

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11.

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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"SECRETARIAT, I ORDAIN THEE BISHOP!"

Ron Halbrook

The instructions of Paul revealed the mind of God "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13). He taught his "ways which be in Christ . . . every where in every church"—a uniform rule of faith and practice (4:17). When the Corinthian Christians came "together in the church," they were to worship after the pattern Paul had "delivered" and "received of the Lord" (11:18, 23). As he had directed "the churches of Galatia" concerning a weekly contribution, "even so" did he order the Corinthian church (16:1-2).

When Paul gave instructions on prayer ("supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks"), he commanded "that men pray every where," but with this limitation. Those who were spots and blemishes to the churches, examples of impurity, bitter troublemakers and spawners of vain disputing, were not to be put forward for prayer any where. Similarly, women were not to parade themselves so as to attract vainglorious and lustful attention. They, too, were to be known for holiness, "godliness," and "good works." more than that, they were not to be set forward for prayers, teaching, or any other role of public leadership. They were to "learn in silence with all subjection . . . not . . . teach, nor to usurp authority over the man" (1 Tim. 2). "Let her learn, not teach; obey, not rule; follow, not lead" (William Hendriksen, **1-2 Timothy and Titus**, p. 110).

After Paul gives instructions concerning the organization of the local church, he affirms the pattern concept of authority. "These things write I unto thee . . . that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:14-15). He also maintained that the holy writings were all-sufficient, fully equipping "the man of God . . . unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Peter said that Paul had written "scriptures" according to divine "wisdom," that the apostolic writings had "commandment" authority from Christ, and that these

writings were binding after the death of the apostolic men (2 Pet. 1:15; 3:1-2, 15-18).

Today, loud protests are being raised against the concepts of inspired and inerrant Scripture, against the concept of pattern authority, and against specific commands of the New Testament. A great thrust is being made against this directive of Paul: "Let not the daughter of Eve teach, rule, lead, when the congregation gathers for worship" (*ibid.*). In the controversy which has arisen, Paul has been misunderstood, maligned, and even mauled! In an effort to counter his command, various interpreters have explained Paul's prohibition on the following bases. His rule was: (1) **BASED ON** male insensitivity, false pride, chauvinism; (2) **BASED ON** a degrading view of woman as "mindless," leading to his desire to block her personal initiative and responsibility; (3) **BASED ON** some local situation or transitory circumstances; (4) **BASED ON** feelings of spiritual superiority, in violation of the equality of all the saved in Christ; (5) **BASED ON** Paul's personal bias against women.

Whether intentionally or not, **THE REAL BASES** Paul gave are being ignored. The two bases he gave throw an entirely different light on his limitation of woman's role in the assembly of the saints. "In fact, they are expressive of a feeling of tender sympathy and basic understanding. . . . This teaching regarding the place which women should occupy when the congregation gathers for worship is based not on any temporary condition but on Adam's priority in creation and Eve's priority in transgression" (*ibid.*, pp. 109, 113).

First, Paul states "Adam's priority in creation": "For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Tim. 2:13). There is a beautiful mutuality of dependence between man and woman (1 Cor. 11:12). Still, woman was literally made from the rib of the first man; on that basis, she was named for him. Furthermore, she was Created as "an help meet for man." That does not mean a play-thing, a robot, or a slave. It means a suitable companion, a weaver of life, a sharer of both sorrow and glory. She is his supporter, but not his superintendent. She is a complement, not a chief. **THIS GOD-DESIGNED ROLE IS TO BE REFLECTED IN THE ASSEMBLY.** Her role in the assembly is not

superintendent, overseer, or leader; rather, she participates, complements, and supports. The Holy Spirit directs the woman, through Paul's instruction, toward FULFILLMENT rather than FAILURE. For, he says in effect: "let a woman not enter a sphere of activity for which by dint of her very creation she is not suited" (ibid., p. 109).

Second Paul states "Eve's priority in transgression": "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2:14). Even here, Paul stressed the equality of the woman in the Lord's provision of salvation. As "faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" are manifested in her, she is assured of salvation (vs. 15). Eve fell by the temptation of Satan, but what was involved? "Eve's fall occurred when she ignored her divinely ordained position. Instead of following she chose to lead. Instead of remaining submissive to God, she wanted to be 'like God.' She—not Adam—was indeed (or was completely) deceived or deluded." (ibid., p. 110). Adam was guilty enough—more than enough!—on his own account. He was not taken in by the direct deception of Satan, rather "his sin was committed in consciousness of its character and magnitude." What then swayed or MIS-directed him? "He yielded to the persuasion of his wife. . . ." (W. E. Vine, Timothy and Titus, p. 46). In her proper role, woman is man's strong support. When she steps out of that role, to lead and direct the man, she is a failure.

Warm sympathy and clear understanding, on the part of both sexes, preclude demanding a role for woman which will truly degrade her. Paul was not moved by local or temporary considerations, nor by delusions of spiritual superiority or personal bias. Rather, those who are caught up in local and temporary movements and who think themselves spiritually superior to the Apostles, are pushing women toward rebellion against God and toward eternal ruin. Though more concerned for Episcopal church law than Scripture, retired "Bishop" William Moody of Lexington, Ky., says he will try to ordain the racing horse Secretariat a priest if any more women are ordained. "We already have parts of the horse," he allowed. "Why not the whole thing?" (Time Mag., Oct. 6, 1975, p. 79). Why not? Caligula (A.D. 12-41), an insane Roman emperor, once proclaimed his horse the consul of Rome. Today, should so valuable a horse be only a priest? "SECRETARIAT, I ORDAIN THEE BISHOP!"

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Editorial

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BLUEPRINT FOR DISRUPTION

Over the past several years there have been a number of young people caught up in the so-called "unity-fellowship movement" spearheaded by W. Carl Ketcherside. Some of these have been preachers. It is ironic that a movement claiming to promote fellowship and love has been the cause of so much friction and disruption among the people of the Lord. We continue to hear of churches being disturbed either by preachers, or transient members (sometimes young people in the military service) who subscribe to these views. Some brethren have been unwilling to listen to warnings about this problem and have mistakenly concluded that there never really was a problem in the first place. But what has happened was entirely predictable. The MISSION MESSENGER (published by Ketcherside) of September, 1968 laid out the strategy which has largely been followed since.

Someone sent him this question: "What can a group of concerned students in a non-instrument oriented Christian college do to further unity as you see it?" His answer explains what has been happening ever since.

He said "I suggest to the concerned ones that they first meet as a cell group to wrestle with God in prayer about their role in our day. In the seclusion of a living-room or dormitory wing they can implore God upon their knees to help them make their lives meaningful and rich with service. They must revolt against our dishonesty and camouflage and do so in at least two ways." We cannot help wondering about the "dishonesty and camouflage" of such cells within congregations operating clandestinely to plot overthrow and create disruption.

He continued "They must challenge the deductions and conclusions which are unwarranted by the scriptures, and which have grown out of the text-scraping tactics we have employed as the glib 'easy-answer people' of the religious world. In class, they must do this respectfully, but firmly, as becometh brethren who are free in the Lord. And they must be prepared to suffer the consequences accruing to anyone of staunch conviction who challenges or bucks the establishment."

....' They must not switch parties or change factions, but work from the base in which they have grown up." Yes, stay inside your "faction" and destroy it from within with your factious "cell!" How could anyone be taken seriously who deplors factions and then urges people to remain in them?

He urged further "I suggest to every concerned student in a Christian college that he continue to attend services on the Lord's Day morning where he has been accustomed to break bread with the saints, and to love all of these brethren dearly. But on Sunday night, and at other times, I urge brethren who are rising above their previous factional littleness to break out of the shell. Let them visit every congregation in the area — instrumental, premillennial, anti-institutional, one-cup, anti-class - all of them! Especially visit the little ones, not neglecting storefront types, or any other." This will help spread their leaven and broaden the underground brotherhood.

The platform of this "unity faction", as it has been appropriately called, has been the notion that all of us who have been immersed have obeyed "gospel" and stand in a saved relationship with God and that our differences are only in the realm of "doctrine." According to Ketcherside, "gospel" is for the alien sinner whereas "doctrine" pertains to those who are already Christians. The trouble with that is that in the New Testament the term "gospel" is used to include the whole system of divine truth whether taught to the alien or saint, and the term "doctrine" is used to describe what is taught to saint and sinner alike. Paul said he was ready to preach "the gospel" to the saints at Rome (Rom. 1:7, 15). The apostles were charged with having filled Jerusalem with their "doctrine" (Acts 5:28). The distinction in this matter is just as arbitrary as that made by Adventists on the moral and ceremonial laws — a distinction where there is no difference.

This whole troublesome error ignores the fact that those who obey the truth can make shipwreck of the faith (1 Tim. 1:19-20); become unruly talkers and deceivers who will subvert whole houses (Titus 1:9-13); and can go "out" from the rest because they were not "of" them (1 John 2:19). They can go "onward" and "abide not in the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9-11). Every issue which arises among the Lord's people must be settled scripturally. Those who stand identified with the word of God are right and those who follow something else are wrong. The notion that we can stretch the umbrella of divine grace over every innovation or sectarian hobby finds no basis in the word of God.

This movement has catered to the discontent and inexperience of youth. In the spirit of the times it urges rebellion against the establishment. It attacks the "traditional" five acts of worship, charges that all such worship is dull and uninteresting and seeks to provide artificial stimuli (turning off the lights, holding hands, spontaneous singing) to enhance spirituality. It has never occurred to some of these that the dullness does not inhere in what we do, nor how often it is done, but rather is to be found in the heart of the worshipper himself.

Not only has this movement appealed to the natural spirit of rebellion in youth, but also to the desire to do something heroic. The martyr complex is encouraged. Ketcherside has played that tune whichever extreme he

happened to be pursuing at the moment. These ingredients have been liberally sprinkled with Calvinistic theology. It has been stated directly and by implication that we have minimized the grace of God and salvation by faith and have invented a system of justification by works. We deny that any such thing has been done by faithful preachers of the gospel. The editor has been preaching the gospel since 1945 and has been observant of other gospel preachers longer than that. We have delivered many a sermon along these lines and have heard a great many from other men. If some fellows want to confess their own failures in this matter, then let them speak for themselves and leave the rest of us out. It has been charged that some of us are advocating "Perfectionism" in order to be saved, and that is not so either. The Calvinian error of the personal imputed righteousness of Christ has been revived and a number of men have come very near the brink of the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy. We have been haunted once more with the ghost of "legalism", the favorite watchword for those in the process of making shipwreck of the faith. Comfort has been offered to the "pious unimmersed" by calling them "brethren in prospect."

We are indebted to brethren who saw this problem arising, made a study of the issues involved and went to war against it, WHETHER ANY OF US LIKED THE WAY THEY SAID IT. We have said our piece on the subject several times and know for certainty that some did not like the way it was said, or even the fact that it was said at all (the reason we know this is that some told us so very plainly). While it may be true that the issue has been identified and that many have been alerted to it, it is not true that the problem has completely gone away. We recently learned of several more congregations which are being disturbed by these views. What shall be done? Preach the truth in love, reprove error, identify those who sow these seeds, smoke them out of the woodwork onto the open floor, and evermore contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

JULY SPECIAL - MORALS UNDER FIRE

Yes, we are going to have another special issue of **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES** in July. Last year's special on **THE FAMILY UNDER FIRE** was warmly received and two printings were quickly exhausted. Biblical morality is also under fire in our day and we intend to offer Christians some help. Articles will be prepared by our regular contributing writers and will cover such subjects as drink and drugs, sexual promiscuity, abortion, hedonism, pornography, existentialism and other such threats to purity of life before God. We anticipate a wide interest in this special issue and would appreciate your order even now. Price will be \$35 per 100 copies. Watch for further announcements as to subjects and authors.

The Godhead

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(EDITOR'S NOTE: We are glad to present to our readers the first of a series of articles by Victorio R. Tibayan of Manila, Philippines. During our trips to that country in 1971 and again in 1975, we requested that he travel with us. This he did, and we found him to be not only a congenial traveling companion, but also a most able student of the word of God, and powerful preacher. During the visit to that country in the spring of 1975, a plot was carefully laid to discredit Brother Tibayan. The evidences appeared at the time to be overwhelming. But those who promised to supply documentation failed to do so, under fervent pleading. It has now been conclusively proved that the charges were false and that those who circulated these evil rumors were attempting to elevate themselves at the expense of this able and worthy brother. We want all readers in the Philippines and those in this country who have any part in supporting work in the Philippines, to know that we have the utmost respect for, and confidence in Victorio R. Tibayan.)

There are several views conceived by men concerning the Godhead. And too, from these theories there emerged, in the process of time, numerous corollaries which are equally the result of human inventories. Monarchianism is one of them. It is said that in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, some religious sects identified under this school of thought claimed that God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are manifestations of one God, single in Person. Another tenet about the Godhead was given the appellation, Tritheism. **"From the controversies with the Monophysites arose the sect of the Tritheists, whose chief was John Ascusnage, a Syrian philosopher, and, at the same time, a Monophysite. This man imagined in the Deity three natures, or substances, absolutely equal in all respects, and joined together by no common essence; to which opinion his adversaries gave the name of Tritheism"** — (ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY by J. L. Mosheim, D. D., p. 144). This theory assumes three independent and personal Gods. Even just by these two opposite human doctrines, varied subsidiary and subordinate dogmas have come to revolve around the true Bible teaching on the Godhead.

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The fact that this is revealed in the Holy Scriptures makes this an important subject. Paul in his speech before the Athenians considered a true knowledge of the Godhead very much important in being saved on the day of Judgment (Acts 17:23-31). Again, to the Romans, the same apostle warned of not glorifying God as God is (Rom. 1:18-25). In the study of this most important subject, as has been demonstrated time and again, we must realize as foremost, that natural reason cannot and will never be able to fathom the real substance and meaning of the term. Philosophical speculations such as Unitarianism, Polytheism, Pantheism, etc., with their attendant idolatrous practices will only lead us away from the truths embodied in this subject and thus imperil our faith. Because the teachings of the Godhead lie at the very heart of man's salvation, we must not let this study be based on the imperfect wisdom of men. The only intelligent course to follow is to go to the revealed things about the Godhead. And this can only be found in the Bible.

The term Godhead is found three times in the Authorized Version. In Acts 17:29, Paul uses the term "theion" to emphasize the idea of God as contrasted with those made by the hands of man and then worshipped. Secondly, in Rom. 1:20, the same apostle contemplates the whole of that by which the Godhead, "theiotes", is constituted, i.e., the everlasting power and divinity. Lastly, in Col. 2:9, "theotes" means that in Jesus Christ, the whole plenitude of the divine perfection dwells bodily. Godhood is another form of Godhead. The fundamental meaning of both expresses the glory, substance and attributes of the Deity or God. As manhood is used to express that which makes a man, a man, and womanhood that which makes a woman, a woman, Godhood is used to express that which makes God, God. (hood — a suffix used to form nouns, meaning: 1. state, quality, condition, as in childhood. 2. the whole group of a specified class, profession, etc., as in priesthood. Also head. — WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY, College Edition, p. 698.)

In the same way that the term "manhood" expresses a plurality of persons included in this specified class, the term Godhood similarly indicates a plurality of persons in the Deity. In Gen. 1:1, the word translated God (Elohim) is plural in the original Hebrew word. It shows that in the beginning, when the heavens and the earth were created, there was a plurality of divine beings. The following verses, especially the 26th and 27th, conclusively give this very meaning. But to forestall any misconception, inspiration has, even in the Old Testament, stressed in many passages the oneness and unity of this plurality of persons in the Godhead. This unity exists for all time; past, present and future. "Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God." (Isa. 44:6.) Also in v. 8, we read, "Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have I not declared unto thee of old, and showed it? and ye are my witnesses. Is there a God

besides me? yea, there is no Rock; I know not any." The theory that there are three Gods is false; ignoring the unity of the Godhead.

In the New Testament, this plurality of divine beings is named as composing the Godhead. Jesus, in the Great Commission said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit _" (Matt. 28:19.) Here is given in the command to be baptized, the plenary members of the Godhead, namely: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The command to be baptized INTO the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit means that the person baptized be brought into a covenant relationship with each of the divine Persons consisting the Godhead. But by any means, this passage could not teach the theory that the Godhead is a threefold manifestation of one Person. This is also false! Jesus constantly referred to His Father as a distinct Person from Himself. Let us consider the following Scripture, "Yea and if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. Yea and in your law it is written, that the witness of two men is true. I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." (John 8:16-18). In arguing for the verity of His judgment before the Pharisees, Jesus at the same time showed that He is not the same Person with the Father, for as they understood by their law (Deut. 19:15), more than one person is needed as witnesses for a matter to be established. Plainly, Jesus and the Father are two distinct and separate Persons. As to the Holy Spirit being a distinct and separate Person from the Father and the Son, the following Scriptures emphatically teach. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me" (John 15:26). Notice that in speaking about the Holy Spirit, the pronoun He (third person, singular number, and masculine gender) is used for the Holy Spirit or Comforter. The Holy Spirit could not be the Son (Jesus Christ) for it is Jesus who will send the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, He (the Holy Spirit) also could not be the Father. The apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians wrote, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6). Here is what is commonly called the "seven bonds of unity." Plainly, each one of these is entirely distinct from each one of the other six. It would be as much error to say that the ONE BODY is the same as the ONE BAPTISM, as to say that the ONE SPIRIT is the same as the ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL. Even as it is here clear also that the ONE LORD (Jesus Christ) is distinct from the ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, in the same token, the ONE SPIRIT (Holy Spirit) is also distinct from the ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL.

From the foregoing, the revealed Truth patently shows the three distinct and separate persons of the one

God or Godhead. With prayerful and further studies of the Holy Writ, there is no doubt that we will gain more knowledge and learn of the divine attributes of each of them which are ascribable only to a Person. And consequently, that each one of them is a divine being conscious of self, having an individuality, rationality and intuition. With such wealth of information gleaned from the Bible, we will be able to understand and appreciate more and more our responsibility in God's grand design in saving our souls. "The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all**" (2 Cor. 13:14).

SET FOR THE
DEFENSE OF
THE GOSPEL

T. G. O'Neal

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Bessemer, Alabama 35020



THE RELIGION OF FREEMASONRY — NO. 3

While most people are not aware of it, Masonry teaches that men may worship deity in it and at last receive salvation. This the reader's attention is invited to consider in this article.

"A God"

As one enters Masonry, in the first degree, the Entered Apprentice, he is asked, "Do you seriously declare upon your honor, that you believe in a **Supreme Being** to whom all men are accountable?" (Tennessee **Craftsman**, page 6; emphasis mine, T. G. O.). This statement is found on page 7 of this same book, "The foundation on which Freemasonry rests is the belief in and acknowledgment of a Supreme Being". Belief in "**a Supreme Being**" will do for "No atheist . . . can be made a Mason" (**Ibid.**, page 15).

Dr. Albert Mackey says, "No disbeliever in the existence of a **God** can be made a Freemason". (Encyclopedia of **Freemasonry**, page 847; emphasis mine, T. G. O.). One does not need to believe in Jehovah, Just believe in "a God". The reason for this is that Masonry is a **universal** religion taking into its membership even those who believe in pagan gods. "Masonry, as I understand it, lays claim to embrace all truth . . . As it has borrowed and preserved truths from all the religions and philosophies of the past" (Joseph E. Morcombe, **A Library of Freemasonry**, Vol. 5, page 496). Dr. Mackey says, "If Freemasonry were simply a Christian institution, the Jew and the Moslem, the Braham and the Buddhist could not conscientiously partake of its illumination; but **its universality** is its boast" (**Ibid.**, page 579; emphasis mine, T. G. O.). Albert Pike says, "**It** is the **universal**, eternal, immutable **religion**, such as God planted it in the heart of universal humanity" (**Morals and Dogma**, page 219;

emphasis mine, T. G. O.). Pike further says, "Masonry around whose altars the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahamin, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster, can assemble as brethren and unite in prayer to the one God who is above **all** the Baalim, must needs leave it to each of its Initiates to look for the foundation of his faith and hope to the written scriptures of his own religion" (**Ibid.**, page 226). Pike again says, "Masonry also has her mission to perform. With her traditions reaching back to the earliest times, and her symbols dating further back than even the monumental history of Egypt extends, she invites **all men** of **all religions** to enlist under her banners and to war against evil, ignorance, and wrong" (**Ibid.**, page 311; emphasis mine, T. G. O.). Again quoting Pike, he says, "Masonry propagates no creed except its own most simple and sublime one; that universal religion, taught by Nature and Reason. Its Lodges are neither Jewish, Moslem, nor Christian Temples. It reiterates the precepts of morality of all religions. It venerates the character and commends the teachings of the great and good of all ages and of all countries. It extracts the good and not the evil, the truth and not the error, from all creeds; and acknowledges that there is much which is good and true in all" (**Ibid.**, page 718). Since Masonry embraces the religions of the world, it can not require belief in Jehovah for this would exclude the most of the world. In order to accept Masons who believe in pagans, they require belief in "a God" or "a Supreme Being".

Masonry Offers Salvation

Being a religious institution, Masonry offers to the faithful Mason salvation in heaven at last. Dr. Mackey says, "The doctrine of a resurrection to a future and eternal life constitutes an indispensable portion of the religious faith of Freemasonry" (**Ibid.**, page 851). Dr. Mackey quotes a Masonic writer as saying, "It is the Theocratic Philosophy of Freemasonry that commands our unqualified esteem, and seals in our heart that love for the Institution which will produce an active religious faith and practice, and leads in the end to 'a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens'" (**Ibid.**, page 1035).

"The Covering of a Lodge is no less than the clouded canopy or starry-decked heaven, where all good Masons hope at last to arrive" (**Kentucky Monitor**, page 41). Masonry teaches that the redeemer of Masonry, Hiram Abiff, is "A kind messenger sent by our Supreme Grand Master to translate us from this imperfect to that all-perfect, glorious, and celestial Lodge above where the Great Architect of the Universe presides, forever reigns" (**Kentucky Monitor**, page 152; and **Tennessee Craftsman**, page 98).

Masonry teaches that only Masons will be saved. Pike says, 'Let him who toils complain not, nor feel humiliated! Let him look up, and see his fellow-workmen there in God's Eternity; they **alone** surviving there" (**Ibid.**, page 343; emphasis is Pike's. T.G.O.).

If salvation may be had in Masonry, then the Bible and the Lord's Church would not be necessary. Jesus was to save people from sin (Matt. 1:21). Christ came

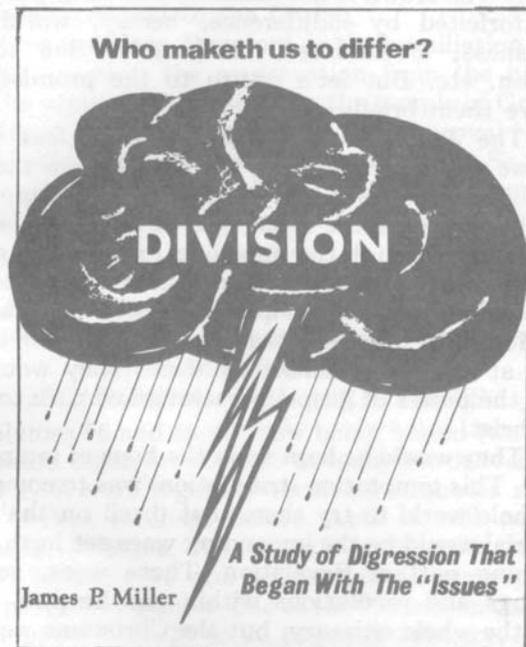
to save the lost (Lk. 19:10). Christ shed his blood to save mankind (Matt. 26:28). Salvation can be had **only** in the name of Christ (Acts. 4:12). Those who are saved, God adds to his church, not to Masonry (Acts 2:41,47). Christ is the Saviour of the body, which is his church (Eph. 5:23-27); therefore, Masonry is not necessary for salvation since men are reconciled unto God in the body of Christ (Eph. 2:13-16).

Conclusion to Article Three

Since Masonry claims to be a universal religion, it is necessary to believe in "a Supreme Being" which any pagan does, but faith in Jehovah is not required. By being faithful to Masonic teaching, one is assured by them of salvation in the Lodge above.

Christ saves and those saved are added to his church. If men are saved by Christ, then Masonry is unnecessary. If men can be saved in Masonry, then Christ died in vain and his church was established in vain.

Christ saves; his Church is essential. Therefore, Masonry is just another human system, promising men salvation, but not able to save.



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THE LETTER TO PHILADELPHIA — REV. 3:7-13

The city of Philadelphia dates back to about 159 B.C. The name was given the city in honor of Attalus II, king of Pergamos, who had shown so great love for his elder brother, Eumenes II, king of Lydia. This love won him the name, Philadelphos (brother-lover), and when he founded the city, it was named after him.

Philadelphia was built where the borders of Mysia, Lydia and Phrygia met in order to influence those provinces in Greek culture and language. The job was so well done that the Lydians by A.D. 19 had forgotten their own language and were all but Greeks.

Not uncommon in Philadelphia were earthquakes. In A.D. 17 an earthquake destroyed Philadelphia, as well as Sardis, and several other cities. Tremors rocked the city for years following. This caused constant anxiety and fear. Most of the population moved outside the city and lived in huts to escape falling stones and masonry.

The Roman emperor, Tiberius, helped Philadelphia build back and in gratitude of this gesture, changed the name of the city to Neocaesarea. Later, when Vespasian Caesar did some favor for the city, it named itself Flavia, the family name, in honor of him. These names did not last too long, however, for by the time Revelation was written, the city was again called Philadelphia. With these few introductory remarks, let us notice the particulars in the letter.

Jesus the Christ

There are three things said about Jesus in verse 7 to which we direct your attention.

(1) **He is the holy one.** Although "one" is not after holy or true, it is understood as each is preceded by a definite article in the Greek. Compare the Revised Standard Version. Jesus is called the "Holy One" in different places. The demons addressed Jesus as "the Holy One of God" (Mk. 1:24). Peter told the Jews they "denied the Holy One and the Just" (Acts 3:14). John wrote, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One" (1 Jn. 2:20).

Beckwith asserts that this title of Jesus is used as "a designation of him in his messianic character." He further states, "It characterizes him, not in his sinlessness, but as the one especially set apart, belonging exclusively, to God; as 'the anointed one' he is uniquely 'the consecrated one.'" "Jesus said of himself, ". . . whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world" (Jn. 10:36). God set apart Jesus for the accomplishing of his purpose in the redemption

of man. Truly he was the Holy One of God.

(2) He is the true one. There are two words in the Greek for true. One is *alethes* and the other one is *alethinos*. The first one means that which is true in contrast to that which is false. The second word means that which is real, genuine as opposed to that which is counterfeit, imaginary and pretended. Jesus used the second word, meaning that he was the true and genuine Messiah. He was not a substitute of God or a mere representative, but he was the Christ, the Anointed of God.

(3) Hath the key of David. This statement is taken from Isa. 22:22. There it described Eliakim as having charge over Hezekiah's household. The verse though, had a double meaning, being messianic in nature. The expression denotes authority. Jesus has authority over the house of God. He rules on David's throne (Isa. 9:6-7; Lk. 1:31-33) over spiritual Israel. He presently has all authority (Mt. 28:18) and rules as king over his kingdom (Heb. 1:8). As king he "openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" in the administration of his kingdom.

The Open Door

To the church Jesus said, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (v. 8). There are different views as to what the door was. Door is used in the Bible in different senses.

(1) There is the door of salvation. When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch on their first missionary journey, "they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27). Jesus said, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door" (Lk. 13:24, ASV). This door is now open unto all. It is entered by faith (obedience to Christ). This entails self-denial and sacrifice. One day, however, the door will be shut. This is why we should enter immediately (Cf. Lk. 13:25).

(2) There is the door of opportunity to preach the gospel. Paul wrote Corinth, "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Cor. 16:9). In the second letter to Corinth he stated, "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit" (2 Cor. 2:12). Paul told the brethren at Colosse, "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ (Col. 4:3).

(3) There is the door of Jesus, himself. Twice in John, Jesus said he was a door. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. . . . I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (Jn. 10:7, 9).

Which one of the doors was set before the brethren at Philadelphia? It certainly would not be the door of salvation as they had already passed through that door when they became Christians. Some contend the door is Christ, but the wording of the sentence, "I have set before thee an open door," would not allow such contention. This door is something Jesus set before them. The only plausible position, in my estimation, is

the door of opportunity to preach the gospel. For three centuries Philadelphia had been given the door of opportunity to spread Grecian culture. Now the church had the opportunity to carry the love of Christ to the lands beyond. This is the heart of the letter.

An objection to the door being missionary opportunity is the statement of Jesus that the church had little strength (v. 8). The church's little strength is interpreted to be numerical weakness. Since the church was small in numbers, it would not be able to preach the gospel, so the door must be something else. But the objection is invalid. A church that is dedicated, though small, can turn a city upside down. Look what a few men, the apostles, accomplished in a very short time. Jesus opened the door at Philadelphia to preach the gospel and no man could shut it or stop the truth from being preached.

The Promises

There are four promises in verse 9-12, with the exception of verse 11 which contains a warning. The warning simply states, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." The crown is not taken by coercion, but rather it is forfeited by indifference, heresy, worldliness, listlessness, lovelessness, compromise due to persecution, etc. But let's return to the promises and observe them briefly.

(1) The Jews would worship at their feet (v. 9). Here we are reintroduced to the Jews whom the Lord again classifies as the synagogue of Satan. They thought they were the synagogue of God because they were Jews. Through the impelling force of the gospel, they would be made to worship, figuratively speaking, at the feet of the Philadelphian Christians. What the Jews formerly opposed, that is, the Cause of Christ, some, at least, would now embrace. They would fall under the power of gospel preaching and turn to serve the Christ.

(2) They would be kept from the hour of temptation (v. 10). This temptation (tribulation) was to come upon the whole world to try them that dwell on the earth. This trial would be the impending woes set forth in the remaining part of Revelation. These woes, such as uprisings and revolutions within the Empire, would affect the whole citizenry, but the Christians would be kept from it. That is, they would be kept through the period of trial so as not to fall. They would not be *exempted* but *preserved*.

In John 17:15 Jesus prayed that his disciples would be kept from the evil one. This is not an immunity from the temptations of Satan, but rather steadfastness through the temptations. In like manner, Jesus is not promising the Christians at Philadelphia freedom from hardships, but ability to live faithfully through the difficult times.

Millennialists try to make the hour of tribulation mean the so-called "Great Tribulation", that is to be upon the earth while the church is "raptured." The "Rapture," they say, is how the church is to be kept from the hour of temptation. The Bible knows nothing about their "Great Tribulation" or their "Rapture,"

but if it did, Rev. 3:10 could not be that tribulation as it was to happen, or at least begin, during the lifetime of those who composed the church at Philadelphia. Too, regardless of what course they pursued (righteous or wicked course), they would be kept from the so-called "Great Tribulation" because they would be dead.

(3) **He that overcomes will be a pillar in the temple of God, and he shall go no more out (v 12).** A pillar is used for support. In the temple of God, the church, those who overcome the tests of tribulation, would serve as support in the indestructible Cause of Christ. Pillars in this text serve the same function as stones do in 1 Pet. 2:5. The figures are different, but support is suggested in both places. "Going out no more" depicts security, a promise they understood in view of the ominous tremors they often experienced.

(4) **He that overcomes will have the name of God, the name of new Jerusalem and the new name of Christ written upon him (v. 12).** The people of the city knew what it was to receive a "new name." Their city had been named and renamed different times. The names meant divine acceptance for the conquering one. It was his assurance that he belonged to God, to the new Jerusalem and to the Christ.

In these promises, therefore, is the humiliation of the church's enemies, the preservation from the hour of trial, the support and security in the temple of God and the fullness of divine recognition and approval.² The message of the letter is just as relevant today. So, let us be moved to pass through the doors of evangelistic opportunities into the harvest fields. **Footnotes**

1. Isbon T. Beckwith, *op. cit.*, p. 478.

2. Compare Merrill C. Tenney, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.

BOUND VOLUMES OF SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Volumes 15 and 16 are now being bound (we bind two years together) and will be ready for delivery by April 1. We are regularly receiving inquiries about this. Orders received before April 1 will receive the book for \$7.50. After April 1, the price will be \$8.50. Volumes 15 and 16 contain 56 more pages than previous volumes, due to the increase in the size of the paper from 16 to 20 pages in January, 1975, plus two special issues, one of 20 pages and the other 24 pages. We believe there is much material in these two volumes which you will want to preserve. We had a special on *An Unchanging Kingdom in a Changing World* and one entitled *The Family Under Fire*. We had the *Chandler-Patton Debate* on service-type organizations including discussion of college Bible departments, plus much more. Indexed for easy reference, we believe you will find this a worthy addition to your library and in time, a source of material for historical research. Only a limited number are bound. Get your order in soon. These may be ordered directly from the editor at P.O. Box 68, Brooks, Kentucky 40109.

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

2920 New Hartford Rd.
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1975 IN HISTORY

What's going on in the ranks of the "Jehovah's Witnesses" and the "Worldwide Church of God"? What do these people say among themselves, and how do they respond in their own private circles when great expectations go unfulfilled?

I wish I knew!

There's no doubt the "Witnesses" were expecting Armageddon in the Fall of 1975. Vice President F. W. Franz began to sound words of caution earlier in the year that the Watch-tower organization had made no specific declarations on the subject.

But "Witnesses" have taught for years that the 1000-year reign of Christ (the 7th and last millennium of man's history) would follow the Battle of Armageddon (New Heavens and a New Earth, p. 360).

In the "Witness" magazine **AWAKE**, Oct. 8, 1966, it was **specifically declared** that the 7th millennium would begin in Autumn, 1975. In this same article, the society rubbed salt in the wounds of "those in times past who predicted an 'end to the world, even announcing a specific date.' " **"They were guilty of false prophesying,"** asserted

AWAKE magazine. **"Why? What was missing?"**

"Missing was the full measure of evidence required in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Missing from such people were God's truths and the evidence that he was guiding and using them.

"But what about today? Today we have the evidence required, ALL OF IT. And it is overwhelming! ALL the many, many parts of the great sign of the 'last days' are here, together with verifying Bible chronology . . . "

I think I'd crawl in a hole if I were still a "Witness" in 1976!

And then there's the "Worldwide Church of God" with Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. My copy of **1975 in Prophecy** by Mr. Armstrong was published in 1957.

Listen to this: "While modern science and industry strive to prepare for us a push-button leisure-luxury-world by 1975, United States Assistant Weather Chief, I. R. Tarrahill, warns us unofficially to really fear **'the big drought of 1975.'** But the indications of prophecy are that this drought will be even **more** devastating than he foresees, and that it will strike **sooner** than 1975—probably between 1965 and 1972!"

A few paragraphs later on the same theme, HWA wrote: "Here is exactly **how** catastrophic it will be: **ONE-THIRD OF OUR ENTIRE POPULATIONS** will

DIE in this famine and disease epidemic!" (p. 12)

That's AMAZING, ASTOUNDING, INCREDIBLE, FANTASTIC, and all the other adjectives often heard on The World Tomorrow broadcast! And we've been told that Watergate was a big cover-up!

But that's not all. On p. 14 he declared that another one-third would be killed by hydrogen bombs, and the remaining third would be sold into slavery. That was 1975 in prophecy!

We can forgive the weather chief for missing a forecast. But laugh as we may about the weather not agreeing with weathermen, I wonder if their forecasts don't stack up pretty good beside the predictions of self-appointed prophets and interpreters of prophecy.

Indeed, as Jeremiah recorded: "Then the Lord said unto me, the prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake I unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of naught, and the deceit of their heart" (14:14).

A PRUDISH POINT OF VIEW

"I may be old-fashioned, but I don't think people should appear in public in clothes designed to attract attention," declared Mrs. Ethel Plant of California (Messenger-Inquirer, Ownesboro, Ky., Jan. 14, 1976)

"I say the way some people dress is immodest," the 73-year-old widow continued.

That is a refreshing thing to read in the newspapers!
Or is it?

Mrs. Plant is manager of a nudist camp.

Oh well, she probably just said that for the free publicity and advertisement. If so, she succeeded. Even got her name in Searching the Scriptures. But not the name of the camp or its location.

Yet, despite our suspicions, we agree with the prudish remarks of this prude. "Many girls and women wear clothes in public that are too skimpy and too tight," she commented.

Isaiah spoke of the imminent oppression of the daughters of Zion who were haughty, "and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton (deceiving with their) eyes, walking and mincing (tripping nicely) as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover (make naked) their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples . . ." (3:16-24).

Mantles and wimples? Well, the language and styles have changed, but not the nature of God. He still will "that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness, and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good

works" (1 Tim. 2:9,10).

I fear that the spiritual nakedness of our nation will hasten the day when "instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty" (Isa. 3:24).

I MARVEL
Galatians 1:6

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COMBATING EVOLUTION

The theory of evolution is taught as a fact in every "science" textbook known to me from the lower grades through college. Recently one of the states that passed a law that creation had to be taught along with evolution had the law struck down as unconstitutional. They said every "theory" could not be taught, therefore they would declare creation unconstitutional and the theory of evolution constitutional. What sense this makes I will leave the reader to judge, but the fact remains that unless we do a better job teaching against evolution we will raise a generation of children who know nothing else.

There are some who say that although evolution is taught it is never applied. For example, Alexander Scourby read the Bible through for the American Bible Society and then turned and did a National Geographic Special where he said the world was four billion years old, etc. The conclusion is that he could not see any inconsistency between the two. Brethren like John Clark and others have made a life long study of the theory of evolution and are masters at its refutation. Their work however has been done on a scholarly basis for high school and college classes. It will be the purpose of this column to suggest ways that the theory can be combated with smaller children for surely there would be no one who would not say, the earlier we start the better. I am currently teaching a teachers' training class at Merritt Island where we are investigating just such teaching and here are two or three of the things that we have found.

Example Number One. A number of building blocks were carried into the class. These can be any kind of blocks for it will make no difference in the outcome. The blocks are divided into two parts. One group is dumped on the table without any regard for form or planning. The others are arranged in any fashion that the student desires. He can put them in a circle, square or build a house. When this is done the student is asked if he can see any difference in the two groups. He will reply that one shows design and the other does not. This is the

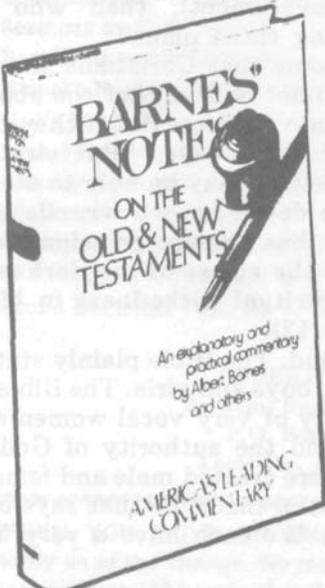
desired answer. If the group that showed design had to have a designer, the world had to have a maker. This makes the difference easy to see and the point can be made, even to small children. Evolution would have it all come by chance, the Bible by creation.

Example Number Two. A sheet of metal is carried into the class. In my class, my wife had a sheet of metal about twenty four inches square. Attention is called to the metal and the class is told that every thing is present in that sheet to make a globe of the world. The class is asked to observe the sheet from week to week to see if they see any changes in it. See if they can detect the fact that it is turning into a globe. If evolution is true it will surely turn into something. Of course no change will be noticed and the point that everything has to have a maker can be made.

Example Number Three. The conformity of the creation argues for a common maker. A student from the class can be selected as a model. It will be observed that the nose is in the middle of the face and that this is true for every member of the class. That the ears are on each side of the head, etc. If we just came by chance, why is this true? Why wouldn't some noses be found on the elbow and some ears on the knee? Many years ago my wife and I arrived at a place to preach early only to find that a small girl was there with her parents. To have something to say, I said, "Who gave you those big brown eyes?" She replied with the correct answer, "God gave them to me." All this proves it is never too early to teach the creation of man in the image of God.

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PAVING THE WAY FOR INNOVATORS

Some of the innovations that have gained acceptance among the people of God in the past one hundred and fifty years, did so because there was a serious vacuum in carrying out some aspect of the church's work. Missionary cooperatives arose due to the negligence of local churches in supporting preachers and in evangelizing new fields. The one man "pastor system" was urged as a remedy for incompetent elders, with which many mid-nineteenth century congregations were apparently saddled. D. S. Burnet was an early advocate of this system and for this very reason. Instrumental music was introduced as an aid to atrocious singing that was common among the churches in earlier times.

It is difficult for us today, who are generally accustomed to good singing, to imagine how bad things were in some churches. Benjamin Franklin, in an early edition of the Reformer, preserved a window through which we may view the singing as it was frequently carried on in those days. He wrote: "It is lamentable to see the negligence of the brethren in cultivating their talent for singing. It might truly be said, that, of all the delinquencies which have obtained amongst religious people, this one is transcendent. How much might be said here without exaggeration? Reader, have you not seen large congregations that could not sing one hymn without a book, and could scarcely do it with one?"

The invitation song, according to Franklin, all too often went like this: "... after waiting some time, a brother very deliberately draws the case out of his pocket, takes out his spectacles, adjusts them properly to his eyes, looks around and inquires of several others for a hymn-book. Presently one is produced, he looks at the index, announces the page, tunes his voice, and finally commences Finally the singing is murdered through, and all seem glad the task is performed." (The Life and Times of Elder Benjamin Franklin, p. 89.)

In the last years of his life, after the instrument had obtained favor among the churches, Franklin expressed profound regret that more attention had not been given to the importance of singing in worship. He was of the opinion that singing, such as described above, was as destitute of true devotion as singing with an instrument. This deplorable state of affairs, especially among the less careful Bible students and the more worldly-minded members of the church, contributed no little to the ready acceptance of the organ in many places across the land.

We today may not be neglecting the singing in worship, but are we neglecting some other aspect of our service to God? Are we, even now, playing into the hands of innovators and helping pave the way for their success in the years ahead, by showing improper concern for a particular part of our responsibility as the people of God? We must constantly strive to be diligent in all our service to God, both in our attitudes and in the performance of our duties, to the end that we do all He requires of us, in the way He instructs us, and to the best of our ability. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!"

**AWAKE, AWAKE, CHRISTIANS,
AWAKE, AWAKE**

Mrs. Wanda Bradberry

"Awake, Awake, Deborah; Awake, Awake" (Judges 5:12). "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty" (Judges 5:23).

Awake, Awake, Christians; Awake, Awake and come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Our great nation is fast being taken over by atheistic materialism. Internal decay has saturated our nation. Think about all of the nations that have fallen because of moral decay (for instance the Roman Empire).

The home, the very foundation of this country, is under attack by the "so-called" Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.) at the present time. God warns us that it is impossible to be indifferent. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

The National Organization for Women (NOW) has set as its number one goal, ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment without amendments. Some of its other goals are already taking place, such as integrated physical education courses, day care centers, de-sexing of school books, liberal abortion laws, and infiltration of all news media, etc.

On page 9 of *Revolution: tomorrow is NOW*, their 1973 handbook, we read that one of their goals is "the upgrading of sex education courses to include factual information on contraception and on the ecological crisis of overpopulation, and to remove all references to ideal or normal masculine or female etiquette, social behavior and vocations." It pleads for, "the provision of contraceptive and abortion counseling in the same way that drug and draft counseling are now a part of many school programs." As we read further on page 16, we find "that marriage should be an equal partnership with shared economic and household responsibility and shared care of children." On this same page it reads "that the wife should be able to keep her own name or the husband to take his wife's name, etc."

At the top of page 18 we read the following: "In light of the enslavement of body and mind which

the church historically has imposed on women, we demand that the seminaries:

- A. Immediately stop and repudiate their propagation of sexist, male supremacist doctrine.
- B. initiate women's studies courses which cut through the traditional male, religious mythology to expose church and other social forces denying women their basic human dignity.
- C. actively recruit, employ and justly promote women theologians and staff in all departments.
- D. actively recruit, enroll, financially aid and seek equal placement for women theological students.

We demand that the churches desexigate help-wanted ads in their own publications and We demand that Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act be amended so that religious groups no longer have legal sanction to discriminate on the basis of sex. NOW will challenge the tax exempt status of the Catholic Church since it is lobbying against abortion law repeal." (How long will it be before Christians are challenged?) The last four lines in the NOW booklet reads, "Therefore, be it resolved: That NOW recognizes the double oppression of women who are lesbians, and Be it further resolved: That a woman's right to her own person includes the right to define and express her own sexuality and to choose her own lifestyle: and be it further resolved: that NOW acknowledge the oppression of lesbians as a legitimate concern of feminism."

When powerful, well-financed organizations, such as NOW, boast that their goal is to "restructure all existing institutions" (which includes the family, church, school and government), then who is responsible for combating these plans?

It has been said by some that Christians should stay out of politics. I do not believe that the above mentioned fall entirely into politics. But if they do, then consider what the Bible says, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of the world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:11,12).

I believe the word of God. The Bible plainly states the roles of men, women, boys and girls. The Bible is our authority. A minority of very vocal women are questioning the Bible and the authority of God.

In the beginning we were created male and female and there is no statement in the Bible that says one is superior to the other. We each have a very important role.

Women from the very beginning of time have been instrumental in shaping lives. Lets look at a few. Eve, the first sinner, (Gen. 3:6); Jezebel, who

provoked her husband to wrong, (1 Kings 21:25); Job's wife, Satan's helper, wanted Job to curse God, (Job 2:9); Delilah, caused Samson's ruin, (Judges 16). Now, on the other side: Ruth, good, gentle and noble, (read book of Ruth); Mary, the mother of Jesus, (John 2:5); Deborah, a wise and courageous mother, who changed the status of an entire nation from servitude to freedom, (Judges 5:31); and Esther, who helped God save a nation, (the Book of Esther); it is plain to see that women can ruin or save a country.

Christian ladies throughout this good country of ours, are urged to awake and arise and become a Deborah or an Esther. Fight this cancer that is destroying our homes and our nation. Personally, I do not want my grandchildren and the future generations reared in surroundings similar to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Christian men, this is your struggle as well as ours and we desperately need your support—morally and intellectually.

Awake, Awake, Christians, Awake, Awake that we shall not find ourselves in the above mentioned situation.

Owensboro, Kentucky

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ACTIONS OF CHRISTIANS

Fred A. Shewmaker

For several months I have had an increasing awareness of a lack of agreement among brethren regarding the word collectivity. This awareness is disturbing and as a result I was prompted to look up the word in the *World Book Dictionary*. Possibly it would be helpful to you for me to share what I found. Here it is:

"coll-ec-tivi-ty, *n.* 1. collective state or quality; collectiveness. 2. a collective whole; aggregate. 3. people collectively, especially as forming a community or state. Syn. 2. sum, mass."

From this, it appears to me, we must recognize that meaning number 3 is the only one we can properly apply to a local church. At the same time it appears that brethren often have something else in mind when they use the word, collectivity. Yet, it has always been my impression that brethren generally recognize a local church as being the "community" of saints in a given locality. If this is what a local church is, should other meanings of the word, collectivity, be applied to a local church?

My consideration of the meanings given to the word, collectivity, led me to check on the word, collectively. Here is what I found:

"collectively, *adv.* 1. as a group; all together: *example deleted*. 2. in a singular form, but with a plural meaning: . . ." Obviously, we are here concerned with the first meaning. From the meanings of the two words considered we may conclude that a local church is a "collectivity" because it is "people" — "as a group; all together," — formed into the "community" of saints in a given locality.

My awareness of the disagreement leaves me with the impression that it centers around the action/actions in which individual Christians and a local "community" of saints may engage. Action/actions by a local "community" of saints have been called collective action. This led me to look up the word, collective. I found its meaning to be as follows:

"col-lec-tive, *adj.* 1. formed by collecting persons or things; taken as a whole; aggregate: *example deleted*. 2. of or derived from a number of persons taken or acting together; common: . . ."

Meaning number 2 is the one with which we must be concerned. It seems clear that when it is said a thing is collective action we must understand that a "community" of saints in a given locality "as a group; all together" has been or is engaged in a "common: action." Thinking of collective action as something other than this would appear to be a misunderstanding of it. When collective action is taken by a local church, that church as a unit

performs a single act.

Among conservative brethren there seems to be complete agreement that local churches are not authorized to form themselves into a larger "community." The disagreement that has developed involves the action/actions in which individual Christians may engage. This led me to consult the dictionary again. I wanted to re-examine the meaning of the word, individual. Let us share what I found:

"in-divid-ual, *n.* 1. a person: *example deleted.* 2. a single person, animal, or thing:

— *adj.* 1. single; particular; separate: *example deleted.* 2. for one only: *example deleted.* 3. having to do with, or peculiar to one person or thing: *example deleted.* 4. marking off one person or thing specially: . . . "

These meanings show that individual action is an action "peculiar to one person" — when a person acts alone.

It is not always possible to find common ground between the positions men take in a disagreement. However, it appears to me that in this disagreement brethren should consider the possibility that between individual action and collective action there may be another action in which Christians may engage. When "Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus" (Acts 15:39) was the action involved either individual or collective? Is it possible that their action was neither individual nor collective? We might ask these same questions about the action of Paul and Silas (Acts 15:40).

When Barnabas "sailed" he did not sail alone; he "sailed" with Mark. Yet, no local church was involved. When Paul "departed" he did not depart alone; he "departed" with Silas. Yet, no local church was involved. Brethren, what kind of action was involved? It seems to me that the action involved lies somewhere between individual action and collective action. Is it possible that the disagreement could be resolved by brethren becoming aware that there is such a thing as concerted action and that brethren may engage in concerted action? Yes, I also looked up the word concerted and found:

"con-cert-ed, *adj.* 1. arranged by mutual agreement; planned or made together; combined: . . . "

Concerted action would involve more than acting alone and less than collectively performing a "common" act. Is this not the kind of action for which we have the scriptural examples of Barnabas with Mark as well as Paul with Silas?

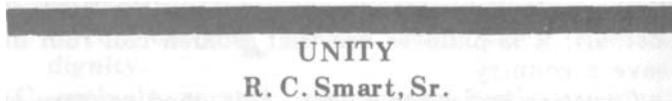
This has been written because I have failed to observe any consideration of concerted action in the discussion of the subject on which brethren are in disagreement. It is my hope that some brother with a better grasp of what may be involved in concerted

action, than I, will write an article, or series of articles, on the scope and implications of concerted action. It would be difficult to find a more timely subject.

May God help us to find agreement upon scriptural ground.

1627 S. Morton Ave.

Evansville, Indiana 47713



Unity among believers in Christ is not a luxury, but a necessary characteristic of the body of Christ. We must ever strive to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

There are many voices raised calling for unity. There are many methods being promulgated which the authors feel would solve the problem of division.

We need, first of all to realize why it is that division exists today. Unauthorized practices in the worship, and the organizing of local churches into "brotherhood arrangements" divided the body of Christ in the last century. Those who insisted on the use of organs and other instruments of music in worship and local churches working through a central body became a separate group. In time there arose up from among them a younger generation who were not content with the innovations of their fathers. These insisted on complete denominational status; so a third group came into being.

Those who resisted the digression of yesteryear were successful in keeping a body of believers from following the multitude. They grew, holding stedfastly to a "thus saith the Lord." Today, they have been succeeded by another generation, many of whom are determined to see that history repeats itself.

Many churches of Christ are being manipulated by promoters among us who cannot satisfy their egos in the simple structure of a local congregation. Educational and benevolent institutions have replaced the societies of the past century. Local churches have set themselves up as receiving and dispensing centers for hundreds of churches.

As was true in the past so it is now that we hear the plea for "Unity": A unity in division.

Those of us trying to hold to the simple arrangement of a local church as the only functioning unit are being pressured to at least give "token" approval of "our projects". We are told that there will be no division unless we insist on protesting the unscriptural practices being promoted.

Brethren, it is past time to dismantle the superstructure and confine ourselves to the work of the church and the church working in the only capacity God ever decreed: the local church with its bishops and deacons.

516 Union St. Bangor,
Maine 04401

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

“... They rehearsed all that God had done with them . . .”—Acts 14:27

HUEY P. HARTSELL, P.O. Box 55, Mt. Olive, Alabama 35117 — After five pleasant years with Meeks St. in Corinth, Mississippi, I moved to Mt. Olive (near Birmingham) in July of 1975. Our labors with the Shady Grove Dr. church have been most enjoyable. We are grateful to the Lord for the progress evident here. There has been a good increase in attendance and contribution, peace prevails, and there is other evidence of spiritual growth. During October it was my privilege to conduct meetings at Garden Valley Rd. in Tyler, Texas and at Pine Mountain Valley, Georgia. I have some additional time for meetings this year if anyone is interested.

WARD HOGLAND, Box 166, Greenville, Texas 75401 — I am now in my fifteenth year at Walnut Street. The work moves along in a fine manner. Meetings for 1976 include Shreveport, La.; Brentwood (Nashville), Tenn.; Xenia, Ohio; Paden City, West Va.; Taylor, Texas; Grenada, Miss.; Butler, Mo.; Campbellsville, Ky.; Pensacola, Fla. I will also be with Leonard Tyler in a lecture series on March 12th at Longview, Texas. W. L. Wharton will be with us in a meeting March 28 — April 2.

JIMMY TUTEN, 111 S. 19th Court, Dade City, Florida 33525 — Things continue to look good at Dade City. Since last report in this paper, there have been seven baptisms, three restorations and four to identify with us. Four of the baptisms and two of the restorations were during our recent meeting with Ronald Mosby, one of the best meetings in the recent history of this church. When in the area worship with us at 203 North 12th Street.

JOHN J. MILLER, JR., P. O. Box 94, Waipahu, Hawaii 96797 — The Leeward congregation located at 94-1233 Waipahu Street, Waipahu on the island of Oahu is the only congregation in Hawaii (with the exception of a single family on the island of Maui) that is contending for the old paths and opposing liberal and modern movements. I began working here in September of last year and would like the readers of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* to know of our whereabouts as many from the mainland take vacations on the island paradise each year. Many military families are transferred here each year also and we would like them to know the location of the church here. For additional information please drop us a line.

India Report

RAY F. DIVELY, 425 Dippold Ave., Baden, PA 15005 — On December 24, 1975, Richard Swan and I left for a month of preaching the gospel in India. This was my third trip to India. There were 43 souls baptized and three new congregations established. In my previous trips, we worked almost entirely in the villages. This time we worked in the cities of Karimnagar and Hyderabad strengthening the congregations there and teaching the lost. The people in the cities are not as responsive to the gospel as those in the villages. Also, we worked some in the villages. We held training classes in Karimnagar and in the village of Kollur for the leading members. Our time was spent strengthening the brethren and teaching the lost. On Lord's days, we visited as many congregations as possible. There are now thirty-five congregations meeting regularly. There is much work to do in India. We haven't even touched the hem of the garment in this nation of over six hundred million people which increases at the rate of thirteen million per year. These people are in deep poverty but are responsive to the gospel. I will always be grateful for the fellowship the brethren have given me in preaching the gospel in India. As Paul stated, "Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account."

SPRINGFIELD, TENNESSEE — a new congregation began meeting here January 11. The church meets at 2 PM Sundays in the First National Bank Building. Amos Davenport is doing some of the preaching.

EFRAIN PEREZ, Casilla 3052, Correo Central, Santiago, Chile — I conducted a gospel meeting for the Santiago church in November during which five persons were baptized for remission of sins. We have had a profitable training class in Quillota during October and November. Four of the brethren who attended are

now taking part in public preaching. In December I preached in an open air gospel meeting in Puente Alto which was attended by about 100 people.

Churches At Work

SPRING BRANCH, HOUSTON, TEXAS — Robert Harkrider reports growth in all areas of work with this good church. Attendance is up from 10 - 26% over the fall of 1974. Contributions for the fall quarter of 1975 averaged \$1405 a week. During the year 17 were baptized and 32 publicly confessed wrongs. The church fully supports not only Harkrider, but Donald Willis in Conroe, Texas, Ricardo dela Cruz in the Philippines, and partially supports Robert Turner enabling him to conduct gospel meetings throughout the nation. A monthly publication, *THE SPEAKER*, is mailed to 1400 homes. Harkrider is permitted to be away in gospel meetings elsewhere during 8 Sundays each year. In June 1976 Matt Quails of Denver, Colorado will begin work also with this congregation. He is a young man just beginning his work as a gospel preacher. This will provide valuable experience for him working with an older preacher and under efficient elders in a normal situation.

IMHOFF AVENUE, PORT ARTHUR, TEXAS — Bill Cavender reports on plans for 1976 at Imhoff Avenue. In addition to an active local program of work, this congregation will support 19 gospel preachers in 8 states and 5 foreign countries. Men will be supported in Nigeria, South Africa, British Columbia, Mexico and the Philippines. Preachers will also be supported in Louisiana, Texas, Florida, South Carolina, Nebraska, Arkansas, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The congregation exceeded its budget for 1975 by \$106.70 per week. With less than 150 members it is most encouraging to see the amount of work being done by these brethren. The budget for 1976 is set for \$1,325 per week. We thank God for such churches and pray that their tribe may increase.

Preacher Needed

MILLINGTON, TENNESSEE — The Central Millington church needs a full-time preacher. We meet near the world's largest inland Naval Base and training center with a constant flow of young people. Members are active in a personal work program that has found many receptive to the truth. We need a mature man, well established in the scriptures. The congregation can supply \$200 per month income with the rest having to be raised elsewhere. Contact Church of Christ, 5038 Easley St., Millington, Tenn. 38053. Phone (901) 872-7269 or (901) 872-3444.

Preacher Available

DON POTTS, P. O. Box 287, Jamestown, Kentucky 42029 — I am 42 years of age with 18 years of experience preaching from Ohio to Texas. I am looking for a congregation that loves rugged truths, is opposed to loose living and can endure 40 to 60 minute sermons. If interested write to the above address or call (502) 343-4128.

Deaths

LLOYD MOYER, well known California preacher and writer, passed away recently. We have none of the details concerning the services. Our deepest sympathies are expressed to his family.

GORDON PENNOCK departed this life January 2, 1976 at Rockford, Illinois at the age of 66. Born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, his preaching work carried him to many places where he always gave a good account of himself. He was one of the founders of *TRUTH MAGAZINE* and was one of the original Associate Editors beginning in 1956. His last full-time work was with the church in Waipahu, Hawaii. The editor will always remember the few hours spent with Gordon Pennock and his wife, in company with Cecil Willis last April on our way to the Philippines. He is survived by six children, two of whom are gospel preachers, and his faithful wife. Ray Ferris conducted funeral services, assisted by Karl Diestelkamp. Burial was at Floral Lawns Cemetery in South Beloit, Illinois. We weep with those who weep.