

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 3

“WHATEVER!”

By *JERRY DICKINSON*

While in a meeting recently in Ratliff City, Oklahoma I was talking with Paul Melton about the work in Mexico and Central and South America. I told him that the last time I was in Mexico Juan Rodriguez and I were so in tune that when I was preaching I would barely finish a sentence and Juan would begin his translation immediately and with great ease and facility. Paul remarked that Juan was truly remarkable at translating, but every now and then there was a word that would cause him to hesitate because there was no exact translation from English to Spanish. By the way, Brother Paul is fluent in Spanish and teaches Spanish in Elmore City. Paul said when Juan was translating for Wayne McKamie, Wayne used the word “whatever” and Juan was stumped for a moment because there is no word in Spanish that corresponds to the word “whatever”. Wayne made the point that our generation is the “whatever generation” and since there is no word for whatever in Spanish Juan had to explain in other words what Wayne meant. The more I thought about it the more I began to appreciate Wayne’s description of our generation as the “whatever generation”. I really cannot think of another adjective that describes the attitude of so many today. In fact, whatever has become a favorite exclamatory expression in our time. For instance:

“Did you hear that children were called up to the pulpit to act out a performance during a recent church service in church in our brotherhood?” Reply: “Whatever!”

“Did you know that a preacher in our brotherhood called on those needing to pray to get down on their knees all over the building and for others in the audience to gather around them and pray for them simultaneously?” Reply: “Whatever!”

“Did you know that a church recently split because some in the church insisted on taking money from the treasury and buying playground equipment for the children?” Reply: “Whatever!”

“Do you realize that some in our brotherhood are advocating calling on (extending fellowship) to those who use innovations in worship?” Reply: “Whatever!”

The word whatever used in the above examples implies that it really does not matter one way or the other. The “whatever person” does not, and apparently cannot, see the significance of the practice under consideration. This is indeed the “whatever generation”. Note the following considerations.

IMMORALITY: The New York Legislature is poised to legalize gay marriage in New York. Both Governor Cuomo and Mayor Bloomberg have made speeches stating that they support the bill. What about the Bible teaching on homosexuality? Whatever! What about the fact that for thousands of years every civilized society has recognized marriage as a sacred compact between a man and a woman. Whatever! Closer to home, however, what about churches that sanction, or else condone by silence, unscriptural divorces and remarriages? What about preachers who continuously hold meetings for these churches and never say a word about the problems? God removes candlesticks, not me, is the reply. Whatever! Is anything immoral? Is there not any practice or situation that crosses the line? John the Baptist lost his head because he preached against the unscriptural marriage of Herod and Herodias. (Mark 6:18) If unscriptural marriages are preached against by preachers today you may not lose your head but you will lose your meeting! May the Lord deliver us from “whatever” preachers.

BAPTISM: Awhile back I was told by a young man that some at the church he attended would not sing an invitation song after the sermon. I asked him why and he said that they were not sure at what point a person was saved. Another young man whom I have known since he was a boyhood friend of my children recently wrote that he was now convinced that baptism was not essential to salvation. How can that be? Here is a young man who has heard the truth all his life but

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Editorial

2012 PHILIPPINE TRIP

By: DON L. KING

On January 4th we began a trip to the Philippines from San Francisco. I arrived early on the morning of the 6th and immediately called my wife to let her know I had arrived safely. She informed me that Duane Permenter, who was to have arrived that evening to join me in the work, was denied boarding at the airport due to a problem with his passport. I would be without him. I felt sorry for Duane, because we both had looked forward to being together in the work. He had been there a number of times in the past and was looking forward to returning. Fortunately, Brother Eduardo Danao would be with me for all of the trip and would act as guide, translator, and companion as well. He had done so for several years even before his brother, Virgilio Danao, passed away. I love and appreciate Eduardo for his hard work and energy through the years. Last year, Eduardo's son Edson had traveled with us and would be along again. He was a valuable asset to the work, to say the least. I have high hopes for him in the future. Bro Conrado Libertino was also along for most of the trip. I have great regard for him and he has been a faithful yoke fellow for many years. His work in the area of mindanao has been invaluable. He has always been steady and dependable wherever the work required him to be. Over the next three weeks we traveled and visited among as many churches as time permitted. Many times congregations came together so we could be with them and preach to the people as well. There are too many congregations for us visit each one separately. It was wonderful to see old friends we have known for over thirty years (this was our 33rd trip) and we were gratified to see that the congregations were at peace and growing. Large crowds were present in some instances and what a pleasure that was. We covered close to 2,000 miles by car on Luzon and toward the end of the trip flew to Palawan to be with brethren on that Island where we traveled by van. The work is growing there as well. The last Lord's Day we were asked to preach at a cups church in the afternoon. A nice crowd of perhaps 60 or more waited for us to arrive after our own worship with one of our congregations about an hour away. I spoke from Bible texts for about 35 minutes and explained in detail why we must use one cup in the communion. Apparently, most agreed and we have been informed that they are now using one cup in worship, having taken their stand for the truth including the preacher. Three more congregations in the area are expected to

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

BY RONNY F. WADE

Question: Would you please discuss the controversy over the contents of the church directory? How is the determination made to include or exclude a church?

Answer: Let me say first of all that I do not, nor does this paper publish a directory of churches. Hence what I say with reference to the above question is not an attempt on my part to speak for the person currently publishing a directory. Historically the directory, published by our brethren, goes back to the mid-forties. The oldest copy that I have is 1949-50. Brother Ray Asplin is to be credited with starting such a directory and for years was faithful to the charge of collecting information, printing, and distributing it. Its contents contained a list of churches that used one cup of unfermented grape-juice and one loaf of unleavened bread in the communion, practiced only vocal music, and did not have Sunday schools or bible classes. As our nation underwent changes in transportation and people began to travel more than before, the directory was a valuable asset in helping them find a place where they could worship without violating the scriptures or their conscience. This continues to be the reason for a directory. When people travel they want to be able to meet with people of "like faith and practice." Who to include and who to exclude has always presented a problem, since from time to time both churches and people change in their attitude and practice. In the mid-forties problems began to surface over the "divorce and remarriage" issue. By the late fifties divisions were cropping up in a few places. The sixties saw that increase. As a result there was controversy over whether to include churches that were responsible for causing that division. These churches still carried on scriptural worship, but some felt that those who caused division should be "marked and avoided" hence a disagreement over who should be included and who should be excluded. In the mid-seventies trouble over liberalism reared its head in the state of California. Even though they continued to worship scripturally some felt that their influence and teachings otherwise were harmful to the church and a few congregations were excluded from the directory. These decisions were made by the individuals publishing the directory at that time with the input and advise of those closest to the problems. Again the decision was made with a view to provide those traveling with information where they could worship in keeping with the principles held by most of our brethren. Those churches who use individual cups, Sunday-school classes etc. publish a directory that includes all churches of Christ. They

carry a legend that identifies the congregation such as "one cup" "non-class" etc. They do not list those churches using instrumental music. In many places today we have more than one church in a town or city. Often they don't fellowship or work with each other even though they worship alike. Both feel the other should not be listed. People traveling often don't know which one if either to attend when both are listed. So, what is one to do? In the recent past I have heard of at least two cities where a few people have pulled away from the church and are worshipping in their home. What about these, should they be listed? First of all, let me suggest that whoever publishes the directory is working under impossible conditions. He is certain to displease someone. Because of this the individual has to use his best judgment, based on the best information he can gather. Remember his goal is to provide a list where people can worship scripturally without violating their conscience. If he has information that leads him to believe that certain things often occur in a church that might violate the conscience of brethren generally, he has the right to exclude that church. If he knows, for example, that false teaching comes from the pulpit at times, he is certainly within his right to exclude that church. If he knows the church practices "open fellowship" that is they use men who worship at places where the worship is unscriptural, again he is within his right to exclude that church. If a few, who can't get along in the congregation decide to leave and meet in a home, even though they carry on what some call "scriptural worship" he has the right to exclude them. Remember "the church directory" is not for the purpose of declaring a church scriptural or unscriptural. To be included in a church directory does not prove that the church is accepted by God, and by the same token to be excluded does not mean that the church is excluded by God. It merely means that the individual publishing the directory can only conscientiously recommend or list the ones he includes. Some might suggest that since the Spirit recognized all seven churches in Asia Minor we should do the same. The problem with that philosophy is that a Divine mandate hung over the heads of many of these churches to improve or perish i.e. have their lampstand removed. I cannot remove the lampstand of a church, but I can avoid and mark those who refuse to change their teachings and practices. They will stand or fall before God, not me or any other man. To ignore or justify unscriptural behavior is a dangerous thing. Souls are at stake. Before judging as criminal the behavior of the man publishing the directory, stop and consider the burden he carries in trying to list only those churches that he feels he can safely and scripturally recommend. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 800337 LaGrange, GA 30240 or rwwade@charter.net)

Pages from the Past

THE FATHER'S PLACE IN THE HOME

By HOMER A. GAY

In the creation, God made man first and has always expected him to be the leader - the patriarch of the family. In Eph. 5. we learn that "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church." But Christ is not merely the "boss" of the church He is the saviour, the leader, the teacher of it.

The grave responsibility placed upon man by God, should cause man to ponder well his steps. The father is to be the provider for the home. God said to the man "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." But graver still is that responsibility of setting the right kind of an example for the family to follow. Undoubtedly, it is intended that the father should voice the standards and govern the conduct of his own household. Paul's instructions that the bishop must be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity" (I Tim. 3:4), was repeated immediately in the same chapter for the deacons also; "ruling their children and their own houses well." It was the general principle for ideal Christian manhood wherever his household was involved.

I am made to shudder when I see fathers thinking nothing of the responsibilities laid upon them. What can parents be thinking about who do not try to mould their children's character for eternity?

We get the manner in which a father is expected to govern his home in the beautiful analogy which Paul had earlier used, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe: as ye know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying to the end that ye walk worthily of God, who calleth you into his own kingdom and glory" (I These. 2:10-12 r.v.).

We would gather from this that the father should live holily and unblamably before his children, and that he should exhort and encourage them. I believe that if fathers will look and see the good things their children do, and encourage the children in them, they will not have to scold them so much for doing wrong. One little boy told the preacher one time that his name was "Johnnie Don't" "The little fellow had heard, "Johnnie Don't", so much until he thought the "Don't" was part of his name.

Fathers are told in Eph. 6:4, to "provoke not their children to wrath, but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord". Notice that the father & wife are to do this.

The father, too, should realize that his wife is a part of him. When they marry they, there and then, become "one flesh (Eph. 5), and he is to love that wife as he loves his own self- love her like the Lord loves the church. If the husband has this kind of love for his wife, he will certainly not abuse her - will not be "bitter against her", but will try to bear and share her burdens and make life as comfortable and pleasant for her as he reasonably can. Peter says that the husbands are to dwell with the wives "according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (I Pet. 8:7). Probably, because men do not heed this scripture is the reason that the common saying is that "women age younger than men."

If the husband is the husband and father that he should be, he will take more than half of the burden and responsibility in building a Christian home; he will take steps off of his wife - will prove to her and the children that he is the patriarch.

But this passage says that the husband is to consider that he and the wife are "heirs together of the grace of life." I believe this includes everything. They are partners. What is his belongs to her and what she has belongs to him. I think a divided bank account, and keeping everything separate, is the worst kind of a picture of a divided home. Some husbands treat their wives like they were slaves, and just dole them out a few dimes now and then and that grudgingly. I have even heard some brethren argue that the women should not contribute on Lord's day - "because they didn't make any money." But brother, half of that land, that money or whatever you have belongs to that good wife of yours; God says it does, and the law of this land says it does. And if you would let the Lord balance the books, more than half of it might belong to her. Fathers, take your place as the head of the family and live up to your responsibility, and God will bless and prosper you. -OPA

DANGERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA - PART 2

By JUSTIN OWEN

Last month we began a study of social media, with an emphasis on Facebook addiction and the ease with which it can become an aid in gossip. This month we conclude by looking at several other issues.

Facebook is an inappropriate forum to have bible debates. How many congregations ruined, reputations destroyed, and good people hurt do we have to endure to understand that heated discussions of bible things are not always appropriate for public view? I've seen and partaken in confrontations that have happened after church in the front aisle, and I've also been part of better discussions that have taken place privately out of public view. People are a lot more receptive to what is being said in private than in a public forum. Not to mention the countless words that are misunderstood due to lack of tone or inflection in text messages or internet posts. There are times that call for public confrontation, Galatians 2:11, and there are times that call for a gentle approach as found in Acts 18:24-26. People generally don't like being confronted in public. Often times a gentle approach is all that's required to help bring a person to understanding the truth.

Lately, most of what I see in terms of bible discussion on Facebook, is closer to slander. People calling for the demise of Brethren's publications & the verbal attacks on persons are becoming much more frequent among our own. It's sad to see, and disgraceful to know that our comments amongst one another can easily be viewed by people from the world. People that we may at one time have had some influence over see this type of behavior and are instantly turned away. Jesus Himself teaches this concept when he says, By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:35). Speaking to one another in this way is cowardly. If you have a good enough relationship with someone to talk to them about something that you think is wrong with their life, then do it in person. If you don't have that relationship, maybe you shouldn't be the one confronting them at all. At the very least brethren, these practices are divisive. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned (Titus 3:10,11).

If speaking in such a way should be condemned then "Liking" what is said is equally divisive. If I tried to publish this article 10 years ago nobody would have a clue what I'm saying. Thankfully, most folks who've read this far will understand what I mean when I say "Liking". But for those that don't know, Facebook allows you to publicly show your support of a comment made. Such support is called a "Like". People love a good fight almost as much as they love a good gossip. In the midst of discussion among others, it's tempting to hop in and show support of one side or another. Resist the temptation brethren, and do not add any fuel to the divisive fire.

It's sad that the smaller this world gets, the harder it is for all of us to get along. We've always had different opinions about small matters, but now those small things have grown into large things. Why? At the end of the day, does the why or the how really matter? We should be striving to repair the personal relationships that we have and leaving the rest alone. Getting involved on either side of a fight within the brotherhood always ends in loss for both sides. The church must stand for the truths that it is built upon, but that can begin and end with the people that you directly influence in your life. There is no need to speak to acquaintances or people that you have little contact with who are involved in a Facebook dispute. People that desire to go beyond the truth will certainly find their way without us escorting them. If you have people you can personally study with and help, do it. If you don't, then don't get involved ...especially over the internet! Why express any more concern for these folks than you would our brethren who use individual cups? All of these are brethren in Christ flirting with losing the protection that is offered for sin through the blood of Christ. My point is this, if we all spend our time and energy working on building our own congregations, how much time would really be left to worry about all of this other stuff? How much influence can we really have on a person that we know so little about? Why talk about people that we have only met a few times, or heard a few things about? That's how Facebook works though! It puts us in contact with people we would usually have very little to do with. It allows us to criticize others actions publicly or behind their back. Simply put, Facebook is dangerous.

Facebook promotes Gender-Role Confusion. Now before anyone gets too upset over the title of my last point, I want to preface my remarks with this ...Women have the right and are actually commanded to be teachers. It's where the teaching takes place and how it takes place that we need to examine. There is one passage of scripture that instantly comes to mind when I get on Facebook and I see women commenting on bible things. Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law says. 35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church (1 Corinthians 14:34-35). A lot of people may note that it clearly says in church at the end of the quotation. I don't discount that the apostle Paul was referencing behavior that was taking place within the worship. However, the object of my focus lies in the reason why. Why aren't women permitted to speak? This passage teaches that they are "to be submissive, as the law says". In Paul's day it appears the teaching in the worship service was

slightly different than how we do things today. Since the New Testament was not complete, no one could have bibles open before them. So, one would get up before the congregation and say something, and the audience would ask questions or make comments to be sure that the speaker was correct or to verify what was said. Some of the word taught right in the midst of their services. That is why Paul writes to the Corinthians the things that he does concerning women. Women were to be silent in the churches. Verse 35 gives further clarification. If a woman had a question, in order to not shame a man or usurp the authority given him by God, she was to ask her question in a private setting.

How can we say that Facebook is a private setting? I am fully embarrassed for women that post their comments on Facebook in blatant disregard to the idea that Paul is presenting. Our women keep silent in the churches today, because that is what they are commanded. The woman's God-ordained role is not compromised by simply speaking outside of the assembly, even when offering encouragement through scripture. However, when a woman publicly shames a man, whether she is right or wrong in truth, it's violating the headship structure that God created. That applies to Facebook and every other public forum. Again women who "Like" comments made to a man's rebuke, dishonor their head. If you are a woman reading this, I understand that what you try to teach may be accurate according to scripture, but there are better ways to teach such things. We want to respect the headship arrangement that God Himself set up and that Paul preached about in 1 Corinthians 11:3. To use Facebook otherwise is not only disgraceful to the man involved, but to your head (mankind), to your congregation, to your family, and to God.

I pray earnestly that people begin to use a different approach when they login to their accounts. Facebook CAN be a wonderful tool. It can do many great things individually for us and the Lord's Church. It was not so long ago that Facebook was used for sharing photos with friends and family instead of proposing religious agenda. Religion is life, so it will be part of our sharing. However, we must stop using our comments and photos to tear down and destroy. I encourage people to remove "friends" and not visit sites of those that you know will promote controversy. Sometimes this may mean we will remain uninformed about certain people's lives. Honestly, who cares? If someone wants to show you what is on someone else's site to gossip about them, don't be bothered! If someone has confronted you about a post or pictures, invite them willingly to study with you instead of taking offense to someone's query. If this difference is small enough to keep fellowship,

then let it go. It wasn't two generations ago that Brother Homer Gay and Brother Homer King kept company while disagreeing over a pretty serious question. They saw the importance of peace keeping. Would it even be possible for them to do that in today's Facebook world? I wish brethren today could see the same things that they did. People who thought different in times past didn't have to flaunt their uniqueness before everyone. Those who did were seen as outcasts. Try promoting peace instead of controversy. Where controversy rears its head have nothing to do with it.

Facebook is fueling a fire that will always burn. As humans, we like to push limitations. Often times we do that to grow. That pushing can be a good thing as long as it remains in the confines of the truth. It's when the pushing goes beyond what the scriptures teach that we have a problem. It's so simple to ignore an important question regarding this article and issue. Is Facebook really worth all the damage it's doing? -6634 Winery, Clovis, CA 93612, easytarget11@hotmail.com

**YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH
LOVE OR YOU WOULD
AGREE WITH ME!**

BY GLEN OSBURN

At some point in our Christian life, the priority of our loyalty to God and His truth over our love for our friends and family will be put to the test.

Jesus foretold this crisis in Matthew 10:16 "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves ...21Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 22You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved ...28Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell ...32Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. 33But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven ...36a man's enemies will be the members of his own household (Micah 7:6)' ...37 Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (NIV).

This is NOT something we ever want to be confronted with, but it is inevitable. How do we handle this?

The first thing we have to deal with is the temptation

to compromise the truth, in order to maintain our relationships.

Satan twists Christ's teachings on love to bully Christians who are defending the truth into somehow believing that they are unloving if they hold to their convictions over approving of their friends. This tactic is classically demonstrated by the homosexual movement in accusing all those who disagree with them as being homophobic, unloving and guilty of "hate speech." If you don't approve of them, you hate them.

Those in error say the same things, you don't have enough love or you would embrace me. We do love them, yet we cannot agree with error.

Paul earnestly desired for Israel to be saved (Romans 9:1-2, 10:1), and he even wept over those who were now "...enemies of the cross of Christ" (Philippians 3:18). Even with his great love for them he would not compromise what he knew to be the truth. In his great love, he did not compromise his faithfulness to God, for man's friendship. Paul said, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

Don't let friends intimidate you by accusing you of being "mean" or "unloving" if you don't agree with them and their friends. That is classic manipulation, emotionally unfair, and a tool used by those who usually don't have Scripture to stand on.

**ALL SHOULD COME TO
REPENTANCE - PART 2**

BY SHAHE GERGIAN

In part one of this article, we addressed three emotions that do not equate to repentance. These emotions are guilt, fear and sorrow. Though these attributes play their role in our lives, they alone are not repentance. We also defined repentance as a changing, a turning, a returning and a conversion of mind and life away from sin and directed toward God.

Another question that is often raised in connection with repentance is, how do we know if someone has truly repented? Since none of us possesses the power of God to look into a person's heart and judge them, is there a way we can know if someone has repented? Are there signs that ought to accompany repentance? Absolutely, yes! The evidences for repentance are threefold.

First, when someone repents, we should see godly sorrow. Wait a minute (you might be thinking), I thought you said that sorrow is not repentance? Though it is absolutely true that sorrow alone is not repentance, the Bible does teach us that godly sorrow should and must accompany repentance. Remember that 2 Corinthians is a follow-up letter Paul wrote to the church at Corinth. He addresses the first letter in the second when he wrote:

"For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while" (2 Corinthians 7:8).

There is some confusing language used here, but the message is simple. The book of 1 Corinthians is a letter of scathing rebuke. The congregation had not just drifted from the truth on many issues; it seems that they ran from it. Among their members was harsh division, gross immorality, the abuse of spiritual gifts, total chaos in worship, especially when it came to the most sacred act of communing, doctrinal error and more. When the church at Corinth came together to read the first epistle from the apostle Paul, they must have felt terrible as they realized the magnitude of their digression.

To this point, Paul simply wrote that he was sorry that his letter made them sorry. He felt bad for making them feel bad. For a short time, he even regretted writing it. However, this sorrow and regret were short lived.

"Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing" (2 Corinthians 7:9).

Paul had declared that his sorrow turned to joy. Not because the Corinthians felt bad, but because they did something with their sorrow. They were sorry in a godly manner, which led to repentance!

"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death" (2 Corinthians 7:10).

What is the difference between godly and worldly sorrow? It is this simple: godly sorrow leads to making a change, while worldly sorrow leads to feeling bad for what you've done, but doing nothing about it. This is crucial in understanding how sorrow is tied to repentance.

Every human being shows emotions differently. There are those who can begin crying with little or no cause. Those who walk into a room and without saying a

word, you know exactly what kind of mood they are in. Others are more stoic. They hide their emotions. So how can we know if someone, in response to their sin, is truly sorry in a godly manner? We simply see this by the changes portrayed in their lives. Paul wrote that this was the case for the Corinthians.

“For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (2 Corinthians 7:11).

They proved their godly sorrow with actions - visible changes that demonstrated to Paul and every other observer that they had truly changed.

This concept brings us to the second evidence of repentance, a reformation of life. The idea of life reformation is powerfully illustrated and explained in the preaching of John the Baptizer.

“Then he (John) said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Luke 3:7-9).

John gives a call for Israel to “bear fruits worthy of repentance.” No longer would they be able to lean on their heritage for salvation. The transition from a national calling from God to an individual calling was in full force. John also emphasizes the seriousness of the situation by explaining that the “ax is laid to the root of the trees,” and “every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” Judgement is in view and if fruit is not produced, there is no hope. Well what does it mean to “bear fruits worthy of repentance?” Thankfully for us, John’s audience wanted an answer to this as well.

“So the people asked him, saying, ‘What shall we do then?’ He answered and said to them, ‘He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.’ Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what is appointed for you.’ Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, ‘And what shall we do?’ So he said

to them, ‘Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages’ (Luke 3:10-14).

To “bear fruits worthy of repentance” means to reform your life. If you have become rich by living a life dedicated to greed and gain, become benevolent. If you have cheated others, act fairly and rightly in your business dealings. If you have bullied others, show kindness and be content in life.

If John was facing an audience of drunkards, he would call them away from the bar. To gamblers, he would beckon them away from the casinos. To fornicators, he would demand purity and chastity. John teaches that wherever we find sin in our lives, there must be a complete transformation. It is not enough to feel guilty, to fear judgment, or even to be sorry. John, along with many other passages of Scripture, implores us to give up every sin which so easily entangles us (Hebrews 12:1).

Thirdly, in addition to godly sorrow and a reformation of life, we see that restitution is a final evidence of repentance. Restitution, according to Merriam Webster’s online dictionary, is a making good of or giving an equivalent for some injury. There are times when we sin, and wrong another. In this case, we must make restitution for our crime.

In Luke 19:1-10 the Bible introduces us to a wealthy tax collector named Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus became rich by cheating the people. Luke’s narrative tells us that Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus as He was passing through Jericho, but because he was a short man he had to climb into a sycamore tree to see over the crowd. This impressed Jesus, and the Lord told Zacchaeus to get out of the tree so that He could stay at Zacchaeus’ house. This greatly troubled the people and they complained, charging Jesus with being the guest of a sinner. In response to this Zacchaeus said, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold” (Luke 19:8).

In order to reconcile his wrong doing, Zacchaeus was willing to give half of his fortune to the poor, and with the leftover half, repay those he had cheated fourfold. This exemplary act of restitution pleased Jesus so much that He said “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham” (Luke 19:9).

The concept of restitution is easy enough for us to understand, yet many forget to include it in their actions. If I were to come to your home in the middle of the night, steal your automobile and take it for a “joy-

ride,” then hours later realize that I had committed sin in that theft, what would be expected of me? Suppose a deep and godly sorrow came upon me. I understood my sin and was vexed mightily because of it. Then I called you, confessed my wrong and said “I vow to never steal again! But since I already have your car, I’ll just go ahead and keep it.” Would this be in keeping with repentance? Certainly not! I would have to make restitution.

In the third and final installment of this article, we will look at that which motivates us to repent.

WHATEVER! . . . continued from page one

suddenly comes to the conclusion that the Baptists were right all along. No doubt the problem results from the fact that he has been drinking at the wrong wells! He has been reading books by people like Rick Warren (Purpose Driven Life) and Max Lucado (former church of Christ preacher), not to mention chatting to some on face book who are bereft of the truth. My brother Billy in a recent article referred to a man who said that baptism is essential to salvation if the person being baptized believes it is essential to salvation. If he doesn’t believe it is essential, the implication is that it is not essential, at least to that person. Whatever! Max Lucado wrote a widely distributed article, in which he claims that baptism is important and everyone should be immersed, but then turns around and states that everyone is welcome at his church regardless of why, or where or even how they were baptized. In other words, whatever!

APOSTOLIC TRADITION: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught whether by word or our epistle.” (II Thess. 2:15) “But we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition that he received from us.” (II Thess. 3:6) In spite of these and other passages that enjoin us to follow the Apostolic traditions and hold to the pattern given in the Scriptures for the work and worship of the church there are many who continue to teach the fantastic theory that there is no pattern. It is really quite unbelievable that members of the churches of Christ have sold out to the notion that we have no traditions, no ordinances, and no pattern. When you show that the apostles used and enjoined one cup and one loaf in the Lord’s Supper the answer of many is - whatever! Paul teaches we are to sing and make melody in our hearts. The Scriptures are silent about instrumental music in New Testament worship. “Silent?” some ask incredulously. “What does

silence prove?” No wonder some are now waving their hands, clapping their hands, dividing the children up and teaching them Bible stories in the church building, having church arranged car washes, yard sales, GED classes, theatrical performances, and on and on. There is no Apostolic tradition, and there is no big deal in doing - whatever! Paul’s words need to ring out as never before. “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.” (I Cor. 11:1,2) There is absolutely no room in those words from an Apostle of Jesus Christ for “Whatever!” -502 Mitchell Ryan, Wake Village, TX 75501 misterjldmsn.com

2012 PHILIPPINE TRIP . . . continued from page two

follow soon so it was a profitable time. There were 106 baptisms on Luzon and Palawan, for which we give God the praise and glory. Already, we look forward to seeing the brethren again next year if the Lord permits. The Philippines has been a fertile field for the gospel from the very first visit in 1981. There are men who are preaching locally without support, because there has been none found for them, yet they preach. If you want to be involved in this great work, let us hear from you. Many are baptized every year by the local preachers. A question often asked is whether or not those who are baptized remain faithful? The answer is that the percentages are similar to what we see in the USA. This year in the Northern part of Luzon several congregations came together because we didn’t have a lot of time to spend there before moving on. I couldn’t count the number but it looked like a Labor Day meeting in the United States. So, yes, the church is growing and there doesn’t appear to be any end in sight. It makes preaching there an exciting time. My thanks to those who traveled with us and made the trip so easy this year. At the present time Brethren Conrado Libertino and Dario Estavillo are in Mindanao, and Mindoro, etc. preaching the gospel and we pray God’s blessings on them.

Our Departed

Don Freeman (April 14, 1955 -January 16, 2012) 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). This verse perhaps summarizes Don’s life better than any other. On January 16, 2012 our beloved brother in Christ stepped from life toward the shores of heaven having won his

battle with cancer. The Don that most of us knew cannot be summed up in this short note but until his death Don truly lived for the Lord. The church was his life and behind his mischievous eyes was a vision for Christ. Whether at work or in private; Don shared his faith! Even while suffering in the hospital Don would take his song book and head down the hall to, as he put it, "sing to the sick folks." It was this type of love of life and others that enabled Don to baptize several into Christ. The preaching and godly living of Don and Dorcas made a huge impact on the brotherhood in both Oklahoma and Missouri. A great void is left with his passing. The memorial service Dorcas arranged here in Kansas City was perfect. Greg Harris led the congregation in Christian hymns and Chris Freeman read a moving tribute he had written. I was humbled to be able to share with the audience some of the family's favorite memories and read from the Word of God. Don leaves behind his wife Dorcas of 31 years and a host of family and friends. Please keep Dorcas and the rest of this special family in your prayers.- Mike Criswell

Announcements

50th Spring Meeting in Birmingham, AL April 1-8 Crescent Ridge Church of Christ Rick Martin, Speaker Sundays 10:30AM and 2:30PM Monday-Friday 7:30PM Saturday 6:00 PM Everyone Welcome

PUBLIC BIBLE DISCUSSION

Church of Christ 3511 Hwy 99 Seminole, OK
March 17, 2012 6:00 p.m.

What constitutes religious authority?

Rhett Brotherton (Catholic Church) affirms:

Church traditions, Papal decrees and the scriptures all constitute religious authority.

George Battey (Church of Christ) affirms: The NT scriptures only constitute religious authority for today.

New Bible Study Booklet Available

It is with a special measure of excitement and enthusiasm that I am honored to announce the publication of a new Bible Study Booklet written by Bro. Brett Hickey. The booklet title is: The

Lord's Supper ---Unity in One Loaf and One Cup Brett compiled this booklet concurrent to the TV program that now airs on several stations in the United States. This work, in my opinion, is one of the best I have ever seen on this subject. The front cover is artistically done with a picture of a chalice and a loaf of unleavened bread. The back cover contains a list of other resources that the reader can explore such as: a list of times and stations that carry the TV program, a list of congregations that worship with one loaf and one cup as well as the computer links to manuscripts, audio and video recordings of many other Bible topics. The back cover contains an invitation for the reader to explore the TV web site at: LetTheBibleSpeak.com along with information about You Tube and Face Book.

The inside of the tract contains 47 pages of easy to read print. Brett affirms the truth with easy to understand arguments, from the scripture, which show the connection between the unity of believers and one cup and one loaf. In a very kind way Brett sets aside arguments made by some brethren in favor of a plurality of loaves and cups. He offers enough scientific information concerning one cup and sanitation to remove any fear of spreading disease when an entire congregation communes from a common cup. He has spared nothing in time and research to find a wealth of historical information, including articles from The New York Times in the 1890's which relates how controversy erupted among various denominations when individual cups were first introduced.

The Pleasant View congregation (north Springfield, Mo.) has under written the expenses of printing the first 10,000 copies of this tract. The printing was done by a professional printing company in Texas. Except for the shipping costs, the tracts are free of charge! to anyone who will use them.

We are not the least bit interested in providing them for brethren to use to swat wasps or to collect dust somewhere in a back room. Every home should have copies for study and research. The remainder should be distributed to those who do not yet know the truth. Drop shipments have been sent to several churches through out the brotherhood. If the church where you are does not have these booklets on hand, please order at the following

address: Irvin Barnes, 3218 East Farm Road 88, Springfield, Mo. 65803 E-mail: irvinbarns@aol.com (please notice there is no "e" in the E-mail address). Phone: 417-833-4710. An individual here will pay to have your order shipped. When you receive your order, please note the shipping cost on the box or package and send that amount to me by return mail. Several brothers and sisters from Pleasant View have volunteered to furnish the labor needed for packing and shipping. Brett has a heavy work load, both on the local level and with the TV program. The church here is making an effort to share in his labor by receiving, filling, and shipping orders.

We commend this tract to everyone, everywhere and consider it a great privilege to be involved with this good work. Yours in Christ, Irvin Barnes

Field Reports

February 4, 2012, Darrel Crawford, 208 E. Baldwin Rd. Unit 5, Panama City Florida, 32405 bugz1955@hotmail.com We hope everyone had a blessed and happy new year. We really enjoyed attending the New Year meeting at Dothan, AL It was a great meeting as usual. The brethren there outdid themselves in conducting the meeting. Brother Ronny Wade did a great job as well. The beautiful singing and preaching were soul stirring.

We are having some beautiful weather here in Florida, much better in some cases than back home in Oklahoma! We feel blessed by the Lord to be able to be here and to do the Lord's work here. It's hard to believe that we have been here two years already. We have been asked to remain here till at least February of 2014. Since our last report we have had one baptism, for which we give God all the praise. We continue to study with two digressive couples, one of which has no problem with the one cup.

We had a visitor from the community last week, a young man who has ties to the church; he is from Memphis, Tenn. We are praying the work here will be blessed and that the Lord will give us wisdom to properly do the work in all matters. We also

continue to speak at the Lowery, AL congregation on a monthly basis.

We want to thank everyone who has prayed for the work, encouraged or supported it in all way as well as financially.

We love and appreciate everyone so much, you mean all to us. We are still able to hold a few gospel meetings a year and we are available one Lord's day a month to preach the gospel as well. We want to remind everyone that we now have an afternoon service at 2:30 pm on Lord's Day. Please come by and worship whenever you can. May we all stick to the Old Paths and may the Lord bless His church everywhere.

Greg Gay, February 6, 2012. I was in a meeting at Fossil Creek in Ft. Worth, Texas February 1 - 5. It has been some years since I was there last. The leaders and families there have worked hard to have the thriving congregation they are blessed with today. I stayed with Randy and Rhonda Cantrell, always a delight, and could not have been treated better. Others were very hospitable so we could visit more than just before and after worship. I appreciate the area preachers taking time out of their busy schedules to attend one or more times including Johnny Herrera, Nathan Battey, Clint DeFrance, Joe Lee Norton, and Melvin Blalock. Area congregations were well represented which is wonderful to see in these times. Recently, I appreciated the opportunity to preach for Grapevine, TX when I was there in December for the preacher's study. I enjoyed the study presentations I was able to hear and believe they were very beneficial and appropriate for today. Our work continues with the 64. St. Congregation in Sacramento. We continue to have leads from the Let the Bible Speak TV program with Brett Hickey. The congregation at Oakdale is helping many congregations through their generosity in supporting the broadcast. I am glad to have some studies with outsiders that have started recently. 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747 papagreg@aol.com

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THE BACK PAGE . . .

THE INTELLECTUAL FOOL

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

I was conditioned as a child not to call anyone a fool. My mother warned me that if she ever heard me call anyone a fool, she would wash my mouth out with soap, and that I would be in danger of hell fire (Mt. 5:22). I had received the oral soap treatment a time or two for using other words my mother felt were off-limits and I did not want any more of it, and I certainly did not want any part of the fires of hell. My mother made such an impression on me during my early childhood that I still cringe when I contemplate calling anyone a fool. However, that is the very word I thought of when I heard recently that Christopher Hitchens, a celebrity atheist, had died of pneumonia while battling esophageal cancer.

Hitchens was an Oxford graduate, intellectual, writer, television personality, and social commentator. He may have been the most combative atheist since Madalyn Murray O'Hair. He reserved the right to attack any sacred cow of his choosing—and the more sacred, the better. He spent a great deal of time on television chortling about the deaths of well-known people who professed Christianity.

He wrote a book attacking God entitled, *God Is Not Great*. One of his acquaintances explained that Hitchens did not write the book just so he would have a reason to get together with a bunch of his atheist cronies for a wine and cheese party in Manhattan, where they could laugh at the “rubes and cornpones” down in the Bible belt, but he hoped his book would generate debates with believers about the existence of God. That is exactly what the book did, and Hitchens took on any and all comers in these debates.

While Hitchens may have been an original writer, there is nothing original about his unbelief. His views have been expressed by others since the dawn of humanity, and they have also been answered many times by some of the wisest people who have ever lived. There is a difference between being “smart” and “wise.” Solomon, the original wise man says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10). It follows that Hitchens may have been smart, but he was unwise.

Commenting upon men like Hitchens the apostle Paul says, “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:22). Paul justifies his conclusion by explaining that what can be known about God has been made plain to them, yet they do not see fit to acknowledge God (19, 28).

David adds, “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God” (Ps. 14:1). The word “fool” is from the Hebrew word *nabal*, and it is used throughout Proverbs and other wisdom literature to refer to churlish, rude, dishonest, belligerent, obstinate people. The fool’s assertion that “there is no God” is not treated in Scripture as a sincere, misguided conviction, but rather as an irresponsible, belligerent, gesture of defiance.

The above definitions certainly define Hitchens. He was aggressively perverse and defiant until the very end. In a number of interviews toward the end of his life and during the course of his cancer treatments, he discussed the prospect of a “death-bed” conversion. He knew that the Scriptures teach “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). He also knew from the example of the thief on the cross and the parable of the workers hired at the eleventh hour in the vineyard, that the door of repentance is open until death (Lk. 22:43; Mt. 20:6). However, he reassured his atheist friends that he would not let them down and that if a report ever came from the hospital that he had cried out to God before he died, as Albert Einstein and Charles Darwin reportedly did, they could be sure that either the report was false, or that the cancer, chemo, or something else had gotten into his brain and he was not in his right mind. You talk about defiance!

Hitchens’ life is a portrait of the fool described by David in Psalm 14:1. The word does not describe his mental ability, but rather his moral character. He lived an immoral life while wishfully protesting that there is no God.

When Jesus threatens anyone who calls another a fool, He is not talking about applying the word to people like Hitchens. It is not the use of the word that condemns, but the attitude behind the use of the word that Jesus censures. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is condemning the practice of any kind of name-calling for the purpose of attacking and destroying the name and reputation of another. Thus He warns that the person who violates another person in this grievous way is “in danger of hell fire” (Mt. 5:22).

David’s labeling of a person like Hitchens as a fool does not violate Jesus’ teaching on the matter in any way. I believe that even my mother would agree. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com