

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. 8

Foundation Principles

WITHOUT GOD

By BRAD SHOCKLEY

At the opening of the final round of the 2011 U.S. Open Golf championship, NBC, trying to capture the patriotism of the moment, aired a clip of children reciting the pledge of allegiance. It was obvious to all watching the event that something was amiss—they had left out the phrase “under God.” Whether this was intentional or an unfortunate oversight, I know not, however, it shows there has been a paradigm shift in American culture concerning God. According to a Gallup poll conducted in May of 2010, three out of ten people now say, “Religion is out of date.” What a sad turn of events in the mindset of this country. Without God there are many sad tragedies. Let us consider a few.

Without God We Have No Standard of Morality

Despite the spin produced by the liberal talking heads, without God in our lives there is no standard of morality. Man never has been, nor will he ever be, capable of determining what is right for society. Many years ago a record was put on paper to remind us of a dark and desperate time. Judges 21:15 states, “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” What a gloomy picture of a time where each did what was right in his own eyes instead of following the truth established upon God’s will. Such situations have spawned the evils of moral relativism or situation ethics. These practices and theological principles have been developed within the mind of man; from a humanistic worldview that excludes God. The guidelines produced from such trends know no boundaries. The advocates of this worldview teach it is impossible to determine what is right or wrong—each individual must decide for themselves in each situation what is acceptable. Jesus, however, clearly identifies the standard

of absolute truth that applies to all humanity: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn. 17:17). Jesus knew the reality of preaching to a sinful world. Many would not heed what was right, thus He prays for His disciples to be sanctified through truth. The psalmist wrote, “Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth” (Psa. 119:151).

Jesus uttered one of the most controversial statements of history, yet one on which all absolute truth rests, when He said: “...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (Jn. 14:6). Thayer defines “truth” as, “the truth, as taught in the Christian religion, respecting God and the execution of His purposes through Christ, and respecting the duties of man.” He goes on to remark, “Opposed alike to the superstitions of the Gentiles and the inventions of the Jews, and to the corrupt opinions and precepts of false teachers even among Christians.” Jesus does not merely point to the truth, or a truth, HE IS the truth! Thus truth is universal and absolute. The Hebrew author remarks, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (13:8). We understand by this that truth is not the invention of man, nor is it ever-changing. Truth is rooted in the nature and being of God. Without God truth does not exist.

Without God We Have No Savior

We are unable to save ourselves. With the rise of modern evolutionary theory the minds of many are deceived, but the fact remains that we cannot save ourselves. We need a Redeemer! Jeremiah wrote, “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (10:23). Isaiah eloquently portrays man’s condition without God: “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isa 64:6).

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550
Fax 925-454-8995

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814

EDITORIAL STAFF

Bennie Cryer	Greg Gay
Billy Dickinson	Carl Johnson
Jerry Dickinson	Barney Owens
Johnny Elmore	Kevin Presley

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE WEBSITE:

www.oldpathsadvocate.org
Rick Martin, Website Publisher
Terry Studdard, Website Asst. Publisher
Brandon Steward, Webmaster

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Editorial

THE SHELLFISH ARGUMENT

By: CARL M. JOHNSON

In November of 2008, the voting public in the state of California passed Proposition 8 that simply defines marriage in California as a union between a man and a woman. The passing of the proposition sparked public outrage from the same-sex marriage activists, who stormed services at churches and temples, vandalized church properties, harassed elderly people, and threatened to retaliate against anyone who supported the proposition. Of course, all of this was done in the name of “tolerance,” “love,” and “mutual understanding.”

Subsequently, Marc Shaiman, one of the creative minds behind the popular musical “Hairspray,” put together an on-line video called “Prop 8: The Musical,” lampooning the supporters of the constitutional amendment. The video boasts an all-star cast that includes Jack Black (who plays the role of Jesus), Neil Patrick Harris, and John C. Reilly, and it immediately went “viral” on the Internet.

The strategy behind this shaming-of-the-public production is simple: embarrass the supporters of the amendment so much that the next time same-sex marriage shows up on the ballot they will do the “loving” thing and support it rather than reject it.

The telling point in the skit comes when Jack Black (playing Jesus) confronts the “Yes on 8” supporters for their belief that homosexuality is an abomination, lifts a shrimp cocktail to them, and says, “Leviticus also says eating shellfish likewise is an abomination.” He goes on to give an erroneous list of other things that are supposedly condemned in the Book of Leviticus. His point being, that if it is wrong to engage in homosexual activity because it is condemned in Leviticus, it is wrong to eat shrimp cocktail for the same reason. He knows, of course, few Christians would condemn eating shrimp.

There has been tension between the theater and Christianity for years. A review of the stage production of “The Screwtape Letters” by an actor

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Would you please discuss a situation where the treasurer of a church embezzles some of the money? How often does this occur, and what steps should be taken to prevent it?

Answer: The obligation of counting the money collected on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1-2) and properly depositing it in the bank is one of serious responsibility. I have no way of knowing how many have failed in their responsibility in this matter, but I do know that it has happened on a number of occasions. In some instances the individual simply planned to “borrow” the money for a time and then repay it. Unfortunately the “borrowing” got out of hand and continued until the person involved was unable to repay what was owed. Later the church discovered the problem and serious consequences followed. In Acts 6 when a complaint arose against the Hebrews because the widows of the Hellenists were neglected in the daily distribution, we are told that the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and told them to “seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.” Note that the men were to be “of good reputation” and “of wisdom.” That is, they were to be of high character, men of honesty and integrity. When a congregation selects a man to care for the money contributed on Lord’s Day, he should be of unquestionable character. Unfortunately even good men sometime make mistakes and do things we never thought they would do. When this happens, the situation must be addressed. This is not a matter that can be overlooked or condoned. In the view of this writer the individual should be expected to repay the money. It may be that payments will need to be spread out over a time period in order for this to be accomplished, however, to overlook such a serious matter would send the wrong message to all concerned. Repentance in such a case would surely involve restitution. As in most situations, prevention is the best policy. If money is never taken then there will be no need for restitution. That being the case, what steps should be taken to prevent such a thing from happening? I offer the following suggestions: (1) always select at least two men to count the money that is contributed. (Because of the seriousness of the situation children should not be involved in counting the contribution.) (2) Have at least two men, if possible, sign all the checks that are written. (This

may take extra time and effort, but it will pay off in the long run.) 3. A monthly report of all monies taken in and disbursed should be posted in a place or in some way made available so that all local members can read and be advised of how the money is being spent, and how much is on hand in the bank. There are, I’m sure, situations where the preceding steps are deemed unnecessary. In fact in some situations where money came up missing those in charge felt steps like the preceding were unnecessary. However what happened later made them wish they had been more careful in dealing with the Lord’s money. Remember when one embezzles from the church, they are actually taking money from the Lord.

(Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade at P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

BUILDING A CHRISTIAN HOME

By Homer A. Gay

Family worship is as old as the family itself. Noah and his family stepped from the Ark and built an altar, and worshipped God (Gen. 8:20). Think of the multiplied instances in which God has made use of the home places which were consecrated to Him: Abraham and his wanderings (Gen. 12 and 13 chapters), is replete with the recurring phrase, “and he built there an altar unto Jehovah.”

There is intrinsic beauty in the study of our first human home at its daily worship hour. In that perfect relationship with the Creator there was a period in “the cool of the day” when the family were in fellowship with God. During that pause in the evening, before the long rest at night they had learned to anticipate the sound of His voice while “walking in the garden.”

Lydia’s house (Acts 16), enabled her to give her timely invitation to Paul and Silas, “come into my house and abide there.” Aquilla and Priscilla turned their house into a place of meeting for the church (I Cor. 16:19). Mark’s home, alive at midnight with praying disciples was ready to receive Peter from his prison deliverance (Acts 12). The “upper room” of a disciple sheltered the last passover that our Lord ate with His disciples, and was the place where the Lord’s Supper was first instituted. To say nothing of the home of Mary and Martha, Zacchaeus, of Peter, and hordes of others mentioned in the Bible as well as the influence of many homes on down through the ages which have helped to shape and mold the lives of great characters

- both statesmen and religionists.

The memories of the old home place with all that went to fill them have held straight the lives of many youths when footloose in the world at large. Home places of great men are preserved and displayed with interest as having a significant bearing on the character of the men. Not often do we see pointed out to us the homestead of a noted criminal. The reason may be that few of them had the advantage of such a place. Religious homes do not lend themselves to the breeding of criminals.

Christian parents should see to it that religion has the first place in their homes. Some of the best and earliest impressions can be made upon the child by his parents living Christianity in the daily home life.

Where God's word is read and obeyed in the daily home life, the child is made to see the beauty and benefits of it constantly, and learns to appreciate it because it causes him to have a more truthful father and mother than the parents of his playmates who are worldly; he sees that they treat each other better; that his home is more congenial and thus, like young Timothy, the faith is imbedded in him in his tender years.

Regardless of how much religion we may display at church, if we do not practice it at home it will not have the proper influence upon our children. We cannot be hypocrites before them; they know us too well. What we are when we get out into the wider circles of the work of the church service depends on what we are in the intimacy of our own homes. One who cannot lead the prayer in the quiet of his own home, usually does a poor job of trying to lead a public prayer. When Jesus had cast the devils out of the poor, benighted soul, He told him "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19). Thus He lays down a principle showing that it would not be in accord with the principles of Christianity to allow this man to accompany him to some foreign field while his home folk knew nothing about the Christ. And I believe today that the Lord expects us to first exert our influence at home. I have always been made to wonder about the preacher who wielded such an influence away from home while his children were not even members of the church. And I have always felt that the brother who could sit on the street corner all day and argue scripture - not knowing what kind of mischief his children were in, would do better to do some of that teaching at home.

I believe that family worship will go as far as anything in the world in giving religion a place in the home -and -causing children to realize that father and mother reverence God, appreciate His goodness and depend upon Him for their blessings. Every Christian home should have at least one hour set apart for this worship in which all the family can participate. We found in rearing our children that a good time for this was soon after the evening meal, and before the children get too sleepy. Some prefer to have the worship around the breakfast table. One of the most impressive of these services I ever took part in was around the breakfast table of Brother Alfred Ellmore, when I was a boy.

A song or two that the children can help sing makes the worship more realistic; a chapter read by father or mother or by one of the children, with any one asking questions or offering comments on the lesson; then all, both young and old, kneeling down should go to God in prayer. Here the children will learn the lessons of life and duty, and they will learn to read aloud the word of God, and learn how to pray and sing.

May we all have more religion in our homes.

THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

By *BENNIE CRYER*

Whether we like it or not God has chosen what man may call and has called peculiar things in his scheme of redemption. He has made choices for us in religion and he expects these choices to be honored today though he made these choices almost 2000 years ago. God had to make these choices for man because man with their vaunted philosophers could not come up with a scheme that would take man from earth to heaven. These wise men in their day could not come up with a plan that would forgive any man, be he great or small, that would bring about forgiveness of a single sin much less forgiveness for a life time of sin. But God could and did. Not many liked all of God's choices but a few did. Some of God's choices are described in these verses.

1 Corinthians 1:27, But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

For his scheme of redemption God selected, picked out, or chose the Savior of the world who, when born among men in a lowly manger and into a family that men may have considered of low esteem and ended up dying on a Roman cross, to many, a shameful death. It

is evident (vv 18, 23) that the Jews stumbled at this fact and the Gentiles considered it foolishness that such a man could be the Messiah, the Christ. God did this to put all who rejected this choice of God to shame. This seems to be the meaning of “confound.” The Jews had no excuse because in their writings they could read how God chose a strategy that seemed weak and foolish to bring down the walls of Jericho. No worldly wise general would have chosen the strategy God chose, Jeremiah 6:1-25. However, to those who let the words of God enlighten their minds it was the thing to do. So they marched around the walls of Jericho one time each day in a certain order for six days. Then on the seventh day they marched around those same walls seven times. The trumpets blew and the people shouted and “the walls came tumbling down.” Do not be ashamed of the simple things God has chosen. Stand fast in the faith.

1:28, And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

God has chosen things with these characteristics also. Thayer defines “base things” as those among men who are held of no account. This is in contrast with “noble” in v26 who are the “well born” and who are of higher rank by virtue of their birth. When Jesus chose his apostles and they began to go out into the world this description generally characterized them in the eyes of the world. What and who God chose as his ambassadors were often “despised” by the world. And this caused some to reject their message. So far as the world was concerned their rank in life made their message void and caused the message to have no effect in their lives. But God is not finished with this thought. He also chose things or persons who “are not.” God chose men to carry his soul saving message to the lost that the philosophers and the nobles considered as “nobodies.” In reality they were considered as “dead” (as far as society was concerned) and therefore not capable of doing such important work. But in the sight of God those he chose that society considered less than nothing were his instruments to show that philosophers, noblemen, and the wise men were less than nothing when it came to providing salvation to a lost and dying world.

1:29, That no flesh should glory in his presence.

God wanted the wisest and most sophisticated of men to know they had not and could not come up with a plan that could save a single soul from his past sins, start him on the path that leads him toward heaven, provide him with a resurrection from the dead, and give

him a new and different kind of body that could live in heaven in eternity. Not one single man or company of men had the power to accomplish such things and guarantee it would all come to pass. But God could and did. No man can boast of such knowledge and power on his own in this area. It had to come from heaven and the mind of God, 2:10. No human being on his own can expect to stand in the presence of Jesus Christ, the judge of all men, and say, “Here I am and I thought it all up about how to be saved and I lived a good life so now give me my crown that I have earned.” Paul in Philippians 2:10-11 tells us exactly what such a man would do in circumstances like that: “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” This action will happen so it is best for every one to humble themselves before Jesus and confess his name to glorify God now. You can do that in joy now, but before the judgment bar it will be to your shame. Glorifying God is the chief purpose for us in this life. John wrote, Revelation 1:5-6, “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” God gave us an example in Leviticus 10:3, “Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.” What had happened and why did Aaron hold his peace? Aaron’s two sons, Nadab and Abihu had offered strange fire, that God had not commanded. Fire went out from God and devoured them and they died. Aaron was agitated because, I suppose, he had just lost two sons. But when Moses explained what God required of those who came near him and that he was to be glorified when the priests appeared before the people, Aaron held his peace. Aaron’s son did not give God the honor and glory he deserved because they offered something not commanded. Aaron now understood, at least for a while, how serious God is about what he has chosen. I think God is still that serious today about choices he has made because he has chosen these choices so man can manifest glory to God by his honoring these choices. Some people sneer at us for not using the modern day Sunday School method of arranging members into classes for the purpose of teaching the Bible. I just opened my encyclopedia and it tells us this about the Sunday Schools founder: “Raikes, Robert (1735-1811), an English publisher, first developed Sunday Schools on an extensive scale.” Wouldn’t it have been

wonderful if they could have written, “God developed Sunday Schools...” But they could not do it because God did not develop The Sunday Schools. Robert Raikes developed the system and therefore receives the glory. Various religions have taken to that system. But it never was God’s choice. Remember and accept what God had chosen and bring glory to him.



WITHOUT GOD.....continued from page one

It is God’s desire for all to seek and find salvation. Paul wrote emphatically of this truth about God in 1 Timothy 2:4: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the “ knowledge of the truth.” God, in His infinite wisdom, developed a great scheme of redemption. He sent His Son to live a perfect life, as a Lamb without spot, guilty of no sin. The very mission of Jesus was to save and redeem humanity, Matthew records, “...thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins” (1:21). John the Baptizer declared, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29). Though an esteemed apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul wrote, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1:5).

Through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God would proclaim His means of salvation (Rom. 1:16). Paul wrote the Corinthians to remind them of “...the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved...” (1 Cor. 15:1-2). The glorious gospel of Jesus Christ is the means by which salvation can be realized in the act of baptism. Paul explained obedience to the gospel in the Roman epistle, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (6:3-6).

Baptism, the act of obeying the gospel depicting a likeness of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, is the manner in which one

comes in contact with His cleansing blood. This is why Jesus proclaimed, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:16). Peter proclaimed, “...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Act 2:38). Without God salvation is unattainable.

Without God We Have No Joy

God gives joy! No true joy and satisfaction will be found without God. Solomon, a man well educated through personal experience and divine guidance teaches, “For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit” (Eccl. 2:26). Two categories of people are found within this timeless teaching: the righteous and the unrighteous. The righteous who live in accordance with God’s will find joy, but the unrighteous only encounter only travail. As Solomon composed a majority of the Proverbs a number of passages give lengthy description to the same principle: serve God and find knowledge, wisdom and joy; but the mocker only encounters misery.

Great joy is found in the realization of salvation. As previously discussed, without God we have no salvation. Habakkuk said, “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (3:18). Paul discusses the same principle in the New Covenant, “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Rom. 5:11). In this life there is no greater joy than finding the forgiveness of sins and having the hope of eternal life.

The greatest joy of all is yet to come-to be found faithful at the Lord’s return. In their woeful misunderstanding concerning the Second Coming, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” (1 Thess. 2:19). They will stand as evidence for Paul’s joy at the time Christ comes back. Their faithfulness would prove his life was not wasted but something everlasting was accomplished. No greater joy will be found in our lives than to meet the Lord when He gathers His own.

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THE SHELLFISH ARGUMENT.. continued from page two

who describes himself and his gay companion as “post-college twentysomethings,” says, “Perhaps the most overwhelmingly alienating part of ‘The Screwtape Letters’...is the play’s strong identification with Christianity. Among many of my peers, Christianity is something for bible-thumpers and right-wing conservatives-something we are predisposed to mock rather than venerate. In the sketch comedy world, where I work frequently, sketches featuring Jesus Christ are so common they are cliché.”

Because of such long-standing hostility toward Christianity by much of the theater world, I did not pay much attention to Shaiman’s video at first. I assumed the video would remain just another inside joke within that crowd. The message, however, seems to have caught on with the entire gay community and has now become its stock argument.

Randy Roberts Potts, homosexual grandson of the late television evangelist Oral Roberts, served last year as the Grand Marshall of the “AIDS Walk of Oklahoma City.” In an interview with the Oklahoman (Oct. 8, 2011) he lamented the fact that his grandfather would not endorse his lifestyle and argued that if the Bible condemns homosexual activity, it also condemns eating shrimp cocktail.

Gay radical Dan Savage makes the same argument repeatedly. He calls the religious world hypocritical because it endorses Leviticus’ condemnation of homosexual activity as being an abomination while ignoring all the other prohibitions in Leviticus, including the one against eating shellfish.

The shellfish argument, however, is a failure to divide rightly the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15), whether it is done ignorantly or intentionally.

The teachings in Leviticus were a part of the Law of Moses and were binding only upon the Jews until the Law was fulfilled by Christ (Mt. 5:17). These teachings were primarily for the priests and Levites who were in charge of the sanctuary and who ministered to God on behalf of the people of Israel. The whole point of these teachings was to teach Israel how to separate and become distinct from all they had learned while in Egyptian captivity. Leviticus is a book about contrast and separation, distinctions and differences. Everything in the

life of the Old Testament Jew was either “holy” (set apart for God’s exclusive use) or “common.” Common things were either “clean” (the people could use them) or “unclean” (the people were forbidden to use them), and shellfish is among the many dietary items forbidden as being unclean (Lev. 11:9-12). The Jews had to be careful to avoid what was unclean or they would be cut off from the people until they could cleanse themselves again ceremonially.

All of the many, complex laws regulating the daily lives of the Jews were reminders that God’s people could not live any way they pleased. They had to learn the difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean (Lev. 10:10). They could not live like the godless nations around them.

The apostle Paul explains, however, that the entire Law of Moses, including the commandments written on stones (2 Cor. 3:7), was taken out of the way, nailed to the cross, and is no longer in force upon God’s people in any of its parts today (Col. 2:14-17).

It follows, therefore, that the dietary prohibitions under the Law of Moses, including the prohibition against eating shellfish, are no longer binding today. This truth is made clear by the Lord and both apostles Paul and Peter (Mk. 7:15; Col. 2:14-17; Acts 10:11-16).

While some of the things declared to be sinful in the Old Testament are not sinful in the New Testament, there are a number of prohibitions from the Old Testament that have been reenacted in the New Testament. Among other things it is still wrong to steal, kill, commit adultery, and covet. The reason these activities are condemned today is not because they were a part of the original 10 Commandments, but because they have been reenacted under the New Testament which has been ratified by the blood of Christ (Rom. 12:9; Heb. 9:15-18; Mt. 26:28).

The same is true of homosexual activity. We do not condemn it today because it was condemned in Leviticus in the Old Testament Law of Moses, but we condemn it today because it is condemned in the New Testament of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:26-32; 1 Cor. 6:9; Col. 3:5). In fact, homosexual activity is so reprehensible to God that He has condemned it in every dispensation of time since the beginning: Patriarchal, (Gen. 19; Jude 7); Mosaic (Lev. 18:22); and Christian (Rom. 1:26-32).

Obviously, the shellfish argument is based upon a faulty premise. One can enjoy eating shrimp, lobster, and any other kind of shellfish today, because the prohibitions against it in the Old Testament ended at the cross and were not reenacted in the New Testament. Homosexual activity remains a sin today, however, because the prohibitions enacted against it in the Patriarchal and Mosaic ages have been reenacted in the age of Christianity.

Paul warns that when people guilty of such sins demonstrate they do not want the truth, and are not going to accept the truth, God will give “them over to a reprobate (debased) mind to do those things which are not convenient (not proper or decent, but loathsome)” (Rom. 1:28). It is tragic, but his words seem to describe accurately the same-sex marriage activists of today. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com

Announcements

A NEW CONGREGATION BOLIVAR, MO

SUBMITTED BY BRAD SHOCKLEY

Introducing a new congregation of the Lord’s church in Bolivar, MO. The congregation began meeting the first Lord’s day in May. It had a very successful start with a community visitor the first day. We are assembling at the Keeling Accounting Building, 308 N Davis Dr, Bolivar, MO. From Hwy 13 turn east on Hwy 32, go 7/10th of a mile turn left on Davis Drive. Service times are 10:00 AM and 1:30 PM.

If you are traveling and looking for a place to worship it would be an honor if you joined us.

Please keep this new work in your prayers.

For more information contact Marc Allie
417-777-7270 or Tyler Richardson 417-650-0670

Brethren Note: New phone number for Clint DeFrance (940) 224-8012

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THANK YOU

A note of thanks to my beloved brothers and sisters across our nation, who sent their condolences, comfort, and personally called me in learning of my beloved Iva Jo’s passing. Needless to say, I am going through the most difficult time of my life and so much need your fervent prayers for me, my children, their spouses, and my dear grand children. Bro. Don Pruitt paid tribute to her, and said he would send a report about the funeral. Also I would like to make mention of the fact that we moved from Andrews to Odessa, due to Iva Joe’s health in January and my new Address is 7 Old Lampasas Trail, Odessa, Texas -797651. This was a most difficult move after working for the Lord, in Andrews for fifty plus years, yet it became necessary for us to do so. I am now worshipping with the church in Midland and returning to Andrews, as often as I can. God bless all

of the faithful Christians, wherever they may and God bless Brother Don King and the staff of the Old Path’s Advocate. I have been dilatory in reporting and sending articles, but, the Lord’s willing, I will try to correct that in the near future, when my healing comes from God, for He promised in His Word “Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning.” (Psalm 30:5). If you would like, you can go to www.DignityMemorial.com to submit your loving thoughts. C. A. Smith, 7 Old Lampasas Trail, Odessa, Texas, 79765

Bonds of Matrimony

DeFrance-Nelson-- On the evening of June 23, 2012 Brother Clinton DeFrance, son of Rhonda and the late Edward DeFrance and Leanne Nelson, daughter of Rodney and Richelle Nelson became husband and wife. The ceremony took place in the meeting house of the Turlock Church of Christ before a large gathering of family, friends and well-wishers. Clint is a young and successful preacher of the gospel, who was raised by his parents to fear God and honor His word. Leanne, a gracious and exemplary young Christian woman, was also reared in the midst of a church going and God honoring family. We wish for this young dedicated couple the very best that life can offer. Our hope and expectation is that the home they build in this world will ultimately lead to that everlasting home of the soul, in the world to come. I consider it a great honor to have been asked to officiate on this solemn yet joyous occasion. -Ronny Wade

Our Departed

COX- Loyal Celes Cox was born October 17, 1939, in Cloud Chief, Oklahoma, to Martha Alice (Lemmon) and Argil Celes Cox. He died June 28, 2012, in Norman, Oklahoma, at the age of 72. Loyal served in the US Army and married Loretta Fay Weaver on May 7, 1961, in Hammon, Oklahoma. He was employed by Fred Jones Manufacturing Company for many years. He enjoyed swimming, gardening, and tinkering on his tractor. His greatest enjoyment, however, was spending time with his grandchildren and family. He is preceded in death by a brother, John F. Cox, twin sister, Lois Robertson, and sister, Lena Fay Copeland. He is survived by his wife Loretta of Blanchard; daughters, Daphne Celest Babcock and husband Buck of Oklahoma City, Melanie Renee White and husband Johnny of Blanchard, and Lesa Ann Blazer and husband Mark of Moore; eleven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; brother, Loya Gene Cox and wife Lorene of Oklahoma City sisters Eva Jackson of Lone Oak, Texas, Leta Novotny of Okemah, Oklahoma, and Lucille Bryant and husband Gary of Petal, Mississippi. He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, and many other loved ones and friends. When Loyal and I first met he was a member of the Capitol Hill

congregation in Oklahoma City, but after Capitol Hill established the Moore congregation he and family eventually began worshiping there. After his move to Dibble, Oklahoma, Washington became his home congregation, and was a member there until his death. Loyal was always faithful in his attendance. He was also extremely good to visit folks in the hospital. James says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27). Loyal personified this definition. We shall definitely miss him. I am honored the family called me to conduct the funeral. Carl M. Johnson

LORTON- Lyle Lorton was born July 21, 1953 in Austin, Texas and passed away May 25, 2012 in Dothan, Alabama. He was a faithful member of the Roper Heights Church of Christ in West Point, GA. Lyle believed in hard work and honest living. He worked as a truck driver for many years, the last 20 as a driver for Wal-Mart. Lyle leaves to mourn his passing his wife Kathy, his daughter Bethany and her husband Kevin Presley; his son Garrett Lorton; three grandchildren Lauren and Halle Presley and Dallas Lorton; his father Leon and two brothers Neil and Del Lorton; and a very special sister in law Wendy Lorton; several nieces and nephews; a host of friends; and many brothers and sisters in Christ. Lyle lived a life of service to God. He was concerned about his soul and the souls of others. He was active in the worship services and his absence creates a void. He was consistent in inviting friends, acquaintances, co-workers, even the nurses who cared for him to visit our worship services and attempted to speak to them about the church and its importance in ones life. I had the privilege of knowing Lyle for almost 30 years. He will be missed for his wise counsel, and friendship. But we do not mourn as those who have no hope in eternity. It was my honor to attempt to speak words of comfort and hope to a full house of family and friends assembled at the Earlytown Church of Christ building in Samson, AL. The beautiful congregational singing was conducted by Brother Larry Thompson of the LaGrange, GA congregation. Lyle is buried in the Earlytown Church Cemetery. - Don Jackson

THOUGHTS ABOUT BRO. EARL HELVEY
 Since he was born on the 4th of July and died on the 4th of July, the date our great country celebrates its liberty from the tyrannies that oppressed a freedom loving people, how could I stand before you in this, Earl's memorial service, and not talk about two special liberties that he became interested in, sought them, possessed one of them, and yearned for the other, and has now taken the next to last step, as far as we mortals know, to possess the other as he now waits for

the resurrection day. Of course, Earl loved this great country we live in where so many have died that we might possess the liberty, the freedom from tyranny, even religious tyranny, and many others serve this cause today so we may enjoy the many freedoms we have today as we strive for the pursuit of happiness while we live on this earth under the starry skies that are all doomed for destruction when that mighty trumpet blast rents this atmosphere with sounds accompanying it that shall be heard by every human ear that has lived on this earth where we are now sojourning. Earl learned that Jesus Christ the Lord died as he waged battles against the tyranny brought about by Satan and sin so he could have liberty from the bondage brought about by the transgressions of God's law. Paul speaks of this in Galatians 5:1, Standfast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Earl considered this the greatest of freedoms his life needed so he voluntarily stepped forward in loving obedience to his Savior and redeemer, was baptized into Christ and His church, lived faithfully, and eventually became an elder here at 64th street where we have gathered together to celebrate his passing. He died in the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free as did his faithful wife, Flora, in 1998. The other special liberty Earl was interested in is spoken of in Romans 8:20-22, For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. The "creature" or better creation is you, me, and Bro. Earl Helvey. Doesn't v 22 describe his aches & pains. When I came to meetings it wouldn't be long until he was telling me about the aching in his feet or how sometimes, when he ate food, his stomach would ache and he probably had other maladies that he did not talk about. If you get around older people it will not be long until we start talking about our aches, pains, & other things that are wrong with us. That is what Paul meant when he said, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now." You younger folks might smile and say I have no pain now. But just wait. Then you will understand what Bro. Earl was enduring. But that is all over for him now. No longer does he suffer. Isn't that wonderful! This is what I am talking about when I said he yearned for that second liberty. He is not hurting anymore. He has been delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. When we next meet with him he will appear in that beautiful, wonderful spiritual body that is suited to live in that eternal heavenly atmosphere. 2 Corinthians 4:17, 17 For our light affliction, which is

but for a moment, worketh for us afar more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; He is happy now, I believe, but we will miss him.

Field Reports

Don Jackson 504 E. 4th Street West Point, GA 31833 706-645-5664 donjackson@knology.net. It has been some time since my last field report. I have held gospel meetings in places such as Dothan, AL, LaGrange, GA, West Monroe, LA, Highway 84 in Brookhaven, MS, and Broken Arrow, OK. Although it has been many months in some cases, I enjoyed each one immensely. The hospitality of the brethren and a great Christian spirit were evident in every place. The congregation at West Point is doing well. We have suffered losses due to the death of members. Others have moved to other locations to live and worship. We hope the coming months bring renewed growth and spiritual vigor. Please pray for us and the work. May God bless the faithful!

P. Duane Permenter, July 12- We arrived home from Zambia and Mozambique on July 6 and all is well. We had a great trip and saw many good things happen. There were well over a hundred responses to the gospel during our trip and I am thankful that the Lord has allowed me to be a small part of this work. We traveled hundreds of miles and saw lots of country. Our brethren both in Mozambique and Zambia are continuing to work and move forward. We appreciate so much all the prayers and support from many different places that made this trip possible. We had the privilege of visiting many different congregations. Even though the roads are rough, we had very few problems. God bless the brotherhood! duane_and_laurie@yahoo.com

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com July 16- Pat and I just returned home late last night from a good meeting at Marietta, GA. I'm a day late getting the paper mailed as a result. The meeting was blessed with good cooperation from area congregations, too many to recall. It was wonderful to see so many old friends and brethren from their respective places. Several preachers also came one or more times. I believe we had visitors who drove a distance just about every service which helped so much. We thank Rick and Jane Martin, old friends, for their great hospitality in keeping us, feeding us much of the time and the rest of the brethren for being hospitable for other meals, etc. Our first meeting there was in 1979 and, of course, we have been back several times since then. We were able to be at the 4th of July meeting in Springfield, MO for a few services and found a fine spirit there among all. It was our pleasure to preach the last night before going on to

GA. Our next meeting is scheduled to be at the New Salem congregation near Brookhaven, MS the first two Lord's Days in August then on to Liberty, KY and finally to West Chester, Ohio before returning home again, Lord willing. Preachers, don't forget the paper as you travel, please.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@cableone.net, July 9: Since my last report I have conducted meetings at Indiana, PA and Killbuck, OH. Betty Lockard of the nearby Lovejoy congregation died just before the Indiana meeting began, so we began the meeting with a pall of sadness hanging over our heads. We had her funeral on the first Sunday evening of the meeting with Ronny Wade conducting the services. Prior to the funeral on that same day, Betty's husband Gene fell and broke his leg and hip. He was rushed to intensive care at the hospital and could not attend Betty's funeral. Doctor's determined later that Gene had also suffered a heart attack. Gene's family kept a vigil at his bedside during the week, knowing that he could not survive long. Adding to our sadness, Elvin Caldwell's mother-in-law died during the week and Elvin (one of the leaders of the congregation) and wife Debbie had to leave to take care of those matters. Nevertheless, we enjoyed the meeting and are thankful for the support we received from surrounding congregations, including Lovejoy, Shenango, and Flemington. Phyllis and I appreciate the wonderful hospitality of Don and Melissa Dunlap during our stay. After the meeting we were joined by my brother Benny and his wife Sondra, and we worshiped June 17 with the good brethren at Rockville, Maryland. We enjoyed meeting those folks very much and were impressed with the solemnity and sincerity of the service. Later, on June 21, we began a meeting at Killbuck, Ohio. Some neighbors who have lived near the church building for years came to this meeting for the very first time. We are encouraged that some of them came back more than once during the meeting. We greatly enjoyed our time there and pray that we left them edified and uplifted. We had a great spring meeting here at home with Cullen Smith. Attendance was excellent. We look forward to Jerry Dickinson being with us September 23-30. I shall be preaching here at home three services this week and then we head to Temple, GA (July 22-29), Hoyte, TX (Aug. 4-12), and the Texas Labor Day Meeting (Aug. 31--Sept. 2). May God bless us all as we strive to glorify Him.

Roger Owens- rowens700@yahoo.com Freeman Road Neosho Missouri: The fields are truly white unto harvest and the laborers are few. The work here in Neosho moves forward. The forth meeting was very enjoyable thanks to the efforts of the Springfield

Southside congregation. So many brethren that I hadn't seen for some time were there and many I wanted to see couldn't make it this year., What a treat to be a part of the great ingathering. The singing lifted our spirits and the sermons gave us renewed courage to take up our cross and march forward. I had the opportunity to speak at Montreal Missouri Sunday morning during the fourth meeting, oh what a treat it was to see friends and church family. Death and sickness move across our efforts at home, but we are not moved nor hindered by these things. Soon brother Joe Hisle will be with us to speak on doctrinal issues, August 19 thru 26. Our efforts in Casper WY. continue with newspaper articles reaching so many. The new song book wasn't ready for the fourth meeting but hope this will not deter any from purchasing it. Singing is such a grand part of our services as we lift up our voices in praise to God. There were a few elder preachers I looked for that were not at the 4th meeting and that was a sad note for me. The wisdom of older preachers is so important to the church. I love the spirit of our younger men, but leadership and wisdom seem lacking in many areas. God bless the work of the Lord around the world and here at home. Pray for us and the work here as we remember all in our daily prayers and intercessions to the Father in Christ. Roger L. Owens P.O. Box 239 Neosho, MO. 64850 (rowens700@yahoo.com)

Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189 mmartin@bellsouth.net I have just closed a very enjoyable meeting at West Monroe, LA. The congregation there is to be commended for their efforts. At least 17 outside visitors, some who had never heard the Gospel before, attended the meeting. This certainly shows how well-respected the members are in the community. The singing was outstanding; four preachers of the Gospel attended the meeting, Floyd Harris Jr., who makes his home there, Jerry Dickinson, Michael Conley, and Bruce Roebuck. Jane and I are grateful to Dwayne and Jana Snow and their two boys, Reagan and Ryan, for allowing us to stay in their home. I pray that my meager efforts strengthen the congregation. We attended the Springfield 4th of July meeting this year and enjoyed it very much. We are presently enjoying a good meeting with Don King. Our annual singing will be August 18. We are looking forward to having Kevin Presley and being able to sing out of the new book, Abiding Hope. My schedule includes meetings at Earlytown, AL, July 18-22 and Jacksonville, FL, September 19-23. Remember me in your prayers.

Richard DeGough, 1809 Flora Vista Dr. Hughson, Calif. 95326. Our meeting with Bruce Roebuck was a great success in many ways. Bruce preached

with power and conviction, using scripture to back up his lessons. We were well pleased with him . He strengthened the church and warned the lost. Issues that sometime come and trouble the church he dealt with. The young men that spoke on Saturday morning were well prepared and their lessons were timely. I really appreciated them. It gives us a good look at the men and appreciation for them to lead the church in times to come, the Lord willing. Co-operation from brethren near and far was good, with lots of young Christians attending. We had gospel preachers as; Don King, Nathan Battey, Clint DeFrance, and more I might have overlooked. They were an asset to the meeting. The Memorial day meetings have all been good and well attended that we have conducted at Turlock. Some 300 plus came. The singing was beautiful if I might judge and the song leaders were from many areas of the brotherhood. We look forward to the next years meeting with brother Clint DeFrance. I must mention Frank Brancato attending and recovering well from his bout with cancer. Frank is one talented man in proclaiming the gospel. We thank God for all the blessings He gives us day by day. Brethren you are cordially invited to be with us in the next year meeting. You will not be disappointed. God bless the brotherhood all over the world.

Shahe Gergian - It has been some time since my last report; however, I am pleased to declare that the work in Columbia, MO (and other regions) is flourishing. Back in March, the Rice Road congregation hosted our second annual Mid-MO study. We enjoyed the attendance of wonderful brethren from across the country, and the preaching was second-to-none. All sermons from the study can be viewed at ChristianLandmark.com. I would like to give special thanks to Clint De France for his invaluable assistance in that effort. Throughout the spring, I was blessed with the opportunity to conduct meetings at Stony Point in Kansas City, KS; Chapel Grove, TN; Montreal, MO and the Ozark, MO Memorial Day meeting. May was an especially exciting month. On May 13th, for the first time in Rice Road's history, we established an eldership, ordaining Bill Smith and Loren Gorrell as elders of the Lord's Church. We are so pleased with these fine men. Bill and Loren are admirable examples to the Rice Road congregation; we are thankful for their leadership. Also in May, I engaged a Roman Catholic apologist in a debate on the issue of authority in Christianity. I sincerely appreciate the many brethren who attended and supported that work. The debate was video and audio recorded and is expected to be posted to ChristianLandmark.com within the next few months. shahegergian@yahoo.com 4710 Rice Road Columbia, MO 65202.

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THE BACK PAGE...

A LEG, FALSE TEETH, AND A TABLE

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

Union commander Major General Daniel Sickles was one of the most colorful characters to participate in the famous battle at Gettysburg during the Civil War. He was a controversial figure even before the Civil War began. In 1859 he was elected to the US Congress from a New York district. While in Washington Sickles learned his wife Teresa was having an affair with a brilliant young attorney, Philip Barton Key, the son of Francis Scott Key, composer of the lyrics to the "Star Spangled Banner." Philip Key was not only a well-known attorney in Washington D.C., he was the district attorney, the chief prosecutor of the nation's capital. When Sickles saw Key outside his home in Lafayette Park, directly across from the White House, he became enraged and shouted, "Key, you scoundrel, you have dishonored my bed-you must die!" In broad daylight Sickles shot Key twice at point-blank range and killed him.

Sickles was arrested and charged with murder, but he pleaded temporary insanity-one of the first persons ever to make such a plea-and was acquitted!

Subsequently, Sickles was made commander of the Union Army's 3rd Corps. During the Battle of Gettysburg, he made some tactical decisions that were questionable at best and historians continue to debate the merits of his contributions during the conflict. One thing is certain, however, he was fearless in the heat of battle and his men loved him. As the Confederates overran the Peach Orchard during the second day at Gettysburg, Sickles was sitting atop his horse near a barn. He was observing his troops when a Confederate artillery round struck him in the right leg, nearly tearing it off. After having a tourniquet applied to his leg to control the bleeding, the still-conscious Sickles calmly lit a cigar and gave orders to his troops until he was finally carried away on a stretcher. Later, a Union surgeon amputated his leg.

Curiously, of all the monuments in Gettysburg National Park today there is no monument commemorating the heroics of Sickles. There is one commemorating the New York brigade he commanded, but none that mentions Sickles by name.

Maybe Sickles anticipated such an oversight because when his leg was amputated at Gettysburg he had it sent to Washington D.C. where it was put on display in the National Museum of Health and Medicine. Sickles amputated leg was the only monument on display commemorating his participation at Gettysburg and he often visited the leg for many years after the battle.

Phyllis and I recently spent 3 days in Gettysburg and then joined my brother Benny and his wife Sondra for 5 days in Washington D.C. We examined the artifacts left behind by the people who made great contributions to our country and the monuments erected to commemorate those contributions. We saw everything from George Washington's false teeth to the Washington Monument.

The greatest memorial we saw during our visit, however, was the one we saw in Rockville, Maryland, on the Lord's Day, June 17th. We met with the Rockville brethren for worship and found the Lord's Table set just as it is described in Scripture. On the Lord's Table we found one undivided loaf of unleavened bread and a cup that contained unfermented fruit of the vine, or grape juice (Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 1 Cor. 11:23-29).

While this memorial is not as grandiose as the Washington Monument or as bizarre as Sickles' leg, it is the one we approached with the greatest reverence and appreciation because it commemorates the greatest event in human history. It commemorates the death of Christ who willingly sacrificed His blood to make possible the forgiveness of our sins here and to give us the hope of a home in heaven in the hereafter.

Furthermore, the elements on the Lord's Table are not mere relics left behind by a dead man, such as Washington's teeth or Sickles' leg, because Jesus Christ is still very much alive! We do not worship a dead, historical Jesus. We worship a risen Savior (Mk. 16:6), and when we participate in the Lord's Supper, we "commune" with Him (1 Cor. 10:16).

Both my sons called me that same day (June 17) to wish me a happy Father's Day. The brief time I spent "communing" with each of them over the phone lifted my spirits and warmed my heart. Similarly, when we partake of the bread and the cup, we commune with one another, but we also commune with the Lord. We are reminded that His blood frees us from the shackles of sin (Mt. 26:28), that He abides with us still (Mt. 28:20), and that soon He shall return to take us home with Him (1 Cor. 11:26; Jn. 14:1-3). Such communion should flood our hearts with gratitude and renew our strength to carry on.

Sickles' leg is indeed a bizarre memorial and the universally-recognized Washington Monument is spectacular, but the Lord's Table remains the greatest memorial in the history of the world. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com