

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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HAVE WE LOST OUR MINDS?

By *DOUGLAS T. HAWKINS*

Paul said, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil.2: 5) He also wrote, “for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (Rom.8: 6) In the process of true conversion, the Holy Spirit renews the mind of man (Tit.3: 5 - “by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”). Grossly misunderstood and greatly underappreciated, the Scripture explains how the Spirit renews the mind and how saints grow to be like Christ.

First, Paul admonishes, “Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” (Rom.12: 2). Such renewing occurs by “...denying ungodliness and worldly lusts” and by learning “...to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world” (Tit. 2:11,12).

Secondly, Paul explains in Ephesians 4:17-24, (1) We no longer live as we used to live v.17; (2) Men of the world continue in the pursuits of lusts, having no real understanding or knowledge of God v.18-19; (3) As saints, WE HAVE NOT SO LEARNED CHRIST and we have put off the old man v.21-22; and (4) when RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF OUR MINDS have put on the new man which was created according to God in righteousness and true holiness v.23-24.

Thirdly, in Galatians 5:19-23, Paul contrasts the “works of the flesh” with the “Fruits of the Spirit.” Faith, Love, and Joy belong to the Spirit, whereas fornication, lust, and hate to the flesh. How then does the Holy Spirit renew the mind and produce the fruit of Love? Answer: the Holy Spirit revealed the necessity of having Love (v.1-3) as well as the traits of Divine Love (v.4-8) in 1Corinthians 13. Through such revelation and by teaching us about the person of Christ (as a perfect example and role model [1Cor.11: 1; 1Pe.2: 21]), “...we all with unveiled face, beholding

as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO THE SAME IMAGE from glory to glory, just as BY THE SPIRIT of the Lord.” (2Cor.3: 18 -NKJV). This process forms the mind of Christ in us and through this formation, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph.3: 19) and he lives in us (Gal.2: 20).

When Paul rebuked the Corinthians for “envy, strife, and divisions” being among them, he said, “are you not carnal and behaving like men?” (1Cor.3: 1) In effect, he just as easily could have asked, “Brethren, have you lost your minds?” They had, hadn’t they? They were acting as carnal men and not as Saints of God? Do we at times act as men? We can, can’t we? We surely agree that the struggle between the earthly and the heavenly continues and as long as this world stands, the war between the flesh and Spirit will rage on. Allow me to quickly make a few points that may indicate that we may have lost our minds.

We’ve lost our minds when we hurt the church for personal gain. Paul instructs, “Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory.” (Phil.2: 3) He also warned, “when we sin against the brethren ...we sin against Christ.” (1Cor.8: 12) Do we understand the grave responsibility that we have to one another? Do we take lightly the charge of pursuing what makes for peace and the things whereby one may edify another? (Ro.14: 19). An awful circumstance existed among the Corinthians. Paul chided the brethren because one brother was taking another brother to law, causing Paul to exclaim, “AND THAT BEFORE UNBELIEVERS.” (1Cor. 6:6) Paul advises that it would be better to suffer the financial loss and be defrauded than to besmirch the name of God and the Lord Jesus Christ in this manner before men of the world. If that doesn’t put perspective on the importance of the Church and our fellowship as saints, what can? The duty of the defrauded brother to the unbelieving world outweighed his right to recover losses from an offending brother in an open court of law. In light of what the Scripture shows us, do you think we can justify speaking curtly to a brother? Can we behave

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Editorial

A GREAT MAN

By DON L. KING

In second Kings 18:1-6 is found an interesting account. It is there the story of Hezekiah beginning as king is told. Hezekiah was a man who most of us would have predicted had little chance of ever amounting to anything. His father, Ahaz, was one of the worst kings of which we are told. In fact, Ahaz was not a good man at all. His story has been told and retold many times. Hezekiah came from a family of wicked people generally speaking. Yet, verse 3 of our text tells us he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. There is something endearing about a fellow who comes from such lowly beginnings but rises above all of the sad situations he has had to live through. You have perhaps known someone like that in your personal experience, and our admiration is immediately ignited when we think of them. Yes, environment is important we know; but in spite that, each person is responsible for himself.

Viewing Hezekiah, another strange thing is seen. Though he was himself a very good man and one who was pleasing in God's sight, he sired a son, Manasseh, who was not a good person. Second Kings 21 tells us he was a wicked king and did that which was evil. Hezekiah was 25 when he took the throne, and his son was only 12 and yet was not a good lad at all. Hezekiah had an evil father and rose above him. Manasseh had a righteous father and fell far below him. Pretty sad isn't it?

A great leader must always be a great servant. Jesus taught that in Mark 10: 43, 44. The mark of true, godly leadership is not all about power and privilege, but humble service. Too many of us overlook that basic principle when we are promoted to some position of authority. We have noticed that there is more in the scriptures about submitting to others than one having authority. Have you noticed that? No? Check it out for yourself. There are many who want authority, but too few who want to submit and are servants to others. Many want to teach, and that

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Did Jesus make alcoholic wine at wedding feast in Cana?

Answer: The passages under consideration are John 2:1-11. Jesus is present at a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. During the celebration the supply of wine is exhausted, and Jesus tells them to fill six water pots each of which would hold twenty or thirty gallons. After each water pot is filled to the brim Jesus tells them to withdraw some and take it to the master of the feast who tastes the wine and proclaims it to be “good or the best wine.” The changing of water to wine was the first miracle performed by our Lord. The assumption that the wine produced by Jesus was alcoholic has been one of the basic arguments made of those who believe “social drinking” is justified in the scriptures. They claim that since Jesus produced an alcoholic product, and possibly drank some himself, such would justify people today drinking socially. But the thing that has to be proven is that the wine produced by our Lord was alcoholic. Those who advocate social drinking are generally reluctant to justify or support drunkenness. The scriptures make it abundantly clear that drunkenness is a sin (1Corinthians 5:11; 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21). From the context of this passage it seems that some of the guests were “well drunk” before Jesus made the additional wine. Logic would seem to indicate that if indeed the wine was alcoholic some of them would actually become drunk before the day was out. Hence this passage would not only condone social drinking but drunkenness as well. It is the conviction of this writer that the “wine” of these passages was actually unfermented wine or grape juice. The word “wine” in the bible could refer to either an alcoholic or non-alcoholic drink. For example grape juice was called wine even while it was still in the cluster (Isaiah 65:8), and was “gathered” with summer fruits (Jeremiah 40:10). It was wine while it was in the wine press (Isaiah 16:10). In these examples it is clear that the “wine” mentioned was non-alcoholic. Sometimes wine was referred to as a “blessing” and at other times as a “curse.” Alcoholic wine was never used in a

good sense in the Scriptures. It was associated with evil. “Wine is a mocker and strong drink is raging” (Prov. 20:10). God declared that “it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder” (Prov. 23:31-32). Any priest who drank alcoholic wine before entering the tabernacle was to die (Lev. 10:9-10). These passages condemn the use of alcoholic wine without any reference to the amount drunk. The results of drinking alcoholic wine are vividly portrayed in Scripture. For example Noah displayed his nakedness in Genesis 9:21. Lot committed incest Genesis 19:32-38. William Patton in his book *Bible Wines* makes a very powerful point when he asks “Is it derogatory to the character of Christ and the teachings of the Bible to suppose that He (Christ) exerted his miraculous power to produce, according to Alvord and Smith at least 60 gallons of intoxicating wine? Wine which inspiration had denounced as “a mocker” as “biting like a serpent,” and “stinging like an adder,” as “the poison of dragons,” “the cruel venom of asps,” and which the Holy Ghost had selected as the emblem of the wrath of God almighty? Is it probable that he gave that to the guests after they had used the wine provided by the host, and which, it is claimed, was intoxicating? “The obvious answer seems to be that Jesus would never supply these people with something the scriptures had openly and plainly condemned. The miracle itself was designed to “manifest His glory” and had the primary purpose of causing His disciples to believe in Him (John 2:12). If the wine provided by Christ had been alcoholic, it could not have done this. It is inconceivable that He made a large supply of alcoholic wine for a feast already “well drunk” with wine. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

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Pages From the Past

Last month, under “Pages From The Past” Brother Richard DeGough submitted the article regarding what name should the children of God wear today. This month Brother Ronny Wade sent this article about “Why We Oppose Innovations in Religion.” Both were written by Brother Ervin Waters. This particular article appeared in the November 1, 1954 Old Paths Advocate and is actually the third part of a much larger piece. This article is especially important because it deals with the danger of centralized funds, etc. Please, read it carefully because the seeds of this unscriptural practice are still alive today in some places. We want to be careful that we do not allow history to repeat itself in our own generation. We hope you enjoy the article and benefit from this good material. -DLK

WHY WE OPPOSE INNOVATIONS IN RELIGION

BY J. ERVIN WATERS

During the first half of the nineteenth century during the ardent labors of Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, and “Raccoon” John Smith, with their co-adjutors, the movement to restore primitive Christianity gained great momentum. Here was the swiftest growing religious movement in America. Scores of thousands rallied to the call and congregations were planted by the thousands. The enemies of truth were met on the field of battle and vanquished by those restoration giants. But, again, what the devil could not accomplish from without he accomplished from within. Innovations were brought into the organization, work and worship of the church, and many congregations were corrupted. The first general departure was in organization.

The Missionary Society

In 1849 representatives from various congregations met in Cincinnati, Ohio, to attempt to devise ways and means for more effective evangelism. They organized a missionary society through which the congregations worked in supporting evangelists. The churches contributed to the society and the society employed and paid the evangelists sent out. This was a departure from the New Testament

pattern. The church as a universal institution is built upon and functions through the medium of local congregations and congregational organization. The local congregation with its organization and its local treasury is divinely intended to be the unit for the support and spread of the gospel. The missionary society set aside and supplanted this with a human organization.

The primitive plan had no inter, extra or super-congregational organization. There was no organic connection or tie-in between local congregations. Their officers were separate and so were their treasuries. The mission fund system, an experiment among us, was tried, used and cast aside; it violated the congregational system. The class brethren are now plagued and torn asunder because of the building of supersystems among them for evangelization. The sponsoring church plan by which the class brethren carry on most of their foreign evangelism is not apostolic. It tends to build a super-congregation with power it should not possess. Congregations may send directly to the evangelist in the field, but beware of many congregations channeling funds through one congregation to support a work which should be equally the responsibility of all of them. The Herald of Truth program conducted on both radio and T.V. by the class brethren is a missionary society in embryo if I know the first principles of church organization. Fifteen hundred congregations turning over their funds to a giant fund in Abilene, Texas, to be administered by the church there, or the elders of one congregation there. There is nothing resembling it in the New Testament.

We are prone to think that we are never in danger of departing from New Testament organization, but it can happen to us. “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” My study of the Bible and of church history makes me very much afraid of any abridgement of the congregational system.

Instrumental Music

Some twenty years after the beginning of the missionary society instrumental music began to creep into the worship of some of the congregations. This was another innovation. The Lord had commanded singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and making melody in the heart to the

Lord. Instrumental Music introduced a coordinate element of music, another way of making music which the Lord did not authorize. It is not a mere aid; it is another way of making music. It has no apostolic precedent in support of it.

The Sunday School

By Sunday School we refer to the practice of arranging the church into classes for religious instruction, usually practiced on Sunday, with women as well as men used as teachers. There are varying degrees of organization utilized by those adopting the system. It is an innovation in the work of the church. There is no hint in the New Testament of such a system being employed by the congregations of the first century. All of the teaching commanded and authorized in the New Testament may be done either publicly to an undivided assembly or privately by individual Christians in their informal daily work. The Sunday School fits neither category and is an innovation.

Individual Cups

Near the close of the nineteenth century some congregations already using instrumental music began to borrow from the denominations a newly employed practice, the use of individual cups in the communion. Some twenty years later congregations opposing the use of instrumental music began to use the individual cups. This innovation met with swift adoption by the majority of the congregations. It violates the example of Christ in instituting the communion, "He took a cup" (Matt. 26:27), "He gave it to them" (Mk. 14:23), and, "They all drank of it" (Mk. 14:23). It violates the command of Christ, "Drink ye all of it" (Matt. 26: 28). It violates the pattern delivered by the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 11:2, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 33.

These brethren in the main are blinded by their own desires and will not fairly interpret the language of the New Testament with reference to the cup. They trample the meaning of words and the rules of grammar under their feet. Why? Not because necessity demands it or because they must do it to have harmony in the scriptures, but because they must do it in their attempts to sustain the use of individual cups. I know of no innovation resting upon softer sand and upon more sophistry than

individual cups. Their advocates are worthy of a better cause and more enlightened reasoning.

Institutionalism

Brethren are institutional minded these days. They build human organizations and institutions either to do the work of the church, the congregation, or to form their own individual Christian responsibilities. Thus Orphan Homes, Old Folks Homes, etc., to be supported by the church came in. And Christian Colleges to teach Bible has a human organization doing the work of the church. Furthermore, if the church supports them, it has the church through them teaching secular education. These innovations and others are on the march. Let us be on our guard. Innovations corrupt the New Testament plan and lead to the subversion and perversion of primitive Christianity.

HERE AND THERE

By RICK MARTIN

While walking in the neighborhood one pleasant evening, a man heard a commotion overhead. Looking up he saw a large crow being attacked by several mockingbirds. The crow, dodging the much smaller birds, kept flying towards some cypress trees and perched on a drooping branch. The mockingbirds' attack became more intense. The man's sympathy was for the crow. Being the object of such harassment must have been distressing.

Next he saw the crow flap its wings and fly to another cypress tree nearby and poke its head in among the tightly grouped branches. Was this an attempt to hide from the savage attackers? If so, it wasn't working. The mockingbirds kept up their assault, diving and pecking away. Why don't they leave the big bird alone? He thought. Then the man saw the crow pull its head back out of the branches and in its beak was a part of a bird's nest—a mockingbird's nest! The crow had raided their nest. He was not the victim, he was the villain. The other birds were only attempting to protect the nest.

This little story reminds me of some people I know. They want it to appear as though they are being unfairly attacked, but in reality they are the villain.

When you hear someone constantly complaining about their mistreatment, dig a little deeper before you jump on their side. First impressions can be deceiving.

In my lifetime I have seen 3 presidents. Seeing a president is sort of out of the ordinary, but nothing will ever compare to seeing God. Seeing celebrities is exciting, but they are just plain old people. God is so far beyond magnificent. He cannot accurately be described. We need to choose our steps carefully and walk in God's way. We must live our lives in a way that will be pleasing to Him. If we do this we will not only get to see God, we will be able to spend eternity with Him.

Summer will be here before long and congregations will be having their meetings. I will be glad to post meetings on the website if you preachers and congregations will send them to me.

You can either send them to my email address (mmartin@bellsouth.net), or you can go to the website and submit them.

<http://www.oldpathsadvocate.org/public/php-scripts/submitMeetingDisplay.php>

If you have an older person in your congregation, may I suggest that you talk to them about the history of your congregation? They probably have a wealth of knowledge. Wouldn't it be nice to write down some of the things they tell you about some past events? Remember when an elderly person dies a library of stories go with them.

Speaking the "truth in love" does not mean speaking it in such a vague way that no one will object to it. Galatians 4:16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? Jude 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

That's all for now. Pray for the brotherhood. OPA

USE OF CHURCH FUNDS

BY JOE NORTON

No responsibility in the role of leading the Lord's church demands more care and diligence than decisions about what the scriptures allow in the use

of the Lord's money, collected into the treasury of a congregation. If we are too restrictive, we may damage a project that is worthwhile. If we are too loose, we go beyond the written word and displease God. Neither extreme is acceptable. Decisions rest upon what the scriptures authorize. The specific question that drives this discussion is whether it is scriptural for one congregation to assist another in purchasing property, building a building, or renovating a building whether it is in this country or in a foreign country.

Correct interpretation of scripture always demands that the examiner allows the scriptures to lead him to a logical conclusion. Allowing the logic to take him too far leads to a radical position that eventually becomes untenable. Not allowing the logic to take him far enough leads to an equally untenable position that becomes so liberal it permits almost anything. In other words, that which teaches too much, teaches nothing. The key is to strike a proper balance, allowing the scriptures themselves to do the leading without the interference of our preconceived notions and our human creativity.

Such a method of interpretation applies to the subject of the use of church funds as much as it does to any other scriptural subject. According to the scriptures, we are authorized to use church funds for two purposes: preaching the gospel and taking care of poor saints.

One of the scriptures that gives us the command to preach the gospel is Matthew 28:18-20, one of the accounts of Jesus issuing the great commission. That scripture gives several commands: Go, Teach, Baptize, and "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." Included in the "all things" would obviously be the command to worship because we know that Jesus believed in and practiced worship while he was alive. We know, too, that His disciples assembled for worship after the establishment of the church in Acts 2. As well, the scriptures provide both a command to worship and examples of disciples assembling for worship in the first century (Acts 20:6-10; 1 Corinthians 11:23-27; James 2:2).

The requirement for assembling for worship is given in Hebrews 10:25: "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." Some Jewish converts there had either stopped worshipping or were evidently about to. The writer makes it clear

they must not leave off worshipping.

The disciples in Troas provide one example of worship, according to Acts 20:7: "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight." Furthermore, the disciples in Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:23-27) met for worship. When James writes to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, he mentions worship as a foregone conclusion: "For if there should come into your assembly," he says as he was teaching them about equality among the saints.

Since we have the explicit command to worship and since we have scriptural examples of worship, by implication we conclude that the scriptures authorize a place of worship. And if it is authorized for one congregation, it is authorized for all. The type of facility is not an issue: first century congregations assembled in an upper room, in a private home, in a meeting place outside of a private home, and in other types of meeting places. If there is authority for these facilities, then church funds may be used to acquire them, whether it is in the form of rent or purchase. We further conclude that these commands carry with them the implicit authority to carry out activities and to accumulate supplies and equipment necessary or expedient for carrying out these commands.

As a result of the teaching in these and other related scriptures, we use the Lord's money for the following: support an evangelist working in an area, support a preacher during a gospel meeting, support evangelists all over the world, pay expenses related to preaching the gospel (like travel expense), build a building or pay rent for a meeting place, buy grape juice, pay utilities and other expenses related to maintaining a building, pay for a baptistery, pay for a parking lot, purchase Bibles for use at the building, purchase Bibles to give away, purchase songbooks, pay for printed materials, pay for equipment that will expedite the preaching and teaching of the gospel message (projectors, recording equipment, computers), pay for advertising, pay for postage and other expenses related to maintaining the church and preaching the gospel, and pay for other incidental expenses related to the Lord's work.

The question becomes can one congregation assist another congregation financially or in any other way in carrying out these activities. We do have an example of one congregation supporting a

preacher of the gospel in another area. When Paul left Macedonia, the church in Philippi sent funds to him; and when he was in Thessalonica, the same church assisted him again (Philippians 4:15-16).

Furthermore, we have examples of one congregation sending funds to another congregation: some of these passages are in Acts 11:27-30, Romans 15:25-31, 1 Corinthians 16:1, and 2 Corinthians chapters 8-9. While these scriptures deal with the use of funds to help poor saints, they establish the precedent of one congregation supplying needs for another.

Since we have a command to worship and by implication we are allowed to have a place for worship and since we have examples of churches in one area supplying needs for those in another area, we conclude that we have scriptural authority to use church funds to help take care of special needs in another church, including helping with a building.

If that conclusion seems incorrect, please consider the following questions: Can one congregation purchase songbooks, equipment, or printed materials for another congregation? Can one congregation buy grape juice for another congregation? Can one congregation pay for advertising or postage for another congregation? Can one congregation build a baptistery for another? Can one congregation give used songbooks to another if church funds were used to purchase the songbooks originally? Can a church give a building to another group of Christians when it decides to relocate (such a situation has taken place)? If our answer to any of these questions is Yes, the same authority allows a congregation to send funds to use in purchasing, renting, or renovating a building. Consistency demands that conclusion.

On the other hand, the scriptures in no place give us authority to create an institution separate from the church (like a missionary society) to carry out the commands for evangelism, for worship, or for sending aid. As well, we do not have authority to set up a separate, centralized fund to be administered arbitrarily—that is, to take funds from one church and allow another church to decide how those funds will be used. The sending church must designate the purpose for the funds, thus maintaining control of them.

While we do have authority for one congregation to help another with special needs, as indicated above, no scripture necessitates that we do so. If a

congregation chooses not to help, it is not a matter of violating scripture; it is a matter of choice. Each congregation has the right to decide what it deems to be expedient because each is autonomous. And, when we decide to send funds to help with a designated need in another congregation, we do not gain authority over the receiving congregation nor are we allowed to do anything that would violate the autonomy of the receiving church, whether it is in this country or abroad.

No scripture, then, explicitly or implicitly, limits the use of funds in the treasury of one congregation to the congregation in which the funds were accumulated. If one church can help another with one of these items, it can help with any of them. If we take the position that we can help with some of these items but cannot help with a building, we are inconsistent in our application of these scriptures. Consistency can be difficult, but we must give due diligence to achieving it.



HAVE WE LOST OUR MINDS?.....continued from page one

rudely in a business meeting “to get our way?” Can we exclude someone from our group because “we don’t LIKE him or her?” What about these political ploys we see in the brotherhood? What about people who seek personal vindication at the expense of others? What about these letter writers who make local problems national issues? We’ve lost our minds, haven’t we? In self examination, I can honestly say, too many times in my life, I’ve dealt in pettiness, too often I’ve acted spiritually immature, too often, I’ve been interested in public recognition - the Sins that I once heard Brother Don Pruitt call the “white collar sins” of the righteous - self righteousness, self importance, self indulgence, all of which stem from a man’s pride. Are any immune? Why do you think people “get their feelings hurt” and go out of their way to avoid the one who has caused the pain? Why do you think that when the one who’s been offended speaks to the offender that the offender may recoil as though they’ve done nothing wrong? At the root of many such scenarios is the sin of pride. No wonder Paul taught, “with lowliness of mind... let each esteem others better than themselves” Oh Brethren, if only we could. Oh brethren, if only we would. We will, if

we possess the mind of Christ. We won’t if we never truly had the mind of Christ or if we we’ve altogether “lost our minds.”

We’ve lost our minds when we allow in ourselves what we condemn in others. Paul asked, “Thou that teachest ‘Thou shalt not steal,’ dost thou steal?” (Rom. 2:21). With this question, Paul affirmed his premise of - “Therefore, you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.” (Rom. 2:1) Is it right for a man to steal? Of course not. What about taking money “under the table” thereby defrauding Caesar of what’s Caesar’s? What about a man remaining silent in respect known mathematical errors that’s in his favor? What about cheating on one’s taxes? The sins of others repulse, but our sins “need context.” We color our sins to make them more attractive and tolerable, right? At least in our minds because we have to live with ourselves. Solomon said, “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts.” (Pr. 21: 2) In other words, we rationalize our sins. Others are thieves, but we are modern day Robin Hoods. Others steal, but we find “loopholes.” Others murder, but we assassinate. Others cheat, but we are savvy. May we all look carefully at ourselves and may we also look mercifully on others.

We’ve lost our minds when we judge or act with partiality. James condemned a man for having the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons (James 2:1). He states that when someone gives preference to the rich over the poor he acts as a judge full of evil thoughts and is condemned for his offense. Giving preference to the rich is not the only way that we can offend. We can act discriminatingly toward others either for or against. We can justify one person because of “who they are” while condemning another because of “who they are not” - or vice versa.. We can exclude someone who should be included because of his or her race. We can include someone who ought to be excluded because of his or her family connection. Many applications could accurately be made, all of which demonstrate that we act as men who’ve lost their minds.

Brethren, may we all strive to possess the mind of Christ - “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). May we all act with true divine love as the foundation of our thinking - “A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). May we all understand the gravity of living by the royal law - “he that loves another hath fulfilled the law” (Rom. 13: 8). May the Lord bless us in our Christian life.



A GREAT MAN.....continued from page two

is a great thing to aspire to; however, James warned us that to such men is the greater condemnation. (James 3:1) What James intended to convey was not to discourage us from wanting to teach but only that with the position come grave responsibilities. We have heard men say some ridiculous things from the pulpit, probably because they had not properly studied. It is quite an honor to be a teacher in the church, and it was so even in the days of the apostles. 1 Corinthians 12:28 places teachers in a pretty high position. Because of this, those who had selfish motives and who perhaps wanted the praise of men sought to be teachers. James was warning against such as that. Some who want to teach may not be qualified while others who do not want to teach may be highly qualified.

What makes a great man? Certainly not advanced age, and certainly not pride, etc. What makes a great man is perhaps some need which arises and a meek brother rises to meet the challenge. He may keenly feel his lack of several things but he determines to do what he can. He carefully studies so that he may meet the challenge. Some of the greatest men in our memory were men who had little education but were serious students of the Bible and could quote much of it from memory. Eloquent they may not have been, but they preached the Word and let the chips fall where they might.

Hezekiah rose above his unfortunate beginnings and became a man God used in His service. He was a man of action, unlike some who are considered leaders today. When he saw a need, he went to work rather than trying to ignore it and hope it would go away. That seldom, if ever, works. The Bible says "He clave to the Lord and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses." (2 Kings 18:6) We must also do the same.

Have we covered all of the things which make a great man? Of course not; however, these are a few matters from which we may learn. Think on these things. DLK

Announcements

TIME CHANGE

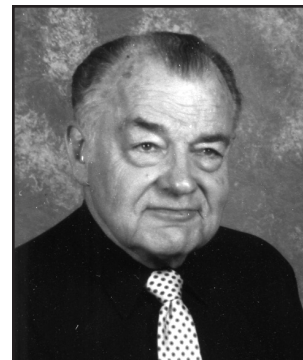
West Monroe, Louisiana
Claiborne Church of Christ
727 Wallace Dean Road, West Monroe, LA
Sunday afternoon services changed to 3:00 PM
beginning 5/3/15

MEMORIAL DAY MEETING

Turlock, CA
MAY 20 - 24, 2015
Wednesday thru Sunday 7:30 PM,
Sunday AM 10:00.
The speaker will be Don L. King.
Please make plans to attend the meeting.

In Honor

**Honoring Our Older Preachers
By Ronny F. Wade**



CARL NELSON NICHOLS

Brother Nelson Nichols was born February 2, 1928 in El Paso, Texas. He was reared in a Christian home where God was served and His word honored. At the young age of fourteen he decided to become a gospel preacher and studied with Brother Homer L. King and other gospel preachers to that end. As a young boy Nelson demonstrated his ability as a good caregiver, and would be left in charge of the other children when it was necessary for his parents to be away for brief periods. He knew just what to say to encourage others to do the right thing. Early on he began to study and give talks at church services. He often would go

to his grandmother's house to study with her. She, being knowledgeable in the scriptures was a great help to him during his early years. He has done evangelistic work in twenty-six states, and worked with a number of congregations in order to assist them in becoming more firmly established in the faith. During the years involving the Korean War he was instrumental in helping numerous young men with their paper work and appeals process as they sought to obtain Conscientious Objector status. In 1951 Nelson married Carlene Bednar and to this union five children were born. All his children are Christians. In 1966 Carlene was diagnosed with malignant tumors of the brain. The doctors gave her only two to six months to live. With the help of God and other Christians Nelson took wonderful care of her until her death some two years later. In 1970 Nelson married Earlene Evans at Norman, OK. Nelson and Earlene currently live in Anderson, MO. When his parents reached their declining years Nelson served as a caregiver for them. His kind and constant concern for their welfare was exemplary. For several years prior to his retirement Nelson was an educator in the public schools of the State of Missouri. He served as both teacher and administrator. In the recent past Nelson has suffered with physical ailments that have restricted his work as a preacher of the gospel. His faith is still as strong as ever and his desire to assist the church in every way possible remains his primary focus. You may contact Nelson at 2645 Moss Church Rd. Anderson, MO 64831. I'm sure he would appreciate hearing from you especially if you have fond memories of his work with the church. May the Lord bless him and all the other men who have in years gone by dedicated themselves to the proclamation of the truth.

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, April 15-2015, email: old_paths@juno.com The church here recently concluded our meeting with Joe Hisle in the new building. Joe did his usual great job of preaching and due to extensive advertising we had a lot of visitors from the community. Over 30 outsiders came one or more times. We also appreciated some help from area congregations. To all who helped out we say "Thank you!" Lord willing, we are to begin a series of meetings at Neosho, MO this coming Wednesday

and hope to see many of you there. We also look forward to holding the Turlock, CA Memorial Day meeting May 20-24. This meeting is usually well attended and we look forward to seeing many of you there. Brother Frank Brancato is scheduled to be here in Livermore, May 1-3 for a short meeting and we hope you will make your plans to be with us then. One time we plan to have him do a presentation in pictures of our 2015 trip to the Philippines so if you have interest in that you will enjoy it. It will probably be on Saturday evening after services. The time for the 4th of July meetings will soon be here as well so let's make our plans to be there. Lord bless the faithful everywhere.

Roger Owens Freeman Road Neosho Missouri. April 1, 2015 Winter now passed much to do and follow up on. Our meeting here at home with Johnny Elmore was well attended with six young and two middle aged visitors from the community. The area congregations came out to support us at every service. Johnny gave us things we and the community needed in his very simple but inspiring way. My health has improved although not back to 100%. I have been cleared by my doctors to do whatever I am able without restrictions. However I am taking rest breaks often until my body tells me otherwise. The work in Wyoming is moving forward with the possibility of a meeting between myself and the elders of a multiple cups congregation. The TV program there has been a great success as well but needs funding to keep it going. If you want to help then please do so now as it is urgent to find more funding. You may contact myself or Brett Hickey. The work at Brumley Missouri is moving forward with some new information coming from the TV program in that area. I received word from Brandon Stephens of great potential with an elderly woman and perhaps others from the cups congregation at the Rodden congregation. I am very thankful to have Brandon in the area to follow up on leads. I am also seeking to find help for the Rolla Missouri congregation, being limited myself, but attempting to do what I can. Our monthly flyer program continues to reach homes in places we may never have opportunity to go. The TV program in Wyoming continues to bring in leads. I am planning to go back out to Wyoming

late Spring if the funds can be obtained to make the trip and my health continues to cooperate. The Casper congregation can no longer cover 50% of the cost as before and so I must seek it elsewhere. If you are a congregation that would like to support that effort please let me know as soon as possible. It takes about \$2,500.00 for a 10 day trip. Brethren that just covers the cost with nothing left over. I have about sixteen leads to cover this Summer but it takes support from brethren to do that. I am willing to do the time if supported to just cover the cost no more. Please call write or email me for information or to have your questions answered. (rowens700@yahoo.com) 417-451-033 or 417-389-7665, P. 0. Box 239 Neosho, MO. 64850 Peace be with you in the Lord's work at home and abroad.

Frank Brancato, 12718 Larkin Drive, Bakersfield CA 93312. frankbrancato@sbcglobal.net (661) 978-9093. In March, I had the pleasure of holding a meeting and working with the brethren in Lubbock TX. Our work included door knocking, calling TV leads, and inviting people to services. During our time together, 15 people agreed to take the free bible correspondence course, and 7 of those have already completed the first lesson. We had visitors at every service, and we also had several studies. The congregation in Lubbock is small but they have a tremendous desire to grow, and we pray for God's increase. The work in Bakersfield is also going well, and we give glory to God. From the TV leads we have placed 64 people on the correspondence course, and 35 of those are currently active on it. 13 have completed at least one full course (6 lessons), and 6 of those have finished a second course. The church in Bakersfield is growing and we are all working together. It is wonderful to dwell in peace, and I am thankful that I am able to work with this congregation. Lord willing, this is my meeting schedule through July: Sharonville, OH (April 22-26); Livermore, CA (May 1-3); Broken Arrow, OK (June - Dates TBD); Strong, AK (July 22-26). Also, Brother Cullen Smith will be holding our summer meeting in Bakersfield, CA (June 3-7). Please make plans to attend if you are in the area, and please remember to pray for the faithful everywhere. *-This didn't make last issue; our apologies. -DLK*

IN MY SEAT

A PILOTS STORY FROM SEPTEMBER 10-11, 2001

By Steve Scheibner

Twenty years before I wrote my life objective to seek trust, and glorify God through humble service and continual prayer. To raise up qualified disciples as quickly as possible, so that one day I might hear God say, well done my good and faithful servant!

Steve had scheduled himself to be first officer on American Airlines Boeing 767 flight 11 from Boston to LA on September 11, 2001 @ 7:45 am, but a senior first officer; Tom McGuiness bumped him from the flight. Tom, along with the entire flight crew and all passengers perished when the 757 was flown into the world trade center building -the first building hit.

Two men in Steve's life have died for him. Tom McGuiness died Sept. 11, 2001 in my stead, and I was totally qualified to have died in that instance.

Most importantly, my saviour Jesus Christ died for me, but I was not qualified to have been in or taken his place. Only he was qualified to perform the deed.

He died for each of us, none of us are qualified to take his place. Have you ever contemplated what his thoughts were in the hours, minutes before his crucifixion?

Remember what scriptures tell us about his prayers in the garden? Great trepidation, reluctance???

Just be thankful he did not abdicate and return to his father without fulfilling his mission!!!!

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THE BACK PAGE...

BE WARY OF SLOGANS

By CARL M. JOHNSON

I attended the "Open Bible Study" at Seminole, Oklahoma, March 14, 2015, where brother Malcom Kniffen and brother George Bailey discussed issues about divorce and remarriage that have divided us for many years. Both men seemed well-prepared to present their arguments and they conducted themselves well during their speeches. A crowd of over 250 people assembled on the campus of Seminole State College to hear the discussion, and a good spirit seemed to prevail among most everyone.

I was disappointed, however, to see a man moving about the auditorium wearing a black T-shirt with the words, "God Hates Divorce," emblazoned on it in large white letters. I do not know whether the man is a member of the Lord's church or not, and I am not sure what his motive was in donning the shirt. I do know, however, that a lot of folks on both sides of the discussion were disappointed in it.

Rather than promoting a spirit of mutual respect while trying to come to a consensus of understanding about this volatile issue, the shirt seemed to promote a partisan spirit, sort of like wearing your team's colors when going to a ballgame. If it was intended to suggest that the brethren who believe in an exception do not hate divorce, then the shirt's message is misleading. No doubt everyone in the audience that night would have agreed God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16). In fact, one of the booklets handed out at the discussion was written by brother Irvin Barnes who believes in the exception, but the title of his booklet is, "God Hates Divorce."

Obviously, slogans can be misleading. Numerous businesses have been reprimanded by federal watchdogs for using misleading slogans in commercials. Therefore, if I were in the practice of buying clothes emblazoned with religious slogans (which I am not. cf. Mt. 23:5), I would not purchase one of the man's shirts unless I knew exactly what his intentions were.

I have similar feelings about another slogan that grew out of a horrible tragedy in Paris, France, earlier this year. On January 7, two Muslim gunmen entered the publishing offices of a Paris magazine called, "Charlie Hebdo" and killed 12 people-cartoonists, editors, police officers, and a maintenance worker.

The gunmen were outraged by cartoons the magazine published about the prophet Muhammad that they considered to be insulting to Muslims.

The magazine "Charlie Hebdo" is named after "Peanuts" comic strip character, "Charlie Brown." The word "Hebdo," means "weekly." Thus, it is a weekly satirical magazine featuring cartoons, reports, polemics, and jokes. It is intentionally irreverent and abrasive in tone. The publishers describe it as being "secular and atheist," first and foremost. Two of its favorite targets are conservative politicians (the magazine was almost banned in 1970 when it mocked the death of former president Charles de Gaulle) and religion-all religions.

In the aftermath of the brutal murders an unprecedented 4 million people took to the streets of Paris and cities across Europe denouncing the actions of the extremists. Signs with the words, "Je Suis Charlie" ("I Am Charlie") popped up everywhere. The slogan was adopted by supporters of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. It meant, "I am Charlie too, and if you attack the magazine 'Charlie Hebdo' you attack me." Within two days of the murders, the slogan had become one of the most popular hashtags in Twitter history. "Je suis Charlie," was embraced worldwide, used in music, displayed on T-shirts, in print and animated cartoons (including "The Simpsons"), and became the new name of a town square in France.

Soon, the magazine published a "survivors' issue," featuring another caricature of Muhammad on the cover and sold millions of copies almost instantly. In the lead editorial, the publication bragged that the number of people who marched in Paris far exceeded any church service.

Pointing to the unifying effect the publication had on the French people, its editors wrote, "For the past week, 'Charlie,' an atheist newspaper, has achieved more miracles than all the saints and prophets combined."

A high-ranking government official said at a funeral of one of the cartoonists, that "in the homeland of Voltaire and irreverence, we have the right to laugh at all religions."

I studied the French language in high school and college and always wanted to make a trip to France. Phyllis and I made the trip in 2009, and I felt an immediate rapport with the French people because I could communicate with them in their own language. However, I cannot conscientiously embrace their new slogan, "Je suis Charlie." I sympathize with the victims, and I am all for freedom of speech and freedom of the press, but mockery is a different matter especially mockery of God. It may be legal for the magazine "Charlie" to mock God in France, but it is spiritually damning. Paul says, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). cmjthebackpage@gmail.com