



# Unless You Forgive From The Heart

Ron Daly

In Matthew 18:21-35 we read the story of the unforgiving servant. The servant owed a king a lot of money, and he could not pay it. His master gave orders to sell the servant, along with his wife and children and all that he had. The servant fell to his knees and asked for mercy and patience, and out of pity for him, his master released him and forgave him the debt. The servant went out and found a fellow servant who owed him a *very small fraction* of what he had owed his master. Though his master forgave him a debt that approximated ten million dollars, he refused to forgive his fellow servant whose debt might have been three months' wages, a pitifully small and meager amount! Since he did not show his fellow servant the same sympathy that had been shown to him, his master, upon finding out what he had done, summoned him and had him delivered to the jailers. Jesus then added, “So also my heavenly Father will do to everyone of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.” The story contains a powerful lesson!

There are folks among the Lord's own people, who like the Corinthians (1 Cor. 6:9-11) in apostolic days, *have* been forgiven of a number of horrible and disgusting sins. Some are former child molesters, drug addicts, homosexuals, drunkards, adulterers, bank account and land thieves, prostitutes, murderers, racists, and blasphemers. All of those sins and perhaps many others were forgiven *them* when *they* repented and obeyed the gospel. Or, if they committed those sins after obeying the gospel, they were forgiven if they repented and confessed their sins to God. Their sins were against people *and* God, yet they were forgiven of every single one of those sins! They were not worthy of forgiveness; they heeded it and were forgiven by a just and merciful God when they met his conditions of forgiveness (Acts 2:35; 1 John 1:7-10). It seems that those who have been the worst people and been forgiven the most atrocities would be  
*see “Forgive . . . Heart” on p. 121*

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## Restoration of Divine Worship

Mike Willis

The book of Ezra relates the story of the return of the children of Israel to Israel following the Babylonian captivity. In 587 B.C. the city of Jerusalem fell into Babylonian hands; the temple was destroyed and the city was torn down. Jeremiah had prophesied that the city would lie desolate for seventy years (29:10). When the book of Ezra opens, the seventy years are completed and the children of Israel are ready to return to their land.



Cyrus, king of Persia, issued a proclamation allowing the children of Israel to return to their land and rebuild their temple (Ezra 1:1-2). The vessels from the Temple that had been taken from the sanctuary were restored to the leaders and they were allowed to return to their land. Under the leadership of Jeshua and Zerubbabel, the work was begun. Ezra writes:

And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord, even burnt offerings morning and evening. They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required; And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the Lord. From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord. But the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid (Ezra 3:1-6).

As Jeshua and Zerubbabel returned to Israel, they had to decide, "What will the worship be like which we will set up?" No doubt they had seen the altars in Persia and Babylon with all the pageantry that these two majestic kingdoms could muster. Would they be influenced to set up their worship to resemble that?

Would they use their own ideas about what is best, creating a new and

# The Wisdom of God

Connie W. Adams

Nothing appears more foolish to the unbeliever than the preaching of the cross of Christ. To him it is an exercise in futility calculated only to satisfy the superstitious whims of the weak, elderly, or uneducated. He sees no power whatever in relating the death and suffering of a descendant of Abraham centuries ago. It does not fit the vaunted views of the scholarly. Nothing about it flatters the vanity of those who appear to know everything except a right relationship with God.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” and “wisdom” (Prov. 1:7; Ps. 111:10). The greatest trained thinkers are woefully uneducated when they leave God out of their calculations. Without acknowledging him they cannot explain their origin, mission, or destiny. Strike God from the picture and there is left no sane basis for moral conduct.

The Greeks of Paul’s day were the self-admitted enlightened ones of all time. Both Athens and Corinth were centers where the wisest of the wise congregated and strutted their brilliance before the dazzled eyes and ears of the intellectually deprived. When Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, he cut to the heart of this problem when he said, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). He even went so far as to say, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (v. 21).

In the Greek philosophers, God allowed the human mind to reach as far as it could, unaided by revelation, in trying to unravel the origin, purpose, and destiny of life. And they really did grapple with these issues. Yet, in the final analysis, they came up empty. Some of them recognized there had to be a power higher and greater than man. But without divine revelation they understood neither his nature nor his will. At one point they thought the gods to be up on Mount Olympus, so far removed from man as to be unconcerned for his fate. By the time of Plato’s *Republic*, they had brought the gods down among men where they acted capriciously and became more wicked than men. Such extremes of thought produced an increasing number of cynics and skeptics. The human intellect was bankrupt without knowledge of the true God and revelation from his mind. Paul argued that this was all according to the wisdom of God himself. It showed the futility of human wisdom unaided by divine revelation and set the stage for the entrance of the gospel into the very citadels of intellectual strength.

The true God was not so remote from the human predicament as to ignore man’s plight. While he is just, he is also gracious and merciful. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16). Yet, when

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his Son left heaven to dwell among men, he (unlike the gods of Greek mythology) manifested all the attributes of deity and resisted every human temptation. In his virgin birth he satisfied what was missing in the wisdom of the ancients. He was divinely conceived but was born to an earthly mother. He was at once both God and man. This admirably suited him to become mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5).

In his death he satisfied all the needs of both God and man for sacrifice. Until that time, even divinely required sacrifice could only foreshadow what was to be offered by Christ and served to underline the insufficiency of such sacrifices to take away sin. When Jesus died on the cross, he ended there the need for all blood sacrifice. But he also satisfied the law's demand. Sin is the severing of spiritual life from God. In order to bridge the chasm, God required that physical life be given to expiate for the spiritual life forfeited. Since the life of a thing was in its blood, then God ordained bloody offerings. But Jesus was sinless. He was the true lamb without spot which the flocks of offered victims up until then could only typify. He was wounded for our transgressions. Our sins were laid upon him. No wonder John said of Jesus, "Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). While the cross depicts human vice at its lowest ebb, paradoxically, it was here that mercy and justice embraced each other. Christ lifted up on the cross presented vividly the desperation to which sin leads men. But that event also was the proffered hand of the Almighty giving the best he had to offer to tell us of his great love for us, even when we were sinners.

In spite of all the scorn the unenlightened intelligentsia

heaps upon that awful scene, centuries ago, it remains that the simple telling of it with all it truly means, evokes from the human family its finest response. It has made men ashamed of sin. It has evoked wonder at the depth of such love. It has produced soul searching and prompted resolution to change for the better. It has replaced the bitter in life with the sweet.

It has prompted the great deeds of love which welled up from the admonition to "do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). It has produced and refined the spirit of the martyr who reasons that "to live is Christ and to die is gain." It has tamed and gentled the tongues of the coarse and profane. It has brought out the noblest sentiments and responses of which the human spirit is capable. It has given the Christian a reason for living and a hope in dying.

Our best attempts at eloquence are puny when placed beside the sweeping statement of the Holy Spirit as Paul penned these words:

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:22-31).

My brethren, this is the message that turned the Roman Empire upside down. It is the message that saves the lost. It took the gospel of Christ to save my soul. It is what my children and grandchildren must hear and obey to be saved. If this is not central to our preaching, then we had better beware lest we be found preaching "another gospel." The wisdom of God is known by what God said. The truth on any subject is the sum of what he said. It is only when we preach his word that we instruct our hearers in divine wisdom. May the preaching of the cross never become foolishness to us.

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## The Cogdill-Jackson Debate

This debate was on the plan of salvation and apostasy. Roy C. Cogdill was a member of the church of Christ and D.N. Jackson was a member of the Baptist Church. Jackson affirmed that man is saved by faith alone and once saved cannot fall away and be lost. Cogdill denied these two propositions and affirmed that a penitent believer is baptized for (in order to obtain) the remission of sins and it is possible for one washed in the blood of Christ to fall way and be lost in hell. Jackson denied.



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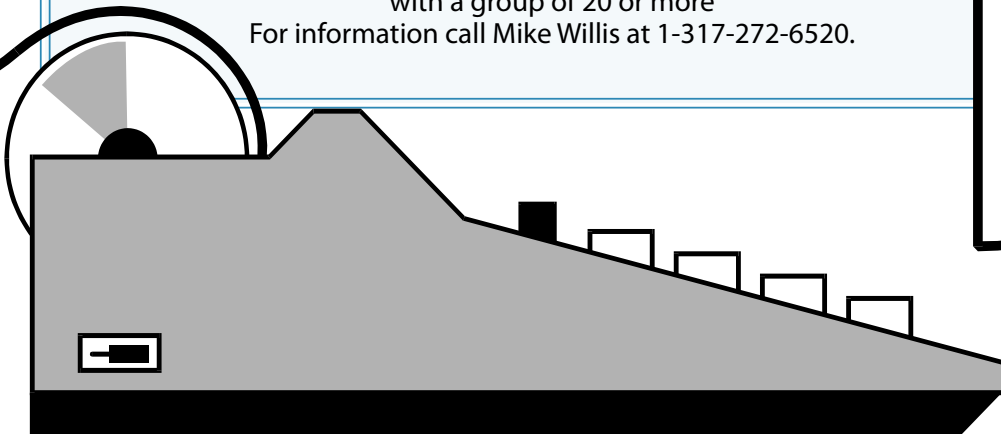
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# The PC Church

Brian Anderson

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We live in a PC world. Politically Correct. There are certain things you don't say, condemn or talk about today in "good" society. Words must be chosen carefully not to offend and if one says such things he is a bigot, intolerant, a hate monger, one to be avoided and shunned. It has been said that what is prevalent in the world takes about seven years to infiltrate the church. Well, it seems that that axiom is holding true, because it seems that many churches have become PC., unable to accept the truth, but rather carefully censoring certain topics so as not to offend and be like the world. When certain topics are breached you can see the discomfort in the faces of the brethren. Do you worship with a PC church? Lets see:

## Sin

We have candy coated sin. Nothing is called sin in the world. Recently I read an article where a Jewish Rabbi bragged that his students, who went to a parochial school where he taught, went from kindergarten to first grade without hearing the word "sin." I've got to believe that the devil is quite happy with that! How about in the church? Can we talk about sin? What it is (1 John 3:4). What it will do to an individual (Prov. 13:15; Rom. 6:23; Jas. 1:14-15, Isa. 59:1-2). One of the first things needed to convert one to Christ is to get him to the realization that he is a sinner. But many are fearful that they will hurt their self esteem or maybe offend. Can we call things sin and condemn them?

## Drunkenness

Today we call it a disease. You see it is really not their fault they're sick. It is like a birth defect. The Bible says, "Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging, and those that are deceived thereby are not wise" (Prov. 20:1). Paul calls it a work of the flesh that will cause one to lose their soul (Gal. 5:19-21). Drinking is a sin and will cause one to lose his soul. Does your church teach such? Or, have we become PC?

## Homosexuality

Gay or alternative lifestyle. People today equate it with being of a different race, and those who preach against such are bigots. Our former president said, "We must stamp out

all bigotry that is clothed in religion." Many in the denominations of men are now voting to embrace such and not condemn. God called this sin an abomination in the Old Testament (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of this sin (Gen. 18-19). It is from that biblical story that we get the term "sodomy." Many today say the cities were destroyed for their lack of hospitality! Can we call this sin . . . sin (Rom. 1:23ff.; 1 Cor. 6:8-9)? The homosexual can help it, he has simply succumbed to perverted lusts and if he does not repent, he shall perish (Luke 13:3). How comfortable are you on that subject? Becoming a little PC are we?

## Divorce

One-half of marriages end in divorce today. Over twenty million children are being raised in single parent homes. Sixty percent of all marriages have at least one member in their second marriage. Yet I go to gospel meetings and I am told, "Don't preach on divorce, we have divorced folks here, you'll hurt their feelings. You might make them feel uncomfortable." Or, "Their mother or father, their son or daughter are divorced and we just don't talk about things like that anymore." There is a saying that says, "As the home goes, so goes the nation." Edward Gibbons wrote a book called *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*. In discussing why the empire fell he says that "the rapid increase of divorce and undermining of the home was the reason." Don't we learn anything from history?

As one's teaching on divorce and remarriage goes, so goes the church. For if we allow the first great institution to be destroyed, how shall we hope to save the second, the church? God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16) and expects marriages to last a lifetime (Gen 2:18ff.; Matt. 19:3-9; Rom. 7:7-4). Only due to a mate's unfaithfulness will God allow one to seek a divorce and remarry (Matt 5:32; 19:9).

I know divorce has hit the church. I know that in every crowd I preach to there are those that are divorced. But I cannot, we cannot, stop teaching and preaching the gospel's truths on marriage and divorce. The next generation must hear and learn God's teaching on the subject! Have

we become PC?

### Women

In the work place men are having to walk on eggshells to remain politically correct. We have to include women in roles that they are simply not suited for (by the way, how did that statement make you feel)? A little squeamish? Have we become . . . PC? Combat, firefighting, police, positions of authority, ruling in the home over her husband, out of the home not seeing to its affairs. Today if the home isn't being kept, it is not the fact that a woman isn't at present meeting her responsibilities there, it is the man's fault for not doing his share.

Women must meet their responsibilities in the home and submit to their husbands (Tit. 2:4-5; Eph. 5:22ff.). How long would I last in "good society" speaking such things? You ought to see the squirming and the bad looks I get when I preach on women's role today in the church. It is not just bad looks from the women. Most of the men are giving me looks that are say, "Would you please shut up about this, I have to live with this woman!"

Paul states, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection, But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:34-35). Yet today many churches are trying to put women in places of leadership and authority. I hear folks say, "Oh you're the type of man that just wants your woman barefoot and pregnant and in the kitchen." Let me tell you, I can assure you that my wife has plenty of shoes, and I never want to see her pregnant again! Can we preach

and teach these things to our wives and daughters or have we become a PC church?

### Baptism

Many today are calling for preachers to quit preaching baptism. Many of the denominations have already stopped using baptism for any purpose at all. Some of the Lord's churches have begun to moderate their positions on baptism and who is a Christian. Such slogans can be heard in classrooms supposedly educating future preachers of the truth as "Christians only, but not the only Christians." Churches of Christ have stopped offering the invitation at every service so as to not make anyone feel uncomfortable.

Lord hasten the day when all sinners and those that have not obeyed the gospel feel very uncomfortable in their position before their God (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21).

There are certain things you don't say, condemn, or talk about today in "good" society. Words must be chosen carefully not to offend and if one says such things he is a bigot, intolerant, a hate monger, one to be avoided and shunned. It's happening in the church today. When looking at these and other subjects, have we become PC?

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# Are You Part of the International Churches of Christ?

David Dann

**Many churches of Christ departed from the New Testament pattern of the work of the local church in the division over institutionalism and social gospel practices in the 1950s and 60s. Many decided that, rather than look to the Scriptures for authority to act in all matters pertaining to the organization and work of the local church (2 Tim. 3:16-17), they would endeavor to take on projects bigger than those revealed in the Bible.**

Jesus rebuked the religious sectarians of his day saying, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves” (Matt. 23:15). While the Pharisees claimed to be servants of God, were zealous, and worked to make converts, they failed to actually do the will of God.

Similarly, today there are those who claim to serve the Lord, display extraordinary zeal, and work diligently to make converts all the while failing to truly do the will of God. One religious group well suited to such a description is the “International Churches of Christ” or ICOC. The ICOC is present in many major cities in North America as well as in numerous other places around the globe. For example, the Toronto Church of Christ, the Atlanta Church of Christ, and the Los Angeles Church of Christ are affiliated with the International Churches of Christ. Because the ICOC uses the name “church of Christ,” those familiar with that group have often asked me, “Are you part of the International Churches of Christ?” The answer is, of course, “no,” but the question is worthy of deeper consideration. Who are the ICOC? What do they believe and teach? How do they differ from the church as revealed in the New Testament? These and other important questions need to be answered.

## **History of the International Churches of Christ**

Many churches of Christ departed from the New Testament pattern of the work of the local church in the division over institutionalism and social gospel practices in the 1950s and 60s. Many decided that rather than look to the Scriptures for authority to act in all matters pertaining to the organization and work of the local church (2 Tim. 3:16-17), they would endeavor to take on projects bigger and, supposedly, better than those revealed in the Bible. It was not long before those who rejected the New Testament pattern in favor of innovation began pursuing newer and seemingly brighter humanly devised plans for the church.

In the early 1970s the Crossroads church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida presented itself among institutional churches as being on the cutting edge of innovative brilliance in carrying out schemes to reach the lost with the gospel. Under the direction of a preacher named Chuck Lucas the Crossroads congregation implemented an aggressive approach to evangelism targeted at recruiting converts on college and university campuses. These young converts would be assigned a “prayer partner,” that is, a more experienced brother or sister in the congregation who would have the responsibility of providing the convert with personal spiritual guidance. The Crossroads church soon became known for making large numbers of converts and



others sought to follow their approach to evangelism.

One of Lucas' most promising converts was a young man named Kip McKean. Before long the student surpassed his teacher. In 1979 McKean and some others started the Boston Church of Christ in Boston, Massachusetts. By aggressively employing and expanding upon the methods he learned from Chuck Lucas, Kip McKean took oversight of a movement that by 2003 had grown to 185,000 members in 430 churches located in 170 countries around the world. It began as the "Boston Movement," then came to be known as the "Discipling Movement" before finally adopting the name, "International Churches of Christ."

### What is the ICOC Known For?

Let it be clearly understood that the list of areas in which the ICOC has departed from the New Testament is almost without end. For the sake of space we have limited our examination to only a few of these.

#### 1. A human founder and head.

There is no doubt that the body known as the "International Churches of Christ" did not exist before Kip McKean began his work. It is just as clear that for nearly twenty years he served as the head of the movement, even wearing the titles of "World Missions Evangelist" and "Leader of the World Sector Leaders." On the other hand, the Bible teaches that Christ is the founder of the church that truly belongs to him (Matt. 16:18), and he is the head of it (Col. 1:18).

**2. A man-made religious hierarchy.** With one leader at the top, the ICOC has functioned through an elaborate hierarchy system involving a pyramid of World Sector Leaders and Geographic Sector Leaders. The ICOC hierarchy resembles that of a multi-level marketing corporation. The Scriptures give no hint of a church-wide hierarchy, or sector leaders of any kind. The formal or-

ganization of the church presented in the Bible is limited to that which should ideally be present in each local congregation, consisting of saints, including elders (bishops), and deacons (Phil. 1:1). There are no officers in the universal church, nor is there any organization other than the local church. Each local church in the New Testament was autonomous, that is, each handled its own affairs rather than being directed by another church or organization.

**3. A heavy emphasis on numerical growth.** The ICOC has placed its members under constant pressure to meet predetermined goals in making new converts. Growth in numbers is what counts. Lost in all of this is the fact that the gospel is God's power to convert souls to Christ (Rom. 1:16), and it is God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:7). The Scriptures charge preachers with the responsibility of preaching the pure gospel (2 Tim. 4:2-4), rather than the responsibility of baptizing a certain large number of people.

**4. Discipling partners.** Much like the Crossroads "prayer partners," the ICOC assigns a "discipler" to provide direction for each convert. Disciplers have extensive authority over those they "disciple." Nearly everyone in the organization submits to a discipling partner. No such relationship is found in Scripture. In fact, Christians are taught to "submit to one another" (Eph. 5:21) and "edify one another" (1 Thess. 5:11). We are to be disciples of Christ, rather than submit to man-made rules and regulations (Col. 2:20-23).

### Recent Developments in the ICOC

**1. Kip McKean resigns.** On November 6, 2002 Kip McKean resigned his positions as World Missions Evangelist and leader of the world sector leaders of the International Churches of Christ. In his letter of resignation McKean offers a general apology to members of the ICOC for

his sins, which are presented in only general terms as arrogance, anger, and problems within his own family. McKean's resignation seemingly brings an end to his twenty-three years of leadership over the ICOC, though he will remain on the ministerial staff of the Los Angeles Church of Christ. Following his resignation, the world sector leaders of the ICOC held a unity conference in order to devise a new form of church government. Since the ICOC is geographically broken down into nine world sectors, it was decided that the leaders of each of the world sectors would work together in order to oversee the operations of the entire body.

**2. Many ICOC leaders call for reform.** On February 2, 2003 Henry Kriete, leader in the London Church of Christ, published a thirty-nine page open letter to the elders, teachers, and evangelists throughout the ICOC. In the letter Kriete calls upon the other leaders in the movement to either tone down, or give up many of the unscriptural practices of the group, including the use of a religious hierarchy, an unhealthy focus on numerical growth, and the use of discipling partners. Many other ICOC leaders soon followed suit in joining Kriete's call for reform within the International Churches of Christ. As a result, the ICOC is currently in the midst of a transitional period of time during which its leaders are seeking to improve the organization.

### What Should The ICOC Do Now?

The aims at reform being made within the International Churches of Christ are reminiscent of the sixteenth century call for reform within the Roman Catholic Church that led to the Protestant Reformation. The Catholic Church was reformed and restructured a thousand times over resulting in the formation of numerous Protestant denominations. Through reformation, one erroneous organization managed to multiply into thousands of erroneous organizations. The reformers of the ICOC should not make the same

# This Is the End of All Men...

David C. Morrison Jr.

(Editor's Note: I received the following note accompanying this

*article from brother Morrison: I am attaching an article that was the result of a funeral I just conducted for Robert O. Miller [brother of the late James Parker Miller or J.P. Miller]. Robert O. was very wealthy and was very influential throughout the state of Kentucky. There were many in the audience who never heard the gospel preached prior to that day. I went in to much more detail in the funeral, emphasizing the death, burial, and resurrection and its relation to baptism and obedience. The gist of the lesson is found in this article.)*

How can you be happy with life on this earth? This is the question that Solomon, the Son of David sets out to answer in the book called Ecclesiastes or The Preacher. "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccl. 1:2). The wise man examines "life under the sun" and all its pursuits and concludes that the "whole of man is to fear God and keep His commandments" (Eccl.

12:13). The things of life are vanity in and of themselves. They are good, yet once they are obtained they are empty. There is a mockery of man in such pursuits under the sun. These vanities suit God's purpose in demonstrating to man the futility of such things. Man can see that he is mocked. Man will realize that there is no happiness in these things themselves. There is happiness in the pursuit of a goal, not in the achieving of the goal. For instance, man decides that happiness is found in riches and wealth. He pursues these things with all his might. Instead of the happiness he thought he would have there is emptiness. This leads to despondency. The wise man uses the phrase "vexation of spirit." He calls it "striving after the wind" and indeed it is just that fruitless unless we "fear God and keep His commandments."

In Ecclesiastes 7:1-2 we are given the insight needed to appreciate life under the sun and to keep our efforts in perspective. "A good name is better than precious ointment;

mistake. The following points briefly summarize what ought to be done by the ICOC at this point in time:

**1. Get back to the Bible.** The International Churches of Christ have spent twenty-three years listening to the direction of Kip McKean. It is now time to listen to Jesus and his apostles. In the Spirit-revealed Scriptures God has given man "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). For many years ICOC leaders have said, "Where the Bible speaks we are silent; where the Bible is silent, we speak." It is time to abandoned that erroneous slogan and instead "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). The damage done through world missions evangelists, world sector leaders, discipling partners, and many other ICOC practices would not have occurred had the "pattern of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13) been followed.

**2. Give up the hierarchy.** No hierarchy structure for the church is found in the New Testament. Therefore, there should not be such a hierarchy now. While we find "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16) in the Bible, we do not find "pillar churches," "head churches," or one church

directing the affairs of another church. Let the local elders oversee the flock that is among them (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

**3. Cease to exist as a body.** There is no authority in the Bible for a religious body known as the International Churches of Christ to exist. The members of the ICOC ought to simply live as Christians and worship and work together in local congregations. The ICOC is a recently formed denomination. Jesus did not die to purchase a denomination, nor does he desire ownership of one (Acts 20:28; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23).

## Conclusion

Just because a church calls itself a "church of Christ" does not mean that it truly is of Christ. As Jesus said, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). It is meaningless to wear the name of Christ while refusing to do his will. Let us learn from the failures of the ICOC movement.

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and the day of death than the day of birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for this is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.” Death is the end of all men. This life is not the end. It can be rich and meaningful only when the “living lay it to heart.” That is, when we consider the eternal aspect of our existence.

“The living know that they will die” (Eccl. 9:5). “What man can live and not see death or save himself from the grave?” (Ps. 89:48). “It is appointed unto man once to die and than cometh the judgment” (Heb.9:27).

All of life under the sun is vanity unless we lay these things to heart, unless we consider our eternal destiny and the seriousness of giving an account to God (Rom. 14:12; 2:6-9). All is vain unless we consider the brevity and uncertainty of life under the sun. James asks, “What is your life? It is but a vapor that appeareth for a short time and than vanisheth away” (Jas. 4:14).

In our pursuits upon the earth we must consider our death and our eternal destiny. The “house of mourning” where death comes close to us is a wake up call to the living. We must recognize the reality and accept the futility of a life that ignores this outcome. The reality is we will die. The reality is we will meet God in judgement. It will matter very little how much money we made or accumulated, the mark we made in this world, the notoriety we may have among our fellows, etc. The only thing that will make any pursuit on this earth worthwhile is whether or not we “Fear God and Keep His Commandments.”

The wonderful news in the book of Ecclesiastes is that with this perspective we can truly enjoy our pursuits under the sun. As Solomon says, this is the “whole” of man. Man

was made to “fear God and keep His commandments.” In other words, we are out of sync with our very purpose in life when we do otherwise. It is no wonder that all our pursuits will leave us with an emptiness. We are trying to fill what only God can fill. You see, this is the “whole” of man, and when he tries to fill his life with anything other than a fear of God and obedience to him, he will be left empty.

The pursuit of happiness in this life under the sun without God is futile. It is simply chasing after the wind. Consider the vanity (emptiness) of vanities (emptinesses). In the midst of such pursuits whether successful or not, we all will die. Ecclesiastes 5:15, “As he came forth from his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour.” We know that don’t we? You see it is the mockery of mankind. Consider the foolishness of ignoring this fact. Since it is true, the focus *must* be on God and pleasing him! Otherwise, life is just the pursuit of one empty outcome after another.

How can I be happy in my life under the sun? Recognize the “end of all men” and “lay it to heart.” Prepare yourself for death and for eternity. Fulfill your purpose in life, “Fear God and keep His commandments!” Make Heaven your goal. As you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, guess what you pick up along the way? That’s right, *happiness!* Your pursuits under the sun take on new meaning and purpose. They are no longer an end in and of themselves. There is a real fulfillment.

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## “Why Beholdest Thou the Mote . . .”

Jim McDonald

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Elsewhere in this series, an examination has been made of Matthew 7:1. There was shown that the command “Judge not that ye be not judged” does not rule out *all* judging: civil, church and righteous judgments are commanded. What kind of judging is forbidden?

Hypocritical judgment is what the Lord condemns.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye (Matt. 7:3-5).

The fact that the Lord said “cast out first the beam from thine own eye” indicates that, after looking at one’s self and removing the “beams,” such a one could see clearly how to remove the mote: judgment would in fact occur.

It is right to rebuke the sinner and to condemn sin. But a proper spirit must be present and one must be “morally qualified”; he is not “morally qualified” if he is guilty of the same wrong (or worse) that he condemns in another. In John 8:1-11 certain scribes and Pharisees brought a woman taken in adultery to Jesus. They sought to put the Lord at variance with either Moses’ law or Roman law (John 8:5). This is a perfect example of the kind of judging Jesus forbade. After their persistent questionings, Jesus said: “Let him that is without sin cast the first stone” (John 8:7). From the oldest to the youngest, the accusers left the woman. Jesus asked, “‘Woman where are thine accusers? Did no man condemn thee’ and she said, ‘No man, Lord.’ Jesus responded, ‘neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more’” (John 8:7-11).

Adultery is a grievous sin but so is hypocrisy: their attempt to snare a just man. They had taken the woman in adultery and brought her to the Lord. Where was the man? Bringing only the woman and not the man showed these were not interested in fulfilling Moses’ law. That law said

both man and woman taken in adultery were to be stoned (Lev. 20:10). They further knew they could not execute a criminal for Romans had taken that right from them (John 18:31). They were not interested in truth; they wanted to trap Jesus and their judgment was hypocritical.

Paul wrote: “Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1). It was right to seek to restore an erring brother, which necessitated (1) that he was in error, and (2) pointing out that error to him. But, caution must be exercised. Such correction must be in a “spirit of gentleness.” It must also be done with a man conscious of his own susceptibility to temptation and sin. Men condemn themselves who, with a proud and haughty spirit, condemn others.

“With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you” (Matt. 7:2). This principle is seen in Jesus’ parable of the “two Debtors” (Matt. 18:23-35). A man owed his master ten thousand talents, an unpayable debt. When the master commanded that he and all he had be sold for the payment, the servant pled for patience, promising to pay. His Lord had compassion and forgave him his debt. Then that servant found a fellow servant who owed him one hundred shillings and he demanded payment of him. When that servant pled for patience (as he had done,) he refused and cast him into prison. When the Lord of that servant heard what he had done to his fellow servant, he commanded the same be done to him. “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you.”

So, when we are faced with something in our brother that seems to be sin, before we proceed further, we must do these things. First, is it really wrong? Second, are we “morally qualified” to correct the person in error? Third, is our motive genuine? Fourth, are we prepared to rebuke our brother in a spirit of gentleness? If we can respond “Yes” to all these questions, our judgment will be righteous judgment.



# The Blood That Speaks

Lewis Willis

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The writer of Hebrews compared the blood of Christ to the blood of Abel, the son of Adam and Eve, who died at the hands of his own jealous brother, Cain. He said, “And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Heb. 12:24). There are several messages which are conveyed by “The Blood That Speaks.” Consider these things with me.

**The Blood Speaks of Love.** John 3:16 speaks of the love of God, who gave his only begotten Son to die for us. Jesus lovingly shed his blood for the sake of our souls.

**The Blood Speaks of God’s Eternal Purpose.** In Revelation 13:8, the apostle writes “. . . of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Those whom God says are “chosen,” were chosen “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). This was the purpose of God regarding the slain, blood-stained Lamb, Christ Jesus.

**The Blood Speaks of Redemption.** Sinners are “redeemed,” purchased, or bought back from the condemnation of their sins. Paul wrote: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:14). Now, how is man redeemed? The word says it is “through His blood,” so the blood speaks proclaiming that redemption has been brought down. Are you redeemed?

**The Blood Speaks of Cleansing.** The Scriptures teach: “But 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). Saul of Tarsus was told to arise, be baptized, and “wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16). Without the cleansing message of his blood that speaks, we would know nothing of such cleansing.

**The Blood Speaks of Peace.** The peace considered is peace with God. Through sin, man makes himself the enemy of God (Jas. 4:4). There is no peace between God and his enemies! Therefore, because sin brings this alienation from God, sin must be removed or forgiven. The blood of Christ removes the sin, and peace with God is realized. Paul said Jesus “. . . made peace through the blood of his cross”

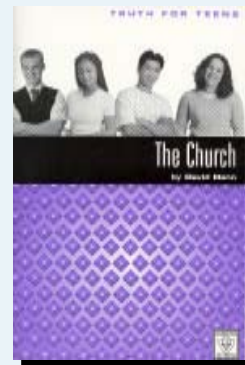
(Col. 1:20). Without the blood of Calvary, there would be no peace. That blood still speaks, offering peace to God’s sinful enemies today!

**The Blood Speaks of Heaven.** Those who are cleansed by the blood of Christ are said to be in Heaven. “Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple” (Rev. 7:15). Heaven would be unknown to us without the precious blood of Christ which speaks of this place of rest for our souls. Will you be blessed with peace in Heaven?

Yes, the blood of Christ speaks “better things” than the blood of Abel. These are profound blessings! Think about it!

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# Godly Families

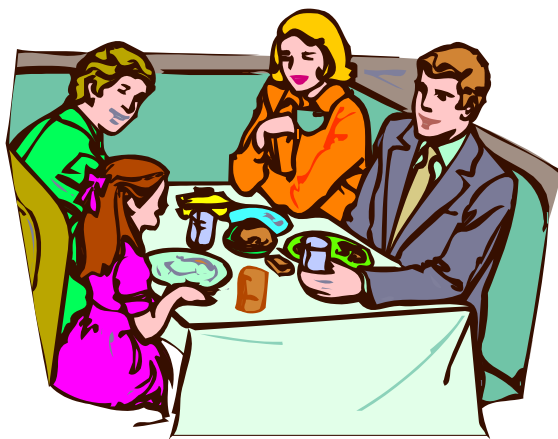
Donnie V. Rader

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Surely it is the dream of every Christian to have a godly family. We want that in the family we grow up in. We want that in our own family (that may yet be in the future). We want that for our children and grandchildren. Yet, not all Christians have godly families.

We all know of families that we think of as being godly families. Think for a moment about some family you

know that fits that bill. You, no doubt, are thinking of a family that is faithful to the Lord in all respects. You are thinking about a home that has a great and solid marriage. This family had done well in the raising of their children. Such a family would be a great example for others to imitate and follow.



Godliness is from the word *eusebeia*, which Vine says is “from *eu*, ‘well,’ and *sebomai*, ‘to be devout,’ denotes that piety which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him.” Another word translated *godliness* is *theosebeia* “denotes ‘the fear or reverence of God,’ from *theos*, ‘god,’ and *sebomai*” (Vine). Thus, a godly family is a family that is well devoted to and well pleasing to the Lord.

Godly families begin with the individuals within the family (2 Pet. 3:11). Confucius once said, “To put the

world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.”

Let’s consider some characteristics of godly families.

## An Atmosphere of the Fear of God

Godly families live in an atmosphere of fearing God Almighty (Ps. 34). That fear will manifest itself in several ways:

**1. Parents will fear God and teach their children to fear God.** To be a great family parents must stand in awe of God’s greatness as Jonah and Nehemiah did (Jonah 1:9; Neh. 1:5; 4:14). They must also be afraid of displeasing God (1 Sam. 11:7). Fearing God means these parents are set to do what God says without question and doubt (Deut. 13:4; Gen. 22:12). Fear causes parents to be devoted and dedicated to the Lord (Deut. 10:12, 20). Then, God fearing parents diligently teach their children to fear God as well (Deut. 14:23).

**2. The emphasis will be on spiritual matters.** With the fear of God in the home, spiritual concerns will be the top priority. Peter addressed both the husband and the wife in 1 Peter 3:1-7 showing that those who are what they should be focus most on spiritual matters. The wife is one who fears and trusts in God (vv. 2, 5). Her concern is

for her husband's soul (vv. 1-2). She is pure in her conduct (v. 2). Her focus is on the inward and not the outward person (vv. 3-6). She submits to her husband because of her fear of God (vv. 1, 6). The husband treats his wife as he should for he is concerned about hindrances to his prayers (v. 7).

### 3. Recognize that the family is designed and directed by God.

Those who fear God know that God created the home and thus respect it as a divine organization (Gen. 2:18-25). Marriage is thus viewed as a good thing and not to be dreaded (cf. Prov. 18:22). But equally important is the understanding of the fact that the home is to be directed by God (cf. Prov. 2:17; Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Pet. 3:1-7). God knows what is best for the family. His word must be the standard and not modern day counselors, talk shows, other families or popular magazine articles.

#### An Environment of Respect For Others

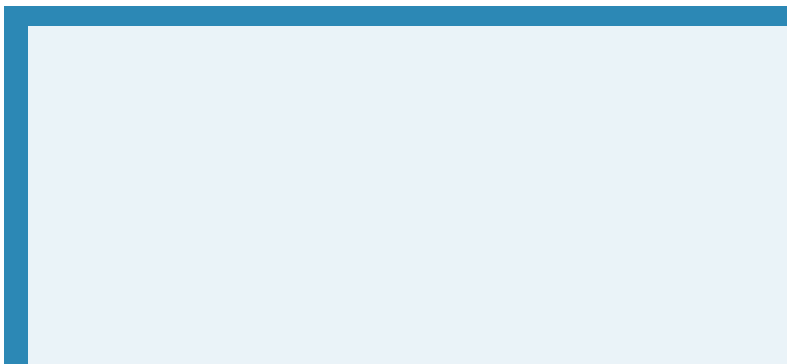
While it is true that godly families need to have respect for those outside the family, I'm more concerned here with the respect and concern they have for each other within the family unit.

**1. Each member learns to deny himself.** Jesus said, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34). How much better would the family relationship be if the husband, wife and children all learned to say "no" to their own desires and wishes in interest of others? I can't think of a marriage problem that is not due to a lack of self-denial on the part of one or both of the marriage partners. Whether it is fussing and nagging, one spending all the money on self, laziness, fornication, or even spouse abuse, it is because someone is not denying himself. A godly family

is one that has self-control.

### 2. They treat others the way they want to be treated.

Perhaps we don't think of the golden rule (Matt. 7:12) as applying to the home and family as much as we should. Shouldn't we start using that rule with the family first? What if the husband treated his wife the way he would want to be treated if he were a woman. And, what if the wife treated her husband the way she would want to be treated if she were



a man? What if parents and children used this principle as they dealt with each other? What a family that would be!

### 3. They are kind and gentle with each other.

Peter instructed husbands to treat their wives as the weaker vessel — like one would handle something fragile and of great value like china or crystal (1 Pet. 3:7). Wives are to reverence their husbands (Eph. 5:33). Would not the principle of speech being with grace and seasoned with salt (Col. 4:6) apply to dealing with those in our own family?

### 4. They have a deep love for each other.

Husbands should love their wives as they do themselves and to the degree that Christ loved the church giving himself for it (Eph. 5:25ff.). Wives are instructed to love their husbands and their children if they want to be sound in the faith (Tit. 2:4). The characteristics of love found in 1 Corinthians 13 should well describe the love that each family member has for the others.

#### Communicate Effectively

A godly family is one where the husband and wife communicate with each other and where parents communicate to their children, and children to their parents. Godly families realize three things about communication:

**1. The risk.** Successful families know the risk involved in a lack of communication. They know that families fail due to not communicating as they should. Marriages that were once strong grow apart when the couple ceases to work on communication. Some marriages never grow close for the same reason. Parents and children become distant. Parents easily can lose touch with their children so that they no longer have any influence on them.

**2. The reasons.** Good families know that any successful relationship (even two people in business together) requires good communication. A husband cannot dwell with his wife according to understanding (1 Pet. 3:7) without communication. The couple cannot be one flesh (Matt. 19:6) without some communication.

**3. The requirements.** Those who effectively communicate *talk* to each other. Husbands can't lead, wives submit, parents train, or children obey without some talking (cf. Eph. 5, 6). Talking involves more than saying something to your mate. Talk so as to communicate your feelings and thoughts — so that your mate will not be shocked later to learn what you think and how you feel.

Communication requires *listening* to others. We all must learn to do more listening than talking (Jas. 1:19). Larry King once said that he never learned anything while he was talking. Listen so you can learn how

your mate feels. Listen to see his/her point of view. Listen to your children with the intent of understanding them. Listen to your parents to know why they are taking the stand they are taking.

Learn to be *calm* while you communicate. No two people ever accomplished much when they try to talk when they are mad or tempers are rising. Shouting will certainly not work. The Proverb writer said, “An angry man stirs up strife, And a furious man abounds in transgression” (29:22). Calm down and your mate, children or parents will more likely listen to you.

Make every effort to *be reasonable* as you talk to family members (especially when you disagree). Think of the situation from their point of view (cf. Phil. 4:2; Matt. 7:12). Don’t make accusations that are unfounded. Don’t exaggerate.

### Willingly Accept Their Roles

Some families fight and resist the roles that God has given them. Godly families, on the other hand, *willingly* accept the responsibilities that God has placed upon them.

**1. The husband willingly takes the lead as the head of the family (Eph. 5:25-28; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).** This is not the role of a master, but one of a leader who takes responsibility. He does not push this off on his wife (so he can blame her if things go wrong). He leads with gentleness and understanding (1 Pet. 3:7). He provides for his own (1 Tim. 5:8). This he does without grumbling and complaining.

**2. The wife willingly submits to her husband’s leadership (1 Pet. 3:1-6; Tit. 2:4-5).** She does this, not because he has the greatest wisdom or is smarter than her, but because she fears God. She seeks to guide and manage the household affairs (1 Tim. 5:14). She is a keeper at home (Tit. 2:5). She, like her husband, does this without fretting and fussing about her role.

**3. The children willingly respect and obey their parents (Eph. 6:1-4; cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-5).**

### Discipline and Train Their Children

Far too many families, even among God’s people, don’t discipline and train their children as they should. In contrast, godly families may seem to be odd and strict compared to most in the world and some among Christians.

**1. They discipline their children.** Discipline will include instructing, correcting, and even *spanking* their children. Proverbs gives many such instructions to parents

(Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15).

### 2. They train their children in the way of the Lord.

More important than secular education is the spiritual training for children in godly families. They train their children in the way of the Lord (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4). They strive to saturate their children with the word of the Lord (Deut. 6:7).

### 3. They are strict, watchful, and careful with their children.

Some parents rear their children as if they just assume that all is going to turn out right. At times they have no idea what their children are watching, listening to or who they are with. Godly parents are concerned about *where things could lead* (even though the matter of concern may not be wrong within itself). To illustrate, there was nothing wrong with the children of Israel living in houses they didn’t build or drinking from wells they didn’t dig. But God warned that they could easily forget about God in the midst of that (Deut. 6:12).



You see, godly parents know that good morals can be corrupted by association with evil (1 Cor. 15:33). Thus, they want to know who their children’s friends are. They want to know what movie the children are going to watch (and not let them see the nakedness and sex scenes or listen to the profanity that is found in many R, PG-13, and some PG movies). They are going to know something about the music their children listen to. They are going to know who their children are e-mailing and chatting with on the Internet. They will be watchful of what is being taught in their classes at school. There will be many places their children can’t go (while other “Christians” can). There will be many rules and restriction their children have (that may not be the same for other families in the church).

### Conclusion

What about your family? Do you have a godly family? What is the atmosphere in your home? How do you treat one another? Do you work at communicating? Do you accept your role? Are you training your children in the way of the Lord? May God help us all to have the families that a pleasing to him.

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# Guard the Faith!

Bobby Witherington

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**O Timothy! Guard what is committed to your trust; avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge — by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith (1 Tim. 6:20, 21).**

First Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are often (and incorrectly) called “Pastoral Epistles.” These epistles are thus designated because they contain instructions and admonitions to two men (Timothy and Titus) who preached the gospel. Timothy, for example, was commanded to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2); he was never commanded to “pastor” or “shepherd” the flock. The Greek word *poimen* (translated “shepherd” or “pastor”) is one of three words used in Acts 20:17, 28 to refer to local church elders, or those men who oversee, shepherd, pastor, or feed the flock of God. The biblical qualifications of elders, bishops, or pastors are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. It is true that Timothy and Titus were to “appoint elders” or pastors (Tit. 1:5), but they were not called “pastors” themselves. They were simply preachers of the gospel. Hence, it is a mistake to describe these books as “pastoral epistles.”

The work of elders (overseers, bishops, or pastors) is exceedingly important. In no way should one ever minimize the significance of their labors. However, the same may be said about “the work of an evangelist,” as is clearly indicated simply by reading the epistles addressed to Timothy and Titus. And one very important aspect of any evangelist’s “work” is set forth in our opening text (1 Tim. 6:20, 21). Let us now focus more clearly on what is actually stated in these verses. For the sake of emphasis, we will highlight and zero in on the different words or phrases contained therein.

**“O Timothy!”** These words convey a sense of earnest-

ness on the part of the apostle Paul in this letter to his “*son in the faith*” (cf. 1 Tim. 1:2). The same earnestness with which Paul began this epistle continued right to the very end. Paul clearly and keenly felt the significance of his charge to Timothy; this was no time for idle talk!

**“Guard.”** “Guard” was a military term, which is not surprising when we remember that Timothy was to “*fight the good fight of faith*” (1 Tim. 6:12), and to serve “*as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*” (2 Tim. 2:3). Timothy was a sentry on duty. The stakes were high. No allowance was provided for careless or slipshod performance!

**“What was committed to your trust.”** “Committed” is from the Greek *paratheke* and denotes “a putting with, a deposit” (Vine, *Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*). In the Berkley Version it is translated “guard the deposit.” Coneybear translated it as “guard the treasure which is committed to thy trust.” Lenski stated that this was “a term used in banking to denote a sum deposited, for which

the bank is responsible, which it then guards most carefully, since it must pay it back.” The point is clear; something was deposited with, or “committed” to the “trust” or care of Timothy, and he was to “guard” it with vigilance. But what, we ask, was “*committed*” to Timothy? The answer is clear — that which was “committed” to Timothy was the same as that which Timothy himself was commanded to “commit . . . to faithful men” and which they were to teach to others (2 Tim. 2:2). Of course, we are talking about the word of God, the gospel, or “the faith” (cf. 1 Tim. 6:10). “The faith” committed to Timothy, which he was to “guard” was none other than “the faith . . . once for all delivered to the saints” (cf. Jude 3). Yes, “the faith” or “the gospel” is a divine “treasure” (cf. 2 Cor. 4:7), and the requirement to guard it was a sacred trust which was not to be lightly regarded!

**“Avoiding the profane and idle babblings.”** “Avoid-



ing,” as used here, means “to turn away from.” In the ASV it is translated “turning away from.” “Profane and idle babblings” denote empty talk, or godless chatter.

**“And contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.”** These “contradictions” were against or contrary to “the faith,” the word, or the gospel which was “committed to” Timothy’s “trust.” Specifically, he mentioned “contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.” Regarding this point, R.B. Sweet in his commentary said that “ignorance had disguised itself as knowledge, and falsehood has assumed a pseudonym called truth.” “Knowledge” is from the Greek *gnosis* and according to Weust (*Word Studies*) it “was the characteristic word of the Gnostic school, the most formidable enemy of the church in the second century. Weust further said that “they claimed a superior knowledge, peculiar to an intellectual caste.” Interestingly, this word is translated “science” in the KJV. One translation renders it “pseudo science.” The point is this: much of what is called “knowledge” is not knowledge at all; it is human philosophy which is contradictory to truth, which provides an ego trip to its misguided followers who look condescendingly upon those alleged dimwits who have no more sense than to believe the Bible. Much of what is called “science” is nothing more than unproven and impossible to prove theories offered by would-be scholars whose whole approach to both life and science is based upon the evolutionary hypothesis.

**“By professing it.”** That is, by professing, believing, and embracing false knowledge, human philosophy or pseudo science.

**“Some have strayed concerning the faith.”** “The faith” is the gospel; it is what was “committed” to Timothy’s “trust.” Others who had not guarded what was “committed” to their trust had “strayed,” turned aside, or departed from “the faith.” A more serious blunder cannot be imagined than that of going “astray from the faith” (NASB)! In view of the consequences, is it any wonder that Paul enjoined Timothy to “guard what was committed to your trust”?

### Current Application

For centuries, religious leaders in general had no problem accepting the Genesis account of creation as literal. But along came Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and his book *The Origin of Species*, wherein he advanced his theory of evolution through natural selection. Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* was followed by his book *The Descent of Man*, in which he outlined his theory that man came from the same group of animals as the chimpanzee and other apes. Darwin’s whole premise was (and yet is) unproven, anti-God, and anti-Bible. But it was regarded (even by many in the religious community) as factual and scientific. Multitudes began trying to re-interpret the Bible — not in the light of what the Bible says — but in the light of false science. And


they “strayed concerning the faith.” In many instances it resulted in rank modernism.

Perhaps of greater significance now-a-days among brethren is the more recent attempt to re-interpret the “days” of Genesis 1 so as to make it harmonize with the presumed age of the earth, as that “age” is advocated by many evolution-believing, anti-God, anti-Bible, would-be scholars. The inevitable result of this approach will be the gradual erosion of faith and the gradual embracing of theistic evolution. More and more, as people accept the broad consequences of this approach, they will conclude that if the first two chapters of the Bible cannot be accepted at face value, then the rest of the Bible will have to be treated in the same fashion. Brethren, it is later than many think! We are in deep trouble when some brethren are more highly respected for their would-be knowledge of the natural sciences than for their respect for a “thus saith the Lord!”

Please do not misunderstand! This writer is not against genuine science. True science, in some instances, may help illuminate the Bible, but it must never be used as a guide to interpret the Bible. The religion of Christ has nothing to fear from true science, but the faith of multitudes can be destroyed by those who advocate a false science — especially if the advocates of “what is falsely called knowledge” are highly respected brethren who instruct in colleges and schools operated by brethren.

### Conclusion:

Preachers who seriously heed Paul’s instructions to Timothy will be labeled and libeled “watch dogs,” “keepers of orthodoxy,” and regarded as opinionated, misguided zealots. But that is a small price to pay for the “grace” afforded them of preaching “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8). Brethren, when all is said and done, the Bible must be interpreted in the light of what it says — not in the light of the unproven, speculations of pseudo scholars!



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# A Review of the Reeves-Sheel Debate

Elmer Moore (Moderator)

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On the nights of June 23, 24, 26, 27, brother Bruce Reeves met Mr. John Scheel in a religious debate of Pentecostal doctrine.

Monday and Tuesday nights the proposition involved the number of persons in the Godhead.

**Resolved:** “The Scriptures teach that God eternally exists in three distinct persons, namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Affirmed by Bruce Reeves and Denied by John Scheel.

**Resolved:** “The Scriptures teach that Jesus is the supreme Deity. Jesus is the only person in the Godhead.” Affirmed by John Scheel and Denied by Bruce Reeves.

On Thursday and Friday nights the proposition was on the subject of water baptism and whether or not there was some set form of words that *must* be said.

The debate was held, the first two nights, in the meeting house of the Church of Christ in Conway, Arkansas and the last two nights were in “The Lighthouse Pentecostal Church” building where Mr. Scheel preaches in Beebe, Arkansas.

The attendance each night was great, over 500 people in attendance. The attention of the audience was excellent. Both moderators and debaters appealed to the audience to be courteous to each speaker and to the person seated next to them. The audience responded positively.

It is not my intention to give a “blow by blow” report of the debate. It is my understanding that the debate will be printed and I would urge you to obtain a copy. It was a good discussion of the propositions dealing with Pentecostal doctrine and the book will be an asset to your library.

Brother Reeves had some of the best charts on the respective subjects that I have ever seen. Brother Don McClain handled the charts in a very effective manner during the debate and was of great help to the success of

the effort.

This was brother Reeves’ first debate, but I think he did a superb job.

Mr. Scheel is a man who is well respected among the Oneness Pentecostals and has met several of our brethren in the state of Arkansas.

Brother Reeves used his questions to Mr. Scheel very effectively in defining the issue.

Mr. Scheel made the usual play, of Oneness Pentecostals, on the word “one,” implying that “one God” necessitated one person. Brother Reeves pressed him to deal with the fact that there was only “one Humanity” but more than one person (Acts 17:26). Bruce pointed out that the term “one” can mean a united plurality and asked Mr. Scheel a question along these lines. Mr. Scheel would not answer.

Brother Reeves very effectively pressed Mr. Scheel to recognize that a word was a symbol of an idea. He then pressed Mr. Scheel to take note of the fact that the word “both” described the Father and the Son, and that the word “both” means two. This was understood by the audience but Mr. Scheel responded by saying that brother Reeves said “both” meant *two persons*, a glaring misrepresentation. The audience could see that brother Reeves had argued that the word “both” meant *two* and that “both” was used to refer to Father and Son.

Brother Reeves called attention to the word “both” in John 15:24 which states: “They have *both* seen and hated *both* me and my Father.” He pointed out that “Me and my Father” are no more the same person than “seen and hated” are the same action.

Brother Reeves stressed the fact that the word “with” meant in the company of and was used to describe the Father and the Son.

Mr. Scheel completely ignored the meaning of words.

# Enoch

## Jarrod Jacobs

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Enoch was a great hero of faith, mentioned in both the Old

and New Testaments. We first read about him in the book of Genesis.

And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him (Gen. 5:21-24).

He is mentioned in the physical lineage of Christ (Luke 3:37). We also read about his faith in Hebrews 11:5. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Finally, in Jude 14-15, he is mentioned one last time. Here, Jude writes, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have

spoken against him."

Enoch stands out as one of only two people who was translated so that he did not see death (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5). The other who did not see death was Elijah (2 Kings 2:11-13). Enoch's life was a living example to us. What he did, we can do. He pleased God, as can we. We can be blessed by God, as was he! What lessons can we learn from a study of the life of Enoch?

### Enoch Walked With God

This statement is made no less than twice in Genesis 5. The word "walked" means, "behave (self), continually, be conversant, exercise (self), run (along), + send, speedily . . ." (Strong's). This has reference to one's course, or manner of life. The only other time the phrase "walked with God" is used in the Bible is in reference to Noah (Gen. 6:9). This is not to say that others did not (or cannot) do it, but that only in reference to these two people is the phrase used that they "walked with God"! Walking with God reveals the character of the person so described. In this record of Enoch's life, it is clear that what Enoch did was something

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He and his brethren seem to have their own vocabulary, often contrary to general usage.

The last two nights of the debate were on the baptism question. Mr. Scheel affirmed the baptizer *must* pronounce a form of words including the term Jesus and denied that you *could* pronounce the terms Father and Son.

Brother Reeves successfully showed that baptism in the "name" of Jesus, was the baptism that Jesus authorized and that scriptural baptism involved what is *done* and not what is said.

The Last night brother Reeves affirmed that one *may* repeat the terms Father and Son when baptizing a repentant believer. He forcefully pointed out that Mr. Scheel was denying one the right to do what Jesus said to do in Matthew 28:18-20.

Mr. Scheel took some ridiculous positions during the debate. I will mention only one in this review. His exact statement was, "That human body was the Son of God, it is the Son of God today," referring to the body of Jesus. This conclusion is the result of his belief that the Son is the flesh and the Father is the Spirit.

Mr. Scheel engaged in appeals to prejudice by referring to the "Three God theory I am denying" ignoring the fact that the proposition states "three persons," not three gods.

This was a very good debate. Watch for its publication.

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other men could accomplish as well!

“Walking with God” means that he was in agreement with God (Amos 3:3). God does not walk with sinners (Isa. 59:1-2)! “Walking with God” stands for the whole of his life. Enoch was not an “on again” and “off again” kind of a person, but was strictly dedicated to God’s will. This dedication is something God expects from others as well (Gen. 17:1; Isa. 2:5; 1 John 1:6-7). To “walk in the light” is to “walk with God” for God is “the Father of lights” (Jas. 1:17)! It also means progress, or growth. Christians are expected to continue in their progress to become more like Christ (2 Pet. 1:5-8; 3:18; Heb. 5:12-14).

How are we doing in our “walk”? Are we progressing, or regressing?

### **Enoch Was a Proper Example**

Perhaps we forget about this aspect of Enoch’s life, but remember, he did not live in a vacuum! As Enoch walked with God he “begat Methuselah . . . and . . . sons and daughters” (Gen. 5:22). Therefore, since Enoch walked with God, he would have shown a proper example to his children, as well as to others who knew him. Enoch was the proper example for living a godly life.

In reality, the youth of *every* generation need a proper and godly home environment with godly parents as good examples for them to follow. Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). Shouldn’t these actions start at home? Of course, they should! Let us not forget that while we are showing a good example to friends and strangers, our children need to see the proper example at home as well. They need this as much as anyone! Notice God’s thoughts concerning Abraham: “I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment” (Gen. 18:19). Could God say this of us? Paul said, “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). We know what his children saw when they looked at Enoch. What do our children see when they look at us?

Yes, our children (as do we) make their own decisions, but what kind of influence are they receiving from home? Does our influence and example declare that the Lord, his work and his church are not important or, that they are important? Does our influence show our children that marriage is for life, or just until we want to do something else? Does our example teach our children that one’s body is yours to do with as you please or teach them that our body belongs to God (1 Cor. 6:20)? Be honest! What are we showing our children when they observe our example and feel our influence on them? Enoch was a proper ex-

ample — how about us?

### **Enoch Pleased God**

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Heb. 11:5). The word “testimony” in this verse means “to be a witness, i.e. testify (lit. or fig.): — charge, bear record, be well reported of, (be, bear, give, obtain) witness” (Strong’s). Now, who was it that bore record, or was a witness that Enoch pleased God? God did! We know this because God had also testified of Abel’s faith and “more excellent sacrifice” (v. 4). The word for “testify” (Heb. 11:4) and “testimony” (v. 5) is the same in the Greek language. Here, we see God testifying of Enoch’s faith and pleasing God. In truth, who else could testify to such a thing other than God? How then did Enoch please God? By his faith! (Heb. 11:5, 6). Notice please that Hebrews 11:6 completes the thought started in verse 5. Therefore, Enoch pleased God by his faith! How do we know this? We know this because he “walked with God”!

We need to appreciate this, because we today can please God just as Enoch did! It begins with our faith (Heb. 11:6), which comes from hearing God’s word (Rom. 10:17). Then, we need to live by what God tells us to do in his word (Rom. 1:17b; 2 Cor. 5:7). Living according to faith means we do what God expects of us, no more and no less (Jas. 2:18-24).

If we want the testimony of God that we have pleased him, it comes in no other way! We don’t live according to our whims, or according to what is popular. We live by faith, pleasing God in all things!

### **Enoch Was A Prophet Of God**

Jude provides further insight into this man. God used him as a prophet (Jude 14-15). Enoch was a spokesman, or mouth (mouthpiece) for God (see: *Brown-Driver-Briggs*, #5030, 611). God used Enoch to pronounce judgment against the wicked people of his day. In fact, the naming of his son (Methuselah) was a prophecy. Methuselah means, “When he dies, judgment.” Remember what happened 969 years after the birth of Methuselah?

What I find amazing is that many times, we find people (including our brethren) opposed to those who would stand and condemn the wrongdoing that is happening around us. Notice please, that Enoch condemned wrongdoing and sin, and God was pleased with him when he did it (Heb. 11:5)! In fact, this urgency and need for pressing the truth and condemning error can also be noted in the life and preaching of Christ (Matt. 23), Paul (2 Tim. 2:16-18), Peter (Acts 2; 5:29-32), John (1 John 4:3, 5-6), and numerous others in the Bible. Yes, there is a place and a need for the condemning of error and wrongdoing, regardless of where it may be found.



In so doing, we please God and walk with God. This is as much a part of our duties as Christians as anything else. Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22). The church at Ephesus was commended for their work and vigilance in the Lord. Jesus knew well "how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev. 2:2). Let us be found doing the same!

### Conclusion

Because of Enoch's faithfulness, he was rewarded by God. Enoch walked with God, he was a proper example for others around him, and pleased God. He was used in God's service, serving as his mouthpiece until he was called away.

In like manner, God rewards the faithful today (Tit. 1:2). Do we have the faith to obey God (Heb. 11:6)? Are we ever striving to be the kind of goodly example that oth-

ers (including our children) can look to and see Christ in us (Matt. 5:16; Gal. 2:20)? Are we serving as that mouthpiece for God today? Remember, "Christ has no tongue, but our tongues, to tell men how he died." Are we using our tongues and words to lead lost souls to Christ? Paul said, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). We are responsible for preaching the word and nothing else (2 Tim. 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9). Are we making the best use of our time, or are we wasting it on temporary, worldly things, which are of no profit (1 John 2:17; Matt. 6:19-21)?

Let us get our priorities straight and learn a lesson from Enoch. He had problems like us all, yet "pleased God." Let us follow Enoch's example and have this same thing said of us!

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## What Should the Sign Say?

### Frank Himmel

Every few years, a movement makes the rounds in which some brethren get all excited about what we should put on the sign in front of the meetinghouse. Most of us use the designation *Church of Christ*. It is a descriptive one, denoting Jesus' headship or ownership (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16). We recognize that it is not the exclusive Bible name for the church; nevertheless, it does accurately depict who we are.

For a while, the "in" thing was to replace *Church of Christ* with *Christians meet here*. We were told that would be more accurate, that people would not confuse the church with the building. To be sure, people often refer to a building as a church. Yet despite sloppy terminology, who does not understand that it is people's beliefs and practices, not their buildings, that make churches Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, etc.? The difference is not in the structures, but in what goes on inside them.

The latest fad is to drop the *of Christ* description and just call it the (local name) Church. This is following a trend in human churches, where groups are shedding their denominational designation in order to avoid prejudice one might have toward their particular group. It is also reflective of another trend: to de-emphasize doctrine and focus on services offered. Why would a group boldly proclaiming Baptist doctrine object to folks knowing they are Baptists? Likewise, if we unreservedly teaching the doctrine of Christ, why would we not want to be called a church of Christ? This, I suspect, is the heart of the matter.

To my simple way of thinking, we are either a church of Christ or we are not. If we are, we should not be ashamed to put it on the sign. If we are not, why not say so? Why not paint the sign to say *Not a Church of Christ* or *A Church Not of Christ*? Doubtless that would be far more accurate in some cases. The truth is, those who have departed from the faith do us all a favor by removing *Church of Christ* from their name.

Have you considered the irony of this concept, that we can improve the church by removing Christ's name from it?! Hmm.

Let us all remember that people being Jesus' disciples is what makes us a church of Christ, not what the sign says.



# How the Church is Set Forth in the Bible

Johnie Edwards

The church of the Lord is only set forth in the New Testament. So, it takes a study of the New Testament to see how the church is presented. Thus, we study:

**1. A Divine Organization.** For an organization to be divine, it must proceed from the Lord. This is true of the Lord's church. In fact, the New Testament church was planned by God from eternity. Paul penned, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10, 11). One reason the church was established is to make known God's wisdom to man. The church of Christ has always been on God's eternal agenda and Christ said that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). To help us appreciate the divine aspect of the church, Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18).

**2. Governed By Divine Authority.** For a church to be the New Testament church, it must be governed by the word of God. Jesus said, "All power/authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). God invested all authority in his Son. Thus, Paul could say that Christ was "set at his (God's) own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the world to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be *head* over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:20-22). When the church is "subject to Christ" (Eph. 5:23, 24), it is being governed by divine authority! A failure of the church to listen to its head, Christ, is but to show a lack of respect for divine authority. And, this is what is happening in many churches of Christ today!

**3. Wearing Only a Scriptural Name.** Even though there would be those who tell us, "there is nothing in a name," the Holy Spirit refers to the Bible church by name. Paul argued that since Christ "created all things, he is before all things, by him all things consist, is the head of the church and it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," he

should "have the preeminence" (Col. 1:16-19). No wonder, in referring to the New Testament church, Paul said, "The churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16). Yet, some in the church today want to do away with calling the church, the church of Christ and refer to it as, "Christians meet here," or "The Main Street Church!" Have we become embarrassed to refer to the New Testament church in the same way the Holy Spirit did? Is this being done so we can blend in with those denominations around about us? We must be content to be called after New Testament names.

**4. Autonomy In Government.** The first century church was independent in organization with "elders, deacons and saints, in every church" (Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5). A lot of religious bodies who preach independence are all tied up in conferences and regulated by mandates of a earthly, central headquarters someplace. Every church of Christ is independent of every other church and answers to no one but the head, Christ, who is in heaven! A plurality of elders overseeing one church; not a plurality of churches under one eldership, is the New Testament order! In New Testament days, the local organization of the church was fully capable and all-sufficient to do every work charged to the church. No exceptions!

**5. Unity Based On a Thus Saith the Lord.** Christians are admonished to unity by "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). There can be no real unity by preaching a unity-in-diversity doctrine but getting back to the basics of teaching: "There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God, and Father" (Eph. 4:4-6). This is the only way our Lord's prayer, "that they all may be one," will ever be answered! We just have to get to training some young men who want to preach to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11) and ask every time they teach or preach, "For what saith the Scripture" (Rom. 4:3)? And then, not be afraid to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2); realizing that "all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

May God help us to get back to the basic teachings concerning the Lord’s church, is my prayer.

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### “Forgive . . . Heart” continued from front page

most understanding and willing to forgive, but too often this is not *the case!* It is especially repulsive when old (I am using this respectfully) preachers, elders, editors, and others waste precious hours that could be used in writing, in-depth Bible study, or community personal work, scour the country with phone calls, e-mail correspondence, travel to other preachers’ homes and offices, or use other ungodly means at their disposal to report on and gloat over the sins of others. They were allowed to crawl from the mire of their own transgressions, but they will not allow other people the same charity. This is the type of scenario that Jesus is discussing in story mentioned above.

God does not have to forgive a single human being who has ever sinned. God is not in our debt. We are answerable to him, he is not answerable to us (Rom. 9:19-21)! God forgives people of the most detestable sins. He forgave Abraham the liar, Noah the drunkard, David the adulterer, Peter the coward, and Paul the murderer. They knew the sweetness of God’s forgiveness, and were willing to forgive any and all sins that others commit against them.

If God is willing to forgive us when we sin against him, how much more should we be willing to forgive each other (Col. 3:13)? Too often this is not the case. Some folks are known to hold grudges. They will not let a grievance die even when it has been corrected! They continue to “hem haw” on the same old “six and seven” over and over again. Every time they find someone who will listen, they make them aware of the alleged wrongs that certain folks did to them, even though the transgressors have done everything in their power to make it right. Ironically, the unforgiving person very often has been guilty of the exact same sins or “worse” yet they become furious when *their past* history of theft, child abuse, prescription drug addiction, alcoholism, adultery, parental delinquency, insurance fraud, and gossip are brought up. Why? Because their sins were forgiven. But they refuse to forgive other people! Such folks, like the ungrateful servant in the story in Matthew 18, will be punished in hell for eternity. One reason for this is: When we refuse to forgive other people who sin against us, we will not be forgiven, and if we are not forgiven by the God of heaven, we will not be with him in heaven for eternity (Matt. 6:14-15, Jas. 2:13).

### “Divine Worship” continued from page 2

innovative form of worship designed to meet the needs of the people among whom they lived? Should they have taken market surveys to see what the needs of the people were and what were the best responses to those needs?

Jeshua and Zerubbabel made a determination to restore the worship that was commanded in the Law of Moses. They “built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God” (v. 2). They “kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required; and afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the Lord” (3:5). Theirs was a “restoration movement.” They were trying to restore the worship commanded in the Law of Moses.

### Restoration Today

We can restore the church of the New Testament today just as certainly as Jeshua and Zerubbabel could restore the pattern of worship taught in the Law of Moses. Just as they went back to the revelation of God to find out what was to be offered in the daily burnt offering and what feasts days were to be kept, we can go to the New Testament to see what the worship of the New Testament church was like and vow to restore it today. We can learn how the early church observed the Lord’s supper, prayed in the name of Jesus, gave sacrificially of their prosperity, sang God’s praises, and heard the “apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19). We can then resolve to do the same thing. When we do, we shall have restored the worship of the New Testament church.

We can study the organization of the church as it is revealed in the New Testament. We can appoint elders and deacons in every congregation that has qualified men to serve (1 Tim. 3:1-14; Tit. 1:5-11). We can respect the autonomy of the local church, without slipping into congregational isolation. We can avoid all of the inter-congregational organizations that are present in twenty-first century denominationalism. When we do this, we will have restored the organization of the church.

We can restore the conditions for membership in the Lord’s church. Just as we read that those who were added to the Lord’s church are those who were saved, we can preach the conditions for salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ as the conditions for membership in the Lord’s body (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13, 18). When we have done so, we will have restored the conditions for membership in the Lord’s church.

We can restore the unity of the Lord’s church when those who are saved make a common agreement to walk

within the revelation of God's word. When every man will agree to lay aside his opinions and practices which are not authorized by the word of God, we can all agree to unite on the revelation of God's word. With every man willingly sacrificing his opinions in order to have unity with his brethren, those other children of God, we will have the unity one finds revealed in the Bible.

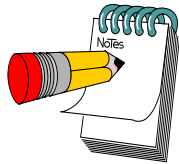
### Conclusion

There are those who affirm that the restoration principle is outdated, divisive, and legalistic. Their solution is to allow men to teach and practice anything that is not expressly prohibited in Scripture. Some are not willing to stop with those things expressly prohibited (such as women preachers). These people have little in common with men such as Jeshua and Zerubbabel. What about you? Are you willing to abide in the revelation of God's word so that we can maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?

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## Quips & Quotes



### Must We Keep The Sabbath Today?

Carroll Ray Sutton has recently published a new book with the title given above to discuss whether or not one is obligated to observe the Sabbath in the Christian dispensation. The fifteen-chapter book reproduces material that appeared in the monthly bulletin at Albertville, Alabama which brother Sutton has edited since 1964 when he began preaching for this congregation. He also serves as one of its elders.

Brother Sutton has been married to Irene Carter Sutton for over 50 years. They have five children and eighteen grandchildren. He has done local work in Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, and Alabama, as well as conducting meetings in a number of states. He has done extensive radio preaching and conducted several debates.

The book is available through Truth Bookstore for \$7.95.

### Indiana Catholic Churches Report Sexual Abuse Cases

In keeping with the decision of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to issue a national report on sexual abuse, the Indiana local dioceses are issuing their reports ahead of the national study. Here is what has already been reported.

- The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend announced 16 priests had sexually abused 33 children since 1950.
- The Diocese of Evansville announced that 15 priests had been accused of abusing 22 minors over a 60-year period. Allegations against three of the priests were found to be not credible by the diocese.
- The Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana announced that 18 priests had been accused of sexually abusing 26 people since 1950. Accusations against 11 of these was deemed credible.
- The Diocese of Gary announced that two diocesan priests were the subjects of "credible" allegations since 1957; two members of religious orders serving in the diocese in the past were also the subject of allegations. Another was removed from office in December after admitting to sexual abuse dating back several decades (The Indianapolis Star [January 3, 2004], A12).

This report is incomplete for Indiana. In the partial report, 54 priests have been accused for abusing over 80 people during this period. Admittedly the Catholic Church includes many more members than the Churches of Christ, but I cannot remember any case of a preacher or elder abusing any children in Indiana during the same period. I am aware of one case in which a member pleaded guilty to sexual abusing some children in the Indianapolis area.

Given the extent of the Catholic problem, there are several things that come to mind. (1) The Catholic Church has participated in the covering up a major problem for an extended period of time. What has drawn national attention in Boston has happened to a lesser degree in other dioceses. (2) The Catholic doctrine of celibacy needs to be re-examined. It is contrary to natural human desire and lends itself to such abuse as is currently being reported. These reports say nothing about homosexual practices or consensual sex between clergy and parishioners or non-parishioners. Were these added to the report, undoubtedly the number of sexual problems would be increased. One must recognize that there have been numbers of case of adultery and fornication occurring among members of the church (including elders, deacons, and preachers), but these have occurred in spite of the natural outlet of marriage to gratify human desire. One can only wonder how many similar cases have occurred within the Catholic Church when it is trying to enforce sexual abstinence for its clergy.

## Preacher Needed

**Logansport, Louisiana:** The Stanley Church of Christ in Logansport is seeking a gospel preacher to work with them. If interested, please call Jerry Gannon at 318-697-5570 or write him at 710 Natural Gas Road, Logansport, LA 71049.

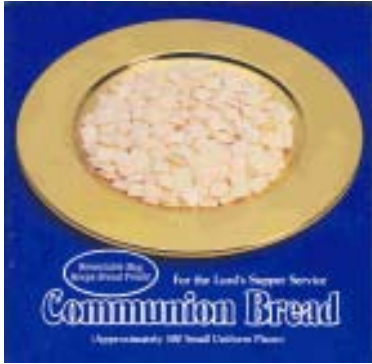
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