



## We're All Preaching the Same Thing!

Raymond Harris

For some time now I have been hearing the foregoing statement. It has come from several sources. Two or three preaching brethren have personally assured me it is so, and I have seen the statement in print. In view of some preaching I am hearing, and some things I read, I am made to question the idea that *we're all preaching the same thing*.

I was baptized nearly sixty years ago. I have been trying to preach some fifty-three years. But, not until the last few years have I heard some things I am hearing today. Over the last fifty years most all believed and preached about the same things. However, now I am hearing many new, strange and uncertain sounds coming from our pulpits. Bulletins and papers are now teaching and advocating things that were unheard of among gospel preachers in the past. Men that for decades were respected for their allegiance to truth, are now either teaching or *condoning* doctrines that are absolutely false! When I compare some things some preachers are preaching and writing today with what I and many many others have believed

and taught throughout our preaching lives, I know we are *not all preaching the same thing!*

Never in my life have I believed or thought that the days of creation were more than six consecutive, twenty-four hour periods. I have never believed there were millions of years between the days! Some today are teaching that the days of creation were millions of years in duration. Others are declaring that it “does not really make any difference if one believes the days were twenty-four hours or millions of years.” *Brethren, we are not all preaching the same thing!*

Recently, I have listened to tapes and read articles wherein it was declared that a preacher who preaches false doctrine is *not* a false teacher unless he is immoral or otherwise a sinful man. They teach that proclaiming a false doctrine *alone*, does not make one a false teacher, and that we can be in full fellowship  
*see “Preaching” on p. 755*

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### Mike Willis

A few months ago, a lady from church came to me saying, "I have been studying with my husband on tongue speaking and instrumental music in worship. Do you have anything that I could give to him on that subject?" Such questions are not unusual for someone to ask. Normally, I would have gone home and searched through my sermon outlines and file cabinets, looking for appropriate tracts which I could have given to her. However, in the computer age, I decided to see what would happen if I tried something different.



I went to [truthmagazine.com](http://truthmagazine.com) and did a Google search on our site looking for material on instrumental music in worship. Within seconds, I found more articles than I could use on the subject. I found that we had produced a special issue on instrumental music several years ago (I had forgotten). I downloaded and printed the entire special issue within 4-5 minutes. Then, I did the same thing on tongue speaking and had two or three articles on that subject ready to give this lady within a few minutes. I knew that archiving *Truth Magazine* would be valuable to brethren but that was my first time to really use it in a practical manner.

I thought about how useful this material would be to our Philippine brethren who might need some material on some particular subject. They might visit a computer café, surf the Web to find help on these subjects, and have printed copies in their hands long before they could write a brother in the U.S. and wait for a book to be shipped to them.

This useful tool is available to us through the labor and sacrifice of several good Christians. A few years ago, a Christian brother asked me about archiving *Truth Magazine* so that this material would be available to another generation. I had not thought about it; why did I need to do that? I had a full set of the bound volumes, but of course others did not. He provided the major portion of the funds (if not all of them) and we began work on the project. I do not mention his name because he prefers to be anonymous.

The primary work of scanning the documents in has been done by my daughter, Jennifer Mann. She scans the material in as a text document (rather than as an image), does a spell check on the material, and saves them as a text file. I mention this to say that these articles have not been proofread for *Truth Magazine* on p. 755

## Decent Dress

Connie W. Adams

We are told that “God doesn’t care what I wear.” The word of God teaches otherwise. Solomon wrote of a woman who lurked in the streets “with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart” (Prov. 7:10). Her attire was an index to her true character. If not, how would one recognize her from any other woman?

Our age is casual. It is not uncommon to see both men and women any place in garb which is not only in poor taste for the occasion, but which reveals loose notions of decency. I am not a fashion expert nor do I wish to impose my personal tastes on others as a standard. But I must speak out regarding the near nudity or form revealing garments which so often are displayed by those who wear the name of Christ.

Many of these frequent the beaches, public pools, work in their yards, go to the mall, or dress for their own weddings in indecent attire. Public worship is not even exempted. Sun-back dresses, low-cut garments, stretch pants, hip huggers, and deeply split skirts, and sometimes shorts, are common in some places. Men appear with skin tight jeans and sometimes with shirts unbuttoned half-way to the waist so the women can see their chains, medallions, and macho chests. I have even seen some of these “he men” at the Lord’s table. Men, women, boys, and girls appear in sweat shirts and T-shirts with all sorts of logos, ranging from the commercial and athletic, to the humorous and sometimes the vulgar. I saw one brother serve at the Lord’s table wearing a “Michelob Light” T-shirt. I saw a young woman at services wearing one which said, “I am a swinger.” I could not even print what is written on a few I have seen young girls wear to services.

What saith the Scriptures? “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds” (Rom.12:2). Paul described two classes of saints in 1 Timothy 2:8-10 — holy men and godly women. “I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.”

### Three Key Words

One who is holy is separated from the common and devoted to sacred use. The term speaks of a proper attitude toward the things of God. “Holy” men and “godly” women are those concerned with their peculiar calling and who are careful to manifest their true character. Now consider these three

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words in that light.

**1. Modest.** The word is from *kosmios* and means “orderly, well arranged, decent, modest, is used in 1 Timothy 2:9 of the apparel with which Christian women are to adorn themselves; in 1 Timothy 3:2 of one of the qualifications essential for a bishop or overseer” (Vine, III:79). It is from the same root word from which universe (*kosmos*) comes and suggests the system and orderly arrangements of the universe. In the context of this passage, the emphasis is on that which befits holy and godly lives with good works. First emphasis must be given to the absence of vanity. A woman who flaunted her wealth by being extravagantly elegant, with intricate hair designs displaying expensive jewelry, to awe the more humble, surely violated this passage. Likewise, one who displayed her feminine charms so as to attract attention to herself, also violated the passage. The standard for the godly woman is not set in New York, London, or Paris. She chooses her apparel consistent with her character. Is it orderly, well-arranged, and decent? If so, in reference to what? Why, godliness, of course.

**2. Shamefacedness.** This word is from *aidos* and is defined as “a sense of shame, modesty, is used regarding the demeanor of women in the church, 1 Tm. 2:9” (Vine, IV:17). “Shamefastness is that modesty which is ‘fast’ or ‘rooted’ in the character” (Davies, *Bible English* 12). “In it (*aidos*) is involved an innate repugnance to the doing of the dishonorable act” (Trench 71-72) . . . “that shamefastness, or pudency, which shrinks from overpassing the limits of womanly reserve and modesty, as well as from the dishonor which would justly be attached thereto” (Trench 71-72).

This is the key word in deciding what is “modest” apparel. It is this inner reserve and sense of moral abhorrence for that which is dishonorable and indecent which enables a godly person to choose appropriate apparel for one professing godliness. The word denotes the opposite of what is reckless, bold, daring, gaudy, or sensational.

**3. Sobriety.** This word is from *sophrosune* and is defined as “soberness, sound judgment” (Vine, IV: 44-45). “Soundness of mind, self-control, sobriety” (Thayer 613). Berry’s *Interlinear* translates the word with “discreetness.” Trench said, “It is properly the condition of an entire command over the passions and desires, so that they receive no further allowance than that which the law and right reason admit and approve” (70). “It is reason’s girdle, and passion’s bridle” (quoting Jeremy Taylor, Trench 70). . . . “That habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires, which would hinder the temptation to this from arising” (*Ibid.* 72).

Notice also in the passage that woman’s apparel is “in like manner also” to what had been said before regarding men who lift up holy hands in prayer; that is, their prayers arise from hearts that are pure and clean. Modesty here is

regulated by a spirit of self-control which dresses so as to keep a check, or rein, on that which is unseemly. Please do not tell me that the way a person dresses has nothing to do with character. It has *much* to do with it.

### Two-Fold Responsibility

Since it is possible to have “eyes full of adultery” (2 Pet. 2:14), and for a man to lust by looking on a woman (Matt. 5:28), it becomes the duty of every godly man to guard his heart and not allow a glance at indecently clad women to grow into a lascivious stare tempting him to make improper advances. Paul urged that all think on things that are “pure” (Phil. 4:8). Likewise, it becomes the duty of godly women to adorn themselves in public so as to indicate purity of heart and to assist in preventing the lustful gaze. Men ought to keep their minds pure and women ought to help them. One young woman told me, after I had preached on modest apparel, that “I have pretty legs and I intend to show them.” The following passage is appropriate here: “As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a fair woman without discretion” (Prov. 11:22).

### Standard Not Provincial

Some contend that these principles might be true in the Ohio Valley but not in California or Florida. Come now, folks! Is the Ohio Valley the only place where men (or women) can lust by looking? Are the women so homely (or the men so ugly) in Florida or California that their exposed flesh would not attract any attention? Were there no beaches in the Greek Isles or the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea when Paul wrote this? Holy men and godly women everywhere will adorn themselves consistent with their character. Far too many preachers are silent as the tomb on the subject. Some would be laughed out of court if they brought it up because their wives and daughters are guilty of wrong doing and have no intention of changing. Some would find little support (if not open antagonism) among church leaders. Some would find their popularity waning. Neither am I advocating an approach to the subject which uses abusive language and lurid descriptions which are as titillating as that which is being condemned. There is a dignity and refinement to truth. But “sound speech” is much needed on this subject. Some are *soundly silent* if not *sound asleep* while the situation deteriorates in all too many places.

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An athiest is a  
man who has

# An Example of Faithfulness

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Don R. Hastings

It was a very cold day the last Sunday in February 1969, in Saratoga, Arkansas. The wind was blowing hard and the sky was a dreary grey. The ground was covered with a light frost that morning which made walking a difficult task.

I had begun preaching for the Afro-American brethren in October 1968. They did not have a preacher and were unable to support one. Therefore, through mutual agreement, I began preaching for them. We met at 9:00 a.m. in order that I might have time to get back and teach a Bible class and preach for the congregation which was supporting me for my work as an evangelist.

As I got up and began to get ready for services, I thought of the hardship that would soon be facing me. The hardship was the coldness of the church building. It would not be properly heated. The overcoat, which I wore over my suit, would remain on throughout the entire service and still I would be cold. As I preached, my breath would freeze. Although I knew this would happen, I wanted to preach for them because I felt as Paul did, “. . . for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16).

As I drove up to the building a few minutes before 9:00 a.m. that Sunday, brother John Olden came walking toward the church building. I thought about the great faith and the great love for God this man must possess. The hardship of preaching in a cold building was nothing compared to the sacrifice and effort that this child of God had made in order to worship his Creator with God’s sons and daughters.

What was so amazing about seeing this brother at services that morning? It was not because he was present. In fact, it would have been unusual if he had not been present. The amazing thing was that this brother had walked nearly two miles through the woods without even the benefit of walking on a road or a path. In spite of the distance, the coldness, the treacherous ground, and his age (you see, he was probably eighty years, or older), this brother was present with the saints. He loved God with all his heart and demonstrated that love in his life.

Oh, how foolish our excuses must appear to him who sacrificed his life for us! Now, what was your excuse for not assembling with the Lord’s children in order to worship him? You have an automobile to ride in and it has a heater. Why were you late for services? This brother had to have left his house around 8:00 a.m. to have arrived before time for worship service.

Are you willing to pay the price of discipleship? Are you willing to deny yourself and take up your cross and follow him (Matt. 16:24)?

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*From Lakeland Hills Leader, November 24, 2002*

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# The Orphan Homes Issue — 1947 Until Now

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Bill Cavender

When I obeyed the gospel of Christ, “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:22-25), February 1946, in San Francisco, California, being immersed by brother George W. Dickson, I not only was “born again of water and of the Spirit into the kingdom of God” (John 3:1-8), I was also “born” into a period and era of impending gigantic, divisive problems and controversies among brethren in churches of our Lord, brethren who were all new people to me. My sins of the past (being nineteen years and two months of age when I was baptized) were all “washed away” in the blood of Jesus, our Saviour (Rev. 1:5; Matt. 26:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 3:20-21; Acts 22:16; Rom. 5:9, etc.), and I was “born free” from the ties of the past in the Methodist Church and the Methodist brethren of my youthful years.

The first week of August 1946, I returned from California to my boyhood parents’ home in Bemis, Tennessee, having completed two and one-half years of military service in the U.S. Navy as a “Pharmacist’s Mate, Second Class,” at the time of my honorable discharge. I immediately went back to work in the Harold E. West Drug Store in Bemis, where I had worked for three years during high school. Harold Etheridge West was the oldest of the five sons of a well-known Baptist preacher in Bemis and the western area of Tennessee. In early September 1946, I began college at Union University in Jackson, the county seat of Madison County. Union University is an old Baptist school, having begun before “The War Between The States” (the Civil War) and is a liberal arts university, with emphasis upon training Baptist preachers for “the ministry.” I went there because it was nearby. College work at Union University is well-recognized and accepted in academic circles, I could get public transportation or “catch a ride” (I did not have a car and my parents never owned an automobile in all my years at home), and I could work in the drug store and go to college. I was not going to be a Baptist preacher but did enroll in pre-medical courses and classes.

Not having any sons, Harold West treated me, all those years, as if I were his son (he and Mrs. West, Yvonne Scott West, had two daughters; she was my fifth grade teacher in elementary school). His promise was and plans were to finance me through medical school if I would become a doctor and return to Bemis to practice medicine. He had political and religious associates who could enroll me into the University of Tennessee Medical School, provided my academic work was acceptable. More than anyone else he was disappointed and hurt when I decided, after one year of “pre-med” studies, to try to be a preacher. Yet he remained my friend and I continued to work for him until going off to Nashville in early September 1947, to study the Bible and other subjects at David Lipscomb College, going to school on the G.I. Bill of Rights. I majored in history and minored in education in college and obtained a permanent secondary-schools teaching certificate in the State of Tennessee. I have never used that certificate nor taught school. My ambitions and future plans, at the time, were to teach school, preach the gospel, own a farm, and raise children, cattle, and sheep. I have been only a preacher, never involving myself in any other work or sideline. I am still trying to do that most needful work in the world. Many are the hopes, dreams, and plans of youth which never are realized nor come to fruition. Yet how wonderful it is to dream and hope, even when such comes to nought. But our hope for eternity in heaven will not be put to shame but is secure in Jesus, our Lord and Savior (Rom. 5:1-5; Tit. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:3-5).

Brethren in Bemis, especially brother Harold V. Trimble, the preacher, urged me to “be a preacher.” One old brother, W.A. Hardy, a good man, highly respected, a widower of many years, gave me most of his books. Especially he urged me to read *Pilgrim’s Progress*, John Bunyan’s classic of his years in prison in England, 1660-1672, 1675-1678, being imprisoned for preaching his views against the Papacy, Roman Catholicism, King Henry VIII, and the Church of

England. (I have twice read *Pilgrim's Progress*. I urge all who may read these reminiscences to go and do likewise. You will be benefitted.) I attended all church meetings on Sundays and Wednesday evenings and the "Young Peoples Class" on Sunday evenings, conducted by brother Trimble. In this class, along with other young men, I led hymns, led prayers, read Scriptures, and made talks. My first attempt to preach was by invitation of the elders in the spring of 1947 at a Sunday morning service. I preached a sermon I had read from someone else, "A Missionary Who Started Too Late" (Luke 16:19-31), the former rich man who "got religion" too late, after he departed from this world, and who wanted to save his brethren on earth lest they should come to torment where he was. But he waited too long and began too late. I was extremely nervous that morning, the first time to address an audience of 150-175 people. My hands were shaking, my palms were moist with sweat, my face was clammy, and my knees literally smote one against another. Yet I managed to get through the sermon and the elders commended the lesson! There was one response to the invitation, a drunk who had entered the building and sat through the service on the back seat, and who wanted to be baptized, hoping his estranged wife (and beautiful little daughter), who was a godly woman and who was in the audience, would come back home to him. I, with the approval of the elders, refused to baptize him. He had been out carousing, womanizing, and drinking all of the Saturday night prior to that service of worship.

The church in Bemis, in those days and to the present, was and is a big supporter of the institutions of the brethren — colleges, schools, orphan homes, homes for aged people, unwed mothers' homes, etc., anything that the brethren can plan and promote, they will support. In 1946-47, when I was a member there, they were greatly under the influence of Freed-Hardeman College, fourteen miles away, and this influence continues to this day. Harold Trimble tried to teach them the truth about "human institutions" as related to divine local churches of the Lord. Brother James R. Cope, then an instructor in Bible at Freed-Hardeman, came up and spoke on "Institutionalism," speaking truth. A year or so later he moved to Tampa, Florida, to be the second president of Florida Christian College. Most Bemis brethren were not listening. Harold moved on. Brother Loyce L. Pearce, a beloved and highly respected business man and brother in Jackson, came to preach in Bemis. But, lo and behold, brother Pearce took a stand for the truth, opposing church support and maintenance of human institutions, and the centralizing of the work of local churches under "sponsoring churches and elderships," as in the Herald of Truth programs. The Bemis elders and church had a difficult time, at the first, in dealing with a man of brother Pearce's good reputation and standing among brethren in that area. Freed-Hardeman administrators, teachers, and board members began to apply tremendous pressure on him, cutting off all business dealings and associations

with him (he owned a business machines, office supplies business in Jackson; previously Freed-Hardeman had purchased all of their business machines and supplies from him). Their treatment of Loyce Pearce was one of many "boycotts" that institutional brethren applied in those days. The "quarantine" of brother Pearce extended to others as the college brethren, preachers and elders of liberalism in the area deliberately tried to put him out of business. The Bemis elders applied the pressure, either to preach what the "brotherhood believes and practices," or leave. Loyce later left and a good number of brethren left with him, to form the Hollywood Drive church in Jackson. In the group was my mother (who had been a Methodist from her youth and who had obeyed the gospel just a few years before, the eighth person I had baptized) and sister Pauline Hammond, perhaps the most highly respected, long-time member of the Bemis church. Shortly afterwards my oldest sister, Myrtle Matthews Fitzgerald, obeyed the gospel. (As the years passed, my mother, brother Pearce, and my sister, all passed on to be with the Lord. I spoke at each of their funerals.) Hollywood Drive church prospered, due to many financial and personal sacrifices of Loyce and Laura Pearce and others. The present Old Hickory church in Jackson is the successor of the Hollywood Drive church. There are still two or three members of the Old Hickory church who helped begin the Hollywood Drive congregation. I held several free meetings in the early days of this faithful work in Jackson. When my mother and others left the Bemis church due to the doctrinal errors endorsed there, I became "persona-non-grata" to the Bemis church and its elders. They wanted nothing further to do with me. I was an "anti," I had to be excluded and shunned, and those who had so much encouraged me to preach would now count me an enemy and have absolutely nothing to do with me. My wife's grandfather and great uncle, Dr. James T. Raines, a well-known country physician, and John Raines, a merchant, gave the land and money for the first meetinghouse of the church in Bemis. Their present large brick building and "fellowship hall" still rests on part of that land. Yet my wife would not be welcomed or received cordially in that church.

In those days most of the Tennessee churches sent a monthly contribution to the Tennessee Orphans Home at Spring Hill. This support would generally be ten dollars per month but some churches would give twenty-five dollars per month. More than this would be an unusually "large contribution." The church at Ashland City, where I did my first real local work, had over two hundred people (on Sunday mornings!); their contribution of twenty-five dollars a month to the Orphans Home averaged out to be 12.5 cents per person per month! Marinel and I tried to give five to ten dollars per month to the orphans, even though we had such little income. We gave canned vegetables, clothes, and household items when the "Orphans Home Truck" came by about every three months. I went

down to Tennessee Orphans Home one time with brethren from the Deason church in Bedford County to take food, clothing, and some money which had been contributed by the members. Seeing the children in regimented-rearing circumstances broke my heart.

After Marinel and I moved to Cooper, Texas in May 1951, we went several times to Boles Home in Quinlan, Texas, brother Gayle Oler being the outspoken, vociferous, unkind superintendent who blamed the “antis” for all the problems amongst the brethren. (He affirmed that institutional brethren were kind, loving, generous, tender-hearted, and caring. “Antis” were hateful, loved only themselves, were stingy, hard-hearted, and would “let the little orphans starve.”) Dear aged sister Patton, mother of Marshall and Herschel Patton, worked there at the time. She was a godly and beloved sister in the Lord. She came to Cooper a few times and worshipped with us. I never understood how she could work there, hearing and reading the diatribes and harangues that brother Oler continually spouted and wrote against his brethren. When Marinel and I would go to Boles Homes, the little children would break our hearts, begging us to “take me home with you,” some with tears in their eyes. During any and all of the visits I ever made to these homes, in my mind I wondered who these children were, why were they there, who were their families, and why the regimented mass-rearing institutionalizing of “normal” children was the right thing to do? As the vicious, heated controversy over the scripturalness of congregational subsidization of these institutional homes developed, I often asked the advocates and proponents if they would send their own children and grandchildren to these “homes” and incarcerate them there. I never had anyone, not a one, to say they would do so with their own children or grandchildren. They didn’t want that! But these same rabid brethren tried to make these institutional, mass-rearing-of-children-agencies, appear as “little heavens on earth” and the children therein so very fortunate who could be sent there to become inmates, to be reared in an institutional environment, attended by paid helpers, hired substitutes for parents and families who, in most every case, could have cared for their own children with sacrifice and entire family involvement. The Bible teaches entire family participation in the care of needy family members (1 Tim. 5:1-16; Jas. 1:22-27).

From 1947 until now, very few, if any, of the children in these “homes” (state chartered benevolent agencies) are really, truly “orphans.” Most were and are from broken, divorced homes, orphans of living parents, not dead parents (but dead in sin for sure). These children become the wards of the state and objects of society’s charity. Long ago institutional brethren decided such children were the wards and responsibilities of the churches of the Lord, objects of church charity. These brethren sold “the brotherhood of believers” on this fundamentally erroneous idea, absolutely

necessary to building and maintaining benevolent agencies, that the widows and orphans, the poor and needy, saint and sinner alike of all this world, are the responsibilities of the churches of the Lord.

The “brotherhood” had to be persuaded that these “homes” were divinely authorized and absolutely necessary to the scriptural work of churches of Christ, that they were in fact “restored homes.” Since “homes” (families) are ordained by God, then these institutions, “restored homes,” are divine and authorized, and the people who operate these “restored homes” are *in loco parentis*, “in the place of the parents.” For these agencies to exist there must be a constant, continual supply of two necessary ingredients: (1) children who are victimized and helpless, and (2) money, money, money, from churches, individuals, businesses, foundations, etc. Money is the oil that greases the wheels and energizes institutionalism, and churches must supply money according to these brethren. They say that we disobey God if we do not do so. Helpless, unfortunate children are the victims, the “drawing cards” and the bait to entice individuals, churches, businesses, foundations, etc., to support these agencies.

In a previous article I mentioned that the oldest orphan institutions among us began around the beginning of the twentieth century when there were real, sure-enough orphans. Many, many people died early of diseases and natural causes. Medications, hospitals, and doctors were few and primitive. There were no nursing homes. Tuberculosis, colitis, smallpox, diphtheria, whooping cough, cancer, heart disease were rampant. Most folks took care of children who were left orphans in their families. But states and denominational religious bodies began to build “homes” to care for the fatherless and the widows. Our brethren did also, on a much smaller scale because we were a much smaller body of religious people as compared to Baptists, Methodists, Roman Catholics, etc. By the 1940s and 50s, circumstances had greatly changed. There were few, if any, orphans. More and more there were “orphans of the living,” children of sorry parents who divorced and who deserted their children, in spite of the fact that folks were earning more money than ever. Families began to find it easier, much easier and more convenient, to let society, the government, and churches take care of their children and aged persons, and let the taxpayers and religious people foot the bills and bear the costs.

As this ugly, divisive, heart-breaking controversy grew in intensity and rancor, brethren, all over the country, began to “quarantine the antis.” Yet it was the despised “antis” who tried to be patient with others, with long-suffering trying to teach and show the brethren what “institutionalism” is. I do not remember any serious, sincere effort by any “institutional church” and its elders, any paper, college, or “home,” who suggested or proposed any plan or arrange-



ment that all brethren could agree to and in good conscience endorse and practice in the interest of unity and brotherly love. I never “withdrew from” anyone over these “issues.” I knew that “fellowship” would take care of itself if I just continued to preach the truth and point out to brethren what we were doing to one another in the institutional battle and division. And “fellowship” always took care of itself. All opinionated brethren will soon “withdraw from” those who try to tell them the truth and who do not agree with their opinions and practice. We tried, in clarity and in meekness, to teach brethren that we cannot attach state-chartered, man-made human agencies and societies, whether missionary or benevolent societies, whether papers, schools, colleges, orphan homes, aged homes, unwed mothers’ homes, or any forms of human agencies, to the divinely authorized and organized churches of the Lord revealed in the New Testament. Regardless of the purposes or works of such organizations, they are human and unknown to the Holy Spirit of God in the New Testament. Jesus and his apostles never spoke of or authorized human agencies. Jesus built nothing but the church (Matt. 16:13-19; Acts 2:47; Eph. 3:10-11; 5:22-33; 1:22-23). The apostles never spoke of any human agencies which were to be attached to or subsidized by divine congregations of God’s people.

We tried to urge faithful brethren to adopt children. Many, many did so, far more in proportion to institutional brethren and congregations who were in the great majority (the brethren and congregations divided about eighty-five percent to fifteen percent, for and against church support of institutions). Those who did not adopt children, to rear them as their own, were more attentive to children and others in need. Many sent money for the care of a specific, named, identified child in one or more of the “orphans homes.” Many brethren, in an effort for unity, urged congregations to “adopt” one or more specified, named, identified child (children) in one of “the homes.” Brother Jack Dunn, preacher of the Street church in Shelbyville, Tennessee, wrote and spoke along these lines, hoping brethren would avoid division. As far as I know, no one paid any attention. In many “Ladies Bible Classes” in local churches, the ladies would

meet one morning a week, during the months in which children were in school, and sew and quilt, and have lunch together, and send the clothes they made and the quilts they quilted to a specific “adopted” child or certain adult in these homes. (Comparatively few women worked for wages, out of their home in those days. There were many more women in congregations available to have a weekly “Ladies Bible Class.” My wife always participated in the classes and these benevolent efforts wherever we lived and preached in those years.) Brother Yater Tant, editor of the *Gospel Guardian* paper, advocated over and over his “box in the vestibule” concept. This plan was for churches to put a box in the vestibule of the meetinghouse and let anyone who wanted to do so, individually, drop their contributions in the box. Then someone would collect these funds and convey the funds to “the orphans home.” This way the church, as such, would not be involved and no contributions would be taken from church treasuries. Those who wanted to donate to the homes could do so; those who did not want to contribute did not do so. Contributions made into the “church treasury” would not be used to subsidize the homes. This concept “went over like a lead balloon!” It was highly ridiculed by brethren who were intent on attaching (and keeping them attached) these “homes” to the congregations.

There was no compromise, no plans for peace, among the institutional brethren. You either supported and endorsed these “homes,” and any other human institutions supported by the local churches from their treasuries, or you had to get out. You were an “anti” and had to be withdrawn from. The institutional brethren controlled all the papers among us except the *Gospel Guardian*. They controlled all the schools and colleges except Florida Christian College. They controlled the largest, wealthiest, most influential congregations. Unless you lived in those days, one cannot imagine the pressures which were exerted upon preachers, elders, and churches “to line up” and “go along with the brotherhood, and don’t oppose the widows and the orphans and the schools.” In early 1958, when I preached in Cooper, Texas, the elders of the large Lamar Avenue church in Paris, Texas, requested a meeting with the elders of the Cooper church, brethren Boyce Bailey, Joe Gregg, and W.B. Gunter. They did not want the preacher (me) to be present. The Lamar Avenue elders really put the pressure on the Cooper elders to “fire the preacher and quit this antism and be in unity with the brethren in Paris and Lamar County.” The Lamar Avenue elders proposed that they would send a regular, monthly contribution to Boles Home in Quinlan, Texas, in the name of the Cooper church, if the Cooper elders would agree. This way the Cooper church would not be reckoned as an “anti church” in the brotherhood! Of course the elders at Cooper rejected all of these pressures and tried to get the Lamar Avenue elders to agree to a public debate

# The Greatness of Christ's Church

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Jeff McCrary

The church of our Lord does not occupy the place it should in the hearts of men and women in our culture. Church membership is seen as a trivial thing, something that is good if one wants it, but unnecessary in the grand scheme of things. Satan's success at diminishing the importance of the church in our culture is one of his great victories of the late twentieth century.

Only the diligence and example of strong Christians who are ready to give an answer of the hope within can stem the tide of anti-church sentiment rising in our land (Matt. 5:13-16; 1 Pet. 3:15-16). Yet, in most of the faithful churches of our Lord these days, attendance, although not the only indicator of the prosperity of a congregation, lags woefully. As good as it might be on Sunday morning, it can fall to two-thirds on Sunday night and as much as one-half by Wednesday night. One preacher I know had to

inform his congregation that only about one-third attended their gospel meeting.

The ease with which some have left faithful congregations and placed membership with unfaithful, more liberal churches, is alarming and demonstrates a lack of concern in the hearts of many for Bible-based teachings and practices in the church they are a member of. It seems, with some, the only thing that matters is the name on the sign in front of the church building. For years I have talked to various ones among denominations who insisted that their church "preaches nothing but what's in the Bible," but were unwilling to examine those doctrines to make sure. It appears that such a sectarian view of the church is on the rise in our time.

Brethren, we need a renewed appreciation for the worth

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regarding these divisive issues. They would not do so. It was with them a matter of public brotherhood approval, what was popular and the "fad" at the time. It was not a matter of truth and right, of what is scriptural, and of what the kingdom of God is all about.

About a year earlier, the Cooper church had an older elder, brother J.D. Wheeler, in his late seventies or early eighties, who was a rabid institutional advocate but could not have his way in getting contributions sent from the church treasury to an institution which brethren operated. We had an infirm, very elderly sister in a local nursing facility, sister McKee. The church paid for her care with a monthly check, along with what her widowed daughter could pay and what the government would pay. Sister McKee was well cared for, her friends, brethren, and family could visit her, pray with her, and assist her, and she was happy and satisfied. One day her daughter, sister Minard, went to see her mother and her mother was not there! Brother Wheeler had gone to the nursing home, arranged for an ambulance, and had shipped sister McKee off to

"The Gunter Home For the Aged" in Gunter, Texas, some ninety miles away. He had told them this was the decision and will of the elders of the Cooper church and the Cooper church would be sending donations to the Gunter Home. He told a lie. He planned to send money from his own pocket to Gunter Home. Needless to say this incident caused an uproar in the church and in that small community. Sister McKee was returned to the nursing home in Cooper, brother Wheeler left the congregation, went to a country church in the county, Klondike, and a small group of brethren, some ten to twelve souls, went with him. This cleansed the Cooper church of the last vestiges of institutionalism. (To be continued.)

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and value of our Lord's church. God is its Author: it is, therefore, divine (Heb. 3:4). Paul said it is God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16), his dwelling place (Eph. 2:19-22). It is to wear the name God gave it (Eph. 3:14-16; Isa. 62:2; 65:15) and be built according to his directions (Heb. 8:1-5; 9:11).

Jesus Christ is the Savior and head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Just as the church has only one head, Christ has but one body (Eph. 4:4). Therefore, the multiplicity of churches spawned in our world today are without God's blessings and forgiveness (Matt. 15:13; Eph. 1:3).

Along with the importance of the church, the mission of the church has been cheapened in the minds of too many. Carnal desires are satisfied with a vengeance. All those who eat and play in the name of religion admit that such activities are not necessary to please God as a congregation, but they push them to the expulsion of those whose consciences are guided by such Scriptures as, "But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment" (1 Cor. 11:34), and "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. . . . It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me" (John 6:44-45). We must draw men to God by teaching his word, not by fulfilling carnal desires (6:27).

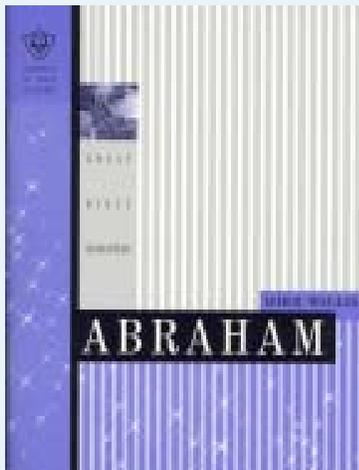
The lust for money is seen in the public pleas for funds from anyone who will give, even though Scriptures teach the functions of the local church are to be funded by the free-will offerings of local members (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-8). The thirst for numbers is seen in the spectacle that is "worship" in many churches, even some "Churches of Christ." Rather than an opportunity to worship, it is a

production with all the trimmings: jokes, personal stories, psychological education, musical and theatrical performances, etc., but very little Scripture and teaching from God's word. It has been voiced to me by every person I have taught out of a denomination over the past few years that they have never heard the word taught to the degree it is in the Lord's church.

Brethren, we look at the world and become discouraged, but we must, rather, look at Scripture and lift up our heads and hands. We have been placed in a glorious church made up of all the saved people (Heb. 12:22-23). It is not "tabernacle made with hands" (Heb. 9:11), for Christ's body is the dwelling place for all who will let him transform them into partakers of the divine nature by doing his will. The church is the fullness of Christ, who himself fills everything (Eph. 1:23)! And we have never, nor ever could be, given the privilege of being a part of a better group of people. However this might or might not be true of the local church you are a member of, don't forget that you are part of that group that transcends time and space, which is truly made up of the greatest people to ever walk the face of this earth, God's own children, Christians! It is indeed an honor to labor in God's vineyard, being a part of a local group of Christians, in a church of Christ. Let us be assured that there are those of our world who will feel the same when the truth is revealed to them. Therefore, let us rise up, walking in the beautiful light of Christ and talking to our friends and loved ones about the blessings that are only in the Lord's body.

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## “When Thou Fastest . . .”

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Jim McDonald

**Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the**

**hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father who is in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret, shall recompense thee (Matt. 6:16-18).**

This is the third instruction against hypocrisy in religion Jesus gave. Fasting is connected with repentance and sorrow. When disciples of the Pharisees and John asked Jesus why his disciples did not fast as they did, he told them it was not proper that they should. They were in the company of the Son of God and such was a joy, not sorrow. The time would come when it would be appropriate for them to fast, but not then (Matt. 9:14).

One annual fast had been commanded by Moses: the Day of Atonement which occurred on the tenth day of the seventh month (Lev. 16:31). This was a solemn day in which the high priest took two goats, cast lots between them for the one which was to be the scapegoat; confessed the sins of the people over that goat's head, which was then taken to the wilderness and released, symbolically “bearing their sins away.” At the same time the second goat was killed and its blood was carried within the temple's veil and sprinkled there as atonement for sin (see Lev. 16). On that holy day no work was to be done; the people were to afflict their souls and they were to fast. When calamity later befell Jerusalem and its temple, fasts were commanded to commemorate those sad occasions.

Fasting was also voluntarily done at other times and there are many recorded instances of such. David fasted because of the mortal disease of his infant son (2 Sam. 12:21, 23). When Ezra led a group of Jews and Levites from exile, he called for a fast at the river which runneth to Ahava (Neh. 8:15, 21). The way was uncertain, the perils were real, but Ezra had told the king God would be their protector (Ezra 8:22f). Nehemiah learned of the sad plight of fellow-

countrymen in Judea and fasted (Neh. 1:4). When an edict had been given commanding the slaughter of all Jews in Persia, Esther (the queen) was approached by her cousin to intercede to the king on their behalf. She consented but begged him and Jews outside the palace to join with her and her maidens in a fast for three days and nights before she went in to the king (Esth. 4:16). Genuine, sincere sorrow for sin and mourning may always be accompanied by fasting, but the danger of hypocrisy is also present. Jesus warned against men fasting to be seen of men, as earlier prophets had warned that prayers of their people would not be heard because their fasting was insincere (Jer. 14:12; Zech. 7:5).

After the church began, men still fasted. Prophets and teachers were fasting in Antioch when the Holy Spirit commanded them to “set apart Barnabas and Saul” for the work he had called them. Before they complied with the Holy Spirit's command, they prayed and fasted (Acts 13:2, 3). Before Paul and Barnabas appointed elders, they fasted and prayed (Acts 14:23). Paul said he had oft been in fasts (2 Cor. 6:15; 11:27).

Fasting, sorrow for sin or mourning, should be genuine, not pretended. It is right that men fast for it is always right to sorrow for sin or have anguish of souls because a loved one has died. But let the expression of our sorrow be real. God knows our hearts and secret fasting is seen by him. Fasting, because it is expected or done to impress people does not impress God. He stops his ears at the petitions of such who “fast.”

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**Renew Promptly!**



# Moral Issues Facing God's People

## Today

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Olen Holderby

To begin an introduction on this subject, I suggest

**Paul says, these (homosexuals) shall not “inherit the kingdom of God” (v. 11), making it quite plain that practicing homosexuals cannot go to heaven. Those who would claim otherwise simply have no respect for what is said in God’s word.**

the reader read John, chapter 17, and notice the nineteen times that Jesus used the word “world”; in most of these instances he used the word in a bad sense. Was Jesus concerned with what the world had to offer? You bet he was! His request in verse 15 clearly shows his concern, “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.”

We can better understand what Jesus had in mind by reading certain other passages of Scripture. Romans 1:28-32 — fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, and unmerciful. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 adds: idolatry, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners. Galatians 5:19-21 adds yet more: uncleanness, lasciviousness, witchcraft, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, and revellings. 1 Peter 4:1-5 adds: lusts, excess of wine, and banquetings. We have between forty and fifty specific sins mentioned in these verses, and Paul adds more by his “and such like” statement in Galatians 5:21. Quite a list! We shall be, in this article, discussing only about a dozen of these.

Consider the use of the word

“world” in the following: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17). “And be not conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2).

With the rather lengthy introductory information behind us, let us now take a closer look at some of these moral issues; issues which appear to be causing a good deal of difficulty and problems among God’s people today. We shall make no effort to exhaust what might be said about each of these, but, hopefully, we can say enough to make plain God’s attitude toward such. I have used the list that I herewith discuss as a series of studies at various places where I have preached for many years. Did everyone like them? No, sir; but they were needed!

### Homosexuality

It appears that we first run across this sin in Genesis 19, with a study of Sodom and Gomorrah. Then in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, such is forbidden and it carried the death penalty. In Romans 1:24-27, we have a good description of homosexuality. In 1 Corinthians 6:9, the expression, “abusers of themselves with mankind”

is properly translated “homosexuals” in the New American Standard Bible. Paul says, these shall not “inherit the kingdom of God” (v. 11), making it quite plain that practicing homosexuals cannot go to heaven. Those who would claim otherwise simply have no respect for what is said in God’s word.

In spite of what the Ann Landers’ column may have said, and others have claimed, it is not an inherited practice. Again, in spite of what some have claimed, homosexuals can change. Look again at 1 Corinthians 6; Paul said to these Christians, “And such *were* some of you.” Some of them had been homosexuals; but Paul further says, “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus” (v. 11). This sin is mentioned again in 1 Timothy 1:10, as “them that defile themselves with mankind.” Such was “contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God” (vv. 10-11).

If you think this sin will never be a problem to God’s own people today, you had better think again. Have you read the paper lately about the newly “ordained” bishop in the Episcopal Church? Yes, I know that is in the denominations, but I also know that what has been approved in the denominations has many times found its way into the Lord’s church. Further, I have personally talked to members of the church who have begun to question what the Bible says on the subject of homosexuality. My friend, this is scary!

Since we are to preach the gospel to every creature and, since the goal of the homosexual community is their full acceptance in society, can you not see the problem of trying to teach others the gospel when those others have fully accepted the homosexual philosophy? Anyone with their head above the sand can see the dangers involved with this filthy practice. Teach, teach, teach what God has said

on this subject; believe what he has said on it and uphold the same. That is the only solution!

### Dishonesty

Yes, this is a moral issue; and it is very prevalent in our society. Sadly, but true, it is also prevalent in many congregations today. Listen to Paul, “. . . provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Rom. 12:17). Again, “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth to his neighbor” (Eph. 4:25). And, again, “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (Col. 3:9). Does anyone really need to have explained to him what it means to be dishonest? I think not, but they do need to realize that dishonesty is a sin, that it separates one from God, and will destroy one’s chances at heaven. Wherever you may be, insist upon honesty, as related in the above passages.

### Immodesty

Immodesty, of course, is the opposite of modesty. In 1 Timothy 2:9, we are told, “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel.” There is a woeful lack of respect for this passage in our society and often times found in the church of our Lord. It is a moral issue because the very practice suggests and encourages immorality. It appears to be so easy for members of the church to follow their counterparts out in society. Yet, Paul plainly says, “be not conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2). And, John says that if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us (1 John 2:15). Why would any “Christian” woman want to encourage a man to look on her with lust in his mind? Jesus said when that is done, the man is guilty of adultery (Matt. 5:28); thus, the woman encourages the man to be guilty of adultery. Adultery first originates in the heart and defiles a man (Matt. 15:19-20).

When a woman asks me if her attire is too “scanty,” my reply, without looking, is always “yes.” The idea

is that we should attire ourselves so that we have no doubt as to its correctness. If we would learn to do this, it would automatically resolve many problems in this area. Since this is a sin, it should be remembered that it can keep one out of heaven.

### Lasciviousness

I don’t know whether this sin is ignored or not understood, but it appears to be prevalent in many places. Let me give you some words from the Bible dictionary used to explain the word “lasciviousness”: excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness. In Galatians 5:19, it is given as one of the “works of the flesh.” In Ephesians 4:19, it is listed among the sins of the unregenerate who are “past feeling.” In 2 Corinthians 12:21, it is one of the evils of which some in Corinth had been guilty and had not repented. In 2 Peter 2:7, it is related to Sodom and Gomorrah and called “filthy” (conversation).

The Bible dictionary (Vine’s) says, “The prominent idea is shameless conduct.” Mr. Vine then offers an interesting comment on the origin of the word. He said that some trace it to the Greek words which means “to charm.” Whether it can be properly traced thusly or not, I have no doubt that the “charm” is there, for unchecked this sin leads directly into further acts of sin — adultery or fornication. In 1 Peter 4:3, it is one of the sins of the Gentiles in which some had walked in the past; but it was now to be left behind. In 2 Peter 2:18, it is one of the sins (wantonness) that was used to allure people into error. What a danger, then, is seen in this sin! We cannot afford to ignore it; God’s teachings on it must be pressed.

### Fornication and Adultery

I doubt that anyone needs a definition of either of these words, but a reminder may be in order. “Adultery” is defined as “unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another,” while “fornication” is a more general term, it includes “adultery” and is defined

as “illicit sexual intercourse,” though it can refer to other forms of immorality. In both 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and Galatians 5:19-21, Paul says that those who are guilty of such “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Those thus guilty in Romans 1, were said to be “worthy of death” (v. 32). In 1 Peter 4, Peter speaks of the “lusts of men” as a part of the past life of those to whom he was writing, and this past life had to be left behind.

In view of the above, how can anyone even think of such sins being acceptable? Yet, our society accepts “live-in” partners, etc. All who are involved in such relationships are just, plainly speaking, fornicators and adulterers. “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). In other words, within the confines of legitimate and proper marriage, one man with one woman, our sexual needs may be met. The Hebrew writer said, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). We are told in 1 Corinthians 6:18 “to flee fornication.” My friends, something being legal does not necessarily make it God-approved. Paul plainly gives the standard of living in Philippians 1:27, when he said, “Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” (NASB).

### Gambling

Definition: “A bet, wager, or other gambling venture” or “Play a game for stakes.” There are three ways in which a man may come to own property: (1) Labor (Eph. 4:28), (2) Benevolence (gifts) (Acts 11:27-30) and, (3) Business or honest exchange (Rom. 12:11; Jas. 4:13-15). Please notice that gambling is not in either one of these three ways.

“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things” (1 Tim. 6:9-11). Enough said!

### Abortion

“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Gen. 9:6). James explains it like this, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all. For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law” (Jas. 2:10-11).

The fact that we have a law on the books that allows abortion does not make it right. God has said otherwise. Abortion is nothing less than “legalized” murder. The size of this problem may easily be seen by merely reading the statistics,

which will show the teeming thousands of babies killed every year. The arguments (?) made by the abortionists in an effort to justify killing these babies is about as sensible as it would be to argue that 9/11 was just a way to reduce the population growth.

### The Use of Intoxicating Drinks

I know of no one who would try to justify drunkenness, since it is plainly condemned in both 1 Corinthians 6 and in Galatians 5, as well as many other places. But what about “social drinking”? 1 Peter 4:1-3, takes care of that practice quite well. In verse 3 Peter lists the things in which his addressees had walked in time past — “lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.” “Excess of wine” has an obvious meaning of drunkenness. Both “revellings” and “banquetings” involve the drinking of intoxicants in amounts less than that of drunkenness — as we would say it, “social drinking.” I have read articles where some denied this fact; but their denial does not change the fact.

In addition to the above, the Christian who drinks has another worry and that is *his influence*. What will his example mean to others? For the interested reader, 1 Timothy 4:12, 1 Corinthians 8, and Romans 14:17-21 all reflect on this topic, and these are not the only passages which do so. Both the Old and the New Testament discuss the use of intoxicating and non-intoxicating wines; but space will not permit us, at this point, to give that information. There simply is no way one can scripturally justify the use of intoxicants.

### “Substance Abuse” (Illegal Drugs)

This subject could have been discussed along with intoxicating drinks for much of what we said on that subject applies equally to this one. Paul’s rule in 1 Corinthians 9:27 will help us in this study, “But, I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” Then in this same epistle, in 15:33, we have the warning,



“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.” A study of Galatians 5:19-21, will show that the term “witchcraft” (sorcery, NAS) involved the use of drugs. It is, thusly, condemned!

### **Pornography**

2 Peter 2:14 appears to describe this sin, “Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children.” Solomon said, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). God wishes to control our thinking, and he has told us upon what to direct our thoughts (Phil. 4:8). Pornography is not in this verse. I have had the sad experience of talking to some Christians who were “hooked” on pornography, even some preachers. Pornography really incites all forms of evil and this relates to both what we see and what we hear. Thus, some music fits into this sinful activity. Beware!

### **Divorce and Remarriage**

It seems that this evil has touched the lives of most people, in some way or other. The influence of the world in general, and Hollywood in particular, has pushed this problem into the church. There are several sets of verses which deal with this subject: Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; and Romans 7:1-3. Since Matthew 19 gives more details, we shall use this set of verses in this brief study. Attention is focused on verse 9, “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” Let us notice some conclusions from these Scriptures:

1. God binds man and woman together, so there are three persons involved: Man, woman, and God.
2. Therefore, only God can release this bond.
3. There is only one cause for divorce, fornication.
4. The innocent party may remarry, but the guilty party cannot.
5. The “whosoever” of verse 9 applies to both “saint” and “sinner.” Some have taught that God’s marriage law does not apply to aliens. However, grammatically, the “whosoever” must apply to all.
6. Notice that Jesus goes all the way back to the beginning to preface his remarks, completely skipping over whatever had happened to this relationship in between.

It seems to me that these conclusions are inescapable and we are left with three groups of people who have the

right to marry: (1) Those who have never been married, (2) Those whose mates have died, and (3) Those putting away their mates for the reason of fornication.

The tragedies of divorce in our land are so obvious that we need not offer any statistics to prove such. The cost has, in many ways, been absolutely horrible to the two parties divorcing, to the children involved, to parents and grandparents, and to congregations of God’s people. What is the remedy for such tragedies? Since God makes no mistakes and he has given all the rules for governing this relationship, man must follow God’s rules if he is to avoid the pitfalls.

What fuels these moral issues in society (or in the church)? For one thing, the educational system has adopted a philosophy that permits, or even encourages most of these issues. Another is the media — TV, videos, radio, and newspapers and magazines, are all filled with such. We must learn the lesson that we will be no better than what is fed into and accepted by our minds. May God help us to follow his wisdom, and not our own, in dealing with all these sins; for there will be a heaven only for those who do follow his will (Matt. 7:21).

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## **Halbrook-Freeman Debate**

by Ron Halbrook and Jack Freeman

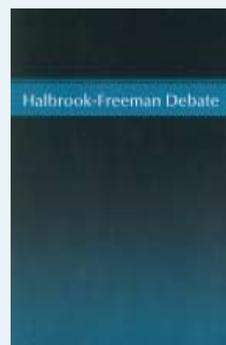
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guilty party who has  
been divorced for forni-  
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# The Truth Comes Out!

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H. Osby Weaver

In the *Houston Chronicle* of Saturday, July 8, 1995, an article headed: “Group Reviews Gay Gene Study” contained some interesting information relating to the homosexual’s claim that he really isn’t responsible for his so-called “alternate life style”; he was just born that way. Now the truth comes out.

The article reported that “the author of a controversial study linking homosexuality to a ‘gay gene’ is under investigation for scientific misconduct.” You see the author claimed he had found a gene on the tip of the X chromosome which is passed from mother to child and concluded that the “gene helped to determine the men’s sexual orientation.” As it turned out, when his conclusion was checked out, “it failed at least in one independent effort at confirmation,” so the article continues.

The Institute research named in the article “caused a stir because, for the first time, it connected sexual orientation to at least one biological root. Some gay activist seized on the information (or misinformation, HOW) as a weapon against discrimination,” so said the article. Of course, the homosexual wanted some excuse to say, “Don’t blame me for my sexual choice, I was born that way!”

However, a “former collaborator” blew the whistle on this author and charged him with “leaving out information that could have weakened the statistical significance of his findings.” Now, how is that for true science? “Apparently, a post-doctoral fellow in the lab (used by the author under consideration) went back to look at some results and found cases that had not been included in his final report. Other researchers believe these cases could have changed the nature of the findings.”

So, the truth comes out! Efforts to bolster the honorable quality of the homosexual falls flat on its face, as any right thinking person would know if he is familiar with the word of God on such matters. God would not impose the death penalty on someone because he was born with something that would lead him to choose a certain life-style that he could not otherwise avoid.

Let us see what God has said about the practice of homosexuality which has not changed through the centuries even if the homosexuals are constantly seeking to bring their practice from under the rock and out of the closet and attempt to make it honorable and decent. You can see why they jumped on the band wagon that suggests that they are doing what they are doing because they cannot help doing it, even though the word of God condemns it.

This is not a new sin. In Old Testament time, God said, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind: it is an abomination. . . . And if a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed abomination: they shall be put to death” (Lev. 18:23; 20:13).

But the prohibition against this sin was not confined to the Old Testament period. In the New Testament, God says to us today that he gave some up “in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves . . . for this cause God gave them up to vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due” (Rom. 1:24-27). While AIDS is not the sum total of the recompense of their error, that fatal disease could very well be a part of it in this life.

According to the Amplified Version, 1 Corinthians 6:9,10, says, “Do you not know that the unrighteous and the wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived (misled); neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality . . . will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God.” In view of these passages, can you imagine even some preachers trying to justify the ungodly sin of homosexuality?

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## “Preaching” continued from front page

with such a one. I do not know, how many believe and teach that, but I know I have never believed or taught such. *Brethren, we are not all preaching the same thing!*

Then there are those who tell us that the problems regarding marriage, unscriptural divorce and remarriage, and other doctrinal matters should be dealt with on the basis of the teachings found in Romans 14. Of course Ketcherside and others like him, have trumpeted such foolishness for years in an effort to have fellowship and unity with about everyone. However, it has only been in the last few years that brethren, who were long considered faithful and true, have taken up with this teaching. If unscriptural divorce and remarriage can be viewed in the light of Romans 14, what else can be applied? I have long understood that Romans 14 deals with non-sinful practices regarding the eating of meats and the keeping of certain days. Paul is urging Jewish and Gentile Christians to be compassionate and patient with one another in areas where God has not legislated either way. Where God has legislated, there is nothing to discuss and the matter does not belong in Romans 14. What God has legislated are matters of faith and are set in concrete. It is a long way from the unimportant opinions as to whether or not to eat certain meats, to applying the same principles to divorce and remarriage. Opening up Romans 14 to doctrinal matters has no stopping place. Why not add premillennialism, instrumental music, and the purpose for baptism. To these could be added the doctrine that Jesus “was and is just a man” and the “A.D. 70 doctrine.” Why not add the “cottage church” concept and the taking of the Lord’s supper in the midst of a congregational “Love Feast” any day of the week? What are we going to do with the teaching that there is no eternal hell and that the lost will be annihilated in the end! Do all these go in Romans 14? I feel very confident that I do not stand alone in refusing to put doctrine in Romans 14. *We are not all preaching the same thing.*

Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-4: “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; *reprove, rebuke, exhort* with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

Such passages make it clear that false teaching must be *exposed, and rebuked*, and that there must be a positive setting forth of the truth in all things. As long as I and a thousand more like me, refuse to buy into the foolish teachings that I have just discussed, I’ll tell you, *we are not all preaching the same thing!*

We have those among us today who are crying out, “We must deal with *issues* and not *personalities*.” Alright, that is exactly what I have done in this article. We need not name anyone. In the main, most all know very well who is disseminating this false teaching! About every one who is not living under a rock knows who the troublers of Israel really are!

Brethren, it is past time for the true and the faithful, every where, to wake up, step forward, and take a stand against all ungodliness!

*We’re not all preaching the same thing!*

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## “TruthMagazine.com” continued from page 2

errors, so there are some typos that occur in the articles. At that point, they are given to Donnie Rader who is our webmaster. He does whatever work has to be done to prepare them to post on the Web so they are made available to the general public.

Already we have scanned in bound volumes I-XXXIII and soon will have finished the task. We look forward to completing the task up to the present day and then keeping it current. We hope you will use it.

I have been thinking for several weeks that I needed to tell our readers about the availability of this material so that they too can access it. Our intention is to archive all of *Truth Magazine*, make it available on our Web site, and then prepare a CD ROM to those who might wish to purchase it at a bargain basement price.

I would to publicly express my appreciation for the work that Donnie Rader does in serving as Web Master for our web site. I honestly have no idea how much time this takes, but I am confident that he has put in many hours. The Web site usually contains material on various issues, especially current issues, which are available weeks before they can be printed in *Truth Magazine*. Like our magazine and unlike some other web sites, truthmagazine.com tries to publish responsible material on both sides of an issue in the spirit of fairness. That does not mean that we will post everything anyone sends, but that does mean that we make an effort to present responsibly written material on 6567 Kings Ct., Avon, Indiana 46123, mikewillis1@attglobal.net















