

Why? A Good Question To Ask

## Why Are We Losing Our Young People?

Donnie V. Rader

It is not uncommon for young people to lose interest in spiritual matters, start “pulling away” and become distant to fellow Christians and even family. They may start missing some of the worship services, then later quit altogether. They may date and then marry a non-Christian. They may even reach the point that they are involved in alcohol or drugs. Ultimately they are lost to the world.

The Proverb writer said, “Train up and child in the way she should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6). Some children don’t live right because they were not trained and taught by their parents. This is a general statement to which there are exceptions. Thus, it is possible to train children in the way they should go and they still depart from it. If this is not true, then children are not free moral agents. From this we must conclude that there could be any number of reasons why young people go astray.

Let’s consider a number of reasons why we are losing our young people.

### **The Bad Influence of Their Friends**

#### **1. The warnings.**

My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent. If they say, “Come with us, Let us lie in wait to shed blood; Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause; Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, And whole, like those who go down to the Pit; We shall find all kinds of precious possessions, We shall fill our houses with spoil; Cast in your lot among us, Let us all have one purse”—My son, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your foot from their path (Prov. 1:10-15).

The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray (Prov. 12:26).

Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul (Prov. 22:24-25).

Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits (1 Cor. 15:33).

These warnings tell us of the power of friendship. They tell us that we may or may not see (at first) the influence others are having on us. Furthermore, we learn where such influence will take us.

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## “Churches of Christ Change Approach to Christmas”

Mike Willis

The title of this article was taken from an article by Bobby Ross, Jr. in *Christian Chronicle* (December 2005). The *Christian Chronicle* article relates how churches of Christ have changed their approach to Christmas in recent years. Ross says that in the past “mistletoe was welcome, but mangers certainly were not.” Churches of Christ scrupulously avoided the religious celebration of Christmas. But now he observes,

In recent years, though, many churches have become much more willing to reflect on the story of Jesus’ birth at a time when the world is focused on him, the *Chronicle* found in a query of more than 100 ministers and members nationwide (1).

Following that statement, Ross relates interviews with several associated with institutional churches of Christ. Jim Hackney, from the Keller, Texas church is quoted as saying, “Visitors come to our church on Christmas expecting to hear about the birth of Jesus. We don’t disappoint them. It’s too important to reach out in a positive way at that time” (8). John Free, elder of the Sunny Hills church in Fullerton, California says, “So Christmas carols are sung in our worship service on the Sunday closest to Christmas, and the sermons typically focus on that part of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke” (8). Glover Shipp, former longtime missionary who is an elder at the church in Edmond, Oklahoma comments, “To celebrate Christmas without Christ, making Santa the chief person in it, doesn’t make sense” (8). Ross also quoted a couple of people who think the church should not participate in the religious celebration of Christmas.

Along the same line, brother Dan King sent me an ad which appeared in the November 26<sup>th</sup> issue of the Nashville *Tennessean*. It was an advertisement of the Pegrarn Church of Christ. They advertised that Rubel Shelly would speak on November 27<sup>th</sup> but then included an announcement of a special service for Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>. It reads, “South Cheatham Choral Society, December 4, 3:00 p.m. Enjoy Christmas songs—old and new—including a percussionist, flutist and pianist. A great way to get into the holiday spirit!”

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# Washing Feet

H. Osby Weaver

The following inquiry was handed to me with the request that I give it my attention which I am glad to do since it is a sincere, reasonable question:

This question (feet washing) has bothered me for many years, and I cannot find the answer in the Record, nor have I heard a logical explanation as to why we do not follow the example and commandment of Jesus as recorded in John 13:5-15, and inferred in 1 Timothy 5:10.

In the outset, be it observed that Jesus did not institute “feet-washing.” People were already doing that as a combination act of cleanliness and a mark of respect and hospitality. In Luke 7, we have the record of the Lord’s acceptance of an invitation from Simon the Pharisee. During the course of the meal, a sinful woman entered and began to wet the Lord’s feet with her tears and wipe them with the hair of her head. Simon reasoned that Jesus must not be a prophet else he would know that this woman was one of questionable character. This led Jesus to present the parable of the two debtors and conclude with this rebuke: “Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment.”

Here, Jesus alludes to the customs of his time. Greeting with a kiss, anointing the head with oil, and washing the feet all were marks of respect and good hospitality and quite refreshing to a guest that had traveled some distance. In John 13, Jesus merely uses a familiar custom as a vehicle in which to deliver a great lesson to the apostles—a lesson that is just as applicable now as it was then. Let us make sure that we do not lose sight of the lesson by giving too much attention to the delivery wagon.

Let us note also that Jesus said, “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” To do “as” the Lord had done does not necessarily mean to do “what” he had done. The word “example” in this verse is a word that “signifies a sign suggestive of anything, the delineation of representation of a thing, and so, a figure, copy as in Hebrews 9:23” (Vine). Jesus certainly was not giving them an example of how to wash feet. They already knew how to do that. So, by washing their feet, he was representing or giving them a figure of something else. In the act of having his feet washed, Peter’s conversation with the Lord brought out another figure. That is, that Judas would betray the Lord. Washing Peter’s feet instead of bathing him entirely led the Lord to say, “Ye are clean, but not all.” How much of

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Peter's body needed to be washed was not the point, but the Lord used a discussion of the matter to get over his point; that all of the apostles were not spiritually clean, "for he knew him that should betray him before said he, Ye are not all clean."

As further proof that the feet-washing experience was to teach them a lesson, look at the Lord's statement to Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter." Surely no one could doubt that Peter knew that the Lord was washing his feet. After the physical act of washing, Jesus said, "Know ye what I have done to you?" Of course they knew what the physical act was—they knew that he had washed their feet, but that is not what Jesus had in mind. He was saying, "My action is emblematical; do you know the meaning of it?"

The disciples had argued among themselves as to who would be greatest in the kingdom of the Lord. Two of them had requested top positions in the kingdom, one on the right hand and the other on the left, to the indignation of the others. Jesus said to the Twelve (Matt. 20:25-28): "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." If, and then added, "not even the Son of Man came to be ministered unto, but to minister." Jesus used the occasion of washing their feet to teach them a lesson on humility and service as opposed to personal aggrandizement.

Washing another's feet was considered a lowly, menial, if not humiliating, task usually left to slaves. That Jesus would stoop to this act was enough to hopefully alter the attitude of the apostles. That this is the lesson taught is further seen when Jesus said, "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." In other words, "If I have condescended to wash your feet, being your Lord, then there is no task of service to each other that you should feel is beneath you, for a servant is not greater than his Lord."

It is a shame that some have lost sight of the great lesson taught by focusing undue attention on the physical act itself which was a "copy representing something else." The principle set forth by the Lord is just as applicable now as it was then. When circumstances require it, no Christian should feel that any honorable task of service in the Lord's cause, no matter how lowly it may seem, is beneath him. This would stand true with everything from cleaning rest rooms to preaching the gospel, from scrubbing floors to waiting upon the sick. We need this lesson as much now, if not more, as did the Twelve when Jesus washed their feet. We could make application of the principle in many ways.

But should one insist that the physical act of washing feet must be engaged in before the demands of the Lord are met, by what reasoning would he make it an act of worship? Jesus put it in the realm of service. This is the same realm in which Paul put his instruction to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:10. The widow that was to be "enrolled" had to have certain qualifications among which was "well reported of for good works," and then some of those good works were listed: "If she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet, (and) if she hath relieved the afflicted." So, we see the category in which "washing the saints' feet" belongs. In the same class as using hospitality to strangers, relieving the afflicted, and bringing up children. These are services to be rendered by individuals and are not church ordinances or religious rites. To attempt to bring such into the church as public acts of worship would be nothing short of absurdity. If a saint or any fellow man needs his feet washed and is unable to wash them, I ought to be willing to do it for him. If I consider such a task a reflection upon my rank or station in life and refuse to perform it, I have not the spirit of Christ in my heart.

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# The Cause of Many Problems Among Brethren

Johnie Edwards

Do you have any idea of a single thing which has caused so many problems among brethren? I believe it is a failure to see that the Scriptures make a clear-cut distinction in the activities of individual Christians and the church of my Lord. So, we take a good biblical look at this issue:

**1. One Christian Is Not The Church.** Try as hard as some do, there is just no way that the actions of one member constitutes church action. Paul said it best: “For the body is not one member but many” (1 Cor. 12:14). When Paul writes of “the body,” he has the church in mind. Listen to him as he tells us what the body is: “For his body’s sake which is the church” (Col. 1:24). This the reason we cannot say: “I am a church of Christ, or a Church of Christer!” Right now, take the time to highlight 1 Corinthians 12:14 in your Bible. Underscore it with a red pen, and read it often!

**2. Church Obligations and Individual’s Often Overlap.** A Christian is often called on to do some of the same things the church is told to do. Both the church and each Christian have been assigned teaching responsibilities. Paul said that the church “is the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). An example of church teaching can be found in 1 Thessalonians 1:8 when the church “sounded out the word of the Lord.” The Corinthian church supported Paul as he preached the gospel (2 Cor. 11:8). And Paul said the church at Philippi “sent once and again to my necessity” (Phil. 4:15-16).

One of the channels of worship is “apostolic doctrine/teaching” (Acts 2:42). Individuals also taught the word, just as the Lord commanded: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). A fine example of individual Christians, teaching the word is found in persecution days when early Christians “were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to Samaria, and preached

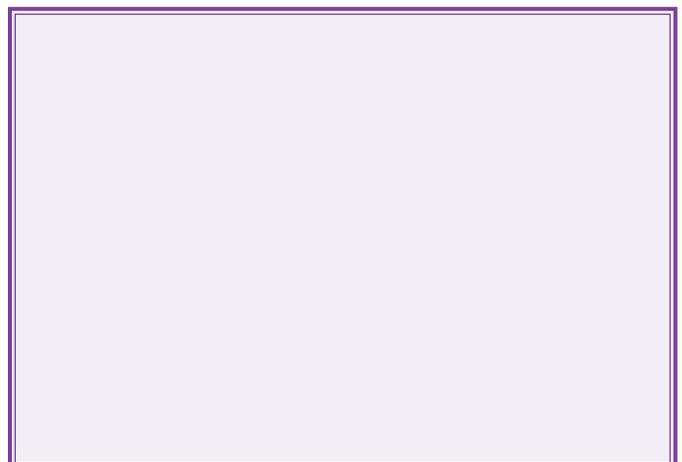
Christ to them” (Acts 8:4-5). When individual Christians and Philip preached, this was not the church doing it; “for one member is not the church” (1 Cor. 12:14)!

Individuals also assisted those who taught the word (Gal. 6:6). Thus, teaching and preaching are not the exclusive work of the church, since both the church and individuals have been charged to preach and teach. Another work of the church is to “edify” (Eph. 4:12-16). But, each Christian must also build each other up as they are “exhorted” to faithfulness (Heb. 10:24-25). Both the church and the individual believers have obligations to help certain needy. Paul told Timothy: “If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed” (1 Tim. 5:16).

We have learned that both the church and individual members have obligations to teach, edify and help certain needy ones. So then, these works are not the exclusive work of the Lord’s church, are they?

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# Rumors and Reckless Hyperbole

Joe R. Price

An Al Qaeda training manual seized in the U.K. says “spreading rumors and writing statements that instigate people against the enemy” is one of its top missions (“Shamnesty International,” Melana Zyla Vickers, Tech Central Station, June 3, 2005). Rumor mongering.

Amnesty International released its annual report on human rights abuses several months ago, calling the U.S. Guantanamo Bay terrorist detention facility “the gulag of our times.” Today’s *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* editorial is right to describe this as “reckless hyperbole” (“The Amnesty International report: Reckless hyperbole,” *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, June 3, 2005).

Shamefully, those who deal in rumors and reckless exaggerations do not see themselves as detractors from the truth, but as defenders of it.

Consider “idle babblings” (2 Tim. 2:14). Like “reckless hyperbole,” empty chatter (void of scriptural context and content) harms reputations, influences, and the progress of the gospel. When we contend earnestly for the faith, it is not necessary to turn up rhetoric that generates heat but no light. The light of gospel truth is sufficient to expose error (John 3:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* editor noted that Amnesty International compared the Guantanamo camp of about 540 detainees to “communist slave labor and death camps where countless millions were brutalized and killed” (*Ibid.*). Slightly exaggerated, wouldn’t you say?

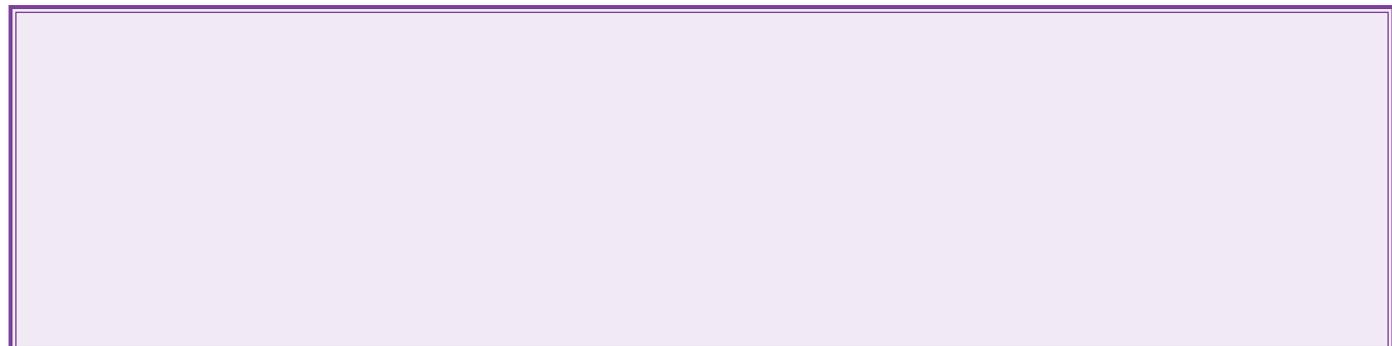
Yet, sometimes that is all it takes to “defeat the enemy.” Evil suspicions, name calling, innuendo, and exaggerated pronouncements against brethren must stop. Such biting and devouring will surely consume us (Gal. 5:13-15).

Clear heads, humble hearts, and open Bibles must prevail whenever Christians disagree on a Bible subject. Love “thinks no evil” and “hopes all things” (1 Cor. 13:5, 7). If we cannot address disagreements without infusing *idle babblings* and *evil suspicions* into our Bible discussions we will ruin our listeners with the strife we perceive as “defending the faith” (2 Tim. 2:14; 1 Tim. 6:4).

So, contend earnestly for the faith, but do not use carnal weapons (Jude 3; 2 Cor. 10:3-5). Do so using God’s word of truth; not rumors and reckless hyperboles.

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# What Kind of Funeral Do You Want?

Dave Morrison

**It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment (Heb. 9:27).**

I can still recall the details of my first funeral service. Our dear sister Linda Willis was in her 40s and I watched her die of cancer. I remember the bouts of pain were so difficult for her that even the morphine had little or no effect. One of the elders and I would go sit with her. She would ask us to read from God's Holy Word. As we read, the pain seemed to subside, and a wonderful calm would come over her body. I can still see the "peace that passes all understanding" in her eyes as we read. This dear sister, in her dying, taught me so very much about trusting in God.

After the funeral, I asked brother Hoyt Houchen and brother L.E. Sloan, the same question: "Does it get any easier?" Their answers were a swift and definitive, "No!" From that day to now, I can only agree. Death is the enemy of man (1 Cor. 15:26). I long for the Lord to return and for death to be destroyed forever! Until then, death will come upon man and funerals will be preached.

## What is a Funeral Sermon?

The service is a time to pay our respects to the departed loved one. It is not, however, the place of judgment. God alone is the judge. "The words that I spake shall judge you in the last day" (John 12:48). There is not one thing that anyone can say to alter the judgment of God. In fact, for the departed one, their fate is sealed. We can honor their memory. We can express words of comfort to those who are bereaved. We can "weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15; John 11:35).

Let us not forget that even at a funeral service, a gospel preacher must preach. "Preach the word: be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). I attended a service just a few weeks ago where the preacher got up and said the family had asked him not to preach! Can you

imagine? He said, "So I am not going to preach." Trust me, he did not preach the gospel. You learned a few things about death but had no idea what to do in order to be saved. It was a nice talk that would have been accepted in every area of the liberal religious arena today! This was a "conservative, non-institutional" preacher giving the talk. Can you imagine a child of God not wanting the gospel preached at his funeral? It was an insult to the godly life of this fine Christian to not talk about the "hope that was in them."

The funeral sermon is for the living! Yes, this is an opportune time to preach to the lost. Of course you comfort the family and friends in their sorrow, but you also admonish the living to prepare themselves for death. Death is certain. Our life is but a vapor (Jas. 4:17).

Ecclesiastes 7:1-4 says, "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth."

The day of death is filled with "mourning." The wise will not turn it into a house of feasting and mirth. Wisdom is found in those who know and understand this is the "end of all men." How dare we not preach to an audience who can clearly see this end? The "living will lay it to their heart." How can we ignore these facts and still claim to be wise? If you expect death to be a house of mirth you have the heart of a fool.

The funeral sermon is an opportunity to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. The good news must be proclaimed at every opportunity. If there are sinners present, they are lost, and they need the saving power that comes from the precious blood of Christ. They need to hear about the hope

of the resurrection in the face of death. Gospel preachers must take advantage of these opportunities to preach the salvation that is in Christ. Many in the audience may never have another opportunity to hear the truth.

### **What Kind of Funeral Do You Want?**

Generally speaking, if we have made any plans for our funerals, we have made physical arrangements for our bodies. Perhaps, we have imagined our own funeral. We may be thinking of a large crowd, a beautiful casket, lovely flowers, etc. We may have planned the location of our burial, prepaid some of the costs, picked out the songs, and even the preacher(s). All of those things are important. I would encourage you to put your wishes in writing and not leave those decisions to others. I have attended at least three funerals in recent years in which the arrangements were made by children of the deceased. Their choices did not reflect the convictions of the deceased.

It is not just the externals that we need to consider, but rather what can be said about you at your funeral.

### **You Are Preaching Your Own Funeral Now**

In a very real sense, you are preaching your own funeral. Your words, your deeds, and your life are a sermon.

Often at a funeral service, we speak about a person in terms of relationships. What could be said about your relationship with God? When you pass from this life, will men talk about how you were like Christ? Will they mention your conversion to him? Will they say that you believed in him? Confessed him? Repented of your sins? Were baptized for the remission of those sins? Will they say you were one who walked in the light as he was in the light?

When it comes to your relationship with God, will they mention how you loved him and kept his commandments (Matt. 22:36-40)? "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:15). "Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me" (John 14:21-24). Will they talk of how you loved your neighbors and how you served your fellow man (Matt. 25:34-40)? Could they say you were growing in all areas of the faith? Would they mention your kind words, purity, the evidence of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)?

What about your relationship with your family? In terms of your marriage, will they say as a husband you were the

spiritual leader in the home? Are you like Joshua, leading your family in devotion to God? For wives, will they talk about your meek and quiet spirit, like the virtuous woman of Proverbs? What about as parents? Will it be said that you did everything in your power to lead your children to Christ? (Eph. 6:4) What will be said about your sense of values? What about your priorities?

### **Some Things No Longer Matter**

When death comes most of what we consider important in this life will no longer matter. For instance, when and where you were born will not matter. How many years you were upon this earth will be of little importance. King Omri was king for twelve years (1 Kings 16:25). He was evil. His greatness and kingdom were marred by his evil deeds. His soul was lost. Our Lord, Jesus, on the other hand, lived for thirty-three years. He was with a "rich man in death."

Your wealth upon the earth will no longer matter.

There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. And this is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind? All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness (Eccl. 5:13-17).

I have seen relatives circle like a pack of buzzards upon the physical "remains" of the deceased. I have lived long enough to watch relatives squander and waste those physical riches.

The rich man in Luke 16 woke up in torment. He would have gladly given all his wealth for one drop of water to cool his tongue. He would have given all his riches for just one minute to talk with his brothers. "Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed. For not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions" (Luke 12:15).

The spectacle of a funeral is not seen in the wealth and splendor of the outward material things. What will it matter if you are arrayed in a gold casket, with hundreds of flowers, thousands in attendance, television, newspapers, and many speakers, etc., if your soul is in torment screaming for relief?

The only thing that matters is your relationship to Christ.

### **Death Is Certain**

Death is coming upon each of us (Heb. 9:27). We may think we have plenty of time. We see the obituary column

# Modern Dancing: A Brother Defends It — Maybe?

Harry Osborne

In the last issue, we examined the justification for the use of modern dancing by some in the denominations. The sectarians cite approved “dancing” in the Old Testament and claim the passages justify modern “dancing,” assuming a parallel between the two. Yet, the examples of “dancing” they cite from the Bible are simply joyful demonstrations (Lam. 5:15; Pss. 30:11; 149:3; 150:4). Such “dancing” was done by one alone or by groups of the same gender (Jer. 31:13; 1 Sam. 18:6; 21:11; 29:5; 2 Sam. 6:14; Exod. 15:20; Judg. 11:34). No approved example of “dancing” is found involving men with women, like we see in modern dancing, because that kind of dancing is clearly condemned (Matt. 14:6-11; Mark 6:22-28; Exod. 32:19). The Bible condemns movements enticing the carnal appetites as “*lasciviousness*” (Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rom. 13:13). Lexicographer Henry Thayer noted that “*lasciviousness*” (*aselgeia*) involved “wanton acts or manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females” (*Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T.* 79-

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in the paper. We watch a funeral procession pass by. We attend the funeral of a friend or loved one. Why do we insist on thinking “not me”? David said, “There is but a step between me and death” (1 Sam. 20:3). That is true for all of mankind. James 4:14 says that our life is but a “vapor.” Our life is like the misty fog of the morning that is soon burned off by the rays of the sun.

## A Time of Great Joy

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His loved ones” (Ps. 116:15). Our funeral can be a time of joy. Christians know we do not sorrow as others who have no hope. We may lose a great example of Christ’s love, but we know it is “far better” for the child of God to depart and be with Christ.

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80). That description comes far closer to describing modern dancing than does the leaping, jumping, or demonstrations of joy found in the Scripture. Remember those “dances” were even part of their worship (Pss. 149:3; 150:4). Can anyone seriously believe that a ballet, tango, salsa, or other modern mixed dancing could ever have been approved by God in worship?

We should expect our denominational friends to pervert Scripture in an effort to justify their unlawful ideas, but it should cause both shock and sadness to see a fellow brother in Christ make much the same justification of some modern dancing. In a recent sermon by brother Marty Pickup at the Valrico church of Christ in the Tampa area, brother Pickup had some startling things to say about dancing (“What the Bible Says about Dancing,” 7/18/04). After he cited several passages saying that some dancing is presented as “good and fine and proper” (e.g. Exod. 15:20-21 mistakenly referenced as Exod. 20; Jer. 31:13; Pss. 149:3; 150:4; Eccl. 3:4), Marty made some excellent and well needed points on Bible passages warning against sensual and lustful actions that incite sexual passion (e.g. Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:17-19). But his failure to clearly distinguish the “dancing” of the Old Testament passages from the typical “dancing” of our time was not the most disturbing part of our brother’s sermon. It is what our brother considers acceptable that is most disturbing:

But I think it’s a mistake to just use the term “dancing” as an umbrella to just say that anything that would possibly come under that heading of dancing must be sinful. Well the Bible certainly doesn’t allow us to draw that kind of conclusion. You’ve got other forms of dancing—ballet dancing, and again, I think there might be some questions we’d want to ask as far as the attire that might be worn and that kind of thing. But again I don’t know that necessarily you’d have to say that there’s anything wrong with this kind of beautiful ballet dancing which is an artistic form of expression and I don’t think is intended to incite lust and to be enticing passion.

There “**might** be some *question*” about the attire worn in ballet dancing? No, there is no question that skin-tight, form-revealing, neckline-plunging, full-leg-baring attire is not just *questionable*—it is *sinful* (1 Tim. 2:9-10). Neither is that the only problem with ballet dancing. If my sons had placed their hands on a young lady where the men in ballet place their hands on the women, let me assure you that the “expression” they would have received from my hands would not have been “an artistic form.” Furthermore, ballet is designed to accentuate the human form. The attire and movements of both men and women participating make that fact clear. How any Christian could think such a public exhibition of the human form is in harmony with the Bible teaching on modesty and morality is astonishing! But our brother continues with more perplexing comments on acceptable dances:

And again, you can talk about various kinds of formal, classical dancing and evening dancing and all that and you have to ask those kinds of questions. Sometimes does it cross the line and become something sensual? I think so. Now I don’t know that it always does. But that’s a question that people have to ask and people have to be thinking about that and again, not just give some broad answer, well, all dancing is okay or give some broad answer all dancing is wrong. The Bible just doesn’t indicate that. But you have to look at individual cases. I can’t think of anything that would be more pure than what you see in a wedding celebration, the first dance of a bride and groom. We just recently had that and I think that’s something which I can’t imagine anything more pure than that or the father-daughter dance. . . . I’ll just have to tell you I can think of nothing that would be impure about that at all.

Our brother cannot even say that classical or evening dancing is *normally* wrong because of its sensuality, but only that he thinks it “*sometimes*” does “cross the line and become something sensual.” Amazing! But would there be any sin involved if a man (the groom) danced with his wife (the bride)? No, because they have the lawful right to each other’s body according to Scripture (1 Cor. 7:4). However, that lawful right has no place being exercised in a public gathering any more than they could properly exercise other marital rights to intimacy in public. There is no passage teaching the “purity” of a father and his daughter engaging in modern dancing, nor can I fathom a Christian seeking to justify it. As an aside, our brother’s examples bring a question to mind: how and where did his “pure” dancers learn to dance? Had I decided to dance with Leslie on our wedding day (or any day since then), neither of us would have known how to do so. Why? Because we never learned to dance! We did not go to dances or take dance lessons because we both knew the movements and activity at such places were not compatible with godliness. One wonders how two Christians would have learned to dance and why they would think to do so at their wedding, much less the father-daughter dance. But there is more:

Let’s just draw some conclusions from all of this. Is any and every kind of dancing wrong? Absolutely not! The Bible does not teach that. Is every kind of dancing obviously lasciviousness? No! And I’ve heard some preachers make that kind of umbrella statement. That’s just not true and the Bible certainly shows us that. On the other hand, because the Bible commends certain kinds of dancing, does that mean that every kind of dancing is okay? Absolutely not! Absolutely not. And, folks, we need to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. You know, Jesus made that statement. We need to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. In our Western culture, if you just look at us historically, what we have done in our culture is we have taken dancing and we have made it something in our Western culture that is most of the time a male-female kind of dancing—couples dancing—which doesn’t necessarily make it wrong or sensual or sexual, but you know as well as I do that the line between something which is pure and something which becomes sensualistic is a very, very thin line. And especially when your bodies are together in that way it’s very easy for one of the two parties, if not both of the two parties, to cross a line and be engaging in thoughts and doing things that really are sensualistic. Sometimes something might just be very, very poor judgment or it may be something that you just have to put the brakes on and just say now wait a minute. We’re not gonna go to that particular party or we’re not gonna go to that particular event or we’re not gonna engage in that particular thing, not because something is inherently and necessarily a sinful action, but it may just be the kind of thing where that’s not good judgment because of how easily the line can be crossed, especially when, especially when you’re with people of the world who, as we have seen, they’re callous to this issue.

Parents, is this the kind of preaching about dancing you want your children to hear as they face temptations to engage in modern dancing? Are they to decide the issue on the basis of personal judgment or on the fact that modern dancing is not authorized by God, but is a violation of the principles clearly revealed in his word? Our brother makes clear the kind of dancing he has in mind. It is the kind where “people of the world” are involved and may produce “sensualistic” thoughts. It is the kind “when your bodies are together” and it is “very easy” for one or both to “cross the line.” Dear reader, when a male and female have their bodies together in modern dancing with movements that may (and will) incite sensual passion, they have *already crossed the line!* There is no passage in Scripture that would justify such action, but several that would condemn it as “lasciviousness” (Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rom. 13:13). Years ago, the typical dancing among young people was known as “dirty dancing” and not because the floor was dusty. Does our brother think it has become more pure with the passage of time? No, modern dancing is not pure! Uncertain sounds point young people in the wrong direction. They need to hear clear, certain, Bible teaching on the sins and dangers of modern dancing.

# Careless Prayers

Craig Meyer

My father-in-law, Larry DeVore, tells the story of a preacher who delivered a sermon on “The Sin Against the Holy Spirit.” At the close of the service, a brother intoned, “Dear Lord, help us to apply this lesson to our everyday lives.” Excuse me if I don’t say, “Amen.”

Over the years I have heard many public prayers. A few were eloquent, even brilliant, and they brought a lump to my throat and tears to my eyes. Most prayers, however, are offered plainly (but sincerely) by plain, sincere Christians.

Sadly, though, I have been an “ear-witness” to prayers that were poorly worded. For instance, within the closing prayer of a gospel meeting in Wichita, Kansas, a brother in Christ quoted a passage of Scripture, then gave its book, chapter, and verse reference. I wasn’t sure if he was praying or preaching! Does God need to have his own word quoted to him? Does the Lord need to be informed where said text is located? It was a careless prayer.

Other careless prayers contain trite and hackneyed phrases, phrases that cry out for a decent funeral and burial. One example: “Be with Brother \_\_\_\_\_ and grant him a portion of his needed health.” Just a “portion”? Why not all of it?

Why not ask God to fully and completely heal? Is it possible that we have not, because we ask not (or we ask “amiss,” i.e. “wrongly”)? On that point, carefully read James 4:2-3.

Perhaps the most persistently thoughtless prayers are those given on that solemn occasion when the Lord’s people surround the Lord’s table to eat the Lord’s supper on the Lord’s day. The one leading the congregation in prayer says, “Dear heavenly Father, we thank Thee for THY BODY which was crucified. . . .”

Stop! Say again? Whose body was it? Jesus, not God the Father, was incarnated (Heb. 2:14). A body was prepared for

the Son of God, not the Father (Heb. 10:5). And what about the cup? “Our Father, we thank Thee for THY BLOOD which was shed. . . .” Hold it! Say again? Whose blood was it? It was the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, that was poured out at Calvary (John 19:34).

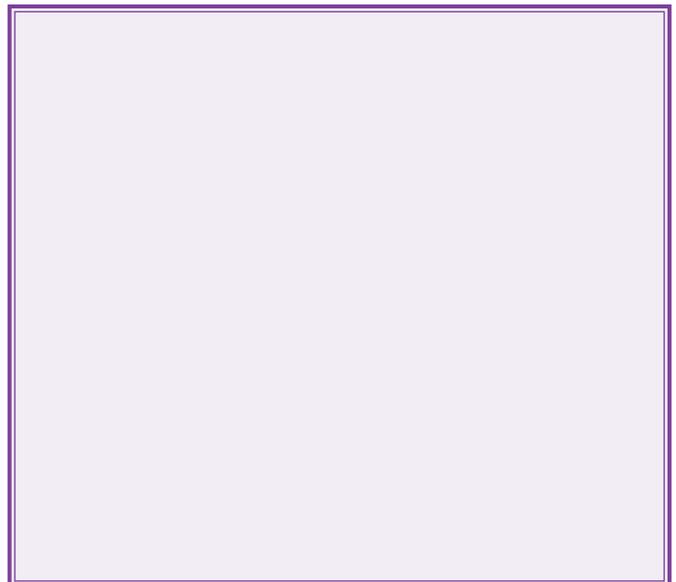
Regarding this last example, don’t say it doesn’t happen. It does happen and I have heard it on multiple occasions in many different places. “Memorized prayers” and saints who are “on automatic” will continue to exacerbate this problem. If visitors to our assemblies hear such confusion, “will they not say that [we] are mad” (1 Cor. 14:23)?

But speak thou the things which befit the sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1).

Brethren, THINK!

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# The Friendship of David and Jonathan

Mark Mayberry

## Introduction

The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself (1 Sam. 18:1; cf. also 20:17). David reciprocated in his affection for Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:25-27). In like manner, Christians should also be knit together in love (Col. 2:1-3).

Despite the evil surmising of some, there is nothing untoward or unseemly in the friendship of David and Jonathan. In fact, the exact opposite is true: The noble sons of Jesse and Saul foreshadow the characteristics of Christian love and brotherly affection.

The modesty, piety, and courage of David were so congenial to the character of the amiable Jonathan, that they attracted his most cordial esteem and affection; so that the most intimate friendship subsisted between them from that time, and they loved each other with pure hearts fervently. Their friendship could not be affected by the common vicissitudes of life; and it exemplifies by fact what the ancients have written on the subject: 'Friendship is an entire sameness, and one soul: a friend is another self'" (Jerome H. Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*).

There are those who pass like ships in the night who meet for a moment, then sail out of sight. With never a backwards glance of regret folks we know briefly, then quickly forget. Then there are those friends who sail together through quiet waters and stormy weather helping each other through joy and through strife and they are the kind that give meaning to life. [Author Unknown from the 1800s].

## Marked by Covenant

The hearts of David and Jonathan were knit together by covenant (1 Sam. 18:1-3; 20:8-9; 20:12-17; 23:15-18). Many would violate the covenant of marriage (Prov. 2:16-17; Mal. 2:13-16). Others would violate the covenant of friendship (Prov. 27:6, 9-10; cf. also 17:17; 18:24). Let

us be loyal to God (Hos. 6:4-6) and to one another (Prov. 21:21).

## Marked by Courage

The hearts of Jonathan and David were knit together by courage. David manifested great courage in confronting Goliath (1 Sam. 17:31-49). Jonathan fearlessly challenged the Philistine horde (1 Sam. 13:1-4; 14:1-15). Let us also be courageous in defense of the truth (Josh. 1:5-9; Acts 4:8-18; Phil. 1:12-14).

## Marked by Conviction

The hearts of Jonathan and David were knit together by conviction. When King Saul sought David's life, Jonathan spoke well of David, seeking to reason with his father and dissuade him from shameful action (1 Sam. 19:1-7; see also 20:30-34). Let us also manifest conviction, standing up for what is right (2 Tim. 1:6-12), and standing beside those who faithfully serve the Lord (2 Tim. 1:16-18).

## Marked by Compassion

The hearts of Jonathan and David were knit together by compassion. Separated because of Saul's malignant hatred, David and Jonathan kissed each other and wept together (1 Sam. 20:35-42). David's requiem for the fallen king and his son is a unforgettable expression of sympathetic grief (2 Sam. 1:17-27). Let us also manifest loving compassion toward one another (Phil. 2:1-4; Col. 3:12-14).

## Conclusion

Unity among brethren is an unparalleled blessing (Ps. 133:1-3). However, friendship is no foil for error (Deut. 13:6-11). True friendship respects truth (John 15:12-15). We are knit together as we conform to God's pattern and speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:11-16).

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# Before Spreading Charges and Accusations

Ron Halbrook

**Before spreading charges and accusations against a brother, we need to proceed with biblical caution. Dishonesty, immorality, and corruption should not be hidden or whitewashed, but neither should such charges be made lightly or hastily. Bible principles guide the steps which should be taken.**

The following questions should be considered: (1) Are we sure of the facts in the case? (2) Have we heard both sides of the story? We may learn the brother charged is innocent. (3) If a fair investigation proves a brother sinned, will we then focus on restoring him or destroying him?

### **Be Sure of the Facts: Separate Suspicions and Rumors from Valid Evidence**

First, it is imperative to be sure of the facts in the case. That means we must separate suspicions, rumors, and gossip from valid evidence. Otherwise, we might become guilty of some things the Lord hates such as false reports and sowing discord among brethren (Prov. 6:16-19). “Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him” (Prov. 29:20).

Jesus said, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matt. 7:12). None of us would appreciate someone making charges

to others against us based on suspicions, rumors, and gossip and not based on valid evidence. Those who might report such things will have the same conclusion regarding their own life and reputation if someone should make charges against them. The Golden Rule will prevent us from repeating unfounded charges against our brethren.

We must first make a thorough investigation of any matter and be cautious not to repeat rumors which other men repeat. “Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22). Repeating unfounded charges cannot be justified on the basis that other men already have repeated such charges. Multiple sources and constant repetition of charges do not make them true. Our repeating unfounded charges makes us partakers of other men’s sins.

“Where there is smoke, there is fire.” This is a true proverb, but it might be misused. *On the one hand,*

when there are several reports of a brother doing wrong, it might be that he is guilty of something which results in smoke or reports. *On the other hand*, the fire might be set by misunderstandings and false accusations rather than by the person charged with wrongdoing. In that case, the accusers and gossipers are making their own smoke by setting their own fires.

Suspicions are not valid evidence. At times the charges can be traced back to a brother who jumped hastily from partial or inaccurate information to a false conclusion. There may be cases where such false conclusions were not based in bad motives, but often the suspicions are driven by such sinful motives as envy and strife. "All looks yellow to the jaundiced eye" (Alexander Pope, English poet). If we manufacture or repeat charges without valid evidence, we become guilty of "evil surmisings" (1 Tim. 6:4).

### **Get Both Sides of the Story: Hear the Accused**

Second, it is imperative to hear both sides of the story, which means we must give the accused an opportunity to respond to the charges. Even if we *think* we have discovered valid evidence, we should approach the person who might or might not be guilty of something in order to hear his own explanation. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Prov. 18:13). "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him" (Prov. 18:17). What appears to be evidence of wrongdoing at first glance, may be no evidence at all when put into the proper context. It has been said concerning the interpretation of Scripture, "A text without its context is a pretext." The same principle applies here. What may appear to be evidence, without its full context, is a pretext or perversion of the truth.

Jesus said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should

do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. 7:12). We would appreciate someone first giving us an opportunity to explain the alleged evidence against us before his passing those charges to others as true. All of us will have that same conclusion regarding our own life and reputation, and therefore we should think of that before immediately spreading charges against other brethren.

### **Help Rather Than Destroy: Restore the Sinner**

Third, it is imperative when a brother sins that we seek to restore him rather than to destroy him. If we are convinced by valid evidence that a brother has done wrong, we should approach him personally, rebuke his sin, and help him make a correction before spreading charges and accusations. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19-20). Sins can be hidden in two opposite senses: *forgiven*, thus no longer imputed to a person, or *denied*, thus hidden from view by dishonest tactics. James speaks of helping a person obtain the blessings of forgiveness, not of adding sin to sin by denial and dishonesty.

"Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27:5-6). True love does not mean smiling and greeting someone whom we believe has sinned. This is only pretended, hypocritical love. True love means we confront the person and rebuke his sin in love in order to help him correct his life. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Prov. 27:17). Discussion, even sharp discussion, in a context of love and friendship can help a brother see and correct his mistakes. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be

tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1-2).

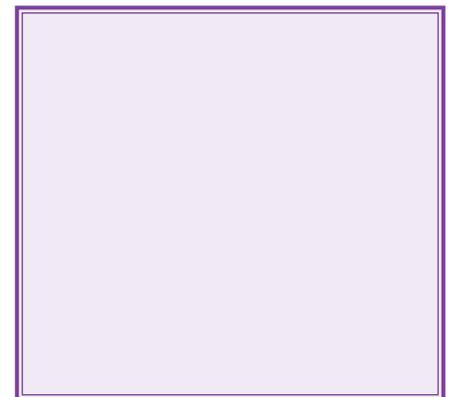
### **Conclusion: Follow the Course of Biblical Love**

Brethren, before spreading charges and accusations, let us carefully and prayerfully follow these Bible principles: (1) Be sure of the facts in the case. It may be that no sin has occurred. (2) Hear both sides of the story. We may learn the brother charged is innocent. (3) If a brother sins, seek to restore him rather than to destroy him. In no case should we spread unfounded charges against a brother lest we ourselves be guilty of sin.

John said, "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us," and, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:12, 16). True love means that we will make a fair and impartial investigation before charging a brother with sin, or before repeating accusations made by other men. If sin is discovered, we must help the sinner to repent and correct his life. If sin is suspected or rumored but not proven by the facts, we must not spread the charges but rather we should rebuke those who are spreading them.

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# Song Books and Singing

W.P. Risener

There are those yet among us who remember when churches were more numerous in rural areas than now, before televisions, computers, or even electricity in many communities. People worked long hard hours, but devoted more time to Bible reading and singing gospel songs than they do now. Churches of Christ and even denominational churches commonly arranged to have a singing school taught every two or three years or so, and it was not unusual for people to spend part of Sunday afternoons and rainy days, either alone or in a group, singing gospel songs. Some who could hardly read or write were able to read music and sing quite well. I know the clock cannot be turned back to those days of yore, yet it saddens me to see many today, even song leaders, who have no time or interest in learning anything about music or improving the singing.

There appears to be general agreement that song books containing scriptural songs are an authorized aid in singing praises to God, and teaching and admonishing one another in our worship (Acts 16:25; Col. 3:16). However, most song books contain songs unsuitable for use in worship, such as those for school groups, patriotic assemblies, etc. No one would likely lead "Row, Row, Row your boat" in the worship, but I recently heard of one leading "America The Beautiful," singing it almost by himself. So a song is not suitable for use in the worship merely because it is in a song book. A "rule of thumb" that has been helpful to me, and I hope may be to others is: if you would not teach it, or lead it in a prayer, don't sing it in the worship. Poetic license allows wide latitude in the way things may be expressed, but will not sanctify false teaching.

In the "old days," before children were given coloring books and toys, the paperbacked song books in common use received rough treatment and usually didn't last very long. But pages from the best made books can be marked up and torn out. Though these books didn't last long, they were cheaper to replace, and because of their light weight were a lot easier on feeble hands and wrists than most of those now in use. Books may now cost \$10.00 or more, with as many as a thousand selections, many unsuitable for use in worship. There are churches in the Philippines,

and perhaps elsewhere, that may not have any songbooks at all, and to me it is a shameful waste of money to replace a book simply because someone liked the one where he previously worshiped, or to match the decor. A few badly worn books can usually be replaced by some taken to the nursery or a classroom, or that people have taken home. Sure, publishers like to sell song books, but they are now quite expensive.

Brethren need to be aware that there are radical changes in songbooks now being sold. Some songs are arranged only for ladies to sing. Others, by the use of brackets are arranged for responsive singing, similar to responsive reading, where half the audience sings a passage and is then answered by the other half singing its part. I am warning about books now being used by churches claiming to be of Christ.

In any large book there will certainly be many songs appropriate for use in our worship. But it seems to me, increasingly, that many are not suitable at all. There seems to be a shift away from songs of praises to the Lord and for teaching and admonishing ourselves in the truth, to those that appeal more to emotions and feelings. Some are more suitable for a college choral group than for a church. Quite a few in the form of a prayer, whether you agree or not, are directly addressed to the Holy Spirit. There are also many references to and quotations from the NIV mistranslation. I counted 150 one-liners in one song book, in many of which the same words were repeated over and over. A new development to me was the large number of two-liners now appearing, twice as many in one book as one-liners.

A number of years ago a song book was published in which an attempt was made to make a number of songs more scriptural. "When We all Get to Heaven" was changed to "When the Saved Get to Heaven," and quite a few other such changes were made. I believe that was a step in the right direction as far as it went.

There are currently several books on the market and more will be published as time goes on. Most of these

# They “Gladly Received the Word”

Larry Ray Hafley

Larry, Lester Roloff said that when they “gladly received the word” (Acts 2) that meant they were saved because no sinner would do such! I am wondering why we did not think of that?

Reply: If the fact that, before they were baptized, they “gladly received the word” in Acts 2:41 means they were saved before they were baptized, it also “proves” the Bereans were saved before they believed. The Bereans “received the word with all readiness of mind” (Acts 17:11). According to Mr. Roloff, that must mean “they were saved because no sinner would do such!” If that is true, the Bereans were saved without faith, for *after* they eagerly “received the word,” the very next verse says, “Therefore many of them believed.”

Hence, if the fact that those on the day of Pentecost “gladly received the word” before they were baptized proves they were saved before baptism, then the fact that the Bereans eagerly “received the word” before they believed proves they were saved before they “believed.” Roloff’s

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contain many really great songs for use in the worship. But if you need new books and you are likely to use almost none except the old favorites, why waste money on a heavy, expensive book of a thousand selections most of which you would never use. Even the less expensive books usually have a large number of the old favorites, so these may very well serve your purposes.

I would suggest that a copy of the available song books be secured and brethren be appointed to go through them, paying especial attention to the words. You will want to consider the cost and the quality of the book. If you have a number of elderly members, you may want to avoid the heavier books. May the Lord help us to be wise and prudent and to worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

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argument means that neither faith nor baptism is essential to salvation, yet the Lord said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

Ask yourself this question, “What word did they ‘gladly receive’?” Whatever that “word” was, it was one in which they were intensely interested. Anxiously, after hearing proof that they had murdered the Messiah, they had implored and inquired, “What shall we do?” (Acts 2:36, 37). It was in answer to that burning question that they received “the word” which they so happily and “gladly received.” *What was that “word”?* It was that they, by the authority of the very one whom they had crucified, should repent and be baptized “for the remission of (their) sins” (Acts 2:38). One cannot present a meaning of what it means to “gladly receive” that word until he defines the “word” which was “gladly received.”

They had not received “the word” which told them baptism was not essential. No, rather, they were acting in response to “the word” which told them to be “baptized . . . for the remission of (their) sins” (Acts 2:38). One can make no judgment about what that expression, “gladly received the word,” means which contradicts the intent and content of that “word.”

Finally, whatever the expression, “gladly received the word,” implies in Acts 2:41, we know it cannot bear Roloff’s explanation, for three verses earlier, the Spirit told those same people to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38; cf. Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16). Thus, even if I did not know the full import of what it means to “gladly receive the word,” I would know that it could not contain Mr. Roloff’s conclusion.

If I were resting on his argument, I believe I would roll off it.

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# Friends

Heath Rogers

Few words in the English language are as beautiful and as meaningful as the word “friend.” Friends are there to share our joys and help us through our struggles. They give us our sweetest memories and our strongest hopes. In short, having friends is one of the things that makes life worth living. Friends are some of the greatest blessings we have from God. Let’s consider some things that the Bible has to say about friends.

**Friends give us unconditional love.** “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Prov. 17:17). Some people will “love” us as long as they can profit from us in some way. The Prodigal Son lost his friends when his money ran out (Luke 15:14-16). True friends stick by us regardless of the circumstances. In fact, moments of adversity show us who our true friends really are. It is at such times that they become like brothers to us.

**Friends watch out for us.** “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Prov. 27:6). Remember the old anti-Drunk Driving slogan: “Friends don’t let friends drink and drive.” What does one do when he sees his friend headed for trouble? He tries to stop him, even if the effort hurts his friend’s feelings. None of us likes to hear that he has made a mistake, but isn’t it better to hear it from a friend? A friend’s criticism may at first be painful like a wound, but the love shown in his action soon turns the pain into gratitude.

**Friends shape our character.** “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Prov. 27:17). Those whom we trust and with whom we spend the most time will have the greatest influence upon us. In this manner, our friends sharpen our countenance. They provide a sounding board for our ideas. They give us encouragement and advice. They pick us up when we are down, as well as calm us down when we are upset.

**Friends give us strength and companionship.** “Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.

But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccl. 4:9-12). Few things are worse than being alone in this world. A man with friends never has to stand alone.

**Friends are sometimes preferred over family.** We may not like to admit this, but we know that it is true. “Do not forsake your own friend or your father’s friend, nor go to your brother’s house in the day of your calamity; better is a neighbor nearby than a brother far away” (Prov. 27:10). We don’t get to choose our families, but we do get to choose our friends. Family ties are strong, but friendships are sometimes even stronger. I have come to learn by experience that a friend nearby is better than a brother far away. I have spent my entire adult life separated from my family. I love them and miss them dearly. No one can ever take their place in my heart. However, because of distance I have had to rely upon my friends in my day of calamity. You know what? They have never disappointed me.

One of the attributes of wisdom is the ability to discern the true value of things. The book of Proverbs, which gives us wisdom, helps us see the true value of friends. God has blessed me with many good friends. I only hope that they have found me to be a good friend in return.

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# I Don't Want To Go To Hell!

David Dann

The punishment of the wicked in hell will be so terrible that Jesus said, “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched—where ‘Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched’” (Mark 9:43-44).

People can be awfully rude and unreasonable at times. A while ago, while dropping off a friend at a nearby subway station, my car was rear-ended at the drop-off point. Since my car had been stopped for several seconds, the incident was clearly the fault of the careless driver behind me. This could hardly even be called a “minor” accident. I couldn't detect any damage to either vehicle when I examined each of them. But my examination of the possible damage was quickly interrupted by a man walking toward me who was being picked up by the careless driver who rear-ended my car. He went on a profanity-laced tirade and loudly made it clear that he believed the whole thing was my fault. Convinced that there was no damage to either vehicle, and seeing where this was headed, I simply shook my head in disbelief, got back in my car, and drove away. One of the first thoughts that crossed my mind as I left the subway station was: “I don't want to go to hell!”

Rudeness, profanity, and ungodliness are bad enough in this life. Just imagine what hell will be like. While the reasons one would not want to go to hell are too numerous to count, let's consider some prominent ones.

**1. All of the very worst people will be there.** The Bible says, “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8). Imagine being trapped in a room for a day with some of the most immoral, insolent, disrespectful, and violent people that have ever lived. Hell will be much worse than that. Hell will feature an ongoing existence filled with those who have spent their lifetimes behaving in the most ungodly ways imaginable. And what's more, the devil and his angels will

also be there (Matt. 25:41). Is that with whom you want to spend eternity? If not, then you don't want to go to hell.

**2. It will be absolutely miserable.** Speaking of the final judgment, the Lord said, “The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:41-42). Hell is pictured in the Bible as a place of boundless misery and regret. Some have joked that hell will not be so bad because all of their friends will be there. But hell is not a place where one can find comfort from friends. Instead, it is described as a place of “outer darkness” where “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:30). Do you want to experience incredible, comfortless torment and misery? If not, then you don't want to go to hell.

**3. It is everlasting punishment.** Of those who will go to hell the Lord says, “And these will go away into everlasting punishment” (Matt. 25:46a). It is also described as “the fire that shall never be quenched” (Mark 9:43). It is one thing to experience misery and torment. It is something else entirely to experience misery and torment without end for all eternity. Every time I sit in the dentist's chair I am reminded that I can tolerate a few minutes of misery at a time. But the misery of hell is worse than anything experienced on earth, and it lasts for more than just a few minutes. Furthermore, there are no breaks or periods of rest from the torment (Rev. 14:11). Do you want to spend the boundless ages of eternity in a place described as “the everlasting fire” (Matt. 25:41)? If not, then you don't want to go to hell.

**4. It is entirely removed from the presence of God.** Of those who will inhabit hell, the apostle Paul writes, “these shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess. 1:9). The Scriptures remind us that, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation

or shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:17). But those in hell will be completely separated from the presence and blessings of God for all eternity. All that is good, pleasant, enjoyable, and helpful will be totally withdrawn. Do you want to spend your unending existence absolutely devoid of the blessings that proceed from the Lord? If not, then you don’t want to go to hell.

is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it” (Matt. 7:13). Let us not forget that, perhaps most miserable of all, hell will include those who almost made it to heaven (Matt. 7:21-23). Imagine the terrible, unending regret that will be felt by those who end up in hell even though they knew better. I don’t want to go to hell! Do you?

**Conclusion**

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad

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# A Good Example . . .

Robert N. Moore

The other day, a fine Christian young man told me a story about what happened at school that day. Here is how the events unfolded . . .

He was in the lunch line waiting to place his order for something to eat when he noticed through the reflection in the glass that a young man behind him was reaching into his backpack. The young Christian chose not to say anything until they got to the register to pay. First of all, thinking that maybe the young man had taken his cell phone, he checked his backpack, but saw that it was there. But, the young Christian noticed a pen was missing. So, he asked the young man, “Did you take anything out of my backpack?” The young man said, “No,” to which the young Christian responded, “I think you did. You see, I had three black pens. Two of them are full of ink, but the third pen started running out of ink this morning. I think you took and have the ‘third’ pen with little or no ink. So, why don’t you give me that pen back, and I will give you one of the pens that is still full of ink.” Well, you can imagine the look on the young man’s face—a look of disbelief and bewilderment. The young man proceeded to pull the “empty” pen out of his pocket while at the same time the young Christian handed him a new pen “in exchange.” Then, the young Christian said, “Listen, you don’t have to steal any more pens. If you need a new one, just come ask me and I will give you one.”



As this young Christian man finished telling me his story, I was speechless. I mean, what do you say? It was and is one of the greatest examples of Christ likeness I have ever heard. All I could do was reflect on how blessed I was to know this fine young Christian man and to have him as my brother in Christ. But, if you’re me, it gets even better. You see, I am even more blessed, because he is not only my “joint-heir” in the kingdom—he is also my son, Robert Joel Moore. Solomon through inspiration wrote, “A wise son maketh a glad father.” This “glad” father says, “Amen.”

*Sinton, Texas*

# Divorce and Remarriage in Ancient Times

Kyle Pope

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:9 that fornication is the sole cause for an innocent spouse to divorce the guilty and remarry, was not produced in a moral vacuum, but in a real world of people facing the same challenges that exist today. Many of the loose values of today are merely echoes of ancient times.

## Customs of the Pagans

In the Greek world divorce was allowed for many reasons. In Athens while a woman seeking a divorce had to go before the Archon, a man could simply send a wife from his house (Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 8). Among the Spartans it was believed that a barren woman should be put away (Herodotus 5.39).

According to tradition, Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, established marriage laws which allowed a man to put away his wife only for poisoning the children, counterfeiting the keys to the house, and adultery (Plutarch, *Romulus* 22). By the first century such laws were disregarded. Caesar Augustus pushed through legislation intended to strengthen marriage and limit divorce, yet mostly it concerned financial penalties for unjustly divorcing a wife (Seutonius, *Augustus* 34). Sadly, the dowry women brought into marriage was the only thing that preserved many ancient unions.

Not all ancients were so tolerant of divorce. Tacitus claimed that the Germans maintained very strict marriage codes. Adultery was severely punished and a woman was said to take "... one husband, just as she has one body for life" (Germania 18, 19).

## Personal Behavior

To the rulers of the lands in which the gospel was first preached the Lord's teachings on marriage and divorce were in direct opposition to their own lifestyles. The governor Felix, to whom Paul spoke of "righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come" (Acts 24:25) persuaded Drusilla to forsake her lawful husband, the king of Emesa, and unlawfully marry him (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*

20.7.2). Cicero, governor of Cilicia, the province of Paul's birth, a century earlier divorced Terentia, his wife of thirty years, for squandering his assets, then married a younger wealthy woman to pay his debts (Plutarch, *Cicero* 41).

All the emperors mentioned in Scripture lived in violation of Christ's teaching. Augustus (Luke 2:1) divorced his first wife, Claudia, before the marriage was consummated. His second wife, Scribonia, previously married to two former consuls, he divorced claiming, "I could not bear the way she nagged at me." His true love Livia, he stole away from her husband, although she was pregnant at the time (Seutonius, *Augustus* 62).

Livia's child, Tiberius, the second emperor (Luke 3:1), divorced his first wife, Vipsania, when she became pregnant again shortly after the birth of their son. Tiberius married Julia, the daughter of Augustus, whom he eventually divorced for sexual immorality. Although he had passed laws banishing noble women who had enrolled as prostitutes, he maintained a palace on the island of Capri where he indulged his own immoral desires (Seutonius, *Tiberius* 7; 35; 43).

Claudius, the third emperor mentioned in Scripture (Acts 11:28), divorced his first wife for "scandalous behavior" and suspicion of murder. His second wife he divorced for less serious reasons. His third wife actually signed a formal marriage contract with another man while maintaining a marriage with him. His most scandalous marriage was made with Agrippina, his niece. Claudius actually had a law passed which allowed uncles to marry their nieces so that he would not be charged with incest (Seutonius, *Claudius* 26).

In the second century our Lord's teaching found no nobler audience. The religious writer Justin in a letter to the emperor Antoninus Pius defending the Lord's teachings claimed, "... those who make second marriages according to human law are sinners in the sight of our Teacher" (*First Apology* 15). Antoninus was the adopted son of Hadrian,

# Brother-in-Christ

William V. Beasley

On our early trips to India (some twenty-five years ago) to preach and teach the gospel of God's Son, we were, at times, introduced to individuals (generally preachers) and told, "This is a brother-in-Christ," "He is a Christian," or "He is a member of the church." Later, when we learned that the individual in question was not a brother-in-Christ, but a denominational preacher, we were chagrined, disappointed, and, perhaps, even embarrassed. We wondered why one whom we recognized as a gospel preacher would introduce a denominationalist as a brother-in-Christ. We recognized, of course, that there was a need for more teaching on what constitutes one a Christian, on how one becomes a member of the Lord's church, and on the subject of denominationalism. It did not take too long (although the teaching had to be repeated several times, since we were dealing with different individuals in different parts of the state of Andhra Pradesh) before the introductions were worded differently. We would be introduced and told, "This man is a denominational Christian," "He is a member of the Church of South India," etc. Still, I wondered why? Why did our brethren (ones who had been taught the truth

and obeyed it) want to associate and identify closely with denominationalists?

The number of "Christians" (the quotation marks indicate that this is an accommodative use of the word, and includes all who make any real claim to following Jesus Christ [Church of South India, Baptists, Methodists, Mormons, JW's, Roman Catholics, Hebrons, etc.]) in India is percentage-wise very small. Approximately 3 to 3.5 percent of the population of India claim to follow Jesus exclusively. There are a number of ecumenical Hindus who are willing to place a "picture of Jesus" (accommodative usage) along side their pictures of Krishna (or one of the other Hindu deities) and Swami Send-Me-Your-Money. In fact, we have had classes in just such a home. Still the question comes, "Why . . .?" There are communities or cities in the United States where the population of Christians (New Testament usage) is no more than three percent, and we do not identify with the denominationalists. Or, do we?

For the past fourteen years I have earned my daily bread in the corrections field (babysitting everything from drunks to child molesters to murderers) while also teaching the gospel of Christ on a regular basis. The corrections field is, it seems to me, filled with the irreligious. There are occasional exceptions; there are individuals who are not only religious, but who are not averse to talking openly about the Christ of God. There are, as might be expected, others who are members of denominational or sectarian churches who seemingly try to keep their religious affiliation a secret. After a few years working in corrections, I noticed that I tended to gravitate toward the openly religious denominationalist. We had something in common (a belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that the Bible is God's word) and were able to discuss spiritual things with greater ease. Through the years I have had some forthright exchanges with other officers, inmates, and with religious volunteers who came to the jail to teach (indoctrinate) the inmates. Being in a negative spiritual environment, I sought out (consciously, and, at times, subconsciously) individuals who were spiritually inclined, someone with whom I was more at ease, more open.

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the emperor widely known for his adulterous homosexual relationship with a young man named Antinous (Spartianus, *Hadrian* 12,14).

## The Remains of Shattered Lives

Some suggest that "things are just different today!" A papyrus divorce certificate dating to 13 B.C. reveals little has changed. Although the document says nothing about the pain and betrayal that led two people to separate, it does reveal hearts as cold and materialistic as those in modern divorce courts. It declares, ". . . Zois acknowledges that she has received from Antipater by hand from his house the material which he received for dowry, clothes in the value of 120 drachmae and a pair of gold earrings. . ." (H and E 6). What a sad epitaph of a failed marriage (Ancient Road Publications™ — <http://kmpope.home.att.net>).

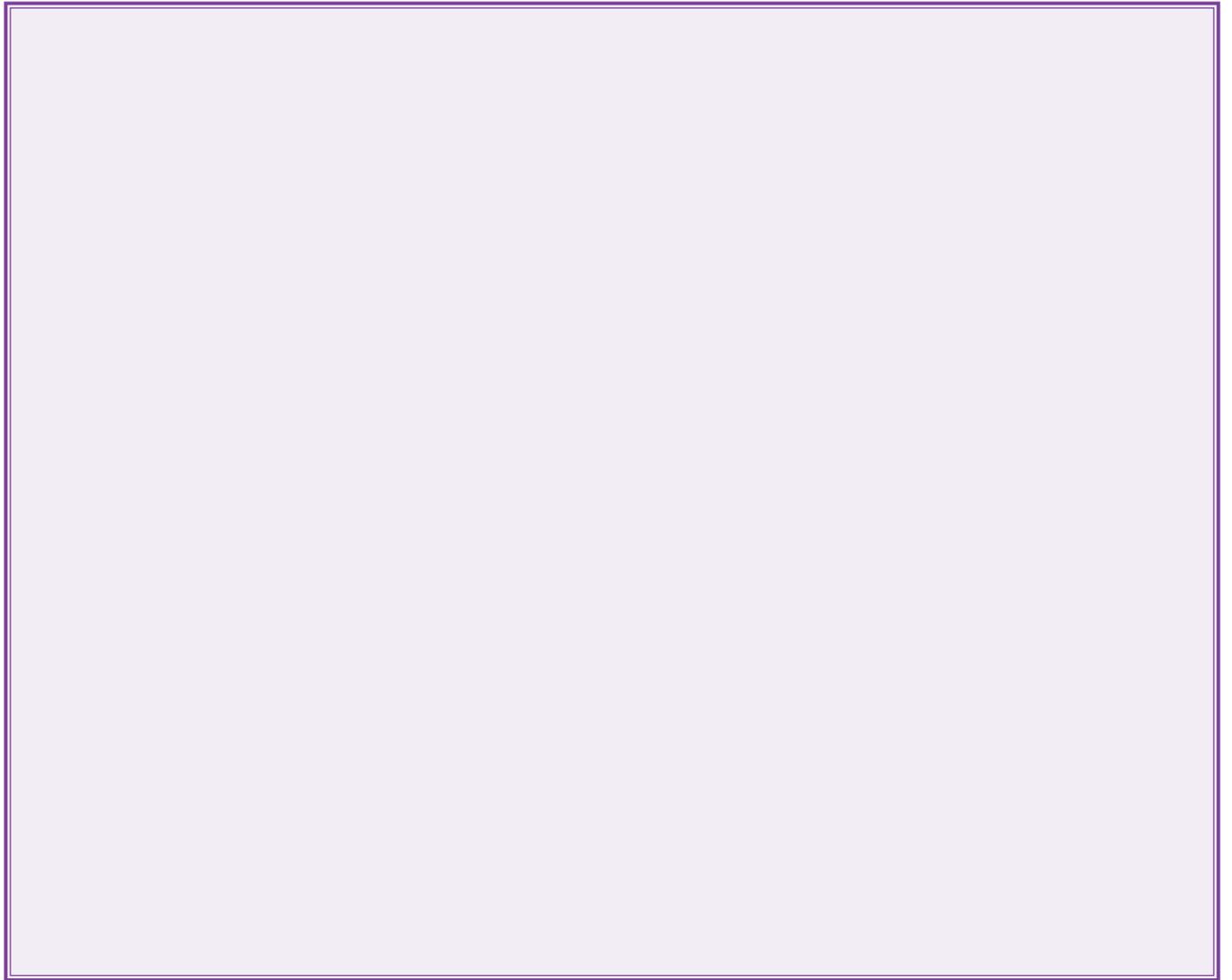
I was doing precisely what our brethren in India were doing, with but one exception. I knew that the Pentecostal officer or the Baptist inmate was not a brother-in-Christ, not a member of the Lord's church. And I certainly would not introduce him as such. There was one inmate who may have been a brother-in-Christ. At least, he claimed to be a member of the church of Christ. He refused to believe that I was a brother, but then I had just disciplined him for a failure to obey the rules.

We (American Christians in general) need to understand and proclaim (in the work place as well as in the Prayer Hall [Indian term for what we generally call a "Church building"]) that a Christian is a baptized believer (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; etc.). We need to realize that baptism is "for," or "unto" forgiveness or the remission of sins. "Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the

gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are faraway, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him'" (Acts 2:38-39, NRSV). Today's English Version also has the word "so that your sins will be forgiven" in this passage. If it hasn't been baptized in order to the remission of sins, it is not a Christian. We need to view the active denominationalist not as a brother-in-Christ, but as a subject of our evangelization efforts—and then put forth the effort. "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:18-20, ASV).

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## “Young People” continued from front page

**2. How this happens.** When young people associate with worldly people they will not suddenly change. Rather, there is a gradual drifting (cf. Heb. 2:1). As time goes on, they become desensitized to sin (Ps. 1:1-3). Pressure mounts when they are outnumbered by ungodly people (Exod. 23:2; Rom. 12:2). It then becomes easy to be just like those around them (Prov. 23:20-21).

### The Poor Example of Their Parents

**1. Young people learn from what they see.** The general principle of the power of example (Matt. 5:13-16; 1 Tim. 4:12) would certainly apply to what children see in their parents. Children often become what that see in their parents. “Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use this proverb against you: ‘Like mother, like daughter!’” (Ezek. 16:44). The Proverb writer said, “The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him” (Prov. 20:7). Don’t forget that *actions* speak louder than *words*.

**2. The poor example of parents.** Young people often see parents who: don’t go to Bible class; don’t go on Sunday nights; don’t attend on Wednesday evenings; miss a lot of services when they don’t feel good; miss a lot for work; give emphasis to material things over the spiritual; stress the importance of school work over spiritual matters; and have toyed with sin. It should not be surprising when the children turn out to be just like they were trained!

### The Weak Image of the Church

From the time a child is old enough to pay attention to what goes on at church (for example, ten years old), he forms an image of the church and Christianity. What image does this child form by the time he is twenty years old? This ten year period is rather short in the history of a local church, but leaves a lasting impression on the young person.

**1. A strong impressive image of the church is powerful.** Think of the powerful influence on our young people when they see a local congregation where they learn the Bible and understand it. Think of the impact of seeing that truth in action in those around them. Think of the good done when the young people see conviction and strength. What do they learn when they see that sin will not be tolerated? Think of the image they have by seeing people who love and respect each other.

**2. Too many young people see a weak image of the church.** In too many places the young people hear preaching that is weak and watered down. The message says little or nothing. In other places the preaching (though it is true to the book) may be hard to follow. Sometimes Bible class teachers are unprepared or may not have a “clue” what the lesson is about. Add to that the fact that they often see hy-

pocrisy in some of the members. They may hear grumbling from the members about each other. What kind of image would all of this give to a young person?

### The Lax Standards at Home

**1. Training young people requires high standards.** God expects parents to train a child in the way he should go (Prov. 22:6). Paul wrote that fathers are to see that their children are brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). To do so requires *high* standards.

**2. Common lax standards.** In some homes there is little corrective discipline in the younger years (Prov. 22:15; 19:18). Some parents are careless in watching what their children wear, the music they listen to, the movies or television programs they watch, who they are with and where they go. Many parents do not make sure their children have their Bible lessons prepared. Little effort is made to communicate, to bond or to teach (Prov. 29:15). And then we wonder what has happened to our children.

### Little Time is Spent Together as a Family

**1. There are many responsibilities that cannot be fulfilled without spending some time together.** It takes time to be an example. It takes time to teach our children. It takes time to help them through problems. It takes time to understand our children. It takes time to communicate. It takes time to build a relationship that lasts.

**2. We must redeem the time (Eph. 5:15-16).** That means we need to make wise use of the little time we have. We do not want to look back later and regret that we did not spend more time together as a family.

**3. Often, families are too busy to really be a family.** When we are too busy to eat together, to talk about each other’s day, to go somewhere as a family, or help a teenager through some problems, we should not be surprised when we lose our young people.

### Conclusion

These are just a few of the reasons we lose our young people. Hopefully, listing these few will help parents to assess what may be happening to their children before it is too late.

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“**Christmas**” continued from page 2

Yes, I would agree with brother Ross that churches of Christ are changing how they react to Christmas! The Pegasus church not only participates in the religious celebration of Christmas, it also is sponsoring a service using mechanical instruments of music. Things are changing rapidly in the institutional churches as many of them are transitioning into the mainstream of Protestant denominationalism.

But things are changing among us as well. Twenty-five years ago, church bulletins nearly always contained an article around Christmas and Easter about unscriptural holidays. Today such articles are rare. How long has it been since you heard a sermon about unscriptural holy days where you worship? My judgment is that some of us have bought the same line as our institutional brethren: “Visitors come to our church on Christmas expecting to hear about the birth of Jesus. We don’t disappoint them. It’s too important to reach out in a positive way at that time” Have we changed our preaching to keep our visitors coming back?

Denominational folks have had special Christmas services for a long time. Many of their pageants can be seen on TV, other presentations occur in various local churches and nativity scenes are frequently presented on church lawns. This year a couple of churches in our area have announced that they will conduct their special Christmas services on Saturday so that they can cancel their services on Sunday, December 25th. Steve Poe, the preacher for the Northview Christian Life Church in Carmel, Indiana, explained why they decided to cancel their Sunday services on December 25th saying, “We value family life, and Christmas is probably the biggest family day of the year. . . . We want to honor and encourage that with our congregation and also our volunteers. We feel we’re not respecting that by asking volunteers to serve on Christmas.” This special “holy day” which man has created has gotten to be so important that this church decided to cancel God’s divinely appointed day for worship.

### A Reminder

The purpose of this article is to remind us of the necessity of emphasizing the fundamentals of the gospel. Peter emphasized the need to re-teach the fundamentals of the gospel when he said, “Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance” (2 Pet. 1:12-15). Preachers and elders need to remember that we constantly have a turn over in membership—young people growing into maturity, people moving in, growth in spiritual maturity of the ones who are

members, etc. Old truths need to be re-stated; one must not assume that “everyone knows this” and not preach on it.

The issue about Christmas is the issue of whether man has the right to establish a holy day for the church to observe or has God revealed how he wants men to worship him. In the Old Testament, the northern nation of Israel had a king named Jeroboam who made many changes in Old Testament worship. He moved the place of worship from Jerusalem to Dan and Bethel, appointed priests of every tribe, set up a calf at the two sanctuaries, and made new holy days. “And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made” (1 Kings 12:32). One could argue that, so long as one worships God, what difference does it make which day the feast is observed? However, the biblical historian succinctly says about Jeroboam’s changes in Israel’s worship, “And this thing became a sin” (1 Kings 12:30). So significant were the apostasies which Jeroboam introduced that the historian made this assessment of several of Israel’s subsequent kings, “And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin” (1 Kings 15:34; cf. 16:2, 19; 22:52; 2 Kings 3:3; 10:29; etc.). The point is that God has revealed to man how he wishes to be worshiped and man does not have the right to change divinely revealed worship.

The New Testament draws upon the principles revealed in the Old Testament. Jesus said about the changes which the Pharisees made in their teaching and worship, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:8-9). Worship that is authorized by man rather than by God is sinful worship. Paul spoke about humanly devised worship being “will worship” (that is self-imposed rules) that had no value to God (Col. 2:22).

Those warnings in Scripture about adding to and detracting from divine revelation need to be taught to a new generation.

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11).

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 into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

Whether the teaching is done in December, April, or July is of little consequence, but the teaching needs to be done so that this generation of Christians will recognize that man sins when he creates holy days for the church, whether those holy days be Christmas, Easter, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, or Thanksgiving.

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## Preacher Needed

**Hermiston, Oregon:** The church at 930 E. Diagonal Blvd. is looking for a sound, conservative gospel preacher. Hermiston is a small but growing farming community in northeastern Oregon. They are a conservative and faithful group of about 30. If interested, call 541-567-0741 or 541-449-3671 or e-mail [alexjam31@yahoo.com](mailto:alexjam31@yahoo.com). James Alexander.

## Field Report

### India Report — 2005

On October 10, 2005 I left home for my fifteenth and best gospel preaching/teaching trip to India. By God's grace, I was safely reunited with my wife late on November 16. During the time in India I taught three Preacher Training Classes, each one lasting from Monday through Friday; normally we had classes from 9:00 a.m. to noon and from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. I also preached a scant twenty (20) times. Normally, this would not have been the rainy season in India, but the heaviest rains in some thirty years cut the number of preaching appointments nearly in half. This may have been fortuitous; by the end of the third Preachers Training (i.e., Conversion) Class (composed primarily of denominational preachers) my voice was about gone, and the next week (in which most of the preaching was done), I was in doubt, at times, if I could continue. There were fifty-seven conversions, one of whom (Sk. Asli) had been a Muslim. The ages of those who were baptized ranged from seventeen (B. Gopal, Hindu) to seventy (N. Saraswathi, also a Hindu). The fifty-seven (57) conversions were thirty-

two (32) less than my last similar effort in 2003. In spite of the raw statistics just given this was, I firmly believe, my finest effort in the Lord's work in India.

On this trip a good deal of time was spent teaching denominational preachers and preaching in denominational congregations. The one statistic that makes this trip unique (to me) is the fact that one-third (19) of the fifty-seven individuals baptized were denominational preachers. Most of the denominational preachers were Individual Workers (i.e., Independent Churches), with a few associated with various Pentecostal groups, one was from GFA (Gospel For Asia), another had emotional ties with CSI (his grandfather was a Pastor in the Church of South India), and one was from the Lutheran Church. The soul of a (former) denominational preacher is of no more spiritual value than the soul of a field worker, but the (former) denominational preacher has a far more likely prospect of being able to lead others to the truth. In fact, this has already begun. Three of the (former) denominational preachers have already been joined by his wife; one father has taken a stand with his son, and a son joined his father in Christ.

To cap it off, I have received two invitations to come to two new (to me) areas to hold additional Preacher Training (i.e., Conversion) Classes with denominational preachers. I do not expect to accept these invitations in the near future, but such is a possibility in a year or two.

Before going to India we had 40,000 tracts and 5000 song books printed, and left the money to print an additional 120,000 tracts. That is a total of 10,000 copies each of sixteen different tracts. Lord willing, another tract, yet to be written, will be translated and printed within a few months. Following one of the classes, one of my translators requested that the material be put into tract form. This we intend to do, and will have it printed as soon as practical.

Each preacher who attended one of the three Preachers Training Classes received, on the last day of classes, a package with five of the song book and five copies each of the four tracts already printed. In addition, the men who attended the third, i.e., denominational class received a copy of L.A. Molt's tract *What Is The Church of Christ?* on the first day of classes. There were approximately thirty-five denominational preachers in the third week of classes. Before leaving India we saw seventeen (17) of these men put on their Lord in baptism. The other two denominational preachers who were baptized were not in the Preachers Training (Conversion) Classes, but were present when we had a preaching service at the denominational congregation.

Thanks to the generosity of some individual saints, I was also able to leave benevolence and support for three preachers. It is always an encouragement to me to know that many of the saints in America are truly (financially) interested in the gospel being preached in other places. For our brethren in India, I say, "Thank-you"!

Rejoice with me! Pray for our new brothers and sisters-in-Christ! To God be all the glory! **William V. Beasley.**





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