In the World, but Not of the World  
(Part 1)

Lester Kamp

According to an old fable, three peas lived in a summer garden safely within the protection of a green pod. Their world was, as far as they knew, cozy and comfortable. Suddenly during a late summer day the pod split open, and the peas found themselves, not in their previously comfortable world of green, but now in a frightening brown world.

Their responses were immediate. One pea crawled back into the pod hoping to regain the safety and comfort of the past. The second pea turned brown so it would be exactly like the new world in which it now found itself. The third pea, however, decided that what the brown world needed was a green pea, so it resolved to be the best green pea possible in that brown world.

This fable illustrates well the possible reactions of Christians to the world of sin in which we live. Bear in mind that Christians have always lived in a world darkened by sin. Recall Paul’s instructions to the Christians at Philippi:

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life (Phi. 2:15-16).

Peter on Pentecost encouraged that multitude of Jews to become Christians with these words: “Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40). Christians live in a world which is hostile to Christ, His teachings, and those that follow Him. Using the terminology of the fable, we live in a “brown world.” Our reaction to that world can be one of three actions—the same three reactions that we saw in the fable of the three peas. Let
us take some time to examine these responses and to examine ourselves.

Isolation from the World

One reaction to the world found among those who claim to be Christians is isolation. Over the centuries, some efforts to do this have resulted in literal, physical isolation from the world. People have actually withdrawn themselves from the world to some isolated place that they might not have to confront the sinfulness of the world. This kind of thinking gave rise to monasticism. Others who have not gone to that extreme have attempted to isolate themselves by ignoring the real world. They may cancel their newspaper subscriptions and refuse to listen to the news for fear of being aware of the problems of the real world. They live in their own dream world without coming to grips with the way sin has affected others.

Though this kind of thinking has its appeal, we should realize that Christians cannot respond to the world in this way. Jesus’ prayer shows the error of His followers when they try to withdraw from the world. He prayed:

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (John 17:15-17).

Jesus did not desire that His disciples be “taken out of the world.” Sanctification (i.e., separation from sin and devotion to the service of God) is necessary, but sanctification is not isolation. Christians must remain in the world, but not be of the world. Christians must have contact with those in the world (Mat. 28:19) and help them deal with their burdens of sin (Gal. 6:2, 10), but Christians must abstain from the sins of the world (1 Th. 5:21-22). If Christians are to be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Mat. 5:13-16), they must be in the world and make contact with that world.

Become Like the World

A second mistake that Christians make is to become like the world. This course is the easiest one to take—just give up and give in. There are members of the church who do not want to be distinctive, to be different. Their lives after baptism are no different from the way they lived before. They have the same companions, their language is the same, they go the same places, and they enjoy the same forms of entertainment that they did before they became “Christians.” These “unconverted Christians” live just as those do who are in the world. For them it is too difficult to change; it is too much to ask of them.

Their concept of being Christians is certainly not what is taught in the Scriptures. Change in the behavior of those who became Christians was noted in the New Testament by their former companions: “Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you” (1 Pet. 4:4). Paul described the sinfulness of the Corinthians before they became

New Arrival

Our congratulations is extended to Aleacia Godwin in the birth of her grandson, Noah James Penny, on January 1. He weighed in at 8 pounds 3 ounces. Ray and Ethel Pierce are the great-grandparents.
Romans 16:16

We are Seeking to Restore New Testament Christianity:
To have no creed but Christ; no book but the Bible; no name but Christian.
To speak where the Bible speaks; to be silent where the Bible is silent.

Facts about the church of Christ:
Christ is Founder and Head (Mat. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23).
It is not a denomination or a group of denominations (Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23).
It pleads for the unity of all believers in Christ (John 17:20-21; Eph. 4:1-6).

We Know That:
“It is not what the Bible teaches that divides the world into religious groups.”
“It is what the Bible does not teach that divides the world.”

We Are Striving To:
Present the first century message to a twenty-first century society.
The message is plain and simple:
The Word of God to a lost and dying world!

Author Unknown

“The Churches of Christ Salute You”

Aurora, CO

Defender and Beacon Available Via E-Mail
To receive the Defender and Beacon via e-mail please send your e-mail address to bellviewcoc@gmail.com. The file you will receive will be an Adobe Acrobat PDF (a free reader is available from www.adobe.com).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Fred Stancliff
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey  Bill Busch
Al Flesher  Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
Harold Cozad
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
David Carter (Peggy Crowe’s brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
January 4—Carl Ayliffe

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

January 8
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

January 9
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
In the World, but Not of the World

(Part 2)

Lester Kamp

Be a Christian

What this world desperately needs (and can be influenced by) is more who are willing to live the Christian life and display the love of Christ to the world. The world cannot be improved through the cowardice of those who try to isolate themselves from it in some sort of cloistered environment. Nor can the world be improved by the hypocrisy of those who claim to be Christians but whose lives deny their claims. The world can and must be influenced by those who are dedicated to the Lord and His Word enough to live the Christian life.

The words of a Christian are important (Mat. 12:37), but without a life to back them up our words are worthless. Jesus spoke of the experience of some on the Day of Judgment: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (7:21).

Paul described the life of the Christian, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10). The Christian life must also show a genuine concern for others. Loving our neighbors, those who have needs that we can supply, is one of the greatest commandments (Mark 12:30-31). This is Christ-like!

There are those who have physical needs that Christians can supply. John wrote: But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:17-18).
Guy N. Woods

Enroute to Jerusalem from a brief period of retirement in Ephraim, whither He had gone following the raising of Lazarus from the dead, at some point on the border between Samaria and Galilee, not certainly known to us, our Lord encountered ten lepers. Nine of them were Jews, and the other was of the Samaritan race (Luke 17:11-21).

When Jesus saw them, He said to them: “Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed” (17:14). He who never turns his back on one who comes to him in distress, heard and heeded the pitiful plea of these afflicted men. He saw their need, their desire, and their faith. He looked, not only on their ruined and diseased bodies, but also into their hearts; and what He saw prompted Him to bestow His beneficent grace upon them.

They were bidden to go to the priests. When a leper was cured, before he was restored to society he was required to show himself to the priest, make an offering, and be officially pronounced clean (Lev. 14; Mat. 8:1-4). Jesus required this procedure in this instance for several reasons: (a) It was the law, and He always enjoined strict adherence to the law while it remained in force, (b) It impressed on the cleansed man the necessity of continued adherence thereto, (c) The action would serve as a testimony to others, and (d) Their faith was tested by the command. Had these men refused to act upon the command of Jesus, they would not have been healed. Faith never pro-
duces a blessing until it leads its possessor to obedience (Jam. 2:20-22, 24).

Their response was immediate. Acting on the Lord’s command to present themselves to the priest, the leprous men hurried away. After they had gone some distance, perhaps out of the village, the miracle of healing occurred. Suddenly the Samaritan, seized with the irresistible emotion of gratitude for the wondrous blessing of healing he had experienced, turned back—not in disobedience to the Lord’s command, but to express to Him the thanks that welled up in his heart for the blessed miracle of healing so wondrously wrought upon him. (a) He glorified God as the author of the good he had received, (b) he kneeled before Jesus as a token of the reverence he felt, and (c) he offered thanks for his unspeakable gift.

Observing that only one out of the ten returned to express gratitude, Jesus asked: “Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?” (Luke 11:17-18). Ingratitude is one of the most universal and deeply seated of all the human vices, and our Lord felt its crushing weight again and again while upon the earth. On this occasion He seemed to have been unusually moved by the depth of the thanklessness manifested. It is true that the nine had gone on to literal obedience to His command, but they did so from selfish motives and were conscious of no gratitude to God and their Benefactor. The Samaritan, untrained in the religion of Jehovah, and from whom less might ordinarily have been expected, did the best. All stood the test of faith, to be sure; otherwise they would not have been healed. But the nine failed in the test of love!

Many of us today are very much like the ungrateful nine. We are far more ready to pray than to praise, more disposed to ask God for what we have not than to thank Him for what we have. Murmuring, complaints, and discontent abound on every hand. The nine represent those among us today who receive unnumbered blessings from Christianity, whose comforts, education, wealth, liberty, homes, and hopes are all gifts of Christ, and who yet refuse to love Him, worship Him, serve Him. We should pray for a daily, thankful heart. It is a spirit which God loves and delights to honor. The prophets, with great poignancy, wept often because of the ingratitude which so often characterized Israel. Hear the plaintive cry of the great prophet:

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider (Isa. 1:2-3).

A hard, ungrateful heart, both toward God and man, is all too often characteristic of mankind. “Man’s inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.”

Deceased Bellview Church of Christ Web Site Why not check it out at: http://www.bellviewcoc.com
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey  Bill Busch
Al Flesher  Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
Aleacia Godwin (surgery on Jan 12)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
David Carter (Peggy Crowe’s brother)

Restored
Aleacia Godwin was restored to Christ on January 8. Please keep her in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Wednesday Bible Reading
January 11—Henry Born

Please Remember
January 15
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
January 16
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Bishops: Paul Brantley, Fred Stancliff
Minister: Michael Hatcher
Deacons: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Bill Busch, Bill Crowe, Jim Loy

Sunday Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

“Strengthened By His Spirit”

David B. Watson

Paul promised the Ephesians that they would be built up or strengthened by the Word of God’s grace (Acts 20:32). Paul also prayed, on behalf of the Ephesians, that the Father “would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16). How is this strengthening accomplished, and what is the relationship of the Word and the Spirit in this process? Paul explained this in detail in Ephesians 6, part of the near context of chapter 3.

The Admonition
Paul began by admonishing Christians: “be strong in the Lord” (6:10). This is parallel to “be strengthened” (3:16). He went on to speak of “the power of his [God’s] might” (6:10). This is parallel to “with might” (3:16). How does the Holy Spirit strengthen the saint with might in the inner man? Paul answers by saying that the Christian must “put on the whole armour of God” (6:11).

The Ability
Four times in four verses Paul stated that this “armour of God” will give the Christian the ability to “stand.” First, he said that this armour will make him “able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (6:11). Paul then proceeded to list the devil’s wiles: (1) “against principalities,” (2) “against powers,” (3) “against the rulers of the darkness of this world,” and (4) “against spiritual wickedness in high places” (6:12). Second, Paul stated that God’s armour will make saints “able to withstand in the evil day” (6:13). Third, Paul exclaimed that, by taking this armour, children of God will be able “having done all, to stand” (6:13). Fourth and finally, Paul commanded Christians to “stand therefore” (6:14).

The Armour
Paul next launched into a detailed description of the “armour of God.” First, we are to
be “girt about with truth” (6:14). Second, we are to have “on the breastplate of righteousness” (6:14). Third, we are to be “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (6:15). Fourth, we are to take “the shield of faith” (6:16). Fifth, we are to “take the helmet of salvation” (6:17). Sixth, we are to take “the sword of the Spirit” (6:17). These are the things that Paul says can strengthen us so we can stand. But “the Truth” is the Word of God which sanctifies (John 17:17, 19).

Righteousness refers to the commandments of God (Psa. 119:172) as revealed in the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17). The “Gospel of peace” is the “Gospel of grace” (Acts 20:24) or the Word of God’s grace which builds up and sanctifies (20:32). “The faith” is the “word of faith” Paul preached (Rom. 10:8) and which was once delivered unto the saint (Jude 3).

The Gospel of Christ is God’s power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). Finally, the “sword of the Spirit” is the “word of God” (Eph. 6:17). All six of these pieces of Christian armour and weaponry relate to the Word of God.

How does the Holy Spirit help saints to stand? How does the Holy Spirit help saints to be strengthened? How does the Holy Spirit help saints to be sanctified? How does the Holy Spirit save saints at last? According to Paul, He does so through the Word of God (coupled with general/indirect providence). Do we need more than the Bible to be saved at last? According to Paul, we do not.

Middleburg, FL

The Fellowship of the Unashamed

I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed. The dye is cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I am a disciple of Christ! I will not look back, slow down, let up, back away, or be stilled. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, and my future is secure. I am finished and done with low living, sight-walking, small planning, smooth knees, tame vision, mundane talking, selfish giving, and dwarf goals.

I no longer need preeminence, position, prosperity, promotion, platinudes, or popularity. I do not have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I live by His presence, learn by faith, walk by patience, live by prayer, and labor by power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions few, my guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of my enemies, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I will not give up, shut up, or let up until I have stay up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and I am preached up for the cause of Lord.

I am a disciple of Jesus! I must go until He comes, give until I drop, preach until all have heard, and work until He stops me. Then, when he comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me, for my colors will be clear—I am a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Author Unknown
In 1994, the following report was issued by the Associated Press under the title, “Most Americans anticipate second coming, poll shows.” Even though the report is now over twenty years old, this writer believes that the figures given would still hold true today, or would be even higher. The report reads:

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly six in 10 Americans believe the world will come to an end or be destroyed, and a third of those think it will happen within a few years or decades, according to a poll released Saturday.

The survey conducted for US News and World Report, also found 61 percent believe Jesus Christ will return to earth, and 44 percent believe there will be a final battle of Armageddon, with true believers whisked off the planet and called to heaven.

Almost half—49 percent—said they believe there will be an Antichrist.

The poll found that born-again Christians were almost twice as likely to have these beliefs than others surveyed. The survey of 1,000 people was commissioned for the magazine for an upcoming cover story on trends in religious beliefs. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

What struck this writer as significant regarding this poll was the high percentage, 61%, who believe that “Jesus Christ will return to earth” and that nearly half, 41%, believe that “there will be a final battle of Armageddon, with true believers whisked off the planet and called to heaven.” Do you see the significance of this poll? If it is accurate, and it is given the normal 3% margin of most polls that are generally regarded as accurate, then it tells us that over half of the people, 61%, have bought into the premillennial doctrine of the return of Christ to this earth to reign for a 1000 years. Further, it also indicates that 44% have also bought in the aspect of premillennial doctrine that has the Christians to leave the earth before the so-called “battle of Armageddon” that they might escape the “Tribulation.” This shows how successful the propagandists for dispensational premillennialism have been in convincing people of their doctrine.

This means that we have a lot of work to do to be able to teach the truth. The Bible does not teach that Christ will ever return to this earth. Further, it does not teach a final physical battle of Armageddon or the removal of Christian from the earth before the end of the world. However, the tragedy is that so many Christians are unprepared to deal with these false doctrines that are rampant in this country. Are you prepared to show the error of these false teachings? If not, you need to take time out and learn about these pernicious doctrines and how to show, from the Bible, that they are erroneous! Will you take the necessary time to learn how to answer them? To be effective in evangelism, we need to be able to refute these errors.

Belvedere, SC
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Fred Stancliff
Harold Cozad  Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey  Bill Busch
Al Flesher  Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
Aleacia Godwin
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
David Carter (Peggy Crowe’s brother)

Restored
Dale Cunningham was restored to Christ on January 15. Please keep Dale in your prayers.

Wednesday Bible Reading
January 18—Elward Brantley

Please Remember
January 23
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.

January 25
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
Contributions You Can Make

Dub McClish

Some members of the church are far too modest in their assessment of what they can do to help the Lord’s cause. Many have convinced themselves that they cannot do anything, since they cannot lead singing or preach, and they become quite content to do little or nothing. However, there has never been a Christian who had so little ability or so few resources that he or she could make no contributions if one really wanted to. Consider some contributions almost every Christian can make:

Faithful Attendance

Sitting in a church building regularly no more makes one a faithful Christian than sitting in a henhouse regularly makes one a hen. However, even an infidel knows that a faithful child of God attends worship and Bible classes regularly. The regular, public meetings of the church are its heart-throb and life-blood. Each member who forsakes these assemblies saps the church of some of its power (not to mention what he robs himself of). No wonder the inspired writer commands us not to forsake the assemblies of the church (Heb. 10:25). Every able-bodied member can make the minimum contribution of faithful attendance and will do so if he loves the Lord and the church.

Service

We are not saved by God to live lives of celestial ease on this old earth, but to serve, to work for Christ, according to our opportunities and abilities. The Lord’s people are made for good works (Eph. 2:10). We are to be “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding” in the Lord’s work (1 Cor. 15:58). God has never made anyone with so little ability that there is no place of service for him in the church. Unless we are daily making a positive impact for Christ and His church, for the Truth of the Gospel, for the pure life God wants us to
live daily, we are failing Him who died for us. Our work for Jesus demonstrates the sincerity of our worship on Sunday.

Money

Even in the early days of the church, when civilization depended so very little on money and cash flow compared to the present, it was necessary for Christians to give their money to do the Lord's work. The regular Lord's day contribution was commanded for this reason (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Not everyone can give a large amount because not everyone has a large amount from which to give. The Lord does not measure our giving by quantity, but by proportion of our income. Even when we cannot attend, we can still give so the Lord's work may go on uninterrupted.

Attitude

Men cannot send you to jail for a sordid, snobbish, hateful, uncooperative, negative attitude, but the Lord can send you to Hell for it. Two attitudes that cause the church great harm are selfishness and indifference. Two attitudes that make great contributions to the Lord's work are unselfishness and cooperation.

Denton, TX
The Odd Return

The other day I checked an odd return: some guy with an income under $5,000 claimed he gave $624 to some church. Sure, he was within the 20% limit, but it looked mighty suspicious to me. So, I dropped in on this guy and asked him about his return. I thought he would become nervous like most of them do, but not this guy. "Have you a receipt from the church or cancelled checks?" I asked figuring that would make him squirm. He replied, "Sure, I always drop them in the drawer." And off he went to get his checks and receipts. Well, he had me. One look and I knew he was on the level. I apologized for bothering him, explaining that I have to check deductions that seem unusually high.

As I was leaving he invited me to attend his church. "Thanks," I said, "But I belong to a church myself." "Excuse me," he replied, "that possibility never occurred to me." As I drove home, I kept wondering what he meant by that last remark. It was not until Sunday morning when I put my usual dollar in the offering plate that it came to me.

Author Unknown

Times change, but human nature remains pretty much the same. The irony of that statement is in the fact that God does not change either (Jam. 1:17). His expectations and commands for us have been the same since the church was established on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. These expectations are not very different from what was demanded in the Old Testament. Though we obviously do not live under the old covenant, we are still to be faithful to God and keep His commands (John 14:15; 15:10). This is done through obedience. The word means to submit to authority or reason; reverence for the source of a command; and to pay attention with resulting conformity to what has been advised or commanded. Obedience to God is the primary problem man has obstructing his way to salvation. Jesus tells us that our love for Him is manifested through our obedience to His will ("if you love me, keep my commandments"). This is not hard to do, according to the Lord ("and his commandments are not grievous"—1 John 5:3).

So we make our commitment not only to hear what He says to us, but also to do those things that are commanded (expected). By this our love not only becomes real, but quite tangible as well. We feel more complete and fulfilled as His children when we abide in His Word. It strengthens us and builds us up in the most Holy faith.

What is more obvious now than ever is the need for others to fully understand the love of God, and how that love will transform their lives! People are always looking for solutions to problems. The larger obstacle in this case is that these very same people are not able to recognize that the main problem is that they live without a knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus as He is revealed to us in the Scriptures. Many do believe they know Him, but only through what they have been told, not from what they have read. This is where we come in.

San Mateo, CA
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Fred Stancliff
Harold Cozad  Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey  Bill Busch
Al Flesher  Horace Myrick
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Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
David Carter (Peggy Crowe’s brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
January 25—Paul Brantley

Please Remember
January 25
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

January 29
Dinner on the Grounds will be held after the morning service. The evening service will be at 1:00 pm.
“Contend Earnestly”
Thomas B. Warren

Jude instructed men to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). There are many men now living—quite a number of whom are members of the Lord’s true church—who hold that it is simply not Christ-like to contend for the faith. But this passage corrects that erroneous claim. To “contend earnestly for the faith” is to strive in combat, to engage in a fight, and such like, and, since earnestly carries the idea of intensification, it is clear that Jude 3 teaches that men are to fight with great intensity for the Truth and against error.

Obviously, this does not mean that Christ wants men to engage in petty quarrels. He does not wish that men should wrangle for the sake of strife. Such activity must grow out of a heart that is filled with selfishness, haughtiness, and pride. But one can be humble, loving, kind, and deeply concerned for the cause of Christ and for the souls of men while fighting desperately for the Truth of the Gospel. Jesus did. Peter did. Paul did. And so did many other faithful men during New Testament days. And so have many men who have lived in our day.

Of course, there are many people who have a perverted sense of love and kindness and a distorted sense of what it means to be Christ-like. Such people are severely critical of those who spend most of their lives in doing what the Holy Spirit, through Jude, enjoins men to do. But faithful men must not allow themselves to be intimidated into becoming unfaithful no matter how unpleasant the criticism of liberal, modernistic thinkers may become.

Rather, one must remember not only such persons as Jesus, Peter, and Paul, but also men such as Stephen, who disputed with the Jews and put them to rout by his arguments which proved that what he was preaching was...
God the Father or God the Son

Robertson L. Whiteside

Acts 20:28 refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father did not purchase the church with His own blood. Blood belongs to flesh, and God the Father is Spirit, not flesh. Yet, I have heard brethren in ministering at the Lord’s Table say: “Father, we thank thee for this fruit of the vine, which represents thy blood.” Such ignorance is inexcusable.

In spite of the pseudo-optimistic attitude of many people, there are teachers of false doctrine in this world and there are doctrines being taught which will cause those who believe and obey them to be lost (2 Th. 1:7-9). There are preachers and elders...in the Lord’s church who teach error on fundamental doctrines—doctrines about which one must be right in order to be saved. Such men must be opposed, and those outside of the church who teach error must also be opposed. It is a grievous error to suppose that by merely pretending that there are no false teachers and there are no false doctrines, God’s pleasure will rest upon us if we do nothing about false doctrines and false teachers.

Many Christians, it seems, adopt a “holier-than-thou” attitude simply on the ground that they—in contrast to some others—never engage in any kind of controversy. Brother B.C. Goodpasture once told me about a preacher who said to him, referring to the pulpit work with a certain congregation, “as long as I am in this pulpit, nothing controversial will ever be preached.” There are a number of things wrong with this statement. In the first place, no one can preach the whole counsel of God without preaching that which is controversial, at least with some persons. In the second place, such sentiment is directly opposed to the sentiment (and actions) enjoined upon men in Jude 3!

Since no one can defend the faith without presenting sound arguments, then it is obvious that Jude 3 demands that men both recognize and honor the Law of Rationality.

Get Your Heads Together

There is an old legend about a herd of mules that was attacked nightly by a pack of wolves from a nearby forest. When the wolves came, the mules began kicking viciously in all directions. Consequently the mules maimed and injured each other while the agile wolves escaped unharmed. Finally, a wise old mule called the rest together for a conference and made known his plans. That night the wolves came yelping from the forest as usual, but in-
Useless Faith
Paul Vaughn

*Faith* is used 243 times in the New Testament and without it one cannot please God. Every Christian must live a life trusting in God. “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17). However, have you ever considered that there is an useless faith? The Scriptures teach that some have a faith that God will not accept.

God will not accept a dead faith. James defines dead faith as one without righteous works for God. It is written, “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead” (Jam. 2:17). It would not do any good to say you believe in God and not do His will. Jesus said:

> Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Mat. 7:21).

Dead faith is all words and no actions. Dead faith never teaches the Gospel. Dead faith is absent of good deeds toward the poor or sick. Dead faith is preoccupied with popularity with man and void of the goal to please God. Those who are dead in faith have an unfocused life, they never see the need to put Christianity into action.

God will not accept an erring faith. Paul spoke of this type of faith when he wrote:

> O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen (1 Tim. 6:20-21).

Sadly, today some have an erring faith because they put their trust in man and not God. Every follower of Christ should seek to keep the faith by trusting in God daily. Just before his death, Paul spoke of his unfailing faith in God. “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7). His faith was not dead, but active. Paul never erred in the faith because he looked to the Lord and not to himself. Let us all follow the example of Paul unless we have a useless faith.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams       Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read           Fred Stancliff
Harold Cozad          Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey         Bill Busch
Al Flesher            Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert           Nancy Travis
Aleacia Godwin
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch's sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond's nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond's sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd's sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)
David Carter (Peggy Crowe's brother)
Marion Spruill (Bill Crowe's cousin)

Wednesday Bible Reading
February 1—Bill Busch

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

February 6
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

February 12
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
Does Repentance Precede Faith?

Bruce Stulting

Some in the denominational world falsely teach that one is saved at the point of faith. However, Jesus plainly taught in Luke 13:3 that “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” See the necessity of repentance in the plan of salvation, the faith only advocates place repentance before faith being unwilling to give up their false doctrine. In an effort to find Scriptural support for their “repentance before faith” doctrine they often appeal to Acts 20:21. In this verse, Paul states to the Ephesian elders that he was, “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Does the order of mention here dictate the order of occurrence in salvation?

To help us understand the answer to this question, let us get a better view of what Paul was instructing these people to do. The Jews were exceedingly blessed by God and had enjoyed His grace under the Mosaic Law. However, in rejecting Jesus as the Christ, they had fallen from that saving grace. These people already had faith in God and needed to repent of their rejection of the Christ. The faith that they are called upon to have is not faith in God the Father, but faith in Jesus the Son. At Antioch in Acts 13:43, Paul “persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.” But for them to have God’s favor now they had to have faith in Christ.

This order can clearly be seen in Acts 2:36-38. In these verses Peter commands them to know assuredly that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. Only after these men had heard Peter’s sermon and believed did they ask, “What shall we do.” Peter’s reply was “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” The order is clearly set forth in this account. They (1) heard God’s Word; (2) believed God’s Word; (3) their faith led them to repentance.
and baptism.

It is absurd to affirm that repentance precedes faith. To do so is to say that people repent toward God before they believe in Him. Without faith, what would ever lead one to repentance in the first place? In fact, Hebrews 11:6 teaches that without faith it is impossible to please God. The Bible also teaches in Romans 10:17 that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” The faith that is produced by God’s Word leads one to the repentance and obedience that is rewarded by our heavenly father.

Huntsville, TX

Chicken or Egg?

Jimmie Z. Gribble

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? That question has been around for a long time. I remember as a youngster a lot of kids enjoyed asking that question. No matter which answer one gave, another question came as to origin. Well, we no longer have to ask that question.

In a news story on the Internet at www.msheridanfajnydailynews.com, it is stated that the answer has been found. Scientists in England say that they have “found the answer: The chicken!” The article states:

Researchers wrote in a recently published report that it all comes down to one protein—ovocledidin-17—which helps in the formation of the egg’s hard shell. This essential ingredient in the formation of the egg can only be produced inside a chicken, scientists from universities in Sheffield and Warwick concluded. “It had long been suspected that the egg came first, but now we have the scientific proof that shows that in fact the chicken came first,” said Dr. Colin Freeman, of Sheffield University’s Department of Engineering Materials, London Daily Mail reports.

Are you not glad that you now have a scientific answer to that age-old question?

A survey associated with this story asked the question about which came first. The majority answer was the egg. For the child of God who believes the Bible to be the Word of God, the answer to this question was written down by Moses. Moses wrote:

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:24-25).

A very important like question has been advanced, “Which came first: A human mother or a human baby?” This, as well as the answer to the chicken question, gets at the heart of evolution. In 1987, Ann Landers had the following question, “Is it biologically possible for a human to crossbreed with animals?” Ann answered, “A human can have sex with an animal but no offspring will result.” She sought assistance from Dennis Borden, Ph.D., assistant chairman of the biochemistry department at Northwestern University. He
Where Did It Begin?

Use of Holy Water—A.D. 120. This was borrowed from the Jews’ religion.

Infant Baptism—First expressly mentioned and condemned in the third century by Tertullian.

First Human Creed—Written in A.D. 325 at Nicea in Bythynia by 318 uninspired men and called the “Nicean Creed.” It should be noted that the “Apostles’ Creed” was not written by the apostles and does not appear in its present form earlier than A.D. 650.

Latin Mass—Began in A.D. 394.

Purgatory—The doctrine that one may suffer punishment after death and then go on to heaven began in A.D. 593.

Instrumental Music—First introduced into “Christian” worship about A.D. 666.

Celibacy—Priests were not allowed to marry after A.D. 1015.

Auricular Confession—The practice of confession of sins to a man began in A.D. 1215.

Sprinkling for Baptism—This became official teaching at the Council of Ravenna in A.D. 1311.

Other Changes—Many other changes have come about since the death of inspired men. These include: the sale of Indulgences; communion under one kind; penance; the Lord’s Supper being observed monthly or quarterly, or yearly; Immaculate Conception; women preachers; praying to Mary; and others. See Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, Revelation 22:18-19, Galatians 1:8-9.

Portsmouth, VA

Spring Church of Christ CFTF
Lectures
The New Testament Church and Counterfeit Churches
February 22-26, 2012

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams      Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read           Fred Stancliff
Harold Cozad          Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey         Bill Busch
Al Flesher            Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert           Nancy Travis
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Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
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Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
David Carter (Peggy Crowe’s brother)

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Bill Crowe in the death of his cousin, Marion Spruill, on February 5. Please keep Bill and his family in your prayers.

Wednesday Bible Reading
February 8—Tim Cozad

Please Remember
February 12
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
Am I just imagining things, or is there a trend among members of the body of Christ to treat all of the church’s worship assemblies as optional anymore? If there is, it is indeed disturbing to me!

Ever since I can remember anything about “going to church” I have been aware that a few people never come to Bible class on Sunday morning or on Wednesday evening. I have also known that some would never be seen at worship on Sunday evening and a smaller percentage still would seldom come even on Sunday morning. Those who never show up on Sunday evening or Wednesday evening have always proved themselves to be among the spiritually weak in every church I have known from my youth.

It is quite discouraging to say the least, to see brothers and sisters who know better, forsake even the Sunday morning assembly when they find something they want to do more. It is a complete mystery to me how such brethren satisfy a conscience which must condemn them. Or do they listen anymore?

The attitude of some of our ladies toward ladies’ Bible class is hard to figure out. I have not heard anyone rabidly opposing this class. But the utter indifference of some toward the class is a wonder to behold when some of the “too busy” type of excuses are offered, we can almost hear the Lord repeating, “Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful” (Luke 10:41-42).

Some have recently arisen within the church who are very loud in proclaiming freedom from any need to assemble with the saints. They insist that individual families can worship just as acceptably in their own homes on the Lord’s Day. I think they must be making some disciples when on any given Lord’s Day it is easy to count up to 100-150 able
Would you like to take a test to see how good a wife you are? Would you like to become aware of some of your faults, or do you think your husband has them all? You know, don't you: “Women’s faults are many, while men have only two: everything they say and everything they do.” The idea of this test is to help us see that many times we are not good as far as our husbands are concerned. We do not do things to benefit him. We do things to benefit us. Would it shock you to learn that you are often disloyal to your husband? Perhaps you are already having righteous indignation that someone would ever question your loyalty. “Of course I’m loyal,” you say. But are we loyal in everything and in every way?

Now let us test ourselves and see how well we do. I have six tests for you. I want to say at the very beginning that they will work two ways—with both the husband and the wife. But we are wives, so let us concentrate on us. Titus 2:4-5 applies to us. You know we have always heard that marriage is a give and take thing. Usually we wives think that we give in and take the blame, but let us notice some ways we could be giving the blame.

**Test #1**

When you have a misunderstanding or a disagreement with your husband, do you ever talk over how unreasonable he is with friends or with your family? Is this loyalty? Is this defending and supporting your husband, or is it putting him down and trying to make him seem wrong in their eyes and you seem right? Isn’t it really trying to get sympathy? Doesn’t this usually only make us feel worse? Do you really think these people can help in this disagreement? If there is some way that you think they can help you and advise you so both you and your husband can be helped, then tell them what has happened. However, only state the case. Do not start complaints and accusations. As a rule, we need to keep disagreements and misunderstandings to ourselves and not be disloyal to our husbands in talking about all of his faults to others. Let us not be a tale bearer (see Pro. 11:13). Well, did you pass the first test with flying colors? If so, let us go to the next test.

**Test #2**

If your husband has disregarded your advice and things go wrong, do you ever say, “I told you so! I knew you were not right. I just knew things would go wrong! I knew it would not work out!” How familiar this sounds! Let us try to think before we say all of this. Does saying any of these things help make things different? Is it going to change what has happened? All it does is cause anger, and angry people never settle differences (15:1 16:32).
Instead, we should take enough time to put ourselves in our husband’s place. We should think how we would feel if he said this to us and how we would want him to talk to us about our failure, whatever it was. Then, instead of anger, scorn, and belittling we would give him tolerance and understanding. How much we wives need to practice longsuffering or forbearing with our husbands! We should not think that in marriage one person is always right, and the other is the husband!

Test #3
If your husband gives you a gift that is useless, ugly, or something you do not need, do you ever show it to your friends and laugh about it? Do you tell them about it and complain? Do you take it back to the store, making your husband think that he could never please you, and so give up trying? Wouldn’t it be much better to be thankful that he thought enough about you to get something for you, even if it was not something you liked? I am sure it would not be something so expensive it would financially break you. If we thanked our husbands for being so thoughtful (and he was since he took the time, effort, and expense to buy it), the next time he might decide on something we really liked. A synonym for thankful is grateful. To be grateful is to appreciate things done for us. So let us not make our husband look dumb or foolish to our friends.

Test #4
Here we see a way of being disloyal to our husbands that many of us who are wives and mothers practice. When you say “no” to your children, do you ever add, “Your dad wouldn’t like it,” or “Your dad won’t let you,” or “Your dad would be terribly mad if you did it”? Should we not say, “Your dad and I both think you shouldn’t do this particular thing,” or “Your dad and I have decided that you can’t do this”? If you say it the other way, you are staying on the good side of your child and father gets all the blame. This is not even fair, let alone loyal! Remember, in being loyal we are obligated to uphold, defend, and be thankful to another person. In being a good wife we are to help our husband and benefit him.

If mother puts all the blame of withholding that which a child wants that is not best on the husband and father, and when father sees the child mad at him but loving and sweet to mother, he begins to feel that his wife is not on his side. He will feel very much alone. How easy it then becomes for him to go to someone who “understands him,” comforts him, and sympathizes with him. This is the way many wives lose their husbands. A contented husband will not look for someone else to understand him or make him feel important.

Naturally, all of the things we are thinking about today will also apply to the husband. If a wife feels that her husband is not on her side, she will also feel deserted and alone. But in this chapter we are talking about wives being “good” to their husbands. Wives are to be taught by the older women to be good to their husbands.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher        Marge Williams
Charles Williams         Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read              Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac              Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey            Bill Busch
Al Flesher               Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert              Nancy Travis
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch's sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond's nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond's sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd's sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe's grandson)

Wednesday Bible Reading
February 15—Bill Crowe

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

February 19
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

February 20
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.

February 22
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
How Good a Wife Are You? (Part 2)

Pauline Hatcher

Test #5

I feel sure that each one here has, at some time in her life, been guilty of this. A group of women will be together and begin telling about men’s faults in general. Soon they will use their husband to illustrate their point. Often we do this in a very humorous way, but we get in all of his shortcomings! Do you ever drag out your husband’s faults for the amusement of everyone there? I have. Later I felt so little, guilty, and cheap! Sometimes we wives make our husbands look stupid, mean, or both by telling their faults to others—even if it is just to be funny and get a laugh. Would you like for your husband to do this to you?

Test #6

How much do you argue with your husband? Perhaps you will say, “This is not being disloyal. This really has nothing to do with being good.” It comes so close to it that I want us to think about it and learn some lessons. To argue can be constructive, because in arguing we try to prove a point by presenting reasons for or against something. This can be a very stimulating discussion between husband and wife! However, too often the arguing or discussing becomes a quarrel. One or both “fly off the handle” and the arguing stops but the quarreling lingers on! Neither one will give in or stop. We do not follow the teaching of Ephesians 4:26: “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” There is an old Spanish proverb that goes, “Where one will not, two cannot quarrel.”

Have you ever stopped to think how often our quarrels are about stupid, petty things? For instance, do we ever argue with our husbands about directions when he is doing the driving? “Well, I know this is the shortest way to go!” “I know that it’s not!” If you find out that you are wrong, how silly you are going to feel after all of the arguing! He will always be telling
people that you have no sense of direction. If you happened to be right, he certainly will not appreciate your help because what you have done is pull down some of his masculine ego. This is not good for a wife to do. Besides, we are not driving, so why worry? Let us just relax and enjoy the drive. Do not be so uptight about proving a point—that I am right!

Second, we often argue and fuss about what our husband has promised to do and has not done. Girls, if he has not done it after the second time of asking or reminding, you might as well give up! After the second time of reminding, “You promised to do so and so and you haven’t done it,” he is going to regard you as a nagging wife. This reminding and reminding is called “nagging” in every husband’s language! If we argue about it, in addition to reminding, we are considered unreasonable. Now I know and you know that husbands should do what they really plan to do—later on! But if they do not get it done when they should, it is better to just do it yourself (if you can), or get someone else to do it (if you can), or forget it (if you cannot). Realize that arguing about it only causes unhappiness to all concerned. If we are sweet about it and do not argue and sulk, we accomplish much more. Sweetness in a wife will get things done that a sharp tongue will never accomplish.

Third, do you ever fuss at your husband for taking you for granted? “You just seem to expect me to cook and clean, wash and iron, and take care of the children, etc.” Well, I wonder

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**We’ll Wake Up to Sleep No More**

*H. L. Gradwoth*

All the dead will rise up from their graves that day  
We’ll wake up to sleep no more;  
There’ll be no distractions, there’ll be no delay  
When we wake up to sleep no more!  
Your money won’t help you when He sounds the Call  
We’ll wake up to sleep no more;  
In fact nothing else will then matter at all:  
When we wake up to sleep no more!  
He’ll take all His Own to a City on High,  
We’ll wake up to sleep no more;  
And where He is taking us we’ll never die,  
When we wake up to sleep no more!  
There at last from all troubles forever free  
We’ll wake up to sleep no more;  
Over death and the grave the last Victory:  
When we wake up to sleep no more!  
In Heaven no sorrows, no troubles, no pain,  
We’ll wake up to sleep no more;  
The Heavenly Crown at long last we shall gain:  
When we wake up to sleep no more!  
Earthly faith will give way to Heavenly Sight:  
We’ll wake up to sleep no more;  
No sun and no moon for the Lord is the Light  
When we wake up to sleep no more!

*Dothan, AL*
how much we take our husbands for granted? How often do you thank your husband for going to work every day—rain or shine? How often do you ever think about his big responsibility of taking care of the family and thank him for doing such a good job? Husbands, as a rule, are under pressure because they know it is up to them to keep a job, send the children to college, make payments on the house, et al. Instead of concentrating on how they take us for granted, we should concentrate on thanking them, encouraging them, and praising them. We will find that, as a rule, they will then work much harder and be more successful. We will also have a happier husband who will appreciate us more, thank us more often, and praise us to others. (Read Proverbs 31:28 regarding the righteous woman.)

**Conclusion**

In all the things we have thought about, I hope we can see that if we hope to be happy, and if we are to have happy husbands and happy children, we must learn to accept without fussing, quarreling, or nagging all of the little, petty things that come our way. We must learn as quickly as possible that what we considered so terrible at the time really meant very little. Within one month’s time, as a rule, we will not even remember what we were so upset about and what we had such a quarrel about with our husband! Someone has said, “Let us be a little kinder, let us be a little blinder to the faults of those around us.”

Every good wife, in the sense of Titus 2:5, will take a little more than her share of the blame, and a little less than her share of the credit. She will learn patience. I wonder how often God thinks we pray to Him in this manner: “Oh Lord, give me patience, but give it right now!” Patience never comes “right now.” We pray for it and then we work, work, and work to have it. This is another reason older women should teach the younger women. They have had more time to learn patience and all that patience is.

How many of you scored 100% on the tests? In case you are feeling that you are not being the good wife God planned for you to be, I want you to know that I am feeling the same way. I am also convinced that older women should be teaching these things more often to the younger women. I believe that both older and younger women should be trying harder to be a good wife, in the sense of benefiting her husband and supporting him to others. Let us be prudent wives (Pro. 19:14).

A prudent wife is from the Lord. Prudence is wisdom in action or practice as well as words spoken. We should all be in training to live our later years with our husband in the way God planned for a husband and wife to live—together as one flesh (Gen. 2:24). “One flesh” means one in mind and one in purpose, as well as one in flesh physically, living joyfully together as Ecclesiastes 9:9 instructs.

How wonderful it would be if every husband and wife could say with Robert Browning:

Grow old along with me,  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life for which the first was made;  
Our times are in His hands  
Who saith, “A whole I planned,”  
Youth shows but half;  
Trust God;  
See all, nor be afraid!
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher Marge Williams
Charles Williams Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey Bill Busch
Al Flesher Horace Myrick
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe’s grandson)

Wednesday Bible Reading
February 22—Dale Cunningham

Please Remember
February 22
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm,
in the auditorium.

February 27
Visitation Group 4 will meet at
6:00 pm.

February 29
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
pm, in the auditorium.
How Could I Have Been So Blind to Have Missed It?

Redeeming Sunset: The Plan

Johnny Oxendine

Over the last few years we have often looked at the unfolding of liberal stirrings in the brotherhood with sadness and concern. The comments made have been with the possible consideration/explanation that brethren, who may have been involved in lectureships, conferences, etc., may have been simply unaware of what the Scriptures mean/intend/imply when they say to “have no fellowship” (Eph. 5:11). However, upon careful reflection, I now see that this has been a larger, if not entirely conscious plan all along in an attempt to unite and amass forces, regardless of doctrine/scriptural positions or implications against anyone who was opposed to the scam/sham of Apologetics Press—which eventually spread to Memphis (MSOP). This to the total disregard for associations with known false teachers and unscriptural positions—as one can see in the vehement criticism of pointing out false teachers and unscriptural positions (and associations with those who hold them).

Wondering why some brethren were traveling to the Tahoe Encampment was a puzzle, since it is a well-known bastion of liberal influence (Sunset—formerly School of Preaching—is all one needs to know). Yet, over the last five years many who would never have hardly said the word “Sunset” were, in fact, offering their services to appear on the programs with Sunset speakers, teachers, et al. This has included popular speakers such as Phil Sanders, Brad Harrub, Joe Wells, and now, men from Freed.

Even more troubling was the question of why congregations seemed unconcerned that these men actually were going to Tahoe, since they were being invited to speak at what had been conservative venues. A couple of years ago we mentioned that Sanders was at both a Sunset Workshop and the Memphis School
of Preaching lectures in the same year. That is quite a feat! Some of the speakers at Tahoe two years ago also made it to the Polishing the Pulpit series, and maybe they will again—I mean, as it stands, what is the difference? There has never been any doubt of the influence Sunset had in missions abroad (remember how they took over in Ethiopia?) and, now through their satellite programs, in local congregations. But there is also no question that the teaching of many of their faculty on marriage, divorce, and remarriage is as false as they come.

Truman Scott, in his discussion with Wayne Jackson in 1983, showed how far one would go to allow the guilty party to remarry, and he was one of the deans at the school—having great influence over numerous programs. Nothing has changed at Sunset, so where did change occur? It now seems crystal clear that brethren are ready and willing to accept the teaching of Sunset, Schertz, Miller, Mac Deaver, and any others into the fold! No longer is it a concern that opposing doctrinal differences should play an important role in the work of the church.

I totally missed this! I had thought, all of these years, that the integrity of the Scriptures might actually mean something to these brethren, and that it was simply an unawareness of circumstances that led to these odd occurrences (maybe they did not know about these engagements?). However, now, with these brethren from Freed attending the Tahoe camp last year with Chris Swinford from Sunset (who took over Scott’s old position), I can only see this as purposeful—not an accident. Something larger is afoot, and I am now wondering if all of the brethren who have thrown their lots in with some of these brethren are really willing to go all the way—as some no doubt will—into the land of make-believe (error).

San Mateo, CA

Testing My Worth

Delbert Goins

“But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another” (Gal. 6:4).

Genuiness of conversion is based upon one’s knowledge of the Word, because the more one knows, the more fervent one will be, that is, should he faithfully obey whatsoever is commanded by our Lord. The Scriptures require personal examination: “But let a man examine himself (1 Cor. 11:28) and “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Cor. 13:5). Examine is to test, scrutinize to determine the quality of our inner self. The life we live is a solid test with convincing answers to such questions as: Am I an asset or a liability to the local body of Christ? Do I help or hinder the cause? Do I add strength and moral fiber to the church purchased by the blood of Christ? A hundred more questions aid in discovery of who we are.

I can measure my worth to Christ and His body should I see myself as others see me. Probably the better question here is, “If every member of the body were exactly like me, what kind of a body would the church be?” If
The Bible

This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

• Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.
• It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.
• It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, and the Christian’s charter.
• Here Paradise is restored, Heaven is opened, and the ways of Hell are disclosed.
• Christ is its grand object, our good its design, and the redemption of man its end.

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher Marge Williams
Charles Williams Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey Bill Busch
Al Flesher Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert Nancy Travis
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Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe’s grandson)
Alvin Myrick (Myrick’s son)

New Arrival
Our congratulations is extended to Bill and Peggy Crowe in the birth of their great-granddaughter on February 20. Elliotte Mae Crowe weighed 7 lbs 11 oz.

Wednesday Bible Reading
February 29—Ray Foshee

Please Remember
February 29
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
Will Modernism Destroy Us?

Harrell Davidson

In the past several years we have seen modernism raising its ugly head in the churches of Christ. Several elderships and many preachers have taught regarding the perils of modernism. These saw the effects of it in various congregations as well as in many denominations. We raised our voices and some heard while others did not care. Those who a few years ago had the “I don’t care” attitudes are today given over to modernism and its trends. We submit that modernism is not a new thing at all. In fact, the tempter was the first modernist. When Satan said, “yea hath God said” he began the slippery slope down the dark road of modernism. Modernism promised in the temptation something that is impossible for man to be—“as God.” We must understand that modernism denies the reality of sin. Modernism waters sin down to the point that it no longer exists regardless of what the Scriptures teach. For instance, look what Adam said after the fall, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (Gen. 3:12). Eve blamed the serpent, Adam blamed God, and from then until now man has not been prone to shoulder his own personal responsibilities for the most part. Very few in the Scriptures admitted that they had sinned. We want to shift responsibility to someone or something else because we must white wash our own faults and set out thinking toward a more modern view of the Word to justify ourselves. Why? Because modernism is man’s effort to make the Bible conform in varying degrees to what man wants all the way to reconstructing the Gospel to the restructuring the church. Ah, now we see why so much liberalism and compromise permeates us today. Many do not want to do what the Bible says so we will get us a new Bible that will suit our own style of living or we will ignore plain pas-
The modernist goes on with these thoughts and teaches that “everything dwells in varying degrees and can be measured.” Measured by what? Of course, by the instrument or thing that the modernist creates! This would require some method and the way to determine method is very important. For instance, you cannot smell, taste, or see the modernist. An x-ray machine will not find them out. However, their words do and will betray them.

Subjectivity led to this malady in a large way. The conduct of some Christians makes others resign from the thought of pure Christianity and this is hypocrisy. Division has been created among us as well as the religious world in general. This, in my judgment, is one of the things that has led many toward agnosticism. And, why not? The modernist already rejects the Bible especially every miracle that is given therein. There is no study among them except trying to find a defense of the very selfish doctrine they hold dear. They can all day long tell one what the Bible does not say while ignoring what it does say.

All of us need to study the Bible more than we do because this is the only thing that will lead us to a wholesome Christianity. We need to ask for evidence. We need to state (live) our faith instead of showing a lack of faith. We need to teach the Scriptures to our children. As long as we feed them with intellectualism, modernism will flourish. Modernism will starve to death if we will feed ourselves and the people we teach the pure Word of God.

Obion, TN

The Indestructible Book
J. Noel Merideth

The Holy Bible cannot be destroyed; it is the indestructible book. Jehoiakim in the Old Testament cut the roll of Jeremiah’s prophecy with a penknife and sent it to the flames, but it was written again and not destroyed. Jehoiakim died in disgrace and was given the burial of an animal—the Word of God lived on. In the fourth century A.D. Diocletian, the Roman Emperor, attacked the Bible and sought to have all the copies of the Bible destroyed. Twenty years later another Roman Emperor, Constantine, sought to put the New Testament in all the churches. The Word of God lived on. Voltaire claimed that the Bible would be a forgotten book within one hundred years. Within less time than that the Geneva Bible Society was using his home as a basis from which it distributed millions of Bibles. Bob Ingersol, an American agnostic, once held a Bible high in his hand and boasted, “In fifteen years I will have this book in the morgue.” Within fifteen years Ingersol was in the morgue and the grave; but the Bible lives on.

The centuries come and go, but the Bible stands; empires rise and fall and are forgotten, but the Bible stands; unbelief abandons it, but the Bible stands; higher critics deny its inspiration, but the Bible shines; and, modernism tries to explain it away, but it stands. “For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89); “the word of our God
shall stand for ever” (Isa. 40:8); “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mat. 24:35).

This century has seen the widespread influence of liberalism and modernism. Basically, liberalism and modernism is an effort to get away from the inspiration and authority of the Bible. The liberals often present themselves as humble and pious followers of the Bible, but in dealing with them you will soon find out that they are arrogant and slander faithful Gospel preachers every chance they get. They pretend to believe and teach the Bible, but they do not believe its statements or morals and try to raise doubts to undermine the confidence of their students. They always say they have been misunderstood, when in reality they have been unmasked. They claim to be religious but will not sacrifice for Christ nor help those who cannot return them a favor. They claim to preach the Gospel, but really preach the doctrines of men. They claim to hold forth the Bible but deny so many verses that members who follow them scarcely have any Bible left. The liberals and modernist say Gospel preachers are too narrow, but Gospel preachers are the ones who are pointing people to the narrow way of Jesus (Mat. 7:13-14). Do not let anyone take your Bible away from you.

Do not let anyone shake your confidence in the Gospel. Do not let any “perverted version” cloud your mind on the Bible. If we live by the Bible, properly divided and correctly applied (2 Tim. 2:15), we may at last hear those welcome words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Mat. 25:21).

Deceased

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What The Bible Says About:

June 9-13, 2012


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Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read        Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac        Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey      Bill Busch
Al Flesher         Horace Myrick
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Connie Kois (Dot Dodd's sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe's grandson)

Wednesday Bible Reading
March 7—Andrew Hatcher

Please Remember
March 11
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

March 12
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

March 18
Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
If you have read any material by the agents of change who have gone out from us but who still claim to be part of us, or if you have heard any of their speeches, you know that one of the common mistakes they make is to associate the church of Christ with a movement rather than with The New Testament. Liberals perceive the churches of Christ as one of three branches of the Restoration Movement. The other two, according to them, are the Disciples of Christ, and the Christian Church denominations. Some of those promoting this idea blame the churches of Christ as the culprit in what they see as a division in the movement, because, according to them, we have allowed human traditions to become part of doctrine, and thus alienated ourselves from the brethren in the other branches of the Restoration Movement.

Some of those who exalt the Restoration Movement above the church are willing to compromise points of doctrine, instrumental music for instance, to extend fellowship on the basis of an irresponsible unity in diversity. Others, who pay too much homage to the Restoration Movement, despite insisting that unity can only come based on the authority of the Scriptures, nevertheless argue that members of the Christian churches and the Disciples of Christ are our brethren who are caught up in some errors of doctrine and practice.

No. The Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ churches are denominations—nothing more and nothing less. Their members are not our brethren. Neither is the church of Christ a product of the Restoration Movement; it is the product of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Truth revealed in the New Testament, and begun to be preached on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord.

Jesus promised to build His church (Mat.
those who obeyed the Gospel at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost were added to the church (Acts 2:47), not a movement. When the Judaizers stirred up trouble in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas did not go to Jerusalem where they were received by a movement, but by the church and the apostles and elders (15:4). Paul did not write the letters of 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians to a movement, but to the churches. The one body of Christ is not a movement, but the church of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). Paul did not write Timothy, so Timothy would know how to behave in a movement, but in the church of the living God (1 Tim. 3:15).

One of the things that are amazingly sad and perplexing is that some, who have long understood that the church of Christ is not a branch of the Restoration or any other movement, are now using the services of some who do not have that understanding. In the February 2006, Christian Chronicle, Phil Sanders stated that he believes baptized believers in the Independent Christian Churches are his brethren. This writer’s alma mater, Memphis School of Preaching has long and correctly opposed that error. So, why is it that if one read the schedule of the March 28 April 1, 2010 MSOP lectureship, the speaker listed for the Wednesday, March 31, 7:00-8:00 p.m. slot was Phil Sanders?

It is not just a matter of how one looks at things, it is a matter of truth, that the Independent Christian Churches comprise a denominational body of man. That is true, because the church of Christ is not a product of the Restoration Movement. It is the blood bought institution of heaven. It is the church of our Lord, for which He

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Self-Deceit
Paul Vaughn

No one wants or likes to be deceived. To be deceived is when one has been misled by falsehood to say or act in certain ways that can be dangerous to his well-being. Being deceived makes one feel like a fool and it brings embarrassment. Yet, the pinnacle of foolishness is being self-deceived. When one is self-deceived he has tricked his own heart into believing a falsehood, leading his own soul into darkness of an abyss where fools roam in packs because their numbers are legion. They labor to justify error by their own thoughts, through their own pride and wisdom. They never come to the light of truth following the delusion of wisdom, being lead astray by their own knowledge or traditions because they reject the wisdom from God.

The Scriptures teach that all who are self-deceived are on the path to destruction. It is written, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Pro. 16:25). By believing what "seems right" one is foolishly traveling the dark road of error blindly heading toward the demise of his life.

When men indulge themselves on their own wisdom, they slowly poison their heart to God's way for man. They began to rationalize bad behavior and poor choices believing they are following the way of righteousness, but instead they follow their own goodness. No one will never make it to Heaven by doing "what seems right." Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mat. 7:21).

Every one of us should take a reality check every day by comparing our way of life by Holy Writ. This is accomplished by being completely honest with Scriptures, not reading into the Word of God our ideas or our traditions because once this is done we are self-deceived.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey  Bill Busch
Al Flesher  Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd's sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe's grandson)

Wednesday Bible Reading
March 14—Jim Loy

Please Remember
March 18
Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

March 19
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.

March 26
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.
The “Isaiah” Attitude

Dub McClish

Seven centuries before the Christ came, God had a job that needed to be done. He asked, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Isaiah replied, “Here am I; send me” (Isa. 6:8). The willingness of the prophet to accept the task to which God referred is exemplary for those who seek to serve God in any era.

Notice some of the background of the “Isaiah” attitude. He had seen a vision of the Lord in His glory, sitting upon His eternal throne. Such a glorious God deserved the fullest service. Could it be that so few in the church and in the world have the attitude of Isaiah because they have never caught the vision of the Jehovah’s glory and power? Of course, He does not manifest Himself to people today in direct visions of glory as the one Isaiah saw. However, He has enabled us to see the great measure of His glory, majesty, and authority through His Word and His world.

When men visualize His glory they will be more likely to serve Him.

Isaiah was very humble before the Lord and felt himself unworthy to be so near Him (6:5). So many are hindered from serving God wholeheartedly because of pride. Pride prevents our assuming the role of servants. It makes us want to protect our dignity above all. Pride convinces us that we know more than God knows. It makes us think we can improve on God’s eternal plans. It makes us think our plans are more important than God’s plans. Until we learn to take up our “towels” (John 13:3-16) as well as our “crosses,” and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23), the “Isaiah” attitude will elude us.

Isaiah humbly confessed his sins and his unworthiness before God (Isa. 6:5). Many people refuse to obey the plan of salvation because they feel inadequate and unworthy. Often when members of the church commit
sin, they then drift further away from God because they realize they have sinned. This is the classic “catch 22” or endless cycle of many lives: people sin because they refuse or fail to serve, and they continue to refuse or fail to serve because they have sinned. The only solution is to break the cycle, as did Isaiah—obtain the Lord’s forgiveness by following His plan for our forgiveness.

With the vision of God’s glory and the assurance of God’s pardon fresh in his mind, Isaiah was ready to go wherever God would send and to serve however God would assign. Oh, how the Lord needs men, women, boys, and girls with the “Isaiah” attitude. The Lord’s call for workers remains in effect: “We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). If we have the attitude of Isaiah, we will always be ready to respond to the full extent of our abilities and opportunities with a hearty, “Here am I; send me.”

Denton, TX

Church Membership Is Essential

Bruce Stulting

I was asked the following question: “Must everyone be a member of the church of which you are a member to go to heaven?”

In answer to this question, let me first say that my membership in any church will not affect anyone’s salvation except my own. However, this question does recognize the fact that there are multitudes of religious bodies in the world all of which claim to be the church. Is God pleased with this division? Since “God is not the author of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33) the divided religious world cannot be pleasing to Him.

In Colossians 1:18 Paul stated that Jesus is “the head of the body, the church.” We see here that the church and the body are the same, yet in Ephesians 4:4 Paul wrote that “there is one body.” If the body and the church are the same and there is only one body then it follows that there is only one church. The question then becomes, “Out of all the religious bodies, which is the right one?” We must turn to the Bible for this answer.

Jesus is the founder of the one true church. The Bible teaches in Acts 20:28 that Jesus purchased the church with His blood. Jesus said that He would be the builder of the church (Mat. 16:18). Paul said that Jesus was the head of the church and savior of the body (Eph. 5:23). Did Jesus establish the church of which you are a member?

Since Jesus is the Head and Savior of the church; it is proper that the church wear His name. This is not only proper, but more importantly, it is scriptural as well. In Romans 16:16, Paul stated, “the churches of Christ salute you.” Does the church of which you are a member wear the name of the one who died for it?

Jesus prophesied in Mark 9:1 that the church would be established when the Holy Spirit came with power and that this would take place during the lifetime of the apostles. This prophecy was fulfilled at Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection A.D. 33. It was at this time that the Holy Spirit

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came with power and the “Word of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem” (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4).

Was the church of which you are a member established in Jerusalem on Pentecost, A.D. 33?

In Ephesians 5:23 Paul stated that “Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.” It is then necessary to be a member of the New Testament church to go to heaven. The terms of membership are quite simple. One must hear and believe the Word of the Gospel (Acts 18:8). Based upon our faith we must repent of our sins and confess Jesus (8:37; 17:30). Then one is baptized by immersion in water for the remission of sins (2:38; 8:36-39). At this point the Lord adds one to the only true church (2:47). Have you met these conditions?

Huntsville, TX
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey  Bill Busch
Al Flesher  Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
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Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe’s grandson)

Wednesday Bible Reading
**March 21** — Ray Pierce

Please Remember
**March 26**
Visitiation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.

**March 28**
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

**April 2**
Visitiation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Being an Englishman, I find the following account, from the book, *A Treasury of Inspirational Illustrations*, by Earl C. Willer, page 108, very interesting:

A caretaker of a church in England used to tell the story of a momentary shock and dismay that came over the people of England, due to a misunderstanding. The Battle of Waterloo was being fought and all the people were vitally interested in its outcome. If Napoleon’s forces defeated the Duke of Wellington there would be the dismal future of living under the Emperor of France. There were no telegraphs in those days so a sail ship was to semaphore the news to a signal man on top of Winchester Cathedral. Then the message would be passed on across England. When the ship came, the signal man on board semaphored the first word—“Wellington.” The next was “Defeated” and then the fog came down and the ship could not be seen.

“‘Wellington Defeated’ went on across England, and there was a great gloom over the countryside. After about two or three hours the fog lifted and the signal was repeated: “Wellington defeated the enemy.” Then came great rejoicing.

Almost 2000 years ago, there was a great gloom among many in Jerusalem and surrounding cities. Word had spread concerning the crucifixion, death, and burial of the one who had claimed to be the Son of God. His body had been placed in a new tomb and a great stone had been placed over the opening and a seal placed on it by the authorities (Mat. 24; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19). All of those who had been opposed to Jesus of Nazareth and His teachings could now rejoice and spread the message, “Jesus defeated.” Everything that He had stood for, principles of doing right, being fair, and the hope He taught and brought had now been dashed.
and laid to rest, it would appear that evil and injustice had won and ruled the day. The love that He had taught was now in the grave. It seemed that it was all over, all had come to an end, sin was the conqueror, man stood defeated, and wrong became the victor. Even those who had been close to Jesus had given up thinking that all their hopes had been dashed. Some were so disappointed that they decided to go fishing. However, the message was not complete. When the fog lifted three days later, there was the complete and true message. Jesus—defeated our arch enemy Satan. Then there arose among His followers an excitement and rejoicing like had never been known before. Jesus, the Son of God, had arisen from the dead never to die again. Because of that victory you and I can have the desire for and the hope of heaven. Because of Christ’s resurrection, we can know that just as the grave was unable to hold Him, neither can it hold us. The banner of hope waves high for everyone who has obeyed the Gospel and become a child of God and continues to be faithful to Him. Such is the blessed assurance that we have in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Belvedere, SC

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What The Bible Says About:
Open Forum Questions
If you have a question send it to mhatcher@gmail.com

Notes from 2 Timothy
J. Noel Merideth

In 2 Timothy 2:3-6 Paul gives three figures which suggest the hard service which is in Christ. The soldier, the athlete, and the husbandman. Paul gives the simile of comparing service to Christ to that of a soldier. The soldier has to go on duty and leave comforts, he must face the hardships of service, and the dangers of the battlefield. Paul points to his own example in saying, “Suffer hardship with me.” Paul did not ask Timothy to submit to that which he was unwilling to do; he suffered for his loyalty to Christ, and he asked Timothy to be willing to accept similar hardship. “No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier” (2:4). A soldier “on service” is one actually engaged in performing the obligations of a soldier. A soldier on duty must devote himself to the service of him who enrolled him. A soldier, to please his officers, must perform their orders without interference from his ties of home or business affairs. The comparison is that the Christian soldier, engaged in the service of the Lord, must keep himself free from the entangling affairs of the world which would hinder him in performing his duties.

“And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully” (2:5). In this verse the Christian is represented as an athlete. The reference is to an athlete in the ancient games which were so well-known in Greek history. Those who had a part in the games were required to conform
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to the rules of the game. They had to undergo much training to participate. Paul’s comparison is that Timothy must, therefore, conform to the laws of Christ, and not give up the discipline which would come through training. Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible (1 Cor. 9:25).

“The husbandmen that laboreth must be the first to partake of the fruits” (2 Tim. 2:6). Here the figure changes to that of a husbandman or farmer. The farmer should be the first to enjoy the fruit of his hands; but, he must first labor to have the fruit. One cannot receive the harvest of the fields if he does not work the crop. The comparison is that Timothy must recognize that for him to receive the fruit of Christian labor, he must engage in work in the Lord’s field.

“Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things” (2:7). Paul had used three illustrations to impress upon Timothy the necessity of concentration, endurance, and faithful toil to please the Lord as a preacher and a Christian. These points were drawn from the activity of soldiers, athletes, and farmers. Timothy was to consider these points carefully. If he properly considered these points, he would see that he was a Christian soldier fighting under Christ in a spiritual war with evil, that he was a Christian athlete running for the prize of eternal life, and a Christian farmer sowing the seed of the kingdom and looking to a bountiful harvest in the judgment.

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher Marge Williams
Charles Williams Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey Bill Busch
Al Flesher Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert Nancy Travis
Bobbie LaBryer Aleacia Godwin
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe’s grandson)

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathies is extended to Ashley Brower in the death of her aunt, Alta Cork. Please keep Ashley in your prayers.

Wednesday Bible Reading
March 28—Fred Stancliff

Please Remember
March 28
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
God “In a Box”  

Brad Green

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me (Exo. 20:2-5).

God is everlasting (Psa. 41:13), eternal, the Creator of all things (Gen. 1), and without Him nothing exists. It is somewhat understandable that man would want to see what he worships. However, because of the nature of God, the evidence He has given us should be enough to plant and strengthen man’s faith. God is not in subjection to man. Man cannot move God or call upon Him like a genie in a bottle. It is for this reason that there were to be no images made. Man was never to think he could be God’s master. Localized images were pieces of property that men had created to worship and could be moved at any time and to any place. They were able to be broken, hidden, and controlled by man. God’s existence is far above that of man and man’s comprehension and therefore should not and must not be thought of or worshiped as something that grants wishes. Men have always tried to control their gods and God Himself.

After a defeat to the Philistines, Israel called for the ark and stated that “it” would save them out of the hands of their enemies (1 Sam. 4:3). The Israelites had made the mistake of thinking that they had God confined to a box. An “it” could save nothing. An “it” has no breath (Jer. 51:17). The Philistines took the Ark of
the Covenant and placed it beside their god, Dagon. When Dagon fell to the floor, man had to pick it up and place it back where it belonged. Obviously, a god that cannot even take care of itself is worthless.

The Israelites built a golden calf and God told Moses that the people worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt (Exo. 32:8).

It is amazing that an intelligent being could possibly believe that a calf that they themselves had built out of pieces of jewelry had saved them from Egyptian bondage. It was, however, an attempt to put God where and when they wanted Him.

There are many Bible examples of men trying to control God. Though there may not be many physical images or statues in the likeness of a god today, many continue to think of God as being a wish maker who is at man’s beckoned call. Doing so can be traced to the physical lusts and desires of man.

Men who do what is right in their own eyes (Jud. 21:25) and teach for themselves doctrines of men (Col. 2:20-23) do not care what God has commanded. They simply want “a god” by their side to comfort them and their evil decisions. They devise a doctrine to which they can adhere and then try to make God conform to their teachings. “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9). God has given us the pattern by which we must live and worship in the New Testament. All else is “vain.”

Lenoir City, TN

Iris Gallaher
1928 – 2012

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Bill Gallaher and his family, in the death of his beloved wife Iris, who passed from this life on March 29, 2012. Bill and Iris moved to Pensacola, Florida, and began to attend the Bellview Church of Christ in 1955. Iris taught in the Children’s Bible class program for many years. While Bill served as an elder of the Bellview congregation for 37 years, Iris was a true helpmeet to her husband.

We were truly blessed to have had Iris Gallaher among us to provide an example as a Christian, a wife, a mother, and a friend. Iris’ godly life was a great influence for good as she and Bill labored in the cause of Christ with the saints at Bellview throughout the years.

Iris will be greatly missed, but we can console ourselves with the thought of heaven rejoicing with her as she explores the beauties of that city, sings praises to Him who died to save us, and meet with the saints gone before.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them (Rev. 14:13).
The Tax Man Cometh!
Jimmie Z. Gribble

There are some things we cannot avoid. One of those things is right around the corner. It is known by several different terms, best known as April 15th. This date comes around each year, at the same time, bringing with it the same problems and anxiety. This year is no different. On that day some of the post offices will remain open longer, or have employees by an outdoor mail box, so the returns can be post marked on April 15th, to avoid penalties for filing late. People know this date is coming and yet, will always wait till the last moment. By the way, are you one of these last minute filers? I always try to have mine done by the end of March—not this year, though. Maybe tomorrow! Even if we are late, we could pay whatever penalties and still be all right.

There is a day coming, not like April 15th that comes each year. This day that is coming comes only once. This day no one knows when it will come—though some have sought to so proclaim. When this day comes there will no person standing outside so one can get his filing done on time. When this day comes there will not be any longer hours for getting things straight. When this day come there will no paying penalties and making everything all right. When this day comes, all things must have already been taken care of. This day, of course, is the judgment day. Jesus so taught that this day would come as a thief in the night, meaning we know not when this day will come. He said:

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (Mat. 24:42-44).

Peter echoed the same when he wrote, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). People know it is coming, but are living as though it will never come, or, else, that they will have time to prepare. Again Jesus taught, “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.… Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Mat. 25:10, 13).

Beloved, we can make it through April 15th, ready or not. But that day, that judgment day, if we are ready, we will make it. If we are not, He never knew us. What a day that will be!

Portsmouth, VA
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey  Bill Busch
Al Flesher  Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
Bobbie LaBryer
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch's sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond's nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond's sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd's sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe's grandson)
Hailie Busch (Busch's grand-daughter)

Wednesday Bible Reading
April 4—Orville Worley

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

April 8
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

April 9
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
While I Can  
Dub McClish  

Atheism, Humanism, and Secularism now control many of the levers of power in our nation. Law-making judges have driven God and the Bible from many public institutions. “Political correctness” has cast a pall of liberal-inspired censorship upon us, which has begun to be translated into “hate speech” laws. The ascent of national amorality has paralleled the opposition to God, Jesus Christ, and the Bible.  

God-lovers love the souls of the God-haters, but despise the things they say and do. If they have their way, it will someday be a crime to preach and practice certain parts of the Gospel of Christ. The nation founded to a great degree by Bible-believers seeking refuge from persecution is now rapidly becoming the source of such persecution. What irony!  

Therefore, while I can (without being arrested), I will continue to proclaim:  

Jehovah God as the Creator of the universe and as the only true and living God. There is no other rational explanation for the origin of all things except an omniscient, omnipotent, eternal Being.  

The Bible to be the Word of God, revealed by Him to inspired men, by which we learn of His nature and of our own. It provides the record of our origin, our purpose for being, and our destiny. It alone is the infallible, objective standard of righteous behavior and true religion.  

Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the one and only Savior of mankind to Whom men must submit to be saved from eternal ruin. His disciples win converts by persuasion, never by force. Before Him all will someday stand in Judgment.  

Abortion to be murder. It mercilessly, cruelly kills the most innocent and defenseless among us. “Thou shalt not kill” was God’s law long before He inscribed those words on a stone tablet. The judges and lawyers who legalized this crime,
along with the medical personnel who perform it, have the blood of 50 million+ innocents on their hands.

**Homosexuality to be wickedness.** God so calls it, as well as “abomination,” “vile passions,” “unnatural,” “unseemly,” “unrighteousness,” and going after “strange flesh.” Its impenitent practitioners will not be in Heaven.

Islam to be a non-peaceful, false religion. It is a religio-political system that thrives on “conversion” and conformity by force. Peaceful Muslims are simply those who are not true to the Koran. It despises “freedom of religion” and would destroy the Bible and Christianity if it could.

*Denton, TX*

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### 37th Annual Bellview Lectures
**June 9-13, 2012**

**What The Bible Says About:**

#### Saturday, June 9
- 7:00 pm Truth  David P. Brown
- 7:45 pm False Teachers  John West
- 9:00 am Morality  Gene Hill
- 10:00 am Worship  Ken Chumbley
- 2:00 pm Bible Translations  John West
- 3:00 pm The Tongue  Dennis “Skip” Francis

#### Sunday, June 10
- 9:00 am Charity  John West
- 10:00 am Worship  Ken Chumbley
- Lunch Break
- 2:00 pm The Church  John West
- 3:00 pm The Tongue  Dennis “Skip” Francis

#### Monday, June 11
- 9:00 am Inspiration of the Bible  Michael Hatcher
- 10:00 am Home  Tim Cozad
- 11:00 am Works of the Flesh  Roelf Ruffner
- Lunch Break
- 1:30 pm Emotions  Charles Pogue
- 2:30 pm Conflict  Gene Hill
- 3:30 pm Open Forum:  
  - Dinner Break
- 7:00 pm Christian Growth  Wayne Blake
- 7:45 pm Baptism  Dub McClish

#### Tuesday, June 12
- 9:00 am Authority  Ken Chumbley
- 10:00 am Divorce and Remarriage  Don Tarbet
- 11:00 am Love  David P. Brown
  - Lunch Break
- 1:30 pm Christian’s Fruit  Lynn Parker
- 2:30 pm Hate  Tim Cozad
- 3:30 pm Open Forum:  
  - Dinner Break
- 7:00 pm Modesty  John Rose
- 7:45 pm Salvation  Dennis “Skip” Francis

#### Wednesday, June 13
- 9:00 am The Second Coming  Dub McClish
- 10:00 am God the Father  Wayne Blake
- 11:00 am Drinking Alcohol  Don Tarbet
  - Lunch Break
- 1:30 pm Covenants  John Rose
- 2:30 pm Christ  Roelf Ruffner
- 3:30 pm Open Forum:  
  - Dinner Break
- 7:00 pm Hell  Gary Summers
- 7:45 pm Heaven  Lynn Parker
Bellview Lectures Information

Housing
The Red Roof Inn (2591 Wilde Lake Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32526) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is $59.99—single bed and $69.99—double beds. Their phone number is 850.941.0908. Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations. If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Meals
The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch Monday – Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

Books
The lectureship book, What The Bible Says About, will be available for purchase. The price has not yet been determined. The book will contain 29 chapters. This will be a soft-cover book. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts. The books will not be mailed until after the lectures are over.

Books-on-CD

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Open Forum Questions
If you have a question send it to mhatcher@gmail.com.

Inner Light
G. K. Wallace

With many the Word of God is not the power of God unto salvation; it is only a witness to God’s Word. They tell us that as they read the Bible the Holy Spirit gives them special light on the passage read. If this is true, then the reader becomes a divine speaker for God. That is all the pope of Rome claims—he speaks for God. I had just as soon have the pope as some teenager who claims he or she has a special leading in their “call meetings” or “soul talks.” This is called by some a “personal encounter.” The Bible is set aside as a true guide and is made only a means of bringing a person into a “personal encounter.” The doctrine of “inner light” gave us every major denomination among us. Let us remember that the “Bible is right” and that “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). God’s means of converting and leading man is the Word of God (Rom. 1:16). The advocates of emotional religion talk much about the Holy Spirit and, at the same time, ignore what the Holy Spirit says in His Holy Word. The spirit that leads a man outside of the Word of God is not holy.

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Marilyn Hall
Fred Stancliff     Dot Lambert
Ella Hammac        Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey      Bill Busch
Al Flesher         Horace Myrick
Nancy Travis
Nellie Read (Baptist Hospital)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe’s grandson)
Hailie Busch (Busch’s grand-daughter)

Wednesday Bible Reading
April 11—Carl Ayliffe

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

April 15
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

April 16
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
The Bible teaches that "without faith it is impossible to please him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Faith is a necessary component in God’s plan to save man and no man can be saved without it. Since faith is so important, we must study the subject meticulously that we can attain such faith as is pleasing to God. The inspired James states, “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.… Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jam. 2:17, 24).

The Scripture plainly teaches that man is not saved by “faith only.” Therefore, for our faith to be pleasing to God, it must be accompanied by works of obedience, as is evidenced by the example of Abraham recorded in James 2:18-23.

Hebrews 11 is many times referred to as the “Faith Hall of Fame.” God has both the ability and desire to reveal His message to man. Therefore it makes complete sense that God explains what it was that pleased Him about the faith of those named in Hebrews 11.

By Faith:

• “Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” (11:4).
• “Noah…moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house” (11:7).
• “Abraham…obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.…he sojourned in the land of promise….For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (11:8-10).
• “Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac” (11:17).
• “Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau” (11:20).
• “Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped” (11:21).
• “Moses…refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than
to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them (11:24-28).

- “They [Israel] passed through the Red Sea as by dry land” (11:29).

It is more than obvious that the one attribute that made the faith of these individuals pleasing to God was that they all acted in obedience. I highlighted the action verbs in each

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37th Annual Bellview Lectures  
June 9-13, 2012

What The Bible Says About:

Saturday, June 9
7:00 pm  Truth  David P. Brown
7:45 pm  False Teachers  John West

Sunday, June 10
9:00 am  Morality  Gene Hill
10:00 am  Worship  Ken Chumbley
   Lunch Break
2:00 pm  Bible Translations  John West
3:00 pm  The Tongue  Dennis “Skip” Francis
Dinner Break
7:00 pm  Holy Spirit  Charles Pogue
7:45 pm  Satan  Gary Summers

Monday, June 11
9:00 am  Inspiration of the Bible  Michael Hatcher
10:00 am  Home  Tim Cozad
11:00 am  Works of the Flesh Roelf Ruffner
   Lunch Break
1:30 pm  Emotions  Charles Pogue
2:30 pm  Conflict  Gene Hill
3:30 pm  Open Forum:  Dinner Break
   Dinner Break
7:00 pm  Christian Growth  Wayne Blake
7:45 pm  Baptism  Dub McClish

Tuesday, June 12
9:00 am  Authority  Ken Chumbley
10:00 am  Divorce and Remarriage  Don Tarbet
11:00 am  Love  David P. Brown
   Lunch Break
1:30 pm  Christian’s Fruit  Lynn Parker
2:30 pm  Hate  Tim Cozad
3:30 pm  Open Forum:  Dinner Break
   Dinner Break
7:00 pm  Modesty  John Rose
7:45 pm  Salvation  Dennis “Skip” Francis

Wednesday, June 13
9:00 am  The Second Coming  Dub McClish
10:00 am  God the Father  Wayne Blake
11:00 am  Drinking Alcohol  Don Tarbet
   Lunch Break
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2:30 pm  Christ  Roelf Ruffner
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Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher        Marge Williams
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Nellie Read         Dot Lambert
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Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe’s grandson)
Hailie Busch (Busch’s grand-daughter)

Wednesday Bible Reading
April 18—Henry Born

Please Remember
April 23
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.

April 25
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

April 29
Dinner on the Grounds and Singing after the morning service. The evening service will be at 1:00 pm.
Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (Phi. 4:8).

When you are feeling down, depressed, upset, lonely, angst, heartbroken, or the like, try thinking on Paul's uplifting list. Whatever your trouble is, seek the truth concerning it, honestly investigate it, ask yourself what justice would do to the matter, what is the purest conduct in which you could engage to effect a settlement to the matter, what are the lovely (pleasant) aspects of your experience—no matter how difficult, there are usually some pleasant lessons learned, what good can you say about yourself or your problem, what strength have you gained from it, and ask yourself wherein is there occasion for praise to God in your ordeal. Mind you, this will not usually erase the problem, but it will help you deal with the problem in a better way. Some problems are brought on us by our actions, some by the actions of others who are our enemies, some by the actions of others who were merely ignorant of the consequences their actions would bring, and some things just happen—no one tried to make them happen, it just worked out that way. Sometimes understanding the why of a problem goes a long way in determining the best solution to it. If the problem is within you, due perhaps to a misunderstanding, or ignorance, or just a bad attitude, these exercises may well extricate it and leave you in good shape.

Always know that if you are right with God the problems that trouble you here will not follow you into Judgment, and they will not enter Heaven. You will leave them behind when you leave this world. Of course, if you know that
Heaven waits in the after-a-while, you will most probably find the strength to deal with whatever troubles you here. If you are lost, however, please do something about that now! The troubles you know today will be nothing to compare with what Hell holds in store!

Jesus loves you and knows what you are going through:

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15).

Bellview Lectures Information

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Open Forum Questions
If you have a question send it to mhatcher@gmail.com or call 850.455.7595.

Ray Pierce
1933 - 2012

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Ethel Pierce and her family in the death of her beloved husband, Ray, who passed from this life on April 22. Ray and Ethel placed membership with the Bellview congregation in 2002. In January of 2008 Ray was appointed as a Deacon. Due to health reasons he had to resign in September 2009. Both Ray and Ethel were active members of the congregation. Ray will be missed very much by his family and friends and the Bellview congregation. Please keep Ethel and her family in your prayers.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Ethel Pierce and her family in the death of her beloved husband, Ray, who passed from this life on April 22. Ray and Ethel placed membership with the Bellview congregation in 2002. In January of 2008 Ray was appointed as a Deacon. Due to health reasons he had to resign in September 2009. Both Ray and Ethel were active members of the congregation. Ray will be missed very much by his family and friends and the Bellview congregation. Please keep Ethel and her family in your prayers.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Ethel Pierce and her family in the death of her beloved husband, Ray, who passed from this life on April 22. Ray and Ethel placed membership with the Bellview congregation in 2002. In January of 2008 Ray was appointed as a Deacon. Due to health reasons he had to resign in September 2009. Both Ray and Ethel were active members of the congregation. Ray will be missed very much by his family and friends and the Bellview congregation. Please keep Ethel and her family in your prayers.

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He understands. He will not allow you to face an ordeal greater than your ability to bear: There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to es-


cape, that ye may be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10:13).

Would you be free from burdens evermore? Come to Him Who died for you. May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

*Dothan, AL*

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### 37th Annual Bellview Lectures
**June 9-13, 2012**

**What The Bible Says About:**

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<td>10:00 am Worship</td>
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<td><em>Lunch Break</em></td>
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<td>2:00 pm Bible Translations</td>
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### Sick

Remember in your prayers:
- Bill Gallaher
- Marge Williams
- Charles Williams
- Marilyn Hall
- Nellie Read
- Dot Lambert
- Ella Hammac
- Harold Cozad
- Robbie Cravey
- Bill Busch
- Al Flesher
- Horace Myrick
- Nancy Travis
- Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
- Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
- Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
- Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
- Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
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- Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
- Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
- Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
- Billy Crowe (Crowe’s grandson)
- Hailie Busch (Busch’s grand-daughter)

#### Wednesday Bible Reading

**April 25**—Elward Brantley

#### Please Remember

**April 29**

Dinner on the Grounds and Singing after the morning service. The evening service will be approximately 12:30 pm.

**May 7**

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

**May 13**

Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
Satan Turns Sin into a “Disease”

Troy M. Cummings

One of the master strokes of deceit which Satan has been able to put over on millions of people—including many Christians—is the clever whitewashing of the sin of drunkenness, dressing it up, twisting it around, and palming it off as the “disease” of “alcoholism”!

If Satan can just deceive sinners into thinking that they are not sinners, but just unfortunate victims of a “disease,” who deserve sympathy and treatment and acceptance—what more would Satan want? No sinner will be led to repent of his sin so long as he and others call it mere sickness.

We all know and agree that habitual drunkenness causes various kinds of bad or diseased conditions in the body. In fact, a large number of sins have an obviously bad effect upon the body and the brain. Ordinarily intelligent people can easily distinguish between sin and crime and the various kinds of bad results of that sin or crime; but the amazing thing is that in recent years, Satan has successfully brainwashed the public and many Christians so they confuse the sin itself with the bad physical and mental results.

I have in my files much documentary proof that many people are flatly denying that drunkenness (“Alcoholism” repeated drunkenness) is a sin or moral problem at all. They claim it is solely a medical, psychological, or psychiatric problem—a sickness or disease, and that is all. The shame is that some of the leading preachers and college professors have taught this.

God in His Word is absolutely authoritative and infinitely wise, and He has made it perfectly plain to all those not blinded by the foolishness of man’s wisdom, that drunkenness is a sin, a “work of the flesh” that will keep one out of Heaven, if he/she does not truly repent of it—and that means stopping it.

If you will study the following statements
from God, and believe and exalt them to the place of supreme authority over all of man’s notions, there is not a doubt as to what conclusion you must draw. Please study every one of these passages: Luke 21:34-36, Romans 13:12-14, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:9-11, Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, 1 Peter 4:3-5.

These passages clearly teach that drunkenness is a sin (not one word mentioned about any “disease”) that will keep one out of heaven, and furthermore, that a drunkard (who

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**37th Annual Bellview Lectures**  
**June 9-13, 2012**

**Saturday, June 9**

7:00 pm  Truth  David P. Brown  
7:45 pm  False Teachers  John West

**Sunday, June 10**

9:00 am  Morality  Gene Hill  
10:00 am  Worship  Ken Chumbley

**Lunch Break**

2:00 pm  Bible Translations  John West  
3:00 pm  The Tongue  Dennis “Skip” Francis

**Dinner Break**

7:00 pm  The Holy Spirit  Charles Pogue  
7:45 pm  Satan  Gary Summers

**Monday, June 11**

9:00 am  The Inspiration of the Bible  Michael Hatcher  
10:00 am  The Home  Tim Cozad  
11:00 am  The Works of the Flesh  Roelf Ruffner

**Lunch Break**

1:30 pm  Emotions  Charles Pogue  
2:30 pm  Conflict  Gene Hill  
3:30 pm  Open Forum:  

**Dinner Break**

7:00 pm  Christian Growth  Wayne Blake  
7:45 pm  Baptism  Dub McClish

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**Tuesday, June 12**

9:00 am  Authority  Ken Chumbley  
10:00 am  Divorce and Remarriage  Don Tarbet  
11:00 am  Love  David P. Brown

**Lunch Break**

1:30 pm  The Christian’s Fruit  
2:30 pm  Hate  Tim Cozad  
3:30 pm  Open Forum:  

**Dinner Break**

7:00 pm  Modesty  John Rose  
7:45 pm  Salvation  Dennis “Skip” Francis

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**Wednesday, June 13**

9:00 am  The Second Coming  Dub McClish  
10:00 am  God the Father  Wayne Blake  
11:00 am  Drinking Alcohol  Don Tarbet

**Lunch Break**

1:30 pm  Covenants  John Rose  
2:30 pm  Christ  Roelf Ruffner  
3:30 pm  Open Forum:  

**Dinner Break**

7:00 pm  Hell  Gary Summers  
7:45 pm  Heaven  Lynn Parker
does not repent) is to be disciplined by the church, to be “put away” from the fellowship, by congregational action, for the purpose, as Paul wrote, “the destruction of the flesh” (lust of the flesh), “that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5).

Paul stated:
I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat (5:11).

The test is before us; are we going to honor and obey God in the plain teaching of His di-

vine Word; or are we going to disobey God and not go along with the Bible—contradict-
ing modern psychology and psychiatry?  

Deceased

Open Forum Questions
If you have a question send it to mhatcher@gmail.com 
or call 850.455.7595

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**Wednesday Bible Reading**

**May 2**—Paul Brantley

**Please Remember**

**May 7**

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

**May 13**

Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
Mother’s Day

Sunday is the day we mortals have agreed upon to honor the most wonderful human being in our lives—our sweet, precious mother. There can be no reasonable doubt but what God wants us to love, honor, and cherish our mothers (Eph. 6:1-3). While every day should be Mother’s Day, we certainly are not opposed to setting aside one particular day just for her. As a matter of fact, we think it is a splendid idea. Let us make sure our mothers know how special they are and how much we love and appreciate them. Let us do something really special for them on their day.

No one has had a greater influence in molding our lives than our mothers. Someone has determined that from the time we are born until we are twenty-one we are awake 105,000 hours. We spend approximately 10,000 hours in the school room and 2,100 hours in Bible classes, which leaves 93,000 hours under the direct supervision of our parents. Since the father is generally the bread winner and a survey some time ago revealed that the average American father spends only seven minutes per week alone with his teenage children, most of those 93,000 hours are spent under the supervision of our mothers. Indeed the hand which rocks the cradle rules the world. Abraham Lincoln said, “All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother. I remember her prayers, and they have followed me. They have clung to me all my life.”

One of the great characters of the Bible is the evangelist Timothy. One of the prime ingredients which made him a dependable servant of God was the influence of his godly mother and grandmother. For as far back as he could remember, he was taught God’s Word by these two very special women (2 Tim. 3:14-15; 1:5). When young mothers decide they want to do something about the preacher and elder shortage in the Lord’s church, they can and will. They have control of a child’s life during the first six years, which are the most formative
years of his life.

One of the tragedies of modern America is that so many mothers make up the working force. We certainly do not want to be critical of working mothers because some of them must work. However, if there is any possible way they could be with their children during those formative years, even if they had to do without some of the things they want, we would encourage them to do it. It is far better for mothers to be with their children during those years than it is for them to be left in the care of a babysitter or a nursery attendant who only consider it a job.

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<td><strong>Saturday, June 9</strong></td>
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<td>7:00 pm Truth</td>
<td>9:00 am Authority</td>
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<td>7:45 pm False Teachers</td>
<td>10:00 am Divorce and Remarriage</td>
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<td>9:00 am Morality</td>
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<td>10:00 am Worship</td>
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Mothers, you have our respect and prayers. We do indeed honor you and especially wish for you a special day of honor on Sunday. You deserve it.

Author Unknown

“The happiest people don’t have the best of everything. They just make the best of everything” (Anonymous). Life has always been more about what you make of it than anything else. I know rich and poor alike who are dissatisfied about money. I know the same who are evermore content. The difference? Jesus! Some have Him, some do not. Do you? God bless.

Tim Smith; Dothan, AL

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If you have a question send it to mhatcer@gmail.com or call 850.455.7595
Sick

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Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Dot Lambert
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey  Bill Busch
Horace Myrick  Nancy Travis
Al Flesher (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
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Hailie Busch (Busch’s grand-daughter)
Lorine Baskins (Bobbie LaBryer’s mother)
Betty Cripps (Joyce Johnson’s cousin)

Wednesday Bible Reading
May 9—Bill Busch

Please Remember
May 13
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

May 14
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Preachers and Preaching

Ken Chumbley

I have recently read two stories regarding preachers and preaching. The first tells the story of a preacher in Kentucky who wanted to make his first sermon to be memorable, so he preached a fiery denunciation of horse racing. After the sermon one of the deacons called him aside and reminded him that he was now living in a neighborhood noted for fine horses, and that many of his members enjoyed the races. The preacher took the hint, and the next Sunday thundered and stomped against tobacco, whereupon the same deacon reminded him that the weed was a major item in the region’s economy, and that part of his salary would come from the tobacco growers. The following Sunday, the preacher took out after whiskey, and again stirred the deacon to remind him that the church building was in the shadow of distilleries: in fact, some of the church members worked at the distilleries. Frustrated by this time, the young preacher asked the deacon: “What can I preach on?” The deacon replied, “Why not preach against heathen witch doctors? There isn’t one of them in a thousand miles of here.”

The second tells of a well-known preacher who was asked why he never addressed any of the issues of the day. There was nothing in his preaching which dealt specifically with sin. He filled his messages with love and steered clear of such topics as divorce, drinking alcoholic beverages, abortion, homosexuality, greed, and gossip. He defended his silence on the issues saying he wanted to be like Jesus and not be negative, wishing to be remembered for what he was for rather than what he was against.

The first story seems humorous but what it talks about is very serious. Should a preacher limit his preaching in order that he might not offend his hearers. The second preacher needs to study the teaching of Jesus Christ. While Jesus was often positive in His preaching, there
were times when He was positively negative. Yes, Jesus taught love, mercy, and forgiveness and so should we. However, Jesus, when necessary, criticized hypocrisy, condemned sin, and demanded repentance. When Jesus criticized the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, He did not mince His words (Mat. 23). He very forcibly and plainly spoke about sin and authoritatively about repentance. We are called upon to imitate Him and follow His example (1 Pet. 2:21). This means that in our teaching and preaching we will not only talk about positive things.
(love, mercy, and forgiveness) but also with those matters that we might consider negative. Sadly, there are preachers like the one illustrated in the second story who do not want to “rock the boat” by preaching anything that might be considered negative. However, there are also brethren who do not want the whole truth taught because it would hit on their “pet sins” that they desire to engage in. Thus, some would seek to stop the mouths of preachers who would preach the whole counsel of God as they desire only “smooth things.”

Brethren, let us never succumb to preaching and teaching only that which is pleasing to the hearers but preach the whole counsel of God. We need to follow the example of the apostles who were told to stop preaching Christ by the leaders of the Jews. Their response was: “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). May we always preach the whole counsel of God with fear or favor.

Belvedere, SC

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**Open Forum Questions**

If you have a question send it to mhatcher@gmail.com or call 850.455.7595
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Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe’s grandson)
Hailie Busch (Busch’s grand-daughter)
Lorine Baskins (Bobbie LaBryer’s mother)

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Joyce Johnson in the death of her cousin, Betty Cripps. Please keep Joyce and her family in your prayers.

Wednesday Bible Reading
May 16—Tim Cozad

Please Remember
May 20
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
We Believe in Good Days Ahead

Bill Jackson

Much of our bulletin work and a good portion of our pulpit work has to do with warning brethren of evils all around us. We never make an apology for this, noting that a goodly amount of the Bible deals in negative material. The profitableness of the Bible is said to be in the area of reproof and correction, as well as doctrine and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). The young preacher Timothy was told to use the Word in reproving and rebuking, as well as exhorting (4:2). So, we have in the past, and will in the future, devote considerable space and time to warning brethren. As a preacher, I would rather face the brethren in judgment, having warned them repeatedly (and having been called a “negative” preacher), than to face them and see them lost, and have them ask me, “Why didn’t you point out these dangers?” We find Ezekiel stressing that when the wicked are warned, then the person giving the warning has “delivered thy soul” (Eze. 3:17-19). We are, and must be, constantly in the business of keeping our own heads pure from other men’s blood (Acts 20:26).

The church, in its history, has weathered many storms. When the calm returns, we may be a smaller brotherhood, but we will be a stronger one for the hardships we have experienced. For all of our warnings concerning liberalism, modernism, permissiveness, worldliness, and apostasy, if the world stands, we confidently believe in good days ahead. The church may be smaller in size, for having lost many to these evil forces, but it will be a faithful and spiritual body. God has always had a pruning process, whether in response to His commands regarding discipline, or in the natural order of things whereby men leave us due to having already left us in spirit (1 John 2:19). Nevertheless, in the turmoil used by Satan to take men away, the body of Christ is cleansed.

One reason we believe in good days ahead
is the conviction that men can tire of their own filth, in time. That can happen in a nation. A society can cut loose its moorings into an abyss of degradation and depravity. Given time, though, it can happen that finally the basically good people can sicken of the filth around them, and come to say, “That’s it! No More!” They can begin to take corrective action.

We believe such will take place, if the world stands, in the church of the Lord. Already in some places brethren have decided that gimmickry is not spirituality, and some are crying out: “Why can’t we have Bible in our classrooms and from the pulpits?” They will—those with
real spirituality that is—come to see what is really the work of the kingdom, and also to see that the church is not a “fun house” where everything is geared to our pleasure. Rather, men who are spiritual learn to take their pleasure in the things pleasing to God. Many will see loved ones lost forever, and many parents will perhaps be shaken in realizing that they have lost their children, before there is that awakening. But, in time, it will come. Once more we declare that men finally can sicken of their own filth, and then will move toward cleansing. We believe good days, while perhaps yet years away, will come. Finally, brethren will realize what has been said all along, “the gospel is the power of God unto salvation!” (Rom. 1:16).

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Wednesday Bible Reading
May 23—Bill Crowe

Please Remember
May 23
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

May 31
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
Action Words

*Delbert Goins*

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading (Neh. 8:8).

From infancy our parents instilled in us the use of verbs (action words) with meaning and substance. Our parents were insistent we become expert verbalists. As you know, God’s Word has much action language, read with unusual conscious analysis of each sentence to understand its real emphasis. For example, “For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord” (1 Th. 3:8). Stand, live, and fast are action words. Man lives! What does that mean? How does man live? When, what, where, which man, and why live? These are vital questions to determine the significance and sense of live. The final function of such a study is its practicality and relevance. But, how do I live both physically and spiritually? Why? Where? What? When? How? To find the answers to these six questions, I search my concordance for live and read each one to learn what God demands in this word, and thereby I can make my life more pure before my Master. Too, they reveal warnings where I have departed. I do the same for stand and for fast. Fast is firmness. Stand is attitude, position.

Everywhere one turns in the law of Christ, one reads about the action word love. God is love; He made man with the ability to love. Jesus said, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev. 3:19). “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1 John 4:7). The unloving do not know God. Not to love brethren makes one a murderer, revealing the seriousness of love. Man loves. God loves. What does that mean? Ask five questions more: how, who, when, where, and why. The answers are within God’s Word! Finally after researching and reading every verse in the New Testament
on love, I can resolve all questions regarding myself, and where I am in the scheme of love.

“Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not” (Rom. 12:14). Do you see the verbs here, the action words? To bless is to confer prosperity, happiness, and favor. It is the opposite of cursing and persecuting. God blesses. Man blesses. Now again, go through the process of asking the how, who, when, why, what, and which questions. Do a concordance research on the New Testament words bless, persecute, and curse. Do I bless? When do I bless, etc? Take corrective steps to improve your whole being.

Walk is an action verb used in a spiritual manner in the New Testament, as in, “even so we also should walk in newness of life” (6:4). God walks. Man walks. What does it mean
to walk? To pray? To sacrifice? To consecrate? To deny? To live in peace? On and on the study goes that will make you a Christian of Christians! How marvelously wonderful to be the best of the best! It means heaven! The benefits from researching action words, making application to self, can make you a scholar in the Word in a few months. Most importantly, it keeps you faithfully obedient and growing in the grace and knowledge of God. It improves hope and vision on the eternal things where stands out hope.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher      Dot Lambert
Ella Hammac    Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey   Bill Busch
Horace Myrick   Nancy Travis
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Lorine Baskins (Bobbie LaBryer’s mother)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond’s mother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
May 30—Dale Cunningham

Please Remember
June 3
Pre-lectureship meeting after the evening service, in room 1. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.
The Road Away from Sodom
Roelf L. Ruffner, Sr.

May 5, 2012, I witnessed President Barack Obama surrender the moral authority of his office by endorsing pseudo-marriage or “gay marriage” during a televised interview. My initial and enduring reaction was of utter revulsion and shame (Pro. 14:34). Long ago I determined that this man has lost his moral compass.

My concern is for my beloved country. Increasingly it is taking the broad way “that leadeth to destruction” (Mat. 7:13) or the road to Sodom, Gomorrah, and the cities of the Plain. They were destroyed by God as a warning to future generations to avoid the way of lasciviousness (cf. Jude 7).

What future does God have planned for America? If Sodom and Gomorrah are any indication, it is not a blessed one. Will it be destroyed by a nuclear fireball or weakened economically to a pathetic fourth world nation?

From the treatment of God’s messengers to Lot at Sodom (cf. Gen. 19:1-11) and of the Levite and his concubine at Gibeah (cf. Jud. 19:13-28), we can surmise that the Christian’s life in the future will not be one of “toleration” by homosexuals and their supporters (cf. Rom. 1:21-32). For the first time in American history, Christians will suffer persecution by their government and society in general for following the way of righteousness. But persecution is expected by the faithful child of God (2 Tim. 3:12).

As Christians our path is clear—we must continue the fight with “the shield of faith” and “the sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:16, 17). As a preacher I am convinced that this homosexual Dark Age has come about because of the silence of the pulpit in America. I am not just talking about denominational churches; they have been preaching the false gospel of hedonism for a long time. The pulpit is often in the churches of Christ have been silent for
years because of the moral rot of religious liberal-
ism and its concurrent moral cowardice.

I challenge my fellow faithful preachers to
make their preaching on this issue so plain “that
he may run that readeth it” (Hab. 2:2). This also
involves explaining to our audience that this
ungodly ruler occupying the Presidency must
be defeated at the polls on Tuesday, November
6th (Pro. 17:15). I challenge elderships and the
men of the congregation of the Lord’s church
to support their preacher in his boldness. Yes,
you may lose members and maybe even that
precious “tax exempt status,” but the love of
God and the love of the Truth demand it!

Christ has given the Christian the royal
duty of serving Him in this world, however
upside down its culture becomes (1 John 5:19).
Let us also remember to pray for our President
and all other government officials (1 Tim. 2:1-
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3). Perhaps they will turn from their evil ways. Let us also pray for those caught up in this perverted lifestyle that they may come to the light of God’s revealed will (Acts 26:18). Let us take the road away from Sodom (Gen. 19:27,28).

Columbia, TN

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
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Charles Williams   Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher         Dot Lambert
Ella Hammac        Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey      Horace Myrick
Nancy Travis       Nellie Read
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Hailie Busch (Busch’s grand-daughter)
Lorraine Baskins (Bobbie LaBryer’s mother)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond’s mother)

Pantry Items Needed
Beef Stew and Tuna

Wednesday Bible Reading
Jun 6—Ray Foshee

Please Remember
June 9-13
37th Annual Bellview Lectures:
Theme - *What The Bible Says About:*
Mark 16:9-20—Inspired or Not Inspired?

Jess Whitlock

Satan has always been the number one opponent of the inspired Word of God! From the moment he dared to add the word not to God’s Word in Genesis 3:4, until the present, he has sought to vilify the Word of God through any means. He even attacks the authority of the Word of God in versions and per versions, by means of footnotes, alternate readings, and appendices. For multiplied centuries after the formation of manmade denominations, the overwhelming majority understood that baptism was essential to one’s salvation. With the passing of time Satan has convinced the vast majority of men that baptism is not essential to the subject of salvation. Mark 16:16 cannot be refuted by the religious opponents of the words of Christ Satan decided it was time to deceive!

New International Version—A footnote: [The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20].

Revised Standard Version—These words are not found in the text at all, but are relegated to a footnote with this statement: “Other texts and versions add as 16:9-20 the following passage” (16:9-20).

The Amplified Bible—A brief footnote: “Verses 9-20 not in the 2 earliest manuscripts.”

The Berkeley Version A brief footnote: [Verses 9-20, are not found in the majority of the most reliable manuscripts]

Simple English Bible—A footnote “Verses 9-20 do not appear in 2 important Greek manuscripts.”

McCord’s New Testament—Satan has even sought to deceive our own brethren. Brother Hugo McCord was a sore disappointment when he failed to correctly translate monogenes as meaning, “only begotten” (cf. John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). Also, Brother McCord enclosed Mark 16:9-20 in brackets. He does devote pages 516-518 in the appendix to a de-
tailed study of the controversy—He does con-
clude, “verses 9-20 are the only possible can-
didate to be the end of Mark.” Why leave the
question in the minds of readers by the use of
brackets? Many will never read the appendix!

*American Standard Version* (1901)—Even
here, verses 9-20 are set apart from the text
by this footnote: “The 2 oldest Greek manus-
scripts, and some other authorities, omit from
verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have
different ending to the Gospel.”

This is not an exhaustive list. Did you note
the misleading statements such as: “The 2 old-
est Greek manuscripts…omit verses 9-20”? Friend of mine, the two oldest Greek manu-
scripts are not available. These mis-translators
should have said the two oldest Greek manu-
scripts available, i.e., Aleph and B of the fourth
century do not contain these verses. If you reject
Mark 16:9-20 on the basis of the *Vaticanus*,
will you be consistent and omit 1 Timothy, 2
Timothy, Titus, the last half of Hebrews, and
all of Revelation? If not, why not? As to the
*Sinaicus* manuscript, this work contains pas-
sages that we know to be apocryphal. Will you
consistently accept those apocryphal writings?
If not, why not? When you look at the man-
scripts and versions: 22 favor Mark 16:9-20
and only two are opposed to Mark 16:9-20!
How is Satan doing? (1 Pet. 5:8; John 8:44;
2 Cor. 4:4; 11:3). The “god of this world” is
doing well!

*Evans, TX*

**What Happened to Sin?**

*Dub McClish*

We seldom read the word *sin* in the newspa-
per or hear it on TV, in modern movies, or even
in conversation. It has almost become a sin to
mention sin.

It was not always so. Our nation, rooted in
Biblical concepts and terms and continuing in
such for almost two centuries, long had a moral
sense of righteousness and therefore of sin.

What has caused this abandonment of
the concept of sin? Almost a century ago
Humanistic psychologists, sociologists, and
educators decided guilt is a harmful emotion,
so sin, the cause of guilt, became a dirty word.
With the elimination of sin and guilt came the
respective elimination of shame. By the
1960s, these ideas had so taken hold that they
produced the disastrous “sexual revolution.”
“The rest is history,” as the saying goes.

The means of mitigating the idea of sin in
the public psyche was ingenious: Label sin-
ful acts by new names and/or mitigate them
as “diseases” or “disorders.” Further, left wing
ideologues created the strategy of “political cor-
rectness” (PC), itself a euphemism for censor-
ship. PC labels for sin include:

**Alternative lifestyle:** The sin of homosexu-
al behavior or sodomy, named after the city of
Sodom, notorious for this ungodly, unnatural
behavior and for which God destroyed it and
its sister cities (Gen. 19:1-25). “Alternative” to
what?—to normalcy and to Biblical morality
(Rom. 1:26-28).

**Gays:** Misnomer for those who practice
the sin of sodomy (i.e., “sodomites”—1 Kin.
14:24; et al., “the effeminate,” and the “abus-
ers of themselves with men”—1 Cor. 6:9;
Gay is a good word perverted to serve an odious purpose and practice.

Same-sex unions: The sinful (not to mention daft) idea of homosexual marriages (i.e., “state-sanctioned sodomy”). Such iniquity sullies the Biblical, physical, and societal normalcy of marriage between a man and woman and of the family for the creation and rearing of children (Eph. 6:1-4).

Cohabitation: The sin of a man and woman living together as husband and wife—“shacking up” in common parlance. The Bible calls it fornication, which will bar one from Heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rev. 22:15). With the acceptance of this sin, illegitimacy rates have predictably soared. Sexually active and safe sex belong in the same list. The PC police insist on “tolerance” of all viewpoints and practices, except those viewpoints that insist on the “intolerant” Biblical doctrines that define sin and exalt righteousness. “Sin is a reproach to any people” (Pro. 14:34).

1 Tim. 1:10; cf. Rom. 1:26-28).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
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Charles Williams Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher Dot Lambert
Ella Hammac Harold Cozad
Robbie Cravey Horace Myrick
Nancy Travis Nellie Read
Bill Busch
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Hailie Busch (Busch's grand-daughter)
Lorine Baskins (Bobbie LaBryer's mother)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond's mother)

New Arrival
Our congratulations is extended to Bill and Peggy Crowe in the birth of their great-grandson, Caiden Boren. He was born on June 5 weighing 7 lbs. 2 oz.

Please Remember
June 17
Lectureship critique after the evening service, in room 1.
Washed In the Blood
Bruce Stulting

In Romans 4:7, Paul quotes David as “Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.” In studying the Bible, we learn that sin must be dealt with. The Bible teaches that God has done His part. In John 3:16 we learn that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” The Bible further teaches that Jesus did His part. In Hebrews 5:9 we learn that “being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” Also, the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit has done its part in guiding us into all truth. In John 16:13: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” Even though all this has been done on man’s behalf, there is still a part left to do in dealing with man’s sin. There is man’s part left to do in covering his sins!

To cover sins is the same as having remission of sins, redemption of sins, or having sins washed away. The Bible teaches that our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. Speaking of Jesus, in Ephesians 1:7, Paul said, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” When Jesus shed His precious blood on the cross, it flowed backward to cover the sins of the faithful in Old Testament times and also forward to cleanse the sins of all the obedient under the New Testament (Zec. 14:8; Rom. 3:23-26). In Romans 1:16, Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation.” We see then that the way to contact the blood of Jesus Christ today is through obedience of the Gospel. In order to obey the Gospel, we must: (1) Hear the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), (2) Having heard the Word we must believe it (Mark 16:16), (3) Our faith in God’s Word will lead us to repent (Luke 13:3), (4) Confess Christ before men as the Son of God (Acts 8:37), and (5) Be baptized for the
remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). It is in baptism that we come into contact with the blood of the Savior (Rom. 6:3-5). Indeed, as David stated in Psalm 32:1: “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”

Huntsville, TX

Just Some Logical Answers to Some Very Unusual Questions: What Saith...?

Johnny Oxendine

Because people are often looking for a way into something without having to do what is actually required for entrance, many have asked me the question: “Can you be taught wrong and baptized right?” In response, I have thought (and sometimes asked), “Can you be taught wrong and hear right?” “Can you be taught wrong and believe right?” “Can you be taught wrong and repent right?” “Can you be taught wrong and confess right?” If we cannot do these things, then what makes us think that we can be taught wrong and baptized right?

The bottom line is that God has clearly identified the purity of purpose for baptism. There is no reason for someone not to know what the purpose of baptism is when they are baptized, and if they are not following the purpose that God has clearly set forth, they are just getting wet.

When we really get down to the truth of the matter baptism is an act of faith. When a person is baptized, they must believe that baptism is for the remission of their sins—that is the act of faith. In Colossians 2:12 the Bible says, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Without that act of faith involved in baptism, one is merely getting wet.

If a person is just baptized “to obey God,” what is the act of faith? Where are you putting your trust when you are baptized “to obey God?” One might say, “I am putting my trust in God.” Great! So what are you putting your trust in God to do? When faith trusts God, it trusts God to do something (Rom. 4:20-22; Heb. 11). Baptism does not need to show that one merely believes God; confession accomplishes that. Baptism is not just a restatement of one’s confession. It is much more than that. Notice what Peter says on the matter of baptism. “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Please notice what is said in that (1 Pet. 3:21) passage: (1) Baptism saves us. (2) Baptism is not merely taking a bath. (3) Baptism is the response to God of a good conscience. (4) Baptism saves by the resurrection of Jesus. Notice item number three. When we are baptized, we have to have a good conscience about it—we must do it with the right purposes.
in mind. The good conscience when taught properly is going to understand that baptism is necessary for salvation and is going to motivate the individual to take the appropriate action. To say that one can be baptized correctly without understanding the purpose of baptism denies the role of the conscience in baptism.

There is nothing magical in the waters of baptism. The water is just water. So dunking a person under the water just for the sake of dunking someone under the water is not going to cut it. If the proper motive and purpose is not present, it is meaningless, just like all the other steps of salvation. If a person is not baptized for the proper motives and purposes, he is just getting wet. The Bible clearly teaches that the purpose of baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

This is why we must insure that those we teach clearly understand the purpose of baptism. One cannot feel safe just because they went through the motions, and we should not feel that this has somehow relieved us of the need for more thorough and detailed teaching before baptism. We do no one any favors by putting them in the baptistry if they have no real appreciation for the fact that their sins are being forgiven.

San Mateo, CA

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Wednesday Bible Reading
Jun 20—Andrew Hatcher

Please Remember

June 27
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Juice and Chili
The Basis of Christian Unity

**Guy N. Woods**

Simply believing as others believe will not bring about unity if such beliefs are not based on the Bible’s teachings. Unity in the body of Christ, the church of our Lord, is a goal for which every sincere and faithful follower of Christ diligently seeks and fervently prays. Why those who profess His name and adhere to His standard should all be one is a matter clearly taught in the Scriptures and therefore, unquestioned by those who respect His will and who confess allegiance to His cause (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:1-6). However, its realization has in large measure eluded us. Why?

The reasons are many, chief among them being the view that unity must be reached on the basis of agreement in certain prescribed areas, one's soundness being determined by one's mental assent to the views common to the faction to which one belongs.

This concept, characteristic of all parties among us, is basically and fundamentally un-

sound because unity in the body of Christ does not necessarily result from agreement among those who constitute any faction or all of them together.

If should be obvious to all that men may, and often do, agree fully on all matters they regard as essential yet are far, very far, from being one in Christ. Unity—conformity to views—may exist out of Christ as well as in Him, but this is very far from being the unity for which the Savior prayed in Gethsemane.

Unity in commitment to a cause is not a necessary consequent of faithful discipleship; agreement on certain creedal matters as a condition of acceptance in fellowship is to resort to a human, not a divine, standard of soundness.

Paul perceived that there were those who would seek to establish their loyalty to party in this manner, and wrote:

For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that com-
mend themselves; but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding (2 Cor. 10:12).

Christ is the source of our lives as He is also the sphere of our total religious faith and spiritual activity. As the branch withers and dies when separated from the True Vine (John 16:1-6), so the members of His body—the church—subsist and are one in Him only as they partake of His spirit, accept fully His teaching, and conform wholly to His will (Luke 6:46). This done, unity with Him prevails and, in consequence, with all others in His body with like motivation.

The truth is the faith that saves is vastly more than simple intellectual assent to a body of teaching; unless it is characterized by love, deep devotion, and commitment without reservation to Him; unless the heart, the mind, and the soul are wholly His; unless one's thoughts, purposes, and plans all converge in Him is there unity with the Head and consequent unity with all other members of His body (1 Cor. 12:12). Where the one is wanting, the other is impossible.

To seek unity on the ground of common belief in party tenets alone promotes sectarianism and produces more division in the body of Christ. James wrote, “the demons also believe, and shudder” (2:19). These demons were of common faith and thus united in their convictions, but the unity resulting was far from that which God intended for His people. One's views may harmonize fully with those of the party yet be far short of that unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, which Paul approved.

Each factious group among us today began, is maintained, and persist solely on the basis of agreement in a narrow and restricted area of allegiance to a hobby and sectarian view acceptable only to the group which holds it, but which effectively operates as a barrier to fellowship with others of like precious faith in all other areas of teaching and practice! How unutterably sad must this situation be to Him who earnestly prayed that His followers might all be one.

Deceased

The Destruction of the Home

Paul Vaughn

One of the greatest blessings one can enjoy in life is having a loving family in a supportive home. Children should get their first perception of true love in the families in which they are born. Sadly, they can also get their first knowledge of hatred in the families in which they live. One of the greatest tragedies in our society is the destruction of the home. Divorce is destroying the home at an accelerated rate. Every 27 seconds a divorce is finalized. It has affected most families today in one way or another today.

Divorce is not the answer! Young married couples often do not develop the skills to overcome the hardships that affect every family because they choose to take the easy way out of their marriage—divorce. We must learn to perceive marriage as God views it. "Marriage is
honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). We must learn to view divorce as God perceives it. It is written, “For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence” (Mal. 2:16). Men and women may make a mockery of marriage by showing contempt of the marriage-covenant, which God established. They often abuse and put away their spouse to make room for another. Yet, God hates it.

Jesus warns all not to destroy marriage. “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mat. 19:6).

The Lord goes on to say, “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (19:9). These verses plainly show the importance of the marriage-covenant. God expects marriage to be a life-time commitment.

The key to a successful marriage is keeping God at the center of the home. If we do not keep the same view of marriage as the Lord, we will see the destruction of many more homes. Marion, VA
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher     Dot Lambert
Harold Cozad    Bill Busch
Robbie Cravey  Horace Myrick
Nancy Travis    Nellie Read
Ella Hammac
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Wednesday Bible Reading
Jun 27—Jim Loy

Please Remember
June 27
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
Ahab, of course, was one of the worst kings Israel ever had. This idol worshiping husband of Jezebel was worse than all the kings of Israel who came before him. There is something curious, though, about Ahab that arose when he met Elijah, as the prophet of God was on his way, by God’s instructions, to show himself to Ahab. When Ahab met Elijah, and falsely accused him of troubling Israel, Elijah turned the accusation right back on Ahab, who was actually the guilty one for forsaking the commandments of the Lord and worshiping Baal (1 Kin. 18:14-18). At that point of the confrontation, Ahab is mindful of some brethren who falsely accuse others of being troublemakers, when it is actually they who have caused trouble by ignoring and disobeying some aspect of the law of Christ. The king responded with stone-cold silence.

If Ahab even attempted to answer Elijah, when he correctly turned Ahab’s charge back upon him, we are not told. Apparently, he never said a word. Ahab reminds us of some who take a false position, or who do things that are out of harmony with the doctrine of Christ. At least in the mind of the accuser, an accused who will not answer has done little more than admit guilt. As the old saying goes, silence means consent. Well, it may or may not mean consent, but it certainly is a demonstration of arrogance!

Why once faithful brethren will not even attempt to defend their compromises in fellowship is not only a mystery, it stands in defiant rebellion to 1 Peter 3:15:

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. “Answer” is the Greek word, apologia, which means to make a defense. If one is willing to extend fellowship to those who teach error, fel-
lowship those who fellowship those who teach
error, or (as one brother has said to have done)
claims that the instructions Jesus gave for han-
dling a personal offense against a brother does
not apply in an academic setting, he ought to
be willing to defend such actions. A failure to
do so screams loud and clear that he knows he
is in the wrong.

Sadly, one has to give credit to Ahab for one
thing that cannot be extended to some breth-
ren today. Verses 19 and 20 of 1 Kings 18 says:
Now therefore send, and gather to me all
Israel unto mount Carmel, and the proph-
ets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and
the prophets of the groves four hundred,
which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent
unto all the children of Israel, and gath-
ered the prophets together unto mount
Carmel.

Even though we are not told that Ahab even
tried to answer Elijah's truthful statement
about Ahab and his Father's house being the
real troublemakers of Israel, when Elijah extended
the Carmel challenge (equivalent to a public
debate today), Ahab apparently did not try
to weasel out of the challenge, make any ex-
cuse about why he should deny the challenge,
nor trivialize the issue by calling Elijah a mote
picker or heretic hunter. Instead, we are simply
told that Ahab gathered the prophets. Ahab
was dead wrong in his idol worship, but he
was more willing to have the debate than some
brethren are over the extremely important is-

issue of fellowship.

Any persons who are willing to concede

that fellowship is a crucial New Testament
d Doctrine, and it is, as the epistle of John, and
other passages bear out, should be willing to
defend themselves when charges are made that
they have in some way violated the commands
given on the topic. But our brethren are not
only unwilling to engage in a public discus-
sion, they are mostly unwilling to have private
conversations about the issue without a host of
strings (such as vows of silence) attached.

We can only come to a number of possi-
bile conclusions when brethren are unwilling
to discuss a matter. They know they are in the
wrong, but will not admit it, they are aware
they will suffer negative consequences when
they lose the discussion, they are just plain ar-
rogant, or they are more cowardly than Ahab.
None of these possibilities speak well of those
who are unwilling to talk, but it would be espe-
cially worrisome for one to face the fact that he
is more craven than a king in Israel, who was
more wicked than all of the others who came
before him.

How sad, as well as incredibly wrong, it is
to accuse those of us who see many instanc-
es of compromise in fellowship of just being
troublemakers. No, there are very real wrongs
in this regard, and the only things we would
hope to seek corrected are the offenses that
have been committed against God, and for the
breach of fellowship that has occurred to be
healed. Anyone who is not willing to at least
try to resolve those matters is certainly more
cowardly than Ahab.

Granby, MO

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Lessons from Genesis One

Franklin Camp

Genesis 1 is intended as an introduction to God:

1. Genesis 1 is an introduction to the wisdom of God. This becomes a background of the wisdom for the rest of the Bible. There is not anything that is short or lacking in God's creation. God did not have to ask anybody about His methods of procedure in creation (Rom. 11:31-36).

2. Genesis 1 is an introduction to the power of God. If God had the power to bring the worlds into existence then why should He have any problem with any other miracle that is recorded in the Bible? This includes the Virgin Birth or resurrection!

3. Genesis is an introduction to the eternity of God (Isa. 57:15—ASV).

4. Genesis 1 is an introduction to the goodness of God. All that is needed for man's happiness is provided for him. The goodness of God becomes the background for our redemption. God has an interest in what happens to man. His grace has ever provided what man has needed (Deu. 8:18; Jam. 1:17; Tit. 1:17).

5. Genesis is an introduction to the love of God (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-9).

6. Genesis introduces us to the spiritual nature of God. The spiritual nature of God becomes the background of man's fellowship with God. Faith is a spiritual principle. Love is a spiritual principle. These have to do with our responses to our Creator (Gen. 1:26-27; Deu. 6:5-6; Mat. 22:37; 1 John 5:3; John 14:15).

7. Genesis is an introduction to the authority of God. When God delegates authority that does not diminish God's authority. Note Jesus and the apostles (Mat. 28:19).

8. God's method of operation is through His Word (And God said). Notice the number of occurrences in Genesis 1 of: “And God said.”

9. Genesis is an introduction to the perfection of God. The knowledge of God is fundamental to all correct knowledge. Error is based on a misunderstanding of the character of God. God will not overlook false doctrine (Mat. 15:9, 13; Gal. 1:6, 9).

10. Genesis 1 gives emphasis to the unity of God. The unity of God opposes Denominationalism. The New Testament teaches the necessity of unity based on truth (1 Cor. 1:10; John 17:20-21). Each denomination has its own distinctive name and doctrines. This would be foreign to 2 John 9-11. False teaching is filled with poison. We must not follow after that which is crooked and perverse. We must see righteousness as the solution to all our problems. Sin is the root of all of our problems. Sin creates was in the soul. This being the case, the only solution for us today is the Gospel of Christ (Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15; 1:16-17; Mark 16:15-16). The Gospel must be believed and obeyed if we want to be saved.

Deceased

(This article is based on notes from Franklin Camp's class many years ago.)
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac  Dot Lambert
Harold Cozad  Bill Busch
Robbie Cravey  Horace Myrick
Nancy Travis  Nellie Read
Al Flesher (The Haven)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch's sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond's nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond's sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd's sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe's grandson)
Hailie Busch (Busch's grand-daughter)
Lorine Baskins (Bobbie LaBryer's mother)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond's mother)
Mike Bailey (Ruby Bailey's son, Nancy Loy's brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading

Jul 4—Fred Stancliff

Please Remember

July 8
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
Bible Authority

John Rose

Paul wrote to Timothy:
All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
The Word of God furnishes to us all that we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Many times the Lord said, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mat. 11:15; etc.). Hearing and obeying brings forth salvation (Rom. 10:17; 1:16-17; Jam. 2:21).
The Lord commands that we obey His words:
But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant (Lev. 26:14-15), and

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven (Heb. 12:25).
Therefore, we should seek to know the way God authorizes by His Holy Word. God speaks with authority in His Word in three ways: direct statement, implication, and examples.
The direct statements of the Bible appear in several forms. A familiar passage from Mark 16 is a good example:
And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:15-16).
Go ye...is a direct statement. As we go, we are commanded to preach the Gospel throughout the world, to all people. However, He that believeth...is not a command, but is another direct statement. This verse teaches conditions of
salvation. Though these two verses use two different types of statements, each has the same weight of authority—authority we are obligated to obey if we desire to please God.

The Bible authorizes by implication. Peter commanded those who heard his sermon on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized:

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

This verse says nothing about confession of one’s faith (Rom. 10:9-10), but since it is necessary for salvation (per the direct statement of Romans 10:9-10), we correctly understand that confession is implied by Acts 2:38, though not actually stated. Correctly understanding the links (i.e., the harmony) between verses is a necessary skill in order to correctly infer what God teaches by implication. To that very end Paul wrote, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

The Bible also authorizes by examples. Please note the verses cited above from Romans:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (10:9-10).

Paul wrote these direct statements, and an account of action fulfilling them can be found in Acts:

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him (Acts 8:36-38).

The eunuch confessed his faith in the Lord. This confession was made before an inspired evangelist, Philip, and has been recorded by the inspiration of God as an approved account of righteous action and thus an example. We are directed to confess. The account from Acts gives an approved way to confess, but does not restrict one to confess in only the exact words said by the eunuch.

Bible authority is delivered in three ways: direct statement, implication, and examples. One must carefully employ knowledge and logic in order to correctly determine what God authorizes in His Word.

Naples, FL

The Ten Commandments

Thomas F. Eaves Sr.

Perhaps it is the immoral escapades of the leaders of our country, drive-by shootings, children giving birth to children, sexual immorality, abuse of drugs, school children shooting their classmates or a number of other things which have Americans seeking a solution for America's
rapidly disintegrating moral standard.

Numerous programs have been suggested and most are concerned with environment, recreation, stricter gun control laws, etc. One lady remarked that the answer to America’s moral problem is for everyone to keep the ten commandments. In 1997 and 1998 a remarkable amount of attention has been given to the ten commandments (Exo. 20:1-17; Deu. 5:1-21). One concerned citizen, George Kelly, has established “The Ten Commandments Foundation” which offers young people $10.00 to recite the commandments hoping that the famous Bible moral code rubs off on them. In the past year 1,800 youngsters accepted his offer. *(The Tennessean*, September 12, 1998, p. 1). **There is no doubt that if everyone obeyed the ten commandments the moral climate of America would be greatly improved**, but what are the full consequences of following the ten commandments in this the Christian age?

1. One can keep the Ten Commandments and not believe in Jesus Christ because this is not one of the commandments. The New Testament teaches that if one is to be saved he must believe in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 8:24, 21).

2. Keeping the Ten Commandments would be keeping a moral standard which was given to a specific nation (Israel, the Jews) at a specific time in their history, when they were escaping Egyptian bondage (Exo. 20:2; Deu. 5:6). The Ten Commandments was a part of the covenant made with Israel (Exo. 34:27-28; 1 Kin. 8:9, 12). While the Old Testament, old covenant, Law of Moses is inspired by God, and serves a useful purpose (Rom. 15:4), the New Testament teaches that Christians are not under its authority (Gal. 4:21-31, 5:4; Col. 2:14).

3. One can keep the Ten Commandments and not be a member of the church (the spiritual body of Christ—Eph. 1:22) to which the saved are added (Acts 2:47).

4. Following the Ten Commandments today would be following the Jewish religion (Judaism) which, as the apostle Paul in Galatians and Hebrews points out, is grossly inferior to Christianity.

To improve the morality of America, let all men become servants of Jesus Christ. This involves faith in God and His son (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24, 21); repenting of sins (Luke 13:3), which is a change of mind which leads to a reformation of life; confessing Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:36-38; Rom. 10:10); and being baptized for remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Following obedience to the Word of God, the Christian (the forgiven, saved) is added to the spiritual family of God, which is the church of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:47). As one who belongs to Christ (Rom. 12:1-2; Phi. 1:21), the Christian follows the moral standard of King Jesus which is set forth in His New Testament. While not an exhaustive list, Galatians 5:19-26, 1 Corinthians 6:18, Colossians 3:1-11 are examples of the moral standard of Jesus Christ. May we all work to improve the morality of America for our own salvation and to influence others for righteousness.

**Deceased**

**Wednesday Bible Reading**

**Jul 11—Orville Worley**

**Pantry Items Needed**

Canned Potatoes and Canned Carrots
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac      Dot Lambert
Harold Cozad     Bill Busch
Robbie Cravey    Horace Myrick
Nancy Travis
Nellie Read (Specialty Care Center)
Al Flesher (The Haven)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe’s grandson)
Hailie Busch (Busch’s grand-daughter)
Lorine Baskins (Bobbie LaBryer’s mother)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond’s mother)
Mike Bailey (Rubye Bailey’s son, Nancy Loy’s brother)

Please Remember

July 15
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

July 16
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
The Bible description of Hell, the eternal place of punishment and torment, is extremely graphic. No one desires nor enjoys being burnt by fire here on earth, and, therefore, the idea of being continuously burned with fire for all of eternity is a terrifying thought. So terrifying, in fact, that many have begun to dismiss what the Bible clearly teaches about Hell. In its place—a doctrine called “Conditional Immortality” or annihilationism. This teaching claims that while God will reward good people eternally, He will not punish the wicked for the same amount of time. Rather, God will allow the evil doer to be burned up, extinguished, annihilated, and therefore cease to exist.

Annihilationists have decided to make Jesus’ warnings about Hell foolish and out of place. If there was no Hell, no place of eternal punishment, why would Jesus warn of the “danger of hell” (Mat. 5:22)? Man is “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psa. 139:14) in the image of his Creator—God Almighty (Gen. 1:26-27). God is Spirit (John 4:24) and in His image He made man spiritual as well. God is eternal (Rom. 16:26; Heb. 9:14) and by making man, His greatest creation, a spiritual being, He made man eternal also. Jesus said:

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die (John 11:25-26).

Jesus was obviously not speaking about living eternally in a physical sense because “it is appointed unto men once to die” (Heb. 9:27), and when Jesus returns “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). Thus, the only logical conclusion is that Jesus was making reference to a spiritual life after physical death.
Though annihilationists want to equate Hell to a place where wicked souls are incinerated, the Bible teaches that Hell is a real place “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mat. 25:41). Hell is a place with an “everlasting fire” (25:41) that never goes out (Mark 9:48). It is a place of “outer darkness” (Mat. 25:30) and a “lake of fire and brimstone” (Rev. 20:10). It is the farthest place from the presence of God and therefore separated from light. God is light (1 John 1:5) and Jesus is the “light of the world” (John 8:12). Jesus also describes Hell as a “furnace of fire” where there will be “weeping” (Mat. 25:30), “wailing and gnashing of teeth” (13:42). Jesus used the Greek word Gehenna when speaking of Hell, the eternal abode for the wicked. Gehenna is a transliteration from the original Hebrew meaning “the valley of Hinnom.” The valley of Hinnom was just south of Jerusalem and was known for its garbage dump that was always burning. Thus, when Jesus stated that Hell was a place “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:48), He meant that the fire would never cease. This “is a picture of the unending torture and destruction of hell” (Wycliffe Bible Commentary). Using the word picture created by the use of the word Gehenna, Hell can be viewed as a garbage dump for the wicked. Since the grave is never full and opens “her mouth without measure” (Isa. 5:14), the eternal place of punishment will never lack for new occupants. The flames of Hell have plenty of new fuel to keep it burning “day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).

Though the Bible states succinctly that Hell is both real and eternal, there are those who still refuse to acknowledge these truths. Jesus proclaims that the wicked “shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mat. 25:46).

Hell and all that accompanies it are forever. Once physical life ends, eternity begins. At that point, man’s fate is sealed. For the wicked, the opportunity to repent and obey has passed. The righteous will enjoy bliss and comfort awaiting these most beautiful words, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (25:34).

The Bible teaches that man is a spiritually immortal being. He will be judged by the words and commandments spoken by God and His Christ (John 12:48). Man will be accountable for the way he has lived “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecc. 12:14). Hell is real and it is a place of eternal punishment. No soul has ever nor will ever cease to exist. Annihilationism is
a false doctrine concocted by many who are attempting to soothe their own consciences without having to wholly and fully submit their lives to God’s Will. Still others devise such a teaching to help God out of what they see as a dilemma—the dilemma of a loving God sending His greatest creation to a place of eternal torment separated from God’s holy presence. God is not in a dilemma. He is holy (Rev. 4:8) and just (1 John 1:9). It is man who chooses and decides his eternal destiny: Live obediently to God’s Word and be eternally saved. Live contrary to God’s Word and be eternally lost.

Let us heed the multiple warnings given to us in God’s Word and escape the horrible destination of the disobedient.

Lenoir City, TN

Taking Our Punishment

A school teacher in a little, drab, mid-western town desired to bring a little bit of beauty into the lives of the children that he taught.

He purchased some beautiful pansies, prepared the flowers in a nice garden just outside the windows where the children could see them. But children will be children, and time and time again they would run through the flower garden. The teacher, realizing that steps must be taken if the flowers were to be spared made the rule that anyone bothering the flowers would receive seven strokes on the hand from a ruler.

All went well until one day one of the older boys approached the teacher, leading his little sister by the hand. In her other hand there was tightly clutched a rapidly wilting bouquet of pansies. “Mary,” asked the teacher, “did you pick the pansies?” Mary nodded her head that she had. “And do you know the punishment?” And again Mary nodded her head that she did. “Then hold out your hand.”

Slowly the little white hand was extended, but before the ruler could be brought down, a larger hand was extended as the brother asked, “Teacher, is there anything in the rules that says whose hand must be spanked?” No, there was not, and seven times the ruler was brought down across the hand of the brother. When the punishment was ended the little girl, with tears in her eyes threw her arms around her big brother, thanking him for taking her punishment.

How deserving of punishment were we! But there was nothing in the rules that said that we must take it ourselves. It was the Son of God who received the punishment that we deserved on that old cross. What have we done about it? Many have not even thanked Him. Still others have been so careless that it seemingly makes no difference to them. The only way that we can show the Lord how much we appreciate Him is to obey His commandments. Are we doing even that?

Author unknown

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Canned Potatoes and Canned Carrots
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac      Dot Lambert
Harold Cozad     Bill Busch
Robbie Cravey    Horace Myrick
Nellie Read (Specialty Care Center)
Al Flesher (The Haven)
Nancy Travis
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tim Busch (Busch’s son)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Billy Crowe (Crowe’s grandson)
Lorraine Baskins (Bobbie LaBryer’s mother)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond’s mother)
Mike Bailey (Rubye Bailey’s son, Nancy Loy’s brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
Jul 18—Carl Ayliffe

Please Remember
July 25
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
We sing the comforting words, “How Beautiful Heaven Must Be.” The apostle John writes:

*there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.…

And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal (Rev. 4:3, 6).

He also pens:

there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever (22:5).

Though Jesus uses words that men can comprehend in regards to the glory and majesty of Heaven, without doubt, Heaven will be much more beautiful than anything man has ever seen or imagined. In addition, the beauty of Heaven is only one aspect of its greatness.

**Heaven Is a Place of Rest**

Jesus pleads with all to accept the rest He offers.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Mat. 11:28-30).

While there is much work and toil to be done here on Earth, Heaven is a place where all labor will end. The sweat, pain, and travail of this life were the result of sin.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the
ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (Gen. 3:17-19).

When man sinned, he was cast out of the Garden of Eden and lost access to the tree of life (3:24). However, through obedience to Christ and His Word, man may regain the right to the tree of life (Rev. 22:14), “which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (2:7). It is in the “Paradise of God” and in Heaven that, through works of obedience and a life of faithfulness to God, man will once again find the rest that was lost because of sin.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief (Heb. 4:9-11).

Heaven Is a Place of Rejoicing
In Jesus’ revelation, John saw the faithful and saved in Heaven:
Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever (Rev. 5:12-13).

Heaven is a place of eternal worship to God. In Heaven, there will be no tears, no death, no sorrow, no crying and no pain (21:4).

Heaven Is the Eternal Home of the Saved (21:7).

Those who hear God’s Word (Rom. 10:17), believe God’s Word (John 8:24), repent of their sins (Acts 17:30), are baptized in order to have their sins washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rev. 1:5), and remain faithful until the end (Rev. 2:10), will hear the words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant…enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt. 25:21).

Lenoir City, TN

The Churches of Christ;
Doing Church Biblically Since A.D. 33

Jess Whitlock

This afternoon I took my wife to the HEB in Gatesville, Texas. I sat in the car and waited for her. I noticed the huge public billboard sign, which read: “The Gateway Baptist Church, ‘Doing Church Biblically Since 1950.’ ” Dr. Royse T. Cockrell is their local preacher.

The thought struck me that the “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16) have been “doing church Biblically” since A.D. 33. The Lord’s church was established in the city of Jerusalem the first Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection (Acts 2). The churches of Christ are patterned after the New Testament church in worship and in doctrine (2:42-ff). Can the same be said concerning the Gateway Baptist Church?

The “churches of Christ” take that appellation from the Bible (Rom. 16:16). The Gateway Baptists cannot find their name on
one page of the New Testament. If so, where??

John the Baptist was not a member of the Baptist church. "Baptist" describes what he did; i.e., immersed or baptized. Baptist identifying a man-made denomination did not come into use until 1644.

The "churches of Christ" assert that baptism is essential to salvation. The Baptist denominations teach that baptism is not essential to one's salvation. The Bible teaches that salvation only comes after baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21; etc.).

The "churches of Christ" sing songs of praise to God without the addition of mechanical instruments of music (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; etc.). The Baptist denominations add to the Word of God by introducing mechanical music to their worship services. Where is the authority for such in the New Testament?

The "churches of Christ" realize that the Scriptures teach a Christian can so sin as to fall from God's grace (Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Pet. 2:19-21; etc.). The Baptist denominations assert the impossibility of apostasy. Where is such a doctrine taught in the Bible? Do we have an example of such? Are there examples of apostasy in the New Testament? Let us count the ways: Judas, Simon the Sorcerer, the Galatians, Hymenaeus, Alexander, Demas, et al.

The "churches of Christ" relate God's plan of salvation in answer to the question: "What must I do to be saved?" One must hear the Gospel (Rom. 10:17; Acts 8:5-ff). One must have faith in Jesus Christ (John 8:24; Heb. 11:1, 6). One must be willing to repent of sin (Luke 13:3-5; Acts 17:30). One must confess faith in Christ as Lord (Mat. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10). One must be baptized (immersed) into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). One must be found faithful until death (Rev. 2:10). By way of contrast the Gateway Baptist church teaches that one must confess Jesus as Lord, (accepting Him as one's personal Savior). Now, you must be baptized to "join" the Baptist church, but you need not be baptized in order to be saved according to Baptist doctrine! This teaching makes it more difficult to become a Baptist, than to be saved!

A challenge to Doctor Royse T. Cockrell or to a man having the approval of the Gateway Baptist Church:

Resolved: “The Scriptures teach that the Gateway Baptist Church is the church that we study about in the New Testament, both in practice and doctrine.”

Affirm: [s] Jess Whitlock, evangelist
Evant Church of Christ

Deny: We shall see what we shall see!

Evant, TX

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Potatoes and Canned Carrots
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac        Dot Lambert
Harold Cozad       Bill Busch
Robbie Cravey      Horace Myrick
Al Flesher         Nancy Travis
Nellie Read
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tim Busch (Busch’s son)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Lorine Baskins (Bobbie LaBryer’s mother)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond’s mother)
Mike Bailey (Rubye Bailey’s son, Nancy Loy’s brother)
Sathyre Rose Hall (Marilyn Hall’s great-granddaughter)

Wednesday Bible Reading
Jul 25—Henry Born

Please Remember

July 29
Fifth Sunday Dinner on the Grounds after the morning service. The evening service will be about 12:30 pm.
"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psa. 33:12). Any people, nation, or society should seek to please God because He is Supreme and He can bestow blessings that are innumerable. Generally, the prayer is for God to bless us as a people; yet, America has become a nation that God will not bless.

Generally, families in our nation are being extinguished by moral decay. The pattern for young people is to live together in cohabitation and not marriage. The Scriptures teach that marriage is precious in the sight of God. “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). The honourableness of marriage in the sight of God is a distinctly different view of marriage than is being taught in our nation.

Moral decay among us as a nation is seen in the advancement of homosexuality. We have become a nation overflowing with tolerance and acceptance of that which is an abomination to God. It is written, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites” (1 Cor. 9:6). Tolerance for this sexual perversion is advanced in the media, by the government, and is taught in public schools. Sexual perversion has destroyed many societies in antiquity.

Spiritual decay is seen in Protestant America. Each denomination is in reverse full-speed to reconstruct or deconstruct the traditional beliefs in God and His standard for the church. This attitude of deconstruction of the simple pattern of Christianity is prevalent in many churches of Christ. There are churches who seek to please the masses by watering down truth to gain members so they can outdo the denominations. One can find a vast spectrum in religion that range from contemporary wor-
ship services to excite the emotions to cowboy churches that enable everyone to ride off into the sunset of religious compromises.

Yes, it is past time for national repentance. God is longsuffering toward all men, but Judgment Day is coming. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecc. 12:14).

The Dignity of Labor

Guy N. Woods

Work is exertion for the accomplishment of a purpose. In it active energy is expended. It may be physical, mental, moral, or spiritual energy, or a combination of two or more of these. There are good works and bad works, works of God, and works of the devil (John 6:29; 8:41).

A refusal to engage in gainful occupation, for the purpose of earning a livelihood, when one has the capacity so to do is designated as disorderly conduct by the Holy Spirit (2 The. 3:6-9). It is, indeed, a sin of sufficient gravity to justify excluding such a one from the fellowship of the congregation.

Many of the members of the church in Thessalonica were from the laboring classes, and these often found themselves in association with slaves. Some came to regard all manual labor as degrading; they refused to work themselves, and they became dependent on the church treasury for support. Paul admonished the church not to provide support for those who, because of indolence or laziness, would not work. A report had come to Paul that some in the church were busybodies, idle, indolent, and who spent their time gadding about gossiping. “For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies” (2 The. 3:11).

There is an interesting relationship between the words work, and busybodies, not apparent in translation. To indicate this, the statement may be freely rendered, “Some have no business, but are busy with everybody’s business.” These, the apostle admonished, by the authority of Christ, to “work and to eat their own bread.” There is an ancient adage which says that “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop,” and it is also true that “the devil finds some mischief still, for idle hands to do.”

To demonstrate the dignity of labor and to support himself that he might not be burdensome to the saints in Thessalonica, the apostle resorted to his occupation of making tents while in that city. Paul, though highly educated by the standards of that day, shrank not from working with his hands. His parents had taught him that it is both honorable and right to work with one’s hands, and he had acquired the skill of tent making. There is a Jewish rabbinical saying that “He who does not teach his son a trade, teaches him to steal!” The apostle had the right to expect support from the brethren, but he often waived it, that he might be “chargeable” to none (Luke 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:1-18). He followed this course in Ephesus, a fact which he brought to the attention of the elders in his address to them at Miletus:
Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak (Acts 20:34-35).

Two motives are set out in the foregoing affirmation of Paul: (1) to provide livelihood for oneself; (2) to be able to assist others in need. There are others: (3) In 1 Timothy 5:16 and James 1:27, the obligation to provide for the fatherless and the widow is clearly set out. To practice the religion “which is pure and unadulterated,” it is necessary to work to have “whereof to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28).

Another motive for work is that proceeds therefrom will enable one to live a useful and profitable life in the community. It is the solemn obligation of all children of God to “walk becomingly toward them that are without” (1 Thes. 4:12), and to “take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men” (Rom. 12:17). The Scriptures prohibit all kinds of fraud, cheating, gambling, stealing, and all other activity not honest and honorable, and such must be avoided by faithful Christians. Moreover, it is sinful to engage in occupations, the fruits of which will lead to harm to others. No Christian can engage acceptably in any form of the liquor industry. Those who make money in such fashion do so at the expense of the health, happiness, homes, and souls of those who purchase and use these evil products.

Another reason why Christians ought to be engaged in gainful work is that they may be able to support the preaching of the Gospel. “Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). Not all can “proclaim” the Gospel, in public fashion, or in distant lands, but most all members of the church can help, by their contributions, in this glorious work. Their reward will be the same.

Not all work is prompted by proper motives. (1) It is wrong to work to obtain money to spend on one’s lusts, and sinful pleasures (Jam. 4:1-3). Many today work for this purpose alone, and their efforts only hasten their destruction. (2) We are forbidden to lay up treasures on the earth. Matthew 6:19-25 is a passage not designed to discourage prudence and forethought, but worldliness and materialism. Instead, we are admonished to lay up for ourselves “treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” (3) Work, prompted by covetousness is prohibited. Covetousness is unlawful desire. Man was not created in the image of God, and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, that he might spend his time in eating, sleeping, drinking, and satisfying the desires of the flesh. He has been placed here to honor God, and to serve him faithfully. Any deviation from this plan is displeasing in God’s sight.

It is a stupid idea that work, any work, however lowly, is disgraceful. Before man sinned God “put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it” (Gen. 2:15). In giving the law at Sinai, God ordained that man should work. “Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work” (Exo. 20:9). God will bless the honest, earnest worker. Idleness is now, and has ever been a curse to the race.

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac      Dot Lambert
Harold Cozad     Bill Busch
Robbie Cravey    Horace Myrick
Al Flesher       Nancy Travis
Nellie Read      Aleacia Godwin
Wyatt Blancheri  (Born's grandson)
Tim Busch        (Busch's son)
Turner Risner    (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart  (Diamond's nephew)
Donna Heck       (Karen Diamond's sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz       (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois      (Dot Dodd's sister-in-law)
Shane Norris     (Pam Busch's nephew)
Lorine Baskins   (Bobbie LaBryer's mother)
Marie Underwood  (Karen Diamond's mother)
Mike Bailey      (Rubye Bailey's son, Nancy Loy's brother)
Sathyre Rose Hall (Marilyn Hall's great-granddaughter)

Wednesday Bible Reading
Aug 1—Elward Brantley

Please Remember
August 6
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Christian Duty and the State

David P. Brown

The Bible does not reveal civil government to be the product of the genius and power of a group of men (Dan. 4:17, 25; Pro. 8:15). It is God who wills an ordered society. Thus, the Bible reveals the general idea of civil government as originating with God. This does not mean that every kind of government is in harmony with the will of heaven. However, even under harsh totalitarian governments (Roman, Nazi and Communist, and such like) there would be many laws that would not cause a Christian to disobey God in one's compliance with them (Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13).

If every person on the earth today were a faithful child of God, there would continue to be the need for civil government. Why? Because there must be a certain amount of social planning and order. Laws pertaining to traffic, commerce, ownership of property, etc., would still be needed if everyone living today were as faithful as the apostle Paul. Of course, we do not live in a society where everyone is a Christian. Hence, we also need laws that protect life and morality. For government to function as God would have it, it must:

1. not “be a terror to good works”;
2. be a terror “to the evil”;
3. be “the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom. 13:3-4).

We may conclude that such passages of Scripture as heretofore noted authorize the state to function in such a way as to bind men together in a just and ordered social life. The state is society organized for mutual protection and development in all spheres of physical, intellectual, moral, and religious activities.

When civil government functions as God intended, it recognizes that it stands under the authority and judgment of God in governing the state. It is bound by His will. It, therefore,
has the God-given aim of supporting law and order. Civil government is not the source of justice. God is the source of justice and the civil government is to guarantee that justice in all areas of society.

The form of government of these United States of America is democracy. This means that the civil government is placed in the hands of its citizens through their elected representatives. Hence, Christians in the U.S.A. may cast their vote and thereby help influence the direction of our government. This is especially needful in matters of morals and religious freedom.

We are commanded of God: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17). As has been pointed out many times before, this passage teaches that if we are to be right with God we must do only those things that are authorized by the New Testament of Jesus Christ. **Brethren, this covers voting as well as everything else a Christian does!! If not, why not??**

It is a sad day indeed when brethren are more loyal to political parties than the truth of God. Some persons in the church throw their Biblical principles of morality and spirituality out of their minds in their selection of the candidate for whom they will vote. I would hate to know that to have more jobs and money I cast my vote to support the murderers of unborn babies, homosexuals, and such like. Since we Christians have an opportunity to help our government be more in harmony with what God intended civil government to be, let us cast our vote for godly principles. Remember, the day may not be far away when opportunities to vote for moral and spiritual principles will be no more. We will close this article with the timely words of the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 and Galatians 4:16:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

Spring, TX

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**Do Your Duty**
Pleasant it is to entertain thoughts of a future scene where plans are noble and all ends well. It is all the more difficult to do the duty that waits and wants us. “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Col. 3:23).

*Author Unknown*

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**Private Beliefs and Public Practices**

*Ken Chumbley*

As the political season is swinging into full swing with the general election now less than four months away and the political conventions shortly to take place, there are many things that should concern us as we examine the candidates for the various offices: their po-
itical philosophy, their character, their voting record, if they have previously held political office, etc. All voters need to take the time to check these and other matters out that they can be informed of the facts so they can use their votes wisely. It is necessary that one checks beyond the news bites, whether in written, audio, or television pieces as often those who prepare such today do not just report the news but put their spin on the news according to their own particular biases. Further, we need to be careful not to vote a particular way since we, or our families, have always voted that way since parties and candidates can change their positions and may no longer stand for what they once stood for.

In this article, I will address a particular theme that concerns me in what I have seen and heard concerning those who seek political office, but it has application to all of us. For example, one may say that they believe that human life begins at conception or that they believe that marriage is between a man and a woman, but when it comes to their public actions their practice expresses something entirely different. If they hold a political office and state their private beliefs and then vote a pro-abortion position or in favor of extending the concept of marriage to include men marrying men and women marrying women, I find this to be hypocritical. However, those who never run for public office can also show hypocrisy by the way they vote. Their private beliefs are that they believe in the right to life and that marriage is between a man and a woman, yet when they go to the polling booth, they will cast their vote for candidates that vote in favor of the taking of life of the unborn and for the granting special rights and privileges for homosexuals.

Also, along the same line is the idea that it is alright to express faith and belief in certain things “in church,” but it is wrong to express such faith and beliefs in the public realm because of the “separation of church and state.” Sadly, those who are most vocal in promoting this view seem to have less knowledge of the wording of the United States Constitution and the purpose of the clause dealing with matters of church and state that I, as an alien have. It was never the intention of the founding fathers of this nation to completely divorce matters of faith from public life. Their concern was that the United States not adopt a national religion or an established church such had been seen in Europe from whence most of them or their forebears had come fleeing the religious persecution that often was a part of that practice. The hypocrisy of some is again seen in that while promoting such separation, they are willing to take politics into the churches during the worship services, while they are campaigning.

Brethren, we need to especially think about such matters as they relate to us as individuals. Can we simply maintain as private beliefs these matters and then when it comes to how we cast our votes, to turn from our beliefs and vote into office those who would undermine our beliefs? Can we hold to our beliefs only in the “church building” and cast them aside when we are in the workplace or the voting booth and be a faithful child of God? Let us beware lest we become hypocrites and find ourselves condemned by the Lord, as were the Pharisees (Mat. 23). Let us ever seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness (6:33).

Belvedere, SC
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac    Dot Lambert
Harold Cozad    Bill Busch
Robbie Cravey    Horace Myrick
Al Flesher    Nancy Travis
Nellie Read    Alecia Godwin
Tim Busch (Busch's son)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)
Sathyre Rose Hall (Marilyn Hall's
great-granddaughter)

Wednesday Bible Reading
August 8—Paul Brantley

Please Remember

August 12
Deacons’ meeting will be held at
5:30 pm in room 5.

August 19
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be
held at 5:00 pm, in room 5.

Cherish Memories
Surely you have precious memories.
Oh, how they linger! However, we need
to throw some into the wastebasket.
Cherish only the good ones, the most
salient, as future teaching and education
and guidance. Meanwhile, let us look
to the future, move forward. We do not
move forward while looking back! We
can make new memories today.

Author Unknown
There Is No Such Thing as Same-Sex Marriage

Dub Mowery

God established marriage at the beginning of time (Gen. 2:18-25). He provided a mate for Adam in the person of Eve, not Steve. During the personal ministry of Jesus Christ He spoke of the Heavenly Father establishing marriage. The Son of God declared:

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Mat. 19:4-6).

Notice His emphasis upon male and female: not male and male, or female and female. In fact, the apostle Paul speaks of such intimate relations between those of the same-sex as “vile affections.” Those who become homosexuals or lesbians have departed from God. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet (Rom. 1:24-27).

Whether or not a government official recognizes the so-called same-sex marriage it remains an abomination to God. He destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of
that heinous sin (Gen. 19). A nation or a state might recognize the relations between two people of the same-sex as a marriage, but God does not. The apostle Peter emphasized when laws of an earthly government conflict with God’s laws then we are to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). Just because a society and/or government recognizes a particular thing does not mean God approves of it.

Even though Herod had married his brother’s wife according to the laws of his government, it was not a marriage in the eyes of God. This is pointed out in the following passage:

For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias’ sake, his brother Philip’s wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife (Mark 6:17-18).

Thus, in the eyes of God there is no such thing as a same-sex marriage.

Pittsburg, TX

The Mirror of God

G. K. Wallace

The Word of God is a mirror (Jam. 1:23). If we wish to see ourselves as God sees us, we must look into His Word. A day seldom passes that we do not look into a mirror to see what we look like. As we look, we often see deformities—spots and wrinkles we would like to remove. Cosmetics will help the physical form, but no amount of makeup can cleanse the soul.

When we look into the Word of God, we see ourselves as God will see us. It is no wonder that we read the Bible so little that we forget what manner of men we are, rule out the necessity of repentance, and thus deceive our souls. We need to “look into the perfect law of liberty” and continue therein and not be a “forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (1:25).

A little boy took the Bible off of the table in his home and said, “Daddy, is this God’s book?” “Yes,” replied the father. “That is God’s book.” The boy said, “Daddy, I think we better send it back to God, because we never read it.”

The Bible is not just a book in which to keep the family record and old letters. It is designed to make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). By the Word of God, we are sanctified (John 17:17). It is God’s begetting power (1 Pet. 1:23). It is “lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). Have we looked into God’s mirror today? If not, why not?

Deceased

A Good Example

Gary W. Summers

Seneca (4 B.C.–A.D. 65), the Roman philosopher and playwright, wrote: “Noble examples stir us up to noble actions.” How the world desperately needs to see men and women who act nobly. The news and entertainment media have for more than a decade glorified the bizarre, the tacky, the perverted, the sleazy, and the obscene. Some who make the “most ad-
How to Kill a Congregation

Let False Teaching Go Unchecked. Tolerate error in the name of “fairness” or “broadmindedness.” Let doctrinal problems fester until they defy solution.

Do Nothing to Stop Gossip and Backbiting. Let rumors circulate without restraint about members of the congregation, especially its leaders and their families. Believe everything you hear—that way, no one will want to lead for fear of being picked to pieces.

Place a Low Estimate on the Need for Congregational Unity. Allow the contentious to divide the church into camps that do not have anything to do with each other. Drive a wedge between members, fragmenting the strength and influence of the body. A good fuss will set the congregation back at least an entire generation.

De-Emphasize Mission Work. Reason that there is no cause to be alarmed with somebody halfway across the world when there are so many good works at home—that way, the church is isolated and loses sight of its higher purpose.

Tolerate Sin in the Church. Do nothing about worldly members whose lives bring shame to the church and indignity to the name of Christ. Foster a cold, spiritless, uncaring atmosphere in the Worship Services. Make no effort to make visitors feel welcome.

Soft-Peddle the Subject of Giving. Offer no bold challenges requiring sacrifice for fear of offending the stingy.

Offer Young People Recreation and Entertainment but No Help with Their Spiritual Lives. Offer them no opportunities to serve others—to flex their spiritual muscles. Tacitly suggest that the sacrificial, cross-bearing life that makes Christianity come alive is for grown-ups; let them be content with an endless succession of wiener roasts.

Put Programs Above People. Make it necessary for a good idea to go through countless channels before it can every get off the ground. This insures that whatever enthusiasm exists in the church will be killed by forcing it through the organizational meat-grinder.

Did you read the above thoughtfully and carefully? Let none of us become guilty of trying to kill the congregation!

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac  Dot Lambert
Harold Cozad    Bill Busch
Robbie Cravey Horace Myrick
Al Flesher    Nancy Travis
Nellie Read Aleacia Godwin
Tim Busch (Busch's son)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch's nephew)

Wednesday Bible Reading
**August 15**—Bill Busch

Please Remember

**August 19**
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 5.

**August 20**
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

**August 22**
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

“Blessed is the person who is too busy to worry in the daytime and too sleepy to worry at night” (Anon). My rule on worry: If you can change a thing, change it; if you cannot change a thing, endure and make the best of it. Worry has no place because it is of no use. Trust God and do your best. May God bless you.

Tim Smith
Worshipping God By the Clock

Ken Chumbley

A number of years ago an article with this title was written by Furman Kearley. It is too long to fit here, but we will adapt many of the thoughts he had in this article as I believe it has an important message.

He writes about receiving an invitation to a social event. The time that was given for this event was “8 p.m.—who knows when?” What about our worship services, our Bible classes, our Gospel Meetings? Would it not be great if brethren were so hungry for the Word of God, so eager for Christian fellowship, and so desirous of worshipping God that a time of commencement could be announced and then indicate that the conclusion would be “who knows when?”

Brother Kearley wrote:

Apparently, this attitude was present at the gathering of the church for worship and study at Troas (Acts 20:6-12). Most of the time when reference is made to Paul prolonging his speech until midnight, the reference is to make a dig at someone who has preached a little longer than 30 minutes. However, not only did Paul speak until midnight, but even after raising Eutychus from the dead, the people continued in fellowship and stayed until the break of day.

However, that is not the situation today. It has virtually been set in stone that a sermon should be preached in such a way that it is no longer than twenty to thirty minutes and that the worship service should take no longer than an hour. Why? Have we come to the point where we worship God by the clock? Brother Kearley mentions an article written a number of years ago in which one was quoted as being pleased that they completed the Lord’s Supper in a large congregation in eleven minutes, thus showing how efficient the congregation was.

Sadly, too many do not have time for God or for Jesus Christ. Too often we leave little room...
in our lives for God and Christ in our thoughts and in our time. We are so busily engaged with our materialistic lives, imbibing all of the pleasure that we can and thus Christianity is removed to a remote place in our lives except for when emergencies arise. The basic problem is that we are not seeking “first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Mat. 6:33). We joke about being able to beat others to the restaurant, but in reality, many times, such things as eating, recreation, business, and so many other things have higher priority in their lives than worshipping God. We are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness as we ought; if we were, we could not spend enough time studying God’s Word and hearing it preached.

It is said that in the early years of the Restoration Movement, John Smith rode on horseback for many miles to hear Alexander Campbell preach. As he was returning with a companion, Smith complained, “That was a long ride to hear a man preach only 30 minutes.” His friend replied, “You have misread your watch. Brother Campbell preached three hours.” I remember having the opportunity of hearing Foy E. Wallace preach on one occasion and he preached for over two and a half hours, but it sure did not seem like it! How many of us would listen to a three-hour sermon today, even from the world’s greatest orator? We can go to football games that can last up to three hours, but are unhappy when services take longer than an hour.

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). If we reduce our hearing of God’s Word, we reduce our faith. As we reduce our faith, we reduce our service to God. All of these work together to weaken the church and to cause the problems of lack of church growth. Let us “hunger and thirst after righteousness” and “seek first the kingdom of God” and be willing to devote the necessary time to our worship.

Belvedere, SC

“Provoke One Another”
(Hebrews 10:24)

Lester Kamp

How talented many of us are in provoking one another. Many times we speak before thinking. We fail to consider how our actions and words will affect others. We act or speak at the expense of others. We provoke hurt in others by our words or perhaps sometimes by our failure to speak.

There have been some people with great capabilities in the Lord’s church devastated in spirit because of the malice, anger, hostility, and bitterness of others. People who could have accomplished great works in the Lord’s kingdom have been ruined in their effectiveness because of the attitudes of others. Sometimes motivated by jealousy or resentment, a few have been able to replace the optimism and zeal of good workers in the kingdom with frustration and a sense of futility. Often due to carelessness and a failure to consider the effect of our behavior on others, we have caused no little grief in the hearts of some of our brothers and sisters in Christ.
If we read the entirety of the twenty-fourth verse of Hebrews 10, we find that we have an obligation to provoke others to “love and good works.” We should guard our motives and activities to insure that what we say and what we do encourage others to do more good works and promote an atmosphere of love and good will. The command we find here can no more be disregarded than any other command. Let the spirit of mutual concern and encouragement prevail.

You are the real loser if you provoke others, but not to love and good works. Your heart is not right with God!

Aurora, CO

The Basic “Flaw”

Bill Jackson

Problems of a thousand kinds, in a thousand areas of life, have the researchers poring over plans, systems, procedures, behavior, etc.—looking for the basic flaw causing the malfunction. Current space probes scheduled, and then repeatedly canceled, show us that the search goes on for the “flaw.” Science was not the “big thing” in school, but we are not speaking of science; rather, we speak of anything in any area that goes awry. Men then turn to try and find the basic “flaw.”

In the area of major interest for most readers of this bulletin, know what the “flaw” is that causes so many problems in the kingdom. This denotes no brilliance on my part, for many of you know it to be so as well. The basic flaw—causing men to reject the New Testament plea and to seek fellowship with the denominations. The basic flaw—causing men to want to turn the church into a playground, substituting fun and games for the work of the Lord. The basic flaw—causing men to see the church ministering to the whole man, rather than attending to his spiritual needs. The basic flaw—causing men to fault all Gospel preaching that “hews the line,” letting the chips fall where they may.

The basic flaw is feeling that the Gospel is not sufficient! What God has provided just is not good enough! Though the Word is said to furnish us completely (2 Tim. 3:16-17), and though the apostles gave us what they had, completely furnishing us unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), and though we are warned against turning to anything else (Gal. 1:6-7 and 2 John 9), it is true that some who wear the name of Christ do not think the Word is sufficient. Again, some have sought “growth” in ways and using means other than that prescribed by the Lord, applying the Word (1 Pet. 2:2)! They think the Word is not enough!

With that basic “flaw,” there is a constant move away from the Word, a constant dislike of some of its teaching, a continual distancing of oneself from study, and finally, becoming sectarian completely. With that basic “flaw,” there is no way that person can be and can do what is pleasing unto the Lord! The basic “advantage” every faithful child of God has is his love of, and devotion to, the Word of the Lord. In that faithfulness is the joy of living one’s life without the “flaw” that robs one completely!

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac        Dot Lambert
Harold Cozad       Bill Busch
Robbie Cravey      Horace Myrick
Al Flesher         Nancy Travis
Nellie Read        Alecia Godwin
Tim Busch (Busch’s son)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond’s mother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
**August 22**—Tim Cozad

Please Remember

**August 22**
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

**August 29**
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Gospel Meeting
with
Roelf Ruffner
Columbia, TN

October 14 - 19, 2012
Dinner on the Grounds will be held
October 14, after the morning service.
One of Man’s Greatest Privileges

Noah A. Hackworth

One of the greatest privileges God has ever given to His people is prayer. It is the “connecting link” between heaven and earth. A faithful child of God, unless he is unconscious or too ill to think, will never go through a whole day without prayer whether it occurs at a set time (Acts 3:1), in public (1 Tim. 2:8), or in secret (Mat. 6:6); we must not forget to pray (1 The. 5:17). When Paul directed the Thessalonians to pray unceasingly he used adialeiptos which means without interruption, unceasingly, constantly.

The word was used of that which was continually and repeatedly done; e.g., the uninterrupted payment of hard taxes; the continual service or ministry of an official; a continual uninterrupted cough (Reinecker and Rogers).

Unfortunately prayer has become the victim of a wide range of thought. There are many who believe that (1) anybody can pray; (2) there are no restrictions on prayer; (3) God hears the prayers of sinners as well as saints; (4) there is no precise verbiage used in prayer; (5) prayers may be offered to God the Father, God the Son or God the Holy Spirit. All five of these points are either partially or totally false. One cannot be living in deliberate rebellion against God and expect his prayers to be heard (answered); there is no Biblical evidence that God ever authorized a sinner to pray; verbiage is important because God is not a fellow human being or a good buddy to whom we can speak anyway we desire. We cannot come into the presence of God as though we were coming into the presence of a casual friend. God is holy, and when we approach Him we need to “put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exo. 3:5). The Almighty does not permit man to approach Him on his own terms (Jer. 10:23).
In the New Testament a variety of words are used with reference to prayer. *Proseuchomai* is always used of prayer to God, and is the most frequent word in this respect (Rom. 8:26; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 1:9; 1 Tim. 2:8; Heb. 13:18); *dedomai* means to ask or implore; to desire (Mat. 9:38; Acts 8:22; 2 Cor. 5:20); *erotao* means to request or ask a question; *eucharisteo* means to give thanks (Mat. 26:27). Just as important as being familiar with the terms used with reference to prayer is the need to know (1) what the Bible teaches about prayer, (2) that every Christian must learn what prayer is, (3) that every Christian must learn how to pray, (4) that prayer avails much in its working, (5) that prayers must be according to God’s will, (6) that prayer is related to keeping the commandments of the Lord, and (7) that Christians are to pray without ceasing.

**Prayers Are to Be Addressed to God the Father**

Prayers are to be addressed to God the Father (Col. 3:17). Jesus demonstrated this in His prayer in John 17. Observe the following expressions: “Father, the hour is come” (17:1); “And now, Father, glorify thou me” (17:5); “Holy Father, keep them in thy name” (17:11); “that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me,” (17:21); “O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee” (17:25). Three times in Gethsemane Jesus said, “My Father” (Mat. 26:39–44); “My Father, if it be possible” (26:39); “My Father, if this cannot pass away” (26:42); “And he left them again, and went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words” (26:44). There is no question that Jesus taught His followers to pray to the Father through Him. “If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name” (John 16:23). Coffman has said, These words show that Jesus intended that his followers should pray, not to himself, but to the Father in Jesus’ name. In all petitions to the Father, the name of Jesus Christ should be mentioned as the ground of the petitioner’s right to be heard…Ignoring or by-passing the name of the One Mediator between God and man is presumptuously sinful.

**Conclusion**

Since God has given us the privilege of coming with all boldness before the throne of His grace, we must take advantage of every opportunity to pray. The world has lost the right to pray, but the saints have not. What a privilege! What a blessing! Let every Christian exercise this right.

**What Costs Me Nothing**

*Al Brown*

After David had been told by God to build an altar and worship God on the threshing floor of Araunah, this Jebusite offered the king the threshing floor and everything necessary to worship God. David refused the offer with these words: “Nay; but I will verily buy it of thee at a price. Neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto Jehovah my God which cost me nothing” (2 Sam. 24:24).

Would that all Christians had the attitude of David? Instead, they often show the very opposite disposition. David realized that an of-
fering which cost him nothing was worth exactly that to him—nothing. God has always demanded the best that a person has—not what somebody else has (Lev. 22:21).

All we have has been given to us by God to use for His glory and in His service. We are but stewards of these things (1 Pet. 4:10). The Lord expects us to be good stewards, but giving what comes without cost to us is not practicing faithful stewardship.

The measure of our devotion, reverence, and love for God is in direct proportion to how much we are willing to commit to the service of God, or how much we are willing to sacrifice (John 12:3ff). Those who take the easiest, cheapest way to serve God are, in reality, servants of self, not God. There is to be nothing cheap about our religion. It is to be the best we have—the same attitude that characterized David. “I will not offer…unto Jehovah my God [that] which cost me nothing.”

Deceased

The Christian Home

Where family prayer is daily said,
God’s Word is regularly read,
And faith in Christ is never dead—
That is a Christian Home.

Where father, mother, sister, brother
All have true love for one another
And no one ever hates the other—
That is the Christian Home.

Where family quarrels are pushed aside
To let the love of God abide.
Ere darkness on eventide—
That is a Christian Home.

Where Jesus Christ is host and Guest,
Through whom we have eternal rest
And in Him are forever blest—
That is a Christian Home.

Author Unknown

Gospel Meeting with Roelf Ruffner

October 14 – 19

“America, It’s Time to Return to the Bible”

Lessons from a Small Church.............................................Sunday 9 a.m.
It’s Time to Return Home..............................................Sunday 10 a.m.
Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves.........................Sunday 12:30 p.m.
Our Best Friend .........................................................Monday 7:30 p.m.
Back to God’s Plan of Salvation.................................Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
Overcoming Temptation ..............................................Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
The Real Roman Road to Salvation .........................Thursday 7:30 p.m.
The Deceivers.............................................................Friday 7:30 p.m.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac    Dot Lambert
Harold Cozad    Bill Busch
Robbie Cravey  Horace Myrick
Al Flesher    Nancy Travis
Nellie Read    Alecia Godwin
Henry Born    Tim Cozad
Tim Busch (Busch’s son)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond’s mother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
August 28—Bill Crowe

Please Remember
August 29
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

September 9
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 5.

“Blessed is the person who is too busy to worry in the daytime and too sleepy to worry at night” (Anon). My rule on worry: If you can change a thing, change it; if you cannot change a thing, endure and make the best of it. Worry has no place because it is of no use. Trust God and do your best. May God bless you!

Tim Smith
Are We a “Peculiar People”?
Jimmie Z. Gribble

The Bible tells us that we are to be a peculiar people, and that we are not to love the world. Yet, it seems in some respects, especially today, how much alike the two are. No one, with few exceptions, wants to go to war. At times, even in the Old Testament times, people went to war. Soldiers asked John, the forerunner of Jesus, what they should do. Luke records:

And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages (Luke 3:14).

Even Cornelius was a soldier. Whatever you view on the current events, we do know that there are people that see the necessity of going to war, and those who do not, and perhaps as one has said, “You could show them an atomic bomb, and they still wouldn’t go to war.” I do not care to discuss the merits of either position; I use this as an analogy to the church today. There are those in the church that see the necessity of fighting the good fight of faith, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12). Also, there are those that would not pick up the Bible and have it condemn error in anyone’s life. There are those that are out on the battlefield, and there are those that would not go for any reason. There are those that are holding high God’s banner, “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, That it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah” (Psa. 60:4). Additionally, we have those that if they could, and they do by their actions, would have protest signs in front of a faithful congregation and take those signs to every place that a faithful teacher would go.

While the current situation in the world is serious, and people could lose their lives, it is temporary—it is earthly. However, the current situ-
Beloved, whatever your view about the trouble in the world today, be aware of the situation in the church. Let each of us examine ourselves to see whether we are on the front line fighting, or carrying signs of protest. May each of us "fight the good fight of faith." Let us make sure that we follow the apostle Paul, when he said, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Amen, and Amen! Portsmouth, VA

Gospel Meeting with Roelf L. Ruffner
October 14 – 19

"America, It's Time to Return to the Bible"

Lessons from a Small Church ............................................. Sunday 9 a.m.
It’s Time to Return Home .................................................. Sunday 10 a.m.
Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves ............................. Sunday 12:30 p.m.
Our Best Friend ............................................................. Monday 7:30 p.m.
Back to God’s Plan of Salvation ................................. Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
Overcoming Temptation .................................................. Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
The Real Roman Road to Salvation ............................ Thursday 7:30 p.m.
The Deceivers ............................................................... Friday 7:30 p.m.

Misapplied Scripture
Roelf L. Ruffner

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another (Gal. 5:15).

What is the apostle Paul referring to in this verse? Paul was writing to the churches of Christ in Galatia. The Galatians were a high strung, Celtic people. False teachers (commonly referred to as "Judaizers") had inflamed these Gentile brethren claiming that one needed to keep the Law of Moses as well as the Law of Christ—the Gospel. This “leaven” had infected the church and caused the brethren to forget brotherly love and to be bitter against one another. He was afraid that their mistreatment
of each other would destroy the church.

For over a generation religious liberals within the church have misused this verse to castigate conservatives who scripturally point out their error. “This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Tit. 1:13). In return, liberals often resort to *ad hominem* attacks or attacks against one’s character or person. As the old saying goes, “attack the messenger rather than the message.” The Lord’s critics in His day resorted to such name calling when they could not refute His arguments, calling Him “a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!” (Luke 7:34).

Lately some brethren who like to think of themselves as “sound” have resorted to such tactics as well. If a brother rebukes them for fellowshipping marked false teachers or fellowshipping those who do, they pull out Galatians 5:15 and accuse them of being “mean spirited” and “divisive.” They seem to desire to compromise the truth of the Gospel for the sake of “friendship,” old school ties, family ties, or even, God forbid, filthy lucre’s sake. Sometimes we must get a bit rough with God’s children to get their attention and perhaps save their souls.

I am reminded of Nehemiah the governor of post-exile Jerusalem in the 6th Century B.C. When he discovered that some of his Jewish brethren had married foreign women and had families by them contrary to the Law, he did not hold back in his rebuke. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves (Neh. 13:25).

I am not suggesting we should use hair pulling or physical force with brethren. Yet, was Nehemiah unloving in his rebuke? Did he seek to “bite and devour” his brethren? No! He manifested a *zealous love* for God and his nation. I imagine he lost quite a few friends but gained favor with God. “Remember me, O my God, for good” (13:31).

Was Jesus “mean spirited” when He called His fellow Jews “hypocrites” (Mat. 23:15) and a “generation of vipers” (23:33)? Was He being overly aggressive when He twice drove the money changers out of the temple? *No!*

When the apostle Paul confronted Barnabas, the Jewish brethren, and Peter at Antioch for not eating with the Gentile brethren and “withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed” (Gal. 2:11), was he seeking to “bite and devour” them? *Of course not!* He knew that the “truth of the gospel” (2:14) was at stake.

**Brethren, we must treat each other respectfully and with brotherly kindness.** But we must not presume that our brother/sister should be allowed to proceed down the road to Hell in a good humor. The bond of fellowship between brethren is a most precious thing. It was made possible by the precious blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28). It should be fought for and defended with all the “tough love” and courage we can muster. It is far preferable to upset them in this life, where they have an opportunity to repent, than to have them upset on the Day of Judgment with no chance of repentance. “Open rebuke *is* better than secret love” (Pro. 27:5).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac    Harold Cozad
Bill Busch    Alecia Godwin
Dot Lambert    Horace Myrick
Al Flesher    Nancy Travis
Nellie Read    Henry Born
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond’s mother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
September 5—Dale Cunningham

Please Remember
September 9
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 5.

Still the Bestseller
In 1794 Thomas Payne wrote *The Age of Reason*, in which he made an attack against the Bible and then boasted that after his book has circulated for fifty years, the bible would be so discredited it would be exhibited in museums as a curious object of a former superstitious age. More than three times fifty years have passed, Thomas Payne is almost forgotten and his book is scarcely known. Yet, the Bible continues to be the bestseller. Truly it must be from God!

*Author Unknown*
The Danger of Compromise
Roelf L. Ruffner

“Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab” (2 Chr. 18:1). Why in the world did Jehoshaphat, one of the most righteous kings of the Kingdom of Judah, decide to make peace with Ahab, the most evil king the Northern Kingdom ever had? It probably did not happen overnight. Spurred on by a marriage between Jehoshaphat’s son and Ahab’s daughter, perhaps he just wanted peace between their two kingdoms. Maybe he wanted to “go along and to get along.” His reasoning may have been, “I know he’s a bad hombre, but aren’t we both Hebrews?”

The Bible shows us that one compromise of faith produces another and then another. This was true in Jehoshaphat’s case.

Ahab asked him to go into battle with him against the Syrians at Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat’s reply was “I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses” (1 Kin. 22:4). Then he got cold feet and said to Ahab, “Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to day” (22:5). Ahab quickly produced 400 hirelings, pseudo-prophets who profusely blessed the military venture. Jehoshaphat was feeling the political pressure to compromise.

A few years ago the controversy over brother Dave Miller and Apologetics Press (AP) came to general brotherhood attention when he was appointed its director. AP, fearing for its survival because of the moral failure of its founding director (Bert Thompson), persuaded several brethren (some of them well-known) to sign a document for its support. Compromising with error they chose the former so they could continue to support AP. Many supposedly sound brethren who had previously
publicly opposed Miller’s false doctrines of elder revaluation/reaffirmation and “marriage intent” now felt the need to cave. Like Ahab’s hirelings, the names/numbers of the signatories seemed to sway these sound brethren. They began falling like dead trees in a forest into the sweet smelling field of compromise that leads to the rottenness of apostasy.

Jehoshaphat again got cold feet. Perhaps remembering the example of his father Asa, he said to Ahab, “Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?” (22:7). Ahab squirmed, but reluctantly dragged the faithful prophet Micaiah out of his dungeon. This noble man gave these two kings “the word of the Lord” (22:19) which warned of catastrophe for both kings if they went to Ramoth-gilead. Micaiah was attacked by one of Ahab’s hirelings and thrown back into prison by Ahab. Jehoshaphat did not ut-
The hue and cry throughout many pulpits is to “develop personal relationships” and to have a “personal encounter with Jesus.” This sounds lofty and noble, but what it often boils down to is simply to de-emphasize the Bible and elevate man. The idea of teaching and accepting propositional truths from God’s Word is ignored for the sake of relationships. That is the reason so many brethren would rather attend a “fellowship dinner” than a Gospel meeting or lectureship. The idea of studying to refute religious error is unthinkable in most city churches.

More of us who know the truth would not disparage good influence or proper relationships, yet this can never replace helping men to see the truth as taught by Jesus in the Bible, or making them aware of the error they have espoused.

We all should be as kind and personable as upholding the truth will allow, but this is a far cry from what is being advocated. Truth is being put down and neglected by many who advocate friendship, people, and relationships above the Lord. It is still “the truth” that makes man free (John 8:32), and all personal relationships must be subjugated to the Lord and His truth (Mat. 10:34-37).

This very attitude concerning “personal relationships” has destroyed controversy and the desire to defend the faith (Jude 3; 1 Pet. 3:15). We become such loving people we cannot chance hurting our relationships by exposing people’s sins or errors. Neighbor, that is not true, biblical love. This religious philosophy is humanism, pure and simple, rather than a love for truth and Christ. Brethren, we need to wake up and see this as yet another ploy of Satan in our congregations today.

Personal Relationships
Andrew M. Connally

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Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
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Bill Busch    Aleacia Godwin
Dot Lambert  Horace Myrick
Al Flesher    Nancy Travis
Nellie Read
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Marie Underwood (Karen Diamond’s mother)

Restored
Dale Cunningham was restored to Christ on September 2 and Terri Myrick was restored to Christ on September 9. Please keep Dale and Terri in your prayers and offer them encouragement.

Wednesday Bible Reading
September 12—Ray Foshee

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

September 16
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 5.

September 17
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).
And delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds) (2 Pet. 2:7-8—ASV).

As I read the foregoing passage I often think of our beloved country. How far does it all go before America suffers the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah? Notice what has happened in the last few years regarding the acceptance of homosexuality in our land:

- The homosexual lifestyle portrayed in the media and Hollywood as normal. Scripts approved/censored by homosexual activists. (When will someone make a film showing the truth about this filthy, de-meaning, destructive, sad, perverted, sinful choice?)
- A growing number of Americans accept this immoral lifestyle.
- Same-sex marriage approved by state legislatures and forced upon other states by activist judges.
- Hate Crimes Laws (so called) passed by state legislatures and recently by the U.S. Congress.
- “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy of the U.S. Defense Department declared “unconstitutional” by an activist judge.
- A growing number of denominations accepting unrepentant homosexuals as members and as clergy.

The list could go on ad nauseum.

"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry” (Acts 17:16). In a sense, homosexuality is a form of idolatry—the worship of the human body—or an outgrowth of it (cf. Rom. 1:22-27).

There is an old political axiom which states, “There is nothing quite as powerful as an idea...
whose time has come.” I believe this is true with the issue of homosexual rights. Using money, lobbying, and “political correctness,” this juggernaut has rolled aside decency and Biblical morality to reach its evil goal—the full acceptance of a perverted lifestyle by society and ostracism (persecution) of those who oppose it.

1. But we must not just roll over and play dead! As was righteous Lot, we will be delivered if we do what is right.

2. Continue to stand for the Truth and oppose perversion (cf. Gen. 19:9; Mat. 5:14-15).

3. Demand fervent preaching concerning this sin; as well as all other sins (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2).

4. Teach our children and grandchildren that sexual immorality is a sin (cf. Pro. 22:6).

5. Be prepared to be persecuted (cf. Mat.
Societal Norms

Society in America has turned the standard of right into an immoral course of ungodliness. In the religious world in general the goal is not the glorification of God, but is geared toward entertainment and the fulfillment of human desires. Too often in the worship services of modern “Christianity” there is only enough Scriptures used to make sermons legitimate, and most people desire it to be that way. This is the same attitude the Israelites had at the time of Isaiah. They were rebellious people who did not want to hear the Word of God. It is written, “That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord” (Isa. 30:9).

Instances of societal norms that have been turned upside down are the way people view their life. It has become immoral to wear a fur coat but normal to kill an unborn child through abortion. It has become “scholarly” to teach that man evolved from animals and “uneducated” and “backward” to teach that God created man in His image. The new standard of morality has changed societal norms for the worse.

Today, America is filled with people who have no moral direction in their lives because God has been pushed out. The god of this world, Satan, has deceived so many into thinking it is more important to save an animal than a child or to teach our children that they evolved from monkeys, who evolved from fish, who evolved from slime, and calling this scholarship. Yet, the Bible teaches that true knowledge comes from respecting and seeking God. It is written, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Pro. 1:7). Societal norms would be completely different if man respected God. This can only come about by men and women going to their Bibles and studying the Scriptures. If that happen societal norms would change for the better.

Marion, VA

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5:10-12; 2 Tim. 3:12).
6. Do not fall into the trap of hating these enslaved souls. If possible, show them the Truth (cf. Acts 22:18; Jude 22-23).

We are not the first Christians who have faced this responsibility. It has been written that in New Testament times fornication was as common as breathing. We are fast approaching that scenario in this country. Pro-homosexual bias is becoming engrained in our society and embedded in the government and the judiciary. Our brethren back then faced their dilemma head on. They could not picket or protest. They just injected into the world the Gospel of Jesus Christ which can change human hearts; so can we! Paul wrote:

Be not deceived: neither fornicators,...nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,...shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Columbia, TN
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Bill Busch  Aleacia Godwin
Dot Lambert  Horace Myrick
Al Flesher  Nancy Travis
Nellie Read  Robbie Cravey

Wednesday Bible Reading
**September 19**—Andrew Hatcher

Please Remember
**Every Sunday**
Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

**September 26**
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Fellow Workers
The world's famous formula with the wrong punch line is: “Teamwork is essential. It allows you to blame someone else.” Yet, in Christ we are to work together for the good of Christ and the Gospel. “We then, *as workers together with him*, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. 3:9). We work together in harvest (Mat. 9:27). Thus, “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building” (1 Cor. 3:9). We are never to blame others for our mistakes, because each gives account of oneself.

*Delbert Goins*
No Intermediate Varieties

Roelf L. Ruffner

The “Theory” of Evolution is just that—a “theory” and not a fact. It has never been shown to be true, however many futile attempts have been made to do so. Charles Darwin, originator and first vocal proponent of this theory, proclaimed long and loudly that the fossil record would vindicate him. He said that it would be full of intermediate varieties or transitional forms of life that would verify that evolution of one species to another was a scientific fact.

In On the Origin of the Species he wrote:
But just in proportion as this process of extermination has acted on an enormous scale, so must the number of intermediate varieties, which have formerly existed, be truly enormous.

Poor Charles, how wrong he was! Perhaps millions of fossils have been unearthed since he wrote those words, and not one indisputable transitional form has been found. A case in point is the insect world.

I have always been amazed by insects. Endless varieties are found throughout the world. Individually and collectively they carry out their God-given mission seemingly oblivious to humanity:

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so (Gen. 1:24).

I particularly love the dragonflies. They fly effortlessly through the air with more dexterity than any man-made helicopter or jet. They come in many sizes and colors, but all are definitely dragonflies.

Yet, where are the transitional forms in the suborder of dragonflies? If evolution is correct, then there must be many attempts and false starts (proto-types) by the mindless force of evolution, eventually (over millions of years) producing this amazing flying creature. There
should be several intermediate stages in the fossils. Frank and Orville Wright's motorized flying kite, called an "aero plane," produced many offspring, some of which crashed, before inventors evolved today's Harrier Jet. The silence of the fossil record is deafening.

There are thousands of examples of fossilized dragonflies, some of which are preserved in deposits of sedimentary rock. Many specimens were caught in their beauty in amber (tree resin). There the tiniest detail of their anatomy can be observed. However, oddly enough (for evolutionists), no intermediate variety has been found. The specimen is either a bona fide dragonfly or another type of insect, many existing in exactly the same form today as in fossil form. There are no dragonfly-butterfly or grasshopper-dragonfly combinations, for example. Each is distinct from one another, as they are to this day. All produced "after its

Gospel Meeting
with
Roelf L. Ruffner
October 14 – 19

"America, It's Time to Return to the Bible"

Lessons from a Small Church.................................Sunday 9 a.m.
It's Time to Return Home................................. Sunday 10 a.m.
Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves..................... Sunday 12:30 p.m.
Our Best Friend .............................................. Monday 7:30 p.m.
Back to God's Plan of Salvation............................ Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
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The Real Roman Road to Salvation ....................... Thursday 7:30 p.m.
The Deceivers .................................................. Friday 7:30 p.m.

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after the morning service in the general purpose building.
A covered-dish meal will also be provided:
Monday – Thursday at 6:00 P.M., in the zone room.
Visitation Group 1 will provide the meal—Tuesday & Thursday
Visitation Group 2 will provide the meal—Monday & Wednesday
Visitors are invited to every meal.
Come and enjoy a good meal and Gospel preaching.
Once again we see that the Bible is right and evolution is wrong. But why did God create the dragonfly? It was not just to fill some ecological niche. He made the dragonfly for the same reason He created the entire natural world—so we might know Him.

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us (Acts 17:27).

A study of 1 Kings will lead one to examine the wickedness of Ahab, and also to see the real power behind him, that wicked and idolatrous Jezebel. These two had a real, powerful and spiritual adversary in God’s servant Elijah. There were other men of the prophets whom God used in bringing Ahab to the end of his behavior.

In a second period of conflict with the Syrians, God had promised to deliver them into the hands of Israel. God’s people were victorious, and the Syrian king then made a plea for the sparing of his life, and Ahab, calling him a “brother,” spared him. God’s words of rebuke were brought to Ahab in the form of a story wherein a man is charged with keeping a prisoner safe, allowed him to escape. Ahab responded to the story in the enforcing of the penalty upon the guard; whereupon, the point turned against Ahab, who had the Syrian king in his grasp and let him live. Of importance to us just here is the point, in the story, that the man on guard allowed his prisoner to escape because “I was busy here and there” (1 Kin. 20:40).

“I was busy here and there” has other forms: “This and that,” “taking care of things,” “seeing to business,” “getting straightened out,” etc. It all boils down to failing to put God first in our lives (Mat. 6:33). Those who do visitation and personal work every so often will hear this given as a reason for non-attendance, non-participation: “Well, we’ve been so busy, we’re going to do better as soon as we get straightened out.” Busy here and there, and letting things of God be ignored.

It so happens that our times are such that anyone can “be busy here and there” and with “this and that,” and never find time for God’s things! Time is there on the calendar and on the clock, but it is made for God! I will have time for no spiritual thing unless I make it! Let us plan to not lose our souls because we were “busy here and there”!

Did you hear about the new kind of collection plate? An engineer has invented an ideal plate which elders will want to order. These plates will accept currency and checks with silent graciousness. Drop in a half dollar and a bell will ring! Toss in a quarter and a whistle will blow! Throw in a dime and it will fire a shot! When you give nothing, it will take your picture.

We Give Because We Love Him!

Author Unknown

New Collection Plates

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac        Harold Cozad
Bill Busch         Aleacia Godwin
Dot Lambert        Horace Myrick
Al Flesher         Nancy Travis
Nellie Read        Robbie Cravey

Wednesday Bible Reading
September 26—Jim Loy

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October 14-19
Gospel Meeting with Roelf Ruffner

If You Think…
If you think it is hard to sit through a sermon, try preaching one,
If you think the pew is hard, try the pulpit.
If you think the singing should be better, try leading the song service.
If you think the teaching is not plain enough, try explaining the lesson yourself.
If you think the congregation is not friendly, try speaking to someone before he speaks to you.

Author Unknown
Secular Fundamentalism

Roelf L. Ruffner

The above phrase was not coined by me. I first heard it on the Michael Medved radio show. I believe that it is an apt description of the increasing anti-religious (especially anti-Christian) attitude among many in our society. These folk are bound and determined to remove all mention of religion from the public arena. For them religion should be put in a box and that box hidden away in one’s heart.

It began over forty years ago when the U.S. Supreme Court forbade public prayer in public schools. Through the years this mind-set has gathered steam resulting in religion being pushed aside in concern over “separation of church and state” (a concept not found in the U.S. Constitution or any state constitution).

Part and parcel of this growing antagonism is the man-made barrier between science and religion. The academic community in our nation has wholeheartedly embraced Charles Darwin’s Theory of Evolution—the unsubstan-
tiated belief that all life evolved from pre-existing life. This unproven theory has been swallowed whole by our public school system, the media, and entertainment industries. They have no use for the Bible or Christianity. In its place they have attempted to make this erroneous science into their religion. True science is complimentary and compatible with true religion and vice versa.

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science [or knowledge] falsely so called (1 Tim. 6:20).

Along with the acceptance of the theory of evolution is the newfound respectability of atheism. Atheists have long been relegated to the ranks of crackpots and eccentric cranks, like the late Madeline Murray O’Hare. But lately a new crop of atheists has arisen. They have been involved in several debates and have written best sellers. Perhaps this goes along with the
Prejudice

Robertson L. Whiteside

Prejudice is a robber which many of us entertain in our hearts. It robs us of generous feelings which we should have for others, and leaves us the tormenting of hate. By shutting our eyes and stopping our ears it robs us of many precious truths, and leaves us the dross of our distorted opinions. It robs us of light, and shuts us up in the darkness of our own ignorance. No other robber can leave us so poor.

What is the faithful Christian to do? Rather than retreat from the forces of Satan, we should obey the Lord and be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Mat. 5:13-14). With love, we must publicly refute this darkness with the light of God’s Word whether in the pulpit or in print or in our daily conversations. Brethren, I do not expect secular fundamentalism to retreat but to only grow stronger. We should expect the worst. They want us to “shut up and go away.”

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived (2 Tim. 3:12-13).

Rather than retreat, the church of Christ should advance with the Gospel and help free more from the darkness of sin (cf. Acts 26:18). Christ is on our side as long as we are doing His will (cf. Mat. 28:19-20).

Columbia, TN

Bible-Centered Preaching

Franklin Camp

Another root of the restoration was Bible-founded and Bible-centered preaching. The men that set about to call man back to the Bible knew the Bible and preached the Bible. The Bible was their textbook. This root is fast drying up. There is too much preaching today that has everything in it but the Bible. I may not know whether a man is quoting from rising tide of unbelief in our culture. Of course their arguments are still intellectually bankrupt and childish but so is the thinking of a majority of our society nowadays.

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, There is none that doeth good (Psa. 14:1).

Another part of this growth of secular fundamentalism is hedonism or the incessant pursuit of pleasure—especially sexually. Practices once considered disgraceful and disgusting by society are now openly flaunted: adultery, cohabitation, promiscuity, homosexuality, etc. Deviant practices once “in the closet” are out of the closet and their adherents are demanding that the rest of us keep our views “in the closet.”

And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting (Rom. 1:28—ASV).

What is the faithful Christian to do? Rather than retreat from the forces of Satan, we should obey the Lord and be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Mat. 5:13-14). With love, we must publicly refute this darkness with the light of God’s Word whether in the pulpit or in print or in our daily conversations. Brethren, I do not expect secular fundamentalism to retreat but to only grow stronger. We should expect the worst. They want us to “shut up and go away.”

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Columbia, TN
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with
Roelf L. Ruffner
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Norman Vincent Peale, or not, but I know enough about the Bible to know when a man is quoting from it. It is a tragedy for a man to get up in the pulpit with a Bible and then never use it. Some would do the church service if they left their Bible at home and got into the pulpit with a stack of magazines and Dale Carnegie’s books so the man in the pew would know what was taking place. It is high time we put the preacher back in the study with his Bible and let him know we expect him to “get with it and preach it.” Some sermons I have heard recently would not have been tolerated in the country church where I grew up. He might have preached one, but that would have been the limit. They wanted the Bible and a man either preached that or he did not preach.

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac        Harold Cozad
Bill Busch         Alecia Godwin
Dot Lambert        Horace Myrick
Al Flesher         Nancy Travis
Nellie Read        Robbie Cravey

Wednesday Bible Reading
October 3—Fred Stancliff

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

October 14-19
Gospel Meeting with Roelf Ruffner

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter, Jelly, Pork n’ Beans

Leftovers
Leftovers are such humble things,
We would not serve to a guest
And yet we serve them to our Lord
Who deserves the very best.
We give to Him leftover time,
Stray minutes here and there.
Leftover cash we give to Him,
Such few coins as we can spare.
We give our youth unto the world,
To hatred, lust, and strife;
Then in declining years we give
To Him the remnant of our life.

Author Unknown
Tell Me You Didn’t Mean It Lord!

Charles Pogue

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said: “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you” (Mat. 5:44). The fact that our culture is geared to watching out for old number one in no way modifies, tempers, or sets aside Jesus’ instruction. A young woman known to me was heard to say she would lie if it gave her some kind of advantage. One problem with lying to gain an advantage is that the lie despitefully uses someone else. Another consequence of the lie is that it makes the one suffering the wrong an enemy to the liar. The liar will sooner or later face the consequences of the lie, but what about the individual who suffers the wrong brought on by the lie? That is the person Jesus is speaking to in the mountain top discourse. Do good to your enemy, pray for them; bless not curse!

It is not enough to restrain one’s self from picking up a 2x4 board and knocking the liar upside the head. We must bless not curse, and do good to the one who demonstrates hate. Paul wrote to the Romans: “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head” (Rom. 12:20). The apostle does not mean for us to render good for the evil begrudgingly either, because in the very next verse he writes: “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (12:21).

When one has been wronged, there are two things to be on guard about: the actions—do not avenge yourself (12:19), and the attitude—bless not curse (12:14). With regard to the former, it may not be too difficult to resist picking up the 2x4. It may not be so easy to have the right attitude toward being wronged, but we develop it, because that is what the Lord commands. A friend of this writer, a man who served many years as a deacon in the church recently passed away. Some of the past words
and deeds by a number of his relatives suggest a war over material possessions may arise. Some of his kin may cheat and defraud other family members. If they do, they will have their reward. What of those who are mistreated? They will have the difficult task of keeping their actions and attitudes consistent with the teachings of Christ and Paul. However, they have a consolation. It is the same consolation the beggar Lazarus had. The faithful are carried to Abraham’s bosom, and the sinful, who have made themselves better off through fraud, will have the same end and eternity as the rich man. The difference in where we spend eternity should make all the difference between whether we seek vengeance and harbor a grudge or take wrong joyfully, knowing by returning good for evil, we will have a greater reward than material wealth.

Granby, MO
Self Examination for Church Members

How many morning services would we have this past year if everyone had stayed at home when I did? How many times would the evening services have been omitted if no one had gone except when I was there? How many times would the Sunday school have met if they had met only when I was there? How much Christian instruction would the children of my community have received if everybody gave as much as I do? How many people of darkened lands would have heard the Gospel, if everyone was interested in them as much as I am? How many of my neighbors would have been invited to service, welcomed at the church; how many prayers would have been offered for my minister, my neighbors, my church? How many words of testimony spoken for Christ?

What kind of a Christian am I anyhow? Do my excuses stand before Christ? What kind of a church would this be, if every person were just like me?

Author Unknown

An Alarming Parallel?

Roelf L. Ruffner

The Bible is filled with examples of men following men rather than God. Here are a few cases:

1. The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11).
2. The children of Israel at Mt. Sinai (Exo. 32).
3. The children of Israel's failure to go into the promised land the first time (Num. 14).
4. The rebellion of Korah (Num. 16).
5. The period of the Judges.
6. Jereboam, king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (1 Kin. 12:25-33).
7. The arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Christ.
10. Those brethren with "itching ears" (2 Tim. 4:3).

Are we no different than those men of long ago? Many of our own brethren would rather hear an eloquent, charismatic false teacher than a Biblical call to repentance. They depart from the teachings of the Saviour to follow denominational doctrines because "it feels so good!" A preacher comes along who is clearly trying to subvert the churches of Christ and they call him spiritual because he titillates emotions. In a spiritual sense, is this any different from what happened at Mount Carmel? The end of apostasy is no less tragic. "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Mat. 15:13).

Columbia, TN
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher        Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac         Harold Cozad
Bill Busch          Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick       Bobbie LaBryer
Al Flesher          Nancy Travis
Nellie Read         Robbie Cravey
Aleacia Godwin (surgery, October 17)

Wednesday Bible Reading
October 10—Orville Worley

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

October 14-19
Gospel Meeting with Roelf Ruffner

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter, Jelly, Pork n’ Beans

God’s Plan of Salvation
Men must hear the saving Gospel (Rom. 10:17).
Men must believe in Christ (John 8:24; 20:31).
Men must repent of their sins (Luke 13:3).
Men must confess faith in Christ (Mat. 10:32).
Men must be immersed, baptized (Acts 2:38).
Men must live faithfully (1 Cor. 15:58).
A Whale of a Tale
Roelf L. Ruffner

It takes an enormous amount of faith as well as downright gullibility to believe in Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. He maintained that a lower species of plant or animal life can, over a period of millions of years, evolve into another species of plant or animal.

Yet contrary to what evolutionists believe, their theory has never been demonstrated by valid experimentation, observation in nature, or even in the fossil record. However, evolutionists hold to their false assumptions with a zealously blind faith that borders on the paranoid. A case in point is Darwin’s speculation in the first edition of his book On the Origin of Species that a whale evolved from a bear.

In North America, the black bear was seen by Hearne swimming for hours with widely open mouth, thus catching, like a whale, insects in the water. Even in so extreme a case as this, if the supply of insects were constant, and if better adapted competitors did not already exist in the country, I can see no difficulty in a race of bears being rendered, by natural selection, more and more aquatic in their structure and habits, with larger and larger mouths, till a creature was produced as monstrous as a whale (567).

So bizarre and ridiculous were his assumptions thought to be that he was forced to remove them from subsequent editions of his book by his scientific colleagues. Yet, is not the whole ungodly theory of evolution preposterous and ridiculous? The fool hath said in his heart. There is no God (Psa. 14:1).

Today, Darwin’s disciples have changed the bear-to-whale fiasco a bit. Some maintain that whales evolved from a wolf-like creature or maybe a cat-like animal or perhaps a hippopotamus-like animal. Lately some have fantasized over a deer-like creature. These experts all bicker amongst themselves over their outland-
ish speculations.

The Christian's faith is based on the inerrant Word of God. On the fifth day of Creation it records the creation of this enormous, beautifully complex creature:

And God created great whales [sea creatures—NKJV], and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:21).

Columbia, TN

**Gospel Meeting**

**with**

**Roelf L. Ruffner**

**October 14 – 19**

"America, It's Time to Return to the Bible"

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<td>Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves</td>
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The lessons will be available for viewing on our website at:

http://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.php

A covered-dish meal will be provided on Sunday after the morning service in the general purpose building.

A covered-dish meal will also be provided:

Monday – Thursday at 6:00 P.M., in the zone room.

Visitation Group 1 will provide the meal—Tuesday & Thursday

Visitation Group 2 will provide the meal—Monday & Wednesday

Visitors are invited to every meal.

Come and enjoy a good meal and Gospel preaching.
Do believers in God, in Jesus Christ as His Son, and in the Bible as God’s Word have an obligation to evaluate candidates and/or political parties in light of Biblical teaching when they vote? Can a Christian be faithful to Christ if he votes for a candidate who champions anti-Christian causes and principles?

Specifically, can a Christian vote for a candidate who:

- **Favors** Islam over the religion of Christ (hosted Ramadan dinners, but refused to host National Day of Prayer). The Bible affirms that Christianity is the one true religion (John 8:24; 14:6; et al.).

- **Fears** offending Muslims, but does not mind offending believers in Christ (before he delivered a speech, demanded a symbol of Jesus’ name be covered). If one is ashamed of Jesus, Jesus will be ashamed of him at the Judgment (Mat. 10:32-33).

- **Ridicules** believers in Christ (“they cling to their guns or religion”). Jesus said, “Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mat. 5:11).

- **Heads** a party that is opposed to God and the Bible (the original party platform removed God’s name completely; when they added God because of political expediency, it was roundly booed). As with all infidels, “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:22).

- **Favors** abortion vigorously (ruled to override conscience protections relating to abortion for medical workers, favors killing babies born alive after botched abortions, favors funding abortion clinics with tax dollars, included a pro-abortion plank in his party’s platform, etc.). Life begins at conception, and intentional killing—in or out of the womb—is murder, which will send one to Hell (Mat. 2:16; John 8:44; Rom. 1:29, 32; Rev. 21:8; et al.).

- **Advanced** the homosexual agenda in manifold ways (announced he would not enforce the Defense of Marriage Act, announced that he favors same-sex marriages, ordered that homosexuals would be allowed to openly serve in our military forces, ordered chaplains to perform same-sex marriages in military chapels, etc.). Homosexual behavior is a “vile passion,” that is “against nature,” and is “not fitting.” Those who persist in it will be lost eternally (Rom. 1:26-28; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; et al.).

When human loyalties clash with loyalty to God, believers must be faithful to God and Jesus (Acts 5:29). True believers will vote so as to maintain a “good conscience” (Acts 23:1).

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**Author Unknown**

A careless word may kindle strife;
A cruel word may wreck a life;
A bitter word may hate instill;
A brutal word may smite and kill.

A gracious word may smooth the way;
A joyous word may light the day;
A timely word may lessen stress;
A loving word may heal and bless.

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Denton, TX
Remember in your prayers:

Bill Gallaher
Marge Williams
Charles Williams
Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac
Harold Cozad
Bill Busch
Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick
Bobbie LaBray
Al Flesher
Nancy Travis
Nellie Read
Robbie Carvey
Alecia Godwin (surgery, October 17)
Doug Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother-in-law)
Al LaGault (Joyce Johnson’s friend)

Wednesday Bible Reading
October 24—Henry Born

Please Remember

Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

October 14-19
Gospel Meeting with Roelf Ruffner

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter, Jelly, Pork n’ Beans

“Don’t prepare the path for the child; prepare the child for the path.” (Anonymous) There are many theories on childrearing, countless books and even video seminars are available for purchase. Each seeks to make plain the right way to rear children. Save your money. Read the Bible and do your best. Each child is unique and needs your love and attention. God bless.

Tim Smith, Dothan, AL
The Crucial Issue of Authority

Batsell Baxter

Every thinking person realizes that authority plays a very significant role in all of our lives. Before we may drive a car, we must have the authority of a license. A doctor must have a diploma from a reputable medical school before he can practice. A policeman must have a badge which authorizes him to carry out his duties. To get married, we must have a license. There is little that we can do in life without proper authorization.

Especially in the realm of religion must we have proper authority for all that we do. In the worship and service of God, we must do that which we are authorized to do and nothing else.

The question Jesus once faced, “By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” (Mat. 21:23) is a good one for all of us.

Possible Sources of Authority

Final or ultimate authority in religion rests in one of three possible sources. First of all, there are those who believe that final authority rests in the church. Councils, conclaves, and synods meet and make decisions. From these human deliberations such doctrines as purgatory, the adoration of Mary, the seven sacraments, papal infallibility, and others have come.

It was Martin Luther who pointed out the problem of such human authority when he said, “I cannot trust either the decisions of Councils, or of Popes, for it is plain that they have not only erred but have contradicted each other” (Friedenthal, Luther: His Life and Times, 278).

Second, others conceive final authority to rest in the reasoning power of men. One’s own conscience, inner feelings, or reason is the final arbiter. Saul of Tarsus demonstrated this view to be erroneous. In spite of his honesty of purpose and intensity of zeal, he was wrong.

Many a person, guided by his own inner feel-
ings, believes and practices what is contrary to the will of God. The whole blight of denomina-
nationalism is a result of man's trusting his own views, rather than conforming his convictions to God's teaching. Liberalism makes the mistake of thinking that man's reason is the infal-
lible authority in religion.

The third possibility, as the absolute source of authority, is the Bible, the inspired Word of God. God the creator of the universe and of man is the only ultimate, final source of au-
thority. He has spoken in His Word. It is our re-
sponsibility to read the Scriptures, understand them and obey them. Let us say as Samuel did. “Speak; for thy servant heareth” (1 Sam. 3:10).

Never With Men

Authority always rests with divinity. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1), and in so doing established his ultimate supreme authority. Later, when Jesus was upon the earth He said, “All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth” (Mat. 28:18). He further announced to His apostles that when He left the earth, the Holy Spirit would come in His place and “shall guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13). Authority has always rested with the Godhead, and never with men. The prophets, the apostles, and others miraculously guided by God were simply spokesmen. God's Word has al-
ways been the final authority among men. Our Only Guide

The Bible is our guide—our only guide. For this reason, it is encouraging to hear people say, “Let us have a ‘thus saith the Lord’ for all that we do in our religious faith and practice.” Still, another way of saying it is “Let us speak where the scriptures speak, and be silent where the scriptures are silent.” Each of these is a state-
ment indicating the acceptance of the author-
ity of the Scriptures.

At this point let us examine two opposite positions on the matter of the authority of the Scriptures. Martin Luther championed the idea that, “Whatever is not expressly prohibited in the scriptures is permissible.” (D'Aubigne, History of the Great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, Book II, 297). Luther's view opens the door to all kinds of innovations, such as the burning of incense, the lighting of candles, the use of images, instrumental music, and even adding other elements to the Lord's Supper.

Huldrich Zwingli championed the second view which said, “Whatever is not express-
ly authorized in the scriptures is prohibited.” (W. Walker, History of the Christian Church,

Author Unknown

Seven Things You Will Never Regret

1. Showing kindness to an aged person or to anyone.
2. Destroying a letter written in anger.
3. Offering an apology that saves a friendship.
4. Stopping a scandal that was ruining a reputation.
5. Helping a boy or girl find himself or herself.
6. Taking time to show consideration to your mother, or your wife or hus-

band, or your children.
7. Accepting the judgment of God on any question.
1959, 322). This is the view set forth in the Scriptures themselves. In Galatians 1:8, Paul wrote, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.” The apostle John said the same thing in these words: “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

Three Avenues

In determining what the Scriptures authorize, there are three avenues through which we may receive guidance. First, there are direct statements, such as Acts 2:38. In the second place, there are approved apostolic examples, such as the apostle Paul’s eating of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). And, finally, there is implication. Each command of God authorizes whatever is necessary to carry it out. When the Lord commanded Christians to meet for worship, He necessarily authorized the providing of a place for Christians to assemble for worship.

Our religion—our relationship to God—is our most important relationship. We must be absolutely certain about everything that we believe and practice.

Just One Vote

If you ever think, “I really don’t matter,” or if you think your church attendance on a Sunday night or Wednesday will go unnoticed (“nobody knows if I’m there. I’m just one person”), consider the value of “one.” How much is one vote worth?

• In 1645, one vote gave Oliver Cromwell control of England.
• In 1649, one vote caused Charles I of England to be executed.
• In 1845, one vote brought Texas to the Union.
• In 1868, one vote saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment.
• In 1867, one vote changed France from a monarchy to a republic.
• In 1867, one vote gave President Rutherford B. Hayes the Presidency of the United States.
• In 1933, one vote gave Adolph Hitler leadership of the Nazi Party.
• In 1960, one vote change in each precinct in Illinois would have denied John F. Kennedy the Presidency (March Fong Eu, California Secretary of State, 1984).

One person is important because the church is a body that needs all its parts functioning to be healthy (1 Cor. 12:12-31).

If I choose to be with the church every time it meets, I am “casting my vote” for the success of the congregation and expressing my partisanship to God.

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Bill Busch  Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick  Aleacia Godwin
Al Flesher  Nancy Travis
Nellie Read  Robbie Cravey
Bobbie LaBryer (surgery, November 7)
Doug Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother-in-law)
Al LaGault (Joyce Johnson's friend)

Restored
Dale Cunningham was restored to Christ on October 21. Please keep him in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Wednesday Bible Reading
October 24—Henry Born

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

October 24
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

October 31
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Peanut Butter, Jelly, Pork n’ Beans
In the past several years we have seen modernism raising its ugly head in the churches of Christ. Several elderships and many preachers have taught regarding the perils of modernism. These saw the effects of it in various congregations as well as in many denominations. We raised our voices and some heard while others did not care. Those who a few years ago had the “I don’t care” attitudes are today given over to modernism and its trends.

We submit that modernism is not a new thing at all. In fact, the tempter was the first modernist. When Satan said, “yea hath God said,” he began the slippery slope down the dark road of modernism. Modernism promised in the temptation something that is impossible for man to be—“as God.”

We must understand that modernism denies the reality of sin. Modernism waters sin down to the point that it no longer exists regardless of what the Scriptures teach. For instance, look what Adam said after the fall, “the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (Gen. 3:12). Eve blamed the serpent, Adam blamed God, and from then until now man has not been prone to shoulder his own personal responsibilities for the most part.

Very few in the Scriptures admitted that they had sinned. We want to shift responsibility to someone or something else because we must “white-wash” our own faults and set out thinking toward a more modern view of the Word in order to justify ourselves. Why? Because modernism is man’s effort to make the Bible conform in varying degrees to what man wants all the way to reconstructing the Gospel to the restructuring of the church.

Ah, now we see why so much liberalism and compromise permeates us today. Many do not want to do what the Bible says so we will get us a new Bible that will suit our own style of living or we will ignore plain passages not thinking of
judgment (cf. John 12:48). The modernist goes on with these thoughts and teaches that “everything dwells in varying degrees and can be measured.” Measured by what? Of course, by the instrument or thing that the modernist creates!

This would require some method, and the way to determine method is very important. For instance, you cannot smell, taste, or see the modernist. An x-ray machine will not find them out. However, their words do and will betray them. Subjectivity led to this malady in a large way. The conduct of some Christians makes others resign from the thought of pure Christianity, and this is hypocrisy. Division has been created among us as well as the religious world in general.

This, in my judgment, is one of the things that has led many toward agnosticism. And, why not! The modernist already rejects the Bible especially every miracle that is given therein. There is no study among them except trying to find a defense of the very selfish doctrine they hold dear. They can, all day long, tell one what the Bible does not say, while ignoring what it does say. All of us need to study the Bible more than we do because this is the only thing that will lead us to a wholesome Christianity. We need to ask for evidence. We need to state (live) our faith instead of showing a lack of faith. We need to teach the Scriptures to our children. As long as we feed them with intellectualism, modernism will flourish. Modernism will starve to death if we will feed ourselves and the people we teach the pure Word of God.

There Is, Beyond the Azure Blue…

Terry Hightower

He lives! Not that men have not tried to bury Him. Is God really there or is He just a matter of wish fulfillment on our part? Remember Voltaire’s claim that “If God did not exist, we should have to invent him” was superseded by his fellow Frenchman Proudhon’s insistence that “The first duty of free and intelligent man is to chase the idea of God out of his conscience incessantly.” Balunin would add, “If God did exist, we should have to abolish him.”

In the nineteenth century, Nietzsche’s madman in the Joyful Wisdom announced the death of God:

“Where is God gone?” he called out. “I mean to tell you! We have killed him,—you and I. We are all his murderers! But how have we done it? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the whole horizon? What did we do when we loosened this earth from its sun? Whither does it now move? Whither do we move? Away from all suns? Do we not dash on ceaselessly? Backwards, sideways, for-
wars, in all directions? Is there still an above and below? Do we not stray, as through infinite nothingness? Does not empty space breathe upon us? Has it not become colder? Shall we not light lanterns in the morning? Do we not hear the noise of the grave diggers who are burying God? Do we not smell the divine putrefaction?—For even God's putrefy! God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!"

The widely accepted notion among so-called intellectuals is that the God of the Judeo-Christian heritage is dead. But yet God has been a very lively corpse! He keeps creeping back into our consciousness because we suspect that professed “sure laws of science” simply cannot explain the human conscience (Rom. 2:14-19), the design of the human eye with color ability and “stereo” focusing, or that everything in the Cosmos has arrived from a non-purposive Big Bang of about 40 pounds of matter. One twentieth century jokester passed out this little card in retaliation toward “God-killers” of our day:

God is dead. (signed) Nietzsche.
Nietzsche is dead. (signed) God.

The God of the Bible is living and active. He is vitally involved in the affairs of this earth, despite our sometimes doubting such. Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 16:16-17).

To the Sadducees he cried out: “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Mat. 22:32). Christians are a “temple of the Holy Ghost” (1 Cor. 6:19). We must live in light of the fact that “The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:30-31)! Do not make the fatal mistake of writing God's obituary.

Let us all with one voice strongly protest the wild rumor of God's death, as did the preacher Lockridge:

God is dead? Who pronounced him dead? Who signed the death certificate? Who was the coroner? Who was well enough acquainted with the deceased to identify him? Why wasn't I notified? I'm a member of the family!

Are you a son or daughter of God? "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27). Let God add you to His family—His church/kingdom upon this action (Acts 2:47). If you have been added to God's household here on earth, the crucial question for you is this: "Are you truly living your whole life in strong belief that there is 'beyond the azure blue a God concealed from human sight,' or are you living as though he is dead or probably dead?"

Amarillo, TX

Gospel Meeting with Roelf L. Ruffner
Lessons are available for viewing on our website at:
http://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.php
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac      Harold Cozad
Bill Busch       Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick    Aleacia Godwin
Al Flesher       Nancy Travis
Nellie Read      Robbie Cravey
Bobbie LaBryer   (surgery, November 7)
Doug Johnson     (Joyce Johnson’s
                 brother-in-law)
Al LaGault       (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Wendell Harrison (Ashley Brower’s
                 step-father)

Please Remember
**Every Sunday**
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00
pm, in the zone room.

**October 31**
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00
pm, in the auditorium.

**November 5**
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00
pm.

“Six” Steps to Stagnation
1. We tried that once before.
2. It cost too much.
3. We’ve never done it that way.
4. We’re not ready for that.
5. That’s not our responsibility.
6. We’re doing all right without it.

*Author Unknown*
“Come Now and Let Us Reason Together”

Bill Jackson

This is given early in Isaiah (1:18), and is especially striking in that Jehovah here invites man to, as it were, sit down and think seriously with Him on matters of grave importance. The latter part of the verse focuses on the sinfulness of man, and the fact that man’s scarlet, red sins can be as wool, as white as snow. Involved in this is surely the fact that if man thinks seriously about eternal and spiritual matters, the message God has provided will be of importance to him. Therein the problem of our time: Getting men to think seriously about their souls!

Some have said that man is merely showing his age when he thinks of “the good old days.” There may well be a tendency for all of us, when we reach the golden years, to look back and give earlier times a glamour that they really did not have. Be that as it may, some of us can remember when it was not so difficult to get people to place their minds on things of a spiritual nature. I certainly do remember when virtually all in our little community professed faith in Christ. I recall religious discussions in the fields, during the lunch-hour break, and down at the grocery store on the highway. It was a time when the communities, and the nation itself, were not drowning in alcohol, when drug use was virtually unheard of, when the tendency was to whisper the word “homosexual” if it had to be said at all, and when divorce touching a family in the community was of such shame that families tended to move away! I remember a time when the mothers were at home with the children, and when the family unit was intact and was such that the greatest possible good influence was exerted upon the children. Alright, if I am telling my age, so be it! The times were wonderful, and only now, in looking back, do we know how wonderful.

Our point is to show that in that era, it was
not all that difficult to get man's attention with spiritual lessons. We have found that to be drastically changed in our time. The times are decidedly non-religious, and people are very, very busy—but not in things of a spiritual nature. In Luke 8:14, Jesus explained how spirituality is forced out of one's heart due to being “choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life.” The same cares and concerns can cause one to have little interest in things that pertain to the soul, and with an unwillingness to set aside those concerns long enough to think spiritually. A most appropriate cartoon appeared in one of our papers, years ago, showing a man bent forward and under a load that just about had him to the breaking point, and in large letters across that load was this word: THINGS! Man involved with his things, but ignoring the things of God!

The Bible is filled with both illustrations and means regarding their need to be faithful in their stewardship, and also to give warning not to “trust in uncertain riches” (1 Tim. 6:17-18). We, today, have lived in good times, materially speaking, and now the question: “As times have been good, has there also been a proportionate drift away from God and spiritual matters?” Surely all can join in with a resounding, “Yes!”

The Word of God has all the power it ever had, and the blood of the Christ still waits on man in sin to obey and make the proper use of it. Forgiveness awaits. Blessings await. Salvation is offered. Jesus still says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (Rev. 3:20). That picture was the basis of a well-known painting, generations ago, and it is no doubt in many homes of religious people. Jesus stands, light in His hand, and knocks at a door. When the artist displayed the finished product, one of his neighbors called attention to the fact that the artist had overlooked something: “There's no handle on the door!” The artist replied, “I intended that. Christ knocks at the door of the human heart, and the latch is on the inside!”

We live with the truth that the Word cannot be changed to adapt to a desire for man to have the world and to also have the Christ. “No man can serve two masters” (Mat. 6:24). The tendency in the denominational world has been to change the message to suit the fancies of men. Too much of that ungodly thinking has already invaded the kingdom. Man still, if he is to have salvation, must cease his sin and come to live for the Christ—in a new and living way (Heb. 10:20). God still expects man to be converted, and I, as a teacher, would lose my soul and render a great disservice to any man if I minimized any requirement of God, and if I allowed man to think he was forgiven...
and blessed by God when he was not! We are still left holding the Word, the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17), and we use it, “in season, out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2). We hope factors of just any type might work to cause modern man to re-assess his values, and to once more think spiritually. We use the Word continually to urge that change upon men. The concern is that we continue faithful to God, and faithful to His Word, and whether that change comes—sooner or later—or whether it never comes again, we still save our souls! Let us press on!

_Deceased_

Author Unknown

Without You
We can’t spell Bible Study without “U”
We can’t spell Church without “U”
We can’t spell Support without “U”
We can’t spell Unity without “U”
We can’t spell Purpose without “U”
We can’t spell Duty without “U”
We can’t spell Soul without “U”
The Church needs “U,” but more than that, “U” need the church.

Author Unknown

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Bobbie LaBryer (surgery, November 7)
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Please Remember

Every Sunday
 Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

November 11
 Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 5.

November 18
 Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 5.

If you want to know how popular the church is, come on Sunday morning.
If you want to know how popular the doctrine is, come on Sunday night.
If you want to know how popular the Lord is, come on Wednesday night.

Author Unknown
Wannabe Cool Preachers

Paul Vaughn

One of the strange characters in “Christianity” today is the “wannabe cool preacher.” His goal: to look dynamic and perform an act each Sunday. His sermon is usually well-seasoned with jokes, so no one is offended. The “wannabe cool preacher” believes that the only sin is offending someone. Therefore, he is more than willing to speak only smooth things to the people, like the false prophets of old (Isa. 30:10). He dresses very casual, no suit or tie because a shirt and slacks make him look and feel cool.

The preacher of coolness understands that the young and affluent members appreciate mediocre sermons of inferior quality that will muddy the standard between right and wrong.

Jesus taught about the “wannabe cool” attitude and their reward. It is written, “And He spoke a parable to them: ‘Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?’ ” (Luke 6:39). He also said:

And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: “Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them” (Mat. 13:14-15).

Only the “wannabe cool preacher” can please people who have closed their ears and eyes to the truth.

Those who seek out the “wannabe cool preachers” will receive what they desire. Paul said, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers” (2 Tim. 4:3). Paul was not a “wannabe cool preacher” because he strongly proclaimed the will of God for mankind. His goal was to “Preach the word!”
When Your Hands Are Tied

David P. Brown

One of the most difficult, perplexing, and heartrending situations is when one must sit back and watch others make decisions the results of which will create more problems than the decision-makers ever thought. In fact, what compounds the problem is when one knows that those making the decisions think that their choice is the solution to a legitimate problem or problems. There is a further compounding of the problem when the decision-makers have been taught correctly and yet to no benefit concerning the decisions they make. In circumstances of this nature, some persons are moved to ask, what can we do to help the situation? The answer many times is: At this point there is nothing anyone can do that has not been done.

To volunteer information to those who could have asked such of you but did not is folly. Under such circumstances people simply open themselves up to all manner of unwarranted charges and accusations. People need to learn where their responsibility begins and ends in trying to help others. Thus, under such circumstances and insofar as being able to help, honest folks must finally conclude that their hands are tied.

God’s hands were tied regarding Adam and Eve’s decision to sin. God had informed them as to what was right and wrong and told them of the consequences if they chose to sin. Their choice and its blessings or consequences was theirs alone to make (Gen. 3). Such has been the case with God and man to the present and will continue for all time. What else could or can God do? (Rom. 1:21-32; 3:23; Rev. 22:17).

Parent’s hands are tied regarding their children’s decisions. Besides setting a Christian example before their children, godly parents have

The Bible and the Newspaper

The front page of our daily newspaper has about 3,000 words from top to bottom. That is the space utilized by the 24 shortest books of the Bible. During the time required to read ten pages of your newspaper, you can read the nearly 40,000 words of all 150 Psalms. It has been said that the entire Bible can be read in about 80 hours.

Why do some know so little about the most important of all publications known to man? Jesus said that the words that He spoke, the same shall judge man in the last day (John 12:48). There is no substitute for our own personal study of the Book from and of God.

Bible study enriches the mind, molds the heart, and shapes the life.

Author Unknown
the responsibility of teaching, training, and disciplining them (Eph. 6:4; Pro. 22:6). Some children, while still in the home, will appreciate none of this and decide to go their own way. In such situations when all is said and done if children are rebellious enough, there comes the time when there is nothing that parents can do to change the rebellious child. Remember, after others have done all that they can do, change is effected by the person who needs to change (Jos. 24:15; Acts 2:40; 8:22; 2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 2:5).

When children are of age and thus out from under their parents’ jurisdiction, parents’ hands are certainly tied regarding their children’s decisions. Like the prodigal son’s father, godly parents can try to be around to help if and/or when such is appreciated (Luke 15:11-21), but just what else could or can godly parents do?

As a faithful member of the Lord’s church many times one’s hands are tied regarding the various decisions other church members make insofar as changing said members (2 Tim. 4:10; Rev. 2:21-25). Even when such decisions will have a detrimental impact on the whole church, there comes the time when the faithful child of God must conclude that at least at this juncture there is nothing else that can be done to alter the matter (Hos. 4:17; 3 John 9); especially is this true regarding false teachers. Some brethren just will not be warned. Please consider the following Scriptures from our Lord and the apostle Paul.

Jesus clearly pointed out to: Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits (Mat. 7:15-16).

Paul warned: Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:17-18). And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

Finally, when all is said and done, the faithful children of God can and must act to protect themselves and other faithful brethren from the consequences of wrong decisions made by others (Jos. 9:1-21). What else could or can a faithful child of God do?

Spring, TX

2010 Bellview Book: Back To The Bible

This book has been designed to hand to a non-Christian and by his reading the book, it will teach him what he needs to do to be saved, to worship acceptably, the proper organization of the church, the work of the church, and a chapter on Christian living. It will teach him some of the basic things he needs to know in becoming a Christian. This book is in its third printing. Order your copy or multiple copies today.

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Capacity of Our Soul
Delbert Goins
Our soul is endowed with vast powers and capable of the highest destiny, yet it is controlled on earth by our body! It is sadness to witness thousands whose disobedient souls rise no higher than the things of the earth. The soul can realize its highest aspirations only if it is risen with Christ, and seeks those things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God!
“Where Are We in the Book of Revelation?”

Ken Chumbley

Many years ago I answered the telephone one day. The lady on the other end of the line immediately asked the question which forms the title for this article. However, she was not wanting to know what chapter we were studying in a Bible class, but, rather, she was wanting to know where, in the sense of fulfillment of prophecy, we are today in connection with the prophecies in Revelation and how soon it was therefore going to be before Jesus Christ returns. Many still ask similar questions today particularly because of events in the Middle East and the popularity of many television evangelists and what they teach.

Somehow, she had gained the understanding that Revelation dealt with “end time events” and thus we should be able to see how much longer we have before Christ returns. I pointed out to her that John, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, makes it clear that the things which he is writing about would “shortly come to pass” because, as he said, “the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:1, 3; 22:10) and thus his prophecies were to the seven churches of Asia indicating to them, in apocalyptic language, things that were about to take place “shortly” and not some two thousand years or so later.

Being unsatisfied with my response, she then started asking about the signs indicating the closeness of the Lord’s return. I then took her to Matthew 24 and read verses 36-39, pointing out that Jesus made it clear that there were to be no signs of His return. Rather, life was to be going on as normal, just as in the days before the flood with eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, everyday activities of life. I also pointed out that the signs that Jesus gave in the earlier part of Matthew 24 were, in context, dealing with the time of the destruction of Jerusalem which we know occurred in A.D. 70.
I offered to study the Bible with her or enroll her in a Bible Correspondence Course. However, she declined. It appears she did not like what the Bible was actually teaching preferring instead her own preconceived ideas.

Tragically, too often, many people are like that lady. Are you? Will you accept what the Bible teaches or will you cling to your preconceived ideas?

Belvedere, SC

What Do “Intellectuals” and Liberals Know About the Bible? Nothing!

Johnny Oxendine

I am just going to give you a few quotes from a December 15, 2008, Newsweek article titled: “Our Mutual Joy.” It is an attempt by a so-called, (but know nothing) religion editor (Lisa Miller) to justify homosexuality by the Scriptures. These are exact comments or statements found in the article. I will leave most of my comments for the conclusion, but here you have this to see for yourselves how ignorant someone can be:

Scripture gives us no good reason why gays and lesbians should not be (civilly and religiously) married—and a number of excellent reasons why they should.

The Bible does condemn gay male sex in a handful of passages. Twice Leviticus refers to sex between men as “an abomination” (King James version), but these are throwaway lines… our modern understanding of the world has surpassed its prescriptions. Why would we regard its condemnation of homosexuality with more seriousness than we regard its advice, which is far lengthier, on the best price to pay for a slave?

“Paul is not talking about what we call homosexuality at all” [Neil Elliott, The Arrogance of Nations].

The Bible was written for a world so unlike our own, it’s impossible to apply its rules, at face value, to ours.

Religious objections to gay marriage are rooted not in the Bible at all (http://www.newsweek.com/id/172653).

This article reveals not only how little Miller knows about the Bible, but also how desperate she seems to toss aside hundreds of years of biblical scholarship that is overwhelmingly concerned with correct and specific definitions—not homosexuality. She speaks with sarcasm of the passages in Leviticus relegating them as some archaic cave writings that cannot possibly be taken seriously and therefore should be thrown away!

To think that our modern world has somehow surpassed the prescriptions of God is perhaps the most insulting slap of all at the Creator. She defiantly sees no reason to obey or apply anything the Scriptures teach if they do not correspond to beliefs she has concocted in her little speckle of a distorted humanistic mind. How this woman can oversee several so-called religious publications also is an indication of how pervasively entrenched the pro-homosexual liberal press is as it endeavors to
demean/demonize religion (not only is she the religion editor(?), but she writes a weekly column, *Belief Watch* for the magazine). If anything, Miller hates the Bible and what it teaches and stands for.

If Paul is not talking about homosexuality at all, what does this passage from 1 Corinthians mean?

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God (6:9-10—NKJV).

The English Standard Version translates that phrase similarly: “neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,” so there is no doubt of whom Paul speaks!

San Mateo, CA

**Heartfelt Religion**

*G. K. Wallace*

True heartfelt religion makes a child secure and keeps him happy at all times. He who has this kind of religion will do what God says at all times. Jesus said the seed on the “good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart” (Luke 8:15).

No heart is a good heart that will not do what the Lord requires. Obeying the truth purifies the heart (1 Pet. 1:22). The honest and good heart will do what Jesus says do. The conduct and actions of the body must be right and a right heart produces right conduct. Christianity includes the body as well as the soul. A religion that makes me feel well according to the Bible is a religion that does well. No man has a scriptural right to feel well who does not obey Christ. Someone says, “I feel like I am saved”—**well I know that I am saved**. My feelings are like the stock market—up and down. I have an assurance that is a “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1:8). I have an assurance that goes beyond feeling. John says “and hereby we do know” (1 John 2:3).

We know that we know. “How do you know?” someone asks. “Well, Jesus told me so.” He said “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15-16). I believed what He said and I “know I am saved” because He said I was saved. I did what Jesus told me to do 67 years ago and I have never had a doubt. All the demons in hell and all the devil’s angels on earth cannot cause me to doubt my salvation. “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4).

Many feel good who have a strong delusion. “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 The. 2:11). One always feels good if he does what he believes to be right. Paul had a good conscience while persecuting Christ (Acts 23:11). Let us be sure that we are led by the Word of God and not by our own feelings. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” (1 John 5:3).

If we have not obeyed Christ, our feelings of salvation are a strong delusion (2 The. 2:9-12).

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac    Harold Cozad
Bill Busch Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick Aleacia Godwin
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Nellie Read Bobbie LaBryer
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Life’s Clock
The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop
At a late or early hour.
To lose one’s wealth is sad indeed,
To lose one’s health is more;
To lose one’s soul is such a loss
As no man can restore.
The present only is our own,
Live, love, toil with a will;
Place no faith in “Tomorrow”—
The clock may then be still.

Author Unknown
When the idea of gifts is pondered, one commonly would consider the act of “giving.” Truly one cannot receive a gift except it first be given by someone. Giving is indeed at the very heart of the Biblical Message (cf. John 3:16; 15:13-14; Rom. 8:32). It is to the verse from John 3 that this article would bring the reader’s attention.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (3:16). “God so loved the world,” Our Heavenly Father loved man, whom He created in His own image, to such an extent that He did a certain thing, that thing was to “give!” What precipitated such giving? The answer is found in Genesis 3.

Adam and Eve had transgressed the law of God, thereby sinning (Gen. 3:6; cf. 1 John 3:4). The punishment prescribed for their sin was death, “thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Adam and his wife stood condemned before their Creator and were powerless to redeem themselves or to justify themselves in the sight of God. Action now had to be taken to save these two precious souls from everlasting destruction (1 Thes. 1:7-9). Who took action? God, as was exemplified in the inquiry by God of Adam, who was hiding in shame among the vegetation of the garden (Gen. 3:8-9); so God was the One to move first. He put into place His eternal plan to save men from their sins, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1:9; cf. Eph. 3:11; Tit. 1:2; Rev. 13:8). It is/was the eternal plan or purpose of God to save man by the sacrifice of His Son upon the Cross.

What (or more precisely: who) then was “given?” The very Son of God. “That he gave
The Salvation and 1 Peter 1

Charles Pogue

No one giving close attention to the reading of 1 Peter 1 can miss the apostle’s obvious discussion of salvation. Four points regarding the salvation that is available through Christ can be made from this chapter. 

The reservation of salvation (1:1-9). Christians are the elect of God, and Peter, points to the inheritance in heaven that is incorruptible, his only begotten Son.” The Son was “given,” but who is the Son? “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1; cf. 10: 30; Phi. 2:6). Jesus is God—He is Deity. The Lord told Philip, “be that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” What is the implication of these facts? That God gave Himself! What could be more sublime or majestic than this Heavenly ideal—God gave Himself for us; for our sakes. We who were sinners (Rom. 5:8) and enemies of God (5:10) received this unfathomable gift! The One that had been scorned and despised and disregarded; was the very One that took away the scorners reproach.

The concept of such great love as has been demonstrated by God toward us requires spiritual maturity to grasp and the end of its depths shall never be found by the minds of men. However, when one does lay hold of this great example, many passages of Scripture open with greater meaning and depth, such as: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are my ways higher than your ways, And my thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9). What has been the great example of this? God gave Himself for us.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them (Gen. 1:26-27).

What is the greatest means by which God has shown us how to be like Him? God gave Himself for us.

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:12-13).

How has God loved us? God gave Himself for us.

Finally:
I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Rom. 12:1).

Why is it our “reasonable service” to “give” our entire beings (Mat. 22:37-40) unto God in service and subjection? Because God gave Himself for us!

Oh, how unsearchable are the riches of God (Rom. 11:33; Eph. 3:8)!

Naples, FL
undefined, and does not fade away. That inheritance is reserved in heaven for those who through the power of God are kept through faith unto salvation. Even though we face fiery trials, heaven will result in unspeakable joy and glory.

The revelation of salvation (1:10-12). The prophets of the Old Testament inquired into the salvation that would be revealed in the Gospel. Although they did not live in the time when the mystery of God would be fully revealed, the great prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Joel had glimpses into the salvation and the kingdom into which the subjects of salvation would be ushered into from the power of the darkness and bondage of sin. That salvation, Peter tells us is “now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you” (1:12).

The regulation of salvation (1:13-17). The salvation that is available to all men requires sobriety, obedience, not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts, and holiness. It requires those things because one day we will all stand before the judgment bar of God where we all, without respect of persons, will be judged according to our works. Consequently, Peter writes: “pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1:17b).

The restoration of salvation (1:18-25). God made man pure and free from sin, but all men beginning with the very first one, Adam, has sinned. The only exception to that was Jesus Christ. The bad news is that sin separates man from God. The good news is that Christ shed His perfect blood to redeem men from sin. That blood washes away sin and purifies the soul when one obeys the truth out of a pure heart. Peter refers to this in the same manner that Jesus did with Nicodemus. It is being “born again.” The saved are born again by the Word of God. Everything in this world will have its end. Just as the grass withers and the flowers fade, the heavens will pass away with a great noise, the earth will be burned up, even down to the very elements, that will melt with fervent heat (2 Pet. 3:10). Men are born, they live, and they die. Those things which we see, such as furniture made from the most enduring woods, and even gold which fire actually purifies, will be destroyed. The material world is not eternal. The Word of God by which, through obedience, we obtain the salvation which the prophets of old inquired into, and that Jesus brought into reality, will never pass away. Peter was there when the Lord Himself stated that His words would not pass away (Mat. 24:35).

Thus, Peter writes about the reservation, the revelation, the regulation, and the restoration of salvation in this opening chapter of his first epistle. Peter will return somewhat to the subject of salvation in the third chapter, verse 21, of this epistle where he points out the proper place that baptism holds in God’s plan to save man. Considering the redemption by Christ’s blood and purifying of the soul through obedience, 1 Peter 3:21 makes it plain that the obedience involves baptism, of which the apostle says, “doth also now save us.”

Salvation in Christ is available to all. Let us tell others of that salvation, relating to them the Gospel that has been reported, and that will save men as long as this world stands!
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Bill Busch  Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick  Aleacia Godwin
Al Flesher  Nancy Travis
Nellie Read  Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Pete Windorn (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother-in-law)

Please Remember
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November 28
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

December 3
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

“There are two mistakes one can make along the road to truth: not going all the way, and not starting.” (Anonymous).
Some think that one who never starts will never lose; not so: he is the greatest loser of all! One seeking Truth may miss the mark, but one not seeking It has surely missed It already! “Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened.” God bless.

Tim Smith
Dub McClish

The Mayan calendar says it will end in 2012. Mr. Harold Camping boldly predicted it that it would end May 21, 2011. Every few years some seem compelled to predict the time of the return of Jesus Christ, the end of the world, and the Judgment Day. Camping actually said that the “first day of the Day of Judgment” would occur May 21, at which time those who are righteous (200 million, he said) would be “raptured” into Heaven. Those “left behind” would endure terrible horrors and suffering for the following 153 days, at which time (Oct. 21, 2011) they would be annihilated. Camping had earlier announced a 1994 date for the coming of the Lord.

Even in the first century some were teaching Jesus’ imminent coming (2 Th. 2:1-3). William Miller made three obviously failed predictions in 1843-45. Jehovah’s Witnesses (an offshoot of Miller’s disciples) have made various predictions of the Lord’s coming. Their most recent prediction (1975) cost the cult tens of thousands of disillusioned adherents. Hal Lindsey, Pat Robertson, Tim LaHaye, John Woolvard, and others have made fortunes fueling wild (and vain) Second Coming speculations with each new earthquake, international skirmish, or other major catastrophe. What does the Bible say about His return?

**Jesus will return:** He thus said (John 14:3), as did other inspired writers (e.g., 1 Th. 4:16; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 9:28).

**He will destroy the material universe:** “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10).

**He will raise all the dead simultaneously:** “The hour cometh, in which all that are in
the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29). The “rapture” is the invention of fermented 19th century theological speculation, found nowhere in the Bible.

He will judge all mankind: “He [God] hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man [His Son] whom he hath ordained” (Acts 17:31).

He will sentence the lost to Hell: “They shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life” (Mat. 25:46). The Annihilation doctrine is heresy.

No one can know when He will return: Jesus said, “But of that day and hour knoweth no one” (24:36). No more needs to be said for those who respect Jesus Himself.

Denton, TX

A Mature Christian

A mature Christian is one who is big enough to attend services of the church without being begged or bribed to do it. Children must be taken to the school building, etc. As long as a member must have others who are continually getting after him to be in the services, he is yet most immature.

A mature Christian is one old enough to let the Lord tell him what to do and be found doing it. He is not concerned about the praise and flattery of men. He is one who is a careful student of the Bible, not to find in it what will prove his point, but to find in it what will prove him acceptable.

A mature Christian is one who is aware that his presence in Bible study and worship is not a great favor that he is doing for God. Being full grown, he senses his own worthlessness at being in God’s company and does not desire to miss the opportunity.

A mature Christian is one who knows that everything about Christianity is good, but everyone’s attitude may not be. Full growth makes the child of God acknowledge that Christianity is not popular with the worldly crowds.

A mature Christian is able to forgive without retaliation.

I suppose the big question at this point is: “Are you a mature Christian?”

Author Unknown

“There Is No Shortcut to Any Place Worth Going”

Jimmie Z. Gribble

There is a sign in front of a business school that reads: “There is no shortcut to any place worth going.” That says a lot. In education, some try to take the shortcut, and often fall short of their potential had they not taken the shortcut. We read of contractors that take shortcuts in building. It may be less quality steel, or maybe weaker mixed concrete that sometimes causes structures to collapse. We sometimes read about people dying because of these kinds of shortcuts.

I doubt this sign was originated from Jesus’
teaching, but is certainly found in His teaching. Look at His teaching in John 10. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep” (10:1-2).

Here Jesus taught that some would try to climb up some other way—trying to take a shortcut. Jesus described them as thieves and robbers. Those who take shortcuts in building and people are injured, we call them criminals. Beloved, there is no shortcut to the sheepfold. Jesus taught, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (14:6). There is only one way! That way is Jesus Christ! Beloved, “There is no shortcut to any place worth going.” Again, Jesus taught: Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

Those who take shortcuts offered by Satan and his angels, yes, even those transformed into ministers of light, will find themselves lost—lost eternally! Beloved, “There is no shortcut to any place worth going.”

Portsmouth, VA

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Ella Hammac          Harold Cozad
Bill Busch           Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick        Alecia Godwin
Al Flesher           Nancy Travis
Nellie Read          Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Melvin Torrey (West Florida Hospital)
Justin Gunsley (14-year-old family
friend of Bobbie LaBryer)
Jason Smith (Debra & Denise
Mowery’s nephew)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

December 9
Deacons’ meeting will be held at
5:30 pm, in room 5.

December 16
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be
held at 5:00 pm, in room 5.

December 17
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Standard for Growth
Delbert Goins
Ephesians 4 is the chapter we must di-
gest in daily routine until we attain the
growth of wondrous love for truth. This
enables the greatest purity and spiritual
maturity.
The End of the World  
Ken Chumbley

Have you heard the news? This world is to come to an end on December 21, 2012. This date comes from the Mayan culture. The Mayan’s believed that the world would last through five cycles of 5,126 years. According to the Mayan calculations, we are living in the fifth cycle and that cycle is to come to an end on December 21, 2012.

You may have heard about, or even seen the new blockbuster movie that was released on November 13, 2009. A synopsis of the movie states:

Never before has a date in history been so significant to so many cultures, so many religions, scientists and governments. “2012” is an epic adventure about a global cataclysm that brings an end to the world and tells of the heroic struggles of the survivors.

That the movie is based on the Mayan calculations is made clear from the following statement from the official web site of the movie: “with the Mayan calendar ending in 2012, a large group of people must deal with natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, typhoons and glaciers.”

While the movie may make interesting viewing for those who like such movies, and some may believe that the Mayan’s have made a correct prediction, what should be the reaction of Christians towards the idea that December 21, 2012 will mark the end of the world?

What does the Bible have to say about the end of the world? In answer to the questions of the disciples, following His discussion concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus said regarding the final Day of Judgment and the end of the world: “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Mat. 24:36).

Who will you believe, the ancient Mayans who have said that the world will come to an
end on December 21, 2012 or the Word of
the Lord who said that only the Father knows
when that will take place? I believe the choice
is clear and simple. I will accept the authorita-
tive Word of the Lord rather than the word of
men.
Throughout the centuries, men have sought
to prognosticate with respect to when this
world will come to an end. Such have proved
to be false prophets. Unless our God would

choose to bring this world to an end prior to
then, the ancient Mayans will join the long list
of those who dates have come and gone with-
out the end of the world occurring.
Let us remember the words of Paul in Ro-
mans 3:4—“let God be true, but every man
a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be
justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome
when thou art judged.”

Belvedere, SC

A Virgin Shall Be With Child
Brad Green

The miraculous birth of Jesus is an essential
component to salvation. The prophet Isaiah
foretold, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give
you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and
bear a son, And shall call his name Immanu-
el” (Isa. 7:14). Immanuel means “God with us”
(Mat. 1:23). An angel appeared to Joseph say-
ing, “thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he
shall save his people from their sins” (1:21).
The miraculous virgin birth is proof that God
is with us. It is also evidence that Jesus lived
long before He came to earth. He is eternal.
In the beginning was the Word, and the
Word was with God, and the Word was
God. The same was in the beginning with
God. All things were made by him; and
without him was not any thing made that
was made. In him was life; and the life was
the light of men…. And the Word was
made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we
beheld his glory, the glory as of the only
begotten of the Father,) full of grace and
truth (John 1:1-3, 14).
When questioned by the Jews, “Jesus said
unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before
Abraham was, I am” (8:58). Jesus had no earth-
ly father. When Mary was told that she would
conceive and bring forth a son, she asked:
How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?
And the angel answered and said unto her,
The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,
and the power of the Highest shall over-
shadow thee: therefore also that holy thing
which shall be born of thee shall be called
the Son of God (Luke 1:34-35).
The miraculous virgin birth of Jesus means,
“Neither is there salvation in any other: for
there is none other name under heaven given
among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts
4:12). Salvation can be found in no man who
has an earthly father; salvation is only found
in the One born of a virgin (Mat. 1:21). The
birth of Jesus evinces God's love for us:
For God so loved the world, that he gave
his only begotten Son, that whosoever be-
lieveth in him should not perish, but have
everlasting life (John 3:16).
Sadly, the birth of Jesus has been relegat-
ed to nothing more than a “play,” or “cantata.” Many celebrate Jesus’ birthday on December 25, though Biblical and historical evidence shows that Jesus was most likely born in the Spring or Fall when shepherds would have been “abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night” (Luke 2:8). God did not reveal to man the date of Jesus’ birth; rather He did so for Jesus’ death. The Biblical pattern established by God is that “upon the first day of the week” (Acts 20:7) Christians partook of the Lord’s supper to remember “the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26).

Let us be thankful to God every day for the birth of Jesus. Let us celebrate His birth by obeying His commands (John 14:15; 12:48) and remaining faithful to Him unto the end (Rev. 2:10).

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Regrets

Tim Smith

Regrets—do you have any? Is there anything you would like to do over so you could do it better? Is there anything you never got to do that you would like to have another chance at? Most of us do have regrets. Things we did, words spoken, opportunities missed and more, in moments of pause for reflection often haunt us. Maybe we would have furthered our education. Maybe we would have sought a promotion or a different job. Maybe we would have gone somewhere or not gone. Whatever the particulars, these things, when they pass through our minds, give us a feeling that is unpleasant. We call them regrets. Most of us have them. Some protest that they do not, but usually when you talk with them they do have regrets—they just choose not to dwell on them (or, sometimes, even to think of them).

Paul had what we might call regrets—I believe we see them in his lines concerning his conduct prior to his conversion. He regretted opposing Jesus. He regretted persecuting the church. He regretted these things, but he did not allow them to prevent him from doing what he should do. That is the key—use the regrets you have to make you better, not as an excuse to avoid doing what you should do now. Hear Paul:

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phi. 3:13-14).

Why would he forget the things behind? They were to him the cause of regret. He forgot them—that is to say, he did not allow them to stand in the way of doing his duty.

Regrets can lead us to further sin if we allow them. What about Judas? He regretted his prior act of betraying the Lord so much that he took his own life. If we are not careful, we will allow our regrets to lead us into sin or foolishness or behavior detrimental in whatever way. Learn from Paul to temper today and tomorrow with yesterday’s lessons, but to do today what should be done.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac    Harold Cozad
Bill Busch     Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick  Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher    Nancy Travis
Nellie Read    Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Justin Gunsley (14-year-old family friend of Bobbie LaBryer)

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December 16
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December 17
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

There Is a Message in This Space
It contains all that a sinner has to do to be lost.
It contains all that a church member has to do to become a "backslider."
It contains all that a church needs to do to become useless to Christ's cause.
It contains all that God receives from some members!!!!

Absolutely nothing

Author Unknown
Blaming God

Guy N. Woods

A brokenhearted man, overwhelmed by grief, weeps uncontrollably over the casket containing the remains of his beloved wife. Well-meaning, but pitifully misguided friends gather about him, and in an effort to soften the blow which brought the world crashing down upon his shoulders, inform him that his immeasurable loss should be attributed to the will of God. A mother grieves beside the pale and lifeless body of her only child and the preacher seeks to comfort her by saying that the child’s tragic death was the result of the will of God, to which she should now resign herself. Disaster strikes with the suddenness of the lightning’s flash, fortunes are swept away as with a flood, poverty stalks menacingly among innocent and helpless children, and the whole of it is attributed to the providence of God.

How Satan must grin with sardonic glee when such accusations are leveled against the Judge of all the earth. How pleased he must be to hear the character of the great Jehovah slandered, his motives impeached, and His will prostituted by those who affect to be His friends! With what great satisfaction must he contemplate the ever-increasing number of unbelievers which such reasoning produces. How comfortable it is for the casual observer of such instances to blame God for what he cannot, or will not, explain in any other way.

The disposition to let God bear the blame is a common one and it finds expression in many ways. Wars, famine, pestilence, and death are regularly laid at His feet. When the heavens withhold the rain and the earth becomes dust, when crops fail and cattle die, men read in the disasters the will of God. Even the law of the land takes cognizance of the disposition of men to blame God by identifying such tragedies as “acts of God.” Casualty insurance policies expressly state or imply exceptions of responsibility when an “act of God” is involved. Among
the contingencies often thus classified are tornadoes, storms at sea, earthquakes, and the like. Many contracts provide that in the event of an "act of God" the contract is unenforceable. An instance of man’s proneness to let God take the blame is illustrated in a mine disaster some years ago, in the resolution of which it was officially declared that God was to blame! An editorial in an Eastern newspaper offered these comments:

Once again God must take the rap. In the aftermath of the ______ mine disaster a jury has solemnly assembled, meditated, contemplated, and brought in its unanimous verdict. God has been convicted. According to the jury the murder of one hundred nineteen coal miners must go down in history as "an act of God."

A columnist in the same paper observed that no one government, coal operators, mine workers, or union officials—seemed prepared to look for any other culprit. Said he, It was so easy to blame God. After all, he could not talk back. More reverent men might have hesitated to reach this verdict. They might have considered the guilt of the congressmen who stubbornly refused to enact a mine safety law. They might have weighed the responsibility of the coal operators who often resist safety mine legislation. They might even have studied the role of UMW officials who have always seemed more concerned with union politics than with human safety. But all that would have involved many complicated problems. It was so much easier to blame God.

So much easier to blame God! Let all of us ponder these words more seriously when next we are disposed to excuse our own neglect, and to ignore immediate causes by blandly suggesting that the responsibility of all such matters must be assigned to God.

_Deceased_

"Quite an Accident"

_Terry Hightower_

The atheist says:
There is no God. All wonders around us are accidental. No mighty hand made the thousand-billion stars. They made themselves. The earth spins itself to keep the oceans from falling off. Infants teach themselves to cry when they are hungry or hurt. Faith is the crutch for the ignorant, the opium of the masses.

Has he examined the evidence? Whose faith is based on fact? Which makes more sense?

- How does the sugar thermometer in the pancreas know the proper blood sugar level to keep us from falling into a coma and dying?
- How does the heart beat for years without faltering? It rests between beats! It pumps 800 million times in a normal life span, pushing enough blood to fill a string of tank cars that would stretch from New York to Boston.
- The pattern of a person's fingerprints never changes and no two persons are identical. What was "evolution's" purpose in keeping these?
Kidneys filter poison from the blood, and leave those components that are useful. How does the kidney know one from another?

A brain weighs less than three pounds but directs all thoughts, feelings, and actions. Each cell *dials* messages to other cells in billions of different combinations. A cubic half-inch of brain cells contains a lifetime of memories. Who gave the human tongue flexibility to form words, and a brain to understand them, but denied it to the brute animals? Who showed a womb how to keep splitting a tiny ovum until a baby had the proper number of fingers, eyes, and ears in the right place and then release it into the world when it is strong enough to live?

Certainly God exists! We are evidence of it. “For every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God” (Heb. 3:4). Let us join David in exclaiming to God, “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvellous are thy works; And that my soul knoweth right well” (Psa. 139:14).

Paul told the Athenians about the “unknown God” (Acts 17:25) in whom “we live, and move, and have our being” (17:28). Our secular society is forgetting that it is God who gives all the blessings we enjoy (Jam. 1:17). May we magnify His name the true God of Heaven and earth.

“Know ye that the Lord he is God: It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves” (Psa. 100:3).

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

1. I must first hear the Gospel: for it is the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16; John 5:24; Rom. 10:13, 14).
4. Having heard and believed the Gospel and repented of my sins, I must confess the name of Christ (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:36-37).
5. Having heard and believed the Gospel, repented of my sins and confessed the name of Christ, I must then be baptized in the name of Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 18:8).

I need to remember that baptism is a picture and representation of the burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:33-39; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).

6. Having done the foregoing with a sincere heart, I must then continue in the commandments of Christ, increasing in knowledge of the Word, in virtue, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (John 8:31; Mat. 28:20; 2 Pet. 1:5-11).

Author Unknown

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**Defender and Beacon**
**Available Via E-Mail**

To receive the Defender and Beacon via e-mail please send your e-mail address to bellviewcoc@gmail.com. The file you will receive will be a PDF file.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Bill Busch  Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick  Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher  Nancy Travis
Nellie Read  Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Justin Gunsley (14-year-old family friend of Bobbie LaBryer)
Chase Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s grandson)

Please Remember

Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

December 26
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Sheila Myrick and Pam Busch in the death of their uncle, Richard Kelley. Please keep Sheila and Pam and their families in your prayers.

Master of Hope
“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).

Delbert Goins
The Story

The parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover (Luke 2:41). When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast (2:42). When they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and His parents knew not of it (12:43). They, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a days journey and then sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance (12:44). When they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem (12:45). There they found Him (12:46).

The Similarities

There are some similarities between these events and certain events in history. First, the Lord’s house, which is the church (1 Tim. 3:15), was established in, and the Word of the Lord went from (Isa. 2:2-3), Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-47). In time, some departed from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-4), just as Joseph and Mary departed from Jerusalem and in so doing departed from Jesus. Since the Word of the Lord is light (Psa. 119:105), those who left that light departed into darkness (1 John 1:6-7). This departure resulted in the corrupt Catholic religion which ruled and reigned during a period of history lasting approximately one thousand years and known as the Dark Ages.

Second, when men began to realize and recognize departure from the faith, they began to seek the Lord, but they found Him not for they were now are removed from Him (Gal. 1:6-9). They sought Him and His Word among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, but He was not there because they were no longer abiding in His doctrine (2 John 9-11). During the period of history known as the Reformation, men like John Calvin came up with a five-point system of religion known as Calvinism which was just as corrupt as Catholicism (2 The. 2:1-10).
Man-made churches and man-made doctrines began to abound, and the corruptions continued with men adding to and taking away from the Word of God (Rev. 22:18-19). Instead of reformation being a solution to the problem, it added to and increased the problem and religious divisions were multiplied (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Third, a group of restorers began to advocate that men to back to the Bible just as Mary and Joseph had gone back to Jerusalem. They advocated speaking when and where the Bible speaks and being silent when and where the Bible is silent (1 Pet. 4:11). They began to call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways for they knew that whatsoever they did in word or deed was to be done in the name (by the authority) of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17). They knew if they sowed the same seed, the Word of God (Luke 8:11), that the apostles and early Christians had sown in honest and good hearts (8:15), it would produce the same thing that was produced in the First Century, New Testament Christians (Acts 11:26).

The Solution

Mary and Joseph found Jesus by going back to Jerusalem. By going back to the Bible, we can find the Lord and the Lord's house. The Bible sets forth the five-step plan of salvation.

First, faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). There must be faith in God the Father (Heb. 11:6) and in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (John 8:24).


Third, confession of faith (Acts 8:37) is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:9-10). If we want the Lord to confess us to the Father at the judgment, we must confess Him before men here and now (Mat. 10:32-33).

Fourth, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:15-16). Baptism is a burial (Rom. 6:3-4) in water (Acts 8:36-38) for the remission of sins (2:38) wherein sins are washed away (22:16) by the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5). Baptism puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27) where salvation is located (2 Tim. 2:10). Baptism also puts one into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) which is the church of Christ (Acts 2:41, 47; Rom. 16:16; Eph. 1:22-23).

Fifth, the Christian (1 Pet. 4:16) must now remain steadfast and unmovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). The Christian must be faithful unto death, if necessary (Rev. 2:10). So long as children of God continue to walk in the light, the blood of Jesus will continue to keep them clean (1 John 1:7). When a Christian sins (1:8-10, if he will confess his sins (1:9), repent (Acts 17:30), and pray for forgiveness, he will be healed (Jam. 5:16).

Middleburg, FL
Truth Makes Christians

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

A perverted gospel cannot save. Jesus declared that it is the knowledge of Truth, not the belief of error, that makes men free (John 8:32). Though a perverted gospel may have in it all the elements of the true Gospel, its power to save is lost in perversion. Bread is God’s power to quell the hunger, but the admixture of a poisonous element—a spoonful of arsenic, for instance, in a loaf of bread—would destroy its power. Water is God’s power to quench the thirst, but the admixture of salt will destroy the quenching power of water.

The Gospel is God’s power to save the soul, but its admixture with error—the doctrines and commandments of men, when heard and believed—destroys its saving power. Hence, Paul’s alarm concerning the perverters at Galatia: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:6-7).

Error preached, error heard, and error believed cannot result in the Truth obeyed. No man can accidentally obey God. The Truth preached, the Truth believed, and the Truth obeyed makes a Christian. Nothing else does. How careful then men should be in their handling of it!

Deceased

Taking Inventory

Businesses which run efficiently take inventories on a regular basis. This is necessary to keep up with how the company is doing. In like manner Christians should take regular inventory of their spiritual lives to see how they are doing in the sight of God. The apostle Paul demanded this very procedure in 2 Corinthians 13:5: “Examine yourselves, 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?”

• The following is a good list of questions for the Christian to ask in taking such an inventory:
  • Am I known as a Christian where I work?
  • Is Christ more loved or respected because of the way I live?
  • Do those who know me best believe in me most?
  • Do I criticize the church and Christians in front of my children?
  • Do people know me as one who has Christ in the center of my life?
  • Is it possible that I claim to be a Christian and nurse revenge?
  • Do I find time every day for Bible study?
  • Can I work with other people? Can other people work with me?
  • Have I a secret longing to be first? Or can I truly say I do not care who is second, third or fourth as long as Jesus is first?
  • What can I do now that I could not do three to five years ago? Lead another person to Christ? Distinguish God’s guidance from my own desire?

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher        Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac         Harold Cozad
Bill Busch          Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick       Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher          Nancy Travis
Nellie Read         Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Chase Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s grandson)
Sharon McCrory (Horace & Sheila Myrick’s daughter)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
  Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

December 26
  Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

2013 Members’ Directory
If you have any changes to the Members’ Directory please contact the office by January 11, 2013. New photos will be taken Sunday, December 30, after the morning service, for those who want to update their photo.

Visitation Group Changes
The Visitation Groups will change starting January 2013. Bill Crowe, the Visitation Group coordinator, will be handing out the new groups’ listing in the near future.
Islam’s View of the Bible
Johnny Oxendine

The regard and view of the Bible from the standpoint of Islam needs to be understood on several fronts. First, it does not matter how men view the Scriptures, they are the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:20-21). The Qur’an was written by a man who claimed to be a prophet, just as other religious organizations were born of men who claimed to have received some additional insight from God (Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, et al.). The generic view/claim of the men who attempt to perpetrate these frauds is that something in the Bible needs to be corrected or altered for their newly emergent system to come into prominence. Of course, God has instructed them of this necessity (as this validates their mission). Their obedience to Scripture is only insofar as it serves their purpose and agrees with what they are proposing.

Islam is no different in this respect, only so from the assertion that the Bible has many corrupted passages (which coincidentally are those that contradict the teaching or contrived “prophecy” of Muhammad), which in many instances is more evidence that the Qur’an is filled with self-contradictions. This is no clearer than in the efforts of Muslims to deny Biblical credibility while at the same time the Qur’an says that the books of Moses, Psalms, and the Gospels were all revelations from God.

If Muhammad (A.D. 570-632), while alive, claimed to have received the revelation (the Qur’an) from Allah (which he did claim), it would logically force us to conclude that the Holy Scriptures (already in existence) could not have been subject to corruption at that time. Ask a Muslim when the Bible (which the Qur’an claim is from Allah) became corrupt if, since the Qur’an (which they also claim is from Allah) states that Allah’s words cannot be changed?

The Word of the Lord is to last forever, as
Jesus stated: “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). The Greek word, *luo*, for broken here means “to loose, dissolve, sever, break (or) demolish.” This same Greek word is translated *broken* in Acts 27:41 and used of the breaking up of the ship in which Paul was a passenger. A ship may be broken up (destroyed, dissolved, dissipated) but not the Word of God. The works of the devil can be destroyed but not the Scriptures: “To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8b—*luo* is translated “destroy” in this passage).

*San Mateo, CA*

**Can One Be Baptized Into Christ While Believing That He Was Saved Before Being Baptized?**

*Thomas B. Warren*

Almost all Protestant denominations teach that the alien sinner is saved (becomes a child of God) at the point of faith in Jesus Christ before and without any further act(s) of obedience. The Bible makes clear that this is false doctrine. It can be seen to be false, for a number of reasons.

1. It is false because Jesus said, “Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). This means that no one can enter into the kingdom of God without being baptized in the name of Christ (cf. Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5; Mark 16:15-16; et al.) If one is baptized (undergoes some religious acts involving water) without understanding that being baptized in the name of Christ is an act of faith which is essential to salvation, then he is not saved, because he has obeyed a mere human doctrine and not the doctrine of Christ. But one must obey Christ to be saved (Heb. 5:8-9; Mat. 7:21-23).

2. It is false because it affirms (by implication) that the alien sinner is saved (becomes a child of God) by a dead faith. Yet, James 2:24-26 teaches that faith without works is dead.

Since whatever is dead is powerless, inoperative, unable to accomplish anything, then obviously no one can be saved by faith only (a dead faith). One is saved only when—because of living faith—as penitent believer in Jesus Christ, he is baptized in the name (by the authority of) Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38).

3. It is false because it affirms that one can

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The website offers a vast amount of resources for your personal edification. Past issues of Defender and Beacon, written sermons presented by Michael Hatcher, as well as Ira Y. Rice’s Basic Bible course are available. Videos of lectureships and sermons can be viewed.

Why not check it out at:

[http://www.bellviewcoc.com](http://www.bellviewcoc.com)

**Defender and Beacon Via E-mail**

To receive the Defender and Beacon via e-mail please send your e-mail address to bellviewcoc@gmail.com. The file you will receive will be a PDF.
be saved without doing the will of God. Yet, Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21). One is not saved merely by (1) being religious, (2) being sincere in religion or by (3) crying out, “Lord, Lord.” While all of the above matters are necessary, they are not sufficient.

One is saved either (1) before he is baptized or (2) when he is baptized or (3) after he is baptized. These are the only possibilities, the truth of the matter is: one is saved when (as a penitent believer) he is baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27; etc.) The other two possibilities are false. So, no matter how religious, how sincere, how zealous, and so on a person may be, if he has not been baptized into Christ, then he is not a child of God, he is not a Christian.

Every child of God (that is, every Christian) is a member of the church of Christ (the church described on the pages of the New Testament, the church which Jesus bought with His own blood). There is not one Christian living on earth today who is not a member of that church. Every other church is of human origin and, thus, is not authorized by God. Salvation is only in the church which Jesus bought with His blood (Acts 20:28).

May every person deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow Jesus—not men or the doctrines of men (Luke 9:23).


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The Cold Within

Six humans trapped by happenstance
In black and bitter cold,
Each one possessed a stick of wood,
Or so the story is told.

Their dying fire was in need of logs
But the first man held his back,
For on the faces around the fire
He noticed that one was black.

The next man looking across the way
Saw one not of his church,
And he wouldn't bring himself to give
The fire his stock of birch.

The third man sat in tattered clothes.
He gave his coat a hitch…
Why should he put his log to use
To warm the idle rich?

The rich man sat back and thought
Of the wealth he had in store,
And how to keep what he had earned
From the lazy, shiftless poor.

The black man's face bespoke revenge
As the fire passed from sight;
For all he saw in his stick of wood
Was a chance to spite the white.

The last man of this forlorn group
Did nothing except for gain,
Giving only to those who gave to him,
Was the way he played the game.

Their logs held tight in death's still grasp
Is proof of human sin.
They didn't die of cold without,
They died from the cold within.

Author Unknown

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac        Harold Cozad
Bill Busch         Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick      Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher         Nancy Travis
Nellie Read        Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Chase Busch (Bill & Pam Busch's grandson)
Sharon McCrory (Horace & Sheila Myrick's daughter)
Jason Smith (Debra & Denise Mowery's nephew; heart procedure–Jan 15)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

January 7
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

January 13
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 5.

2013 Members' Directory
If you have any changes to the Members' Directory please contact the office by January 11, 2013.

Beacon
The Beacon for December 31 was printed early due to the secretary being on vacation.