



Reflections on the First Annual Truth Magazine Lectureship

Jason Hardin and Daniel Ruegg

We will be the first to tell you that we didn't know what to expect. We talked extensively during our eight-hour trip from northeast Ohio to Bowling Green, Kentucky about what we *might* see and hear. Part of this was based on what we had been told by others that we *could* expect. Here's a sample:

- “Just a bunch of grumpy old men that are going to tell everyone else how wrong they are.”
- “A big religious in-breeding session.”
- “An arrogant group of men who are just trying to tell everyone else what to do.”
- “A twenty-first century Pharisees' convention.”

It's no secret that a great many people do not like the Guardian Of Truth Foundation. It is neither our aim in this article to recap or rehash anyone's role in recent controversies, nor to defend the Foundation. They are perfectly capable of doing that on their own. Our intention is simply to make a few observations based on spending the week at the First

Annual Truth Magazine Lectures in July of 2004. If we know our hearts, these are the objective opinions of two young men with a great deal to learn. We are not affiliated with the Guardian of Truth Foundation in any way. However, it is our honest opinion that a great many would be surprised with the contrast of their expectations and the reality of what really transpired in Bowling Green.

The theme for this year's lectureship was *The Renewing Of Your Mind*, taken from Paul's exhortation to the Christians in Rome: “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by *the renewing of your mind*, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:1-2). The following excerpt from the *Foreward* of this year's lecture book elaborates on the aim for the week:

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My Cup Runneth Over

Mike Willis

The twenty-third Psalm has long been a favorite with God's children. Many of us have turned to it for comfort in times of trial and drawn strength from its encouraging words. We have meditated on its phrases to learn how to live better. I want to focus our attention on one clause from this psalm and make a few personal reflections which I hope will be edifying to each of our readers.



The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

One could comment on each sentence, clause, and phrase to great benefit, but allow me simply to talk about "my cup runneth over."

This statement expresses an attitude toward life — an attitude that one has been bountifully blessed at the hand of God. David looks upon his life and thinks that God has been good to him. Some would be inclined to look upon David's life and think that David's life was not so blessed or so easy. He was raised in the humble home of a Jewish family in his day, with all of its hardships. He worked as a young man caring for his father's sheep (he was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth). After he won the stunning victory over Goliath, Saul appointed him as a captain in his army. His military successes incited Saul's jealousy, resulting in Saul treating David as an outlaw who should be hunted down and killed. For years, David lived his life on the run. Even after he became king, his life had some miserable days when one of his sons (Amnon) raped his half-sister (Tamar); her full brother Absalom in turn murdered Amnon. Later, Absalom led a rebellion to overthrow the rule of his father David. David was forced to flee to the wilderness for his life. David also faced other rebellions which made his life a series of troubles.

see "My Cup" on p. 569

Preacher of Righteousness

Irvin Himmel

In 2 Peter 2:5 the patriarch Noah is described as “a preacher of righteousness.” Preachers in today’s society are as common as carpenters, lawyers, office workers, doctors, truck drivers, merchants, and mail carriers, but preachers of righteousness are in short supply.

There are certain basic requirements for a preacher of righteousness. Your attention is directed to some essentials.

1. He needs to be a man of strong faith. It was not raining when Noah began building the ark. He believed a devastating flood was coming because God said there would be a mighty deluge. “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb. 11:7).

“Make thee an ark of gopher wood” (Gen. 6:14) was God’s plain directive. Noah did not overstep the bounds of faith by attempting to build a whole fleet of boats. He did not substitute another material in place of gopher wood. Faith is taking God at his word and obeying his commands with exactness. “Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him” (Gen. 6:22; 7:5).

2. He must uphold the standard of righteousness. The Bible says that “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Gen. 6:9). The life, deeds, and words of Noah were consistent with God’s solemn warning that a flood of waters would come upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein was the breath of life. He was indeed a herald of uprightness. It was not until after the flood that he became careless (Gen. 9:18-27).

A preacher fails miserably if he does not hold up the standard of righteousness in his own life. Paul was addressing a younger preacher when he said, “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). The preacher’s talk should be reflected in his walk. He proclaims uprightness in word and in deed.

3. His duty is to warn and rebuke the unrighteous. In Noah’s time, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence . . . all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Gen. 6:11-12). It is a principle of divine justice that “the wrath of God is revealed from

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heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Rom. 1:18).

The task of warning and rebuking the wicked is not pleasant. It may bring stiff opposition, sharp insults, and personal dangers. Paul clearly saw his duty as “warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom” (Col. 1:28). It is most likely that Noah was ridiculed, mocked, and derided. If the wicked did in fact sneer and jeer, chide and deride, Noah continued to proclaim righteousness.

4. He must be prepared for discouragement. Although Noah “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8) and “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb. 11:7), his being a preacher of righteousness did not make him popular. Only seven other people were saved with him in the ark, and they were family.

Perhaps some have turned from preaching righteousness to declaring other things in the quest for widespread acceptance. Paul forewarned that men would prefer teachers who would scratch their itching ears, and they would “turn away their ears from the truth” and “be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). By modern standards, many church leaders would write Noah off as a failure! No preacher should be discouraged as long as he is faithfully preaching the word of God. His promise is that his word will not return void, “but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isa. 55:11).

5. He should exalt God, not himself. “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord,” said the beloved Paul

(2 Cor. 4:5). The preacher of righteousness keeps the mind of his hearers focused on the things of God, not on the messenger. Noah did not preach so as to project himself; he proclaimed righteousness.

A preacher who projects his own personality, his own program, his personal charisma, or his own opinions is missing the mark. The divinely-appointed message is what draws men to God. The magnetism of the messenger is not the power of God to turn men from darkness to light. To project righteousness one must teach the word of God and keep the spotlight on the Lord. Some modern preachers come across as thinking they know it all. In contrast, Paul said, “I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). His critics said his “bodily presence is weak, and his speech is contemptible” (2 Cor. 10:10), but he preached so that the faith of others “should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:5).

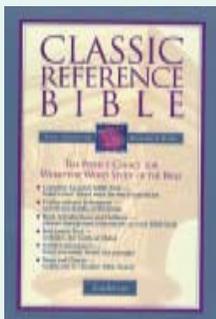
The whole world lies in wickedness (1 John 5:19) The remedy for wickedness is the righteousness which is revealed in the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). Many are ignorant of God’s plan for making men upright, so they have “not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3).

~~May God grant us more preachers of righteousness.
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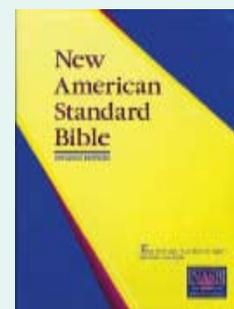


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Is This a Trend or a Coincidence?

Lewis Willis

Two weeks ago *The Akron Beacon Journal* published an article in their Saturday “religion” section in which the author called on religion to reject modern corruptions of worship and return to the worship prescribed in Scripture. On May 22, 2004, a second article’s author asks the religious community to “change” its conduct. I’m wondering if we are dealing with one of those cyclical shifts we hear so much about, or is this simply coincidence?

Tom Schaefer, in his article, makes the shocking charge that “. . . our faith is a mile wide and an inch deep. More style than substance. We talk a lot about religion but don’t live as if it makes much difference in our lives.” He notes that we are upset about the removal of images of the Ten Commandments from public places, and we are upset at the thought of removing “one nation under God” from our Pledge of Allegiance, while we “ignore faith’s precepts that make personal demands on us.”

Schaefer cites a “hard-hitting” new book, *The Future of Christian Faith in America*, written by David Yount. In his book, Yount asks: “Is it time to change our spiritual ways?” This concept of a need for religious change is positive and hopeful to me. We have seen religion try its own way for years, and look at the shallow, ineffective product it has delivered! Modern religion will teach a disciple how to prepare a great dinner that the members will love, or how to put together a great wintertime basketball program, but beyond that, modern religion is not supplying the needs of the worshipers in times of crisis or for eternity.

Schaefer’s review states that “*spirituality*” has been substituted for “religion.” This new “spirituality” is called by George Barna, an evangelical pollster, “. . . a personalized, customized form of faith views that meet personal needs, minimizes rules and absolutes, and bear little resemblance to the pure form of any of the world’s major religions . . . spirituality declares that the individual is god and can make whatever rules and travel whichever paths that suit. . . . The result is a society in free fall.” Schaefer asks, “Is it any wonder that human life has been degraded to the point that any behavior is acceptable?”

Again I say, “It’s About Time!”

Undoubtedly, it is time for modern religion to be called to the way of the Lord. Whatever resemblance it ever had to the religion of Christ has been sacrificed to a “give me what I want” approach that has no relation at all to the religion of Scripture. Yes, a call for “change” is appropriate and needed. And, yes, Schaefer is right when he says making this change will be like “turning around the Queen Mary,” but it is an essential change if religion is ever going to get on the same course as the Lord. Given what we see and know of denominationalism, one finds it hard to be optimistic about religion’s potential to change.

To the Standard

If a God-approved change is going to occur, there must be an acknowledgment of the standard for it. I suspect a worldly-minded religious community will find living according to God’s standard not only surprising, but also unacceptable.

Christ will have to be recognized as King and Lord. He is, after all, King and Lord, or ruler, of all (Rev. 17:14). His rule must be accepted; his rule is the only one that matters. However, modern religion has relegated Christ to such an unimportant role that it will find it difficult to enthrone him as King.

His headship authority will have to be accepted. He is the head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). His authority must be recognized on the earth, as it is in heaven (Matt. 28:18).

Christ exercises authority through his word. If a worthwhile change is to be wrought in modern religion, his word must be accepted. Thus, before he acts, man must go back to Scripture for authority; every action and teaching must be authorized and validated by his word (Col. 3:17).

Religion cannot love the world if it is going to change to please God (1 John 2:15-17). The “me” generations that populate the modern religious scene will find this tenet most difficult to accept. Most of their lives center around worldly,

Should a Woman Speak in Bible Class?

Kyle Pope

The issue of a woman's role in the local church has always been the topic of much discussion among God's people. As the world continues to abandon a respect for the authority of God's word on this issue, it is even more important for Christians to examine our own practices to make certain that they conform to what the Lord commands. Historically there has been general agreement among churches of Christ in America that a woman is restricted from speaking in the church assembly. Unfortunately, there has not been universal agreement on the question of whether or not a woman can speak in Bible classes. If the Lord would have us to work together in "the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10), we should strive to attain unity on this issue as well.

Speech Restrictions and Their Context

Three passages outline the restriction of a woman's speech and the context in which these restrictions apply. The first comes in a large section in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians addressing behavior in the assembly. Start-

ing in chapter 11, Paul addresses first the issue of the head covering (11:1-16), then the abuse of the Lord's supper (11:17-34) and then the use of miraculous spiritual gifts in the assembly (12:1-14:40). Within the context of this last section Paul commands, "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church" (1 Cor. 14:34, 35, NKJV).

The second, is more general in nature and comes in Paul's first letter to Timothy. After instructing all men to maintain a prayerful life (1 Tim. 2:1-8) and women to behave modestly (1 Tim. 2:9-10) Paul commands, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:11, 12). Many translations bring out the fact that the word used in this text refers to "quietness" (ASV, NIV, YLT) or behaving "quietly"

ungodly pursuits that have become part of modern faith for most practitioners of religion; they love the world!

If a correct change is going to be made, men must love God. This love is not simply talked about; it must be lived. Love for God manifests itself by keeping his commandments (1 John 5:3). Unfortunately, commandment keeping is one of the most rejected concepts in modern religion; man does not want to be told what, or what not, to do! No absolutes are permitted that will limit men's actions today.

Conclusion

We can hope that there is a trend away from the "do anything you wish" religion of our day, but little evidence can be seen indicating that the faith community is ready

to move in that direction. If it is, and if it does change, let us pray that the change will not be limited to superficial concerns. Let religion return to the "old paths" instituted by God; go all the way back to the teaching of the gospel. Patterning our worship, work, and living after the word of the Lord will save us from sin and from ourselves. But, as much as we would long to see this change occur, we are reminded of how the call to the "old paths" has been received in the past. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and *ask for the old paths*, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. *But they said, We will not walk therein*" (Jer. 6:16)
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The third is actually the historical account of the conversion of Apollos in the book of Acts. Apollos, who knew only the teaching of John the Baptist, was teaching in the synagogue at Ephesus. The Christian couple Aquila and Priscilla heard him and afterwards took him aside and “explained to him the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26). The Greek text indicates clearly that both Aquila and Priscilla spoke with Apollos. Literally “they took him aside and they explained to him.”

From these three accounts we can conclude that a woman is to be absolutely silent “in the church.” At all times she is to maintain a quiet disposition. She is not to teach or exercise authority over a man in spiritual matters. Yet, in contexts outside of the church she can discuss spiritual matters with men, other than her husband.

When Are We “In the Church”?

The Greek word *ekklesia*, which is generally translated “church,” is used in at least three distinct ways in the New Testament. First, it is used of the church universally. This is not a single congregation but all of God’s people, everywhere. This is what Jesus said he would build (Matt. 16:18). This involves those whose names are registered in heaven (Heb. 12:23). This is what the Lord adds one to when he obeys the gospel (Acts 2:47). A person is “in” the church in this sense as long as he lives in faithful obedience to the gospel. The Lord does not teach that a woman is to remain silent from the time she is added to the church universal.

Second, the word “church” is used of a local congregation of Christians. We find reference to the “church in Cenchrea” (Rom. 16:1) or the “church of the Laodiceans” (Col. 4:16). It is over the church in this sense of the word that a local congregation appoints elders (Tit. 1:5). It is with a local church that a faithful Christian identifies himself. As long as a person continues to work with a local church, he could be said to be “in” a specific church in that sense. Yet the Lord is not teaching a woman that she must be silent from the moment she identifies with a local congregation.

Third, the word is used of a local congregation actually assembled. While this refers to the same people who are a part of a local congregation it refers to them when they have actually come together “as a church.” It is before the

church in this sense that the unrepentant sinner is to be brought when other efforts to bring about restoration have failed (Matt. 18:17). It is within the church in this sense that Paul teaches the value of speaking clear words as opposed to unintelligible tongues (1 Cor. 14:19). Paul rebukes the Corinthians’ abuse of the Lord’s supper because they had not come together for the proper purpose when they came together “as a church” (1 Cor. 11:18). A person is “in the church” in this sense only when he is actually assembled with a local congregation who has come together “as a church.” It is in this context, that the Lord teaches a woman to be absolutely silent.

There are many situations when members of a local congregation may do things together but they are not acting or assembling as a church. We might go fishing or shopping and yet we are not doing so as a church. When a congregation decides to offer separate classes for all ages (at the place of assembly or in other places) they are not acting “as a church” in that

the church is not all assembled together. Could the entire congregation do something without acting “as a church”? Certainly. In small congregations of two to three families it is not unusual at all for every member of the congregation to go camping together, or engage in business together, but they are not camping or doing business “as a church.” The same is true in large classes where virtually all of the congregation has come together but the meeting is not intended to constitute the church assembled.

This is much like the way that our government operates with respect to the Congress. A person is elected to serve in Congress. During his entire term he is considered “in congress,” but the same rules do not govern his speech or behavior that do when the congress is assembled and they are thus “in congress.”

A Word of Caution

We have seen that the Bible authorizes women to speak in discussions of the Bible in situations outside of the church assembly. We have also seen that in such situations the Bible teaches that a woman is not to exercise authority over a man and to maintain a quiet disposition at all times. This makes it clear that in Bible classes of God’s people that are not understood to involve the local church assembled, whether at a congregation’s meeting house or somewhere else, a woman is authorized to speak.

With that said, a word of caution is in order. When Paul gave instructions in 1 Corinthians 11 regarding the head covering, at least part of the issue seems to have been avoiding anything that would communicate a lack of submission to male authority in the church to a stranger visiting the assembly (1 Cor. 11:10). Sometimes we may not be as clear as we ought to be when it is our intention to assemble together as a church and when we are not. I recently attended a congregation which had Sunday night "worship services" posted on their sign. Everything about the assembly gave the impression that the congregation was meeting together as a church to worship. When the time came for the lesson, the speaker got up in the pulpit and presented a lecture on a biblically related historical topic. After the lesson he then asked if there were any questions. Two women raised their hands and offered questions. If I had known nothing about the saints that worshiped there, it would have been my impression that this congregation disregarded the Bible's restrictions regarding a women's speech in the assembly. In their case, I know that this particular congregation varies what they do on Sunday evenings. Sometimes they will have a singing, other times a night of prayer, and other nights a Bible class. A congregation certainly has the right to make such choices for itself. At the same time we should be very careful that we don't communicate something which we do not intend to communicate. If they had said "tonight we are having a Bible class," it might have avoided the wrong impression.

We should note that the determining factor is not what is

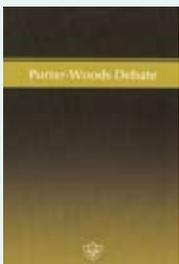
done (i.e., worship vs. Bible study) but the context in which it is done (i.e., "in the church [assembly]" vs. outside of the church assembly). This is often distinguished simply by a declaration of the intention of the gathering. The church could have a "Bible class" as a church, and the speech restrictions would apply. First Corinthians 14 describes an assembly in which different men spoke at different times. If a prophecy came to one seated they were to indicate this and offer their comments (1 Cor. 14:29-31). It is within this context that a woman was told to keep silent.

When we take steps in a particular direction we often set an example and a precedent that will be followed and expanded by the generations that will follow us. Just because we may technically have a right to do something doesn't mean that we give no consideration to how our actions appear to others. If we are not very clear regarding our intentions we will find ourselves crossing a line that becomes impossible to defend and even harder to retreat from.

A tract of this study is available at <http://kmpope.home.att.net>.

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PORTER-WOODS DEBATE



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BOSWELL-HARDE- MAN DEBATE

This discussion covers the subject of Instrumental

Music in the Worship. It was conducted in the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee from May 31 to June 5, 1923. The reader who is truly interested in the truth on Scriptural worship will profit greatly from a study of this work. Is instrumental music in worship authorized by the Scriptures or is it just a matter of opinion?



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Benevolence: Our Individual Responsibility

Harry Osborne

When individual responsibility for benevolence is minimized and the benevolent responsibility of the church is emphasized beyond its lawful bounds, the result is a failure for individuals to meet the benevolent responsibility God has entrusted to them.

In Luke 10:25-37, we read the account of Jesus giving the parable of the good Samaritan in an effort to teach all how we truly fulfill the command to love our neighbors as ourselves. Of the three men, two failed to properly love their neighbor while one was an example of the love commanded by God. When the priest and the Levite saw a man beaten and lying by the side of the road in need of help, they did not have compassion on the man and give assistance to him. Whether they viewed the beaten man as unworthy of their help or refused to make the sacrifice necessary to help, they passed by on the other side of the road and left the man unaided in his need. The Samaritan, however, was moved by love to help the one in need. Note what Jesus said about that Samaritan's actions towards the man in need:

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you" (Luke 10:33-35).

The benevolent Samaritan recog-

nized that assisting this man left beaten was his individual responsibility and fulfilled that responsibility. Rather than putting the priority on himself and his own desires, he exemplified the admonition of Jesus that "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Many in our world never realize a need to give to others outside of the holiday season when giving and benevolence are encouraged. The sad part is that when the holidays pass, all too many forget about the continuing needs of others and our responsibility to be benevolent.

In religious circles, it is a shameful fact that many talk about the virtue of giving more than they practice it. This happens for many reasons, not the least of which is shifting benevolent responsibility in a way that avoids personal involvement. When individual responsibility for benevolence is minimized and the benevolent responsibility of the church is emphasized beyond its lawful bounds, the result is a failure for individuals to meet the benevolent responsibility God has entrusted to them. Though it begins as well-intentioned, churches are sometimes unwittingly counterproductive to meeting benevolent needs by enlarging the responsibility of the church to the elimination of individual responsibility. Instead of being personally aware of others' needs, the individual feels relieved of that responsibility by giving a con-

tribution into the collection plate. In turn, the church gives a contribution to some benevolent institution without any personal involvement. With the church taking the place of primary benevolent provider, many needs are left unfulfilled simply because individuals expect that all needs are being met by the church.

Though most of the failure to meet individual responsibility in benevolence is a case of benign neglect, it can also serve to mask a more willful motive of neglect. Making the church the funnel for all benevolent action serves as a salve to the conscience of those not wanting to be bothered with their personal responsibility in benevolence. While it masks the action in the noble facade of greater concern and compassion, a look behind the false front often manifests a more unseemly reality. Our liberal brethren have often touted their great concern for orphans because of their support of orphan's homes from the church treasury. When faithful brethren have rightly noted such care is a responsibility of the individual Christian rather than the church (Jas. 1:26-27), liberal brethren have falsely and maliciously charged us with not caring about orphans. In debates, they have been known to put a sack of fertilizer and a baby bottle on the table and say, "These Antis would take money out of the church treasury to buy this sack of fertilizer for the church lawn, but they will not take a single dollar from that treasury to buy a bottle for a starving orphan." Their charge has an emotional appeal, but it betrays a deeper problem upon closer inspection. Why would any Christian wait to get a check from the treasurer before he bought a bottle for a starving child? Why would he not be moved to care for the infant in his own home rather than shipping the poor child off to institutional care where neglect and abuse are common? It is individuals who are most often the best suited to meet benevolent needs.

The Bible stresses our individual responsibility in benevolence. Let us

notice a few passages emphasizing this obligation charged to each child of God:

Psalm 41:1: "Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." God's blessings are not promised to those who are selfish, but to those who give to people in need.

Proverbs 28:27: "He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses." If we give to others, it will not deprive us from meeting our needs. If we fail to give to others, our greed will result in our doom. Though it seems paradoxical, we have all seen the truth of this proverb.

Proverbs 22:9: "He who has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor." Let us open our eyes to those in need that we might share with them.

Isaiah 1:16-17: "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow." When the people of Judah failed in their responsibility to those in need, God called it "evil" and demanded that the people change their ways.

Hebrews 13:16: "But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." God sees our benevolent actions towards others and is pleased by those who are liberal in such giving.

James 1:27: "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." Our claim to being religious is hypocritical if we fail to help others in need. The same one charged to be pure is charged with benevolent care. Who is that? The individual is charged with responsibility

in both cases.

Deuteronomy 16:17: "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you." God never has expected us to give more to others than we can. However, he has always expected us to give what we are able to give unto others.

1 Timothy 6:17-19: "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

Ephesians 4:28: "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need." While theft is an obvious violation of the responsibility to give, the Bible declares that refusal to work also violates that responsibility by leaving one without the means to meet the needs of others who cannot so work.

Let us remember that the responsibility we have towards the needs of others. While we may rarely see one beaten and left for dead along the side of the road, do we turn a blind eye to brethren who lack the necessities of life due to famine or natural disasters? Jesus will hold us accountable for the way we have fulfilled our individual obligations (Matt. 25:34-46). In a materialistic society, we need to repeatedly consider this responsibility. When one is constantly searching for how he can get more for self, he has failed to understand the blessing found in giving. May God help us to truly love our neighbors and sacrifice ourselves to meet our individual responsibility of benevolence.

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“Girls Pushing for Modest Fashion Options”

Steve Wallace

Does the above title catch your eye? It caught mine. You see, it is not mine. I simply copied it from the heading of an AP news article (Kristen Gelineau, Yahoo.news, June 2, 2004). I could hardly believe my eyes, but there it was! As the writer of Proverbs wrote, “As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country” (25:25). Living outside of the U.S. and having long since become accustomed to the kind of fashion promoted both there and here in Europe, it was truly refreshing to read the contents of this article. Hopefully, this review of it will be encouraging and instructive.

The article told of the experiences an eleven-year-old girl had in shopping for clothes. She “became frustrated with all the low-cut hip-huggers and skintight tops. So she wrote to (Nordstrom’s) executives to complain.” As a result of this,

The shy, bespectacled redhead has since become an instant media darling, appearing on national television over the past two weeks to promote modest fashions instead of the saucy looks popularized by the likes of Britney Spears. “We like to call this new girl Miss Modesty,” said Gigi Solif Schanen, fashion editor at *Seventeen* magazine. . . . “Shoppers are starting to see higher waistlines and lower hemlines, and tweeds, fitted blazers and layers are expected to be big this fall,” Schanen said.

“. . . I think people are tired of seeing so much skin and want to leave a little more to the imagination.”

The Web sites ModestApparelUSA.com and ModestByDesign.com — where the slogan is “Clothing your father would be proud of” — report that sales have skyrocketed over the past eighteen months. Many youngsters are frustrated by the profusion of racy teenage clothing, according to Buzz Marketing, a New Jersey-based firm that compiles feedback from teen advisers.

While this is just now making the news (in the experi-

ence of this writer), it has been pushed from the grassroots level for some time.

In 2002, a group of Arizona teens submitted a petition to the Phoenix division of the Dillard’s department store chain asking for more modest clothes. The chain began carrying more conservative styles.

Nordstrom spokeswoman, Deniz Anders, said the company has been hearing for about two years from customers who want more modest looks, and Nordstrom tries to carry a broad array of styles in its stores.

One cannot help but be encouraged by such news. Further, we hope that it will cause some of our brothers and sisters in Christ to reconsider their thinking on the subject of dress. There are some clear lessons to be drawn from the Scriptures that this news article reinforces.

1. Modesty is reflected in the way one dresses (1 Tim. 2:9). Yes, it can also be reflected in other ways, but our point is clear for all to see: Society, as represented by the writer and many young people in this article, sees a connection between modesty and dress. It is helpful to remember that the writer is using the word “modest” as it is used in our society. Webster’s definition of the word in this connection is, “. . . decent; pure; now especially, *not displaying one’s body*” (*New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* 1155, my emphasis, sw). Decency and purity (Webster) are something we can show in many different ways, but let it never be forgotten that among them is in how we dress. Our next point naturally grows out of this one.

2. Immodesty is reflected in the way one dresses. Let us note again a line from the article under consideration. It said that the young lady featured in the story was trying “to promote modest fashions instead of the saucy looks popularized by the likes of Britney Spears.” Modest fashions are contrasted with the clothes worn by Miss

Why Some Christians Are Not Devoted

Richie Thetford

I have wondered many times why it is that some Christians do not seem to be truly devoted to their Christianity. I now believe it is because they do not understand what it means to be a genuine disciple of Christ. One can never hope to be the kind of Christian God intends for one to be if one has not learned discipleship. Webster defines disciple as: “A pupil or follower of any teacher or school; A follower of Jesus.” Every Christian must learn that one must forsake every person and everything and put Christ *first* in his life. To forsake is to “give up; renounce; leave; abandon; desert.” Those unwilling to do so will not enter into heaven and will never become the servant that Jesus

expects one to be! When a Christian can truly grasp the importance of following Christ, doing *all* his commandments, then one will become an effective servant in God’s kingdom. When one does not learn this lesson first and foremost, then he will find that he is spinning his wheels and being unstable. “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24).

Every Christian must first strive to do Christ’s will. Jesus said that only those who do his will enter into heaven

Spears. Her clothes are characterized as “saucy.” This word means, “impudent; rude; transgressing the rules of decorum” (Webster 1611). I do not know if I have ever heard a song by this pop diva. However, you cannot miss seeing pictures of her. She has appeared on news sites on the net, posters at fast food restaurants, billboards, etc. Decency generally demands that one avert his eyes when seeing her pictures as she is so often dressed in some kind of revealing attire. She is an example of immodesty. This leads us to our next point.

3. What is modest attire and what is immodest? All Christians should want to appear modest before our God as well as before mankind. Does our article contain any clues as to what clothes should or should not be worn? For starters, it is interesting to note that “higher waistlines and lower hemlines” are viewed as being desirable while clothes that show “much skin” are seen in an opposite light. Included at the end of the article under review were three web sites dedicated to modest clothing. These sites were revealing in a way that is not usually connected with modern fashion. That is to say that they revealed women in clothes that answered to Webster’s definition: “. . . Decent;

pure; now especially, not displaying one’s body.” Even the swim suits that were pictured covered from the shoulders to the knees! Just as helpful in answering the question posed in our point here is what was *not* on these web sites. There were no split skirts, backless dresses, necklines that reached inches below the underarm in the front, clothing above the knee, bare midriffs, tube or halter tops, etc. That is to say, nothing that would fit Britney Spear’s wardrobe. Such clothing is obviously not modest. Does the clothing you wear fit the description of modesty or immodesty?

Conclusion

Finally, the world is starting to take another, refreshing look at fashion. Hopefully, God’s people will do the same. All Christians recognize there are things that one should not wear. May more of us wake up to the whole truth on these matters. May offenders reconsider, reflect, and repent in order to bring purity and decency to this part of their lives (Acts 8:22; Tit. 2:11-12). As our news article shows, it is a part of our lives that the world sees and understands. God is watching as well (Acts 15:8).

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and those who don't will be cast away into an eternal hell (Matt. 7:21-23).

We Must Take a Stand For Jesus Above All Else

In Matthew 10:32-39 we can learn a valuable lesson on what Jesus truly means by being a true disciple of his. We have got to be willing to confess Jesus each day of our lives before men. No matter where we are, or what we are doing, others should see us living a life as a Christian "proclaiming godliness." It is only when we take a stand *for* Christ that he will take a stand for us: "Whoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33). One of the toughest things we must do as Christians is to go against the personal beliefs of our own parents, brothers, or sisters. Jesus addresses that in this passage. We must be prepared to even put our physical family second to Jesus if we ever hope to have eternal life with him. He said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt 10:37). When we make decisions to do things with our family at the expense of doing Christ's will then we are not worthy of being his disciple (Matt. 10:35-38).

We Must Be Willing To Deny Self and Serve Jesus

This may be the hardest lesson for a Christian to learn. Until one can put his own interests, passions, and desires second to serving Christ, then he is not ready to be a disciple of Jesus. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:24-25). Many will be cast away into hell on the day of judgment because they would not deny their own lusts and desires and put Jesus first!

Excuses Won't Cut It —

We Must Not Look Back

In Luke 9:57-61 Jesus urged several to follow him. But in each case they made excuse for why they had to do something else first. Jesus sums this up by saying, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Then later in Luke 14:16-33 he told the story of the man who made a great supper and invited many. But those who were invited made excuses why they could not attend. Jesus invites us to join him in teaching others and living the Christian life but many make excuses on why they can't put Jesus first in their life.

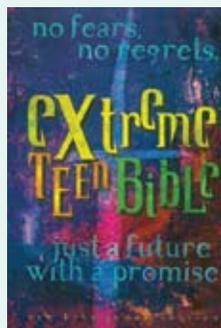
A disciple of Christ truly loves Jesus and one another (John 13:34-35; 14:15, 21, 23). A true disciple will continue in his word. Jesus said: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31; see also Acts 14:22). A true disciple will be faithful until death (Rev 2:10). Only a dedicated disciple is worthy to wear the name Christian (Acts 11:26).

Each and every Christian must be determined to follow Jesus. If you do, you can have peace through his word which says; "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). Let us be determined to walk in the light of Christ, serving him because we have a sincere desire to and not looking back because we *know* that our reward is ahead of us if we remain faithful to Jesus until the day of our death! May God bless each of us as we strive to put Jesus *first* each and every day that we live!

7921 Goodway Dr., Indianapolis, Indiana 46256 Richie@Thefordcountry.com



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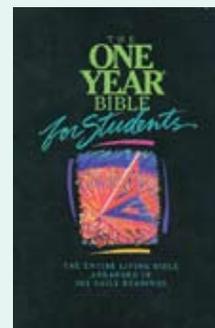


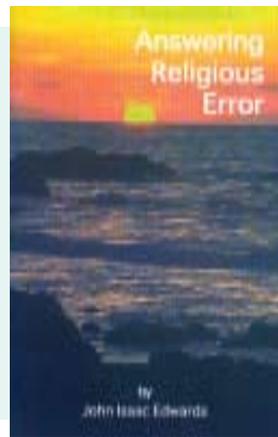
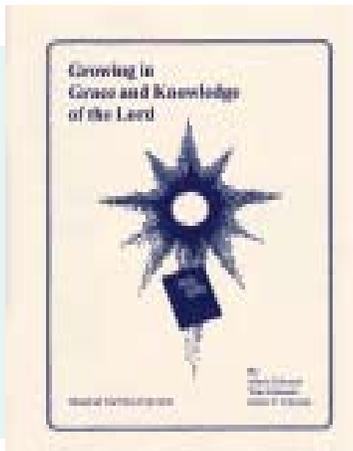
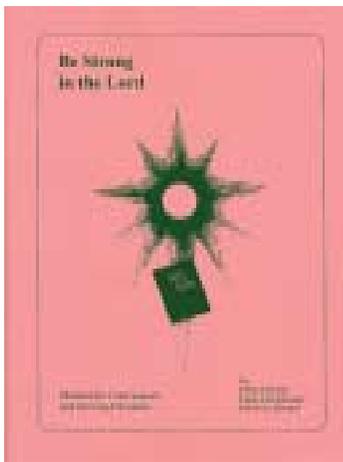
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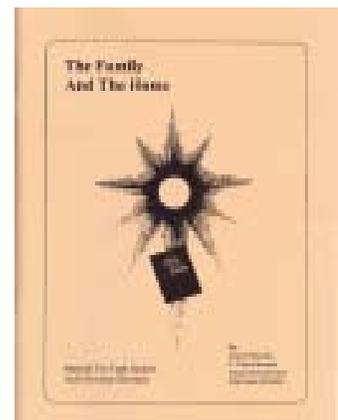




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Let the Church Be the Church!

Ron Halbrook

(Editor's Note: *In this issue of the paper appears three articles pertaining to the lectures which we conducted in Bowling Green in July. I have decided to publish all three of the articles in this one issue. Only one of the three was solicited — the one by brother Townsley. Because we realized that some brethren had disagreements with our decision to have a lecture program, I invited a responsible brother who had no axe to grind with the Foundation to write his material for publication. In the meantime, Ron Halbrook was preparing a defense of the Foundation's right to conduct a lectureship which he distributed during the lecture program itself and then sent to me for publication. These two are reproduced side by side so that brethren can read both sides. Brother Townsley and brother Halbrook wrote their articles without either seeing what the other had produced. I have the highest respect for Donald and regard him to be a faithful preacher of the gospel. We regret that his conscience did not permit him to speak on the lectures because his ability and soundness in the faith would have resulted in an excellent sermon. Donald and others who share his view will not be quarantined or stigmatized in any way. Brethren who love the Lord, the truth, and each other can forebear with differences of this kind while we continue to study.*)

God's eternal plan of salvation is summed up in Christ and the church. "All spiritual blessings" are "in Christ," who is "the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:3, 22-23). This is "according to the eternal purpose" which God "purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11). All men must be members of the universal church to be saved. Jews and Gentiles are reconciled "unto God in one body by the cross" (Eph. 2:16). The universal church has no earthly headquarters or other institutional organization on earth with officials, a treasury, and assigned missions. It simply refers to our spiritual fellowship with Christ as our Savior and head, nothing more, nothing less.

Christians must be active, faithful members of the local church. The first thing we read about the first Christians

is this: "And they continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). When the newly converted Saul came to Jerusalem, immediately "he assayed to join himself to the disciples" (Acts 9:26). The local church has its own organization to do its own work: elders to oversee, deacons to serve, and all members to participate (Phil. 1:1).

We must guard the church against apostasy or the abuse of its role by strictly following the New Testament pattern for its work, worship, and organization (1 Tim. 3:14-15; 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:13).

The Church Distinctive

The church does some things the individual does, but is not an individual. "For the body is not one member, but many" (1 Cor. 12:14). The church does some things the family does, but is not the family. Deep, affectionate, abiding love is experienced in both relationships, but we must love Christ, the truth, and the church above the family (Matt. 10:37). The church does some things a school does, but is not the school. Classes are provided by both, including Bible classes in some cases, yet God did not design or equip the church to educate people in secular subjects (1 Tim. 3:15-16). The church does some things a summer camp does, but is not a camp. Some camps schedule time for Bible study and worship each day, just as a church does in Vacation Bible School, but the church was not ordained to teach horseback riding, swimming, softball, and marksmanship. The church does some things a business does, but is not a business organization. Both churches and businesses need money to operate, but the church depends upon the freewill offerings of its members and not upon selling goods and services, investments, and other business strategies (1 Cor. 16:2).

In all things, let the church be the church in its distinctive role as God ordained!

The Church: Distinct From the Individual

The individual as a Christian may do some things the
Continued on p. 563

Why I Opposed the Guardian of Truth Lectureship

Donald Townsley

I was asked to speak on the Guardian of Truth Lectureship program, but turned them down — out of conviction. Brother Mike Willis has asked me to write this article concerning why I opposed the Lectureship; I thank him for giving me this opportunity. The issue of a human organization preaching the gospel centers around Bible authority just as every other issue does. The issue of institutionalism has been one of the main battles over which brethren have fought down through the centuries. Brother W.E. Brightwell said in the November 29, 1934 issue of the *Gospel Advocate*: “The next religious war will be fought around the issue of institutionalism.” He was right! The war began to heat up in the forties, and by the fifties it was fully waged. We saw great bitterness, families divided, churches divided, friendships ended and preachers were “quarantined” — brethren were driven from buildings they helped build into store buildings, schoolhouses, and other places in order to start over. My heart aches as I remember the casualties of that war! So, it frightens me to hear the “bleating of the sheep” and the “lowing of the oxen” of a new institutionalism in our ranks. Brethren, Satan will use any or all of us (if he can) to accomplish his purpose (Eph. 4:27; 1 Pet. 5:8). He always brings apostasy by degrees. He plants his “tares” (Matt. 13:27-28) through good men with pure motives — men who only want to do good, but are blinded as to where their new venture could lead (2 Cor. 4:4). In time the “tares” will produce after their kind (Gal. 6:7-8). Trends away from truth, if not stopped and footed up, will always mature into apostasy.

First, let me point out that I have no objection to the Truth Foundation as a publishing company (a secular

business enterprise). A publishing company may publish Bibles, workbooks, and other aids and sell them, but the publishing of aids is *not* teaching (for example, the World Publishing Company publishes Bibles, but it does not *teach* Bible). The Guardian of Truth Foundation is a *human organization* that operates under a board of directors made up of ten men. It is an “entity” that has existence all its own — distinct existence separate and apart from the existence of its individual board members. My objection is that the Truth Foundation has moved into a *dual role* — no longer is it functioning just in the realm of a secular business; it has now moved into the realm of the spiritual, and in planning and overseeing this Lectureship has become a “gospel preaching organization.” It is now usurping the function of the local church (1 Tim. 3:15)! Its action in having this Lectureship is the action of the legal entity (G. of T. Foundation) and *not* the action of the individual members. Thus, the Lectureship is the action of a human organization (G. of T. Foundation) and is *not parallel* in any way to the action of individuals teaching the gospel. When God specified the local church as his functional organization to make known divine truth (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Thess. 1:1, 8; Phil. 4:15-18; 2 Cor. 11:8), that eliminates any other organization (just as the command to “sing” eliminates the instrument-Eph. 5: 19).

My second objection is this: many have assumed because the individual Christian has many duties and activities which are the result of his relation to this life (domestic, economic, civil and social) where God has left him free to form organizations to carry out these duties, they are also free in the realm of the spiritual to form any kind of organi-

zation to carry out their spiritual duties. But, in the realm of the spiritual God has *not* left man free to form any kind of organization. He has specified the organization Christians are to work and worship through, the local church (Acts 9:26-28; Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; Acts 20:7; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Thess. 1:8). When God specifies a thing, man is limited to that thing. When God specified gopher wood to build the ark, Noah was limited to gopher wood (Gen. 6: 14). When God specified the local church, man is limited to the local church (1 Tim. 3:15). In apostolic days we only read of individual Christians teaching the gospel to other individuals (Acts 8:4; 11:19-21; 2 Tim. 2:2; Eph. 6:4; Tit. 2:3-4) and local churches teaching and supporting the preaching of the gospel (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Thess. 1:8; Phil. 4:14-18; 2 Cor. 11:8-9; Acts 11:22-26). There is no scriptural evidence that first century Christians individually did their work of teaching through any organization but the local church. This is God's exclusive pattern for carrying the gospel to the lost world. In about thirty years from Pentecost, individual Christians and local churches carried the gospel to the lost world without the help of any other organization, and it is still God's way (Col. 1:23). The local church is not an "optional" organization which provides the individual Christian with a choice of either teaching the gospel through it (the local church) or through a human organization.

My third objection is that using human organizations to do the work God built his church to do *denies* the completeness and sufficiency of God's plan. Many fail to appreciate the all-sufficiency of Christ, the church and his Word. The New Testament teaches that Christ is a sufficient Savior (Col. 2:9; 1:19; 2:3, 10), the gospel is a sufficient revelation (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and the church is a sufficient relationship and institution; the fulness of Christ is summed up in the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 1:3). The church originated in the mind of God from eternity; it was established on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ in fulfillment of God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:9-11; Acts 2). It has the deity of Christ as its foundation (Matt. 16:16-18; 1 Cor. 3:11); Christ as its Head and Savior (Eph. 1:22; 5:23)

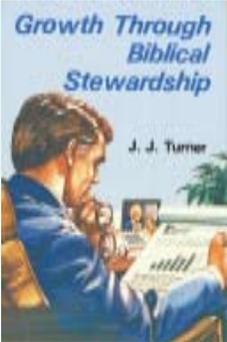
and the New Testament sealed by the blood of Christ as its rule of faith and practice (Matt. 26:28). The *divine origin* of the church shows us that God has a *divine purpose and mission* for it in the world — that mission is to *support the truth* (1 Tim. 3:15), and he has given that mission to no other institution in the world! Why can't men be satisfied with the church designed by God, built by Christ, and revealed by the Holy Spirit?

It seems some have opposition to a human organization preaching the gospel only when it involves contributions received from churches, but the concept of a human organization functioning in the realm God ordained for the local church is wrong! It shows a dissatisfaction with God's appointment — the local autonomous church (Eph. 3:9-11; 1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 14:23). I do not understand why brethren want a human organization to preach the gospel and deal with vital issues when they have a perfect divine arrangement to do this — the local church! Brother W.W. Otey said: "The seed of the Kingdom — the word of God — unmixed with the doctrines of men, never has, and never will produce any other institution, organization, association, great or small, than the church of our Lord." (Taken from *Vanguard* [July 14, 1977]). And, brother Roy Cogdill wrote the following in the June 16, 1966 issue of the *Gospel Guardian*:

Human societies to take over and do the work of the church which the Lord built His church to do are spiritual forgeries for they are unauthorized in the scriptures. The only thing that God ever built in the way of religious organizations is the church. He gave it order and arrangement that it might accomplish His will. In the New Testament days the local "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16: 16) did the greatest job of propagating the truth and furthering the borders of the kingdom of Christ that has ever been done. The maze of Missionary Societies, Educational Societies, etc., did not exist and the man does not live that can find authority for their existence today in the scriptures. They are human and not divine. They are spiritual forgeries and those who promote them will stand condemned.

If individual Christians can build a human organization to preach the gospel (have a gospel meeting), why can't they build one to sponsor a radio program to preach the gospel, or one to send men into the world to preach? If individual Christians are not restrained by the authority of Christ, then there is no end to the organizations they could form! The Christian is restricted to the only organization that God has authorized for him to carry out his spiritual duties of public worship and teaching the gospel—the local church (Acts 9:26-28; 2:42; 20:7; 1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 11:25-26). Brethren, this issue needs to be studied with the utmost care, with an open mind, believing hearts, and a great respect for the word of God.

160 Rice Rd., Florence, Alabama 35633



**Growth
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by J.J. Turner

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“Let the Church” continued from p. 560

church does, but is not the church. Individuals may sing, pray, study the Bible, and disseminate truth in every way possible. “Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms” (Jas. 5:13). “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them” (Acts 16:25). Jesus said, “Search the scriptures,” and Paul said, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). This realm of individual activity, whether people act independently or in unison, is no substitute for the church and is not in competition with the church.

Individuals must also guard against going into apostasy or abusing the role God has given to them. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). For instance, an individual should not attempt to serve as “a missionary society,” taking donations from churches and then selecting fields of endeavor and providing financial support to send men to these fields. Don Carlos Janes (1877-1944), a premillennial preacher among churches of Christ, once tried to function as a one-man missionary society. Faithful brethren rejected this plan, insisting we “let the church be the church.”

The Church: Distinct from the Family

The family of Christians may do some things the church does, but is not the church. The family may gather to sing, pray, study the Bible, and disseminate truth in every way possible. Aquila and Priscilla made Christ the center of their family life by helping to supply Paul’s needs, teaching Apollos “the way of God more perfectly,” and inviting the church to meet “in their house” (Acts 18:1-3, 26; 1 Cor. 16:19). A family gathering at the home of Cornelius provided Peter the first opportunity to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and Peter stayed for several days to do follow-up teaching after baptizing the first converts (Acts 10:24, 33, 48). At “the house of Mary,” Christians “were gathered together praying” for Peter while he was in prison (Acts 12:12). Like many other families, Joel and Linda Plunkett for years have invited young people far and wide to their home in middle Tennessee for monthly occasions of Bible study, prayer, and singing God’s praises.

Untold hundreds of young people have been blessed by these periods of worship provided by the Plunkett family and other godly families like it. Yet, for all this, such actions on the part of families are no substitute for the work the church itself does and are not in competition with the church.

Families must also guard against going into apostasy or abusing the role God has given to them. For instance, a family should not attempt to serve as “a missionary society,” taking donations from churches and then selecting fields of endeavor and providing financial support to send

men to these fields. Let the family be the family and let the church be the church.

The Church: Distinct from the School

The school conducted by Christians may do some things the church does, but is not the church. The school may make arrangements during the day to sing, to pray, to study the Bible, and to disseminate truth in every way possible while training young people in all sorts of secular subjects and pursuits. What the school does is an extension of the work of the home and the state in preparing young people for life (Eph. 6:4; Rom. 13:1). This is no substitute for the work of the church and is not in competition with the church.

Such schools must also guard against going into apostasy or abusing the role God has given to them. For instance, a school should not attempt to serve as “a missionary society,” taking donations from churches in order to teach the Bible and other subjects to its students, or selecting fields of endeavor and providing such financial support to send men to these fields. Let the school be the school and let the church be the church.

The Church: Distinct from a Summer Camp

The summer camp conducted by Christians may do some things the church does, but is not the church. The camp may make arrangements to sing, to pray, to study the Bible, and to disseminate truth in every way possible. Individuals and families combine their talents, funds, and efforts to provide young people with all sorts of wholesome activities and associations in the camp environment. Dedicated people serve as counselors and mentors in leading these activities. Each day’s schedule includes physical exercises, learning experiences, and time set aside for Bible lessons and worship. Camp activities reflect the efforts of individuals and families to fulfill the duty to raise our children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” and a recognition that this duty cannot be shifted to the church (Eph. 6:4; 1 Cor. 11:34). This is no substitute for the work of the church and is not in competition with the church.

Such camps must also guard against going into apostasy or abusing the role God has given to them. For instance, a camp should not attempt to serve as “a missionary society,” taking donations from churches in order to teach the Bible and other subjects to its participants, or selecting fields of endeavor and providing such financial support to send men to these fields. Let the camp be the camp and let the church be the church.

The Church: Distinct from a Business

A business conducted by Christians may do some things the church does, but is not the church. The business may make arrangements to sing, to pray, to study the Bible, and to disseminate truth in every way possible. The business is an extension of the individual, whether acting indepen-

dently or in concert with others, in making an honorable living (Eph. 4:28). This is no substitute for the church and is not in competition with the church.

Such businesses must also guard against going into apostasy or abusing the role God has given to them. For instance, a business should not attempt to serve as “a missionary society,” taking donations from churches and then selecting fields of endeavor and providing financial support to send men to these fields. Let the business be the business and let the church be the church.

The Church: Distinct from the G.O.T. Foundation

The Guardian of Truth Foundation is a business that publishes religious literature including *Truth Magazine* and that owns two bookstores which market its literature. This Foundation fully supports the proposition that the church and our business are two separate entities acting in independent realms.

Individuals may act alone or in concert to form and conduct legitimate, legal businesses, but no business enterprise was included in God’s eternal plan of salvation in Christ and the church. It is not necessary that all men be members of, or that they participate in any way, in the G.O.T. Foundation or in any other business organization. God ordained the organization of the local church with elders to oversee, deacons to serve, and every member to participate, which organization is fully sufficient in order for the church to fulfill its mission of evangelism, worship, and benevolence (Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). Therefore, churches should not donate money to the G.O.T. Foundation or to any other business under the guise of doing the work of the local church. Churches may simply purchase goods and services from businesses for their own use in fulfilling their work. Let the church be the church.

In the course of conducting our business, members of the G.O.T. Foundation often pray together and even pray with other people with whom we have dealings, especially in praying for God’s wisdom and blessings upon our endeavors. We discuss God’s word together and with others, especially regarding its proper application to our work. As circumstances permit, we create and utilize opportunities to teach people the truth of God’s word and we do everything possible to encourage them to obey, worship, and serve God faithfully. Such studies have been conducted for the staff writers of *Truth Magazine* from time to time. The Truth Lectureship makes it possible for other interested individuals to share with us in such studies. By inviting people to read *Truth Magazine* and to visit our web site (<http://www.truthmagazine.com>), we hope to better acquaint them with the goods and services of our bookstores and to encourage them to obey, worship, and serve God faithfully.

When this Foundation does all that it can do in its legiti-

mate role as a business conducted by Christians, this is no substitute for the church doing all it can do in its God-given role as the church. There is no competition with the church nor any effort to detract from the church. Utilizing the goods and services of this Foundation is not necessary for salvation, but faithful membership in the church of Christ is essential for salvation. Let the church be the church.

The Church: Distinct from Every Other Effort

The church is distinct from every other effort and every other organization in performing its own work through its own organization. We are thankful for every legitimate effort to disseminate and teach the truth of God’s word. In the past years, schools began the day with Bible reading and prayer, and teachers paused to pray at meal time. Families have often opened their homes to conduct monthly Bible studies for young people. Businesses conducted by Christians sometimes make Bible study materials available to customers or invite a preacher to teach weekly Bible lessons for interested employees. Several Christians have combined their funds to rent meeting rooms at motels for gospel preaching in places where the true gospel is unknown. Properly conducted, none of these efforts can detract from the unique role and work of the church in the plan of salvation.

Consider other examples. Athens Bible School in Athens, Alabama and Florida College in Temple Terrace, Florida have taught Bible classes, conducted daily devotionals, and presented Bible lectureships through the years. Summer camps have provided young people wholesome activities and associations including daily periods of Bible study and worship. A group of brethren associated with R.J. Stevens has conducted an annual singing school, utilizing the facilities of a college in Wilburton, Oklahoma. Businesses which produce or market Bibles, songbooks, tracts, magazines, and books occasionally provide complimentary samples or give away outdated and damaged materials in an effort to disseminate the truth.

Countless other examples could be added, but none of these efforts is a substitute for the daily ongoing responsibility of each and every local church to press forward in doing its own work through its own organization as “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). The examples and efforts enumerated above do not diminish or detract from the duty of local churches to sound out the word of the Lord via regular worship periods, Bible classes, singing schools, gospel meetings, radio programs, special lectureships, tract distribution, correspondence courses, and other endeavors (1 Thess. 1:7-8). No one of the activities listed above, nor all of them combined, diminishes the unique role, organization, and glory of the local church in God’s plan for the redemption of the world.

Let individuals, families, schools, and various business and service organizations do their best to please God and

Emphasis On Doctrine

John Isaac Edwards

A charge brought against us is that we put too much emphasis on doctrine. Observe the emphasis placed in the Bible on doctrine:

Jesus said, “My *doctrine* is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the *doctrine*” (John 7:16-17).

Members of the model church, “continued stedfastly in the apostles’ *doctrine*” (Acts 2:42).

Paul wrote, “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of *doctrine* delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18).

Paul beseeched the brethren at Rome, “mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the *doctrine* which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17).

Paul besought Timothy to abide at Ephesus that he might, “charge some that they teach no other *doctrine*” (1 Tim. 1:3).

Timothy was instructed, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the *doctrine*; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. 4:16).

Paul charged, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering

to bless the world. But, first and foremost, emphatically, we must remember this imperative: *Let the church be the church!*

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and *doctrine*. For the time will come when they will not endure sound *doctrine*” (2 Tim. 4:2-3).

Paul told Titus, “But speak thou the things which become sound *doctrine*” (Tit. 2:1).

John taught, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the *doctrine* of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the *doctrine* of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this *doctrine*, receive him not” (2 John 9-10).

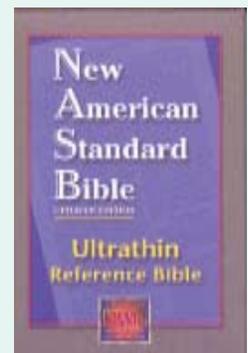
Did the Lord, the apostles, early Christians or preachers of the New Testament put too much emphasis on doctrine? When we put the same emphasis they put on doctrine are we putting too much emphasis on doctrine, or has the time come that men will not endure sound doctrine?

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Postponed Prophecies

Frank Himmel

Premillennialists tell us the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy is yet future. They say Jesus came to reign as the Messiah, but the Jews rejected him. He therefore established the church as a last-minute substitute (they often call it a “parenthesis”). It will continue until Jesus comes again, at which time he will establish his kingdom. Thus, the kingdom was postponed.

The Bible teaches no such thing. In fact, this theory contradicts the Scriptures in at least four ways.

1. Predictions with a time element cannot be postponed. If I predict that a certain team will win the Super Bowl, but do not say when, then whenever they win my prediction will be fulfilled. But if I specify 2005 as the year, and my team does not win it until 2010, I cannot say my prediction was postponed; I must admit that it was false.

So it is with Bible prophecy. When Daniel put a time

element on the establishment of God’s kingdom — in the days of the Roman kings (Dan. 2:44) — that eliminated every other time, before and after. Either his prediction came to pass as stated, or he must be rejected as a false prophet (Deut. 18:22).

Premillennialists sometimes try to get around this obvious point by saying Daniel was referring to a “revived” Roman Empire. Not so. The four parts of Nebuchadnezzar’s image were four successive world empires. Besides, if Daniel’s prophecy refers to a revived Roman Empire, why did Jesus try to establish the kingdom during the historic Roman Empire? Did God’s Son not understand the very prophecy he was trying to fulfill?

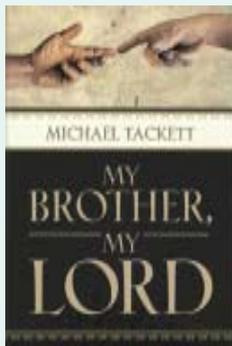
2. The Bible tells us that the church was part of God’s eternal plan, not an afterthought. God’s wisdom manifested in the church “was in accordance with the eternal purpose which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:10-11).

3. God knew beforehand that his Son would be rejected. Isaiah foretold that Christ would be “despised and rejected of men” (53:3). Earlier, the Psalmist referred to him as “the stone which the builders rejected” (118:22). One of Peter’s points in his Pentecost sermon was that Jesus was “delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23).

Did that rejection require God to postpone his kingdom plans? Not at all. Consider Psalm 2. In verses 1-3 the kings and nations are taking their stand against God’s anointed. (The New Testament says this refers to Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the Jews’ opposition to Jesus [Acts 4:25-28].) How does that affect God and his plans? “He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury: ‘But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain’” (vv. 4-6). Next is the Anointed’s testimony

MY BROTHER, MY LORD

by Michael Tackett



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of God's decree: "He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee.'" That refers to Jesus' resurrection (Acts 13:33), following which he ascended into heaven where he was given the nations to rule with a rod of iron (vv. 6-9; Rev. 2:26-27).

The Jews' rejection of Jesus was not an obstacle to God's plan, it was a key element in its success! "For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him" (Acts 13:27).

4. The Bible teaches that the kingdom is now in existence. "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col. 1:13). "I John, your brother and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus" (Rev. 1:9). The kingdom consists of men and women everywhere who are purchased by Jesus' blood (Rev. 5:9-10; 1:5-6; cf. Acts 20:28). Many other New Testament passages speak of Jesus sitting on God's throne and reigning (Rev. 3:21; Acts 2:34-35; 1 Cor. 15:24-26; Heb. 1:8).

God's prophetic word has come to pass. Jesus now reigns in a kingdom "not of this world" (John 18:36). Have you been born again, born of water and the Spirit, to become a citizen in that kingdom (John 3:3-5)?

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"Reflections" continued from front page

Paul calls men to make a conscious choice to be guided by divine revelation rather than be molded by the values of contemporary society. This text has been a familiar theme of preachers down through the years, but it has generally been limited in application to contemporary morals. Brethren have warned Christians not to be conformed to the values of this world in its dress, sexual ethics, and such like things. However, the influence of the world is not limited to sexual moral values. The world has a more comprehensive agenda. It wants to shape man's thoughts about Jesus, the Bible, the church, evangelism, the work of the church — indeed, every aspect of human existence. As Christians, we need to beware lest we allow those values to become our own.

Our Post-lectureship Thoughts

1. On the attitude of many young people:

- In Leviticus 19:32, God commanded his people, "You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the Lord."
- In Lamentations 5:12, as Jeremiah recounts the reasons for his people being exiled and enslaved, "elders were not respected."
- In 1 Timothy 5:1, the inspired apostle instructs young Timothy, "Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father."

If we may comment, as two twenty-five-year-old men with much to learn, it seems to us that there is a great void of respect on the part of many young people for those who have gone before them and the work that has been done in the past. Many of our peers are much more likely to read Philip Yancey, Max Lucado, or Rick Warren than they are to read the writings of past and present faithful brethren. *We wonder why.* We wonder why so many who will quickly confess their disagreement with different sections of these and other evangelical writers' books will not give the writings of our brethren fair audience. We wonder where this trend will lead in the not-so-distant future.

From our vantage point, it appears that many of our peers have a prejudice against anything that is old. For elaboration on this idea, we would point you to an excellent article that appeared in the July 2004 issue of *Renewed In Spirit* by Brian Sullivan:

- Something old is not necessarily wrong
- An existing boundary does not require change unless it is laid out improperly
- Survey the whole territory before you draw up new boundaries
- Respect the work of those who went before

Many seem enamored with change simply because it is change. We ask that you reflect, as we also continue to

ponder, “Is there a reason that so many young people seem so enamored with change and so many older people seem so cautious when it comes to change?” One needs only to open up the chronicles of history to find that this is not a novel twenty-first century quirk.

We continue to hear discouraging reports from around the country of our peers who have little or no respect for the insight of experienced gospel preachers and elders who are trying to offer advice from years of wisdom accumulated from good and bad times. Are the old always right and the young always wrong? Absolutely not. However, there is a reason that we have the scriptural admonitions to “honor the aged” that we do. The inspired account of Rehoboam’s reign of folly was preserved for a reason (2 Chron. 10). But even Rehoboam was willing to do something that many of our peers are not: at least *ask* the elders, “What counsel do you give me?” Sadly, many young people today will turn *only* to one of two places: those who are equally young, or the liberal writings of denominationalists.

That is one of our greatest concerns with the “House Church Movement.” So many of our peers are choosing to worship in homes around the country. Let us be clear: *Is there anything wrong with worshipping in a home?* MOST CERTAINLY NOT! The day very well may come when we are *all* worshipping in homes due to our stand for the truth. However, should it not be alarming that so many young are so quick in divorcing themselves from the wisdom and experience of those who are older? Is this not traveling dangerously close to the pathway paved by Rehoboam?

During our week in Bowling Green, we had the opportunity to sit at the feet of some very experienced older men. Those who spoke throughout the week comprised more than 850 years of total preaching experience. It is our belief that when such an abundant fountain of knowledge is freely available, young people would do well to listen.

2. On the attitude of the speakers throughout the week. In light of so many “warnings” about what we could expect in attending this year’s lectureship, we were struck by the attitude of those who spoke throughout the week. It is important for all of us to always remember, “God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). Only God knows what these men, and any other men have as their motive and aim in their work for the Lord. That being said, let us tell what we saw:

- We saw men who love the Lord.
- We saw men who love the Lord’s church.
- We saw men who love the truth.
- We saw men who are deeply hurt and disturbed by the state of division in so many places around the world.

- We saw men who have a “burning fire” in their hearts to preach and teach God’s word (Jer. 20:9).

Are these men perfect? Of course not. But contrary to popular belief, they will be the first ones to tell you that fact. It is our conviction that they genuinely want honest, open, and truth-filled dialogue, seeking to “work out their own salvation with fear and trembling,” and encouraging others to do the same (Phil. 2:12).

During the lectureship, Ron Halbrook gave one of the best sermons that we have ever heard on *Renewing Our Commitment To Balanced Preaching*. From his chapter in the lecture book:

“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand” (Phil. 4:5). Christians need a mature, well-balanced attitude, especially in times of controversy. We need boldness and courage in setting forth the principles of truth, balanced with vigilance and persistence in exposing false doctrine, balanced with patience and forbearance in assessing differences which do not destroy the truth, and balanced with love and wisdom in our efforts to fulfill all of these duties.

Ron encouraged all of us to seek balance in:

- Avoiding extreme attitudes
- Recognizing error in people’s lives
- Facing bitter enemies of the gospel
- Distinguishing personal scruples and doctrinal apostasy
- Defending the truth without stooping to error’s tactics
- Teaching the truth in love
- Putting the cause of Christ above self
- The content and the tone of teaching
- Our grasp of truth with room to grow in the truth

That is a message that people all over this country, young and old, need to hear.

3. On the abundance of good, old-fashioned gospel preaching. Although we are relatively young, we have been to a variety of different “lectureships” over the years. We have heard of the days when lectureships were not an exercise in quoting modern-day psychologists, professors, and scholars, but were simply session after session packed with plain and forceful preaching from the inspired word of God. We have missed that in a great deal of the “lectureships” and even the “gospel meetings” that we have attended in recent years. It was refreshing for a large portion of the sessions throughout this week to be free from the external trappings that impress “enlightened” twenty-first century listeners and to be full of first century gospel preaching.

4. On the importance of always reading and studying for one’s self. There appear to be so many around the

country that are taking “sides” on one issue or another without even sitting down to honestly and objectively search out the truth for themselves. Many of our peers absolutely refuse to attend a lectureship offered by, read material written by, or listen to a sermon given by many of the men whom we heard preach throughout the week, and will even look down on those who choose to do so. *Please do not misunderstand what we are saying!*

- “Must I attend the Annual Truth Magazine Lectures in order to be a Christian?” Absolutely not!
- “Must I subscribe to *Truth Magazine* to have my name recorded in heaven?” Of course not!

But please openly and honestly investigate the truth of any matter before judging, tuning out, and condemning anyone! There have been, and undoubtedly will continue to be, those on opposing sides of issues who will assume, slander, and verbally destroy each other. Rest assured that such an individual, regardless of what “camp” he may find himself in, has ignored the instructions of the apostle Paul: “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Eph. 4:31-32).

The men whom we heard speak in Bowling Green are not perfect, but neither are those who are vilifying them around the world, and neither are we as we try to objectively pass along our own impressions for your thoughtful consideration. But it is our very deep conviction and concern that when the dialogue ceases, when people are tuned out and ridiculed without fair investigation, the cause of righteousness will suffer. May we always remember,

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

Reprinted from the August 2004 issue of *Renewed In Spirit Magazine* (www.renewedinspirit.org), Jason Hardin & T. Sean Sullivan, editors.

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“My Cup” continued from page 2

Nevertheless, David looked upon his life and said, “My cup runneth over.” He felt God’s goodness, his blessings, even in the face of the adversities of life. Perhaps it will do all of us good to think about how God has richly blessed our lives. Having gratitude for what God has given me is not my strong suit; I need the exercise to remind myself that my cup also runs over. Indulge me as I mention these personal references of how I have been blessed.

I was blessed to be reared by Christians. Not every child is so blessed. Some children are raised in divorced homes where the children become tools of war by the parents. Others are reared in homes in which they are abused and sometimes sexually molested by their parents. But my parents were godly parents who made it one goal in their lives to teach us about Christ and his church. I was regularly taken to church by my parents. I was taught the truth and saw it lived before my eyes. I was never turned off by the hypocrisy of professed Christians, although I know some of them were hypocrites, because I saw so many conscientious, God-fearing Christians. I was blessed to be taught the difference in revealed religion and humanly devised religion so that I could distinguish the denominations of men from God’s revealed church.

I was blessed to have brothers and sisters in Christ. I am blessed to have six brothers and sisters in the flesh. We all have been baptized into Christ. My three brothers provided an example before me in preaching the gospel. Their families were trained to obey the Lord and their children and grandchildren help to create a rich heritage in Christ. Beyond those brothers and sisters in Christ who are my physical relatives, I have been blessed with numerous godly brothers and sisters who have enriched my life. Ron and Donna Halbrook, Steve and Betty Wolfgang, Dan and Donna King, Andy and Joy Alexander, Harry and Leslie Osborne, Larry and Marilyn Hafley, Morris and Judy Hafley, Fred and Frances Pollock, . . . the list could be continued until it is boring to you. However, most of our readers could create their own list of how God has blessed their lives through their brothers and sisters in Christ.

I was blessed to wed a godly wife. I did not have sense enough to make a wise choice; the Lord in his providence was watching out for me. Fortunately, I married a woman who also has a commitment to serve the Lord. I married Sandra Carol Parson on June 18, 1966; we have been married 38 years. As I reflect on our marriage, I truly am blessed that she has enough commitment to the Lord to love me even when I am not so lovely. Not once in our married life did we fight about immodest dress — one of us defending our children wearing immodest dress and the other one opposing it. We went to church together and encouraged our children to devote their lives to the service of the Lord. Sandy has followed me wherever I moved to preach the

word — moving with me from Florida to Indiana to Ohio to Kentucky and back to Indiana. We sacrificed the close relationships we could have had with our respective parents for the sake of the gospel. How blessed I am to have a companion willing to make such sacrifices.

I am blessed with two godly children who married godly mates. I was richly blessed to have two children. My oldest is Jennifer Lynette Mann (June 18, 1971) and my youngest is Corey Michael Willis (July 13, 1977). I still have precious memories of their birth, their childhood, and their new birth. We never faced the problems of children using drugs, drinking alcoholic beverages, being involved in pre-marital sex, and such like things. Rather, my children obeyed the Lord from their heart and conscientiously served the Lord. When they started dating, neither of my children brought home any “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” of whom I was ashamed. They dated godly young men and young women. When they came of age, both of them married a Christian (Robbie Mann from Phoenix, Arizona and Meagan Robbins from Avon, Indiana). Both of their families are faithful, active members in local congregations.

I have been blessed with two grandchildren. My first grandchild is Corbin Chandler Mann, born May 9, 2001. My second grandchild is Raven Phoebe Willis, born July 23, 2004. I also consider myself blessed to live near enough to my grandchildren to be a part of their lives, to witness their first steps, to hear their first words, and such like things.

I have been blessed to attend a faithful congregation. Many congregations have moved into apostasy (and some are still making that move), but I have been blessed to hold membership in a congregation that is committed to apostolic doctrine. I know when I attend worship that things will be conducted in accordance with divine revelation.

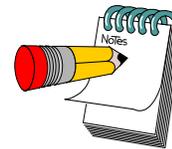
I have been blessed with a job that gives me the ability to provide for my family. In a world that has many people living at the poverty level and below, how blessed I am to have a job that enables my family to live a comfortable life.

Conclusion

The list could go on, and perhaps I need privately to continue the list to grow in gratitude. However, just beginning such a list reminds me that I too should join King David to say, “My cup runneth over.” I have enjoyed so many wonderful blessings from the hand of the Lord, that I should not complain so much when a few days of trouble come. Will you join me in thanking God for the good things he has given us in such abundance?

6567 Kings Ct., Avon, Indiana 46123 mikewillis1@attglobal.net

Quips & Quotes



Letter of Need

Dear Brother Willis,

I am writing because my husband, Leo Rogol, cannot see well enough to write or read anymore.

There are friends of ours, Fernando and Annahelen Amoros who live in York, Pennsylvania and for years have been driving great distances to attend faithful congregations. For some twenty years Fernando has carried the mail in York. After many years of saving and hoping, they finally got to buy a home in the outskirts of York in Manchester Township.

Fernando joined the Marines just after he graduated from high school and served four years.

Fernando was raised in a Catholic home and was a practicing Catholic when he went into the Marines. While in the Marines he and a buddy, also a Catholic, decided to read the Bible together. Each day they read and when they came to the New Testament, they were amazed and Fernando said he told his buddy, “The priest never told us this.” As they continued to read, they realized that the Catholic doctrine was not in harmony with what they were reading. What they decided to do was find a church that did the things taught in the New Testament. They were excited and were talking to others about what they learned. One Marine told Fernando, “I think you should meet my wife and attend where she worships as she goes to a church of Christ.”

So Fernando met her and attended the congregation where she did. He took his Bible and observed closely everything about the worship and listened to the sermon. When the preacher extended the invitation, Fernando said, “I ran down the aisle and asked to be baptized.” I believe the preacher was Bill Crews. It was some congregation in California. Fernando worshiped there until he finished his four years and moved back to York. The preacher in California told Fernando to look up Leo Rogol to find the closest place to worship. So Fernando contacted Leo and even though it was a long way from York to Gettysburg that was the closest place.

Fernando’s parents were very upset to learn that he would no longer be going to mass with them. But his father did bring him the first time for worship since Fernando did not have a car. Fernando bought a motorcycle and rode over from York to Gettysburg each Lord’s day. Most times he remained all day

with us and went back to York after evening worship. So lots of Sunday afternoons Leo and Fernando had Bible studies.

Later two couples who were members of the Lord's church moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania from Texas. As there was not a faithful group of the Lord's people meeting in Lancaster, these two couples started a congregation in their homes with each man taking turns preaching. Later, another couple joined them, Marion and Jo Grant. When they returned from Iran, where brother Grant had been working, but was then working in Baltimore, they purchased a home in Shrewsbury, Pennsylvania. As they passed near York on their way to Lancaster, they picked up Fernando and took him with them. As they studied with Fernando, he realized that maybe he did not understand enough when he was baptized. So, brother Marion Grant baptized Fernando at a motel swimming pool in York.

Later brother Grant got cancer and passed away. He was taken back to Texas, I think, and sister Grant moved to Florida to be near her children.

Later the congregation where Fernando worshiped was known as the Leola Church of Christ. I think they met in a Fire Hall. That group disbanded and Fernando attended other places but all the time he has had to drive long distances to worship. Now that he has a nice house he would love to get a faithful congregation started in York. What they need is a Christian couple willing to meet with them and discuss the work they could do in York — if they only had some help.

Do you know a couple, grounded in truth, able to teach who would be willing to move to York and work with Fernando and Annahelen? Maybe some couple who has a comfortable retirement income would enjoy doing something exciting with their later years — like starting a congregation where it is greatly needed.

Maybe some congregation could send a preacher and his family to York with full support for a year or so and see what working along side Fernando and Annaheln could accomplish. There needs to be a faithful congregation there to help teach and reach the lost souls in York.

It is my prayer that someone will hear the call of Fernando and Annahelen for someone to come over to York and help them. At times the Amoros have been so discouraged as it is lonely to be so far from faithful brethren. They spend so much time driving to get to worship. They now worship at Gettysburg. The Amoros have three children: Lauren (13), James (12), and Joshua (8). Their address is: Mr. & Mrs. Fernando Amoros, Jr., 1251 Greenwood Rd., York, PA 17404-4750, phone: 717-793-9171.

At present Leo is unable to do anything to help as he is in a wheelchair, unable to walk and is almost totally dependent on others for his care. He is able to feed himself and that is all.

The DaVinci Code

Cecil Douthitt

No, this is not a new feature of book reports. But I saw this novel on the *New York Times* Bestseller List for 47 weeks. There it was, week after week until curiosity got the best of me. So, I decided to check it out of the library. I like to know something about the book or the author before deciding to read anything. The blurb in the Bestseller List was not a bit of help. "A murder in the Louvre reveals a plot to uncover the Priory of Sion's ancient secret." Does that tell you anything? Me neither. At this writing *The DaVinci Code* by Dan Brown has fallen all the way down to number two. And I am one of the millions who has read the *Code*. What a waste! What is it all about?

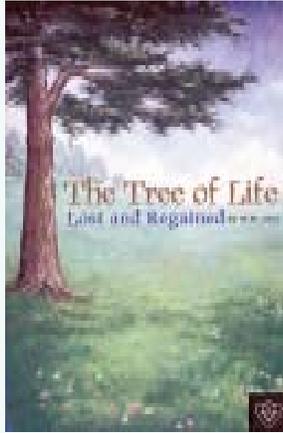
This fictional thriller supposes a marriage between Jesus and Mary Magdalene that produced a royal bloodline in France. Well, if I had known that I would have killed all my curiosity and saved a lot of time on this stupid book. This silly novel has sparked an ABC News special (I missed it) and debates about the legitimacy of western and Christian history. Can you believe that? It is a novel! The book contains many more claims about Christianity's historic origins and theological developments. Here is some more trash. "The central claim Brown's novel makes about Christianity is that, 'almost everything our father's taught us about Christ is false.'" Okay, now I understand Mr. Brown's mind: he does not believe in the inspired word of God, the God I serve, or Christ as the pure, holy Son of God, and blasphemy does not bother him one bit.

There have been several books and movies about the Holy Grail. You probably thought it was the chalice (cup) Christ used at the last Passover supper. Right? Mr. Brown gives it a very new strange twist. Are you ready? The Holy Grail was actually Mary Magdalene. She was the vessel that held the blood of Jesus Christ in her womb while bearing his children. There is more of this nonsense but I can't stomach anymore. One of the saddest things about books and movies like the *DaVinci Code* is that so many people over the world read and/or see this filth and do not know enough Bible truth to disagree, to know it is all fiction. So they believe all of this lie. And they go further and further from the truth of God's word that has the power to save them eternally.

The DaVinci Code is just one more long, drawn-out lie and blasphemy from Satan and his crowd.

cecildouthitt@juno.com

THE TREE OF LIFE LOST AND REGAINED



by W.W. Otey

Connie W. Adams says of this book, "This book is

a summary of the scheme of redemption from the loss of man's access to the Tree of Life in Genesis to his admittance to it in Revelation. It is perhaps the most devotional of all of Otey's books. His chapter dealing with the faith of Abraham and Sarah in leaving Ur and going into a land God would show them directly affected the decision my first wife, Bobbie, and I made to go to Norway in 1957 to preach the gospel there. We had read the book together as a family devotional. It is good reading for a new generation."

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