

GOSPEL GLEANER



Volume 12

Number 3

"THAT'S JUST YOUR INTERPRETATION!"

Dave Miller

What do people mean by the statement, "That's just your interpretation"? Many mean: "You've got your view of what the passage means and I've got mine -- so who's to say mine's wrong and yours is right?" The matter is further muddled when one considers the fact that on any given religious question there are knowledgeable, sincere authorities on both sides of the issue. Nevertheless, the Bible portrays a completely different picture.

God has given man a written revelation with the understanding that it can be correctly comprehended. This means that for every teaching, there is a meaning that God originally intended to convey. It is our task to ascertain that one correct interpretation. There is only one such interpretation to any given passage -- the right one, God's view! God made clear that we can arrive at the proper view. Jesus "Ye shall know the truth..." (John 8:32). Paul said, "Speak the same thing...be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Paul said, "Rightly divide (i.e., handle aright) the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Luke said of the Bereans, "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Paul said to Festus, "I...but speak forth the words of truth and soberness" [i.e.,

things that are both true and reasonable] (Acts 26:25). John declared, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1). Notice that all of these passages are predicated upon the presupposition that individuals can, with proper study and logical reasoning, arrive at the conclusions that God intended to transmit.

So there is no such thing as my interpretation and your interpretation. There is only God's meaning, and with diligent, rational study, we can arrive at the truth on any subject that is vital to our spiritual well-being. Rather than shrug off the conflicting views and positions on various subjects (e.g., baptism, instrumental music, divorce and remarriage) and dismiss religious differences as hopeless, unresolvable, and irrelevant, we must be about the business of studying and searching God's book (cf., Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21). We must cautiously refrain from misinterpreting and misusing Scripture (cf., 2 Corinthians 4:2; 2 Peter 3:16). We must carefully consider both sides of every issue (1 John 4:1; Proverbs 14:15). We must "take heed therefore how (we) hear" (Luke 8:18), i.e., make certain our hearts are genuinely receptive to the truth (Luke 8:15).

We must also realize that there are those who are "ever learning, and never able to come to
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Volume 12 Number 3
July-September 1996

The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is a quarterly publication of the Mabelvale Church of Christ in Mabelvale, Arkansas and the Mountain Home Church of Christ in Mountain Home, Arkansas.

The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is also supported financially by interested sister churches and individuals and is mailed free of charge to its subscribers.

The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity. We welcome your comments and questions regarding any article found herein.

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THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION

Bill Dillon

On one of his ocean voyages to the South Sea Islands, Robert Louis Stevenson related that a terrible storm arose and the passengers feared the ship would be lost. One of the men finally went to the upper deck, braving the wind and the rain, to see the captain quietly pacing the bridge. With undisturbed face, the captain issued orders for the handling of the ship. The man made his way back to the other worried passengers huddled together and said: "I have seen the captain's face and all is well!"



In 2 Corinthians 5:14 we read: "The love of Christ compels us." The words used here literally mean, "holds together." Christ is the "super-glue" that holds our lives together so we can be whole persons -- pure, honest, upright -- persons of integrity.

Amid all the sorrows and strifes, and anxieties and confusions of our times, and amid all uneasiness over what may lie ahead, we take heart to face life courageously by centering our heart's devotion and life's desire upon the Captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10).

Jesus is the Revealed, the Redeeming, the Risen, the Reigning and the Returning Lord whose example runs like a golden beam of glimmering light, piercing the darkness of uncertainty that often surrounds us.

Hebrews 12:2 says we are to be "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." We arise from our knees to take hold of our responsibilities with calmer minds and fresh courage. Mary James wrote:

*"Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
I've lost sight of all beside.
So enchained my spirit's vision,
Looking at the Crucified."*

Christians can be calm and controlled knowing the Captain is at the helm. -612 E. 4th Street, Mountain Home, AR 72653

A prejudiced man puts out his own eyes. He refuses to see the other side of the question. His judgment is blinded by his own willfulness.

He who changes his opinions to suit the prevailing current is a man of small value. A weathervane is the obedient slave of every wandering breeze.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE LATE JAMES D. BALES

Dennis Gullede



How long have you been preaching the gospel?

My father, Benjamin Franklin Bales, attended Potter Bible College (1903-1904) in Bowling Green, Kentucky. My father and mother (Ethel Florence Davis/Bales) were killed

when a train hit their car in Atlanta, Georgia while they were on their way to a class in connection with the Bible (January 4, 1927). When I went to Harding College (Morrilton, Arkansas) the fall of 1933, I thought perhaps I would preach. Once while discussing it with some fellow students, Stoy Pate said: "Bales, if you are going to preach, preach." I stopped talking about it and started preaching in April 1934. I have been preaching for sixty years.

Can you recall the circumstances of your first sermon? I asked a small congregation of black brethren if they would let me preach one Sunday. I had copied a sermon Dean L. C. Sears gave me on "Jesus The Light Of The World." I studied the outline and preached it several times in the woods and in the cow pasture. As far as I know, no cows went dry after hearing my preaching. When the Lord's day morning came for me to preach, I spoke to a congregation of ten black brethren and ten college students who came to hear me preach. During that period of time I was an amateur wrestler but I was more nervous before the sermon than I was when I entered the wrestling ring. But when later I entered the wrestling ring I thought it was easier to preach -- until the time came to preach! In the pasture I had preached for twenty minutes, but that morning I finished in thirteen. Fortunately I observed the rule to get up, speak up, and shut up. A preacher needs good terminal facilities. A sermon does not need to be eternal in order to be immortal!

How do you think the emphasis in preaching has changed since you began preaching? Has the change been for better or worse? Because very early in life I came into contact with unbelievers, I thought there should be more preaching on why we believe in God and the Bible than what I had been hearing. Some other subjects I thought should be preached on some folks thought was dabbling in politics. A strong stand was taken against denominationalism. Some today are beginning to try to convince the denominational world that we are one of them. They are speaking for themselves and not for me and others who maintain that denominationalism is contrary to the word of God. There are some other trends which I oppose because of that for which, and Him whom, I am for.

Name three preachers of the past or present and tell how they influenced you most in your preaching. I am not sure of who influenced me the most, but the following had considerable influence on me. J. N. Armstrong with his passion for souls and stand against sectarianism. My father had studied under brother Armstrong in Potter Bible College. G. C. Brewer's courageous stand for truth and against error influenced me. Over the years we became good friends. I was encouraged by his confidence in me. B. F. Rhodes was one of my teachers in Harding. I had many long talks with him and borrowed some of his outlines. Jokingly he said: "J. D., aren't you afraid to shoot those cannon balls in your pop gun?" I couldn't shoot them, for his outlines did not have enough meat on them for a beginner like me. (For his points he would use one word with Scripture reference for each point.) I needed more "filler" than that. The "filler" for brother Rhodes was in his mind.

You have held a number of debates over the years. Which one is your most memorable,
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and why? I have had many oral and written debates. I am grateful for the confidence President George S. Benson showed in me in agreeing for me to meet the atheist Woolsey Teller in the Harding College auditorium October 5, 7, 8, 9, 1947. Every night after the debate we discussed with some faculty and students how best to deal with the matters which were raised. I later debated Teller in Memphis, Tennessee, New York City and Parkersburg, West Virginia. I am not ashamed of my first debate with Teller. However, I kept studying and he did not. I think my last debate was the best. Only my first debate was published.

As far as I recall, my first debate was with a Dr. West, a Seventh-day Adventist in San Francisco, California. It went on for six Sunday afternoons during the summer of 1944. I was also preaching those Lord's days. Each of us spoke one half an hour, then we were questioned by the audience for an hour. If I got the question I spent five minutes answering it, and then Dr. West spoke five minutes. The same thing was true if he got the question. One member of his church said if I kept debating Dr. West I was going to ruin him. Before the debate started I had filled several notebooks with material on all the Scriptures that I knew they used and all the questions I thought they could ask. I had also pasted in quotations from the Bible in the appropriate places. The first day I was asked only one question to which I had not outlined an answer.

It seems that our brotherhood has seen a decline in debating over the past thirty years, or so. Do you agree that this is true, and if so, to what would you attribute the decrease in the number of public discussions? First, there are not as many denominationalists who are willing to defend what they believe. Second, in today's world it is not politically correct to say that people can be wrong religiously. However, the irreligious left, and those influenced by them, do condemn what they call the "religious right." Some assume that one church is as good as another and none should be evaluated. Third, some among us do not take a strong stand against denominationalism. However, there are many questions, in addition to

denominationalism, which also need to be debated. Fourth, the wrong spirit has turned some off in the past, but truth can and should be spoken in love.

What special word of advice would you like to pass on to young preachers who may read this interview? First, the parable of the sower teaches that we should sow the seed of the kingdom, but it also shows we cannot guarantee fruit. Other hearts and minds are involved than that of the sower. Second, though one should not cast pearls before swine, one should be alert for opportunities to sow the seed of the kingdom. Third, seek to be scripturally balanced in your teaching. Fourth, be grateful for gratitude but labor on though there are those who do not appreciate your work. Remember we labor for the Lord. Fifth, never quit studying. Sixth, be much in prayer. Seventh, be faithful and never, never, let anything or anyone cause you to cease serving the Lord. -10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103

EDITOR'S NOTE: This interview with brother Bales was conducted in July 1994. -Dennis Gullede

"THAT'S JUST YOUR INTERPRETATION!"

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the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7) and not permit such to deter us from being convinced that we can know the truth. Having given sufficient attention to these important keys to ascertaining God's will, we can be certain of our ability to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3-4). -P.O. Box 210667, Bedford, TX 76095



FAITH FUNDAMENTALS

"Add To Your Faith"

2 Peter 1:5

IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN IN HEAVEN?

Guy F. Hester

We read in Luke 10:17-20 about the seventy who were sent out by Jesus and their returning to him overjoyed by the fact that they had been able to cast out devils through his name:



"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and

over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

The Lord did not want the casting out of demons to be the chief reason for their joy. He wanted them to rejoice because their names were "written in heaven."

Most people are interested in having their names written somewhere. When I was a young boy, there was a tree deep in the woods, where we lived at the time, in which I carved my name and the date, and imagined that someone would come along, perhaps a hundred years later, and read it and know that I had been there. This illustrates the desire of even the young to have their names recorded.

Some like for their names to be on some prominent social register. Others want their names written in the political world. Recently I heard a country music star say that his biggest desire was to have his name in the Country Music Hall of Fame. This passage suggests that the biggest and best blessing is to have your name recorded in heaven by God.

Heaven's Record

There is a record kept in heaven. We find these words in Hebrews 12:23, "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." The record book in heaven is called "the book of life" (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 20:15; 21:27).

How May One Get His Name Written In Heaven?

An important question to consider just now is, "How may one get his name written in heaven?" Morality alone, although important, is not sufficient. In Acts chapters ten and eleven we read the account of the conversion of a man who was the epitome of morality. The record says in Acts 10:1-2, "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." But this good moral man was told to send for Peter "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:13-14). When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, he was told to "believe" (Acts 10:43). He was told to "repent" (Acts 11:18). He was commanded to be "baptized" (Acts 10:48). If just being a good moral man was not enough to save Cornelius, neither is it enough to save one today. One cannot enter into the kingdom of God until he is born again (John 3:1-5). One cannot be saved until he does the will of the heavenly Father. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall
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IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN IN HEAVEN?

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enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Obedying the doctrines and the commandments of men will not enable us to have our names written in heaven, but rather they will condemn. Listen to what Jesus said of some in Matthew 15:8-9, "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." Many are the passages that warn us against the doctrines of men. Here are just a few from the pen of the inspired apostle Paul: Colossians 2:20-22, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" Titus 1:13, "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." Ephesians 5:6, "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

Being honest and sincere, although necessary, is not enough. Saul of Tarsus was very conscientious in the persecution of Christians and had to be shown that he was a sinner (Acts 23:1; 22:16). Merely believing or thinking that one's name is written in heaven is not sufficient evidence that it is on record there. A man went to the polls to vote and found that his name was not on the voting register. He sincerely thought that it was, but he could not vote because believing that his name was on the register was not sufficient, he had not fully complied with all the rules to be a registered voter.

There are many people who have obeyed the doctrines of men and believe that they are saved. Some have obeyed in part by believing but have not completed their obedience of repentance, confession and baptism. Others have substituted

sprinkling or pouring for immersion (Romans 6:3-4). Many have thought that they were saved at some altar, substituting prayer for the command: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

Many have become members of churches unknown to the Bible and wear the names of men. They feel that they have their names written in heaven. The word of God warns us of this grave danger. Jesus said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22-23). Then in Matthew 15:13, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

Only by believing in Christ and the power of his blood to take away sin, and humble obedience to his will, can we have the blessed assurance that our names are written in heaven in the Lamb's Book of Life. We must obey just as the good and moral Cornelius, and the honest and sincere Saul did; then we can have the assurance that our names are written in heaven.

Name May Be Blotted out

However, it is possible for one's name to be written in heaven and then be blotted out. We read in Revelation 3:5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

Dear reader, there is nothing more vital to us than that our names be written in the Lamb's Book of Life when we stand before the great judge in the day of judgment. Only those whose names are written in the book can enter into heaven. Revelation 21:27, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie:

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CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"Ye Are The Salt Of The Earth"

Matthew 5:13



"WRITE IT DOWN FOR A MEMORIAL"

Ronnie Whittemore



Jehovah is the Deliverer of the oppressed, the Equalizer of injustices, and the Redeemer of the erring. He hates sin; He loves righteousness. He completely forgives the penitent and forgets the sin. He remembers rebellion and

punishes the disobedient. Regardless of man's opinions, God always does what is right and good (Psalm 33:4). One of the most striking and curious descriptions of God's character and nature is recorded concerning the people of Amalek.

When the Israelites departed from Egypt, they were attacked in the wilderness at Rephidim by the Amalekites. Moses commanded Joshua to secure armed forces and fight the enemy. While Joshua was leading the troops, Moses, Aaron and Hur ascended a hill and with the rod of God in his hand, Moses held up his hand and Israel prevailed in the battle. But when Moses let down his hand, then Amalek prevailed. When the hands of Moses became heavy, Aaron and Hur stood on each side of Moses and held up his hands so that Joshua and the Israelites gained the victory. There are many great lessons that are learned from this episode in Hebrew history.

KEY LESSONS

1. God does not do for men what they can do for themselves. With one swift movement of

His Almighty Hand, Jehovah could have destroyed the Amalekites. However, the Israelites were attacked and the Israelites had the man-power and God-power to defeat the enemy.

2. The leaders of God's people need others who will support them. Though Joshua led the charge, Moses stood on the hill with the "rod of God" in his hand. His effort was critical in the impending victory. Aaron and Hur did not stand by idly; they held up the hands of Moses so that Amalek would be defeated. Their work was important. Without their efforts, the battle would have been lost.

3. God's servants must act by the authority of God. Moses' rod was not made out of a special grain of wood nor from precious metals. This staff was called "the rod of God" because it represented power and approval from God. Moses was not a renegade who acted on whims; he was the divinely appointed deliverer of the Israelites. His actions were stamped with God's approval.

4. God's people must persevere regardless of circumstances. The battle with the Amalekites was Israel's first battle. No doubt, they were nervous and anxious. Joshua led the troops and did not have war experience. Moses was tired; his hands were heavy. Aaron and Hur stayed with their duty "till the going down of the sun." The perseverance of the entire company resulted in complete victory.

CURIOUS ELEMENTS

God's confrontation with the children of Amalek did not end in the book of Exodus. Following the victory, God instructed Moses to "...write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus 17:14). Why was the Lord still angry with this nation? After all, they were defeated. Wasn't that enough? In the context of discussing various injustices which were unrighteous and abominable in the sight of God, Moses wrote, "Remember what Amalek did unto

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"WRITE IT DOWN FOR A MEMORIAL"

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thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God" (Deuteronomy 25:17-18). No wonder God was so angry with the Amalekites! They preyed upon the elderly, the feeble and the weak. They showed no respect unto God in that they evidently thought that God would overlook their cruelty toward the feeble. But God not only assured their defeat immediately, He would exercise justice against this nation in the future at His appointed time.

The time of God's justice occurred during the reign of king Saul. Though Saul proved himself to be disobedient and rebellious toward God, the Lord gave him an opportunity to redeem himself by "utterly destroying" this nation which acted so wickedly generations earlier. Though most men had forgotten about this dark episode, God did not! "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt" (1 Samuel 15:2). He ordered King Saul to "destroy all that they have and spare them not" (1 Samuel 15:3). However, king Saul failed the test. This act of justice was important to Jehovah. It was so important the He had Moses write it down in the book. It was rehearsed in the ears of Joshua. It was time for the Amalekites to pay for their crime. Ultimately, Samuel killed Agag, the king of the Amalekites so that God's justice could be satisfied.

CONSISTENCY IN LAWS

Both the law of Moses and the law of Christ denounce cruelty and demand justice. Under the old law, God often required restitution immediately and dramatically. God slew thousands of people with disease, pestilence, fire and water because of their sins. Under the new law, God also requires restitution for sins;

however, the time of reckoning before God will be at the end of the world (Hebrews 9:27). Sometimes men escape justice on earth, but God has promised that no one can escape His wrath (Romans 12:19).

Solomon recorded seven specific sins which are hated by God. The list includes: "A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19). Within this list are the makings of stirring up strife and contention among people or in the Lord's church. The results of such actions may be discouragement and confusion. The elderly, spiritually weak and novice are especially vulnerable because of a lack of information or understanding. Yet, the inconsiderate, unknowing, uncaring or calculating brother who discourages these brethren stands guilty of the same crime as the Amalekites who preyed upon the elderly, weak and feeble in the wilderness. If God took vengeance upon Amalek for his cruelty and "wrote it for a memorial," what makes one think that God would allow anyone to prey upon the spiritually weak without retaliation?

Souls are important to God and they should be important to us also. Every effort should be made by God's people to save souls. Every effort to endanger one's own soul or the souls of others must be avoided. Gossiping, backbiting, whisperings, and such like are tools of the devil to harm souls and stifle the growth of the church. If God's people are so busy battling the vain babblings of foolish men that they cannot do the work of the church, then the church will not prosper. Therefore, men should seriously contemplate their actions, lest they be aligned with the Amalekites and subject to God's severe punishment. Because God will remember! -3078
Gurley Pike, Gurley, AL 35748

Life with Christ is an endless hope;
Without Him it is a hopeless end.

"WORRYING OVER WORRY"

Allen Webster



The three best selling prescription drugs in the United States are: Tagamet (an ulcer medication), Inderal (a hypertensive drug), and Valium (a tranquilizer). The most

wealthy, healthy, intelligent, highly-advanced, enlightened generation ever to occupy this orbiting sphere is literally worrying to death.

It is remarkable and unfortunate that Christians are not immune to this disorder. They have been known to be just as insecure as those whose feet have never stood on the Rock of Ages, whose eyes have not looked to the hills from whence cometh their help, and whose minds are not set on things above. Most saints know that they ought not to worry, so they end up worrying about worrying. What does the Owner's Manual say to do about this malfunction?

Jesus discussed the Christian and anxiety in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:25-34). He says, "Take no thought" (*merimnao*) for life (6:25), food (6:31), and tomorrow (6:34). This does not mean not to plan tomorrow's menu, buy winter clothes in the summer, or purchase home or health insurance (cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11; 1 Timothy 5:8; Proverbs 30:25). It means that we are not to "be anxious" for these things. Note His four reasons Christians are not to worry.

THE BIRDS TEACH US NOT TO WORRY (6:26). Whoever said that "worrying is for the birds" was off the mark. Birds don't worry! Who ever heard of a bird taking ulcer medication, committing suicide when his stocks crashed, or dying with a heart attack? Birds are not concerned with the future, yet they form no lines at soup kitchens or welfare offices. God cares for them.

Surely, God could not be charged with watching out for sparrows and neglecting His own children! We are made in the image of God and

infused with a soul from the Father (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; Hebrews 12:9). Birds are not. Thus, if God cares for them, He cares more for us (Matthew 10:29-31; cf. Romans 8:32).

THE YARDSTICK TEACHES US NOT TO WORRY (6:27). Whoever heard of a short man worrying himself into a larger size? Was it ever reported that worrying lengthened someone's life? No! Worry is useless. Stature (*helikia*) indicates "a stage of growth whether measured by age or stature" (Abbott-Smith). Jesus says worry will not make you older (though we appear to be!) or taller. "Worry never climbed a hill; worry never paid a bill; worry never dried a tear; worry never calmed a fear; worry never darned a heel; worry never cooked a meal; worry never composed a song to sing; actually, worry never did a worthwhile thing." "Worry is like a rocking chair, it keeps you busy, but gets you nowhere."

No one can lengthen his life by worrying, but there is evidence that worry can shorten it. When it comes to long life, what we are eating is important, but what is eating us is more important! Studies indicate that 70% of all illnesses are psychosomatic ("relating to bodily symptoms caused by emotional disturbance").

Worry has been listed as a leading cause of heart trouble, high blood pressure, stomach disorders, and respiratory ailments. "I have never known a man to die from hard work, but many who have died from doubt" (Dr. Charles Mayo). The old English root from which we get worry means "to strangle," and people are strangling their lives with anxiety. If for no other reason, we should not worry because it destroys the Spirit's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Worry falls into three classes. (1) Things that have already happened. Why worry? Eggs cannot be unscrambled and toothpaste cannot be put back in the tube. "Most worries are reruns" (*Reader's Digest*). Paul learned to put the past

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SALVATION

Kenneth Bray



What is the most important subject that the human mind is able to consider? Obviously, it is the subject of God. But second to that subject would be a consideration of the matter of salvation. Since there is a God who made the human

family, and since the human family has gone astray into sin, then the remedy for this fallen condition is of utmost seriousness.

God's word has much to say about the need for and the means of salvation. One of the most well known declarations related to salvation was made by Peter as he spoke before a Jewish tribunal as recorded thusly: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). God's revelation regarding this salvation can be summarized under these three headings.

SALVATION IS BY A PERSON - Because animal sacrifices could not take away the guilt of sin, it was necessary for God to provide a special offering that could completely atone for sin. The person selected was none other than the Word, the Son of God, who was made flesh and lived on this earth as a human being (John 1:14). This person is described in the "golden text" of the Bible which says: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Our redemption can come only through "the precious blood of Christ" which serves as the very basis of salvation (1 Peter 1:18-19).

SALVATION IS BY A PLAN - Since God has made salvation conditional, we need to ask this question: What are the terms that we must meet in order to have the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Christ? This is the question asked by

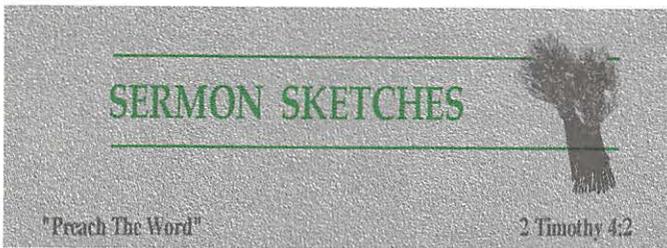
the people on Pentecost: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). The Philippian jailer likewise asked: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). The answer to this question relates to the plan of salvation.

The answer to this question can be summarized as follows: One must hear the good news (gospel) related to Jesus and to the salvation that he offers (Mark 16:15). The sinner must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:16). Having learned the truth about sin, one must repent (turn from) of sin (Acts 2:38). Then upon a confession of faith in Christ, one must be buried with Christ in baptism (Romans 6:3-4; 10:9-10). When this is done, the blood of Jesus Christ washes away all past sin (Acts 22:16).

SALVATION IS IN A PLACE - When one is saved by the blood of Christ, he is translated into a new spiritual place (relationship). This new relationship is described as follows: Romans 8:1 - "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Ephesians 5:23 - "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." Acts 2:47 - "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

All of those who have put their trust in Christ and who have obeyed his gospel are members of the body of Christ, which is his church (Ephesians 1:22-23). Having been baptized into Christ, they have put on Christ (Galatians 3:27). God requires all who compose his family to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

Conclusion: No matter what else we might know, nothing can take the place of the knowledge of salvation. Only through an understanding of the truth can we be made free (John 8:32). The fundamental truth about salvation is this: It is by a person, by a plan, and in a place. -59 Jackie Street, Morton, MS 39117



WHO'S KEEPING THIS CHURCH ALIVE?

(Revelation 3:1-2)

M. W. Kiser



It has been said that these epistles from Christ to the seven churches of Asia are not just antique relics for us to observe something of the past; but mirrors in which we can see ourselves. Truly the church at Sardis was one with a false reputation. The most that we can say for it is that it was a "feeble" church! It had no doctrinal problems, nor was it being persecuted; neither did it receive from Jesus a word of commendation! It had grown accustomed to its blessings, and complacent in its ministry. An organism is alive, then there is growth, repair, reproduction, and power. There were only a few who kept that church from being a total corpse! What about this church of Christ?

I. THE FAITHFUL...OR THOSE WHO ARE DEPENDABLE.

- A. Dependability is an outstanding trait of those who accomplish things. It is exactly what the Lord is looking for (Matthew 25:21, 23; Revelation 2:10).
- B. Areas in which faithfulness can be observed.
 - 1. Bible Study (Acts 17:11).
 - 2. Purity of life (James 1:27; Matthew 5:13-16).

- 3. Prayer (Acts 2:42; Colossians 4:2-3).
- 4. Attendance (Hebrews 10:25).
- 5. Service (Matthew 25:21)
- C. The priesthood of the Old Testament serves as a type of the royal priesthood of the New Testament (Leviticus 6:12-13; 1 Peter 2:5, 9).

II. THE WILLING...OR THOSE WITH A WILL TO DO.

- A. Some are willing to do; others are willing to let them. It is the willing who keep the church alive (John 7:17; 2 Corinthians 8:12).
- B. Willingness manifests itself in several areas.
 - 1. A willingness to take on new tasks. Some look only to quit doing!
 - 2. A willingness to learn and develop potential (2 Peter 3:18).
 - 3. A willingness to improve. A grave in the Alps, "He died climbing."
 - 4. A willingness to get involved. Disciples in The Book of Acts.
 - 5. A willingness to develop into leaders (elders, deacons, teachers).
 - 6. A willingness to practice the truth...even when it is difficult!
- C. Let us have the mind of Christ in this matter of service (Matthew 8:2-3).

III. THE LIBERAL...OR THOSE WHO LIVE TO GIVE.

- A. Christianity is a religion founded on liberal and unselfish giving (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-9).
 - B. Those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ must give their money:
 - 1. Weekly (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
 - 2. Willingly (2 Corinthians 8:12).
- (Continued on page 13)

INTERESTING INQUIRIES

"Understandest Thou What Thou Readeſt?"

Acts 8:30

"DOES GOD RECOGNIZE 'GAY' MARRIAGES?"

John T. Polk, II

NO! Furthermore there is nothing "gay" about them, for homosexuality causes grief and heartache for it is a perverse twisting of one's true nature. Homosexuals even pervert the word "gay" to make it seem they are what they are not!

Jesus spoke on homosexuality when He said, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate" (Matthew 19:4-6). Since marriage was established "at the beginning" (cf. Genesis 2:24), and since it was designed for "male and female" (cf., Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18-25), then God never intended marriage for two people of the same sex!!! There is a sexual appeal to be satisfied in marriage, for God made them "male and female" thus introducing the sexual relationship. Adam and Eve's marriage sanctified their sexual appetites for each other and "they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:25).

Only within heterosexual marriage did God ordain sexual satisfaction (Hebrews 13:4). In a "homosexual marriage" there is no "opposite sex" to control the desires of the spouse (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). Calling a homosexual spouse a "husband" or "wife" doesn't change the fact that that person is not made by God for that role. Since God made marriage for "male and female," any attempt to "mate" a person of the same sex is

perverse. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "Neither fornicators...adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites...will inherit the kingdom of God." Fornication is unlawful intercourse (1 Corinthians 6:15, 18); adultery is violation of the purity of marriage (Matthew 19:9); homosexuals are men who are effeminate, soft to the touch, who disguise their "maleness" with feminine mannerisms, clothing, and language; sodomites are men who have sexual intercourse with men. Since God made us "male and female," and since everything reproduces "according to its kind" (Genesis 1:11, 21, 24); then homosexual marriages cannot reproduce "according to its kind"!

Men marrying men, and women marrying women destroy God's pattern for individual sexuality and marriage itself. "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their effort which was due" (Romans 1:26-27). To change the "natural use" into that which is against nature is to rebel against the physical creation of God! By creation God made us "male and female" and by procreation we are born either "male or female." One violates his/her body's "natural use" to prefer to be other than what he/she was born to be. No man is born "a woman trapped in a man's body," nor is a woman born "a man trapped in a woman's body" as some claim. In fact, the Women's Liberationists have falsely claimed that "men need to get in touch with their feminine side" and "women need to get in touch with their masculine side." The only "feminine side" men should get in touch with is a wife, and the only "masculine side" women should get in touch with is a husband. The homosexual/lesbian segment of society are those who have either been confused or deliberately mis-taught on this basic issue of their sexual roles. State schools and public education in general have done nothing but add to this confusion by encouraging boys to be
(continued on page 15)

WHO'S KEEPING THIS CHURCH ALIVE?

(Continued from page 11)

3. Purposefully (2 Corinthians 9:7).
 4. Proportionately (1 Corinthians 16:2).
 5. Liberally (Romans 12:8).
 6. Sacrificially (Romans 12:1).
- C. The example of Israel when building the tabernacle (Exodus 35:2, 29).
1. Little boy saved the choice morsels for his dog. His father insisted that he eat the best and take the dog the scraps. "Here Spot, I really intended for you to get a love offering, but you have got to settle for these few scraps instead!
 2. Which will the Lord get from you today? A love offering or scraps?

Would you want to see this church die? What are you doing to keep it alive? Are you one of the ones we have spoken about? -922 Heritage Drive, Sylacauga, AL 35150

**MOUNTAIN HOME CHURCH OF CHRIST
COLLEGE AND NORTH STREETS
P.O. BOX 192
MOUNTAIN HOME, AR 72653**

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

Telephone (501) 425-4330
Office Fax (501) 425-8118

Bill Dillon, Evangelist

**"IF A MAN COULD HAVE HALF HIS WISHES,
HE WOULD DOUBLE HIS TROUBLES."**

Benjamin Franklin

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED DURING THE PAST QUARTER

Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Eldridge Livingston, TN	10.00
Arlington Church of Christ McMinnville, TN	75.00
George & Nadine Lucas Carbondale, IL	15.00
Eva & Marshall Johnson LaFayette, GA	15.00
Wayne & Frances Deffenbaugh Cassville, MO	5.00
Anonymous Cleveland, TN	20.00
J. C. Alexander Canton, TX	50.00
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hall, Sr. Eads, TN	10.00
Mr. & Mrs. Roy E. Barfield Rogers, TN	10.00
John David Wright Mt. Pleasant, TX	15.00
Mountain Home Church of Christ Mountain Home, AR	1,200.00
Mabelvale Church of Christ Mabelvale, AR	600.00

TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS:

We thank you for your kindness and generosity in giving to *Gospel Gleaner*. Your loving thoughtfulness is so very much appreciated.

The Editors

STARTING BLOCKS, NOT STUMBLING BLOCKS

Daniel F. Cates



This year the United States will host the Summer Olympics. The Olympics will feature many types of events, but the main events will be those which involve racing. The races will be of different distances, with the fastest runners taking home the medals. If you pay close attention to the shorter races you will see an object which is often overlooked, that object is the starting block. The starting block is very necessary to sprinters. It allows them to get into the position which will best allow them to "explode" from the starting line. In a race that is decided in hundredths of a second, a good start is crucial. A good start will generally, though not always, insure a strong finish.

To the person who seeks to run the race, and to win the prize (1 Corinthians 9:24), starting blocks are also a necessity. To the Christian, the starting block is faith. Faith is the foundation, it is the object which sets the Christian on his way to the goal. The Bible talks of the Christian life as a race in Hebrews 12:1, and it states that sin is a weight which besets us. Such a weight must be cast off.

We need starting blocks, not stumbling blocks. We must be able to avoid all stumbling blocks as we run our race. Have you ever watched a steeplechase? That is the race where the runners have to jump over hurdles and water traps. It is not uncommon to see one or two fall at such an obstacle, or to even see one stumble and then a few behind that one either fall themselves or have to go out of their way to avoid him. Those are stumbling blocks, and the winner is the one who is best able to avoid them. Stumbling blocks may be

sins which slowly creep back into our lives. Stumbling blocks may be temptations. Galatians 5:7 shows that stumbling blocks may be other people, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?" In Romans 14:13 Paul encouraged Christians, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Unjust judgment, then, is also a stumbling block. Stumbling blocks caused by others also may include lying, gossip, division, false teaching and factions.

One will not be allowed to participate in the Olympics if he is not entered, and no man can run the Christian race without entering. In order to enter the race we must have faith, we must cast off the weights of sin in repentance, we must confess Christ before men, we must be baptized for the remission of our sins, and we must run with patience the race that is set before us. Knowing there is a race is not enough, for we must enter. Having faith, or starting blocks is not enough, for we must run patiently the entire race.

Runners always know where the finish line is, and faithful Christians should be looking toward their finish lines. As we run the race we should continually look "unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). Alas, we reach our goal only when we have faithfully, patiently, and accurately run the course and have reached the finish line. -9300 Treasure Hill Road, #1004, Little Rock, AR 72207

EVERYTHING THAT IS RIGHT IS
NOT POPULAR AND
EVERYTHING THAT IS POPULAR
IS NOT RIGHT!

"WORRYING OVER WORRY"

(Continued from page 9)

behind him (Philippians 3:13-14). If sin is involved, we should cleanse it in Christ's blood (Acts 22:16; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7), and go on.

(2) Things which must happen. All the worry in the world cannot change some things, for they will happen anyway. We are going to die (Hebrews 9:27), so why worry about it? Prepare and let it come (Philippians 1:21). (3) Things which will never happen. A little old lady said, "I always feel bad, even when I feel good, because I know that it will not be long before I feel bad again." Sad! "It is not the tornadoes that get us, but the termites." It is said that 85 percent of what we worry over never happens! (The original words for worry have to do with "being concerned with objects in the future; to be anxious beforehand.") Why waste the time (Ephesians 5:16)? Time should be invested in working instead of worrying. The ant wastes no time worrying about the future. Instead, it constantly works to prepare for tomorrow (Proverbs 6:6-8). "Go to the ant."

A CHILD TEACHES US NOT TO WORRY (6:32). Children lead us in many ways (Isaiah 11:6), and one way is that they trust their parents. It is sinful to worry because it says, "I do not trust my Father to care for me." Worry is praying to the wrong god and thus insults Jehovah (cf. Psalm 37:1; Proverbs 3:5-6; Philippians 4:6-7).

Problems become smaller when they are seen in God's shadow. Martha was troubled about many things, but Mary was sitting at Jesus feet (Luke 10:38-42). Guess which one was content! "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). Our coins say, "In God We Trust," and so should our hearts (Proverbs 3:5; Psalm 9:10).

God is unlimited in what He can do (Romans 8:28; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:19), so my problems are not very big to Him. It is much like a child who becomes frustrated with a knotted shoestring. To him it is a major problem and an unsolvable dilemma. He may even deem it worth several tears. Daddy smiles to himself and

quickly unties it. The difference is a matter of perspective. Our major difficulties are only knotted shoestrings to Almighty God. Why get so upset?

A minute of prayer is better than an hour of worrying (Philippians 4:6). We read where Jesus spent an entire night in prayer, but never where He spent one second in worry. His example is worthy of imitation (1 Peter 2:21-22).

Worried? Let God handle it. -P. O. Box 512, Jacksonville, AL 36265

"DOES GOD RECOGNIZE 'GAY' MARRIAGES?"

(Continued from page 12)

more effeminate and girls to be more masculine. There is no such thing as a sexless society but sexual roles are fixed at birth and can be reinforced by accepted social practices.

People who deliberately choose not to honor God's law cannot expect God to sanction their actions by his law!! No one is born a homosexual/lesbian for everyone is either "male or female." God is not responsible for the confusion caused by perverse people (1 Corinthians 14:33). The gospel of Christ can save any from perverseness if they are willing to repent (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Acts 2:38). -125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

MABELVALE CHURCH OF CHRIST
10820 MABELVALE WEST ROAD
P.O. BOX 345
MABELVALE, AR 72103

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

Telephone (501) 455-2548
Dennis Gullledge, Evangelist



THE LORD'S WORK IN DONETSK, UKRAINE

Dennis Gullede

On June 10, 1996 I left Little Rock, Arkansas to begin the long journey to Donetsk, Ukraine, to join a campaign for Christ in that city. I traveled in the company of Johnny Boyd, one of the faithful elders of the Mabelvale church, and on the 12th reached Donetsk in the company of over thirty other campaign workers who departed from various places and at different times. This was my first time to travel to Ukraine. It was brother Boyd's third such endeavor, since he had participated in similar campaigns in 1994 and 1995.

My flight took me from Little Rock to Atlanta to Frankfurt, Germany to Kiev, Ukraine. From Kiev we traveled eighteen hours by train into Donetsk. Our purpose in going to Donetsk was two-fold. First, to preach the gospel in a



The author in company of campaign workers and translators (L-R; Charles Evans, Dema, Julia Balatskaya, Dennis Gullede, Micah Sexon, Kid Oleg.

campaign with the theme, "What Does The Bible Say...?" Second, to deliver diabetic supplies in order to help provide small relief for some of the many diabetic sufferers in Donetsk. The medical relief helped secure our visas into the country.

In order to prepare for the campaign, local television and radio ads announcing it were carried over the airwaves. All the campaigners, in the company of their translators, canvassed the streets and neighborhoods handing out flyers which described the campaign and the subjects being treated each evening. This we did for three days prior to the start of the gospel meeting which began on Saturday, June 15th and went through Sunday, June 23rd. One disadvantage of this method of campaigning is that the average Ukrainian confuses us with the Jehovah's Witnesses who are quite active and bothersome even in that part of the world.

The people seemed moderately receptive. Most were in a hurry, did not want to be bothered and said they were too busy. Some were just not interested and waved us off as they went by. With some, their laughs and smirks spoke the universal language of disinterest. However, others (especially the older people) would stop and converse. These people knew about the Bible, but did not own one themselves. Most of them, of course, were brought up in the Russian Orthodox Church. They believe themselves to be Christians having been "Christianized" as infants when they were "baptized." The Russian Orthodox Church represents a mighty stronghold in Ukraine.

As already mentioned, the theme of the campaign was, "What Does The Bible Say...?" The lecture titles were, "What Does The Bible Say About God?; Worship?; Jesus?; the Holy Spirit?; Salvation?; Baptism?; the Church?; Heaven/Hell?, and the Christian Life?" I preached four times during the campaign. My subjects included worship, the Holy Spirit, baptism and heaven/hell. I learned that there are some difficulties inherent in working with an interpreter. Translators must translate ideas rather than word for word. In my
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THE LORD'S WORK IN DONETSK, UKRAINE

(Continued from page 16)

sermon on the Holy Spirit my translator was unfamiliar with the word "deity." He told me that the Russian language had no equivalent for it, so he went to his dictionary for assistance. Another problem I encountered was the word "baptism" in a sermon dealing with the same. You would think it simple, but in the Russian Bible their word for "baptism" is "Christianize;" not exactly an equivalent translation. Add to that the fact that most Ukrainians were baptized as infants into the Russian Orthodox Church, thus considering themselves already baptized and "Orthodox Christians," and you can see the inadequacy of the Russian concept of Christianizing and the difficulty in communication facing the preacher. Therefore, I elected to use "immerse" in place of the word baptism. My interpreter was faced with some difficulties in adjusting and gave me the distinction of preaching the most difficult lesson he ever had to interpret.

At each of the evening lectures the visitors were given a Bible. I have seldom seen such joy as was in the expressions of these Bible recipients. Many of them had no Bible at all; some had nothing more than a paper-back New Testament to call their own. Their delight spoke a language which is universally understood. At each service we taught only what the Bible has to say. We urged people to open their Bibles and read for themselves what the Scriptures say. After each lesson we entertained questions from the audience.

The entire group of campaigners with which I was involved worked at three separate congregations in the city of Donetsk. I worked

with the Proletarsky church. Others worked with the Budyonovsky church. Still others worked in a new location where a congregation is now meeting. The entire campaign effort was responsible for forty precious souls being baptized into Christ. Enough work was done that there may well be other conversions to follow in the wake of this effort. To God be the glory for any good we may have been able to do!

Ukraine is still a mission field "white unto harvest." The novelty of Americans coming into the country seems to have faded. The vast results of hundreds being baptized were not there for us to see. However, we would rather see a comparatively few obey the gospel, and these people become rooted and grounded in the most holy faith; remaining steadfast and loyal to God, than to speak of vast results one year and be unable to account for them the next.

It should be our prayer that the door of opportunity will remain open in Russia and Ukraine. If Russia ever closes the door to "foreign religions" it could close the door for those who would bring glad tidings of good things in the

future. Let us pray that as long as the door of opportunity is open to us that there will be laborers willing and able to go.

On June 23rd we said good-bye to our Ukrainian friends, and the campaign coordinators who are working long-term with the three congregations involved, and began the long journey back home with stops in Kiev, Vienna and Atlanta. It was a wonderful privilege to participate in such an effort. I have grown because of it. I pray that much and lasting good has resulted. -10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103.



Gorky Palace -- The Proletarsky church meets in a room in this building in Donetsk, Ukraine.

THE SMALL CHURCH IN AMERICA

Max Patterson

The following is a summary of a survey conducted by Larry Fitzgerald in 1994 of 200 churches of Christ. 187 of these churches responded. Those preachers and others who have been described as "change agents" need to take notice. There are those who have said that churches of Christ are going to have to change the organization and worship to survive. However, such was said without any serious research, and I highly suspected that they were wrong. (I always knew they were wrong from a scriptural point of view, and now this survey demonstrates they are wrong from purely a pragmatic point of view). M.P.

Small Church Survey Conclusions

Growing Small Churches

1. Nearly every member involved.
2. Membership had focused, clear-cut goals.
3. Some form of visitation.
4. Hosted a vacation Bible school which typically contributed to the congregation's goals.
5. Bible classes use curriculums coordinated with the adult classes and usually written or adapted by the membership.
6. Offered a variety of adult classes (even in very small churches).
7. Had a full-time pulpit minister regardless of church size.
8. Preachers served more than four years.
9. Preachers considered themselves to have multiple roles.
10. Preachers were usually over 40 years of age.
11. Were willing to vary worship and Bible study times.
12. A little more than half (58%) had worship services which they described as "untypical of churches of Christ" only in that they gave greater emphasis to acts of worship.

It is interesting to note that 42% of the growing churches had "typical" services.

Non-growing Small Churches

1. Many members complacent.
2. No clear-cut goals.
3. Visitation limited to preacher or small few.
4. Most did not host a VBS. Those that hosted a VBS had little support from membership.
5. Used only pre-printed curriculum.
6. Little variety of adult classes.
7. Many had part-time pulpit preachers.
8. Preachers served 3 years or less.
9. Preachers listed their only roles as "pulpit-minister."
10. Preachers were under 40 years or over 65.
11. Would not change times of worship services or Bible classes.
12. Most worship services were described as "typical of churches of Christ." Where radical changes were made (i.e. women preaching, introduction of instrumental music, etc.)...this always led to loss of attendance.

The biggest surprise that came out of this survey is reflected in point #10 of this survey. Nearly half (45%) of pulpit ministers who served growing small churches were 40-49 years of age. One third (33%) were 50-59 years old. This means 78% of the preachers who served growing churches were 40-59 years old. This does not preclude the possibility that younger preachers can help spark growth in smaller congregations. But it does give pause to wonder why a number of congregations seek to hire younger preachers.

The second big surprise was #12. It has been asserted lately that for a congregation to grow it must introduce radically innovative things into its worship service. Adoption of choirs, solos,

(Continued on page 19)

IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN IN HEAVEN?

(Continued from page 6)

but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." Those whose names are not in the book will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Revelation 20:11-15, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Is your name written in heaven? Every alien sinner should hasten to take advantage of God's grace and the cleansing power of the blood of Christ that his name may be written in the book of life.

Every wayward child of God should repent and pray to God that he may be forgiven and have his name in the book at that great day. It will be a bright day for some but a sad day for others. - 10914 Hwy 25 South, Fulton, MS 38343

THE SMALL CHURCH IN AMERICA

(Continued from page 18)

Instrumental music, drama, "tongue speaking," women preachers, which are common among Catholic and Protestant churches in the U.S. actually never helped any of the churches of Christ in this survey increase their overall attendance. In fact, these introductions did hurt several churches. -1013 W. South Street, Neosho, MO 64850

THE CHURCH

Andrew Connally

The church is not made up of people who believe they are better than others, but rather it is made up of those who realize that they should be better than they are and must continually strive to do better always.

The church is not made up of people who never make mistakes, but those who often acknowledge their mistakes and then forsake them. Never must we seek to justify them or continually make the same mistakes over and over again.

The church is not trying to withdraw from everyone, but rather to draw everyone into its fellowship and love who are willing to walk in the light where God the Father and Christ the Son are found. The church is not trying to set up arbitrary rules to hinder anyone, but rather to show the rule of Christ which helps everyone.

The church is not trying to make you feel ugly, but rather it is trying to instill the beauty of holiness in your life.

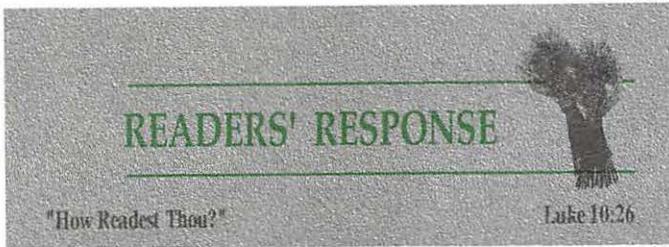
The church is not trying to separate you from your money, but rather is trying to keep your money from separating you from God.

The church is not trying to become the master of your life, but rather is trying to get you to master yourself.

The church is not trying to rob your life of priorities, but rather trying to get you to put the priorities into your life.

SIX DAILY MATTERS FOR US

1. Daily cross-bearing - Luke 9:23
2. Daily prayer - Matthew 6:11
3. Daily exhortation - Hebrews 3:13
4. Daily searching the Scriptures - Acts 17:11
5. Daily concern for the church - 2 Cor. 11:28
6. Daily teaching and preaching Jesus Christ Acts 5:42



AN EXCELLENT PAPER

I read and appreciate the *Gospel Gleaner*. It is an excellent paper. J. A. McNutt, Memphis, TN.

KEEP IT UP!

I read your write up in the *Gospel Gleaner* and enjoyed it so much. I thought it very tactful and correct (small groups ministry). Keep up your wonderful work. Donna Fort, Cabot, AR.

IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Forgive me for being negligent in commending you and Bill Dillon for the excellent job you are doing with *Gospel Gleaner*. You have an attractive, clean looking paper with a balance of variety and excellent content. We must pursue excellence in the printed media and *Gospel Gleaner* goes a long way in realizing that goal! Ted J. Clarke, Mammoth Spring, AR.

ONE OF THE MOST ENLIGHTENING PAPERS

I am writing in regard to the wonderful paper the *Gospel Gleaner*, it has meant so much to me even with this one reading. I picked it up some where at some congregation. I go to East Ridge in Chattanooga, Tennessee. I may have gotten it there. I am just not sure where, but it is one of the

most enlightening papers I have read and I take several of them. Louise Hassler, Ringgold, GA.

STRAIGHT FORWARD TRUTH

I have seen and read copies of *Gospel Gleaner* and appreciate your straight forward truth of the good news of Christ. This Bible teaching is so needed by the young couples of today. God be with you and he will bless you always. Frances Murray, Fulton, KY.

APPRECIATES THINGS STATED

Recently I was at the Memphis School of Preaching and picked up a copy of your paper, *Gospel Gleaner*. I appreciate the things stated in it and wish to be added to your mailing list if possible. Thanks for your stand for the truth. Eddy Gilpin, Munford, AL.

WORD FROM CENTRAL AFRICA

Thank you for your *Gospel Gleaner*. It is very educative. Put me on your mailing list so that we could share Malawi experience with your experience. May God bless your good work. S. C. Gondwe, Malawi, Central Africa.

ENJOYS READING GG

I enjoyed reading your recent publication and would like to be added to your mailing list. Donna Bell, Cobden, IL.

GETS MUCH OUT OF GG

I get so much out of your publication. Thank you for all of you. Love to all. Marie Carson, Indianapolis, IN.

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GOSPEL GLEANER



Volume 12

Number 4

DOES IT MATTER HOW WE DRESS WHEN WE COME TO WORSHIP?

Mack Lyon

I am absolutely appalled at the attire of some church members. Is this just my age showing or is there a problem developing? When I was growing up, I recall so vividly my mother every Saturday night getting our clothes ready for Sunday. It was the one day of the week that we would "look our very best." We were going to worship God! Now I see young and old coming to worship this same God in clothing that would not meet our local school code.

Physiologists have known for a long time that dress does have influence on our behavior. Slouchy dress creates slouchy work in school. This has led some high schools, colleges, universities and even work places to insist that their students/employees dress as though they were serious about their work. I am not suggesting that every man wear a white shirt and tie. I am saying that the importance of worship should cause us to want to give some special attention to our appearance.

Make no mistake about it: shorts, tank-tops, T-shirts advertising beer, rock groups, and beer taverns send a message about the wearer. Most respectable eating places have a sign, "No shirt, no shoes, no service." Are we approaching the day when such signs would be appropriate for the house of worship?

What has happened to the human race? Have we no self-respect? People appear in public

everywhere unbathed, unwashed, uncombed, unshaven, untrimmed, unshod, even undressed, and generally unkempt with no apparent shame at all! Is there nothing inappropriate? Or immodest? One might expect this from those who walk after the flesh, but who would have ever dreamed that Christians who are led by godly principles would be so much like the world? Even elders' and deacons' children come to services with seemingly little regard for the example that church leaders' families should set.

The Bible tells us that, "...The Lord sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Are we going to misuse and abuse this Scripture so badly that we endorse a state of decadence? It is true that God does not have a dress code for worship! A true spirit of awe, reverence and worship dictates that Christians going to worship would not dress as Christians going to some sporting event.

I encourage every Christian here...to have a poor and contrite spirit (Isaiah 66:2). Let us have the attitude spoken of by the writer of Hebrews 12:28-29, "...let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire." I encourage our young ladies and young men to be modest in their dress when coming to worship or

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Volume 12 Number 4
October-December 1996

The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is a quarterly publication of the Mabelvale Church of Christ in Mabelvale, Arkansas and the Mountain Home Church of Christ in Mountain Home, Arkansas.

The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is also supported financially by interested sister churches and individuals and is mailed free of charge to its subscribers.

The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity. We welcome your comments and questions regarding any article found herein.

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GAMBLING: THE WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE

Bill Dillon

Millions today are seeking excitement and thrills through the allure of gambling. From bingo to blackjack; from roulette to horse racing; from state lotteries to selling chances on a lawn mower; gambling is viewed by many as a way to fulfill all their dreams by riding on the wheel of fortune. But is gambling really the wheel of fortune or *the wheel of misfortune?*



In a recent *Reader's Digest* (April, 1996), there appears an article that truly gives, in the language of Paul Harvey, "the rest of the story."

The article is called "Gambling's Toll in Minnesota" and the subtitle reads, "When a State Legalizes Gambling, Everybody Pays." Here is more of what the article says:

In less than a decade legalized gambling in Minnesota -- \$4.1 billion is legally wagered in the state each year -- has created a new class of addicts, victims and criminals whose activities are devastating families. Even conservative estimates of the social toll suggest that problem gambling costs Minnesotans more than \$200 million per year in taxes, lost income, bad debts and crime.

The article details Minnesota's misery with the gambling mess in terms of lost income, bad debts, crime, an increased police burden, a greater taxpayer tab and hidden suicides. The article concludes by pointing out:

But for Minnesota the social costs of gambling are emerging in vivid and tragic detail.

In Minnesota and elsewhere, the gambling concept that was supposed to yield a financial bonanza for states and good, clean harmless fun for players, has not worked as planned!!

Gambling does not work financially nor socially, and it does not work spiritually!!! It is a social detriment, a financial failure and a spiritual catastrophe.

Someone may try to defend gambling by saying, "What's wrong with it? Isn't life itself a gamble?" But there is a difference in a necessary risk and an unnecessary one.

In gambling you are talking about created risks with wagers and stakes. We are not referring to the risks a farmer incurs growing his crops. Floods, pests and droughts are not created risks -- they are a part of the nature of things as long as the world stands. A farmer's situation

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WHAT ABOUT PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE?

Dennis Gullede



Sentiment grows in our country for the "right to die" by suicide, and by euthanasia, assisted suicide. Most of the talk is done by people who are thinking of other people's death, not their own. It is a moral question of immense magnitude and

an issue which is not going to go away.

Suicide is the act of taking one's own life to escape the burdens, problems or pain of life. Euthanasia is the act of killing or permitting the death of hopelessly sick or injured persons in a relatively painless way for reasons of "mercy." It seems that modern America has a national fixation with the avoidance of any and all pain. We have a pill for every problem. The idea is: "All pain is bad -- all relief is good" -- even death. There is a growing belief that a life of suffering (or even possible suffering) is to be avoided at all costs. If a baby might be born into a world of suffering it is easily aborted. If a person is terminally ill he is easily terminated. Such is the world in which we now live.

A question for our modern times is, "What about physician assisted suicide?" In 1980 Dr. Christian Bernard wrote a book titled, *Good Life/Good Death: A Doctor's Case For Euthanasia And Suicide*, in which he said that "doctors who take an oath to preserve life in all situations ought to 're-examine' that oath" (John Temples, "Suicide: Changing Attitudes" *Gospel Advocate* February 3, 1983, p. 76). More recently, Dr. Jack Kevorkian of Royal Oak, Michigan has earned for himself the title, "Dr. Death" because of his crusade for physician assisted suicide. The self-murder advocates would covet a new dignity to suicide with the support of physicians. The American Medical Association (AMA) recently reaffirmed its objection to assisted suicide. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) supports

doctor-assisted suicide "as a legitimate extension of the right of control over one's own body" (F. LaGard Smith, *ACLU - The Devil's Advocate*, p. 25).

I am not a physician and shall not discuss the medical issues involved. I am a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and it is my conviction that regardless of the social, political, medical, societal or psychological arguments which weigh either for or against this issue, the spiritual arguments take priority.

What does the Bible say about suicide, physician assisted or otherwise? There are no direct statements such as, "Thou shalt not commit suicide," which are the very words some are seeking in order to be convinced that God is against it. However, the Bible does address principles which relate to this issue, as we shall see.

It is worthy of note that the Bible mentions several instances of suicide. These are cases of men who died either at their own hand, or, at the hand of others upon their own request: Abimelech (Judges 9:54); Samson (Judges 16:30); Saul (1 Samuel 31:4); Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23); Zimri (1 Kings 16:18); and Judas Iscariot (Matthew 27:5).

Suicide Assumes That Man Has The Rule Of His Own Being

A growing segment of our society has a purely materialistic view of life. The humanistic idea that man is his own god is gaining ascendancy in public consciousness. Many people do not allow for belief in God. A growing perception of many is that we are mere animals. Then, there is the futilistic philosophy which says that life is absurd, that we are nothing more than "dust in the wind," or an empty bubble on the sea of nothingness.

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PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

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The Christian, however, knows that life is not accidental, the product of organically evolutionary processes, fatalistic nor humanistic. We know that it is God who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25). That makes human life a sacred thing to be preserved. Man, however, has elected to take life into his own hands. Prior to birth abortion is an action which many see as a right. A nation that would sanction wholesale abortion would also sanction wholesale suicide.

Suicide Violates The Biblical Teaching Of Self-Respect

The Christian knows that we are the "offspring" of God (Acts 17:28). God's children by creation bear the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). To take human life, our own or someone else's, is the greatest wrong (Genesis 9:6).

As far as Biblical principles relating to it are concerned suicide comes under the prohibition of murder. It is at least as wrong to take one's own life as it is to take the life of another. One is to love himself as well as others (Matthew 22:39; Ephesians 5:29). Our loving another implies that we will not murder him (Romans 13:10). Our loving ourselves implies the same thing. Norman L. Geisler said, "Suicide is wrong because it is the murder of a human being made in the image and likeness of God, even if the individual happens to be oneself" (Geisler, *Ethics: Alternatives and Issues*, p. 238).

Suicide Is The Desperate Act Of One Who has No Purpose In Life

The Christian knows that life has meaning beyond the here and now. If life is measured merely in things, all is vanity (Ecclesiastes 5:10-11). If pleasure is the chief aim in life, all still is vanity (Ecclesiastes 2:1; 1 Timothy 6:9-11). By these measures it is well to ask, if our losses

exceed our gains is life worth living? If pain goes beyond pleasure is life worth living? To one whose faith is in God there is a more noble purpose to living and that is to "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Conclusion

Is it coincidental that we, in a prospering America, are farther away from God than we have ever been before and people are despairing more and more of life? I think not. There is a relationship between soaring suicide rates (physician assisted or otherwise) and a lagging faith in God. It is only when people find their strength in God that such tragedies are prevented.
-10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103

DOES IT MATTER HOW WE DRESS WHEN WE COME TO WORSHIP?

(Continued from page 1)

when coming to work for God. If your parents are unthoughtful, please take the initiative to do right. If your parents are too old to remember what "lust" is, you dress in such a manner that you will never be a contributing factor to another's lustful eye.

No! God does not have a dress code for worship and work! Of course, He does not. He assumes the humble worshipping heart will dictate proper attire and behavior. A true spirit of awe, reverence and worship dictates dignity and propriety in dress and demeanor. God does not command us to kneel or stand or bow our heads when we pray, but doing so manifests a humbleness of heart that honors and respects the sovereign God whom we praise and petition. So does proper dress.

The message we send with our attire when appearing before God will influence others' opinion of God. A casual attitude that indicates God is not special enough to rate our best, downgrades the importance of His gospel. -P. O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083

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THREE PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE

Guy F. Hester



In Luke 10:25-37 we have the parable of the good Samaritan. "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And

he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and

gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

In verse 25 the lawyer made trial of Jesus by asking him what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus answered him by asking, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" The lawyer answered correctly by saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus said, "This do and thou shalt live." The lawyer desiring to justify himself asked, "Who is my neighbor?" The parable of "The Good Samaritan" was given in answer to this question.

This parable gives three philosophies of life: That of the robbers -- "What is thine is mine." That of the priest and Levite -- "What is thine is thine and what is mine is mine." That of the Samaritan -- "What is mine is thine."

Robbers

The philosophy of life practiced by the robbers was "might makes right." The rule that might makes right was practiced by Hitler during World War II. He had the power to destroy the little countries and take them and that is just what he did.

The robbers loved money more than men. The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. 1 Timothy 6:6-10, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves

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THREE PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE

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through with many sorrows."

This idea that might makes right is so very evident in our society today. Every night on the news we hear of car-jackings, armed robberies, etc., because so many are practicing the philosophy that what is yours is mine if I can take it from you.

The robbers thought that the end justified the means. But the end does not justify the means. Needed revenue does not justify the legalization of gambling casinos, legalized sale of whiskey, etc. The fact that the crucifixion of Jesus worked out to man's salvation did not justify Judas in betraying him, nor the murderers in crucifying him. The philosophy of life that "might makes right" and that "the end justifies the means" would make life unsafe for anyone.

Priest And Levite

The philosophy of life practiced by the priest and Levite was that "every man must look after himself." The priest and the Levite represent the religious class. They probably had been to Jerusalem to do their service in the temple.

The priest and the Levite loved money and ease. They were too busy with their outward duties to do good to their fellow man. They had not contributed to the unfortunate circumstances of the man who had been beaten and left half dead. They felt no responsibility for his welfare. The priest and Levite neglected an opportunity to do good.

It is sinful to neglect opportunities to do good. James 4:17, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Galatians 6:10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." James 1:27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,

and to keep himself unspotted from the world." It is sinful to neglect an opportunity to do good and no sinner can go to heaven.

Good Samaritan

The philosophy of life practiced by the good Samaritan was "do good unto others." This is the golden rule. Matthew 7:12, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

The good Samaritan took the time to help one in unfortunate circumstances. He did not say, "I just don't have the time." He used his best oil and wine. He did not say, "If I had this and that I would help." He did something. He used what he had. He didn't wait for someone else. We should not wait for others to do our work. The parable of the good Samaritan serves as an example to teach us that we should help those who stand in need of our service.

The good Samaritan did not conduct a character search before giving the help that this man needed. The need was there and he fulfilled it. Paul said in Romans 12:20, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

Conclusion

Let us briefly look again at the various attitudes. The lawyer's attitude was, "How may I tempt Jesus?" The robber's attitude was, "What may I get out of this man," what is thine is mine and I will take it by force. The attitude of the priest and Levite was, "What is mine is mine," and I will not expend myself in the interest of another. The attitude of the Samaritan was, "What is mine is thine if you need it." - 10914 Hwy 25 South, Fulton, MS 38343

FROM "POOR RICHARD"
"Write injuries in dust, benefits in marble."

ABORTION: THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

Allen Webster



The January 22, 1973, U. S. Supreme Court decision eliminated any protection for an unborn child's life in favor of a mother's right to privacy. Except for biopsies, abortion is the most common surgical procedure performed in the

U. S. About \$500 million changes hands for abortions in this country annually, and about 1/3 of the "abortuaries" are tax exempt.

God said, "Cursed be he that taketh a bribe to slay an innocent person" (Deuteronomy 27:25). Abortion is legal, with a doctor's permission, through the entire forty weeks of pregnancy (up to the day of birth). America's policy is the most liberal in the western world. One child in three dies by abortion in the U.S. (Via *Pulpit Helps*, Vol 13, No. 4, January 88), one every twenty seconds. The most dangerous place in America for a baby is in its mother. A mother's womb has become a baby's tomb. Jeremiah, in a state of depression wished "that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me" (20:17). Sad, but this unwished dream has become reality for millions of unloved children. Pharaoh and Herod, the Bible baby killers, are no more guilty than their modern counterparts who also unmercifully exterminate helpless infants (Exodus 1: Matthew 2).

The Declaration of Independence promises to all, "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The Bill of Rights reads, "Nor shall any person...be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law." In the battle against abortion, it pays to know the enemy and his tactics. In Vietnam, the Communist often hid himself by donning peasant's garb. Modern

baby killers disguise their intentions by using decent sounding names and argue in intellectual lingo. They are well-educated, influential, wealthy and polished.

Planned Parenthood, a leading dispenser of death (Other leaders in the movement are: The National Abortions Rights Action League [NARAL], Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights [RCAR] and the National Organization of Women [NOW]. They provide funds and troops to advertise and demonstrate for the right to kill.) operates more than 30 abortion chambers. In some cities they receive funding from the United Way and have from the U.S. Government (\$30 million annually) through the Title Ten family planning program. They use a deceptive motto, "Every child a wanted child." Many media personalities and powerful politicians are pro-abortion. Abortionists use smoke-screen tactics to prejudice undiscerning minds and take attention from the real issue -- taking innocent lives. They argue for abortion with five arguments.

(1) *Mother's life endangered.* This is very rare, and due to medical advancements, abortions can almost always be avoided. Dr. C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General, said: "Protection of the life of the mother as an excuse for an abortion is a smoke screen. In my 36 years of pediatric surgery, I have never known of one instance where the child had to be aborted to save the mother's life. The doctor will either induce labor or perform a Cesarean section. His intention is to save the life of both the mother and the baby. The baby's life is never willfully destroyed because the mother's life is in danger." In those rare cases where a choice must be made, what should be done? The dilemma is the same faced when several lives are jeopardized in a fire. If all cannot be saved, which is to live? This would, obviously, be a difficult choice made by much prayer by the loving couple. This is not an argument for

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ABORTION: THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

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abortion on demand. Abortion is like casting an unwanted child into the fire!

(2) **Rape or incest.** Such criminals should face the quick and severe wrath of an angry government (Romans 13:1-5), which would be a strong deterrent (Ecclesiastes 8:11). The likelihood of becoming pregnant from a rape is about one in 4,000 from a review of two separate studies (Jarrett). But when it does occur, victims need moral support, financial help, tender understanding and protection by caring people and a fair government. They do not need the added trauma of a violent and destructive abortion.

Abortion is dangerous. Unsuccessful second pregnancies occur more than twice as often among those who have had abortions. Miscarriages, premature births, tubal pregnancies, loss of interest in sexual activity, damage to reproductive organs, intractable hemorrhages, pelvic pain, infertility, severe emotional and psychiatric problems, and even death (in a two year period, 26 with legal abortions and 14 with spontaneous abortions). There is no happy solution to every problem pregnancy, but evidence of concern from society for mother and child, positive support, and assistance with problems, is the more humane route.

God will give strength to get through troubled times (1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:13). There is no way to ignore His words: "...and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15). Adoption, rather than abortion, is the option for those who love God. Adoption agencies throughout the country have lists of people waiting to adopt a baby.

(3) **Deformed child.** Half such cases can be corrected, but is not all human life sacred? Are defective babies human? Why not kill the defective after birth instead of before? What level of perfection is required before a baby should be allowed to live? Who has the power to decide? To many, man is nothing more than a highly evolved, tool-using animal whose value is

measured by productivity. The unborn is nothing more than a developing "non-human blob of protoplasm." From a humanist perspective, taking this useless life is not immoral. Unknowingly, many "pro-choicers" have been influenced by humanistic/evolutionistic/atheistic thinking.

(4) **Child abuse would sky-rocket.** No, since abortion was legalized, child abuse has climbed by at least 500%, even though we have prevented more than 16,000,000 unwanted children's births.

(5) **World population needs to be reduced.** Abortion is an ineffective, expensive, and inhumane method of population control. One may as well argue for war and famine to control overcrowding. Martin Luther King, Jr., at the height of his protest against the treatment of blacks at that time, was arrested. When a reporter asked him, "Why are you in jail?" his only response was, "Why are you not in jail?" Babies are being murdered everyday. Why are we silent? Edmond Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Christian, pray, speak out and vote!

P.S. If you have had an abortion, God will forgive you. -P. O. Box 512, Jacksonville, AL 36265

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Bill Dillon, Evangelist

MORALITY

Kenneth Bray



In the animal kingdom, the "law of the jungle" is the rule by which lower forms of life live and die. In nicer terms it is sometimes called the survival of the fittest, but it still involves a "dog eat dog" existence. People, however,

belong to a higher and a different order of creation. According to Genesis one, after God had created the lower forms of life, he then formed man of the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life. This unique being was made in the "image" of God (Genesis 1:27). Being made in the image of God, man, therefore, lives under a different set of rules commonly called moral principles.

Morality involves a basic standard of conduct which applies to all people for all time under all circumstances. A government might enact a law for a limited group of people for a limited time (such as the law that requires a driver to stop at a red light). This is not a moral law. God, in whose image man is created, has revealed thorough his word a set of unchanging ethical principles by which all mankind is to live. This is morality.

Although the subject of morality is broad and is sometimes rather involved, yet it is simplified when we apply God's ethical principles to three areas of man's conduct.

Life -- Human life is precious. God, who is the ultimate source of life, has imparted to each individual this wonderful possession. At his creation, Adam became a "living" soul (Genesis 2:7). He then shared this life with Eve, who was created from a rib taken from Adam's side. Then, as husband and wife, they imparted this life to their children and ultimately to every human being born into this world.

God, in order to protect human life, forbade murder. In Genesis 9:6 God said: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." In every dispensation of time, God has made it clear through his revelation that life is precious and that murder is wrong. Jesus in the New Testament not only forbids murder, but he also forbids the attitudes that prompt this sin (Matthew 5:21-22).

In a backward country where the word of God is generally unknown, we might expect murder to be commonplace. But how do we explain the enormous murder rate in our country where the word of God has been known for over two hundred years? The answer is this: God's moral law related to the sanctity of human life is now rejected and ignored by a vast number of people. The cure for this problem is not more police but a return to God's moral standard.

Property -- Although the Bible teaches us that physical possessions have their limitations and that we are not to lay up our treasures on earth, yet possessions (property) are important. You cannot live without them. You need food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, transportation, etc., in order to live in this world. Therefore, God has enacted certain moral laws that protect property.

In the Ten Commandments, for example, God forbids stealing, lying (which often relates to stealing) and coveting the property of others (Exodus 20). In the New Testament, the issue of property rights is covered in this statement: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he might have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28).

Shoplifting, car theft, robbery, burglary, and other forms of dishonesty are common in our society. These sins undermine the foundation of our society. Although helpful, better electronic

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security systems on our homes is not the answer to this problem. Only when people hear, accept, and apply God's moral principles related to property will this scourge be halted.

Home -- The home is another key factor in the welfare of the human family. God instituted the home in the beginning, and only through it does he intend for children to enter this world. Every child deserves a mother and a father who are committed to each other and to the child. Any practice that would threaten this relationship is dangerous and evil.

Sexual relationships outside of the marriage bond constitute sin or immorality. Since adultery is a common cause of marital problems, God has, therefore, condemned sexual immorality in the clearest of terms. The "one flesh" relationship which results when God joins husband and wife, is a permanent and binding covenant between the two parties. Concerning this God says: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

Because of a humanistic campaign designed to redefine sexual morality, plus the vile and evil influence of various "heroes," coupled with the tremendous influence of television, Hollywood, and various printed publications, the sexual morality of our country has seriously eroded. Broken homes, unwanted children, abortion and disease are the consequences.

The answer is not humanistic sex education. The answer is a return to Biblical morality. It must be taught in the home, emphasized in the church, and practiced by God's people in their daily conduct.

Conclusion: At the very heart of our existence as individuals, as a congregation, and as a nation is the matter of morality. When practiced, it will contribute to the preservation of society. When absent, it is a sure formula for destruction. -
59 Jackie Street, Morton, MS 39117

It is interesting to observe the quest for fitness with which our society seems to be obsessed. When we turn on our televisions we are flooded with a multitude of advertisements for exercise machines. Numerous people have taken up walking in malls, neighborhoods, schools, etc... Oftentimes when traveling to services we see many engaging in physical exercise. I ponder how these individuals need to be in services worshipping God and learning about His will for their lives. These souls are depriving themselves of essential spiritual activity.

Keeping one's body in proper physical condition has many advantages. It can decrease and prevent health problems. It can contribute to a longer life upon this earth. It has also been shown to improve mental stability. Eventually, though, the physical body is going to run down and die. Our life is but "a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). Compared to eternity our lives upon this planet are but a blink. We, therefore, must be preparing for our eternal destiny.

Although there is some advantage to bodily exercise, one's emphasis should be directed toward the spiritual realm. This is the exact point Paul made to Timothy: "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

Are we exercising our spiritual body? The exertion of our physical bodies may be important, but compared to the activity of our spiritual there is no comparison. How can we exercise our spiritual bodies? By spending time studying the Bible, application of those Biblical principles, worship, prayer and communion with God, attending Bible Study, fellowship with other Christians, adding the Christian graces found in 2 Peter 1, doing good to others, acts of kindness, self-sacrifice, etc. What about you? Are you exercising your spiritual self? -4604 Nelms Lane, Roanoke, VA 24019



WHAT ABOUT CHURCH ATTENDANCE?

(Hebrews 10:25)

M. W. Kiser



We shall see that the word speaks often about the assemblies. We misunderstand the subject as seen by the way it is approached. Some use gimmicks to get folks to come. There is no end to what carnality can attract. Others speak of

being "provisionally hindered" as if to say God arranged their life so they could not come. I would rather think I am here because of His providence. We want to dwell now upon some positive thoughts about the assemblies of the church.

I. WHERE SHOULD THE CHURCH ASSEMBLE? (The place of the assembly).

- A. The church assembled in various places in New Testament times.
 - 1. Private homes (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2).
 - 2. The Jewish temple (Acts 2:46).
 - 3. In those rented upper rooms (Acts 20:7-8).
 - 4. In school houses (Acts 19:9-10).
- B. The command to assemble necessitates a place. The kind of place is not so important (John 4:23). We have used several kinds of places.

C. The church building is not the church (Acts 17:24; 1 Peter 2:5). Our craze for elaborate buildings makes me think we want an earthly kingdom!

II. WHEN SHOULD THE CHURCH ASSEMBLE? (The time of the assembly).

- A. Upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
- B. This was not their only time! (Acts 2:46; 17:17; 19:9-10).
- C. We need to apply the "extra mile" principle to the assembly (Matthew 5:41).
 - 1. Some think in terms of how "few" they are required to attend.
 - 2. Some think in terms of how "many" they will get to attend.

III. WHY SHOULD THE CHURCH ASSEMBLE? (The reason for assemblies).

- A. To worship God (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 2:12; Colossians 4:16).
- B. To discipline the unruly (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5) [Incidental].
- C. To report on missionary activities (Acts 14:27) [Not just the elders!].
- D. To exhort one another (Hebrews 10:24) [The one we are not to forsake!].
- E. To transact church business (Acts 6:1-4) [The "anti" contention!].

IV. HOW SHOULD THE CHURCH ASSEMBLE? (This involves attitude).

- A. They are an obligation (Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 16:1; 11:23).
 - 1. This is a direct negative command...like a "thou shalt not..."
 - 2. The motive for obedience (John 14:15; Revelation 22:14).
- B. They are beneficial (2 Peter 3:18).

(Continued on page 12)

WHAT ABOUT CHURCH ATTENDANCE?

(Continued from page 11)

1. Spiritual development is not optional (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:3).
 2. Our purpose for coming together is spiritual (1 Corinthians 11:22).
- C. They are exclusive (Matthew 18:20; Revelation 1:13; Matthew 26:29).
1. You must believe He is here, ...not there!
 2. If one can stay away and have fellowship with Him, all can!
- D. They are desirable (Psalm 122:1).
1. So much so that Paul would tarry several days to be present (Acts 20)
 2. Are they a good work? If not, then quit it! (Titus 3:1).
- E. They are revealing (Matthew 5:13-18).
1. No man attends, or forsakes to himself.
 2. Are you satisfied with the influence of your attendance on others?

God has declared His mind on this subject. Excuses are never exceptions to a divine rule. "I'm sick," but I went to work! "I don't like the preacher," but worship God! "My clothes are not good enough," but it is not a parade. "Company came," so bring them; if they won't come then you are keeping the wrong company. -922 Heritage Drive, Sylacauga, AL 35150

I ATTEND THE SUNDAY EVENING ASSEMBLIES BECAUSE

I want to go and I am wanted. I need to go and I am needed. I had rather be there than anywhere else. My children are watching me, and will follow my example. My soul is strengthened by the Bible teaching. My heart is warmed by the spiritual songs I sing in His praise. I am better prepared to discuss His Word with those who do not understand it. I hunger and thirst after righteousness. -Bulletin, Jacksonville, AL

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED DURING THE PAST QUARTER

John & Gracie Orange Ashland City, TN.....	10.00
Arlington Church of Christ McMinnville, TN.....	75.00
Mr. & Mrs. James Burney LaFayette, GA.....	25.00
Elizabeth Church of Christ Elizabeth, AR.....	50.00
Mr. & Mrs. Young Lovett Almo, KY.....	10.00
Lloyd & Lucille Krantz Ashland City, TN.....	10.00
Harold & Mayme Krape St. Charles, MO.....	10.00
Mabelvale Church of Christ Mabelvale, AR.....	600.00
Mountain Home Church of Christ Mountain Home, AR.....	1,200.00

THE LORD HAD ALREADY CALLED

A call came on Sunday morning. "Tell mother not to go to church services this morning; we are coming." But the mother went right on to Bible study and worship anyway. The daughter was furious when she arrived and no one was home to meet her. She said, "I called you and told you that I was coming and you went on to worship anyway." The mother replied, "I'm sorry, dear, but the Lord had already called."

-Anonymous

RESTORATION REACHBACKS

"Ask For The Old Paths"

Jeremiah 6:16



A PIONEER PREACHER

A certain pioneer preacher came to Arkansas with his wife and nine children. His total income from preaching was less than one hundred dollars a year. He settled on a quarter-section of land in a dense forest.

Within two years time he built a two-room log cabin, had a garden, a small cotton and corn patch, a few razorback hogs, some chickens, a cow and calf, a yoke of oxen, one horse and a few dollars in money. One room of his cabin was used for cooking and eating, the other for sleeping and "raising" the family. The older boys slept up in the loft.

They worked from sun-up until sun-down, except on Saturdays when they quit at noon and had the afternoons off. One of the fine boys shaved his father, another curried and saddled his horse, and with a wave of good-by from the devoted, happy family, that grand man of God and builder of republics started to his appointments. Those afternoons the boys went hunting or fishing or engaged in some of their wholesome games.

The preacher, after traveling ten, twenty, and often forty miles, would reach the cabin of some friend and spend the night. The next day people would come from miles around to hear the Gospel. In fair weather, and there are more fair days in Arkansas than there are in Los Angeles, California, he preached out in the small yard. During the winter crowds were smaller, and they held services inside some cabin home. Later they built log school houses, which were also the preaching places. Late Sunday afternoons he bade his friends adieu and started his journey homeward. The next morning bright and early he and the boys were hard at work again. Now and

then he made these long, trying trips during the week to visit the sick or bury the dead.

That is not all the story. In that family room, before an open fire-place -- which furnished both warmth and light, he and his good wife taught the children to read, write, and "figger." While teaching them to read he told them that books are the store-houses of knowledge. While teaching them to write he told them they must learn to be exact in their dealings with others and in their own lives. While teaching them to "figger" he told them that all people have a given *sum* to start with. They are supposed to *add* to that every day. But when something is added which is not right they must *subtract* it from the total. And best of all he told them that all the good, things they might have must be *divided* with their less fortunate neighbors. And that is not all.

He opened the Book of Books and read them the wonderful things therein, and then knelt down to pray. Many times the youngsters did not pay much attention to his prayers, but now and then the father would think of the time when he and their mother would be gone, and then with a sob in his voice he prayed to God to keep their children and make them good and useful. Then their young hearts came up into their throats and they felt the presence of God. It is said that one night, one of the small boys asked if he might lead the prayer. Among other things, he asked *God not to let them get lost in that wilderness*. Was that prayer answered? Yes. From the labors of that pioneer preacher, and others like him, our Protestant churches grew... Out of those Protestant churches came our law-abiding, liberty-loving citizens.

There were many other preachers like this one in the pioneer days. (Taken from, *A School History Of Arkansas [1928]*, by John H. Moore, (pp. 110-112).

EDITOR'S NOTE: Although we should seek to be neither Catholic, nor Protestant, nor Jew, but, Christians only, this article reveals just how much of the true pioneer spirit of hard work, honesty and family values is lost to us in these modern times. May we strive for that rugged individualism that once made our nation and the Lord's church great. -JG

DON'T SAY NO

Daniel F. Cates



I can remember a few of the chapel services from when I was a student at Harding Academy in Memphis. I can remember just a few that dealt with the specific Bible stories, and a few that were meant to strengthen us as students.

While I can only remember a few of those types of lessons, I can remember many lessons telling us, the individual students, to "just say no." Of course when we hear this phrase we immediately think about drug use and about the danger involved in giving in even once to the pressure to use them. While there are times that we should "just say no," there are other times when we should not say "no." Let us look at some of these.

First, don't say no if there is an obstacle that you are going to have to overcome. Too many people give in too easily to a challenge because they just say no. That is what the Israelites did when the ten spies, Joshua and Caleb not included, brought back the report that they could not (even with the power of God on their side) win the victory over the Canaanites (Numbers 13:30-33). When you are called upon to reach to new levels remember what Paul wrote in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

Second, don't say no if someone wants to ask you a question about the church of Christ. This requires more than just answering a question, this requires having put enough time in study (2 Timothy 2:15) to be able to give a knowledgeable, Biblical answer (1 Peter 3:15). Be able to tell that person who asks why we worship the way we worship, or why we do not worship like the denominations. Be able to tell the person what must be done in order to obtain salvation, and be able to do it with scripture. Also involved in this is not being ashamed to give an answer to

questions that may arise. Don't say, "Well, in the church of Christ we do such and such, but I guess..." Just show what the Bible teaches, and let it be the authority.

Third, don't say no if your child wants to bring another child to services. There could be little better for a child than to have enough zeal and determination to desire to bring others to church. I am sure that somewhere along the way some parents have seen this as an inconvenience, that is having to chauffeur around someone else's child for the day, but how can this be viewed as an inconvenience when we should be trying to chauffeur everyone's children to services. If a child learns at an early age that it is acceptable, and admirable to want to bring others to church and ultimately to Christ, then he will grow up showing others what a wonderful thing it is to be a Christian. How many parents not only allow their lights to be dimmed, but try to dim their children's lights also, in more ways than this. Take an opportunity to read Matthew 5:16 and then consider those parents who do not even see a need to carry their own children to services, much less someone else's.

Just say no to drugs, don't say no to challenges, challengers, or children.

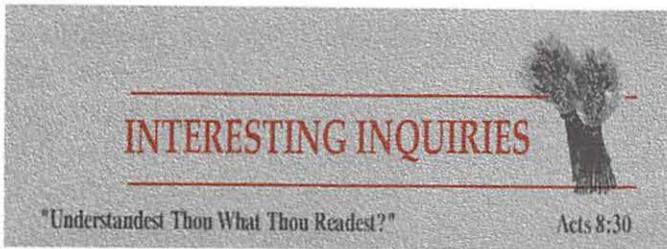
MABELVALE CHURCH OF CHRIST
10820 MABELVALE WEST ROAD
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MABELVALE, AR 72103

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

Telephone (501) 455-2548

Dennis Gullede, Evangelist



"IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?"

John T. Polk, II

NO! A media "feeding frenzy" was sparked by NASA's press release on August 7, 1996 about a "meteorite" supposedly from Mars that, under an electron microscope chemically resembled life forms on Earth. The scant suppositions quickly "evolved" into discovery as if it were the "missing link" from space. *Popular Science* Contributing Editor, Andrew Chaikin said, "To be sure, the findings are based on a host of unconfirmed conclusions, as the scientists themselves point out. No one can be completely sure that the rock, a 4.5-billion-year-old meteorite discovered on an Antarctic ice field in 1984, came from the red planet" (p. 7, October, 1996). If we believe the Bible, since heavenly bodies were made the same time as Earth, could they not be similar in some respects? Evolutionists assume elements without God created life, thus life evolved on other planets without God as well! President Bill Clinton said, "I am determined the American space program will put its full intellectual power and technological prowess behind the search for further evidence of life on Mars." Evolutionist Carl Sagan said, "This is the most provocative and evocative piece of evidence for life beyond Earth...If the results are verified, it is a turning point in human history, suggesting that life exists not on just two planets in one paltry solar system, but throughout this magnificent universe." In other words, evolutionists desperately seek creation without God, so *they think* a meteorite in ice on Earth is *assumed* to be from Mars, *thought* to have contacted life, and *supposed* to demonstrate a life-line from Earth to

Mars "proves" life in "Space-the final frontier." Their heads are full of "Star Trek" not sense, their eyes "star-ry" not scientific, and their hearts "silly" not sane.

The search for "life on other planets" is mostly the "Enterprise" of evolutionists who squandered billions of American tax dollars for a huge radio antenna to listen for life "out there," rockets so men and machines can look for it, and monuments and museums to glorify these achievements. They say it is all done to "learn more about the origin of life on Earth" (read that, "to prove evolution is right" -JTP, II). Their false belief is that we don't know "the origin of life" now! To keep looking for information we now possess is not "a great mystery of the universe," but instead is "the great hoax of humanity." There *is* superior, intelligent life in outer space - God (Isaiah 45:5)! Earth *has* been visited by someone from "outer space" - Jesus Christ (John 8:21-24)! There *is* proof of life away from Earth - Jesus' Resurrection (Acts 17:30-31)! People *have* been changed upon contact with this "extra-terrestrial" - Christians (Acts 11:26)! There *is* communication from "space" - Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17)! *But this is contrary to evolutionary mythology and cannot be taught in public schoolrooms!*

People have idolized every facet of creation. Evolution is idolatry, for it "exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25), saying life came from Earth and not God. God has always condemned such (Deuteronomy 18:9-12; Amos 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 John 5:21).

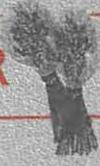
The "stars" are useful for: determining our location on the Earth's surface (navigation, Acts 27:20) but not our lives (astrology); revealing the Creator's brilliance (Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:19-21) but not our brightness (academia). The "glory" (Gk. splendor, brightness) of the sun, moon and stars is different for each (1 Corinthians 15:40-41; Genesis 1:14-18), and these "celestial" differ from the Earth "terrestrial." Astronauts, telescopes, and photographs bear witness that

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CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"Ye Are The Salt Of The Earth"

Matthew 5:13



Frustration

Ronnie Whittemore



As we near the twenty-first century, the need for gospel preaching is as urgent as ever. While some have become too sophisticated for the simple gospel of Christ, it is still "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). People are steeped in sins of all kinds. They are influenced by the hedonism and humanism of the times. Yet, the gospel is the only life-line for sinners and Christians are charged with the awesome responsibility of throwing out that life preserver to the whole world (Matthew 28:18-20). The challenges of the first century are our challenges today (2 Timothy 2:2). Yet, our efforts are hindered when brethren who possess false philosophies promote an agenda which is characteristic of the secular world. So, as we accept the charge to preach the gospel to every creature, we must also, along the way, instruct many of our brethren concerning other valuable truths of the Bible. But, this too, is not new because the apostles and first century church responded to the Judaizing teachers and their false doctrine of the first century as well as addressed problems that plagued the church, such as, neglect of the widows (Acts 6) or abuse of the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11).

The word "frustrate" is defined as: "(1) a. to prevent from accomplishing a purpose or fulfilling a desire; to thwart; b. to cause feelings of discouragement or bafflement in. (2) To prevent

the accomplishment or development of; to nullify." Its adjective definition means: "baffled or thwarted." Its synonyms include: "thwart, foil, balk; these verbs mean to prevent the attainment or fulfillment of a goal or purpose. They are often interchangeable. *Frustrate* suggests defeating in the sense of nullifying another's accomplishment or making it ineffective. *Thwart* makes a stronger implication of direct opposition to another. *Foil* implies defeating either by direct confrontation or by outwitting, confounding, or disconcerting. *Balk* implies the placing of barriers or hindrances in another's course" (*American Heritage Dictionary*, p. 530).

MANY BRETHREN ARE FRUSTRATED

With those definitions in mind, let it be said that many preachers and other concerned Christians are *FRUSTRATED!* We are frustrated by the barriers of liberalism and its false philosophy of relativism (Colossians 2:8). We are frustrated by the willing ignorance and deafness of hearers of the gospel message including brethren (2 Timothy 3:7). We are frustrated by the prejudice and bias of other men who claim to have all knowledge and telepathic powers to judge the motives and hearts of sincere, dedicated Christians (John 7:24). We are frustrated by the unwillingness of brethren to open their Bibles and study God's Truth (Acts 17:11). We are frustrated by the gullibility of brethren to be swayed so easily by "good words and fair speeches" of esteemed preachers and leaders (Romans 16:17-18). We are frustrated by the fear which has gripped the hearts of so many brethren (Matthew 8:26; Revelation 21:8). They fear that friends and family will reject them (Matthew 5:11-12). They fear that brethren will stop worshipping. They fear that they will be insulted or ridiculed. They fear that the contribution will drop. They fear criticism and they fear that someone will arrive at the conclusion that they are lost and going to hell (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

We are frustrated in our knowledge that men and women are not robots. They are free
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FRUSTRATION

(Continued from page 16)

moral agents; therefore, we cannot indoctrinate them with the gospel, but we must win their minds, their hearts by the gospel. We must overcome prejudice, ignorance, fear, cowardice and gullibility which has engulfed the souls of so many. And the sad reality is: some people can never be won to the Lord and influenced by the true gospel of Christ because their hearts are untouchable because of the barriers described above.

SOME HAVE ADVOCATED CHANGE

So what should preachers and concerned Christians do? (1) *Some have advocated changing the message.* The religious world has done that. Do we want to be like them? If so, then please take their name, follow their creed books and stop making a pretense that you are a New Testament Christian. Stop claiming to follow Christ when you have denied the power of His gospel! (2) *Some have promoted entertainment and recommended changing the church into a social club.* There are civic clubs and social organizations already in existence. If you want to be like that, then please join their club and stop trying to change the church. (3) *Others promote a spirit of pseudo-love* in which their love is superficial because they never touch upon the things that are wrong. There are churches, represented by their leadership, which thrive on this kind of attitude. Go there if you want a church that behaves under such pretenses. But leave the Lord's church alone! It has a mission that is distinctive. It has obligations that are not always pleasant. It has a charge to preach a message that some men will hate and will ridicule, but so be it. The apostles were persecuted and the Lord was crucified for preaching and living that message.

THE BIBLE GIVES DOZENS OF EXAMPLES

Friends, the Bible is filled with examples

of men and women who sold out to the world. Esau sold his birthright for food (Genesis 25:30-34). Balaam coveted the rewards of divination (2 Peter 2:15). Achan's greed hindered Israel from gaining victory in Ai (Joshua 7). Korah and his rebel band died in the wilderness because they opposed God's chosen leaders and the way in which they were leading (Jude 11). Ananias and Sapphira lied to God, the apostles, the Holy Spirit and the brethren (Acts 5:1-11). Demas forsook Paul and loved this present world (2 Timothy 4:10). Diotrephes refused to receive good and faithful brethren including an apostle whom Jesus loved (3 John 9). Does anyone want to be in the camp of these Bible characters who sold out for power, prestige and money?

Brethren, the Bible is also filled with examples of men and women who suffered and sacrificed for the Lord. They possessed courage and boldness. They possessed faith, not fear. They refused to compromise and often suffered as a result. Abel was murdered because he worshipped God according to divine instructions (Hebrews 11:4). Abram and Sarah, his faithful helpmeet, journeyed throughout Canaan and "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Job suffered the loss of his children and his possessions. He suffered physical afflictions because he was faithful and true to Jehovah (Job 1:21-22). Elijah, following the great victory over the false prophets of Baal, was pursued by Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 18). His discouragement led to his hiding in a cave until he was reminded that 7,000 others had not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:13-18). John the Baptist was beheaded because he rebuked Herod for his adultery (Matthew 14:4). Stephen was stoned to death for preaching Christ and Him crucified (Acts 7:51-58). James was killed with the sword (Acts 12:2); the other apostles were imprisoned (Acts 5:17-18). Paul was beaten, stoned, suffered shipwreck, endured countless perils from natural elements, from strangers, and even from so-called brethren (2 Cor. 11:23-28). Tradition tells us that all of the apostles except John suffered persecution in their

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IS THERE LIFE ON MARS?

(Continued from page 15)

nothing else in space even looks inhabitable but the Earth! Truly God "formed it [and it alone--JTP,II] to be inhabited" (Isaiah 45:18). Man cannot even accurately count the stars, but God "counts" and "calls them all by name" (Psalm 147:4).

Evolution is creeping blackness in the mind that renders one unthankful, unreasonable (futile), unintelligent (foolish) and uneducated (professing, pretending) as in Romans 1:21-22. Charles Darwin whose work *Origin Of Species* was printed in 1859 and popularized evolutionary doctrine, began as one who "did not then in the least doubt the strict and literal truth of every word in the Bible" but slowly gave up his faith. And so is its cancerous effect on all who embrace it in their hearts (cf., Proverbs 6:27-28). When the Bible speaks truth it is always verified with facts. Evolution has yet to be verified by Bible or scientific facts.

I will debate, oral or written, a qualified evolutionist on the following proposition: "RESOLVED, the Creation account in Genesis 1-3 is consistent with all scientific fact and Biblical faith." Affirm: John T. Polk, II Deny: _____
-125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

FRUSTRATION

(Continued from page 17)

deaths. While no one know what the future may hold, this writer would rather be in the camp of these faithful men and women who suffered with courage and unwavering faith. Though no one welcomes sufferings and persecutions, one should not live in fear if he is faithful to the Lord. The reality is this promise: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12).

SO WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

(1) No one can be saved from sin and rescued from the plight of hell without obedience

to the gospel of Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). (2) No man will obey the gospel unless it is preached faithfully and truthfully by dedicated men of God (2 Timothy 4:1-4; Romans 10:13-17). (3) Any effort to "water down" or "compromise" the Word of truth will alter the saving power of the gospel and must be met with resistance and exposure. (4) Every Christian must realize that God's Word accomplishes many things. Some people are converted by the truth (1 Timothy 2:4); others are offended (John 6:60-66), but those results do not change the necessity of preaching the truth. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). (5) One must also understand that the church's obligation is to teach, the hearer must accept and obey and God will give the increase (1 Corinthians 3:7). Therefore, the Word of God will not return to Him void (Isaiah 55:11). (6) Finally, brethren, the love in our hearts will not allow us to give any person false hope that he can persist in his sin, whether moral or religious, and be saved. Error will be rebuked; Christ will be exalted; the one church will be promoted; and heaven will be our goal. -200 S. Curry Pike, Bloomington, IN 47404.

GRANDMA'S GLASSES

Two small boys were discussing eye glasses.

"Wouldn't you hate to wear glasses?" one asked.

"No," answered the other, "not if I could have the kind my grandma wears! My mother says she can always see when folks are tired or discouraged or sad. She sees whenever somebody is in need and she can always recognize when you have something on your mind that you need to talk over. But best of all she can always see something good in everybody!"

The little fellow continued: "I asked my grandma one day how it was that she could see that way. She said it was because of the way she's learned to look at things since she's gotten older. So I'm sure it must be those glasses of hers!"

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all of us could see others through Grandma's glasses?

-Unknown

GAMBLING: THE WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE (Continued from page 2)

of engaging in productive labor, does not involve prospering at the expense of others. A gambler's situation does involve prospering at the expense (harm) to others.

Gambling is not the same as an insurance company using the premiums of the insured as an investment, receiving returns with profit -- in turn giving the insured protection and security.

In like manner investing in stocks and bonds in the stock market is a legitimate practice with reasonable hope of productive results in goods and services.

Gambling is different. *Gambling exists being based on the sole hope of obtaining something for nothing, with no possibility of producing anything good. In a circumstance where so few win and so many lose just cannot be sensible.*

Someone else objects by saying, "But the word gambling is not in the Bible!" That's true! But white slavery, suicide, bootlegging and embezzlement are not mentioned by name either! The point is, all of these are condemned, in principle, by what the Bible teaches.

Gambling is a spiritual catastrophe -- a wheel of misfortune -- because:

1. *It encourages the wrong attitude.* It destroys the incentive to work and to be a productive member of society. George Barnard Shaw stated, "...a citizen who is neither producing goods nor performing services is in effect a beggar or a thief... Gambling, or the attempt to get money without earning it, is a vice which is economically (that is, fundamentally) ruinous."

The Bible says we are to work:

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)

Any attitude that promotes "get-rich-quick" ism is wrong.

2. *Gambling is a form of covetousness.* Colossians 3:5 says that covetousness is idolatry. The term "easy money" is nothing but an euphemism for *greed*. And greed is nothing but a form of idolatry.

3. *Gambling violates the second greatest commandment:* "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). You cannot honor that commandment and take your neighbor's possessions at the turn of a card or the roll of the dice.

4. *Gambling violates the Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12.* What if he agrees to it? But two men may agree to a dueling contest, yet would that make it right? An agreement doesn't alter the fact that you are doing to him something you wouldn't want him to do to you. Just an agreement to gamble doesn't change the fact that it violates the Golden Rule.

5. *Gambling is a sin against the family.* The bad habit of gambling robs the family of the finances necessary to its support. 1 Timothy 5:8 says:

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

This is not to say that the morality of gambling is a matter of "affording it," but as the *Reader's Digest* article points out:

Gambling has significant social and economic impact. It results in ruined lives, families and businesses; in bankruptcies and bad loans; in suicides, embezzlements and other crimes committed to feed or cover up gambling habits -- and increases in costs to taxpayers for investing, prosecuting and punishing those crimes.

Gambling is everywhere. Those who advocate it promise that it is the answer to many problems. But, in reality, social woes result, financial difficulties emerge and the cost in spiritual and monetary terms is tremendous. Gambling -- we don't need it!! -612 E. 4th Street, Mountain Home, AR 72653

READERS' RESPONSE

"How Readest Thou?"

Luke 10:26

ONE OF THE BEST

I hope when receiving this letter that you are in the very best of health. My name is Curtis Nelson, I'm a 1995 graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching. I would like to get on your mailing list for the *Gospel Gleaner*. Without a doubt it is one of the best publications in the brotherhood. I will be sending a small contribution monthly. Looking forward to hearing from you soon. Curtis J. Nelson, Henderson, NC.

LOOKS GOOD

Please add me to your mailing list. Looks good (the one copy I saw). Paul Sain, Pulaski, TN.

WONDERFUL JOURNAL

Your love for truth is evident from this wonderful journal. The new look is great. Tracy Dugger, Cloverdale, VA.

READ A BORROWED COPY

I thank God for giving me a chance to read a borrowed *Gospel Gleaner*. I was amazed for this kind Biblical publication. Will you please include me in your mailing list to be able to receive a copy of *GG* regularly. I am very grateful for your effort in helping Christians to grow spiritually through this wonderful publication. Thank you very much. I hope to receive my free copy. God bless you all. Danni C. de Vera, Quezon City, Philippines.

ENJOYS READING GG

We received our *Gospel Gleaner* today and read it all. Enjoyed it very much as we always do. We're sending a small check, would like to send more. Thanks agains for the *Gleaner*. James & Wilma Burney, LaFayette, GA.

BOUND VOLUMES

We recently received an issue of the *Gospel Gleaner*. Do you plan to continue to send this to us? If so, we plan to bind all complete volumes for our permanent collection. Mrs. Jimmie Coffey, Periodicals Supervisor, Abilene Christian University. **EDITOR'S NOTE:** *We are glad to see our paper going into some of our schools and universities. We hope it will help strengthen those who are still faithful.* -D.G.

WANTS ELDERS & DEACONS TO RECEIVE GG

I enjoy reading *Gospel Gleaner* very much, and gain so much from the articles contained in it. I was hoping that I could add a few names to your mailing list. I would love for the elders and deacons of this congregation to receive this fine publication. I have listed their names and addresses on the following page. Thank you, and continue the good work. Mark E. Reynolds, Muncie, IN.

SPLENDID APPEARANCE & WELL WRITTEN

Thank you for the copies of the *Gleaner*. It has a splendid appearance and some well written articles. I hope you will be successful in enlarging the circulation to cover many states. If you are able to save and stabilize the church in your area and in Arkansas you will have rendered a great service to the cause. E. Claude Gardner, Henderson, TN.

GOSPEL GLEANER
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