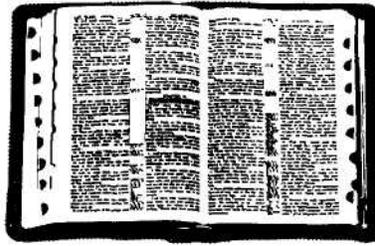


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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

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VOLUME XXX

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NUMBER 2

"ALL THINGS
WORK
TOGETHER"

Frank Himmel

723 15th Ave. W.
Palmetto, FL 33561



"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8: 28). God can and does turn adversity into advantage. However, to make that the meaning of this passage is to set our sights too low. Paul has much greater "all things" in mind than the personal setbacks of life. It is the things of God—elements of His plan—that He so beautifully brings together on our behalf. Five components are specified in the two verses that follow.

Foreknowledge

"For whom He foreknew..." To "foreknow" is simply to know before. The Greek word is prognosis. A doctor's prognosis is his forecast of what course a disease will take. Admittedly, his forecast is based on past cases and is subject to error; God's foreknowledge is perfect. When God reveals to us what will happen before the event, we can have foreknowledge (e. g. 2 Pet. 3: 17).

In this case God's foreknowledge involves people: "whom He foreknew." God knew beforehand what group of people would be saved. How? Because he chose the group and He does the saving. The group He chose is those in Christ (Eph. 1: 4).

Predestination

"He also predestined..." Here again is the idea of something done beforehand. To predestine is to decide or determine in advance. We predestine a vacation when we decide what attractions we will see and what roads we will take; when we make motel reservations or buy airline tickets.

God predetermined many things regarding salva-

tion: Jesus' crucifixion as the atonement (Acts 2: 33); adopted sons, with full right of inheritance, as the status of the saved (Eph. 1: 5, 11); eternal life as the reward (Ti. 1: 2). Our text mentions another: "conformed to the image of His Son" as the character of the saved. Jesus is our example (1 Pet. 2: 21). Being a Christian is not simply belonging to a church or having completed certain requirements. It is molding our lives to conform to Jesus' pattern, becoming partakers of the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 3, 4). In the resurrection, too, we will be like Jesus (1 Jn. 3: 2).

Why did God predetermine that we be like Jesus? "That He might be the first-born among many brethren." The first-born is a position of honor and preeminence. We glorify Him by changing to be like Him.

Calling

To be in Christ and to live like Christ requires a change. God invites us to make that change: "these He also called." He encourages us to come and enjoy His rich blessings. This "call" or invitation is made through the gospel (2 Th. 2: 14). Paul described it as an upward call (Ph. 3: 14), an invitation to something better.

God's calling can be rejected. Jesus told His disciples to preach the gospel to all creation (Mk. 16: 15). Everyone is invited in one sense. But He knew not all would accept. Those who do will be saved; those who do not will be condemned (v. 16). So in another sense, the called are those who accept the invitation. "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt. 22: 14).

Justification

"These he also justified..." God is calling sinners to be in Christ. The required change is so radical it is termed "conversion," the process of turning one thing into another. Some of this transformation is up to us. We must repent or turn from sin (Acts 17: 30). We must replace sinful practices with godly ones (Eph. 4: 17ff). But there remains the problem of guilt.

"Justification" refers to acquittal of guilt. God is graciously willing to pronounce us righteous, based on the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 3: 24-26). We can never deserve that, but receive it as a gift. Obviously God does this only for those who accept His call. We are justified by faith (Rom. 5: 1), believing His promises and the power of Jesus' sacrifice. The question is, how do we

accept God's invitation? Or asked another way, at what point are we justified?

Here the Bible makes a play on words. "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10: 13). God calls us; when we call on Him we will be saved. We do not call on Him simply by saying "Lord, Lord" (Mt. 7: 21), but by following the terms of His invitation: specifically, confessing Christ and being baptized for forgiveness of sins (Acts 2: 38; 22: 16). Interestingly, it is that same act which puts us in Christ (Gal. 3: 27). Do you remember what God foreknew? That act is also a conformity to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6: 3, 4). Do you remember what God predetermined?

Glorification

"These he also glorified." Earlier in this chapter Paul had written of our glorification (vv. 18-25). It is yet future, but is so certain it can be spoken of as already accomplished. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory..." (Ph. 3: 20, 21).

Having enumerated the elements God brings together for those who love Him, Paul asks, "What then shall we say to these things?" Will you not say, "That's for me!?" Accept the gospel invitation today.

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Editorial

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THE NASHVILLE MEETING

On December 1-3, 1988, the Doubletree Hotel in downtown Nashville, Tennessee was the scene of a most unusual gathering. Institutional and non-institutional brethren came together to discuss their differences. Steve Wolfgang arranged for the non-institutional speakers and Calvin Warpula make the same provisions for the institutional speakers. Seven major areas were covered. They included a history of the division, establishing Bible authority, collective and individual activity, the work of the church, the relationship of the church to human organizations, cooperation of churches, and the question of fellowship.

The procedure was simple. A man from each side made a thirty minute speech. Each main address was followed by a fifteen minute reaction speech. Then moderators handled questions from the audience directed to specific speakers. Each session lasted three hours. Good order prevailed from the first to the last. The whole affair was really an extended debate. Speakers came well prepared. The attendance exceeded everyone's expectation. Crowds ranged from 500 to 800 on Friday night when we met at the Vultee church building. Each session at the Doubletree was overcrowded and many stood, or sat out in the hall, or in an overflow room where they could hear, but not see, the speakers. While there were many preachers present, it was not just a gathering of preachers. There were many interested men and women from a wide area.

Interestingly enough, the bulk of those in attendance were non-institutional, a remarkable fact in view of the fact that there are so many large institutional churches in Nashville and middle Tennessee. One local preacher of the institutional persuasion simply explained that most of our brethren are not interested in these issues — other things are much more important to them. "

There were some who were conspicuously absent, both in the audience and at the speaker's stand. Those men who write for THE SPIRITUAL SWORD, men like Roy Deaver, Thomas B. Warren, Alan Highers, Robert Taylor, Dub McLish and others who are generally regarded as more conservative among the institutional brethren, were not there. None of them consented to speak and they did not attend. These men are themselves being called "antis" by some of the institutional folks who WERE at this meeting. The above named men, and others who run with them, are generally contemptuous toward those they describe as "antis."

That within itself created a weakness in the program, for among the institutional speakers there was a wide difference on serious matters. Perhaps the two most conservative-minded speakers from the institutional side were Johnny Ramsey and Roy H. Lanier, Jr. I am sure they were personally embarrassed by some of the things said by speakers on that side. Yet, in fairness, it should be pointed out that each speaker came to represent only himself.

This was the first time many in the audience had listened to one from the other side in an orderly presentation of what he believed and why. It was an eye-opening experience for many. We heard many strange things from the institutional speakers. There were decided hints of rank modernism in speeches by Richard Rogers of El Paso, Texas and Bill Swetmon of Plano, Texas. Both denied that the New Testament provides a pattern for the church. Brother Swetmon amazed us with the news that the canon of the New Testament was not settled until 400 years after Christ. We were told by him that we "need a new hermeneutic" for this age and that the old idea of having a command, approved apostolic example or necessary inference to authorize what we do, is not valid. Lewis Hale of Oklahoma City was more conservative and made the same kind of arguments which we have heard in debates on these matters for the last thirty-five years.

Randy Mayeux, who preaches for the Preston Road church in Dallas (where Roy E. Cogdill preached many years ago) was even farther out in left field. He spoke of the New Testament responding to the "felt needs" of men and said it was never intended as a code of doctrine. He made one reference to the "eucharist" and defended gymnasiums, or whatever it takes to get people to come and hear about Jesus. Calvin Warpula said Jesus is the pattern for the church and that whatever Jesus did, surely the church can do. Keith Sharp pointed out that Jesus lived and died under the law of Moses which included instrumental music and showed that on that basis we could use that now.

While my assessment may be regarded as biased by some, I thought the non-institutional speakers did good work in setting forth the basic causes of our differences and contending for the old paths. Some feared that such a meeting would tempt some to compromise the truth. I do not believe that any objective observer would reach that conclusion. This meeting differed from the Arlington meeting of 1968 in that on that occasion, only the participants were present. This time, anyone who wanted to hear it was welcome and questions were received from the audience at each session.

What Good Did It Do?

I do not expect to see any spectacular results from this gathering. It is painfully evident that the differences between us are far greater than they were thirty years ago when churches were dividing. If anyone thinks we only differ on sending a check from the treasury to an orphan institution or to some sponsoring church, this meeting surely dispelled that notion. The differences are vast. There will continue to be individuals who will come out of these churches, and occasionally, a congre-

gation with turn around. In the last few years there have been several preachers to leave the ranks of the institutional brethren to stand for the truth. I have worked with several the last two or three years and have met others in our travels over the country.

There were a number of young men and women who attended this meeting who were not involved in the division. They have grown up since that time and had no acquaintance with brethren on that side. I don't know how many we heard express their surprise, and even shock, at some of the things they heard. They came away with a deeper appreciation of the truth. Some of the younger generation have thought that had some of us been kinder and shown more love and understanding, the division might not have happened. This meeting showed the fallacy of that. Truly there is a great gulf between us.

Those who attended this meeting should have come away impressed with the urgency of speaking as the oracles of God and determined not to let this happen again. And it can, you know.

The only way for us to have unity is for all of us to "walk by the same rule" (Phil. 3: 16), respect the example of the apostles (Phil. 3: 17) as we practice what was "received" from them (Phil. 4: 9). We must all be willing to "walk in the light as he is in the light" (1 Jno. 1: 7). We must speak "as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4: 11). We dare not "go beyond the doctrine of Christ" (2 Jno. 9-11) and we cannot afford to "think of men above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4: 6).

There can be no unity with the folks who went out to form Christian Churches as long as the objectionable practices continue. Neither can there be unity with the institutional brethren as long as the practices which divide are still present. I cannot speak for others but I can speak for myself. There is not a single point of truth which is negotiable with me. I have never stopped loving those brethren who left the truth. I have always been willing to study, whether one-on-one, informal gathering or structured public discussion. Loving each other, was never the issue and is not at this late date. But I cannot, and will not, look the other way and pretend that church support of human organizations, sponsoring churches, church sponsored recreational activities, and now the issue of whether there is such a thing as pattern authority, and even the integrity of the scriptures themselves, are simply matters of opinion. Thirty years ago, the camel stuck his nose in the tent. Now he has moved in, hide, hump, hooves and all, and the institutional folks don't know what to do with him. The Nashville meeting made that abundantly clear.

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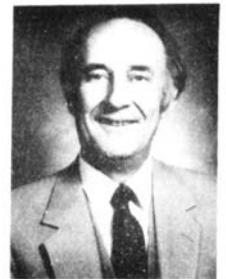
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

Question: *Does a married couple have a right to decide against having children?*

Answer: Marriage serves three purposes: (1) *Companionship.* "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2: 18). (2) *To avoid fornication.* "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (1 Cor. 7: 2). (3) *Procreation.* "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1: 28, 9: 1; cf. 1 Tim. 2: 15; 5: 14). To ignore any one of these purposes is to thwart a God-given role of the marriage relationship.

Of course, marital responsibilities cannot always be met because of adverse circumstances. Companionship may be lost due to institutionalizing a mate who has become mentally or physically incapacitated. Conjugal rights may be denied because of biological impairment, and bearing children may be inadvisable due to the high risk to the woman's life because of poor health, or impossible because of sterility or past child-bearing age.

But the natural, God-given function for a married couple is to have children. Paul wrote, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house" (1 Tim. 5: 14). This is inspired counsel to prevent younger widows from falling into the danger mentioned in vs. 11-13.

It is normal to desire children. When Cain was born, Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Gen. 4: 1). She considered this a blessing from God. After the birth of Isaac, Sarah said, "God hath made me to laugh" (Gen. 21: 6). Leah rejoiced in her children (Gen. 29: 32-35). Rachel envied Leah and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die" (Gen. 30: 1). Hannah prayed for a son (1 Sam. 1: 8) and Samuel was born. When the announcement was made to Zacharias that he and Elizabeth would have a son, the angel said, "And thou shalt have joy and gladness" (Lk. 1: 14). At the birth of John the neighbors and cousins rejoiced with Elizabeth (Lk. 1: 58). Yes, children are a great blessing sent from God.

To not want children is contrary to the tenor of Biblical teaching. To decide not to have children maybe indicative of selfishness, self-centeredness, a psychological hang-up, fear, an unhappy marriage or more interested in a career than home and family. The Psalmist wrote, "Lo, children are an inheritance of the Lord:

and the fruit of the womb is his reward... Happy is the man that hath a quiver full of them" (Psa. 127: 3, 5).

How many children a husband and wife should have, God didn't say. To contend that a husband and wife must have all the children they can is without scriptural warrant and to deny family planning is imposing a human regulation. God left this matter to our own good judgment.

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

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Middletown, MD 21769

Once in a while, something happens. Perhaps I see someone act in a certain manner or perhaps something happens which reminds me in a personal way of a particular spiritual lesson. Yesterday such an event took place.

Since moving to Washington, D. C. five years ago I've seen, up close, political leaders of our government and others who wield great power and influence. One almost becomes calloused about such things and ignores them. So maybe this is why I was left unprepared for what occurred. Yesterday, I was invited by the pilots of the private jet for a "local" multi-millionaire to go for a ride in the jet to New York City and back. It seemed "the boss" wanted the crew to fly a veterinarian to New York to care for one of his thoroughbred race horses. The plane would be empty coming back. Needless to say I jumped at the chance. Some of you may not realize it but these jets aren't exactly Yugo's with wings. They cost millions of dollars. This particular one costs approximately \$3000.00 an hour just to operate.

Meeting the crew at the airport they took me aboard the aircraft and showed me around. It had soft leather seats (and couch), video/stereo system, gold-plated fixtures, and a small kitchen. I knew immediately I was in tall cotton. I felt like I had walked onto the set for one of Robin Leach's scenes of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." I sat up front with the pilots on the way up to New York while the doctors sat in the cabin being waited on by (you guessed it) the stewardess. With the airplane empty on the return trip I sat in the cabin all by myself and had a chance to imagine, to feel, and enjoy for a few minutes what it must be like to have more money than you can spend. It was quite a rush to say the least.

While surrounded by this luxury. I couldn't help but think about Jesus' teaching in Matt. 19: 16-24. I looked with new insight at Matt. 19: 24 which says, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." As I sat with my hands on the gold-plated arms of my seat I wondered if I would not have had the same reaction as the rich young

ruler did in vs. 16-22. The young man couldn't turn loose the power, the fun, the security he felt he received from his earthly treasures. Oftentimes, it is hard to understand a lesson of Jesus' until you're in that position. I was awarded just an imaginary peek and what I saw scared me to death. How easy it would be to clutch these beautiful things so tightly so as not to let go. Oh, we say we can give up what we have for Jesus but few of us have real wealth of great degree to release. What a blessing it is that God holds back these temptations which for many are too great to overcome. It must be said however, that wealth is relative. James shows the proper outlook from both sides of the "coin" in James 1: 9-11, "But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: and the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings." Emphasis on one's physical goods instead of one's spiritual will condemn an individual whether the pile is large or small.

One of the pilots said of the owner of the jet that he treats it like it was his own "magic carpet." I suppose that is a fitting description. But there is one place into which no man can buy entrance, and that is heaven. There is no magic carpet to carry you there. You must walk it step by step just as all other saints have done. Don't be distracted by things that glitter by the roadside. Paul said it best in Phil. 4: 11 — Learn to be content. Your physical situation is only temporary, but your spiritual one is eternal.

After our landing in Washington, I walked off the plane (I wonder if anyone saw me?) with my head in a spin from my jaunt in the "fast lane" of society, yet knowing a little more about some lessons of Jesus and a little more about myself. On the drive home, I felt happy. It had been an exciting trip. The feeling of sitting there among all that wealth was awesome, yet it had no substance to it. I felt no envy for Mr. Firestone. I felt happy because I was content with what I have. Contentment and peace of mind, now that's something worth holding on to tightly. I hope maybe now you feel that, too.

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(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

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MUST ONE BE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TO BE SAVED?

You have probably either asked or been asked the question "Do you really believe that a person has to be a member of the church of Christ in order to go to heaven?" Whether you were asking or answering, you found that answering the question wasn't the real problem. The real difficulty was in swallowing the answer that was given. The religious world in general cannot imagine that the Bible could answer that question in the affirmative. Part of the problem is in understanding what the church really is.

The Standard

The first thing we must do is agree upon a **standard** of authority to answer the question. We never will come to any agreement until we use the same standard. Thus, our first concern is expressed in the words of Peter who said, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" (John 6: 68). To whom shall we turn for an answer to our question?

We must **NOT** turn to: (1) **The ideas of men.** The philosophy of some man is of no avail in that God said "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55: 8-9). (2) **Our own thinking.** My own human reasoning will not be sufficient for "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14: 12). (3) **Parents and family.** One of the first responses to any suggestion that one must be a member of the church of Christ is that if that is so then that would mean that a mother or grandmother would be lost. Since no one likes to face the fact that a close relative will be lost in hell, he or she rejects Biblical statements in favor of family members. However, the one who wishes to be a disciple of the Lord must love the Lord **more** than father or mother (Matt. 10: 37).

Our standard must be the **word of God.** Peter went on to say "thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6: 68). John suggested that we determine whether a man is speaking truth or error by whether or not what he says agree with what has been revealed unto the apostles (1 Jno. 4: 6). When this life is over we will be judged by the words of Christ (John 12: 48).

A Misconception

When one misunderstands what the church is he has a hard time seeing that it could be essential to salva-

tion. Many think of the church in terms of a **denomination**, rather than the body of the saved.

To refer to the church as a denomination or a group of denominations indicates several things. The word "denomination" suggests the idea of division or fraction. When asked by the bank teller "what denomination" she means what division of money (e. g. ones, fives, tens or twenties). Thus, the concept of denominationalism indicates (1) division is approved, (2) one division is as good as another (e. g. four fives are as good as one twenty and two tens are as good as twenty ones) and (3) there are no wrong choices (i. e. no one is going to condemn you for choosing the two tens instead of the four fives).

The same is true if the church of Christ is a denomination or a group of denominations. That would mean that **(1) all are divided with the approval of God.** Yet, Paul plainly stated that God does not approve of division (1 Cor. 1: 10; Phil. 2: 2; Eph. 4: 4). It would also mean that

(2) one church is as good as another, and (3) that there are no wrong choices (i. e. if one chooses to be a member of one denomination while another chooses another denomination, neither one has done any wrong). Furthermore, it would mean (4) that **the things that distinguish one church from another are of human origin.** If the things that distinguished one church from another were of divine origin, then one church would not be as good as another. Thus, in denominationalism the different names, doctrines and practices are of human origin.

If the Bible teaches that there is one church and that one must be a member of that one church, then the church is not a denomination as many want to believe.

One Church

The Bible could not be clearer on any point than it is on the matter that there is just **one** church. The apostle Paul said "There is one body" (Eph. 4: 4). What is the body? The same writer says that the body is the church (Col. 1: 18; Eph. 1: 22-23). Thus Eph. 4: 4 is saying there is one church! Oh sure, there are many churches like there are many gods and many faiths, but only **ONE** God is true and only **ONE** faith is true and only **ONE** church is true.

Jesus spoke of his church (singular), not churches (Matt. 16: 18). Paul said that all are reconciled in **one body** (Eph. 2: 16). Jesus is the one shepherd having one fold (John 10: 16).

The Church Is The Saved

If the church and those who are saved are one and the same, then obviously one must be a member of that church to be saved. The evidence is great that the church and the saved are one and the same.

1. The saved are added to the church (Acts 2: 47). Those whom the Lord saves are added to the church. Thus, the church is the saved.

2. Christ is the savior of the body (Eph. 5: 23). Remember, that the body is the church. Christ is the savior of the church. Thus, those whom Christ saves are in the church. There is no promise to save anyone out of the church.

3. The church was purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20: 28). If the church is not essential to

salvation, then the blood is **not** necessary either! However, if we are saved by the blood of Christ, then we must be in the church to be purchased or saved. If you purchase a pair of shoes for \$45.00, then any benefit you get out of the \$45.00 will be in the pair of shoes. Likewise, since the church was purchased by the blood of Christ, any benefit we receive from the blood must be in the church.

4. **"Ekklesia" is the Greek word that is translated by the English word "church."** Ekklesia literally means the **called out** (ek — out of; kneo - to call). Those in the church are those who have been called out of darkness into the light (1 Pet. 2: 9; Acts 26: 18), out of the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26: 18) and from sin unto the forgiveness of sins (Acts 26: 18).

5. **The church is the house of God** (1 Tim. 3: 15). A house is a family (e. g. the house of David - Luke 2: 3). The church then is the family of God. To be in the family of God, one must be in the church.

6. **We are saved by the blood of Christ in the one body.** Notice the parallel statements:

Redeemed — In Christ — Through The Blood (Eph. 1:7)

Made Nigh — In Christ — By The Blood (Eph. 2: 13)

Reconciled—In One Body—By the Cross (Eph. 2: 16)

From these passages I learn that we are **saved** (redeemed, made nigh and reconciled) by the **blood** (through the blood and by the cross). But, it is **in Christ** or **in the one body** that we are saved by the blood. One enters into Christ or the one body by being baptized (Rom. 6: 4; 1 Cor. 12: 13).

In view of the above who could deny that one must be a member of the church of Christ to be saved?

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The entire system of Premillennialism hinges on the claim that God aborted his plans to establish the kingdom, because rebellious Jews frustrated divine preparations and prophecies relative to that kingdom. Such a claim not only contradicts the scriptures, but questions the wisdom, prudence, and power of God.

In fact, the scriptures were very emphatic in pointing out in detail how the Jews would reject Christ and his kingdom. Jesus himself knew that he would be rejected when he quoted from Psalms 118: 22 as recorded by Matthew (21: 42, 43). Peter later referred to the same prophetic passage (Acts 4: 11, 12). Isaiah also prophesied of such a rejection (Isa. 53: 3).

The truth is that the Jews would not have rejected Christ had he set up an earthly kingdom, for they tried to force him to become an earthly king (Jno. 6: 15). Jesus resisted their efforts, just as he shall resist similar efforts of the premillennialists to set up an earthly kingdom at some future date. The multitude (Lk. 19: 11), and the disciples also expected an earthly kingdom fashioned after the old Israelite kingdom (Acts 1: 6). Christ's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, and "not of this world" (Jno. 18: 36). Both the weapons and the warfare of Christ's kingdom are spiritual (Eph. 6: 12, 2 Cor. 10: 4). And, it is just as ridiculous to suppose that a carnal battle, falsely described as Armageddon, would have anything whatever to do with Christ's spiritual kingdom.

Any good Bible student knows that God is perfectly capable of handling complicated political situations. At one stroke, God had a future heathen king anointed, along with a king for Israel and a prophet to succeed Elijah (1 Ki. 19: 15-17). At the same time, God was still monitoring the situation in the kingdom of Judah, and had plans for Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The idea that God would allow one small remnant of a rebellious, rejected nation to upset his plans concerning the kingdom is ridiculous indeed. The folly of such a notion is further accentuated by the total destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of its inhabitants in the year A. D. 70. If the Jewish nation were influential enough around the year A. D. 30 to upset God's plans, why did they not influence his plans and prophecies concerning Jerusalem only forty years later?

God's ability to declare "the end from the beginning, "

to cause his counsel to stand and do his pleasure (Isa. 46: 10, 11), has been manifested at times and in ways too numerous to mention. "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God" (Isa. 66: 9). Yet, that is exactly the accusation which the premillennialist makes against God, saying that God was able to bring the kingdom to the birth, but not able to bring it forth.

There is only one way I can account for the rejection of Christ's spiritual kingdom by the Jew of the first century and the premillennialist of the twentieth century — a worldly-minded attitude that cannot discern spiritual things. Brethren likewise need to take heed when they question the sufficiency of the church to perform its mission, thereby questioning the wisdom and prudence of God (Eph. 1: 8).

**WAKE THE WORLD
AND TELL THE
PEOPLE**

Wilson Adams

891 Autumn Valley Lane
Gambrills, MD 21054



ANTIOCH — THE POWER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

In order to study the New Testament church it is imperative that we study New Testament churches. We know about Jerusalem and the potent preaching on Pentecost. We have studied Corinth and seen in detail their triumphs and troubles. Thessalonica, Philippi, Ephesus, and Rome are likewise places about which we know a great deal. But there is another New Testament congregation that deserves our attention yet seldom receives it: Antioch. The place Paul and Barnabus called "home." The place God chose to be His strategic center for the spread of the gospel. The place that brings us face to face with the power-potential of the local church. Antioch. Our study continues...

2. The Antioch church made a commitment to teaching. After witnessing their enthusiastic response to the gospel (Acts 11: 19-21), Barnabus now arrives to encourage, edify and challenge these first generation believers.

And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabus off to Antioch. Then when he had come and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord (11: 22-24).

A Commitment to Teaching Means a Commitment to People

Barnabus. His name meant "son of encouragement" and if ever a name was tailor-made, his was. This servant dedicated his life to lifting up others. From his financial sacrifice (Acts 4: 36-37), to his vote of confidence in one Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9: 26-27), and finally to his willingness to give a young preacher a second chance (Acts 15: 36-39), Barnabus was a giver. And now... he leaves the comfort and security of the Jerusalem church to work with a group of un-known pagan converts. It was a bold move. He knew it would be challenge. He knew there would be those who needed encouraging. He was right.

You don't turn to Jesus Christ from a morally depraved culture with generations of heathenistic tradition without carrying some baggage. The changes in lifestyle demanded by Christ were anything but superficial for

Foy E. Wallace Jr.

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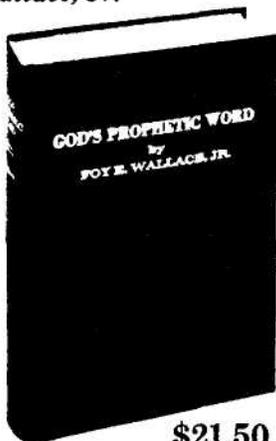
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these early believers (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). It would take a man of patience to work with these people. It would take one who knew the merit of complimenting positive progress as well as pointing out failures and areas demanding change. It required one who, while not wishing to squelch the enthusiasm of new-born believers, could balance the zeal with knowledge and instill within them a quest for continuance (Rom. 10: 2; Acts 11: 23). It would take a preacher who loved people. Barnabus did. He was the right man for the job.

People. Preaching is about people. Barnabus understood what we are prone to overlook. It's easy to view preaching as a mere 9 to 5 desk job that is best accomplished with minimal interruptions. Thus, people problems are often seen not as a part of the preacher's work but, rather, as an inconvenience and interruption to his work. Such is a far cry from the attitude of Jesus (and Barnabus!).

I'm not denying the need for prime-time studying (2 Tim. 2: 15). A preacher who doesn't study and prepare adequately for his lessons has about the same effect on a congregation as cold left-over meatloaf has on a family. It doesn't exactly generate enthusiasm for coming to the dinner table... There has to be a balance. Every preacher needs to learn that mastering the finer points of hermeneutics, restoration history, and Koine-Greek has its place but that place is not to act as a substitute for walking among the people and meeting their needs.

I heard of one preacher who remarked as to how much he enjoyed working where he did because **"I can sit in the study all day long and not be bothered by the brethren."** Can you believe that? Can you hear Jesus saying that? Our Lord's office was in the market place among the people. That's what set Him apart from the religious preachers of His day. That's what caused the common people to love Him. He was one of them. He was approachable. He was real.

Whoever advanced the "it's not good for the preacher to get close to the brethren" notion didn't get it from the example of Jesus (or Barnabus). (I've heard some dumb advice before but that's about the dumbest!) Nothing cancels out a preacher's effectivity any faster than that kind of thinking. We need to go back and study the work of the preacher as it was carried out in the first century. From it we learn two fundamental principles that we must never forget: (1) people are the only reason for preaching, and that (2) no one cares how much we know until they know how much we care!

Barnabus cared. The "son of encouragement" preached a message of encouragement (11: 23). He saw men and women leaving lives of sin and becoming transformed into new creations. He witnessed people trying to cope with the fast-lane lifestyle and seeking to take a stand for the one God in the midst of a contrary culture. They encouraged him. He encouraged them. **"And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord"** (11: 24).

The more I study Antioch the more I see a preacher-congregation relationship the way it ought to be. Often

we preachers miss out on one of the greatest joys of Christianity because we seek to keep the brethren at a distance. That's sad. Paul said of the beloved Philippians — **"For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart... For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus"** (Phil. 1: 7-8). It doesn't happen by accident. It requires sacrifice. It demands time. It takes patience.

I am convinced that there needs to be more said about this business of preaching and getting along with people. Many church-preacher problems cannot be avoided. But some can be. You see, it's not a matter of personality or charisma or a particular style in the pulpit that endears brethren to a man laboring among them but, rather, it is a knowledge based on observable action from his life that tells them that he really loves them. Paul said, **"I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some"** (1 Cor. 9: 22). Paul said, "I adjusted my schedule, went out of my way, and reached out to people... I built bridges instead of barriers." See the Ephesian elders as they wept and embraced the man who had worked so long among them (Acts 20: 36-38). They loved him. He loved them. And... they weren't afraid to show it.

Little things... It's often said that marriages fail not over big things but through the neglect of little things. The same could be said of preacher-church relationships. It's easy to take people for granted. It's easy to maximize faults. It's easy to forget basic courtesy and kindness. Sometimes we can find ourselves so detached that we're unable to "weep" and "rejoice" with our brethren. That's sad. More than that, it points to a serious flaw in our character.

I don't suppose I've done anything more important in my preaching work than a little practice I began a few years ago of sending a personal handwritten note to every member of the congregation (kids too!) at least once a year (usually on their birthday). A note of appreciation for a job well done. A note of admiration for faithfulness and zeal. A note of admonishment and challenge when spiritual things are lacking. "Hey, doesn't that take a lot of time?" You betcha! (And stamps, too!) But in my opinion it's time well invested. Besides... if you haven't stood at the back door after services and had a little five year old come by and grab your neck and give you one of those "moisturized" kisses and say, **"Thank-you brudder Adams for my birthday card..."**—you have yet to learn the meaning of "thrill." Little things.

A commitment to teaching begins with a commitment to and a love for people. A man can be equipped with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and have the God-given truth on any subject and yet fail to be effective. Why? Because he fails to see himself as nothing but a servant among his brethren. Jesus said, **"If any one wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all"** (Mark 9: 35). Jesus lived the principle. Paul practiced it. Barnabus understood it. And I'm... well, I'm working on it. What about you?

PSALMS, HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

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The three synonyms, "*psalms, hymns, spiritual songs*" are each a specific kind of song. The word "*ode*," is a "**generic**" term which is an umbrella over all the **specific** kinds of vocal music.

Only one of these three synonyms, "*psalms, hymns, spiritual songs*" i. e., *psalms*, has any history of vocal music being accompanied by man-made musical instruments. The other two, i. e., **hymns** and **spiritual songs** have through all ages referred to purely vocal music. **Evolution of the Greek Word — Psallo**

In the Classical Age of the Greek Language, *psallo* was used to describe the "pulling of a whisker" or the "plucking of a bow-string." Eventually, this word came to refer to the "twitching or twanging" of the strings of a musical instrument.

By the third century B. C., the Greek Translation of the Old Testament, used the word *psallo* to refer to the singing of songs with instrumental accompaniment, such as had been practiced by David.

Still later, in New Testament times, *psallo* referred to a song that was vocal, and without man-made instrumental accompaniment. Eph. 5: 19 and Col. 3: 16 indicate that the emotions of the worshipper serve as that which accompanies the singing.

Psallo — Verb, "To Sing" — Psalmos — Noun, "A Song"

"*Psalmos*" is the word from which the Book of Psalms, takes its name. Related words include "*Psalter*," referring to all the Psalms as a collection. "*Psalmody*," has to do with the art or practice of singing sacred songs. "*Psalttery*," was an ancient stringed instrument.

"*Psallo*," is the act of singing and in the New Testament, was figuratively accompanied by the 'heart-strings' of the worshipper. Thus, in New Testament assemblies, every Christian was "*psallo-ing*" so to speak. In congregations that digress from the New Testament pattern of worship, the players-on-instruments or special choir-groups, take the place of total congregational worship in song.

Figures of Speech Used in the Bible — By E. W. Bullinger

In writing about the synonyms, "*psalms, hymns, spiritual songs*" Bullinger states:

"Although the first word, *psalmos*, implies musical instruments, it was only in Old Testament worship that these were used: not in the New Testament, nor in the Primitive Church. Basil, Ambrose, and Chrysostom all speak in panegyrics on music, but do

not mention *instrumental* music. Indeed, Clement of Alexandria, forbade the use of flute in the *Agape*, though he permitted the harp. Basil condemns it, and Justin Martyr expressly says that it was not used in the Christian Church.

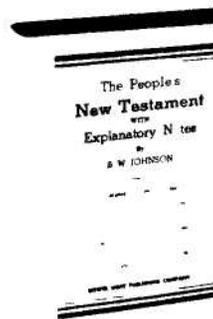
"There is no gift of God which fallen man has not misused, and indeed *diverted*, or rather *perverted* from its original design. The great enemy used it for the destruction of *spiritual* worship, under the guise of aiding it; and few discern the meshes of his marvelously clever snare. (Page 334).

Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words — W. E. Vine

Concerning the word "*kardia*" (heart), Vine writes" "... By an easy transition the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life..." Pages 206-207. From the above quotations, it can be readily demonstrated that the 'instrument' that must accompany our psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, is the mind; the intellect; the emotions of the worshipper. Thus, figuratively, the Christian accompanies his worship in song, with joy in his heart! Nor do we have any Bible authority for substituting man's inventions in place of "the fruit of the lips."

Three verbs are involved in our song-service **speaking, teaching** and **admonishing**. A mechanical instrument of music cannot accomplish any of the three! While man's vocal chords, designed by God, can achieve each and all of the three!

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TAKING THE NEW AGE CHALLENGE SERIOUSLY

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Anything that discredits Jesus Christ, departs from Biblical truth, and admits to no absolutes must be confronted and assailed with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6: 17). Whether it be a written religious dogma invented and advanced by man; a worldly lifestyle; a misinterpretation of Scripture advanced by a brother; a philosophy or worldview; or a social movement — it shouldn't matter to the conscientious child of God. The high things of men that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God and the arguments that accompany those things must be cast down (2 Cor. 10: 1-6).

Today, in the society in which we live; in the circle of associations where we try to raise our children and preach the gospel, there is the burgeoning New Age movement. It is flourishing quickly, influencing young and old alike and making disciples of people from every level of society.

An urgent call to give heed to this danger and cast down these arguments needs to be sounded. For this is a view, an approach to life and a set of premises which discredits Jesus Christ, departs from Biblical truth, and admits to no absolutes!

In preaching and writing against the New Age movement over the past few years, I am often confronted with mild interest, and the incredulous question: "IS THIS REALLY A BIG DEAL? This is somewhat interesting, and it certainly isn't biblical. But do we need to preach and warn people about it?" Curiously, this inquiry often comes from gospel preachers who preach multiple — series type sermons against Calvinism, the Social Gospel, Situation Ethics, etc., but cannot see the need to deal with something equally false and perhaps more influential in the "Yuppie" segment of the population.

Here is a movement (an outlook, set of premises and practices being widely promoted) which is corrupting and subtle, with a non-religious billing, which pleads for some of the ancient errors and misdeeds Jehovah entreated the Israelites to refrain from (Isa. 2: 6; 8: 19, 20). The New Age movement stands on a course away from the Word of God, which says that IT IS NOW IN MAN THAT WALKETH TO DIRECT HIS OWN STEPS (Jer. 10: 23). It denies the basic distinction between humanity and deity; it places more value on crystals, reincarnation and visualization than faith, repentance and baptism. And the New Age gurus speak of Christ, Buddha and Edgar Cayce with the same esteem! So here is something that's happening right now, that discredits Jesus Christ, departs from Biblical truth, and admits to

no absolutes. Let every Christian "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them," (Eph. 5: 11).

What are the evidences of this widespread influence? What's going on in America that points to the reception and popularity of the New Age movement? Please take these ten evidences into account:

1. **THE GROWTH OF BUDDHISM.** There are now more than "1,000 Buddhist organizations in the United States," and "more than 4 million Buddhists in this country." This religion is rapidly discarding its cult image and gaining more respectability among "middle class" America. And "they believe there is no higher being than oneself..." (Houston Chronicle, Nov. 26, 1988, page #2E).

2. **CELEBRITY CREDIBILITY.** Early in 1987, ABC carried a mini-series called "Out On A Limb," starring Shirley MacLaine. It was an extended "plug" for New Age thinking; a docu-drama of her personal religious quest that led her to discover her divinity. Reincarnation is held by such notables as John Denver, Glenn Ford, Loretta Lynn and Sylvester Stallone. In Willie Nelson's autobiography, he tells of an unpleasant experience he had with a Baptist minister, that prodded him toward New Age beliefs. He preaches that "every atom in your body was once in a star, that life is continuous and nothing dies, and that the law of Karma... is as real as electromagnetism..." (Houston Chronicle, Nov. 3, 1988, page 2D).

3. **CORPORATE RECOGNITION.** "In July 1986, representatives of some of the nations largest corporations, including IBM, AT&T and General Motors, met to discuss how metaphysics, the occult and Hindu mysticism might help executives compete in the world market." (UNDERSTANDING THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT, by Russell Chandler, p. #148). Some of the young executives in our local churches are sent to seminars and workshops where meditation, New Age Capitalism and self-discovery sessions are common; and all of this under a non-religious billing!

4. **ENTERTAINMENT ATTENTION.** "Such films as CLOCKWORK ORANGE, ROSEMARYS BABY, THE EXORCIST, 2001, DR. STRANGELOVE, COCOON, and ANGEL HEART convey New Age themes and occultism," (UNDERSTANDING THE NEW AGE, Chandler, p. #22). Ted Turner says that America needs to elect a New Age president, if it is to survive through the year 2000 (Cited in Ronald Enroth, "The New Age Movement," Fundamentalist Journal, Feb. 1988, p. #49).

5. **FROM OUTER SPACE TO INNER SPACE!** Edgar D. Mitchell (Apollo 14 astronaut) established THE INSTITUTE OF NOETIC SCIENCES, in Sausalito, California, to study PSI, which means "phenomena that escape traditional scientific definitions," including telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis.

6. **THE U. S. ARMY** commissioned a West Coast firm to "explore the military potential of meditation and extrasensory perception," (TIME, Dec. 7, 1987, p. #63).

7. **STATISTICS** (even with wide margins of error granted) indicate a growing interest in eastern relig-

ions, mysticism and other subjects and practices with New Age connections. According to an opinion research organization in Menlo Park, California, SRI International, about half of American adults (47%) now believe they have been in contact with someone who has died—"up from 27% in a previous national survey eleven years ago," (Chandler, p. #20). According to a 1982 Gallup Poll, 23% of Americans believes in reincarnation. Many believe this has increased since '82. As far back as 1978, a Gallup Poll indicated ten million Americans engaged in some aspect of Eastern mysticism.

8. THE PUBLIC HAS GROWTH MORE TOLERANT of psychic beliefs and practices. "... the nation's courts have increasingly called on psychics to use their reputed powers to weed out lying witnesses, pinpoint suspects, and locate missing bodies," (Chandler, p. #24).

9. IN RELIGION, some of the radio and television preachers reflect New Age influence in their doctrines. Kenneth Copeland says, "You don't have a God living in you; you are one," (Tape, "The Force Of Love," BCC-56). Robert Schuller, Charles Capps and Yong-gi Cho all teach doctrines which have connections to mysticism and Shamanism (contacting the spirit world through visualization and meditation methods, to gain super-natural powers, knowledge and inner healing).

10. IN EDUCATION, Dr. Beverly Galyean received a federal grant to use her Eastern religious methods in the Los Angeles Public Schools. She has said: "Once we begin to see that we are all God, that we all have the attributes of God, then I think the whole purpose of human life is to reown this Godlikeness within us... my whole view is very much based on that idea," (SCP Journal, Winter/1981, 82, p. #29).

Conclusion:

What religion really amounts to can be expressed in three questions: WHAT IS MAN? WHAT IS GOD? And HOW CAN MAN ENTER INTO FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD? The New Age movement says, "Man is god," and it is through some mystical, esoteric means (or costly seminar!) that you can look inside yourself, discover your divine essence, then join with other enlightened ones in the dawning of a New Age.

Let us tell everyone we can, THIS IS NOT GOD'S WAY! The truth to which we are committed is captured by the words of Jesus, when He said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jno. 14: 6).

The New Age movement — especially to those over 40—may seem like a big package of nonsense that grew out of the 60's counterculture. It may be easy for those in the older generation to dismiss the whole thing. But bring up some of these ideas and New Age premises with a group of High School students, and see what the response is? Discuss these things with some young couples, and see if they give it any credibility.

Let us take every challenge against truth seriously. For, anything that discredits Jesus Christ, departs from Biblical truth, and admits to no absolutes must be confronted and assailed by the sword of the Spirit.

CAN'T MAKE IT ON ONE INCOME

**John R. Gibson
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In the March issues of **Searching the Scriptures** in both 1987 and 1988, Connie W. Adams had some excellent comments on the ever increasing problem of finding that mother is not at home. If you have not read those articles and have access to back issues I would recommend that you take the time to go back and read them. But even more than that I would recommend that you take your Bible and read Eph. 5: 22-33; Col. 3: 18f; 1 Tim. 5: 9-14; Titus 2: 3-5 and 1 Pet. 3: 1-7. Rather than allowing the thinking of this ungodly age to completely shape our views and values regarding marriage we need to make certain that God's word is the final word when it comes to home and family.

In this article I want to briefly examine the most common argument I hear being made for women not being "homemakers" who stay home to "manage the house." (Titus 2: 5; 1 Tim. 5: 14 NKJV) While a few sisters in Christ may admit that they have gone to work in order to find fulfillment, most make the claim that they would stay at home if they could. I frequently hear it said that "I would love to stay home with my children, but we just can't make it on one income." Is it really true that in the 1980s it has become impossible to live on one income? Have we reached a point where families with only one income cannot survive? Though there can be little doubt but that the feminist movement has wielded a tremendous influence on the thinking of Christians, it just may be that it is more the influence of materialism than feminism shaping our thinking regarding working women. Too many of us see it as impossible to make it on one income because we have become so materialistic in our thinking. Consider the following:

Are two incomes necessary to provide shelter from the elements? Two incomes are usually not necessary to provide adequate shelter, but a 2000 square foot house with 3 bathrooms in the "right neighborhood" often does require an extra income.

Do most families need a second income just to clothe their children? Not if they are content to outfit the children with something less than the most prestigious of labels. However, if one's children must wear the same brands as the children of the doctor down the street two incomes may become necessary.

Can adequate nourishment and nutrition be provided for the family with only one income? It all depends. Is the mother willing to take the time to clip coupons and comparison shop or does she insist on eating out several times a week? One may not eat a lot of steak and trips to Shoney's may be rare, but the honest person must admit

that one income will generally be sufficient to feed a family.

We could go on and talk about a host of other things like VCRs and more cars than licensed drivers, but I think that you can see the point. In the beginning I listed some verses for consideration, at this point I would like to suggest a few more for you. Please read Lk. 12: 23, 1 Tim. 6: 6-10 and Heb. 13: 5f. Brethren who believe that life's needs are met when food and clothing are taken care of will rarely be heard to say that they "just can't make it on one income."

I am not trying to suggest that everyone can live on one income, but I am strongly suggesting that most who speak of being **unable** to make it are in reality **unwilling** to say "having food and clothing, with these we shall be content."

CHURCHES COOPERATING IN BENEVOLENCE: GOD'S PLAN WILL WORK!

**Ron Halbrook
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West Columbia, TX 77486**

It has been well said that God's plan will work if we will work God's plan. In the New Testament, God created local churches without additional layers of organization, without earthly headquarters, and without any kind of centralized agency to coordinate the work of the churches. Every church in every city selected local leaders called by several names to indicate their leadership function: elders or presbyters, bishops or overseers, and pastors or shepherds (Acts 14: 23, 20: 17, 28; Tit. 1: 5, 7). These terms do not designate separate offices but all refer to the same function of guiding a local church in its God-given work. No church was led by a single pastor, bishop, or elder, but two or more were always chosen. They were chosen according to strict qualifications given in the Bible (Tit. 1: 5-9; 1 Tim. 3). Special servants or deacons were also selected in each local church.

Paul wrote a letter "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1: 1). Each church was independent and autonomous with its own elders leading, deacons serving, and other saints cooperating in the work and worship appointed by God for His people. There were no human organizations, bureaus, societies, archbishops, popes, presidents, councils, conventions, synods, presbyteries, zones, districts, circuits, or institutional ties of any kind between the churches or over them. No such organizational structures were authorized by Christ. All such councils and institutions impugn the perfection of God's plan for the local church and transgress the clear teaching of Christ. True churches of Christ follow the teaching of Christ (Rom. 16: 16; 2 Jn. 9-11).

Each local church is to do its own work of proclaim-

ing the gospel, helping Christians to grow spiritually, and supplying the emergency needs of destitute saints (1 Tim. 3: 15; 5: 16; 1 Cor. 14: 26). God's plan will work in every phase of the church's mission, including benevolence. **GOD HAS A PLAN FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH TO RAISE FUNDS FOR ITS BENEVOLENT WORK** "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. 16: 1-2). Each Christian gives according to his own ability and his own purpose of heart (Acts 11: 29; 2 Cor. 9: 7). God authorized no high pressure appeals, no tithes, no sales or suppers, no begging money from the unconverted world, and no collections on days other than the first day of the week. God's plan will work!

GOD'S PLAN TEACHES THE LOCAL CHURCH TO HELP DESTITUTE SAINTS. From its beginning, the church was taught to supply the emergency needs of destitute saints. The New Testament church did not extend benevolent aid to the unconverted world. This work was limited to "all that believed," "the number of the disciples," "the brethren," or "the saints" (Acts 2: 44; 6: 1; 11: 29; Rom. 15: 25). Christians who were lazy, unfaithful, or fallen back into sin were not helped from the treasury of the church (2 Thes. 3: 10; Ja. 5: 19-20). Faithful Christian widows who were destitute of all other means of support could be enrolled for regular benevolent care under certain conditions (1 Tim. 5: 4-16).

Christians on a personal, individual, daily basis are to "do good unto all men," but God did not plan the church as a general welfare agency to all the needy of the world (Gal. 6: 10). We must work God's plan, not change it!

WHEN CHURCHES ARE UNABLE TO CARE FOR THEIR OWN NEEDY, GOD HAS A PLAN FOR OTHER CHURCHES TO HELP. During a great famine, the disciples at Antioch sent "relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea... sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 1: 27-30). The church at Antioch chose its own messengers to carry its own funds to the elders where the needy saints lived. Several years later the saints of Jerusalem suffered an extended period of deep poverty. Many churches in other places raised their own funds, chose their own messengers, and sent the help needed so desperately (1 Cor. 16: 1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9; Rom. 15: 25-32).

No local church acted as the planning, centralizing, or coordinating agency for other churches and no other form of denominational machinery was created. Churches cooperated by sharing information and by each one sending its own funds to the needy churches. God's plan worked perfectly well!

CAN GOD'S PLAN WORK TODAY? Or, if local churches of Christ are to cooperate in benevolence today, must we pool and centralize our funds under "sponsoring" churches, man-made boards, and denominational machinery? After Hurricane Gilbert hit Jamaica and Mexico in mid-September 1988, the White's Ferry Road Church of Christ in West Monroe, LA set itself up as a centralized agency to collect funds from hundreds and thousands of churches in order to carry out relief work for them. The Richland Hills church in Ft. Worth and the Memorial Dr.

church in Houston, TX did the same thing. This violates God's plan for independent and autonomous churches to do their own work.

Many churches of Christ have followed God's plan by sharing information and sending messengers with help for brethren who suffered from the hurricane. The church of Christ in West Columbia, TX sent aid as did churches in Clute, Southern Oaks in Lake Jackson, North Freeport in Freeport, Herman St. in Humble, College Park in Deer Park, Park View and Southside in Pasadena, and others. None of the relief disappeared into the dark hole of institutional bureaucracy, but we received a direct report from our messengers and grateful letters from the brethren we helped. YES, GOD'S PLAN FOR CHURCHES TO COOPERATE IN BENEVOLENCE WILL WORK, IF ONLY WE WILL WORK GOD'S PLAN!

DENOMINATIONALISM

Norman E. Sewell
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In the past year we all saw and heard or read about the things happening to Jimmy Swaggert. And there is no doubt that he sinned for he confessed it before his whole television audience. But Jimmy Swaggert's situation is not unique for other preachers in the public eye have sinned before him, and still others will sin. However, in the process of the news reports regarding Jimmy Swaggert and Jim Bakker we have been given a real view of denominationalism. I fear that sometimes I fail to teach as much about the nature of the Lord's church as I should; to show its organization and how different it is from the denominational world. But this situation is just too good to miss, for we can easily show the Lord's church as different from the denominational system.

First of all, what is a denomination? The word is sometimes used to designate a certain class or society of people who are called by the same name. But denominationalism is much more than just the fact that people wear a certain name. It is clear that those who followed Jesus in the New Testament wore the name "Christian," but they were not a part of any denomination. They were a part of the church that you read about in the New Testament, the church which belongs to Christ. The system we all saw in the news reports regarding Jimmy Swaggert is a denomination, because it is a class or society of people who all wear the same name, subscribe to doctrines and submit to an organization different from that in the Bible.

When it was first learned that Jimmy Swaggert had sinned, the matter was taken up by a group of men whose area of responsibility was the state of Louisiana.

And it appears that these men had the right (according to their by-laws) to suggest some kind of discipline for Jimmy Swaggert, or for any person who preaches for or is a member of one of their churches. Then, their recommendation was sent to Springfield, Missouri to the world headquarters of the Assemblies of God where the executive council was given the job of reviewing the situation, and deciding upon the recommendation of the Louisiana council. The executive council in Springfield disagreed with the Louisiana council and suggested much more severe penalties for Mr. Swaggert. They decided that Jimmy Swaggert should not be allowed to preach in one of their churches for at least one year. (Louisiana recommended three months), and that he be under probation for two years while undergoing rehabilitation. Where would we go in the Bible to find such penalties for sin? Who has the right to decide on such penalties and to enforce them? The truth is that in a denomination those who are in positions of power can do just about whatever they want because their authority, either to exist, or to function, does not come from the Bible but from their Constitution and By-laws. And apparently decisions made by their executive council and their superintendent are final and binding on the whole denomination.

Contrast all of this with the system so clearly revealed in the New Testament. The church which belongs to Christ has only one head, and that is Jesus. Paul wrote of this in his letter to the Ephesians when he wrote of God raising Jesus from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand, **"far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all"** (Eph. 1: 20-23). Jesus is the one who heads His church, and the rules He set in place are those given by the Father Himself. In a denomination, a man or a group of men head the denomination, with the power to set policy and make rules, even rules different from the Bible.

In denominationalism, the unit of the denomination is the local congregation. But in the Lord's church the unit is the individual Christian. This is made clear by Jesus in John chapter 15. Jesus said: **"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned"** (v. 5-6). It is not denominations, or even local churches themselves that are the individual units of the church, but Christians, men and women who abide in Christ.

Further, in the Lord's church the only kind of organization found is on the local congregational level. There is no national or international, or even state headquarters. But on the level of the local church Jesus did give some rules. After Paul and Barnabas had returned from their first preaching tour they went back through the

cities where they had preached, **"confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed"** (Acts 14: 22-23). **Every church where men were qualified was to have its own elders or bishops.** And these men were limited to that church. Paul told the elders from Ephesus to **"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood"** (Acts 20: 28). The "flock" over which they had been appointed was in Ephesus. This is the same as the language used by Peter when he wrote that the elders should **"feed the flock which is among you"** (I Pet. 5: 2).

View again the denominational system where there is an executive council able to make decisions about sin within a local church somewhere, and able to choose punishments not found in the word of God. But the Bible would place such responsibility in the hands of local elders, and even then they could not require something different from what God has already said about forgiveness of sins. When we begin to apply human wisdom and human rules to religious things we soon find that we are not the church found in the New Testament, but a full grown human denomination. And don't suppose that such cannot happen to us.

To be sure, many of those men and women, perhaps all of them, who make up the Assemblies of God are sincere people. And I don't mean to single them out from any of the other denominations, for all of them are of

men. But in any such system, when error is practiced it affects the whole of the denomination. But in the system of Christ, when one man or even one local church goes into sin, the rest of the Lord's people are not necessarily affected by it. And when some of our brethren begin to set one group of elders over more than one local church, or begin to function through the "sponsoring church" arrangement, we have the beginnings of the same denominationalism that we have seen so clearly in the news reports.

Let's shout out the news to all of the world who will listen that the church of our Lord is not a denomination and is different from denominations. We are not just a better church, or a better denomination; we are followers of Jesus, and the church that belongs to Him, and they can be too.

Porter Sermon Outlines

By W. Curtis Porter

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PAUL WILLIAMS, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa — Three were baptized in the work here while we were in the U. S. A. from July 28-October 26. Also, during that time, one young man was withdrawn from. Brethren in places we visited in the States made it possible to purchase a computer with all necessary equipment. This will enable me to put out quality tracts, reports, correspondence courses, and our teaching paper "Words of Life." My heartfelt thanks to all of you, and my prayer is that the use we make of this equipment will justify the expense.

BROTHER KELLY ELLIS GOES HOME

Brother Kelly Ellis ceased his journey among men on December 2, 1988, in an extended care facility in Stanford, KY. Kelly was born Sept. 3, 1913 to Charles Lee (April 18, 1874-June 6, 1960) and Lillie Bell (Oct. 22, 1874-April 19, 1956) Ellis. His parents were godly and righteous. They worshipped at the Sycamore church in Boyle County all their lives. Sycamore church was founded in 1840, and continues a thriving congregation to this day. Brother Charles Ellis, baptized in 1897, was a long time gospel preacher; he set before Kelly the

examples for life, and encouraged him to practice the truth. He saw in his father the same toils and sacrifices for the gospel which he himself made many times.

Kelly's wife, Claudia, preceded him in death just over a year. His way was more difficult after her passing, but he continued to serve in the Danville church and to preach in other places. He had preached the gospel nearly forty-five years. His home was in Danville during all this time. Through these years he taught in the school systems there, and was a bookkeeper for a local Ford Motor Agency. He would preach in an average of about 15 meetings annually. For many years, in later life, he served as an elder in the Danville church.

Perhaps, there has not been a man in the church in central Kentucky since the days of McGarvey who has had the wide respect and influence in the churches as Kelly Ellis. In most cases, preachers come into a city, stay short time and then leave. Kelly came to Danville and stayed. Though small in physical stature, he was a giant in spiritual matters and mental powers.

Kelly is survived by two daughters: Mrs. Dickie (Sue) Cooper of Stanford, KY, and Mrs. Mike (Betsy) Meadows, Cleveland, OH, and

several grandchildren. One brother and one sister also survive.

Funeral services were conducted Sunday afternoon at 2:00 from the Preston-Pruitt Funeral Home, Danville, by Earl E. Robertson and Steve Wolfgang. Burial was beside his beloved Claudia in the Buffalo Springs Cemetery, Stanford, Kentucky. — Earl E. Robertson, 514 S. Green St., Glasgow, KY 42141

STEVE WALLACE, P. O. Box 7257, APO NY 09012—There are now two more churches in West Germany, one in Wuerzburg, the other in Stuttgart. For information on the church in Wuerzburg, please write: Russell Roberts, Frankenstr. 17, 8702 Eisingen, W. Germany. For information on the church in Stuttgart: Robert Manaugh, Blanken-steinstr. 17/1, 7141 Murr, W. Germany. Also the church that used to meet in Moerfeldon is now meeting in Gustavsburg near Mainz. For information on this church write: Greg Engel, Det. 12, 7 WS, Finthen AAF, GE, APO NY 09185. Feel free to contact this writer at the above address for any help I can give about the work in Germany.

CIRILO B. SUMABAL, Baybay, Leyte, Republic of the Philippines — Leyte Province is composed of 65 municipalities with a population of 3,000,000. The third largest city is Baybay where a congregation was started in 1977. Alberto D. Vivero is the preacher there. In 1978 a church was established in Barrio Ampihanon, 20 kilometers north-east of Baybay by the writer. In September, 1988 another work was established about 16 kilometers from Baybay. The writer, Seraphin O. Petallar and Ben Pitogo worked as a team. 11 obeyed the gospel. Now relatives of those saved are interested and studying.

Ten days later we moved to the town of Hilongos, Leyte, 53 kilometers south of Baybay, a town of 125,000 which was 100% Roman Catholic. Four families of professionals were converted and were joined by a brother from Pagadian City who had been unfaithful for 10 years. So, now there is a small congregation in that town. They are meeting in what was once the office for Philippine Air Lines.

TOM MOODY of South End church in Louisville, KY and **GERRY SANDUSKY** of Madison, Indiana, left on January 9 for six weeks of work in India. They were there last year for a similar period. These men, along with John Humphries, Jerry Parks, Bill Beasley and others, have done outstanding work there in training Indian preachers to work among their own people.

PREACHERS NEEDED

MERRITT ISLAND, FLORIDA: Small congregation with great potential is searching for a full time preacher. We can provide a nice house, 3 bedroom - 2 bath, and some salary. If interested please contact Jim Winton (407) 452-4762 or Cloyce D. Walden (407) 636-8255 or 636-4361. Our mailing address is: Merritt Island Church of Christ, P. O. Box 540591, Merritt Island, FL 32954

MT. WASHINGTON, KENTUCKY — We are in need of a faithful gospel preacher. We are 55-60 in attendance and can provide partial support, depending on the need of the person. We are located just outside Louisville, KY. We would like a mature man who might be elder material with strong personal work skills. You may contact Louis Miller (502) 538-7934 or Darrel Swift (502) 538-7182.

MT. STERLING, KENTUCKY — We are in need of a full time preacher for the Oak Hill church, located about five miles from Mt. Sterling. Attendance runs between 35-40. At the present time we can provide \$1200 a month in financial support. For more information contact: Arnold Smith, 604 Brentwood Dr., Mt. Sterling, KY 40353 (606) 498-1375, or Russell Ginter, Rt. 3, Mt. Sterling, KY 40353 (606) 498-3811.



WORSHIPPING THE LESSER GOD

You see it in many places over the country. On Sunday morning most of the audience arrives looking their very best. They appear to

be a people who have come to a special occasion which caused them to present themselves as respectfully as possible. But then, the same people (minus a few) come back that night looking as if the track meet just ended, or they just finished a softball game or tennis match. Why the difference? It put me to wondering if some suppose they are worshipping a lesser God on Sunday night. Now, don't get bent out of shape. Just think about it, that's all I ask.

SPEAKING A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE

At the Nashville meeting in December, one of the institutional preachers said of the non-institutional speakers "I don't understand what you fellows are talking about, we don't speak the same language." He was right. As brethren drift farther from the truth, their vocabulary changes. Every apostasy has demonstrated that. Titus was told to use "sound speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2: 7-8). When men make the change from gospel preachers to theologians, their speech is sprinkled with expressions garnered from more time spent in reading the philosophical and speculative musings of men than in study of the text of scripture. "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2: 1).

SUPPORTING GOSPEL MEETINGS

It is not unusual, when preaching in Canada, to have brethren come from 200-300 miles away to attend the meeting, some will make that trip two or three times during a week of gospel preaching. That happens a few places in this country, but not many. There are several metropolitan areas where there are a good number of congregations and where some of the ablest preachers of our time can be heard most any night from early spring to late fall. Yet, in many places, there are very few who will come from other congregations to encourage, to learn and to just be with other Christians. Our children need to know other young people from godly homes. They need to be exposed to the preaching of good men. But now, we have band, scouting, ball games, little league, camps, and you name it. Load up with the family and drive across town, or 40 miles away, to attend a gospel meeting? Don't be silly! We have no time for that stuff? Did somebody say something about confused values?

SWIFT PUNISHMENT

In a time when a murderer can take nine or ten years to exhaust all the legal ploys available, so that people have forgotten the horror of what he did, and the press has made a folk hero out of him, it would be good for presidents, governors, judges and lawyers to read what Ezra the scribe said: "And whosoever will not do the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment" (Ezra 7: 26).

"DON'T WEAR FUR"

Fur is expensive, and for that reason, everyone cannot afford to wear it. But there is a movement under way now to discourage the wearing of fur because it will cost the life of an animal. To be deliberately cruel to animals is one thing. But to recognize that God made the animal creation for the use and blessing of man is not cruelty to animals. The Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed "Adam and Eve" (Gen. 3: 21). When will we hear activists admonishing people not to eat fish, or chicken, or pork or beef? Plants are also living things. Shall we ban the slaying of them, too? This whole silly business is the outcropping of evolutionary philosophy which reduces man to the level of the beast. God made man of a higher order and gave him dominion over the animal kingdom (Gen. 1: 28). Interestingly, some of the same activists concerned about the saving of the life of furry animals, are also loudmouthed advocates of abortion on demand. Save the chinchilla, but kill the human babies! What a crazy world!

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	225
RESTORATIONS	48

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)