

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. 5

WHERE DIVINE WISDOM IS FOUND

By *BENNIE T. CRYER*

1 Corinthians 1:30 was written to some church members who were having a difficult time in getting along with their brothers and sisters in Christ. A few of the Gentile members had begun to lose their way to life eternal because, being Greeks, they considered themselves far better educated and much wiser than Paul the apostle to the Gentiles or any of the inspired evangelist and prophets with Paul and especially those members in Corinth who had had Paul's hands laid on them and were therefore able, by inspiration, to speak the words of life. “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write to the church in Corinth. He is explaining to them about the source of wisdom in the true religion of God that has to do with saving them from their sins and maintaining the right relationship with God. God is the source of wisdom and revealed to man his wisdom in the New Testament first orally and then in the written form we still have today. The first cosmonaut that hurtled through space for a short time openly declared that he did not see God on his journey. Of course he did not see God. He was depending on his own education and human abilities that he had attained in order to discover the creator of the very space he was traveling through. Though he did not see God the creator God saw him and others like him from the time of the revelation of the scheme of redemption in the first century till this twenty first century. And you can extend this thought into

the future till the end of time and the destruction of this world and the space the cosmonaut was traveling through.

How do we know this? God knew this and revealed it to us in his inspired word: 1 Cor. 1:21, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” What the Greeks in the church in Corinth needed to pay attention to was the preaching of the good gospel sermons Paul and the other gospel preachers had given them. What the cosmonaut needed to hear was some good gospel sermons before he went into space. Then maybe he could have seen God was the cause of all he saw up there. What some of our brethren need today is to remember the good gospel sermons they heard earlier in their lives instead of delving into the silence of God and coming up with new things based on human wisdom that has troubled the brotherhood. Men taking advantage of the so called silence of God has created the divisions even in the denominational world. In Col. 2:3, “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” It is “in Christ” where God has “hid all” the wisdom and knowledge that has to do with the church and the salvation of our souls and the instructions about how we are to live. “In Christ” we are even instructed about how to enter into him. Gal. 3:26-27, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Do not ever forget this and chase after some new thing. For this purpose God “made unto us” Christ Jesus as our wisdom. --OPA

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Editorial

We are reprinting a good article by Brother Johnny Elmore for the editorial this month. Though written over 28 years ago in February 1986, it is still very appropriate, timely and could have been written this month. Johnny has been one of the editors of this paper for many years and we value his service, knowledge, and dedication to the truth so very much. If you benefit from this article, why not drop him a note, or email, and tell him so. -DLK

STRENGTHEN THE THINGS THAT REMAIN

By JOHNNY ELMORE

Among the evangelists who traverse the country each year conducting gospel meetings, there is a real and genuine concern. Although there are some churches that are thriving and growing, there are many more that would fall into the “struggling” category. It seems that in some places all it will take is another funeral or two and the doors of the church building will be shut, perhaps forever. Who is to blame for this deplorable condition? Some may wish to blame the evangelists, and it may be that some of us will have to accept the responsibility. However there are others who share the responsibility.

Some years ago in the state of Oregon, an old, abandoned church building was put up for sale. There had been no services in it for years and the denominational heads decided it would be wisest to dispose of the property. But a storm of protest arose and the local paper was full of letters written by irate citizens objecting to the sale of a historical landmark. The man who had one time been its pastor remarked that, if people had shown that much interest in it while it was still alive, it would not have been abandoned.

In a religious journal that comes to my door, I recently read an article in which the writer charged that we are “preparing the soil for the planting of the seeds of Pentecostalism” in the churches of Christ. My first reaction was to deny it, but as the writer stated his case, I found myself inclined to agree. If we do not feed the spiritually sensitive souls of those who attend our services, they will look elsewhere for spiritual satisfaction. Brethren, as distasteful and humiliating as it is for us to admit it, we need to own up to our responsibilities for dead, lifeless services and work and do what we can to correct the situation.

continued on page eight

QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: How important is it that older women teach younger women those things listed in Titus 2:3-5?

Answer: The verses in question read as follows: “the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” Such teaching is not only important, it is commanded. The teaching is not public teaching from the pulpit, for women are forbidden to do that in I Timothy 2:11-12 “Let the women learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over the man” and I Corinthians 14:34-35 “Let your women keep silence in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive as the law also says. 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.” Hence the teaching here mentioned is that done in private settings. Who would be better equipped to do this teaching than older, wiser, and more experienced Christian women. It seems to me that there is a crying need for such teaching today. Why is it that so many older women seem reluctant to step forward? Could it be that some young women resent being approached by older women who seek to instruct and guide them in Christian conduct? Could it be that some older women feel inadequate to do such teaching? Could it be that many older women are guilty of the very things young women need to be warned to avoid? Notice the list that Paul enumerates: (1) to love their husbands, (2) love their children, (3) to be discreet, (4) chaste, (5) homemakers, (6) good, (7) obedient to their husbands. One might wonder just why young women need to be reminded to love their husbands. In a day when over half of all marriages end in divorce it seems evident that many don’t love their husbands as they should. Nothing such as fancy dress, costly jewelry, or educational advantages can compensate for the genuine love

and devotion that a wife must have for her husband. It seems almost unthinkable that any mother would need to be taught to love her children. Yet in our world today thousands of children are beaten and abused every day. Some are even murdered by the hands of the one who brought them into this world. There is no doubt that maternal affection is natural, yet even in Paul’s day he realized the need to admonish mothers to love their children. Mothers who love their children introduce them to the Lord at an early age and continue to school them in Christian principles with the word of God and a Godly example. Young women need to learn the lesson of being sober-minded and chaste. When I see young women dressed in clothes that cover very little of their bodies, it seems evident that some mother failed to teach her young girls the value and necessity of dressing modestly. Young women need to be taught the danger of yielding to the flesh and the necessity of keeping their bodies pure and free from the sins identified by Paul in Galatians 5:19. Married women are to be home makers. Literally Paul is saying that young women need to be taught to be workers at home to watch and guard the home. The home needs to be a pleasant place to those who live there. Young women not only need to be taught to keep the house clean and orderly, but to make the home a place where both husband and children long to be. The woman is truly the queen of the home and as such she deserves the love and respect of both husband and children. She is to be good and kind and to love her husband. These things clearly show just why older Godly women need to teach and train younger women. Young women who are trying to be the kind of example the Lord expects of them will gladly receive the instruction given them by older, experienced women in the church. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

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“JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES” AND CHRIST’S DEITY

BY ANDREW RICHARDSON

I once had a study with two “Jehovah’s Witnesses” in which I asked one of them if it would be acceptable if I bowed down to him exclaiming, “Worthy are you to receive honor, glory, and blessing!” His companion adamantly answered, “No, he’s not God.” I said, “I agree, but you also say Jesus is not God, yet this is what the multitude of angels proclaimed to Him in Revelation 5:11-12:

“Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!’”

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, through their “Witnesses,” out-right deny Jesus’ deity and subsequently reject that He should be worshipped, but these two gentlemen well recognized the kind of worship in my question to be deserving of nobody other or less than God. They also recognized the dilemma they faced once they read that such worship was offered to the “Lamb” (i.e., Jesus-John 1:29, 36) in Revelation. Observe also:

“And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” (Rev. 5:8).

Why would the heavenly beings prostrate themselves before Christ (as did numerous humans whom Jesus did not rebuke for so doing-Matt. 2:11; 15:25; 18:26; Luke 8:41; 17:16) and worship Him when worship is reserved for God (Math 4:10; Acts 10:25-26; Rev. 19:10)? - Why? - Because Jesus and God, though two individual persons (1 Cor. 15:27-28; 1 Tim. 2:5) are “one” (John 10:30).

Furthermore, we see Jesus included in the worship given to the Father in verse 13:

“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.” What honor they give to God here, they give to His Son with Him. Would it not be a great evil to include

together with God, in worship and praise, anyone unequal with Him - anyone less than God? Yet, in fact, Jesus said, “All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father” (John 5:23). “Even” means equally! So, are the Father and the Son not a unified Deity? Both God and the Lamb will be the heavenly temple (Rev. 21:22), and both the Father and the Son will be the light of that temple (Rev. 21:23). They are both the Creator (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; 1 Tim. 4:3), and with this fact, it is interesting that in Revelation 4, the creative work is one of the causes of praise and worship offered to Him that “sat on the throne”:

“The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (vv. 10-11).

This worship is given to God and Jesus together; for They both are the Creator, and They both “sit on the throne” (Rev. 22:3). Jesus and the Father are one. The “Witnesses” cannot sensibly deny this to be the case in these two verses. In fact, it is said that “for Thy pleasure they are and were created,” and the inspired apostle Paul informs us that Jesus was for Whom everything was created:

“For by him [Jesus] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” (Col. 1:16).

By no means does this cover the breadth of the Biblical substance of the deity of Jesus Christ, but it certainly manifests the obvious equality of Jesus and God. In Jesus “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (ES V- Col. 2:9). Let us give praise, honor, and glory to both Jesus, and the blessed Father!

FRONT PORCH VISITING ON THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - PART 1

By STEVEN BOWEN

We have been blessed over recent years - through the Old Paths Advocate -to sit out on the “front porch” with so many of you good brothers and sisters and visit regarding the church of our Lord. Today in this place, I think we need to have an important talk about some attitudes that could help lead us to heaven, and some that may keep us out.

We feel compelled, first, to say that I believe you

know we have a great love for the Lord's church- both you and I. Truly she is that great "Ship of Zion." She is the beautiful bride of Christ whom our Lord one day will "present (to) himself as a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:26). I am so thankful for those who left us that grand heritage of the church of Christ, that "great speckled bird" (Jeremiah 12:9). Words fail us in trying to express our gratitude in having the breath and ample passion to proclaim the story of Jesus and His glorious church wherever we can, as well as the energy, at times, to help her overcome her struggles. We all often grow weary at times both in spreading the seeds of the gospel as well as limiting the spread of the fires of trouble.

It is because of that love for the church that we share some sobering thoughts on this "front porch" visit. The truth is, I am afraid many of us within the church of our Lord are in trouble, and the trouble often stems from that one powerful, loaded word: Attitude.

I am afraid that many in the Lord's church- many three-times-a-week members, leading citizens - are going to be surprised on the Day of Judgment because of attitude. Matthew 7:21 applies to us as much as it applies to the denominational world.

The problem of having the wrong spirit or attitude is nothing new. If you go through each of the epistles, you may be a bit surprised to see the inspired writer of each book warns brethren, in various ways, not to "bite and devour one another" (Galatians 5:15) but rather "by love serve one another" (v. 13).

It seems strange that the apostle would have to warn church members against such behavior. But you do not have to study long to realize the way we treat and love one another was a soul-threatening issue then even as it is now.

This problem is what leads the apostle in Galatians to sketch two portraits that are as contrasting as heaven and hell. He tells the brethren, "But if bite and devour one another, take heed that be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (15-16). The apostle establishes the contrast clearly in the outset of his sermon, and it becomes more pronounced as he moves on through Galatians 5.

But notice in verse 17, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would?"

That last statement grabs us and demands attention - "that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

Being guided by the flesh, what we WOULD do is demand that we have our way. But because we "walk in the Spirit," we, instead, consider our brother so that our actions do not cause our "weak brother (to) perish, for whom Christ died" (1 Corinthians 8:11).

After the flesh, what we would do is dig our heels in until chaos develops on every side. But what we do - because we walk in the Spirit- is "follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19). It is by the Spirit of Christ we learn that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17) - in other words, we learn that the old Ship of Zion is a vessel of peace and joy. Our lives and attitudes change when we sail the high waters that ship sails on.

In the flesh, what we would do is demand we have our rights, even if demanding our rights causes division and grief all around. But what we do when we walk in the Spirit is adopt the attitude of the great apostle who says, "... if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Corinthians 8:13).

I am convinced that if every Christian would adopt the attitude of 1 Corinthians 8:13 that the chasms in the Lord's church would be repaired as smoothly as a seamstress sewing a garment. If everyman will have the mind of the apostle and the mind of Christ-whether he be scholar or journeyman, conservative or liberal, in the right or treading precariously on the edge - peace in the Lord's church will flourish.

What we will NOT do when we walk after the Spirit is say, "That's just the way I am. People will just have to deal with it." Instead, we will develop this attitude, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you" (1 Corinthians 9:22-23).

Good friends, when you lay the pleading words of the apostle carefully alongside the self-will attitudes we often develop within the doors of the Lord's church, tears and regret may soon follow.

In essence, here is the apostle's powerful message: "I have learned - through a life of much difficulty- to humble myself enough that I can become weak to those

who are the weak. I will take on anything - or give up anything - on this side of truth. I can go no further, but I will go that second mile, and the third and fourth if needed. I will go as far as my Lord will allow. I will even suffer wrong for the brother I love (1 Corinthians 6:7). You see, my love for my brother is so great that I long to be 'partaker' with him, to walk with him on that grand avenue, even as we walk together here, and as we partake together at the Lord's table of the cup of blessing, the communion of the blood of our Lord (1 Corinthians 10:16). I do all of these things - I become all these things - not for my sake, but for the gospel's sake."

What a powerful four-word sermon there at the end: "for the gospel's sake"! We must be willing to do all - scale whatever imposing mountain that rises before us or lower ourselves to any valley- for the sake of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

That attitude is the one that will meet the Lord's approval on the great Day of Judgment.

We pray these words will pierce our hearts and help us examine ourselves closely by the word of God in the days ahead (Hebrews 4:12).

But we cannot close without reminding ourselves of the beautiful life the apostle lays out for us in the twenty-second and twenty-third 'verses of our chapter: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Then he adds a powerful six-word sermon at the end: "Against such there is no law." In the loving tone of a father, the apostle says, "Remember, brethren, it is not unlawful to be gentle, patient, meek, and good."-steven.bowen@redoakisd.org

**LET THE BIBLE SPEAK
WITH KEVIN PRESLEY**

Plans are ongoing for a series of new T.V. video programs by Kevin Presley. Equipment is being purchased and hopefully within the next few months the programs will be available for use.

If you are interested in using these tapes please get in touch with Kevin as soon as possible so you can be on the list of churches that plan to show them in your area. There is no charge for using the tapes. Churches will be responsible for arranging time with a local TV station in your area. The churches in Northern Arkansas have been using tapes by Kevin that were recorded several years ago. The response has been amazing. Following is a letter from Brother Dennis Smith who resides in

Ft. Smith, AR in which he details the results in that market. Just recently Kevin was there in a five day gospel meeting and they had 92 community visitors during the meeting. Write to Kevin at Kevin Presley 108 Mulberry Court Dothan, AL 36303. You may e-mail him at kwpresley@gmail.com or call at 334-618-1550.

We began airing "Let The Bible Speak" with Kevin Presley on April 5th, 2009 and have continued showing the programs in rotation each Lord's Day since. Kevin was only able to produce 68 programs at that time. Lord willing, at the end of July of this year, we will have completed airing the programs for the fourth rotation. During that period of time, I have purchased software which allows me to edit the digital productions by adding different congregational singing and various announcements. We believe that this has kept the program "fresh". The subjects taught and material used in these 68 programs are 'timeless' and indeed, need to be taught over and over again.

We greatly appreciate of the brethren of the Rogers and Hartwell, AR congregations who have assisted in the financial obligation of airing the program on KFTA, FOX 24, in Fort Smith. We have also received financial help from the Tucker, OK congregation and from several individual contributors. The coverage area for our broadcast extends to the North as far as 20 or 30 miles into Missouri, and South as far as Mena, AR We have had many responses from areas East of Fort Smith as far as 70 miles, and to the West as far as Talihina, OK and Tahlequah, OK. This is a large coverage area and it continues to produce many varied responses.

We have had good results from our television work. Over 300 responses in all have been received. This includes people visiting the various congregations; letters; emails; telephone calls; correspondence course enrollees; requests for DVD's; and requests for printed notes of lessons. Thus, we know of six people who have left various congregations that have digressed from the Bible pattern of worship, and have begun worshipping with our supporting congregations. Also, in conjunction with the program, I was afforded opportunity to speak one evening at a congregation that has digressed. I spoke for 45 minutes affirming the Bible pattern of observing the Lord's Supper, and then answered questions from the audience for another 45 minutes in support of our practice. We have had several contacts from this.

From recent conversations with brother Kevin, I know that he is trying to arrange a situation that will allow him

to produce new programs. The plan is to build a small room for a recording studio and purchase the necessary equipment to again get back into full production of his program. I, whole heartedly, endorse his plan, and would encourage as many as can to contact brother Kevin and help to support such a great work. Yours in the Lord, Dennis . dsmith46@sbcglobal.net P. O. Box 10868, Fort Smith, AR 72917 (479) 452-5896 - home; (479) 285-3106 - cell

**WANTING THE BENEFIT
WITHOUT THE COST**

By DARRIN WHITTAKER

In Luke we have a man clearly in need of help. We find people who knew there was a problem; this man needed help to be freed from the demons that tormented him. Any attempt by the people to help him did not alleviate his torment. Jesus entered the picture, healed this man of his tormentors and demonstrated both His compassion and power. What was the cost of this man's healing? As Jesus cast the demons into a herd of swine, they ran off a cliff to their death. There were eye witnesses to this miraculous event, and the news spread throughout the whole town. No doubt those witnessing this man's torture had compassion for his suffering. Yet, the cost of his healing was simply too great. "Solve our problems but save my pigs." Said another way, " 'Lord, I want the change, but don't let it cost me anything.'"

I had a college professor who had an open door policy for any student who wanted assistance. He did require one thing; the student needed to bring in his text book. If the professor heard the binder of the book "crack", he would hand over the book and have the student exit the office. He knew the student had not studied the text book prior to requesting help. "Help me with my problems, but don't ask anything of me."

Do we bring that same mentality when we approach God? "God, I want a change, but don't ask anything of me. God, I want my relationship with my spouse to be better, but don't ask anything of me. God, I want my relationship problems with my children solved, but don't ask anything of me. God, I want (fill in the blank) but don't ask anything of me."

If we want better family relations, what does the wisdom of God's word ask of us?

HUSBANDS; 1 Peter 3:7, "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." The word "understanding" means a general and objective knowledge. I remember having an old Ford pickup that had so many quirks that everything had to be "just so" even to get it started. The choke had to be pulled out a specific length and the gas pedal pressed just so far in order for the engine to start and that was when the temperature wasn't too cold or too hot. Because of my experience with the pickup, I gained a general and objective knowledge of all the special aspects of how it worked. Peter instructs every husband to have that type of intimate knowledge of their wives. If you want to push your wife's "CARE BUTTON," what can you say or do? Can you generate a list of things you can do for your wife that shows her how special she is to you?

Peter further explains that each husband is to "give honor" to their wives. The concept of giving honor means to treat as precious, or to bestow a mark of honor. Are you willing to use your intimate and objective knowledge of your wife to make her feel precious and show that she holds a place of honor in your heart? Husbands, do you want a better marriage? Are you willing to pay the cost?

WIVES; Col 3:18, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." Submit means to subject oneself and obey; to submit to one's control. A wise and Christ-honoring wife seeks her husband's best-serving, helping, comforting, and supporting him as he assumes the God given role as head of the household. The role of a wife at home is so important that God saw fit to direct, older woman to teach the younger woman how to be a loving wife (Titus 2:4,5). Wives, do you love your husband, not as you think he should be loved, but as God instructs you to love? Do you submit yourself to his authority, subject yourself to his role as head of the family, and place his needs above your own. Wives, do you want a better relationship with your husband? Are you willing to pay the cost?

PARENTS; Deut. 6:6-9, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk

by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates.”

First, notice the amount of time God instructs Moses that parents should spend with their children. In a recent survey, it found that working mothers spend an average of 13.5 hours per week with their children and fathers spend 7.3 hours per week. That is an average of just under 2 hours per day for moms and 1 hour per day for dads. Parents, how do you compare to the national average? How much Bible and spiritual teaching can be accomplished in that limited amount of time? Moses instructs parents to teach diligently. This means to teach with much attention, carefully, and exactly. It is God’s word that we are to give much attention to and teach carefully to our children.

When was the last time you had a Bible or spiritual discussion with your son or daughter? When they are scared before a doctor’s appointment, do you share how God knows and cares about how they feel? When they lose a baseball game due to bad calls by the umpire, do you explain that God is concerned about how they handle unfairness and not whether they win or lose? When your daughter comes home in tears after being teased for her modest clothes, do you tell her God sees and knows about her godly heart? Parents, do you want a godly relationship with your children? Are you willing to pay the cost?

Whatever the problems might be in your life, whatever area of growth you desire, are you willing to pay the cost to reach your goal? Begin the work by studying God’s word and praying for wisdom to find God’s solutions. - darrinwhittaker65@gmail.com



STRENGTHEN THE THINGS . . . continued from page two

The Saviour warned the church at Sardis: “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die” (Rev. 3:2). Williams renders this: “Wake up, and strengthen what is left, although it is on the very point of dying!” We have lost some ground, brethren! It is an undisputed fact that we have lost more young people than we have kept. In many places, we have lost our enthusiasm and zeal. We have lost our sense of

purpose and direction. Jesus’ words are so appropriate for us. We need to “wake up and strengthen what is left!” What can we do? How can we help?

CHANGE OUR ATTITUDES

I am convinced that some of us need an “attitude adjustment,” as the country song suggests. Maybe we have been attending worship entirely out of a sense of duty, and we sit, watching the clock, or filing our nails, or worse, we sleep through the worship. Maybe we present our bodies completely uninhabited by the spirit, and our attitude is expressed: “Well, here I am; entertain me.” I say to you - could we not bring some enthusiasm with us? Could we not open up and join enthusiastically in the songs? Could we not give the brother who is trying to teach our respectful attention? Could we not shake hands and greet strangers with warmth and affection? And if we are filled with joy and gladness over being spared for another week of life, could we not notify our faces? David said: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord” (Psalm 122:1). Maybe we can’t teach or pray or lead publicly, but everyone can be an encourager of those who do.

OUR SINGING

Most of the congregational singing that I have heard could stand improvement. Far be it from me to discourage anyone, for I believe that when anyone does the best that he or she is capable of, it will be acceptable to God. But are we doing our best? Is the worship the time and place to train song leaders? To me, the idea that everyone must be given an opportunity to lead songs is contributing to the death of good singing. Singing that is consistently pitched too low and with a tempo too slow and draggy is discouraging and uninspiring. Doing our best-means trying to improve. Doing our best may mean finding someone who can teach us how to pitch songs correctly and how to sing them at the right tempo. And having the right tune would help, also. And how many song leaders would put up with the teaching giving the same lesson each service? But I have noticed that in many congregations the same five or six songs are sung at each service. If we want to lift spirits and inspire others, let us study to improve the singing.

OUR PRAYING AND TEACHING

Another area that could use attention is in our praying and teaching. What would be wrong with casting aside memorized prayers and addressing our petitions to specific needs? And when the brother finishes his prayer, why not let every brother in the house audibly say “AMEN”? I do not get to hear much teaching in any local congregation except my own, but if what

I hear is a specimen of teaching in general, I know we could do much better. Much of what I hear is dry and uninspiring. Some teach because they have to say something and some teach because they have something to say, and there is a big difference in the two. How long has it been since you have heard a lesson spoken with courage and conviction which calls upon the hearers to act and respond? And how long has it been since you have heard an "Amen" from one of the brethren? I realize that could be overdone but the last time I heard it, it was so rare and unexpected, I almost leaped out of my skin.

The great spiritual and political leader of India, Mohandas K. Gandhi, told of attending a church in South Africa when he was a young man. He said: "I attended church every Sunday. The church did not make a favorable impression on me. The sermons seemed to be uninspiring. The congregation did not strike me as being particularly religious. They were not an assembly of devout souls; they appeared to be rather worldly-minded, going to church in conformity to custom. Here at times I would involuntarily doze. I was ashamed, but some of my neighbors who were in no better a case lightened the shame. I could not go on like this and soon gave up attending the service."

We wonder what impact it might have had on the nation of India if he had found it inspiring and enthusiastic? And how often has that been the identical experience of young people in America?

Oh, brethren, let us "wake up, and strengthen what is left." Souls are at stake. The soul we save may be that of someone very near and dear, and it could be our own.

Announcements

Missouri Fourth of July Meeting

The annual Missouri fourth of July meeting will be conducted in Springfield under the direction of the Mission Hills church. The dates are June 29-July 3. Services at the church building Sunday morning at 10 A.M. Sunday night the services move to the Remington Center where the meeting will continue thru Thursday Night. Below we have listed Motel Information. For further information you may call Ronny Wade 417-766-2700, Mark Triplett 417-823-9665 Chad Smith 417-839-8222

Motels For The Fourth of July Meeting, Springfield, MO

Holiday Inn Express---Medical District (Formerly Comfort Inn and Suites) 310 E. Monastery St. Springfield, MO 65810 Phone: 417-887-8500 Rate \$99.00 plus tax per room per night Free Hot Breakfast

Sleep Inn---Medical District 233 El Camino Alto Springfield, Mo 65810 Phone: 417-866-2464 Rate: \$74.00 plus tax per room per night Free Hot Breakfast In order to receive these rates at either hotel, the guest must call the hotel direct and the rates will be honored based on availability. Tell them you are with the Church of Christ.

Hampton Inn---Springfield South 3232 5. Glenstone (Near the Battlefield mall) Springfield, MO 65804 Phone 417-882-6611 Rate: \$89.00 plus tax per room per night Free Hot Breakfast Must call the Motel directly and tell them that you are with the Church of Christ

Candlewood Suites 1035 E. Republic Rd. Springfield, MO 65807 Phone:417-881-8500 Rate: Studio Suite \$84.00 plus tax per room per night One Bedroom King \$119.00 plus tax per room per night Must call Motel directly and ask for Church of Christ rate.

There are other motels in the area that are available that can be reached by telephone or e-mail. Should you need assistance you may call or write any of the references listed in this letter of announcement.



50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Saturday June 7th Irvin and Barbara Barnes will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

A reception will be held in their honor from 1 to 3 P.M. at The Muse in Chesterfield Village 2160 W. Chesterfield Blvd. in Springfield, MO

You may send cards of remembrance and congratulations to the Barnes at 3218 East Farm Road 88 Springfield, MO 65803.



NEW SONGBOOK ABOUT READY

I am happy to announce the soon-publication of the 2014 songbook 'Ceaseless Praise.' The book should be available by or before the annual 4th of July Meetings. This book contains a number of wonderful new songs, beloved hymns and a host of favorites from yesteryear. The price will be \$5 per book, plus shipping. A companion CD will also be available this summer. I want to take this opportunity to apologize for the binding problems with the last book "Abiding Hope" that many congregations experienced across the nation. The printers are aware of the problem and are identifying the cause. They have assured me that the issue will be corrected in this new publication. I appreciate your use of these past songbooks and I appreciate your patience and loyalty to the effort we have tried to continue since the passing of Bro. Lynwood Smith. Purchasing the books is a wonderful way to keep high interest in the good singing in your congregation and allows

us to continue in this effort! I would appreciate it if you would consider using ‘Ceaseless Praise’ in your congregation. If you would like to pre-order, you may email: legacymusicpublishing@gmail.com or call 334-618-1550 and you will receive your books with the very first shipments. May we always be a singing people!



BOOKS BY TOMMY SHAW NOW AVAILABLE

We now have the 2nd printing of Tommy Shaw’s two books: The Destruction of Jerusalem and The First Epistle to the Corinthians. The price is \$8.00 for the Destruction of Jerusalem and \$10 for First Corinthians. You may purchase both books together for \$15.00. Please send orders to: Bart Shaw, 670 Breedlove, Sturgeon, MO 65284, e-mail bartshaw@hotmail.com



SULPHUR OKLAHOMA’S ANNUAL 4TH OF JULY MEETING will be June 28 through July 4, 2014. Services will be 8:00 PM nightly and 10:00 AM as the crowds increase. Greg Jordan and Terry Studdard, both from Alabama, will be in charge of the services. For information on lodging or eating places go to www.sulphurokla.com or call 580-622-2779 or 622-5213 & we’ll mail you listings. Come worship with us on this 77th year of the meeting. We are looking forward to great preaching and singing as we have always had in the past.



OUR OPPOSITION TO CARNAL WARFARE

The following brethren have asked that their names be published as verification that they are conscientiously opposed, for Scriptural reasons, to carnal warfare and participation in the military in any form.

- Garrett Thornton 903 Hwy 84W Brookhaven, MS 39601
- Travis Thornton 903 Hwy 84 W Brookhaven, MS 39601
- Michael Landon Nettles 1901 Palmetto Trail Brookhaven, MS 39601
- Kody O’Neil Byrd 911 Newton Lane NW Brookhaven, MS 39601
- Jordan Lamar Lea 1303 Sams Rd NW Brookhaven, MS 39601
- Tyler Daniel Smith 1843 Oilfield Lane NW Brookhaven, MS 39601

Our Departed

WILBURN- Elvin “Al” Wilburn, of Stockton, CA was born March 24, 1919 and passed away April 1, 2014 at 95 years of age. He was born in Corning, CA to Floyd and Olive Wilburn. Al grew up in Ripon, CA and graduated High School there. He worked for Bruner’s Furniture store for 32 years. Al was a faithful member of the Lord’s church for 60 years at Stockton. He is survived by his daughters, Patricia Hill, Raylene Williams, and Kathleen Guidi, two

grandchildren, two great grandchildren, and four sisters. He was preceded in death by his wife Vivian-and one sister. Al was a very good man and always willing to help anyone he could. He was a good song leader and helped train many young men to pitch and lead songs. He could read music and was a great help to the church when new song books were purchased. He was asked to help sing at many funerals in Lodi and Stockton. His faithfulness to the Lord was admirable. Before the church was established in Hawaii, he would fly home to CA for Lord’s Day and then back to Hawaii during vacation time to avoid forsaking the assembly. A great expense but he didn’t complain. Much more could be said about this good man but best of all he was a great husband, father and Christian. The Lord and His church came first in his life. His funeral was held in Lodi, CA on April 7, and this writer, accompanied by Alan Bonifay was honored to speak words of comfort to those present. -Don L. King

BENTCH- James Hugh Bentch, age 92 was born on July 26, 1921 to James and Minnie Bentch and departed this life on March 29, 2014. On March 3, 1946 Hugh married the love of his life, Juanita Jones. To this union two daughters were born. Hugh is survived by his daughters Donna Sue Bentch and Doris Thomas and her husband Larry also two grandchildren Tim Thomas and his wife Tammy and Tamara Thomas, along with two great grandchildren Allison and Jared Thomas--a brother George Bentch and wife Betty of Richland, MO and a sister-in-law Nellie Bentch of Lebanon, MO. I want to make special mention of Hugh’s daughter Donna Sue. Hugh had a very difficult and painful time in his last few months. Donna Sue lovingly cared for her dad with many long hours at his bedside as his health deteriorated. May God bless you for your tender care and love for your dad. For me this is an end to an era at Cable Ridge, MO. I met Hugh in 1965 when I traveled with Bro. Johnny Elmore to Cable Ridge for a meeting. In 1966 which was my first year to preach full time Hugh invited me to hold them a meeting. In the next fifty years I enjoyed a close relationship with Hugh and the church at Cable Ridge. Hugh is perhaps the best man that I have ever known. In all of those fifty years I never heard him say a mean or hurtful word about anyone! He was full of good deeds and work for the cause of Jesus. He loved to lead singing and was a capable teacher. It was also my great honor to appoint him as an elder in the church. Hugh or better known as Granddad to just about everyone had a great love for all people but especially children. He loved his grandchildren and great grandchildren and all the kids that he met. He was the candy man at church. All of the young people loved Granddad. My own daughters always looked forward to our trips to Granddad’s. Hugh was patient and kind with all children always having time to listen and talk to them. Hugh was a patient, kind, caring man who went about singing a happy song obviously content and at peace with what he had, and the way he lived. He enjoyed the simple pleasures of life and understood the most important thing that he could ever do was to serve his Lord. Our grief is for our loss ...we will miss Granddad...but his death is his gain. -Joe Hisle

Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com April 8- We recently closed a very enjoyable meeting with the brethren who meet in the Hoyte community near Cameron, Texas. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay among these brethren. They have a mind to work and with their capable leadership are making a difference in the community around them. One could never find better hospitality anywhere than among them. Crowds were good throughout with one baptism. The Lord willing we go next to Fossil Creek in Ft. Worth April 16-20, then to Chestnut Ridge, KY April 23-27, London, KY April 27-30, Dardanelle, AR May 9-11, Witt Springs, AR May 21-25, and Greenville, SC June 15-22. We hope to see many of you at these meetings. We are also looking forward to the fourth of July meeting held here in Springfield. We hope you will be able to attend. The dates are June 29-July 3. May the Lord bless and care for each of you.

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953, April 14- I am happy to report that the doctor has told me that the Non-Hodgkins lymphoma cancer that I have had treatments for since February of 2013 has been eradicated. I am thankful for this and the hundreds of cards sent to me and prayers brothers and sisters have offered up to God in my behalf. My last chemotherapy treatment was on December 24 of last year and the last Petscan was two weeks ago. They will check me every 3 to 6 months to make sure that I am remaining cancer free. I am feeling good. I am still working for the Olivehurst church and we are growing in strength and in number and we thank God for this. We now have several young people in attendance and two of our new young men are leading songs and preparing and giving short talks. Keep us in your thoughts and prayers and thanks again for your concern.

Kevin W. Presley, 108 Mulberry Court Dothan, AL 36303 April 11, 2014. 2014 is off to a good beginning in the Lord's work. During the first week of April, it was my privilege to once again be with the good brethren in Fort Smith, AR. We were encouraged to welcome 92 visitors from the community during this 5-day meeting. Almost all of those visitors were directly in response to our television program which has been airing on Lord's mornings since 2009. One gentleman was baptized and a sister restored to the faith. I have, personally, never experienced such an outpouring of community interest in a gospel meeting. In fact, the television work has been more effective in NW Arkansas than any other place where I have been involved in such an effort. In 2009-2010, I recorded 68 broadcasts that the church has now aired 4 times through. We are laying plans, the

Lord willing, to return to production this summer with a quality, HD broadcast. We intend to become set up with our own broadcast equipment which will allow us much more flexibility and the opportunity to create a much higher quality, engaging product for people to watch. If you or your congregation would like to be involved in such a work, feel free to contact myself or Bro. Dennis Smith from Ft. Smith. We are excited about the potential this work holds, with the Lord's blessing. The month of March took me to Harrisonville, MO and Jamesville, MO. Both meetings were well attended and a joy to be part of. In January, the year began with a meeting at Freeman Rd. in Neosho, MO. These brethren may be small in number but they are large in spirit. Large crowds from the local area greeted us at each service and made for an uplifting time of worship and fellowship. My utmost appreciation to Roger Owens, Billy Dickinson, Dennis Smith, and Taylor Joyce - all gospel preachers who labor with these congregations. Their presence and encouragement buoyed my spirits along the way. May the Lord bless them in their respective works! A final note: I returned to full-time evangelism in March. I am thankful for this opportunity and hope good will be done here at home and where I may be called to preach the gospel. My upcoming meetings include Arlington, TX; Tulsa, OK; Lawrenceburg, TN; Springfield, MO; New Salem, MS and others. I hope to see many of you along the way, the Lord willing!

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA, 94550, April 10, 2014, e-mail old_paths@juno.com Pat and I have just returned from visiting the work in Hawaii. It was good to be with the brethren again and we pray good was accomplished. The church there is in such a beautiful place. We wish all could visit them. The church at Livermore continues to work together in peace and it is a pleasure to be here. The anticipated beginning of the new building project is now waiting for the City to furnish us with permits which seems to be slow in coming. However, we look forward to getting started soon. We are worshiping in a rented facility right across the street from where the building will be constructed. We are in the HBW building. It is located on Research Dr. Exit 1580 on Vasco Road and go south to East Avenue. Turn right and then immediately left on Research Dr. The HBW building will be the first building on the right. Go through the main entrance and all the way to the back of the hallway. The last door is where the church is meeting upstairs. Services are at 10:00 A.M. Lord's Day, 3:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. Wednesday. We have had several visitors and all are welcome. May the Lord bless the faithful.

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THE BACK PAGE...

GOD BLESS YOU

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Several years ago a woman went into a restaurant whose walls were decorated with red, white, and blue patriotic posters that read, "Bless America." Surprised the posters did not say, "God Bless America," she asked the manager why "God" had been omitted. The manager explained "God" was omitted because they did not want to offend anyone. The woman protested, "But without God, we have no blessings." She was right. James explains, "Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (1:17).

The word "blessing" means, "to praise, thank, salute, or wish well to," (William Wilson, Old Testament Word Studies p. 41). Blessing always involves God and therefore we say, "God bless you." Asking God to bless is a "benediction," and there are several mentioned in Scripture. The best known benediction in the NT is 2 Corinthians 9:14 and is commonly referred to as the Apostolic benediction. Paul writes, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."

The best known benediction in the OT is the Aaronic benediction in Numbers 6:24-27, "The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord make His face shine upon you! And be gracious to you! The Lord lift up His countenance upon you! And give you peace."

The substance of these two benedictions is essentially the same, but the Aaronic benediction is more familiar to most people because it has been incorporated into a song we have sung for many years in the public assemblies of the church.

In the original context, the Aaronic benediction served as a blessing pronounced by the priests, Aaron and his sons, upon the children of Israel (Num. 6:23). The blessing asks the Lord to bless and to keep, or protect, them. The phrase, "make His face shine upon you," is a beautiful metaphor used repeatedly in the Psalms as a sign of inward delight and happy acceptance (cf. Ps. 32:16; 80:3; Prov. 16:15). To give you an idea of the meaning, find grandparents somewhere and watch their face shine upon their grandchild. The expression "lift up His countenance upon you," means to turn His face toward you with a smile. In ancient days when a person was given an audience in a court, the monarch might not even look in the direction of the person. The monarch might look at the claimant, but with an expression of wrath. How pleasant it was, however, when the monarch looked with pleasure on the one who had come before his throne. How wondrous when that smiling monarch is the King of kings and Lord of lords, and when He grants His peace!

By pronouncing this blessing the priests placed the name of God on the children of Israel as a spiritual brand, a mark of identification that they were a people peculiarly related to God Himself, and assured them of God's blessing.

We need the blessings of God today just as desperately as Israel needed them. We need to be favored and kept by Him, to be pleasing to Him, to receive grace from Him, and to have peace with Him. Such blessings come from God when we become His child and abide in Christ (Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 1:3).

Under the Law of Moses, the priests interceded with God on behalf of the people. In the age of Christianity, however, all Christians serve as priests and we have the privilege and duty of interceding on behalf of ourselves and others through Christ our High Priest (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; 1 Tim. 2:5). As priests we are admonished to pray for one another and to ask God's blessings for one another (cf. Jas. 5:16; 2 Cor. 9:14).

When pronouncing a benediction directly upon another person by saying, "God bless you," you should be personal and sincere. It should not be done flippantly or through gritted teeth. It is easy to fall into the habit of saying "God bless," thoughtlessly, as a mere reflex, such as when someone sneezes. We misuse the pronouncement when we speak badly about someone and then try to absolve ourselves by adding the benediction, "Bless his heart."

When you pronounce a blessing thoughtfully and sincerely upon another person, however, it can be a profoundly powerful act. Stop for a moment and think about saying to someone, "God bless you and keep you." Imagine looking them in the eyes when you say it. Emphasize "you." The pronouncement needs to be very personal. "God bless 'you' and keep 'you.'" God make His face to shine upon "you." Such an approach is very intimate and can be disarming. I have seen tears well up in people's eyes because the earnest, heartfelt blessing touched their needy hearts so deeply.

Do you want to be blessed of God? Ask God to bless others and give of yourself to see those blessings fulfilled. The more you give to others, the greater your own blessing will be (Acts 20:35). God bless you. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com