



Olympic Mistake

Johnny O. Trail

By now, most people have heard about the opening ceremonies of the Summer Olympics in Paris. The responses over social media have varied from complete outrage to complete shock that the followers of Christ would respond in such a manner. Some have argued that the scene depicted by several drag queens was nothing more than the re-creation of a pagan feast depicting Dionysus, the god of wine, fertility, and ecstasy. One of the creators of the scene even made this assertion. Still, many people viewed it as a re-creation of Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the "The Last Supper."

Regardless of what the organizers of the opening ceremony intended; many people were offended by what one commentator described the scene as being— "Jesus Christ as a transgender drag queen." Enough reasonable people associated the ceremony with The Last Supper to make one give some credence to the assertion of profaning a world-famous iconographic representation of the Savior's instituting of communion.

Still, the denials have come in a fast and furious manner. Barbara Butch, who was at the center of the table in the opening ceremony recently deleted an Instagram post where "she" displayed a picture of the opening ceremony along with a da Vinci's painting. In the post "she" remarked "O yes! O, yes! The new gay testament." It seems that the denial of the depiction of the "Lords Supper" falls apart upon examination of the evidence.

Furthermore, a recent article reveals that the Olympic Committee knew what the opening ceremony contained.

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Jesus and the Twelve

In Christ is found an example of a preacher mentoring preachers through the shepherd leadership model. Jesus mentored the twelve disciples as a group and each disciple as an individual. Jesus loved them unto the end (John 13:1). He taught an object lesson by washing their feet (John 13:4–17), specifically instructing the twelve as to why this was necessary (vv.12–17). By being a friend to tax collectors and sinners, the Lord's actions proved to the twelve that every soul was valuable to God (Luke 7:34). He also exemplified obedience to the Father even unto His death on the cross (cf. Heb. 5:8, 9; 1 Pet. 2:21 ff.).

Jesus protected the twelve by warning them of the wolves in the world (Luke 10:3) and the leaven of the Pharisees' false righteousness (Luke 12:1). He promised to continue to protect them as they heard and followed Him (John 10:27, 28).

Preachers Mentoring Preachers in the New Testament

Andy Erwin

Jesus fed the twelve through His sermons and personal teachings with a diet of sound doctrine intended to bring them to greater understanding of obedience and true holiness (cf. Matt. 5–7; Matt. 23). He oversaw the spiritual growth of the twelve by helping them to *learn* what was needed (e.g. Luke 11:1–4) and to *unlearn* when necessary (cf. Matt. 20:20–28). Jesus provided opportunities for the twelve to work, to utilize their abilities and gifts, and to gain valuable experience (cf. Matt. 10). He was their constant companion and friend (John 15:13, 14).

He equipped His disciples for a greater purpose, teaching them the value of serving others as did He (Mark 10:44, 45). He entrusted them with the work of continuing His mission of seeking and saving the lost by preaching the gospel to the world (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:47, 48; cf. Luke 19:10).

In every way, Jesus was a mentor to the twelve. He chose to mentor by using the shepherd leadership model His Father introduced in the Old Testament. His relationship with the disciples was based upon

His example, His feeding and nurturing, His protection, His fellowship, His edification, His equipping, and His entrusting.

As mentees, the disciples had to receive the wisdom and guidance imparted by their Shepherd Mentor. Eleven of them chose to follow Him. One betrayed Him.¹

Paul, Timothy, and Titus

Paul provides a second example of a preacher who mentored preachers through the shepherd leadership model. As with Christ, Paul's mentoring of others was informal, as fellow preachers worked alongside Paul as apprentices – at least for a while. Paul's relationship with Timothy serves as one example of his mentoring relationships. Timothy did not have a believing father, so Paul became a father figure in the faith to him (see 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1). From their first encounter, Paul took Timothy unto himself as a mentee.²

Timothy became a trusted companion to Paul in Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia (cf. Acts 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Rom. 16:21; 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil.

¹ The betrayal of Judas demonstrates two sides of the same coin. For the mentoring experience to be successful, the mentee must desire and follow the guidance of the mentor. Judas' betrayal teaches us that a person can literally have the Son of God as a mentor and still lack the necessary spiritual qualities to be successful in ministry. Failure to persevere in ministry is not

always due to the fault, lack, or inferiority of mentors.

² F.F. Bruce provides a good explanation as to why Paul had Timothy circumcised. Having a Jewish mother, Timothy was considered Jewish. But, having a Gentile father, Timothy was considered an apostate Jew. Timothy's apostate status would have jeopardized Paul's preaching

in the synagogues of the area. F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, revised edition (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 304–5. We would add that his apostate status would have also prohibited Timothy's inclusion in that ministry setting.

1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Philem. 1). Paul equipped, nurtured, and encouraged Timothy until his death, and for ministry after his death (cf. 2 Tim. 4:1–8). He trusted Timothy in the work as his own son and fellow worker (Acts 17:14; 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor. 1:19; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thess. 3:2, 6).

The two letters written to Timothy by Paul are especially telling when considering Paul's role as a mentor to him. Paul wrote to Timothy concerning conduct in the church (1 Tim. 3:15). Various matters of church polity were discussed (1 Tim. 2, 3, 5).³ The letter contains instruction to protect Timothy from false doctrines and false teachers (1 Tim. 1:3, 4, 6; 2:18–20; 4:1–3). Encouragement is also given to take heed to his ministry (1 Tim. 4:12–16) and to maintain a holy and faithful life until the appearing of Christ (1 Tim. 6:11–16).

In 2 Timothy, Paul encouraged Timothy to use his gifts (2 Tim. 1:6, 7). He was encouraged to hold fast to the pattern of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13). Timothy was instructed to mentor others as he had been mentored by Paul (2 Tim. 2:2, 3). He was told to continue studying and to continue refuting error (2 Tim. 2:15, 16). Timothy was reassured in the inspiration of the scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15–17) and charged to preach the scriptures faithfully (2 Tim. 4:1–4),

looking to Paul as an example (vv.5–8). Their friendship becomes apparent once again as the letter closes with Paul's desire to see him soon (2 Tim. 4:9, 21).

In every way, Paul was a mentor to Timothy. He chose to mentor by using the shepherd leadership model exemplified by Christ. His relationship with Timothy was based upon a common goal and the shared values of preaching the gospel and saving the lost. He could challenge Timothy to genuine and frank self-assessment. As a mentee, Timothy was more like a son to Paul.⁴ He became a trusted coworker and someone Paul could depend on to build upon his labors.

Paul's relationship with Titus also serves as an example of a preacher mentoring another preacher informally as an apprentice. In the case of Paul and Titus, the age discrepancy between the two may not have been as large as it was with Paul and Timothy.⁵ No mention is ever made of his youth as it was with Timothy (1 Tim. 4:12). Titus does not appear to be a novice. However, like Timothy, he is regarded as a son in the faith by Paul (Titus 1:4).⁶

Titus traveled with Paul to Jerusalem to discuss the matter of Gentile circumcision (Gal. 2:1). Paul could trust Titus to walk in the same spirit (2 Cor. 12:18). He was trusted

significantly in communicating with the churches of Macedonia and Achaia and handling the delicate matter of their contribution to Judea (2 Cor. 7:13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23). During such times as he was absent from Paul, the apostle sincerely worried about Titus' wellbeing (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6).

In the epistle to Titus, Titus is trusted with appointing elders in Crete (Titus 1:5–9). He is warned about false teachers and emboldened to confront them (Titus 1:11–16). Titus is instructed to see to the mentoring practices among the Christians he serves (Titus 2:1–8). He is encouraged to speak the grace of God and the mission of Christ boldly and with all authority (Titus 2:11–15). The third chapter of the letter contains practical advice for ministry (Titus 3:1–11). What should Titus emphasize in his teaching? What type of teaching and individual should be avoided? Paul is also anxious to see Titus as his love for his mentee is evident to all (Titus 3:12–15).

As Paul was a mentor to Timothy, he also mentored Titus. He chose to mentor by using the shepherd leadership model exemplified by Christ. His relationship with Titus was based upon a common goal and the shared values of preaching the gospel, edifying the church, and

³ Paul was depending upon Timothy and Titus to build upon the work previously done in the churches. The work was being entrusted to them to continue faithfully with evangelistic zeal, determination, and a strong work ethic. For further discussion on "work ethic" in the

Pastoral Epistles, see Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 30–41.

⁴ See 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1.

⁵ The ages of Titus and Timothy are significant to this study as preachers' ages vary as well.

⁶ It is important to note that Paul did not have children. Timothy and Titus were his "sons" whom he loved dearly.

saving the lost. Titus became a trusted coworker and someone Paul could depend upon to continue his ministry.

Conclusion

The significance of the mentoring relationship among older and younger preachers is clear in scripture and its importance cannot be overstated today. The church is experiencing a decreased interest in young men desiring to preach and an increased number of burnouts among those who do.

The scriptural model for ministerial mentoring will go along way to change these trends. As we seek to follow the New Testament as our pattern in all things, let us not neglect to see and to implement God's pattern for encouraging and training fellow ministers of the gospel.



And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."
Mark 16:15

How how shall they hear without a preacher?

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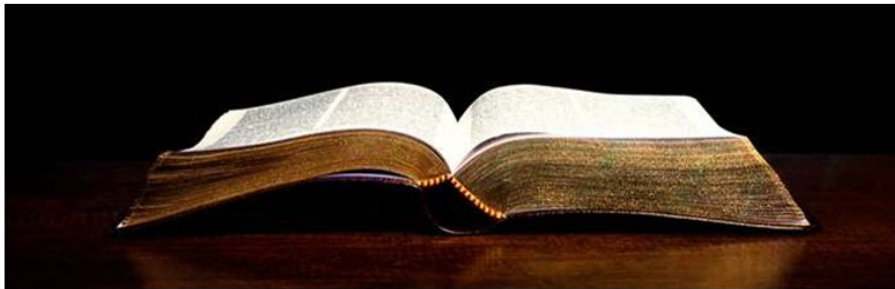

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Heresies Against the Holy Spirit

Jackson Erwin

Ancient Heresies Against the Holy Spirit

In the early centuries of the church, four major heresies developed to explain the Holy Spirit and his relationship within the Trinity. These four views are: Arianism, Sabellianism, Montanism, and Macedonianism. All these approaches were rejected and labeled as heresy in the church.

Arianism

This view is named after Arius, a fourth-century Alexandrian presbyter. Arius's focus was primarily Christological. He believed that Christ was God's first created being, and therefore not deity. Rather, Christ had a unique relationship with the Father and played a critical role in saving mankind. One of his chief texts was Revelation 3:14, where Christ is called "the beginning of God's creation."

This belief resulted in a denial of the Trinity, believing that the Father alone was God. Arius's view of the Father, Spirit, and Son was hierarchical in nature. The Father was over both the Son and Spirit, while the Son was over the Spirit. Brought to its logical conclusion, Arius also denied the deity of the Holy Spirit.

One of Arius's followers, Auxentius,⁷ explained the Arian

view of the Holy Spirit in his confession: "I believe in one Holy Spirit, *an enlightening and sanctifying power...*[who is] *neither God nor Lord*, but the faithful minister of Christ; *not equal*, but subject and obedient in all things to the Son. And I believe the Son to be subject and obedient in all things to God the Father."⁸

This summarizes the Arian view. The Holy Spirit is not a person, but an "enlightening and sanctifying power." "It" is God's instrument, but not God himself. The Spirit is "not equal" to the Father or Son in power or authority. The Spirit is the lowest of the three.

The Arian controversy was one of the earliest heresies the church faced in the post-apostolic era. Ultimately, his views were condemned at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, was Arius's primary opponent. Following the council, the church developed a creed to summarize the teachings of the church. This is now known as the Nicene Creed. It reads:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true

God, begotten not made, of one essence with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end.

Later, the church expanded the creed at the Council of Constantinople (381 AD) to include a statement of faith concerning the Holy Spirit. This is sensible, given that Arianism and other heresies would directly impact the third Person of the Trinity. The addition reads:

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver-of-life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

⁷ Auxentius was an Arian bishop of Milan (355–374 AD). He led the Arian heresy in the Western church until his death in 374 AD. Because of his close

relationship with the Roman Emperor Valentinian I, he was not excommunicated when a synod condemned the Arians in 369 AD.

⁸ This is taken from the creed of the Arian Ulfias (311–383 AD), quoted by Auxentius to conclude his letter.

The statement that the Holy Spirit is to be “worshipped and glorified” provides a direct attestation to his deity. The Spirit is not an instrument of the Father, nor is he a creation of the Son. He is fully God and worthy of one’s worship and adoration.

Sabellianism

Named after Sabellius, a third-century presbyter in Rome. Sabellius taught that God does not consist of three Persons. Instead, God is *one* Person who has taken on three different *forms* or *modes*. His views became increasingly popular in Egypt. In 261 AD, he was excommunicated by Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria. Today, this view is commonly known as Modalism.

Sabellius believed that God would periodically take on three different roles throughout human history. Sometimes, God would appear as the Father—demonstrating his love, providence, and authority. At other times, he would take on the form of the Son. For thirty-three years, he lived on the earth and then died on the cross. A final form God took was that of the Spirit. In this role he indwells believers, works miracles, and inspires the Scriptures.

This view arose from a desire to understand the nature of the Trinity. As human beings, we cannot understand the concept of one Being consisting of three Persons. However, just because we cannot logically comprehend it does not discount its truthfulness. God is omnipresent (everywhere; not limited by space)

and atemporal (not limited by time). Yet, we cannot understand his omnipresence since we are limited by space and time. Whenever we try to fully understand the nature of the Trinity, the quicker we find ourselves teaching heresy.

We should listen to God when he said, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8–9, ESV).

Even though Sabellianism was labeled as heresy, the doctrine has kept appearing throughout church history. Oneness Pentecostalism is a prime example of modern-day Sabellianism.

Montanism

The third major heresy is named after Montanus, a second-century prophet who led a schism within the church. Montanus believed that he was called to be a spokesman for the Holy Spirit somewhere between 172–173 AD.

While he was generally orthodox in doctrine, he was unorthodox in practice. The Montanist movement was also led by two female prophets named Priscilla and Maximilla. These women left their husbands, joined Montanus, and claimed to be the recipients of a new revelation. This was, of course, against what was prescribed in Scripture (1 Cor. 14:29–40).

Montanism grew in popularity due to the perceived conception that

the church was weak in morals and discipline. They called for strict ascetic living. Additionally, the Montanists viewed the Spirit’s work as intense and emotionally/physically overwhelming. This garnished the attention of many who believed the supernatural was lacking in the second-century church.

The Montanists not only emphasized the role of the Spirit. They also taught that the millennial reign of Christ was at hand. However, rather than expecting Christ to reign in Jerusalem, Montanus prophesied that he would reign in Pepuza—a small village in the region of Phrygia (Asia Minor). Montanus believed he would serve an important role during the millennial reign.

This movement spread as far as Rome and North Africa. One of their most influential converts was Tertullian, an acclaimed writer and teacher in the church. Tertullian converted to Montanism in 201–202 AD. However, because of his reputation within the church, he was not excommunicated like the others. His writings have provided church historians with first-hand sources for the major doctrines of Montanism.

As stated previously, Montanism upheld many of the core tenets of orthodox Christianity. They believed in the doctrine of the Trinity. They also held similar beliefs regarding the sacraments (baptism and the Lord’s Supper). However, there were also some major differences.

- They condemned Christians who fled from areas of persecution (despite them not denying Christ).
- They forbade women from wearing expensive, ornamental clothing. Virgins were likewise commanded to wear veils.
- They taught a radical form of the priesthood of the believer (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6). In their understanding, men and women had completely identical roles. This allowed both men and women to teach, preach, and lead the church.
- They prohibited Christians from remarrying, even after a spouse's death—considering it adultery.
- They taught that any sins committed after baptism could not be forgiven. Christians outside of the Montanist movement also held this view. As a result, a believer would often postpone their baptism until they were one their deathbed.
- They believed in a continuation of miraculous gifts. Two of the most prominent gifts were prophecy and speaking in tongues.

Macedonianism

Named after Macedonius, a fourth-century Semi-Arian bishop from Constantinople. Macedonius denied the full personhood and divinity of the Holy Spirit. He taught that the Spirit was the creation of

Christ, who likewise was the creation of the Father. Since the Holy Spirit was the creation of God's creation, he was lower than both the Father and the Son.

Followers of Macedonianism were also called the *Pneumatomachians*, or the "Spirit fighters." That is, orthodox Christians viewed those within the schism as people who fought the divinity and personhood of the Holy Spirit. Another council was held at Constantinople in 360/362 AD to deal with the schism. Sixty-two bishops excommunicated Macedonius for his heretical views. This would play a contributing factor in expanding the Nicene Creed to include a defense of the deity of the Holy Spirit.

Modern Heresies Against the Holy Spirit

As Solomon wrote, "There is nothing new under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9). One might expect that, given the time those ancient heresies were formulated, they would have died out long ago. However, when one examines the broader realm of Christendom today, several of these teachings have reappeared. We have already examined four *ancient* heretical movements. We will now compare them to four *modern* movements that share similar or identical views on the Holy Spirit.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witnesses are, in many respects, modern-day Arians. Most people know them for their

rejection of the deity of Christ. Like Arius, the Watchtower Society believes that Christ is not God, but the first and greatest of God's creation.

In the Watchtower and Tract Society's book "*Let God be True*," the writers cite the Athanasian Creed⁹: The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods, but one God. They then comment, "Such a doctrine, with the explanation thereof, is very confusing, and to excuse it with the word "mystery" is not satisfying...[I]t is at once seen that such doctrine is not of God."¹⁰

If Jehovah's Witnesses reject the doctrine of the Trinity, what do they believe about the Holy Spirit? Like Arianism and Macedonianism, Jehovah's Witnesses reject the idea that the Holy Spirit is a person. Their works generally read "spirit" "holy spirit," etc. The reason behind this is to emphasize the impersonal nature of the Spirit. They argue that "The holy spirit is the invisible active force of Almighty God that moves his servants to do his will."¹¹ In short, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Holy Spirit is the power, force, or energy of God. Rather than speaking of the Spirit as a "he," they regard him as an "it."

Jesus did not receive the third person of the Trinity as his baptism. He simply received the power of God to work miracles. This "spirit" does not have emotions as Christ and God. Rather, "it" is the instrument that God uses to enact his

⁹ A fifth or sixth-century document named after Athanasius, who was instrumental in refuting Arius on his doctrinal points.

¹⁰ "*Let God be True*," (New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1946), 81–82.

¹¹ *Let God be True*, 89.

purposes. “The holy spirit is God’s power in action, his active force. God sends out his spirit by projecting his energy to any place to accomplish his will.”¹² The traditional understanding of the Trinity does not arise from Scripture, according to this perspective. “[T]his is another of Satan’s attempts to keep the God-fearing person from learning the truth of Jehovah and his Son, Christ Jesus.”¹³

Mormonism

Initially, Mormons appear to be orthodox in their doctrine of the Trinity. They affirm that Jesus and the Spirit are divine. Unlike Jehovah’s Witnesses, they believe the Holy Spirit (although they tend to prefer “Holy Ghost”) is a person. Mormons also use traditional Christian terminology, such as “Trinity” and “Godhead.” Few Christians would disagree with their assessment that “The Holy Ghost works in perfect unity with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, fulfilling several roles to help us live righteously and receive the blessings of the gospel.”¹⁴

However, further study in Mormon theology reveals several major differences. Their doctrinal stance concerning the Holy Spirit is summarized:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that the Holy Ghost is a spirit man, a spirit son of God the Father. It is

fundamental Church doctrine that God is the Father of the spirits of all men and women, that Jesus is literally God’s Son both in the spirit and in the flesh, and that the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit separate and distinct from both the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Eternal Godhead, and is identified also as the Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, and the comforter.¹⁵

This description of the Holy Spirit can be confusing to those unacquainted with Mormon doctrine. What is meant by “a spirit son of God the Father”? How is the Spirit “a personage of spirit separate and distinct from both the Father and the Son”? The Mormon view of God drastically differs from orthodox Christianity. Christians have long defended the teaching that God is eternal, without beginning, and uncreated (Isaiah 43:10). God is the only God (Deut. 6:4). No one else can be compared to him (Isaiah 40:25). Mormons reject this.

Joseph Smith, in his famous “King Follett Discourse,” taught that there was a time when “God was once as one of us.” That is, God was once a man who worshipped another deity. Through righteous living he progressed to the status of divinity. Assuming this new mantle, he had the power to create “spirit children.” He created Jesus and

Satan as “spirit brothers.” He also created the Holy Spirit as another “spirit son.” Through faithful living in the Mormon church, one can also become a god and continue this process.¹⁶

Therefore, while Mormonism speaks of the Godhead or Trinity, their understanding of it is incredibly different than our own. Orthodox Christians have believed that the Trinity consists of three equal, co-eternal, and uncreated persons. Both the Father, Son, and Spirit are without beginning or end. This is rejected in Mormon theology.

Mormonism shares traits akin to Arianism—that Christ and the Spirit had a beginning. However, there are also some striking differences. Arius did not believe that the Father had an origin. He also rejected the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit. One would be hard-pressed to find an identical ancient counterpart to Mormonism. This is all the more interesting since they believe that they have restored the New Testament church.

Oneness Pentecostalism

This is a movement within mainstream Pentecostalism that denies the doctrine of the Trinity. Usually, Oneness churches attach labels such as “Apostolic” or “Jesus Only” to their denominations and buildings. Just as Jehovah’s Witnesses are virtually modern-day Arians, Oneness Pentecostals are practically

¹² “What is the Holy Spirit,” <https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/what-is-the-holy-spirit/>.

¹³ “Let God be True,” 93.

¹⁴ “Holy Ghost,” <https://site.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/holy-ghost>.

¹⁵ *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:649.

¹⁶ “Becoming Like God,” <https://site.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/becoming-like-god>.

modern-day Sabellians. They reject the doctrine of the Trinity—that God is one being who consists of three persons. Instead, they believe that God is one person who has taken on three different *personas* throughout history. At times, God would appear in the form of the Father. At other times, he may appear in the form of the Son. Finally, he could also take on the form of the Holy Spirit. Each form would display some unique aspect of God’s character and his relationship with mankind.

Oneness Pentecostals heavily emphasize the *Shema* (the Hebrew word for “hear”). This is the Jewish confession recorded in Deuteronomy 6:4 that states, “Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one.” Of course, Christians who understand the doctrine of the Trinity clearly teach that God is “one.” We do not worship three Gods, nor do we believe (like Mormons) that there are more gods outside of the Trinity. When Moses gave this confession to the people, he was speaking to a group that was previously engaged in the paganism of Egypt. God had not yet revealed his full nature to the Jewish people. This is why Paul speaks of the incarnation as “the mystery of godliness” (1 Tim. 3:16). Moses had no concept of the Trinity, nor was the Triune nature of God in the discussion. Israel’s major problem was worshipping the false gods of Egypt and Canaan. This declaration of God’s “oneness” was meant to direct their

hearts to worship the one true God, whom Christians worship today.

The Charismatic Movement

This is likely the most difficult to categorize, since the Charismatic movement cannot be pinned down by any theology, group, or tradition. There are Charismatics who are quite conservative in their theology and practice. Some of my most referenced commentaries were written by scholars from the Charismatic movement. Others, however, are not as doctrinally astute. They might even teach outright heresy on a routine basis! The Word of Faith movement generally falls in the latter.

“Heresy” might be too strong of a term to charge some Charismatics with. Nonetheless, we place this movement here simply because it shares many similarities to an ancient schism previously discussed—Montanism. Prophets, modern apostles, and miraculous claims are common in several Charismatic circles. These were common features within the Montanist movement. Larry Christenson, a leading Charismatic author, even argued that Montanism was an early Charismatic movement.¹⁷

The word “charismatic” comes from the Greek term *χάρισμα* (*charisma*) which means “gift.” Charismatics, therefore, emphasize the role of miraculous gifts in the life and work of the church. They believe that the Holy Spirit continues to work in the same ways seen throughout the New Testament.

Men and women are chosen to serve as prophets, speaking revelations from God. Healings have a prominent place in the church’s ministry. Speaking in tongues is (if not expected) commonplace in worship. The Spirit also stirs the emotions and controls the bodies of believers. All of these were emphasized in Montanism as well. Early Christians were convinced that Montanus and his followers were demon-possessed. The reasons for this were twofold: 1) Their practice of speaking in tongues, which were not earthly languages, and 2) their shaking, crying, and being moved by the Spirit.

While Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Oneness Pentecostals underemphasize the person, nature, and role of the Holy Spirit, those from Charismatic circles tend to do the opposite. A valid criticism that even Charismatics themselves make is that reason, theology, and Scripture is often neglected in place of visible “outpourings” of the Spirit. Consistent and time-tested hermeneutical principles are replaced with one’s being “led by the Spirit.” Instead of worship being done “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40), it can often become quite chaotic and anonymous. The corporate focus of worship becomes individualistic. Rather than the church coming with one mind simultaneously to God, individuals come to have an experience with the supernatural.

¹⁷ Larry Christenson, “Pentecostalism’s Forgotten Forerunner,” in *Aspects of Pentecostal Charismatic*

Origins, ed. Vinson Synan (Plainfield, NJ: Logos, 1975), 32–34.

The biggest problem with the Charismatic movement, however, is doctrinal in nature. Since Scripture is subjectively interpreted by what one believes the Spirit is telling them, there is a lack of doctrinal unity. The Prosperity Gospel,

Continued from Page 1: *Olympic Mistake*

One source states, “A Paris 2024 Olympics spokesperson admitted the controversial drag show version of ‘The Last Supper’ seen in Friday’s opening ceremony was indeed inspired by the iconic da Vinci mural — despite attempting to vehemently deny it following fierce backlash.” Even so, the attempts to walk back the Olympic fiasco continue.

For the sake of argument, one might assume that it was little more than a representation of a pagan god. If that is so, why did the world audience need to have several men dressed as women (transgendered individuals) to be actors in the depiction? Why include a child on the same stage as men dressed as women with two of them being almost nude and having semi-exposed genitalia? It is simple really, the radicals in our world are trying to indoctrinate adults and children to accept the LGBTQ+ lifestyle.

One person on social media said that the supporters of Christ should expect to be persecuted for what they believe. There is a difference between being persecuted for our

Oneness theology, unbiblical worship practices, and direct “revelations” from God make it difficult to summarize Charismatic beliefs. In place of doctrinal depth, they emphasize the Spirit’s influence. Instead of organized worship, they

convictions and profaning the Son of God! When one profanes the holiness of God, he relegates the Creator of the Universe to just another common being. The Bible is replete with passages that warn against profaning God to the extent of warning about the misuse of His name.

The first part of the Ten Commandments addresses the Israelites interaction with the Holy God who delivered them from Egyptian bondage. Consider these portions of the decalogue:

Exodus 20:3-7 says, “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

view corporate gatherings as an opportunity for individuals to participate in spiritual gifts. These are not easy problems to solve and have resulted in numerous schisms throughout the movement’s history.

The simple fact of the matter is this—if you do not revere God, you will not obey His commandments. Many people in our world hold nothing to be holy and are in awe of nothing other than themselves and their carnal desires. The opening ceremony of the Olympics made that plain to the casual observer.

Moreover, the question begs “Why is it acceptable to parody Christ and His followers, but other religions and beliefs are simply off limits?” Even if the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games was just a parody of Dionysus, there is ample evidence that Christianity is under constant attack. Some people on the opposite side of being offended seem to be saying we need to turn the television off and “go do something else.”

There are some things which should offend the people of God. Profaning His Son should be chief among them. Perhaps even more disturbing is the way some have responded to Christians who are genuinely upset by this carnal, sensual display. While it is true that we need to love all people who are created in the spiritual image of God, we are not instructed to accept

every immoral standard that society attempts to shove down our throats.

The world we live in has lost its moral compass. Regardless of the reasoning behind the opening ceremony of the Olympics—a portrayal of the Last Supper or a pagan god feasting—the organizers of such a spectacle should be ashamed.

Jeremiah 6:15 says, “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; At the time I punish them, They shall be cast down,” says the LORD.

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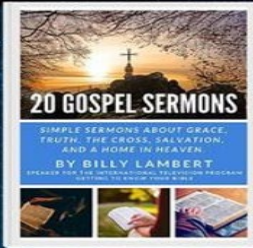
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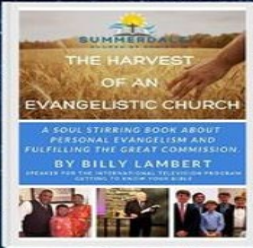


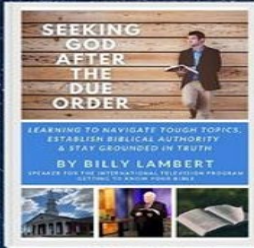
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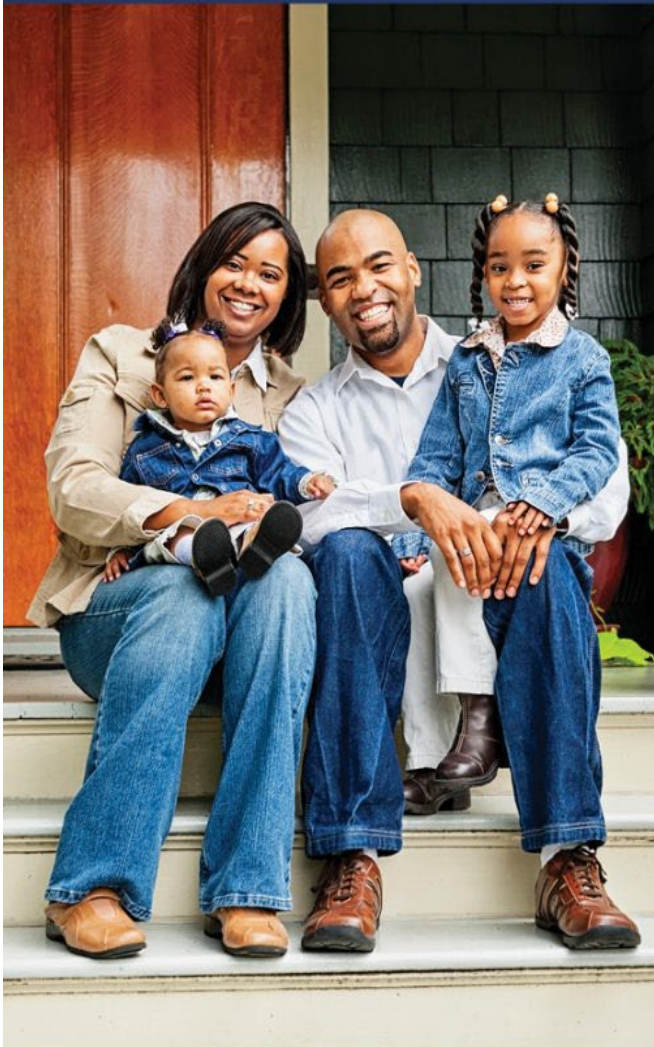
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The Worldwide Preacher Training Initiative Officially Launches New School

Named after the late evangelist and educator, J.W. McGarvey, McGarvey College of the Bible is the result of the Worldwide Preacher Training Initiative launched by the Summerdale church of Christ in Summerdale, Alabama in 2022. Classes are set to begin in January 2025 in four countries - Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and the United States.

It is an exciting time for the Worldwide Preacher Training Initiative. The dream of beginning a school for graduates of schools of preaching and Christian colleges has become a reality.

In January of 2025, Lord willing, we will launch the first semester of the McGarvey College of the Bible. [Originally, we were planning on using the name 'Legacy Bible Institute.' However, we found another school was using this name and decided instead to honor the late preacher, educator, and author J.W. McGarvey as the school's name-sake.]

Our Plan

Students will be enrolled in Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and the US. We will be conducting a scholarship-based school with no cost for the students. Free tuition will be awarded, laptops will be supplied when needed, and a digital library containing thousands of

volumes of books and periodicals will be available to each student.

Students invited to enroll in MCOB will be selected by the administration and faculty based on their proven capability in a school of preaching or Christian university equivalent from schools associated with the churches of Christ. Exceptions may be made for ministers with years of experience. Ministerial experience may be considered equivalent to undergraduate scholastic achievement in such cases.

Online classes will be limited to ten students in each country and forty total students for the first two years. The program will take two years to complete. When completed, students will have earned a Master of Arts in Christian Doctrine and completed 36 semester hours.

Our plan is to add extensions every two years. We are currently targeting multiple locations for new extensions to begin in 2027.

Our Purpose

The purpose of McGarvey College of the Bible is to assist churches of Christ around the world in equipping ministers who have graduated from a school of preaching or undergraduate college to gain an increased knowledge and capability for teaching the word of God. We are a graduate school designed specifically for graduates of schools of preaching around the world. MCOB

will be offering graduates from schools of preaching in these countries the opportunity to continue their education. Most of the students have been limited to only two years of formal Bible education. The curriculum we will offer will focus on doctrine.

Our Philosophy

The philosophy guiding MCOB is completely devoted to New Testament Christianity. Everything we intend to do is dedicated to Christ, His word, and His church. We steadfastly promote the plea to return to New Testament Christianity through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the gospel alone.

We believe that every generation needs "a voice crying in the wilderness." We intend on being a "voice" for our generation and generations to come, Lord willing. Our voice will be heard through the work of our teachers and graduates all over the world as we are strengthened with might in our inner man by His Spirit.

We desire to call to repentance our world, our countries, our communities, our families, and when necessary, our congregations. Our plea is for a return to the "old paths."

We believe in providing a school that is truly distinctive in not yielding to denominational doctrines or the men who teach them. We intend to conduct a school that will say,

“Here we stand, and we will stand immovable.” We hope to do so with great courage, enthusiasm, and strength that can come only from God.

Our Plea

The Worldwide Preacher Training Initiative began in 2022 by the Summerdale church of Christ and would not be where it is today without the support of gracious and like-minded brethren. The work that has been done has exceeded our expectations and now we are ready for it to grow into a greater, more expansive phase.

By beginning McGarvey College of the Bible, we will be able to take a hands-on approach in the daily conduct and curriculum we recommend for training preachers. We will also be able to expand the Worldwide Preacher Training Initiative into many more countries. We will begin by enrolling preachers in four countries – Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and the US. We plan on expanding the program into additional countries every two years thereafter beginning in 2027.

We cannot do this without you. We need your help. This is an opportunity conceived by great ambition. If it is to become a great work, we will need your help and support. If you believe in the cause we are promoting and the work we are doing, please consider supporting it with a monthly donation. Every donation received is respected and appreciated as a generous gift in this labor of love.

Thus far, our work in establishing the school has been behind the scenes and time-consuming. We have chartered MCOB as a non-profit organization, built and launched a school website, developed the curriculum, created the school catalog and faculty handbook, organized our digital library, appointed a board of directors [a group of faithful elders], targeted the countries where we will begin offering classes, interviewed faculty and administrative staff, and we are now in the process of raising funds for the work.

For the remainder of 2024 we will be focusing on completing all preliminary tasks for the school, hiring and training faculty and staff, enrolling students, and raising funds.

Our work cannot succeed without your help and support. You have graciously accepted us into your hearts by contributing to the Worldwide Preacher Training Initiative. **Without you, this would not be possible.** Please continue to consider us as we expand the effort and build something that will only grow and endure for generations to come.

We are asking for congregations who have supported us to continue and for some to increase your support to at least \$250 each month beginning in 2025. For \$3,000 per year, you can help 40 preachers earn a master’s degree. Compare that to the cost of graduate schools in the States and you will see that this is a very economic option to help train

preachers at home and around the world.

Our expenses will increase with the launch of the school. Your increased fellowship will cover the costs of travel for faculty and students, the purchase and shipment of laptop computers and school supplies, miscellaneous expenses, evangelistic campaigns and lecture-ships, graduation ceremonies, and compensation for faculty and administrative staff.

We are asking individuals who have supported us to continue doing so and to share our work with your home congregations. Speak to your church’s leadership. Arrange for someone to visit and share this vision with them. Above all, pray for the work to be faithful, blameless, and pleasing to God. Pray for our growth in wisdom, energy, and love.

Andy Erwin

McGarvey College of the Bible

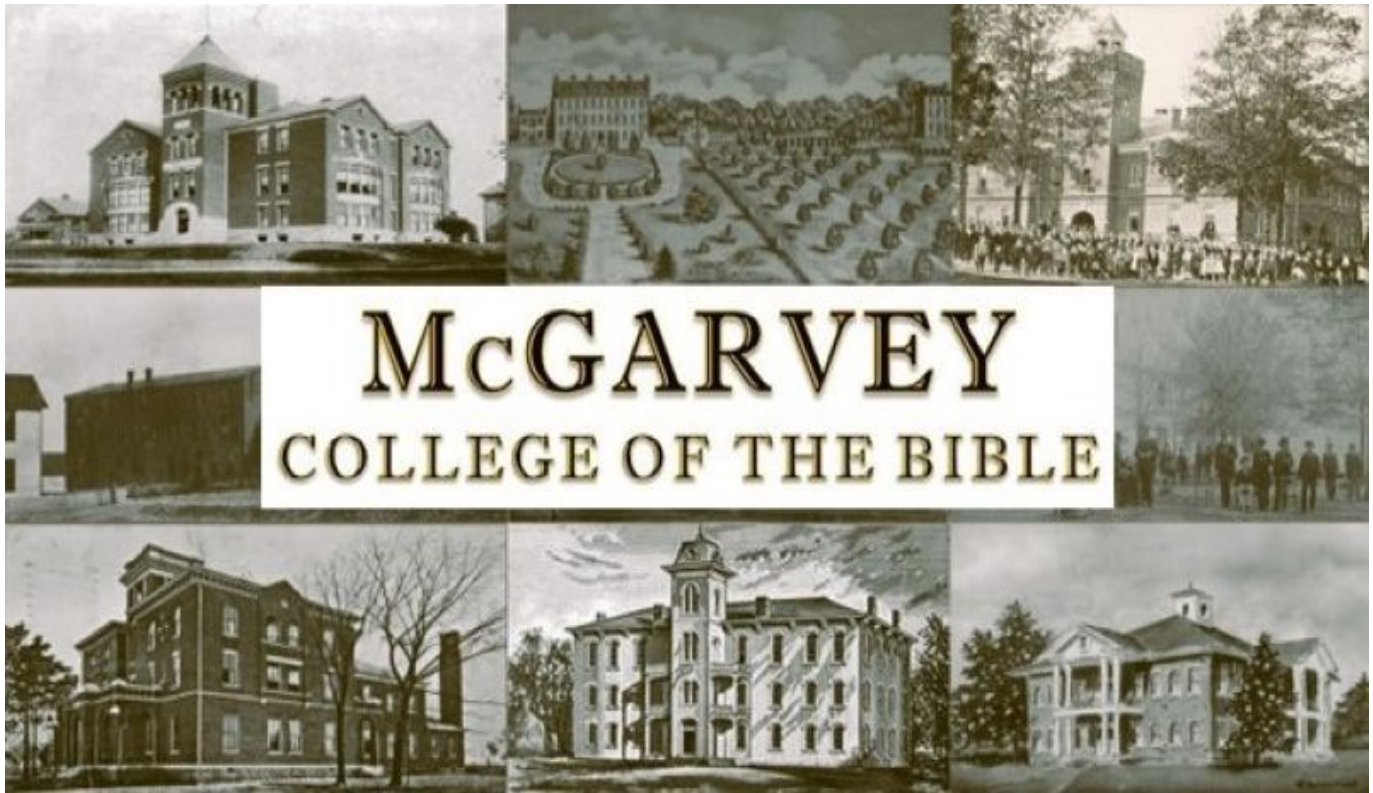
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A Statement on the Institutional Philosophy from McGarvey College of the Bible Catalog:

The purpose of McGarvey College of the Bible (MCOB) is to assist churches of Christ around the world in equipping ministers who have graduated from a school of preaching or undergraduate college to gain an increased knowledge and capability for teaching the word of God. In this sense, we are unique. We are a graduate school designed specifically for graduates of schools of preaching around the world.

The institution also has a special interest in helping bi-vocational preachers continue their ministerial education. We recognize the need and desire of those who are limited by time restraints and location to

learn in a college-level setting. Our schedule and online program are crafted to cater to these needs by offering a flexible method of study.

The philosophy guiding MCOB is completely devoted to New Testament Christianity. Everything we intend to do is dedicated to Christ, His word, and His church. We steadfastly promote the plea to return to New Testament Christianity through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the gospel alone. We believe that every generation needs “a voice crying in the wilderness.” We intend on being a “voice” for our generation and generations to come, Lord willing. Our voice will be heard through the work of our teachers and graduates all over the world as we are strengthened with might in our inner man by His Spirit. We desire to call to repentance our world,

our countries, our communities, our families, and when necessary, our congregations. Our plea is for a return to the “old paths.” We believe in providing a school that is truly distinctive in not yielding to denominational doctrines or the men who teach them. We intend to conduct a school that will say, “Here we stand, and we will stand immovable.” We hope to do so with great courage, enthusiasm, and strength that can come only from God.



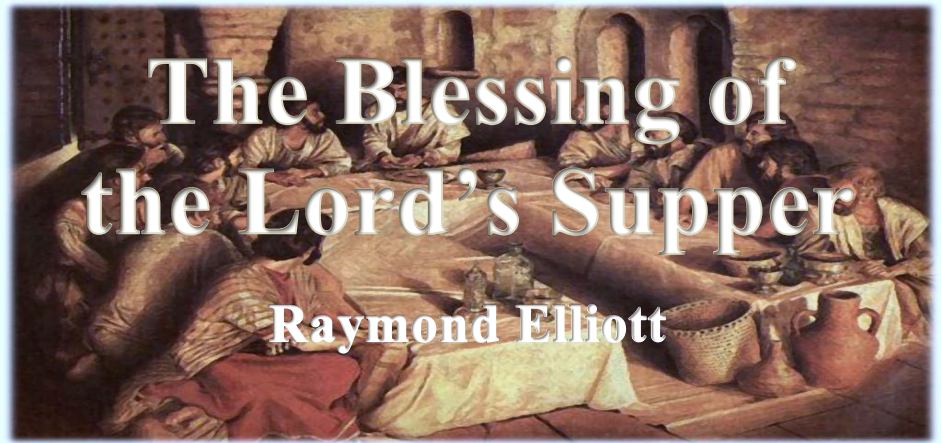
In Matthew 26:26, we read, “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body’” (NKJV). The New American Standard renders this verse as follows: “Now while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’” The Greek word for “blessed” is εὐλογήσας (eulogesas).

Let us now read Matthew 26:27, “Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you.’” Please observe the similarity of the Greek word for “thanks” - εὐχαριστήσας (eucharistesas), in verse 27 with the Greek word εὐλογήσας (eulogesas) for “blessed” in verse 26.

In Luke 22:19, we read, “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’”

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:23, 24: “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’”

Consider that as Jesus gave thanks for the fruit of the vine, He also gave thanks for the bread. Of course, this would not exclude



blessings of praise to God for His grace and love; and blessings on those who partake of the Lord's Supper. We do not know what all Jesus said when He spoke a blessing, however, it did include the giving of thanks for the bread.

In his commentary on Matthew, regarding 26:26, Albert Barnes wrote:

“And blessed it” - Or sought a blessing on it; or “gave thanks” to God for it. The word rendered “blessed” not unfrequently means “to give thanks.” Compare Luke 9:16 and John 6:11. It is also to be remarked that some manuscripts have the word rendered “gave thanks,” instead of the one translated “blessed.” It appears from the writings of Philo and the Rabbis that the Jews were never accustomed to eat without giving thanks to God and seeking his blessing. This was especially the case in both the bread and the wine used at Passover.

If we could go back in time and enter the room where Jesus and the

disciples were gathered and listen to the words of Jesus as He gave thanks, it would not be possible for us to know the thoughts and deep emotions in the heart of our precious Savior. He spoke a blessing and gave thanks for these elements of the Supper, knowing that His suffering and death on the cross were imminent. He gave thanks knowing His body would be nailed to the cross, would be pierced, and His blood would be shed.

As a good friend and brother said, “To me this is one of the most awesome statements in all of history. That Jesus, the night before the crucifixion, would thank the Father for the bread and cup, the emblems of His own tormented death and ultimate sacrifice, is beyond comprehension.”

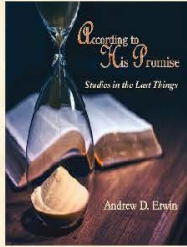
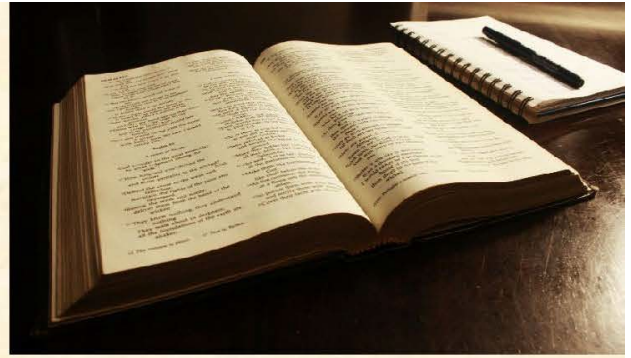
On the first day of the week when we assemble to “break bread” our hearts should burst forth with praise, adoration and love for our blessed Lord Jesus Christ who gave His life for us on Calvary and to God the Father who gave His precious Son to die for the sins of mankind that by His grace we could be saved.

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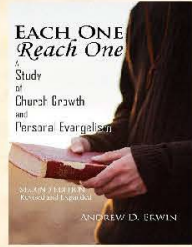
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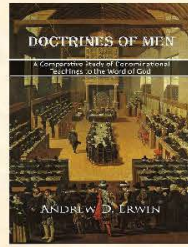
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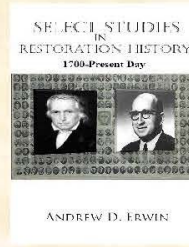
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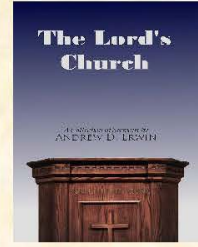
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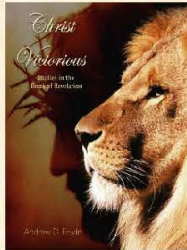
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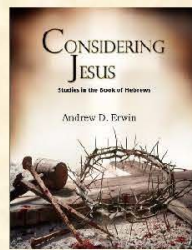
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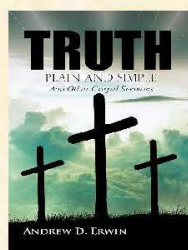
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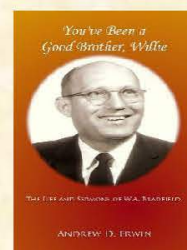
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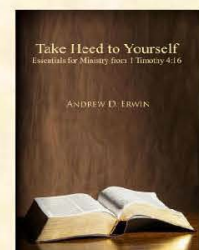
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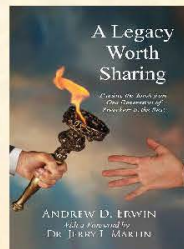
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Why We Love the Church

Ephesians 5:25

Introduction:

1. What the Apostles thought about the church would not go along with what the vast number of professing Christians think about the church today.
2. We stand opposed to injecting our ideas about the church between the lines of inspired writings on the subject.
3. Aside from what the outside world thinks about the idea of the church, what do you think about it?
4. Why do we love the church?

Discussion:

I. We Love the Church Because Jesus Loves It.

- A. We go back to the personal ministry of Jesus. Matthew 16:18, 19: “The gates of hades shall not prevail against it.”
- B. We travel up Calvary’s hill and behold the cross. The price of human redemption was the price paid for the church. “He gave himself for it.” Ephesians 1:7; Acts 20:28.
- C. We now count the cost of the church. How could I not love what Jesus loved and sacrificed for. (Some sing, “O how I love Jesus” and then show contempt for the church which is His spiritual bride.)

II. We Love the Church Because We Are Members.

- A. We go to Pentecost day of Acts 2. The great day of “the beginning.” Isaiah 2:2, 3.
- B. We hear the question, the answer, and witness the response and the consequence. Acts 2:37-41, 47.
- C. We did the very same thing with the very save results. We became members of the body. 1 Cor. 12:13.

III. We Love the Church Because of Our Reconciliation.

- A. The meaning and need of reconciliation. Colossians 1:20-22; Hebrews 2:17.
- B. The place of reconciliation. Ephesians 2:16
- C. The question is answered, “Can one be saved outside the church?” Can one be reconciled to God outside the church.

IV. We Love the Church Because of What It Does.

- A. The Father seeks true worshippers. John 4:23, 24.
 1. This is exactly what takes place in the assembly.
 2. God is glorified by our worship.
- B. The church is involved in mutual edification. Hebrews 10:24, 25.
- C. The church is involved in good works.

V. We Love the Church Because Jesus Is Coming for It.

- A. One day the kingdom will be delivered up to God the Father. 1 Corinthians 15:24
- B. Our Lord made a promise to His disciples. John 14:1-3
- C. That promise was reiterated by the apostle Paul. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

Conclusion:

1. So, you say you have complaints about the church.
 - Jesus still loves it regardless of your feelings.
 - You actually think you can function as a member apart from the body(!)
2. “I don’t need the church to go to heaven!” Some say. Do you think you will slip in some other way. (Slip in and watch the Braves play without a ticket!) No one will slip into heaven!

Mike Kiser

Did the Old Testament Faithful Believe in an Afterlife?

Bradley S. Cobb

This may sound like a rather large topic to cover in a short article, but the answer may be quite clear if we just take a look. Though some “enlightened” critics of the Bible say that the idea of an afterlife is a New Testament concept, the evidence disagrees.

In Genesis 15:15, Abram is told that he would “go to [his] fathers in peace.” Elsewhere in the Old Testament, we read of people being “buried with his fathers” by being put in the family grave (usually this was said of kings). However, none of Abram’s ancestors were buried anywhere near Machpelah, the piece of land that Abram bought for a burial

plot. Thus, the only way to understand this statement from God, that Abram would “go to [his] fathers in peace,” is that an afterlife existed—and Abram believed in it.

Moses was told, while in front of the burning bush, “I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob” (Exodus 3). As Jesus so eloquently stated it when bringing this verse up to the Sadducees (who denied the afterlife), “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

Job, during his pain and his frustration with his “friends,” spoke these words:

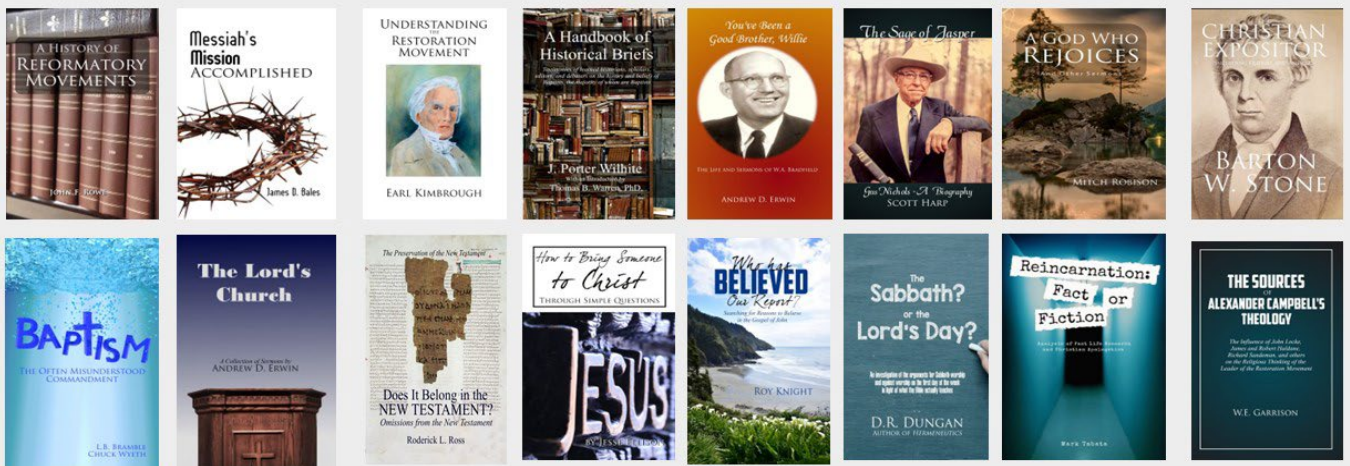
But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth, And at last he will stand up upon the earth: And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, Then without my flesh shall I see God; Whom I, even I, shall see, on my side, And mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger. (Job 19:25-27, ASV).

There are other passages that could be appealed to, but these three are enough to answer the question in the title with a clear, unambiguous YES!

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