

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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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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The Heart and Lip Service

The piercing question of Paul in Galatians 4: 16 is in order: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Why do we foolishly and carelessly allow ourselves to be carried away from the truth in our daily lives? Why do we talk about doing better, and promise both ourselves and the brethren that we will repent of indifference and get to work in the kingdom of Christ, but never make the change? Why do we hear more and more brethren express alarm because they are not able to pray and to study the word of God as they once did?

The answers to these questions may be found in our own hearts where our real goals and desires reside. An individual needs to be urged to do more serious soul searching with special emphasis on his spiritual and moral concepts. We need to really "Examine your-selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (1 Cor. 13: 5).

Jesus told the Pharisees of their hypocrisy and referred to the prophecy of Esaias, which he applied to them in Matthew 15: 8, 9: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15: 8, 9). Of course, they were offended after they heard this (vs. 12), but Jesus

said to his disciples: "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (verse 14).

One could say, "Look what we are doing, we draw nigh unto God with our singing, praying and preaching the word, and in addition, we praise and honor God with our lips and promise to serve Him. What more could one ask?" Every word of this could have been said by those hypocritical Pharisees to whom Christ spoke. The problem was not that they did not give vocal; praise and lip service, but the real and only problem was that the heart was far away, and in fact not involved at all in their professed praise to God.

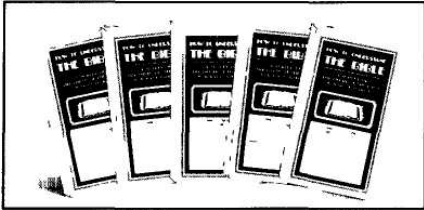
I could follow the typical line of many prayers which we hear today: "Father, we thank thee for this wonderful opportunity to meet here and worship thee in spirit and truth, " when in fact I could care less whether I am present upon the occasion or not. And the "wonderful opportunity to meet here" is really a painful burden I wish I could avoid, and I do doge the "opportunity" every time I can. I could also sing loud the words of the song: "My Jesus, if ever I loved thee, tis now, " and not give a single thought to Jesus, love, or time. This lip praise and verbal honor is the cold, lifeless, formalism that now enshrouds churches all across the land. Because the lifeless body does nothing more than lip praise and promise, the commandments of men are brought into play to try to pump some life or activity into an otherwise cold, dead body of people.

Back to some of the questions at the beginning of this article which we should be asking ourselves. We must realize that without heart action, the lip and hand service is nothing. While all responsible people have the capacity to see, hear, and understand with their hearts, by comparison, not many of them use the heart in praising God. The heart becomes dull of hearing, gross and calloused so that what is seen and heard does not effect any change in the thinking, believing, and obeying from the heart.

The heart hardened by the practice of sin explains why the preaching of the gospel in the most persuasive manner produces little more than blank stares, vague promises, and a few attempts at lip service. We must bring heart worship to God if we expect it to be accepted.

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"QUOTE

"Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.

—John F. Kennedy

UNQUOTE"

Editorial

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At The Beginning

When Peter recounted the events at the house of Cornelius before his Jewish brethren, he said "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11: 15). This caused Peter to remember the words of Jesus who taught the apostles that John baptized with water "but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (v. 16). Since there was the same outpouring of the Spirit when the gospel began with the Gentiles that had occurred at the beginning of the gospel with the Jews, Peter concluded that he should not withstand God and the Jewish brethren concluded "Then hath God granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life" (vv. 17-18).

Pentecost, when the Spirit fell upon the apostles, empowering them to speak with other tongues and proclaim the gospel of salvation, was indeed the beginning. The events of that day of Pentecost reported in Acts 2 were the hub of the Bible. Prior to that day, all sacred history pointed to it. When it was done, the sacred writers and inspired preachers would always look back to it as "the beginning."

God's Eternal Purpose

The momentous events of that day brought to reality the plan of God which he purposed in his mind before the world began (Eph. 3: 9-11). This was the plan God had chosen and predetermined "according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1: 4-5). What occurred was neither accidental nor incidental. The whole course of human history moved steadily toward that day.

Patriarchs and Prophets

What God purposed in his own mind for the salvation of the human family was announced first to the patriarchs. The seed of woman would come to bruise Satan's head (Gen. 3: 15). The seed of Abraham would come to "bless all nations" (Gen. 12: 1-3). The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49: 10).

What was announced dimly to the patriarchs was enlarged upon by the prophets. Nathan announced to David who was disappointed that he would not be permitted to build the temple, "I will set up thy seed after thee... and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7: 12-13). David spoke of

the "day of his power" when his seed would sit at the right hand of God and rule in the midst of his enemies, where he would be priest while he ruled (Psa. 110: 1-4). Isaiah foresaw the establishment of God's government unto which all nations would flow, "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2: 2-3). Daniel prophesied of four great kingdoms, the fourth being the Roman Empire and declared "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2: 44). He further foretold the ascension of Christ when he saw visions in the night, "And behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given unto him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7: 13-14).

When Peter began to speak on that Pentecost day, he said "This is that spoken of by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2: 16) and followed by identifying the events of the day with what David had spoken prophetically (vv. 25-31).

The Preparatory Work of John

John the baptizer was the voice of one crying in the wilderness "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Mt. 3: 1-3). John was not "that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (Jno. 1: 8). John promised "He shall baptize with the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 3: 11).

The Preliminary Work of Christ

"After that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mk. 1: 14-15). He promised that his kingdom would come in the lifetime of some who heard his voice and that it would come "with power" (Mk. 9: 1). He said just before ascending that "ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1: 8).

The Beginning

When that first Pentecost after Jesus arose from the dead and ascended to his Father did, indeed, come, the stage was set for the divine plan of the ages to be set in motion. Jerusalem was the right place. The anticipated power of the Holy Spirit came upon these apostles "as a rushing mighty wind" (Acts 2: 2). They were "all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (v. 4). As Peter lifted up his voice, along with the eleven others, there was the beginning of the work of that gospel which Jesus said they should preach in all the world. They were not to begin this work until the "promise of the Father" came upon them as they "tarried at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24: 47-49).

Here was the beginning of the work of human redemption which would bruise Satan's head, bless all nations through the seed of Abraham, set in motion the "day of his power" establish the kingdom, and set the captives free as they turned to that truth which alone can make men free.

Pentecost, then, was the beginning of the gospel age,

the inauguration of the new covenant (Heb. 8: 8) now that the testator had died (Heb. 9: 15-17). Here was the beginning of the church. From this day forward "the Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved" (Acts 2: 47). Any church which began at any other time, place or under other circumstances than these, cannot claim to be the Lord's. Here was the beginning of gospel preaching. Here was the announcement of the resurrection, coronation, and blessed reign of him who is at the right hand of God, exalted (Acts 2: 33) and who now is declared to be "both Lord and Christ" (v. 36). Here for the first time, heart-stricken sinners were told to "repent and be baptized... for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (v. 38). Assurance was given that this promise was not only to them and to their children, but those afar off (Gentiles).

Gentiles — Why that's where we came in, wasn't it? When Peter defended his work among the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, he said "the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us AT THE BEGINNING." So, you see, without understanding the significance of what took place on that Pentecost day, we are at a loss to understand the rest of the Bible. The patriarchy, the law, the prophets, John, the preaching and miracles of Christ — all these pointed to Pentecost. The conversions in the book of Acts, the instructions in the epistles and the reassurances of the book of Revelation cannot fully be appreciated without understanding what took place "at the beginning."

It is precisely at this point that the whole denominational world stumbles. Without a clear understanding of this, one cannot rightly divide the covenants. They do not know when one law ended and another began. They do not know nor preach what the apostles preached on Pentecost and from that day forward. Theirs is "another gospel." They understand neither the universal nor the local body of the saved. Unless gospel preachers periodically call their hearers back to what happened "at the beginning" we shall lose our sense of identity and destiny. Have you heard much preaching lately on what happened "at the beginning"?

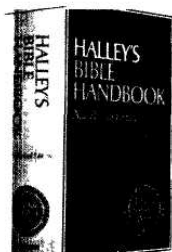
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SINCERE WORDS
 "The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth (Ecc. 12:10)."



Dick Blackford
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 Tuckerman, Arkansas 72473

A Nation Flounders

The irony is overwhelming and it is cause for sorrow to watch a nation as it struggles and flounders to solve the AIDS crisis without teaching morality. The country has been blindfolded, bound, gagged, and had its hands tied by censoring itself against teaching morality. This has been done by those who have no morals and want a new world order. It is done under the guise that the nation would be violating its own constitution which says "government shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion." It does no good to point out that the framers of the Constitution were seeking to avoid establishing an official state church (as had been the case in England). These perverse ones act as though the Constitution requires hostility toward belief in a Creator, the Bible and its standard of morality. But they are liars.

There is a difference between freedom and a "free-for-all." Freedoms have their limitations. A "free-for-all" does not. The late Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "freedom of speech does not grant one the right to holler 'Fire!' in a crowded theater" (1919). Governments have the right to make laws which are in the best interest of its citizens, and often have.

As the problem of AIDS increases, especially among the young, more and more are abandoning the call for "safe sex" and are calling for abstinence. It is too late for thousands, but on what basis? **On the harm that is caused to others in society.** That puts us back to advocating morality, the very thing the humanists can't stand.

Where are the advocates of "free love" who were so vocal in the 60's, 70's, and 80's? Those who interpreted freedom to mean a "free-for-all" in every sort of indulgence? Those who defended obscenity, pornography and what goes on between "consenting adults?" These were the humanists who argued "no restrictions" and gained the upper hand in the media, entertainment, and positions of authority. They were the ones who mocked the Bible and morality and censored them from the school-room while replacing them with the animalistic doctrine of organic evolution, sex education (minus morality), and values "clarification."

The nation's problems have grown in proportion to

the success of the humanists and their front organizations. Their defense of immorality and success in getting laws against sodomy and adultery struck down was on the basis that what goes on between consenting adults is a "victimless crime." What they said was "personal and private between consenting adults" has become extremely public and a social scourge to the life and soul of man. Many of these were highly educated but not perceptive at all about the future. They lived for the "here and now." Wisdom had departed from the "wise." How wrong they were! They now struggle to patch up the mess their philosophy has made without teaching morality! They are walking an impossible tight rope. It is a mixed up world.

The advocates of filth have tried to present themselves as "angels of light" (2 Cor. 11: 13-15) by avoiding the uncomplimentary and unfavorable name, "atheists." These pseudo-intellectuals present themselves with such dignified terms as the **American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, Humanists, Feminists**, etc. What little good these organizations have done is greatly overshadowed by the harm they have caused with their anti-God, anti-family doctrine. There is no denying their success. They have infiltrated religion as we see major denominations unable to decide whether homosexuality is a sin. They have infiltrated the media and we are bombarded with TV programs filled with adultery, lesbianism, incest, obscenities, etc. The music industry is overrun with raw sex.

Rape and Pornography

Sex crimes are on the increase. Yesterday's newspaper reported that rape was up 59% in 1991 (over 1990). This can be traced to the philosophies of humanists who defend pornography. To say it politely, the humanists are naive not to note that most rapists have been con-noisseurs of porno, all the way from Ted Bundy to Jeffery Dahmer. What enters the eye and ear has a way of lodging in the brain. It eventually manifests itself in what we say and do. The wise man said it like this: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23: 7). They could have known if they had only listened.

Rape and Evolution

The reason humanists want man classified as an animal is because they know animals are amoral (not governed by moral standards). If he is merely an animal, why should we be shocked when he behaves like one? If the rapist is a product of evolution, a chance arrangement of molecules, how can he be blamed? He is simply following his evolutionary inclination of the "survival of the fittest."

Rape and Feminism

The popular doctrine of feminism is interwoven with humanism. Take it from one rabid feminist. "Feminism is the best form of humanism that I know" (actress Jodie Foster, AP, 2/12/92). Feminists are part of the problem of rape. With their heads in the sand they argue that lust for sex has nothing to do with it, for it is an act of violence. In many cases it is both. To agree that it is a sexual act would violate their unisex philosophy and unwillingness to admit there are real and basic differences between

men and woman. Those differences will remain till the end of time.

Rape is always wrong and never justified. The rapist should be punished to the full extent of the law. Where feminists are wrong is in failing to admit a basic difference. Men are more easily and quickly stimulated by sight than are women. This is why nearly all pornography is purchased by men. It is why most rapists are men. It is why harlots dress a certain way to attract men (Prov. 7: 10). It is why Jesus said "everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Mt. 5: 28).

A woman may be raped who is totally innocent and contributed nothing to the process. A man may have his passions inflamed through pornography and he vents his lust by raping the next woman in sight, though she may be decently attired.

On the other hand, the man who rapes a woman who tempted, teased, tormented and tantalized him by lascivious behavior and clothing, is still guilty of rape, but she is not guiltless. Whether the law ever recognizes it or not, she was a stumblingblock. No rapist is justified — not one. But her behavior may be an important part of the extenuating circumstances. If feminists really are sincere in wanting to understand why rape has taken such a dramatic increase, they need to look at the total picture. As long as they deny that there are major differences between the sexes the rape rate will continue to increase and they will continue to be shocked and bewildered. Instead of making war on the Bible, they should be making war against evolution, pornography, fashion designers, and feminism. Humanists want to deny the consequences of humanism, but it lies squarely at their feet.

Males are responsible for exercising self-control. There are situations which test and try them and make it difficult to maintain that control. This is why they should stay away from pornography, nightclubs (where lasciviousness is rampant), public gatherings that are notorious for near nudity (such as mixed swimming). They must control the music they listen to and what they watch on television. This is not too high a price to pay when one considers the salvation of his soul.

What Can The Christian Do?

PRAY. Pray for strength against temptation. There is some truth in the maxim that "the Lord helps those who help themselves." He wants us to pray for strength against sexual temptation, but He also expects us to avoid pornography.

PRAY FOR RULERS. What was once the "cream of the crop" has become the "scum of the slop." Homosexuals, adulterers, thieves, and liars have gotten elected to high office. Some of them sit on extremely important committees that shape the direction of the nation in the area of morals. God still rules in the kingdom of men. Ask Him to give us good men of high morals and worthy of honor.

PRAY FOR BOLDNESS. Speak out! There is a dearth of backbone among some officials who lack courage to stand for principles rather than policy and politics. When Christians by peaceful and lawful means

speak out, they are "points of light." This concept credited to our president actually comes from the Bible (Phil. 2: 15, 16; Mt. 5: 14-16). I fear we have become weakened and intimidated. The "fight" has been taken out of us. Here is an area where we cannot afford to "go with the flow." We must not blend with society. I have always thought of myself as an optimist, but unless Christians and congregations become more militant we are in for some hard times ahead. We must fight fair (strive lawfully), but we must fight (I Tim. 6: 12).


We have the answer to some of the world's most serious problems. If we don't speak out, who will? If we don't do it now, when will we?

**ACCEPTED
OF HIM**

(2 Cor. 5:9)

Donnie V. Rader

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Lexington, Alabama 35648



No Repentance — No Regret

There is a time and place for repentance and regret. Repentance is a change of mind. It involves sorrow for sin. Regret entails a feeling of sorrow or disappointment or grief. We may regret that we have done something. Yet, on the other hand we may regret not doing some things.

Every person has done and will do things for which he later repented. When we realized that we had sinned we turned to God in repentance. We all have done things that we also regretted — even things that did not involve sin.

On the other side of the coin there are many things that are proper and right for which there will be no repentance and no regret. In fact, we are glad we did those things. If there were to be any regrets at all it would be in not doing those things that we should be doing. Or, we may regret that we didn't do those things sooner.

Let's consider some things that I never will repent of or regret. Don't misunderstand, if someone can show that any of these are wrong, I most certainly would repent.

I'll Never Regret That I Obeyed The Gospel In My Youth

Our youth is a time that we should be serving the Lord (Ecc. 12: 1). It is not a time that we must sow our wild oats. I obeyed the gospel when I was fourteen. I never have, and I don't think I ever will regret that I did. I have never looked back and wished that I had waited a few years.

I don't regret it because that is when I became a Christian, a follower of Christ (Acts 11: 26). That is when I obtained the remission of sins (Acts 3: 19). That is when

I obtained the hope of going to heaven when I die (Rev. 22: 14). Obeying in my youth gave me more years to grow and mature as a child of God.

Many, on the other hand, have looked back and regretted that they didn't obey the gospel sooner. I have witnessed some who were middle-aged and older who finally submitted in obedience. On several of those occasions the remark was made, "I only wish I had done this years ago."

I'll Never Regret Maintaining Moral Purity

God demands moral purity. The command is to abstain from or flee sexual immorality (1 Thess. 4: 3; 1 Cor. 6: 18). God expects that of all. It was not intended for this to be a characteristic of only a few strange people.

I have never known of any one who entered marriage and looked back and regretted that they didn't experiment with fornication. Have you ever known of anyone who repented that they maintained their virginity until marriage?

I have never known of anyone who regretted that they didn't have any extra-marital affair. Have you ever witnessed repentance and confession of marital faithfulness?

The reason we have not known of this is that true joy in this intimate relationship comes only within marriage (Prov. 5: 15-17; Heb. 13: 4; 1 Cor. 7: 2-4).

In contrast many live to regret and even repent of not maintaining this purity. They live with the shame, disgrace, dishonor and a cloud brought on by their sin (Prov. 6: 27, 33). Fornication leaves scars that may never be removed. Countless times we have heard the statement, "I wish we had waited" or "It wasn't worth the price I had to pay."

Ill Never Regret Spending Time With My Children

There are a number of Bible principles that suggest that time must be spent with our children, not only teaching them, but just bonding and playing with them (Eph. 6: 4; Col. 3: 21). We must use our time properly and carefully (Eph. 5: 16). Timothy's mother and grand-mother spent a lot of time with Timothy (2 Tim. 3: 15).

The time we spend with our children will never be a waste of time. It might involve playing ring-around-the-roses, building a sand castle, throwing a ball, watching television, playing with dolls or trucks, taking them to a movie, to a ball game or treat them to a cook-out in the park. Yes, there are 101 other important things that must be done. But, those things will have to wait because the children will not. One day we will wake up to an empty house with no little one to feed and get off to school - no one who needs help with homework - no one who begs for a snack - no one who makes a mess in their room - no one whose clothes need washing—no one who keeps you up at night with a fever—no one begging you to play with them. Then it will be a little late to try to spend a little time with them.

This time we spend with them now, while they are still at home, is helping mold them into what they ought to be. I have never regretted that I have spent time with my children. No matter what was left undone because of it, I have never looked back and wished I had spent less

time.

There are many parents who have looked back only to regret that they didn't spend more time. When their children are grown, it is too late. They now realize the children were more important than a career. The sad part is they can't go back and do this job over.

Ill Never Regret That I Spend Time In Daily Prayer And Bible Study

God's people pray often (1 Thess. 5: 17; Psa. 55: 16-17; Dan. 6: 10). They also study from the word frequently (Acts 17: 11). To do both takes time.

No matter how much time I take every day to pray and study, I have never regretted that I took the time to do so. I have never wished that I had prayed less. I have never felt disappointed that I studied as much as I did.

However, there have been days that I regretted that I didn't pray and study more.

There are many other things that are proper and right that I will never regret doing such as: going to services, using an opportunity to teach others or taking my stand for truth. Just do what the Lord tells you to do and you'll never regret doing it.

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A Time To Laugh

"... there is a time to weep and a time to laugh" (Eccl. 3: 4).

The story is that a brother approached Ed Harrell after one of his inimitable sermons and said, "I don't think the pulpit is any place for humor." Ed smiled and replied, "Well, I do."

Certainly humor may be overdone in the pulpit, as pathos may also be. But it's difficult to discern why some would totally restrain a basic human emotion from being manifested in preaching. A few years ago I was privileged to hear Irvin Lee and Granville Tyler preach back to back in an all-day meeting at Nixon's Chapel, a rural Alabama church. Brother Lee preached for over an hour, which he did not often do. Brother Tyler also preached longer than usual on the special topic he had been assigned. Yet the time passed so quickly as these lessons were delivered with finesse. The reason was easy to ascertain. Both lessons were underscored with homey illustrations and anecdotes, some humorous, some sad, but all to the point. If it is wrong to entertain an audience when you preach, both stood condemned. But they not only entertained, they provided a great deal more edification than I have heard in many a drier attempt.

A publication of the American Medical Association observes: "Scientists have been studying the effect of laughter on human beings and have found, among other things, that laughter has a profound and instantaneous effect on virtually every important organ in the human body. Laughter reduces health-sapping tensions and relaxes the tissues, as well as exercising the most vital organs. It is found that laughter, even when forced, results in a beneficial effect on us both mentally and physically."

Norman Cousins has publicized his laughter therapy in a couple of books. He credits regular laughter with bringing healing to his body which was diagnosed as terminally ill. He says he watched regularly the old comedy movie classics and T. V. sit corns, and laughed uproariously. (Make sure it's the old ones. We'd probably all be terminal cases if we depended on the new ones).

Laughter, of course, like everything, can be abused and misused. To "laugh at the plight of the innocent" (Job. 9: 23), or at the misfortune of others (Psalm 80: 6) is

cruel. To laugh at things holy (Gen. 18: 12-15) is destructive. To laugh and mock at sin (Prov. 14: 9) is foolish. To laugh at someone because of his dress, speech, age, color, mistakes, or any other reason is arrogant.

Though Jesus was called a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, He also had a sense of humor. Elton Trueblood wrote an intriguing book called **The Humor of Jesus**. While I don't find humor in all the references that Trueblood did, one cannot escape the fact that many of the Lord's illustrations were funny and were intended to be. The thought of one trying to remove a speak from the eye of another while a stick of timber protruded from his own eye; or straining out a gnat and then drinking down a camel, is ludicrous. And doubtlessly it brought belly laughs to those who heard these analogies who were not objects of the attack.

The book of Proverbs teaches us that **"A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken... All the days of the afflicted are evil, but he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast... A merry heart does good like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones"** (15: 13, 15; 17: 22).

By the way, have you heard the one about...

WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

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Joint Efforts Result in Conversion

Naaman was captain of the Syrian army, a war hero. He was also a leper. His story is told in 2 Kings 5.

In Naaman's day Syria made frequent border raids against Israel. During one of those raids a young maiden was taken captive who later became Naaman's wife's servant. She told her mistress about the prophet Elisha, whom she was sure could cure Naaman's leprosy.

Leprosy was among the most dreaded diseases in Bible times. It begins with brownish-red spots on the skin which turn into hardened modules, and in time became ulcers. As the disease progresses the muscles and nerves are affected, resulting in deformity and paralysis. Naturally, one with leprosy would seize any opportunity to be healed. Naaman was no exception. Laden with extravagant gifts, he proceeded to Elisha's house, thinking the prophet would come out to him and ceremoniously cleanse him. Instead Elijah sent a messenger to him, instructing him to go wash in the Jordan seven times.

Naaman reacted angrily. This procedure was illogical

and humiliating. He might have returned home without complying had not his servants intervened. They wisely pointed out to him that he was prepared to do some great thing to be healed, so why not do something as simple as dipping himself in a river? Naaman reconsidered, obeyed, and his flesh was restored to a childlike purity.

This account illustrates several important lessons and is an oft-used sermon text. I want to make just one point from it: Naaman's cleansing resulted from the combined efforts of several people. The Israelite maiden initiated the process by telling him help was available through Elijah. Then Elijah, through a messenger, told Naaman what God required of him. Finally his own servants played the vital role of encouraging him to obey when he resisted. Each of these contributions was equally essential to Naaman's cleansing. Without any of them he would have gone to his grave a leper.

Those lost in sin need to be washed in Jesus' blood. Every effort at helping them is valuable; none should be demeaned. And there is something you can do. Some are like Elijah, who can effectively explain what God requires. Perhaps more of us are capable of this phase than we realize. But if you cannot be an Elijah you can be an Israelite maiden, telling others that cleansing is available and putting them in contact with an Elijah. Or maybe you are a good Naaman's servant, encouraging others to do what they know is right. Barnabas was a "Son of Encouragement"; we need more like him. Some plant, others water. These efforts come together, and God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3: 6).

Look at this lesson in action. Mary, a sister in the church here at Palmetto, has an uncle who lives in Indiana. He is bedfast, breathing through a trachea tube connected to an oxygen tank. She had been talking to him about the gospel, and he was about to decide to obey. Mary asked me for help. I contacted a preacher in his town. He and another brother visited uncle Carter and did some additional teaching. Mary encouraged him further when he hesitated. And last week he was immersed into Christ in his bathtub. Now he is working on a way to get to the assembly and take his Catholic family with him.

Friend, every effort, whether large or small, counts. Your own conversion was likely the culmination of combined efforts of people who loved your soul. Now do what you can, unto God's glory.

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"David Did It"

It is nothing short of disrespect for the dead, as long as David has been in his sepulcher, for folks to continue blaming him for their religious error. And in doing so, they also show disrespect for the New Will and Testament of Christ (Heb. 9: 15-17).

The advocates of instrumental music in the worship of the church have always attempted to implicate David in their false doctrine and practice. "David used instruments, and so can we."

Then, they jump from David and the Old Testament dispensation, all the way over the New Testament dispensation and the church-age into heaven, and attempt to justify their mechanical instruments of music by perverting the symbolic and figurative language of Revelation. And this exercise in religious gymnastics is a tacit admission that they cannot find New Testament authority for using their pianos, guitars, and drums in the worship of the church.

One of the first things brother Homer Hailey emphasized in his classes on Revelation is that you cannot allow symbolic language, whether found in Daniel or Revelation, to interpret plain, literal declarations of revealed truth found elsewhere in the Bible. I think it is high time that brethren begin to make some of these basic applications for establishing Bible authority once again.

The first time I personally heard anyone try to use David as an excuse for "plural marriages" was back in the 1930's, and the occasion was a handwritten debate between two Baptist preachers. And my father was one of the participants in the debate. The preacher who attempted to use David and Bathsheba as justification for divorce/remarriage on grounds other than fornication, clearly held an indefensible position. And that was evident even to those of us who were still very young and had very little knowledge of the Bible.

Incidentally, neither of those Baptist preachers believed in instrumental music, so the one who used Mt. 19: 1-9 as his text for divorce/remarriage did not put himself in an inconsistent position, at least on that subject. (But some years later when I challenged one of those same Baptist preachers for New Testament authority to wear the name "Baptist," he could not find that authority.)

David — It was David himself who pointed us to Christ's authority when he said, "the Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Ps. 110: 1; Mt. 22: 44).

Ezekiel — The prophet Ezekiel told of the time when the earthly throne of David would be superseded by the spiritual reign of Christ on his throne (Ezek. 21: 25-27).

God — On the mount of transfiguration, God clearly, once and for all, exalted the authority of Christ over the Mosaic dispensation (Mt. 17: 1-5). And this was in direct agreement with the prophecy of Moses himself (Acts 3: 22, 23).

Peter — On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter declared that David's sepulcher was still with them and that Christ had been raised up to sit on David's throne (Acts 2: 25-36).

Paul — In rebuking the Galatians for their attempts at justification by the law of Moses, Paul said, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5: 4).

God "suffered" people in times past to do many things which did not meet with his approval, but he did so "because of the hardness of your hearts" (Mt. 19: 8).

God suffered Israel to have a king, but it was never his will that such earthly kings should exist (Hos. 13: 11). God allowed some of these kings to exist, and even blessed them in some ways, in spite of the fact that many of them still condoned the sins of Jeroboam and his golden calves (cf. 2 Ki. 10: 29).

So the fact that God allowed (or "suffered") David to do a thing was no basis for authority even under the old law, much less under the law of Christ.

We are going to be judged by Christ's word, and that judgment will include both saints and aliens (Jno. 12: 48; Acts 17: 21; 1 Pet. 4: 17, 18). Notice that God will judge the "world" in righteousness, and that includes the alien sinner, judged by the righteousness of God as revealed in the gospel (Rom. 1: 17; 2: 16).

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17: 30). And notice the "now" as contrasted to times past.

That is why Jesus took time and pains to contrast his teaching with that of Moses on a number of subjects (Mt. 5), including the matter of fornication, divorce, and remarriage (5: 31, 32; 19: 9). But in spite of this, brethren still attempt to circumvent the teaching and authority of Christ by reverting to the Mosaic dispensation and saying "David did it," or going even farther back to the patriarchal dispensation and attempting to justify a doctrine/practice in this dispensation by "universal moral law."

And like the sectarians who concede that they have no New Testament authority when they try the long jump from Moses to heaven, brethren who place so much emphasis on David and "moral law" are conceding that they are not comfortable with their position when confined to the New Testament.

It is one thing to use the examples of the Old Testament as they were intended to be used (Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 11), but quite another when we make the "tail wag the dog" and base our main arguments on David and the

"moral law.:

And if some brethren still deny that they are using David, Moses, or Abraham for authority on the subject of marriage or on any other subject, then I have only one sentence left to write.

It is time they began acting, talking, and writing like they believe what they claim to believe.

When I Am Weak, Then I Am Strong

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The title of this study comes from a statement of the apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians, and it sounds like one of those statements that can't possibly be true. How can it be that when I am weak, then I am strong? Taken in its context, this statement is not only understandable, but it is also logical and reasonable.

One of the problems most of us have had in our youth is thinking that we know all the answers. There is something about youth that often refuses to acknowledge how little we know, how weak we are, and how much we need the help of others. One of the dangers of this period of our lives is that we may fail to see the danger and be swept away in it. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he told of some of the sins of the Jews and told the Corinthian brethren: "Now all these things happened unto them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10: 11-12). It is when I am least aware of the danger, and when I think that I am at my strongest that I am indeed in the greatest danger of all.

In the passage suggested by the title of this study Paul was concerned about some apparently physical problem, something he called "a thorn in the flesh." What ever the problem was it was such that Paul truly wanted relief from it and prayed three times that God would remove it from him (2 Cor. 12: 7-8). But the following verses show that God's way is not always our way. Paul wrote: "And he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12: 9-10). I don't believe Paul was literally saying that he enjoyed infirmities and reproaches and persecutions or distresses. But he took pleasure in them, because when he acknowledged that he was powerless over these things, and trusted in God to see him through, then he was strong.

The wiser we think we are, and the stronger we feel, the less we feel the need of the gospel, and of God's care day by day. One of the problems Paul described in the first letter to the Corinthians was that so many thought of the gospel as foolishness. With their human wisdom they could not seem to grasp the simplicity of the gospel, or how salvation could be in the shed blood of Jesus, or why God would send Jesus to die in the first place, or even why they needed Him. Paul wrote: "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (1 Cor. 1: 25-30). God's way is not the same as that of men, and only when we recognize how weak and frail we are and how much we need Him do we willingly accept His strength, and His way. This is the reason that so few of the Jews accepted Jesus when He came, because they thought of themselves as righteous and good, not weak and sinful and in need of His grace.

HOW DOES THIS HELP ME? It helps me to know that God knows of the struggles and trials in my life and that He cares. David wrote: "But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me" (Psa. 40: 17). And earlier David wrote: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37: 25).

It helps me to know that even though God already knows how weak I am, He wants me to cast my cares on Him, He wants me to acknowledge my need of Him and my trust in Him. It helps me to know that He will hear my cry for help. Peter wrote: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5: 6-7). And John wrote: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5: 14-15).

And it helps me to know that no matter how much I may fail, and how often others in this life may fail us, that God will not fail. In the letter to the Hebrews we find this statement: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13: 5-6).

None of this means that God will remove all our problems any more than He removed Paul's "thorn in the flesh." Nor does it mean that God will overlook my sins. I must still confess my sins (1 John 1: 9), and repent and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8: 22). But it does mean that in

(Continued in next column)

The Sponsoring Church

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Some churches of Christ participate in a working relationship known as the sponsoring church arrangement. One might rightfully ask, "What is a sponsoring church?" A sponsoring church is a local church that has decided to take upon itself a work that is much larger than it could afford to do by itself. Then, this self-appointed sponsoring church solicits money from other congregations so that they can accomplish the task which they have embarked upon.

After the work has been decided upon a large amount of money is spent to raise the amount that has been estimated in order to carry out this project. The mail is used along with professional promoters for the purpose of raising money from other churches of Christ in the area or even the nation. These churches are urged to send money to the sponsoring church so that it can carry out this "great" work they have decided to do.

A few examples of this type of arrangement are: 1) the Memorial Drive church of Christ in Houston, Texas who sponsor a work in South Africa, 2) the Forrest Park church of Christ in Valdosta, Georgia who operate a massive project in Central America called the Panama Missions, 3) the Sycamore church of Christ in Cookeville, Tennessee who sponsor the One Nation Under God campaign which is designed to send a brochure into every home in America and eventually throughout the world. These projects undertaken by these self-appointed sponsoring churches are much larger than they could do on their own.

Origin — God or Man?

Where did the sponsoring church originate? Did it have its beginning in the mind of God or the mind of man? Since all truth has been delivered, then if the sponsoring church originated in the mind of God we will be able to turn and put our finger on the passage or passages that teach about this arrangement (John 16: 13; Jude 3). There is NO Bible passage that even hints of such an arrangement. Do not take the word of this writer; search the Scriptures for yourself and see if God's word reveals such an arrangement.

In order to be fair and give those who support sponsoring churches the benefit of the doubt, a call was made to Jeff Smith, a local preacher who supports the sponsoring church arrangement, and he was asked if such an

spite of our weakness we can indeed be strong when we recognize the source of our blessings and the one who truly cares for all His people.

arrangement could be found in the New Testament. He stated that God's word was silent concerning the sponsoring church. He stated further that no scripture existed that referred to a sponsoring church. In defense of this arrangement he said that the sponsoring church was not forbidden in the New Testament. There were various other attempts made to justify this practice which we will examine, but this shows that those involved in the very act of promoting this know that there is no sponsoring church found in the Scriptures.

The origin of the gospel which the apostle Paul preached was Jesus Christ (Gal. 1: 12). We are commanded to teach the gospel of Christ (Mk. 16: 15). How can we teach the gospel of Christ and teach people to participate in sponsoring church arrangements? We cannot do it by God's authority, because it came from man and not from God.

Too Big and Too Small

The sponsoring church is bigger than the local church which we can read about in the New Testament and it is smaller than the universal church which we can also read about in the New Testament. Brother Smith was asked if this was an accurate description of a sponsoring church and he agreed. The sponsoring church is an organization that is not found in God's word. This is one of the arguments that some of those in these sponsoring churches used to use against the denominations of men. They should apply this same teaching to their own invention.

Why is it wrong for the Baptist churches to form an association to carry out their work and it is not wrong for the churches of Christ? Changing the name does not change the structure of the organization and the organizational structure cannot be found in the New Testament.

There is a form of cooperation found in the New Testament. Two or more churches sent money to a gospel preacher to support him in the work of preaching the gospel (2 Cor. 11: 8-9). However, the New Testament is silent when it comes to local churches funneling their money through one church to preach the gospel to all the world. One is in the New Testament and the other is not!

Remember brethren, an argument based upon the silence of the scriptures will allow instrumental music, sprinkling for baptism, infant baptism, denominational names and associations, the worship of Mary, and any other practice that man can dream up. Had this argument any validity with God, Nadab and Abihu would certainly have been spared from His wrath (Lev. 10: 1-2). "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15: 4). We had better learn the lessons of the past.

Christianity is a positive religion. We are to do what God teaches, like God teaches and leave off everything else (Matt. 7: 21; Gal. 1: 6-9).

Is God's Organization Sufficient?

Individual Christians and local churches spread the gospel into all the world during the first century (Col. 1: 6, 23). God's way worked then and it is being worked now by faithful churches of Christ.

Those who promote and support the sponsoring church arrangement claim that this is a more effective and efficient way for doing the Lord's work in the twentieth century. In other words, they are saying that God did not give us the best organization possible for carrying out His will. Who can believe it?


Many examples could be given to show the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the sponsoring church arrangement. However consider this, God loves all men and wants all to come to repentance (Jn. 3: 16; 2 Pet. 3: 9). Certainly, God is going to provide the very best way to reach mankind with the gospel. God did not provide in any way whatsoever for the sponsoring church; therefore, the sponsoring church is not the best way possible to reach the lost, nor is it the right way to reach the lost.

In our next article we will examine more of the reasons given for supporting the sponsoring church.

**THE
NEW MAN**

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Retiring From The Lord's Work

I think now and then about something that happened several years ago when my good friend Chuck Durham accompanied me on a preaching trip to Dominica, the beautiful little Island in the Caribbean where Ernest Roberts lives and works as an evangelist. An islander with whom we were visiting was asking Chuck about his family back in the States. When he asked what Chuck's father's occupation was, Chuck replied that he was a retired farmer. We noticed a puzzled look on the individual's face, and suddenly realized that, on an island where those who eke out an agricultural livelihood simply work until they die, the expression "retired farmer" must have seemed a contradiction in terms. To the man with whom we were talking, this crazy idea of a farmer just arbitrarily ceasing to work, although still physically and mentally **capable** of working, probably confirmed what he had always been led to believe about Americans: that we are an effete, self-indulgent bunch of people.

It is easy for us to forget that the concept of "retirement" from one's life's work is for the most part a peculiarity of industrialized nations and is not at all the norm in the wider world. With this notion, as with many others, it is hard to keep in mind that ideas that are second-nature to us are not necessarily a part of the way

most of the people in the world think even today, not to mention most people throughout history. What we assume is the "norm" may be nothing more than a curious little exception in terms of the total history of mankind—and a **worrisome** exception at that, in the opinion of those whose customs **are** the norm.

What is worse, we tend to take aspects of our American culture and lifestyle and read these back into the New Testament. When we make judgments about how we ought to engage in the Lord's work, we often exercise our judgment in ways that nobody would ever do if he were not looking at the New Testament through the tinted lenses of the American way of life. Our assumptions about what is wise and good and expedient would often look ridiculous from the vantage point of the vast majority of mankind. To take but a simple example, an American's assumptions about how long a sermon should last would be humorous to many of the Lord's people in the rest of the world. We wrongfully assume that "the way it is" for us is the way it **has** to be, the way it **ought** to be, etc. **In** reality, though, our customs are nothing more than that: customs. Some of these may happen to be good—but others may not be so good.

To me, it seems as clear as can be that our view of what is "reasonable" in regard to serving the Lord over a lifetime is influenced by our peculiar American customs regarding retirement from our secular vocations. In societies where there is no such thing as retirement from one's work, the thought of "retiring" from the **Lord's** work would hardly enter anyone's mind. But most of us have been conditioned since childhood to think that the way life ought to unfold is something like this: one works as hard as he can early in life so that when he gets to his sixties, if not before, he can cease what he has been doing for a living and basically do what he wants to for the rest of his life. As suggested above, the concept of doing that may sound soft to people in less affluent societies, but there is nothing inherently wrong with the custom. There is, however, **much** wrong with the idea that we can at some point arbitrarily lay aside our responsibilities in the **Lord's** work and basically do what we want to for the rest of our lives.

Now obviously, the strength and vigor of youth passes away long before most of us die. The time comes when we simply cannot, either physically or mentally, do in the Lord's work what we once could. Not only that, it is also true that as we mature the nature of what we can do **best** in the Lord's work changes. The contribution we are able to make as senior citizens in the kingdom is not the **same** contribution we were able to make in youth. (Frankly it is often a much more **important** kind of service that age and wisdom allow us to offer). I am not suggesting here that anyone should make a fool of himself trying to continue doing what he is no longer capable of doing, nor am I denying that the nature of our work in the Lord changes over time. I **am** suggesting that there is nothing scriptural about the concept of arbitrarily ceasing to do **any** significant work in the Lord's service, as if having "done our part" it is now someone else's turn to work while we "enjoy" the years we have left to us.

But I have seen it happen time and again. Just when folks are able to be of the very best service, they quit. Seasoned men and women—able to lend much-needed maturity to our evangelism, edification, and benevolence—decide that their retirement plans do not allow room for much responsibility in the Lord. Elders leave their post of duty and move off to the Sunshine State. Married couples, often part of the irreplaceable backbone of their congregations, retire and move "back home" to some situation where they are not needed nearly so badly. People who complain throughout their "working" lives about having too little time for the Lord's work, suddenly find that the pleasures of travel, etc. leave little time for spiritual work during their retirement years. Grandmothers (who can literally "love it into them") decide they will no longer teach God's word to children's classes. On and on the story goes, making it appear (at least in some cases) that we did not truly enjoy working in the Lord's service anyway. Is it possible that we were only putting in time until we could satisfy ourselves that we had done enough, at which point we immediately moved on to what we had really been wanting to do all along?

I know that as the years wear on we get tired. The Lord's work is hard work, and the years take their toll. But keeping on working, even when we are tired, is plainly a part of what it is going to take to get to heaven. Paul urged, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in **due season** we should reap **if** we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6: 9). And the Lord Himself said to the brethren in Smyrna, "Be faithful **until death**, and **I** will give you a crown of life" (Rev. 2: 10). It makes little difference whether the text should read "**until**" or "**unto**" death. The person who would go so far as to die **for** the Lord is not going to retire **from** the Lord's work until he does die, whenever that is.

Would it not do us all great good to read the Hebrew letter thoughtfully from time to time? There the writer said, "And we desire that each one of you show the same **diligence** to the full assurance of hope until the **end**, that you do not become **sluggish**, but imitate those who through faith and **patience** inherit the promises: (Heb. 6; 11, 12). And there we are warned, "Since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us **fear** lest any of you seem to have come **short** of it" (Heb. 4: 1). Whether that fellow in Dominica could envision any such thing as a retired farmer, the notion of a retired servant of the Lord ought to be unimaginable to any of us.

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Benevolence, Evangelism, and Cooperation

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The Bible teaches that local churches are to evangelize (1 Thess. 1: 8) and practice benevolence (2 Cor. 9: 1). The Bible also teaches that churches may cooperate in these works (2 Cor. 11: 8; 1 Cor. 16: 1). The extent to which churches may cooperate has been an issue of controversy among brethren. May churches cooperate through a centralized agency (the sponsoring church), or is cooperation limited to independent action? It is my view that the latter position is correct.

To prove the sponsoring church position, cooperation in benevolence and evangelism have been paralleled. It is argued that since a church may send money directly to other churches in benevolence, the same holds true for evangelism. Therefore, churches may send money to congregations like the Sycamore church in Cookeville, TN, for the purpose of supporting evangelism (the "One Nation Under God" program). It is the purpose of this article to show that church cooperation in benevolence cannot be paralleled to church cooperation in evangelism.

The New Testament does teach that churches may send directly to other churches in order to meet a benevolent need. Churches just did not decide to send money to other churches for no reason. Money was sent when the membership of a congregation was threatened by poverty, as were the saints in Judea (Acts 11: 29). If there had been no need, no money would have been sent. Such is the nature of benevolence. It is precisely because benevolent cooperation is need-based that it cannot be compared to sponsoring church arrangements. Such arrangements are not based on need, or at least genuine needs.

Sponsoring churches "need" money from other churches only in the sense that they have decided to enact a program which they cannot fund on their own. This contrived "destitution" is not parallel to the examples of church-to-church benevolent care in the NT. Let me illustrate with benevolent work in a local church. A congregation does not distribute money to its members for no reason. Churches give their members aid only when those members are in need (see 1 Timothy 5: 3-16). But suppose that a member where you worship decided they wanted a Porche sports car, and became impoverished in their attempt to get it. Does that person qualify for benevolent care since they are in "need"? Obviously not, because their need is contrived. Or, to more accurately illustrate this point, suppose a member where you worship announced that they felt it was their duty to

feed every person in your county, and demanded that the church pick up the tab by relieving the poverty they experience when they embark upon this costly venture. Is that a true need or a concocted one? Clearly such does not fall within the scope of church benevolence.

Now, since according to our institutional brethren what's true for the individual is true for the church, let's apply these principles to church cooperation. If a church decides to perform a work which it knows it cannot fund by itself, it has no more right to receive money from other churches any more than an individual saint should receive money from his local church when he does the same thing on an individual scale. Both are contrived needs, not the type of need with which NT teaching on benevolence is concerned. For this reason, the pattern for church cooperation in benevolence cannot be compared to church cooperation in evangelism.

When will we learn that God does not expect Christians or churches to do more than they have the ability to do. God does not expect me to feed every hungry person in Montgomery County, and He does not expect Oak Hill to mail a pamphlet to every house in America. God expects us, individually and congregationally, to do only what we have the ability to do. And in the final analysis, whether that means we contribute much or little, God is more pleased with the two mites of the widow than He is with the great gifts of the wealthy.

When You Move Or Are Transferred

Steve Hudgins

2922 S. E. 7th Street
Ocala, Florida 32671

As a nation we are a mobile people. According to some estimates as many as 20% of the population of this country will move in a year's time. Some of these moves will be within the same city but many will be out of town and out of state moves. Big companies and corporations move their employees about due to promotions, relocations, mergers and what ever. Frequently when people retire they move to warmer areas of the country or to areas where life is at a slower pace. Undoubtedly there are a number of faithful Christians involved in such moves and transfers.

With such moves there are many adjustments that have to be made. Getting located in a suitable area, finding schools for children, finding doctors and dentists, locating other services that will be needed and for faithful Christians a congregation of faithful disciples with whom to meet and worship. Many cities and towns may not offer one a choice. In fact in some places to meet

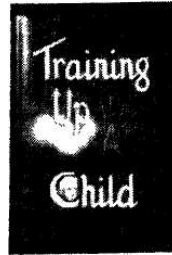
with a faithful church a family may have to travel a number of miles or start a congregation in their home. In places where there is a choice of congregations what determines that choice? How close it is to the new home? the largest group where one is least needed and can get lost in the crowd and bury any talent one has?, or is it with concern for where one can be the greatest help to the cause of Christ?

Shouldn't our attitude be "I want to be a worker for the Lord and meet and worship where my presence, talents, abilities and means are most needed"? Why would a good song leader be content to warm the pew where there are already a half dozen or more good song leaders while at another congregation, across town or maybe even nearer but smaller, there may be a desperate need for one good song leader? The same with teachers and others who can have a good part in the work and be an encouragement where encouragement is so greatly needed. When you move or are transferred won't you give some thought to this? What about where you are now? Is there a small faithful church not too far away where your presence and help is much more needed?

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by Gwendolyn M. Webb



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FROM: Religious Supply Center

I

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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NEW WORK IN FAIRMONT, WEST VIRGINIA

RICK CLELLAND, Rt. 1, Box 144-A, Rivesville, WV 26588 — In December, 1991 a new congregation, known as the Eastside church of Christ began in Fairmont, WV. Some had been driving 30 miles north to Morgantown and others 30 miles south to Clarksburg to worship. We began meeting in the home of Bill and Ruby Wright. Due to growth we have now acquired a rented meeting place at 934 East Park Ave. with parking available in the rear of Brown's Lumber Company. We began meeting in the new location April 19, 1992. Attendance has been in the 20's with a high of 37. Our first gospel meeting will be held May 4-7 with J. Wiley Adams preaching. When in the area, please come and worship with us.

FRED E. ENGLAND, 23 Trumbull Dr., Wallingford, CT 06492 —

The church here now meets in a small building we purchased at 1213 Old Colony Road, Route 71 in Wallingford. The work began with two, soon became six and now the church has 19. This is a transient area. If all who had worked and worshipped here over the last 19 years were here now we would number about 80. We are encouraged since our move in to more permanent quarters by the interest of neighbors. We have been having some regularly to visit with us. To find us when you visit rustic, historic New England, take I-91 to Exit 15; turn west (toward Cheshire) to Route 150 and turn right. Go north about 1/2 mile and turn left onto Route 71. We are about one mile on the left. We meet on Sundays at 10 and 11 A. M. and 5: 30 P. M. and on Wednesdays at 7: 30 P. M.

77TH ANNIVERSARY

STEVE HUDGINS, 2922 S. E. 7th St., Ocala, Florida 32671 — On April 25 my parents, the H. H. Hudginses, celebrated their 77th wedding anniversary. If Daddy makes it to August 15 he will be 99

years old and mother is 96. Their home has been the place for preachers to stay during meetings for many years in Moultrie, Georgia. The first preacher I remember staying with us was C. R. Nichol about 1923. He baptized my mother along with two others at that time.

(Editor's note: I am one of many preachers who shared the hospitality of the Hudgins household. When the church in Moultrie went liberal, they faithfully carried on and the church met for a time in their home. What a remarkable thing to celebrate 77 years together. Pour of their five children are living. Steve is a faithful gospel preacher in Ocala, Florida. The Hudgins family has contributed much to the cause of Christ through the years. CWA)

FRED A. SHEWMAKER, 1101 S. W. Dorchester St., Port St. Lucie, FL 34983 —

The church in Ft. Pierce has made considerable progress during the last several months. In May, 1991 the church assumed total support for the local preacher. Men of the congregation are speaking here once a month. Two brethren are preaching elsewhere once a month. Another brother did so until health problems forced him to stop. In January, 1992 we began providing regular support to one preacher in the Philippines and to another in Maine. We recently distributed 8, 000 flyers offering a Bible correspondence course and have for use a video home study course. Jack Hobby of Titusville, FL will preach in our next meeting July 12-17.

RECONCILIATION IN HAWAII

Dan Lister, Thad McCall and Ed Sheline report that a new congregation was started on the island of Oahu as a result of error being taught and practiced on the subject of divorce and remarriage. However in July 1991 the preacher who taught this left the Leeward congregation and attended for awhile with the institutional church at

Keeaumoku and Dominis in downtown Honolulu. Recently, also, a sister involved in an adulterous relationship left the Leeward congregation. The brethren there have decided to seek a preacher who will teach the truth on the divorce and remarriage issue. A good spirit prevails and an open examination of scripture is now under way. As a result of these developments, those who left the Leeward congregation have now returned. The reconciliation and progress are due to a desire to study God's will and a determination to submit to it, rather than a toleration of error and its effects. Please pray for the Leeward church that truth may be upheld and the unity of the Spirit may be the result.

RICHARD BOONE, 2590 County Hwy, 45, Hayden, AL 35079 — I am trying to locate a copy of Edward J. Young's commentary on Isaiah. It is a three-volume set. If you have this and would like to sell it, would you please contact me. You may write to the above address or call 205-657-5809.

CHARLES M. (CHARLIE) CAMPBELL 1905-1992

The 65 year preaching career of Charlie Campbell came to an end on March 31, 1992, when he left this life. He was 87 years old. His wife of 57 years preceded him in death.

Brother Campbell was born in Ft. Worth, Texas. He lived the last 28 years of his life in Akron, Ohio. He started preaching in Nashville, Tennessee in the 1920s and served in ten congregations in five states. He moved to Akron in 1945 and worked with the Brown Street church for the next eight years.

He devoted his life to the study and teaching of God's word. All who heard him will remember him as an outstanding speaker with a powerful voice which remained with him to the end of this life. In his speech he reminded me of Roy Cogdill. Charlie became well known in this part of the country because of his stand against institutionalism in the 50s and 60s.

His funeral was conducted by his friend, Hubert Showalter. The chapel was filled with brethren and friends. Brother Showalter spoke of how brother Charlie had followed the example of Paul. He was converted like Paul, preached the same gospel, would not compromise truth and was faithful to the Lord. This aged veteran of the gospel carried a heavy burden in his last years because of failing health. Brother Showalter closed his eulogy with these words: "You and I mourn his passing, but if he could speak to us now he would no doubt say with Jesus, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children" (Lk. 23: 28). Lewis Willis 491 E. Woodsdale Akron, OH 44301

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

ROMANIA — Wendell Watts of Anderson, Alabama has just returned from a three month's stay in Bucharest, Romania. He said "Although I am 65 years old and have been preaching about 35 years, this was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. The people of Romania are eager to learn and several have obeyed the gospel. There is an urgent need for someone to go to Bucharest to stay at least a year. David Teel and his family need help in the work. Please have anyone interested in the work to contact me. Phone 205-247-1335.

HUNGARY—Richard Copeland reports from Budapest that ten new people came for a study using film strips. The last time they used them eight came and three actually finished the series. A number of private studies continue with varying interest. They have made the decision to stay another year in the work there.

ARGENTINA — Carlos Capelli was with the Mercedes church in March with three baptized. At Jose C. Paz congregation there was a gospel meeting in March with Joe Soto of Sequin, Texas. Between April 27 and May 18th he spent one week preaching in Ambato, Ecuador and two weeks in Bogota, Columbia.

PHILIPPINES — **WALLACE H. LITTLE** writes: "In the past I have published a listing of Filipino preachers with biographical and preaching experience and other voluntary data for the use of American brethren who might desire it. Having just returned, I have massively updated and expanded it. It has entries on more than 750.

These include data gained from personal knowledge plus what these men have supplied. Americans interested in the work there and who they think might benefit from this information, please phone me at 904-244-7903.

RODRIGO DIEGO reports on preaching efforts along with Juanito Balbin in the area around Makilala (Mindanao) and reports 16 baptized.

JUANITO P. BALBIN reports from Davao City and also mentions the work in connection with brother Diego. Assisting them in this work was Balbin's eldest son, Dudley Ross. They started a new work in Bulakanon, Makilala, Cotabato where six were baptized in February. On March 5-6 a preacher's lectureship was held in New Matina. On March 19-20 Balbin spoke on the eldership in Tambobong church in the Bagiu District of Davao City. After several lengthy study sessions, he assisted them in appointing three elders and four deacons. He reports that Mindanao has suffered a severe drought destroying crops and creating much need. Some brethren are hungry and others need medicines which they cannot afford. His address is: Juanito P. Balbin, Cor. Sandawa, MacArthur Hiway, 8000 Davao City, Philippines

RICARDO DELA CRUZ, Balite Lagao, Gen. Santos City, Philippines 9500, also reports on severe drought conditions in South Cotabao where he lives. He mentions need in two congregations in Gen. Santos City, 3 in Municipality of Malongon, one in Banga and one in Domagil, Norala all in South Cotabato.

(Editor's note: I have known brother Dela Cruz for over twenty years and though we have exchanged many letters over those years, I do not recall his ever asking for anything. He has proved to be a quiet, dedicated worker who goes about his work without complaint. When some men cry "wolf their past record is such that you do not take them too seriously. But when good men, such as brethren Balbin and Dela Cruz, bring such a situation to my attention, I take them seriously. CWA).

PREACHERS NEEDED

JONESBOROUGH, TENNESSEE — The church which meets at 1025 Depot St. will be needing a full time preacher as of Nov. 1, 1992. Being a small congregation with an average attendance of about 40, some support may be needed. Those interested may write to: Church of Christ, 1025 Depot St., Jonesborough, TN 37659 or contact Dallas Hensley (615-257-6502, Donnie Clouse (615-753-3540, or Bud Kent (615-753-8391).

ST. CLOUD, FLORIDA — The church in St. Cloud is looking for a preacher. Attendance averages 20-30 per week. We can provide \$600 per month support. For information call I. G. Maynard (407-892-4187 or Bill Hart (407-892-1105).

BEDFORD, OHIO—(Cleveland area)—The church which meets at 515 Columbus Rd. needs a preacher about August 1st. We own a house and can provide full support. Please submit background, references and, if possible, an audio tape of sermon. For information contact the elders: Gerald Paugh (216-255-5493), Joseph Stano (216-232-8286), or Dough Warton (216-248-8495).

CUMBERLAND, KENTUCKY — The Poor Fork church near Cumberland, KY needs a preacher. Contact R. B. Browning, 304 River Rd., Cumberland, KY. Call 606-589-2868.

CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA — The Walnut Bottom church in south central PA needs a full time preacher. There are about 30 members who can supply \$300 support weekly. Those interested should contact Garry Adams (717-423-6707 or Gerry Smith (717-776-3653) in the evenings. You may write: Walnut Bottom Road Church of Christ, 2637 Walnut Bottom Road, Carlisle, PA 17013.

GLADESVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA — The church in Gladesville needs a full time preacher. Attendance averages about 20. We have a house and can supply a small amount toward support, so most of the support will have to come from outside. We are only interested in a sound man. Those interested please contact Dean D. Brewer Sr., Route 1, Box 193, Independence, WV 26374 (304-864-6721) or Dixon L. Summers (304-864-6738).



WERE THEY JUST YOUNG PEOPLE?

For a long time I have been asked a question after returning from gospel meetings which disturbs me. In reporting now and then that so many were baptized, someone will nearly always ask, "Were they just young people?" What is the point of that question if not to minimize such baptisms as opposed to those who are older at the time they obey the truth? Very frankly, over the last few years I have seen fewer and fewer young people obey the gospel and other men who preach in a good many meetings report the same concern. In congregations where there is a whole back row of high school students which have not obeyed the Lord, there are anxious parents who would give all they own if "just their" son or daughter, who is about ready to graduate from high school, would obey the Lord. In many places brethren are not saving their own. You know, Noah preached for 120 years and saved none except his family. But Peter said he was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2: 5). It is refreshing to me to find young people with tender hearts and who are willing to stand up and confess the name of the Lord and obey him in baptism.

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