

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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Foundation Principles

BIBLE BLUEPRINT FOR UNITY

PART II

BY BARNEY OWENS

While the efforts of some to achieve unity must be applauded, the unity that God wishes cannot be realized until we appeal to His blueprint for unity. Attempts to have a union of various denominations allowing each to remain under the curtain of their own wishes and practices is far from Bible unity. Forming a mere confederation of churches under the canopy to "agree to disagree" is also deficient. This paper is a continuation of last month's as we seek to follow God's blueprint for unity as presented in Ephesians chapter four.

WE MUST WORK TO ATTAIN UNITY

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Verse 3). Paul had written to these Ephesians in chapter three concerning the dimensions of the love of Christ. He had hoped they would comprehend that love which would create within them the same temper, character, disposition or spirit. He had made this the object of his prayer. Joined to the Lord Christians are one spirit, "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." (I Cor. 6:17). We are not to waver but "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." (Phil. 1:27). Realizing God has made all in Christ (Jew and Gentile) one, they were to appreciate this union and endeavor to keep it. Endeavouring speaks to a strong desire to seek solutions to problems while avoiding strife and dissension. Keep is to retain or hold fast the unity that has been set forth by Christ and attained by the obedient to Him. The preservation of their spiritual relation depended on holding, observing, practicing and performing the principles of the love of Christ. This had and would continue to manifest a bond of peace. In the sister epistle he wrote, "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." (Col. 3:14). A bond is ligament, tie, sinew, or band around elements, joints and muscle. Love is this bond and since it lacks nothing is called perfectness. Although they were once enemies (Eph. 2:14,) having

the same mind, attitude, disposition or spirit animated the Ephesians to be bound in peace, with enmity and hatred being conquered and abolished. This heart they were to keep.

THERE IS ONE

The Apostle mentions several things as being one, therefore some have concluded that it is incorrect to say, "is" one but should be "are" one. The singular however, is correct as each of these although making a composite whole are individually one and "is" modifies "one" rather than each of the things named. Therefore in each thing named the words "there" and "is" are understood and shall be rendered accordingly.

Can we understand the meaning of "one?" One is defined, "being a single thing or unit; not two or more." (Webster). In any context other than religion most would think it silly to define one. We all know that there must be at least one, yet it would not be two, a dozen or one hundred or yet as many as might be agreeable with modern thinking or practices, as it is thought (contrary to God's revelation), that there are many bodies, a variety of faiths, and a multitude of baptisms.

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling,' One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. " (Eph. 4:4-6).

THERE IS ONE BODY

The human body is often used metaphorically to teach how members of Christ are related to Him as He is the head of the body, and to exemplify how each of us whether Jew or Gentile are related to one another in the family of God. What the body is had been explained to these Ephesians earlier in this epistle. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church. Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22-23). One would be hard pressed to find words that are clearer or more emphatic. Christ is head of the church which is His body. What is the body? It is the church. How many bodies are there? One! How many churches are there? One! To deny this fact is to belie the Scripture. To the sister epistle the same writer spoke about the reasons

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Editorial**"BECAUSE NO MAN HATH HIRED US"***By: DON L. KING*

In Matthew 20 Jesus related the parable of the Vineyard. As he did so, He came to the part where the householder had gone back to the marketplace for the fifth time, or 5:00 P.M. This was only one hour before He would call the laborers in and give them their pay which was the common penny a day. This time, however, he found others standing idle. (Verse 6) he asked them why they were still idle and in verse 7 they answered, "Because no man hath hired us." At that point he instructed them to go into the vineyard and they would receive what was right for them.

There are at least two ways, and probably several more, to see the statement "Because No Man Hath Hired Us." One is that those men were somehow not around when the householder had been there the other times and so did not realize there was a job available. This could very well be the case. Perhaps they arrived late in the day although that seems a little strange. The marketplace was the common spot for anyone to be if they were seeking employment. That was the place where those fellows who were looking for workers were most likely to be. It would seem unlikely to visit the marketplace so near the end of the work day. Another possibility could be that they just didn't choose to go to work when presented with the opportunity earlier. This appears to be a more likely reason they had not been hired. So many hear the gospel but decline to obey. Sometimes those who are baptized have refused the invitation for many years before deciding to follow the Lord. One such fellow comes to mind now who attended services for over 15 years with his wife before deciding he wanted to obey the gospel. He had ignored sermon after sermon. Could this be the case with these who had not been hired? My mind goes back to an elderly man we had studied with several times but who spurned the opportunity to be baptized again and again. We were getting ready to move to another area so I made one last trip to see him. He lived literally on the banks of a major river. We pleaded with him to be baptized that day. He promised he would do so someday. We tried to reason with him that he might not live to see another day but he declined again. We moved and soon after received the sad news of his passing unprepared to meet his God. Here was a good man who had the opportunity several times to

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Would you please comment on the idea that the scriptures are not relevant to the problems we face in the world today?

Answer: The idea expressed in the above question is not new. Some people have always questioned the validity of God's word and its applicability to man. Paul warned Timothy in chapter 4 of his second letter to him "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word, be ready in season and out of season: Convince, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables." The "time" spoken of here is obviously upon us. People, even those claiming to be religious, often care little about what the bible says. Often men in positions of authority and religious leadership express distaste for biblical declarations. Others go so far as to state that they believe the word of God does not express a viable message for those living today. Is the bible really "out of date?" From the viewpoint of many it obviously is. For example: (1) there is growing support in our nation and in the world at large for same-sex marriages. Several States have already passed laws protecting such marriages and both the president and vice president have come out in favor of them. The bible, however, makes it clear that marriage should only be between a man and a woman Gen. 3:18-24, Matthew 19:3-1, hence marriage between two males or females is wrong and in violation of God's will. (2) The bible also teaches that any sexual relationship between a man and woman outside of marriage is sinful. (Galatians 5:19) The Hebrew writer declared "marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (13:4) Yet in view of this, growing numbers of couples choose to live together without the benefit of marriage. Even members of the Royal family in England lived together for sometime before they

decided to marry. All of which seems to indicate that many feel that our bible is out of date, and what God says is of little consequence. As a result of this thousands of children are born out of wedlock each year in this country. Single parent homes have become the norm in many communities today. Morally our country is falling apart all because we have failed to honor what God has said in his word. (3) Today in increasing numbers women are filling the pulpits of America, all in direct opposition to the teaching of the scriptures. Paul in I Cor. 14:34-3 5 said "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in the church." It is amazing to hear how some try and get around this inspired statement. The popular line, however, is usually "the bible is outdated" or "that doesn't apply to us." Either way people are dismissing what God has said in order to do as they please. With one swipe of the hand they wipe out age-old divine edicts in favor of their current wishes and desires. Placing women in the pulpit is in direct violation of God's revealed truth. Because the "people want it so" has become the norm rather than "a thus saith the Lord." (4) Closely associated with the role of women in the church is the current popular practice of short hair on women and long hair on men. In 1 Corinthians 11 the apostle Paul, in language that cannot be misunderstood, said "does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering." The practice of many today seems to say "that is out of date." With reckless abandon they do as they please. Some who have been taught all their lives that women should have long hair have forsaken that teaching for what is popular and in vogue today. Unfortunately it does seem that with many our bible is out of date. They substitute what they want for what is revealed. The word of God is still relevant to our problems today as it has been down thru the ages. Times and conditions change, God's word does not. We change, as do our perspectives, however God's revealed will does not. The problem lies with us, not with revealed truth. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

BUILDING A CHRISTIAN HOME

By Homer A. Gay

A Work For Two

The discipline that is needed in building a Christian home is certainly a work for two, and these two must be sure and cooperate in the task if they hope to succeed. This reminds us of the passage: "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:11). In the seventh chapter of I Corinthians the Apostle gives us a good lesson, showing the relationship that should exist between the husband and wife along these lines (please read the chapter, and save me the space for it here). Also, in the fifth chapter of Ephesians there is given another fine lesson on husbands loving their wives and wives obeying their husbands - all of which is so necessary in order for them to work together in the disciplining of their home.

I Pet 3:7 speaks of the husband and wife as being "heirs together of the grace of life," which shows that the Lord wants them to be full partners in everything. When the children can get their parents to disagreeing on something and arguing it in the presence of the children, that is as good as they want. So, parents, you may not always see the thing just as the other one sees it, but by all means don't object in the presence of the child.

With two grown, married, Christian people, prayer and open-mindedness, brought into quiet discussion ought to solve most any problem between them. It may be necessary at times for one or the other to yield on some point, on his or her manner of procedure, but this yielding is not a sign of weakness. Sometimes it is a sign of fair mindedness and willingness to cooperate. A thorough trial, honestly given, may really prove that one was wrong and the other right where it had not seemed possible before. Both should be filled with the wisdom that is from above as we read in James 3:17, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." How well does this passage fit into the lives of Christian parents in disciplining their children. Each parent should strive to be easily intreated, remembering that they are only human. And above all things parents should never use hypocrisy with their children. A father may forbid the child doing a

certain thing, then the mother arrange for the child to do it and the father know nothing about it. The child partakes of such a scheme and violates a dozen laws of character and truth. Certainly he has lost respect to some degree for both of them, and will soon be learning to practice this deceit himself.

The wrong kind of discipline, the lack of it, or a disagreement between the parents over it, can spoil the whole outlook of the future of our boys and girls. The truth is that discipline has to begin a deep self-searching on the part of the parents themselves. Many times corrective measures can be avoided wholly, if the parents will look ahead and make plans for their children's safety. The child, well trained by patient and consistent parents and provided with the necessities for comfort, happiness, and satisfaction at home, presents a far less problem than one who is not supplied with the means of normal happiness.

Not long ago seven young men, in a hotel room, were up until a late hour discussing the problems they were facing. Someone asked them what their conclusions were and one replied: "We concluded that the problems facing us are greater than at any other age of the world, and therefore, it is going to take greater men with greater characters to face them; and that, God being our helper, we will be some of those greater men."

The great task before Christian parents today is to build of the children in their homes those greater men and women that the world needs, and must have to save it from chaos.

A father should consider well the answer he gives to his child and then the mother should not cross him; likewise the mother should think and pray before she says "yes" or "no" to a child, and the father should never, NEVER tell the child differently. Fathers must be careful to see that the child always minds the mother, and also the wife should see to it that the child minds the father. These are rules which must be observed if parents ever hope to bring their children up to obey and honor them and the Lord. Any relaxation of these rules will surely cause trouble in the home, and make a break that may never be mended.

I do not even hope for all to agree with me on these thoughts, but if only a few fathers and mothers will "awake to righteousness," and begin NOW to build Christian homes it would not be long until we could tell a great difference.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

BY ZACHARY EVANS

Children often ask many questions about what seems like very simple topics. Their nature is to be curious about everything that they see. It would not hurt us to be like children in that respect, by asking questions sometimes about topics even that we see frequently. One of those subjects that is worthy of consideration is the church. Christ promises to establish His church in Matthew 16:17-19, prompting us to ask questions such as what is the church? Who makes up the church? What phrases in the Scriptures describe the church?

While there are many questions that members of Christ's church should ask about that institution, we will only consider the ones mentioned above.

The church is synonymous (or equivalent) with many terms found in the New Testament. The Church of God (Acts 20:28), Temple of God (2 Cor. 6:16), House of God (1 Pet. 4:17), Body of Christ (Eph 1:22-23), Kingdom of God (Acts 28:31), and Church of Christ (Matt 16:18; Rom 16:16) denote the same institution, the church Christ established. In interest of time, this article will only examine a few of these.

The word church has been translated from the Greek *ekklesia*, a compound word of *ek*, and *kaleo*. Thayer defines *ek* as "from out of, out from" and *kaleo* as "to call," much like a shepherd would call his flock. Therefore, we are the "called out." (Bible students could perform entire studies upon this one word alone.)

This word has two chief meanings throughout the scriptures. Eph. 5:23, 25 shows the first meaning of the church universal. The second, and most common meaning, is that of the local congregation (e.g. church at Antioch--Acts 13:1, church at Corinth--I Cor. 1:2).

Paul confirms the definition of the called out in Rom. 1:5-7 "Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." The word "called" comes from the root word *kaleo*.

The religious world has many misconceptions on how we are called. Many will say that each individual must have a special supernatural experience in order to be sure that they are called. With this view, serving God becomes emotionally, not scripturally based. These individuals confuse a bout of adrenaline or even drowsiness for the Holy Spirit falling upon them.

Rather, the scriptures teach exactly how the children of God are called. 2 Thes. 2:13-14 says, "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." How are Christians called? By the gospel, the word of God.

Now, this does not mean that while reading through the scriptures one day, a person will have this feeling that all of a sudden they are saved. No. The scriptures show how to become a Christian, live the life of a Christian, and receive the crown of life.

Next, the word of God can prove that the church and the body of Christ are one and the same. Eph 1:22-23 explicitly puts it, "gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body." (Him being Jesus.) Col 1:18-19, "He is the head of the body, the church."

It will easily be agreed that Christ only had one body to give. His blood paid for the sins of many. Therefore, as Eph 4:4-6 shows, there is only "one body." This one body is the church that Christ gave Himself for. Now, many around say that every religious organization that believes Christ as their Savior is part of this one body. They say that each denomination is a different body part. But in this case the church, Christ's body, ends up being a Frankenstein's monster; with all of the denominations sewed together to make this so-called "one body."

The scriptures does not support this view. Once again, in Eph. 4:3 "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." It becomes an impossibility to make an effort to keep unity if everyone divides themselves upon the simplest of beliefs, such as worship.

Finally, the terms church and the kingdom of God are interchangeable. Today, for all intents and

purposes, the kingdom is the church, the church is the kingdom. Since the church was established, a person must be added to the church to enter the kingdom.

Many see the kingdom to come in the future and will be a physical kingdom. Phil. 3:20 says, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Mark 9:1 also shows that the kingdom has already come. The nature of the kingdom is unlike that of the Roman, Babylonian, Greek Empires, or like the rule of the United States. Contrary, Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36).

How does one enter into this wonderful kingdom, body, church? We do not have to present a petition to the council of elders or the church board. We do not have to pay dues, for the church is not like a country club. Jesus answers this question in John 3:5, "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

There are many terms that are interchangeable with the church, and it is my hope that each and every person seeks first the kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33). OPA



BIBLE BLUEPRINT.....*continued from page one*

for his suffering, "Who now rejoice in my suffering for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." (Col. 1:24). The statement here is simple and declarative. Paul suffered for the body's sake which is the church. The body of Christ is the church—the church and body are one and the same thing. How many bodies are there? One. Therefore, there is one church. To say there are many churches is to stand against the inspired word and common sense.

The church is so precious to the Lord that he died for it. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Eph. 5:25). The latter expression is translated in the American Standard Version, "gave himself up for it" Christ gave himself up to be tried, gave himself up to be scourged, gave Himself up to carry the cross, gave Himself up to be nailed to the cross, gave Himself up to be hanged on the cross, gave himself up in death, gave Himself up to be pierced—why? Because He loved the church. In the face of these facts, there are those who think that one church is as good as another. Some people

would have us believe that membership in the church can be foregone, consequently preach that salvation has nothing to do with the church. Such talk makes me ashamed to be a member of the human race. How can anyone choose one of the many churches instead of the one church Christ loved and gave Himself up for—the church of Christ?

Furthermore, we read, "Christ is head of the church: and he is the savior of the body." (Eph. 5:23). In Colossians 1:18 it is said, "he is the head of the body, the church." Christ is head of the church, or Christ is the head of the body because the church is the body. We are told, "He is the savior of the body," which can mean nothing less than He is the savior of the church. Many seek the salvation which Jesus offers, but do not wish to be saved among those whom Christ is said to save. They claim salvation outside the church, which flies in the face of the word of God. Question: what is the means used by Christ to save men? Answer: He saves us by His blood. That being true, notice what the Apostle said to the Ephesian elders, "feed the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28). Being saved by the blood of Christ is to be saved in the church that He purchased with His blood. It cannot mean we are saved out of the church or in a church that has not been purchased with His blood. When people get upset upon hearing that salvation is in the church, or that there is but one church, that is a demonstration that they are not in the church purchased with the blood of Christ. It is certain Christ will save the church He died for—the one purchased with His blood. I want to be in that church.

ONE HEAD OF ONE BODY

Sometimes nature appears to play a trick on us by allowing an animal to be born having two heads upon one body, or having two bodies with one head. All recognize that this is abnormal being a freak in the physical world. Regrettably, there have been children born in a like condition to the heartbreak of parents and the horror of others. This is not as it should be nor do we wish it so. However, as ironic as such is in the natural or physical world it is accepted and promoted in spiritual affairs. All call for ONE HEAD namely Jesus Christ, yet at the same times they wish Him to have MANY BODIES (churches, see above). I shall forego naming the many bodies (churches) that exist in the world, you however, can immediately call them to mind, by thinking of the church you are a member of in comparison to the one your neighbor belongs to. Or, the one you hold membership in and the communion in which your cousin participates. Does this not present a spiritual freak?

THE IMPORTANCE OF FELLOWSHIP

To all believers one body denotes Fellowship. Denominationalism is founded on fellowship as it includes those of a certain belief while excluding all

others. Most of these divisions are important enough to recruit others to their peculiar fellowship while at the same time proclaiming that one's church affiliation is unimportant. The one body demands that there be a single fellowship. The first century was a wonderful time for the Lord to erect a number of fellowships as these existed in a similar fashion to modern denominationalism among the Jews. Such obviously was not the will of the Lord. In addition, it would have been a grand time to form a Jewish fellowship and a separate fellowship for the Gentiles. Viewing the problems that arose in the Body of Christ between these two groups a great deal of strife could have been avoided had this been done. However, the Lord promised, then had established one body-one fellowship.

Some disavowed the teaching of the Lord and were removed from the fellowship of the disciples leaving them with nowhere to go. ‘Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which he received of us.’ (II Thes 3:6). This meant that faithful disciples were to have no association with those from whom fellowship has been withdrawn. “I have written to you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one know not to eat.” (I Cor. 5:11). There has been and remains a great deal of controversy over the meaning of “no not to eat.” Does this refer to the Lord’s Supper or to a common meal? I think either position is too limited. It is for sure that we are to exclude one from whom the church has withdrawn from eating the Lord’s Supper. It seems to this writer superfluous to withdraw from a member of the church then offer to commune with him. Then again to share in common everyday activities “as eating a meal together, (eating together being one of the more intimate associations,) is inconsistent with the very purpose for withdrawing in the first place. Withdrawing is “for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (I Cor. 5:5). How can the church be protected from sin if the iniquitous one is free to work among the faithful? “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. “ (I Cor. 5:6-7).

In this day of laxity in the world which has crept into the Body of Christ there is not nearly enough attention given to keeping the fellowship pure. Perhaps this is because we have not considered the seriousness of withdrawal of fellowship. Withdrawal means that we "deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh" (I Cor. 5:5). Men who had taught false doctrine were withdrawn from by Paul, "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." (I Tim. 1:20). If one is withdrawn from by the faithful it

means they are in league with Satan, there is no middle ground. Those who have been added to the church came out of the kingdom of darkness where Satan rules. Members excluded from fellowship with the church are those who have by their practice acknowledged that they desire to be under the rule of the Devil. There is a lesson found here for those contending that church membership is not necessary. The Apostle knew of two spheres in which one may dwell-in the Body of Christ or in fellowship with the Devil.

To be in fellowship with the church is to be in fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ because He is the head of the church, which is His body. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (I Jn 1:3). To claim fellowship with Deity while living sinfully is both ridiculous and a violation of the Word of God. "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." (I Jn. 1:6). Christians must realize the possibility of being enslaved to Satan and serving him through sin. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (Jn. 8:34). When a member of the Body of Christ gives himself to sin, the church either takes action toward that member by withdrawing fellowship, or ignores the sin and retains the sinful member in good standing with the congregation. When the latter is done, the entire body is in grave danger.

BECUSE NO MAN HATH HIRED.. continued from page two

obey the truth but refused until it was simply too late. In the parable Jesus tells in Matthew 20 those fellows were more fortunate in that they apparently were able to go into the vineyard before it was too late.

It is a possibility that some are never hired, or obedient to the gospel, because they really are never exposed to it. Most of us have had folks who worship in error, perhaps even near where the church has worshiped for years, tell us they have never heard of brethren who worship as we do. That is unfortunate but apparently true in some cases. Everyone deserves to hear the truth and if we have made no more impact than that in our own neighborhoods we had better get busy.

Sometimes we see members of the church who attend regularly but refuse to be of use in the services. Over and over they are invited to use their talents but decline. We have had members tell us, "Oh, I am just a one talent man." Such an excuse must come from those who do not realize what happened to the one talent man spoken of in Matthew 25:14-30. The man who had only one

talent finally was rebuked by the Lord and had even the one talent he had taken from him and given to another who had ten. The picture shown there is of a fellow who is either afraid to do anything or too lazy to make an effort. What was the result? He was lost! Of all the excuses to use, to claim to be a one talent man is one of the poorest in existence. Remember, Jesus said in Luke 16:10, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Some say, "if I could do anything that really amounted to something I would. If I could preach, etc., I would do that. However, are you willing to do the little things you are perfectly capable of? If not, you may be sure you would do no better in larger things. Jesus said so.

Others are apparently unwilling to make an effort to study when it is their opportunity to teach in the local congregation. What a shame when the opportunity is given to edify the church and study is neglected perhaps until moments before it is time to get up and teach. Sometimes great chapters are next in line to teach and a "lesson" is "taught" that absolutely misses the entire point of the inspired writer. Brethren, if you don't want to study please don't be surprised when your efforts to teach are met with disappointment. The least one can do is try to be prepared. If you don't understand the chapter, ask someone for help. -Think on these things. DLK

Announcements

The brethren at the Denton County Church of Christ would like to announce the ordination of Jonathan Edwards as an evangelist. Jonathan is the son of evangelist Doug Edwards and Debbie Edwards. From his youth, Jonathan has held the desire to serve as an evangelist and has worked hard to prepare himself for this office.

Jonathan has worked with the Denton County congregation in Lewisville, Texas for the last four years. His service has helped to establish and build the congregation since its inception. Jonathan has been instrumental in restoring, converting and strengthening many members. His zeal and dedication have been exemplary for the congregation.

Jonathan has given much time to the study of Scriptures and has not failed to teach the whole council of God. His work with the Denton County congregation has both developed and proven his capacity to serve as an



evangelist. It is with full confidence in his commitment and skills that we recommend him. Jonathan is available to hold meetings and to offer council. He may be reached via the contact information below.

Jonathan Edwards
3011 Scott Mill RD
Carrollton, TX 75007
214-578-1444
ifollowchrist@gmail.com

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2012 TEXAS LABOR DAY MEETING

This will be held at the Grapevine Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas. The dates are Friday, Aug. 31 - Sept. 2 with the following evangelists:

Billy Dickinson, Carl Johnson, Clint DeFrance, Bruce Roebuck, Barney Owens & Ronny Wade.

For more info go to:

<http://texaslabordaymeeting.org>
-Randy Cantrell

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PLEASE READ

Perhaps you are considering a move to a different part of our great country. If you have a desire to offer your zeal and talents to assist a faithful congregation in worship, teaching and an outreach to the community, we are inviting you to consider Cottage Grove, Oregon.

The congregation was established many years ago, and through the efforts of Bro. Gayland Osburn and others, the church grew to the largest in Washington and Oregon, with a full building of believers. Even though, over the years, so many of our members have moved or passed away, the few continue to stay steadfast and keep the congregation alive. Our desire, prayers, intentions and efforts are to do our part that God might, once again, give the increase. Perhaps you desire such an opportunity to help. If so, Cottage Grove desperately needs you.

Cottage Grove, OR is a small rural community of approximately 9,500 people and located about 20 miles south of the large city of Eugene, on I-5. We are within easy driving distance to other congregations for additional fellowship and meetings. This community has much to offer growing families as well as retired folks. Please contact: Dennis Wilsey Phone (503) 551-0047 Ed Ferguson Phone (541) 942-8565, email ferg68@juno.com or Ron Burkeen at ronanbetty@gmail.com

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Our Departed

ALDRIDGE- The members of the Freeman Road congregation gathered with the family and friends of Terrie Aldridge at the Granby Cemetery for a short graveside service on May 14, 2012. Terrie was born November 29, 1948 and passed away on May 11, 2012. There would be no singing at this graveside occasion, but I softly and quietly read the lyrics of Fanny Crosby's great song, "Safe in the arms of Jesus." We spoke a few words of Terrie's life recalling the good deeds of her service for the Lord. The work at Freeman Road began four years ago. Terrie was an active part of the congregation right up to the end. She came to knock doors, clean the building, and was always early to every service. Terrie in her last few months suffered great pains from her cancer. Most of the time she was at services, even when death had a firm grip on her body. She inspired the congregation in ways I can't find words to describe. Her forwardness and candor was quick and absolute but sincere. Terrie could make you laugh and had a wonderful time when we all got together. I recall many conversations with her as she questioned her hope of heaven. The thing I remember was how in the last two weeks of her life she finally realized her hope was real and she was at peace. She told me she was ready to go home and all was well with her soul. At the graveside tears were many but the joy of knowing that we will see her again one day was the peace that allowed everyone to depart. One by one God's children are gathering home. What a blessing to have known and worked with our sister Terrie. Roger L. Owens

LOCKARD- Betty Louise Lockard was born June 17, 1926 in Cherryhill Twp., Indiana County, PA and departed this life May 30, 2012 with her loving family at her side. In August of 1948 she married Eugene Lockard and to this union three children (Kenneth, Marsha, and Lori) were born. Betty was a homemaker and it was my privilege to spend many happy days in her home. She was hospitable, kind and caring. Eugene, her husband, has preached around the PA area for many years. During his life he has conducted over ninety-five funerals. Unfortunately Gene fell the day of the funeral and broke his hip and was unable to attend the memorial service. Betty is survived by her husband of sixty-three years, Eugene, her three children and their spouses, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. A large crowd gathered at the Rairigh Funeral Home on June 3 to pay their respects to Betty and the family. It was an honor for this writer to speak a few words of encouragement and warning to the crowd of family and friends who were there. Though gone from our presence, she is not forgotten. - Ronny F. Wade

TRENT - Doyle Trent was born July 10, 1925 in Ardmore, Oklahoma. He departed this life May 14, 2012, in Long Beach, California surrounded by his family. Doyle had been ill and living in a care facility for dementia for the last 2 1/2 years. Doyle is survived by his wife Korean and two children, Donna Stone of Bellflower, Ca. and Geary Trent of Clovis Ca., and a brother Travis of St. Augustine, Fla. He

had 5 grandchildren, Jennifer Nieves of Bellflower, Ca., Darren Stone of Modesto, Ca., Matt Trent of Oakdale, Ca., Andy Trent of Fresno, Ca., and Lori Culver of Clovis, Ca. There are 15 great grandchildren. Doyle was baptized into Christ by good friend Laverne Lum in September 1988 in Porterville, Ca. and was a faithful member of the Covina, Ca. congregation till he was no longer able to attend. Doyle married Korean Milner on July 29, 1948 in Oklahoma and they came to California to start their life together. Doyle was a diesel mechanic for 29 years at the same company, and after he left he continued working on his houses and spending time with family and friends. Doyle was married to Korean 40 years before he obeyed the Gospel. It seems the persistence of his wife Korean and others in his life finally paid off. This story should be a good example for others to never give up on their loved ones or friends. When Doyle passed away Korean was at the head of his bed. When he breathed his last breath Korean looked up at me and said, "Till death do us part". A tribute to their good and long lasting marriage of almost 64 years. Doyle was laid to rest at the Rose Hills Cemetery in Whittier, Ca. A large gathering of family and friends attended the graveside service as words of comfort and respect were given by Don McCord and Doyle's grandson Matt Trent. -Geary Trent

REYNOLDS- Vaughn Morris Reynolds was born September 9, 1937 in the Boston Mountains (near Scotland, Arkansas). Morris was the youngest of four children born to the late John E. and Mittie Mae (Simpson) Reynolds. In November of 1956 Morris married the former Effie Maudine Brown and to this union was born four daughters, Lynette, Debbie, Peggy and Sharon. A son died at birth in 1959. Morris was not a Christian in those early days, although his mother had been baptized by Brother James Stewart and was faithful to the Lord. Morris would be influenced by his wife and daughters to obey the gospel (1 Pet 3:1). On May 6, 1973, during a gospel meeting at the 21st Street Church of Christ in Little Rock, Arkansas, Brother Don Pruitt baptized Peggy, Sharon and Morris into the body of Christ. (The previous Sunday Brother Don had baptized Debbie.) From this point onward, Morris was truly a changed man. Now he would be the leader of his family in spiritual matters. Rather than himself being influenced, he would do the influencing. Morris quit his good-paying job at Teletype because he knew once a month he would be required to work on Sundays and he knew the Lord must come first (Mt 6:33). Morris began working as a carpenter for a local contractor and eventually he would launch out on his own and begin his own business Reynolds Home Builders. Morris' daughters grew up and would each marry preachers and church leaders. Lynette married Byron Spinks; Debbie married Doug Edwards; Peggy married George Bailey; Sharon married Brian Burns. Brother Lynwood Smith once humorously said at a New Year's service, "We will now be led in prayer by brother Morris Reynolds who has supplied wives for all our preachers" an exaggeration of course, but based on truth, for Morris had supplied

wives for three gospel preachers. If one word could be used to describe Morris it would be the word "faithful." Morris often found himself disappointed when relatives and friends would leave the Lord and quit the church. He would often speak to the wayward trying to bring about repentance. Others proved unfaithful over the course of his life, but he himself remained true to the vow he made at his baptism. Brother Morris ended his earthly sojourn on May 30, 2012 at the age of 74. Each of his sons-in-law spoke at his funeral with Benjamin Burns filling in for Brian who was preaching in Africa at the time. Brother Morris' body was laid to rest at the Mt. Zion Cemetery near Jerusalem, Arkansas to await the final resurrection of the dead when the Lord returns (Jn 5:28-29). Brother Morris will be greatly missed, but not forgotten by those who knew him. -George Battey

Field Reports

P. Duane Permenter, 1705 Pecan Dr., Cleburne, TX, Jun 1-We have enjoyed a great trip in Mozambique and have visited 7 different places. At least 300 congregations had church leaders at these different meetings and studies. We have studied many things and we have encouraged, reproved, and rebuked. It has been promising, and we have traveled over 1200 miles on some of the roughest roads in the world. God has been good and we were safe with a minimum of difficulty. I did contract Malaria at the beginning of the trip which was my first case. I was taking anti-malaria medicine. This the doctor said kept my case from being so serious. It took me three days to get well enough to travel and about four days to get 100%. Thank you for all your prayers and God bless! We return to the states July 13 the Lord willing. Peace to all the brotherhood! duane_and_laurie@yahoo.com

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com June 13- Please note my new address and e-mail, we have recently moved back home to Springfield from LaGrange, GA where we spent three and one half years among the wonderful people of that area. While in Georgia we were privileged to work with and among a number of churches in the South. The ties and close bonds we made with many while in that area will endure as long as we live. Recently I have had the privilege of working with the following churches in gospel meetings: Lowery, AL, Walnut Grove, KY, and Flintville, TN. At all these congregations we were privileged to be among some very dedicated people who were sincerely striving to serve the Lord. While at Flintville we were privileged to have Brother

Johnny Fisher present for the entire meeting. Johnny continues to preach and work as his health permits. Currently we are in a good meeting at Mtn. Home, Ark where brother Brett Hickey lives and labors. The Lord willing we look forward to meetings at West Point, GA, Greenville, PA and Mtn. Grove, MO in the near future. May the Lord bless us all as we strive to work for the good and strength of His Kingdom in the world.

Bob Johnson, 4248 Reserve Rd. #102, Lexington, KY 40514 (972-741-1163) bobusj@gmail.com The work continues here in Lexington, as brother Zach Evans and I continue to evangelize and follow up on the television leads produced from Let The Bible Speak. One brother that had been out of duty made repentance and is back with the church here, thanks to the efforts of brother Doug Hawkins. Two other men that Zach and I visited in their homes are potential candidates for obedience to the gospel. Both have been watching the television program and have been enjoying listening to Brett Hickey's sermons. We can only hope and pray that results will soon come about. I was privileged to hear Ronny Wade in a meeting at the Walnut Grove congregation outside of Mt. Vernon, KY. The crowds were good, and Ronny did some powerful preaching, and gave much "food for thought" as we all strive to live and function in this sinful world. Brother Barney Owens begins a meeting with us June 10-17 and Brett Hickey August 5-7. In my recent visit back to Texas to see my new great granddaughter, and also to attend a high school graduation for one of my granddaughters, I was privileged to speak for the Allen and Weatherford congregations. On our way back to Kentucky the brethren at Ratliff City, OK asked me to speak for them during their Wednesday evening service. We look forward to being at two of the services for the of July Meeting in Springfield, Mo and to my speaking engagement at Mt. Home, Arkansas on July 1st where brother Brett Hickey labors. Let us continue to pray as we seek out the few honest hearts that will heed the gospel call and give their lives to the Master.

Kevin W. Presley, 108 Mulberry Ct., Dothan, AL 36303 - May 10, 2012 -- 2012 has, so far, been a good year in the Lord's work. It has been my privilege to preach meetings for the churches in West Point, GA; Fort Smith, AR; Piedmont, AL; El Cajon, CA; and Blue Springs, KY. Each meeting was a good effort

on the part of the brethren and I greatly enjoyed laboring with them. It's always an encouragement to be with my good preaching friend, Don Jackson. Our television program airs in Fort Smith and we had dozens of community visitors as a result. One man left the practice of using individual cups and took a public stand for scriptural worship. Dennis Smith is doing a good work there and I enjoyed being with he and Nance as well as Taylor and Glenna Joyce! I always look forward to being with the brethren at Piedmont. Terry and Angie Studdard are so hospitable and enjoyable to visit with. The church there is enthusiastic and a light in that small community. We were thankful for large crowds and lots of interest at El Cajon - what a vibrant and zealous church! Chris and Jan Allen could not have been more welcoming and hospitable and I was uplifted by the association with preaching brethren Larry Lay and Andrew Tucker. At Blue Springs we were encouraged to see 3 baptized into Christ. These brethren are very dear to me and I always look forward to meetings there! I was also recently with the New Salem, MS church for a Lord's Day and one was baptized there. Lord willing, I will be in Ardmore, OK soon for the annual Memorial Day meeting and then look forward to the 4th meeting in Springfield. I have recently heard some great preaching. Clint De France is with the church in Florala this week doing his usual fine job and Terry Studdard was in Dothan this past weekend. Terry is a very able student of the scriptures and does a wonderful job in preaching the word. Be sure to see the announcement elsewhere in this journal about the new songbooks. Finally, we appreciate all of your prayers and concern on behalf of my father-in-law, Lyle Lorton. They have sustained us through a very difficult time. -Our apologies this was mistakenly left out last month. -DLK

Terry L. Studdard, 538 The Wagon, Road Piedmont, AL 36272, tstuddard75@bellsouth.net -For us, the month of May was very busy. May 4-6 we were invited to hold a weekend meeting at the Dothan, AL congregation. The services were well attended by the members as well as visitors from neighboring congregations. It was good to see Jeff and Georgiana Hughes who made the drive over from Opp, AL to be with us. It was also very good to see that Brother Charles Marsh is getting better from his long battle with his health. Although he is still quite weak, it was a wonderful example to all who were there

to see him in attendance at every service. While there, we made our home with Lawrence and Lena Eubanks who are long time friends and our fellow laborers in Christ. The congregation at Dothan is doing very well and they have a bright future in the service of the Lord. Also while at Dothan, we had the opportunity to visit with our dear friend and brother in Christ Lyle Lorton and his sweet wife Kathy. As many are aware, Lyle has been in a hard battle with his health since about November of last year. He is very weak physically but, I was not surprised to find that he is still as strong as ever in faith. The entire time that we had to spend with him and Kathy, his thoughts and conversation were on the Lord's church rather than on his problems. What an inspiration he is, and always has been, to me! Our prayers are continually for Lyle, Kathy, Bethany, and Garrett. May the Lord grant them His richest blessings! May 18-20 we were blessed to be invited to hold a weekend meeting at the Memphis Church of Christ on Frayser Boulevard in Memphis, TN. It was our first opportunity to attend this congregation but, we soon felt right at home. The hospitality and brotherly love exhibited at this church is amazing. We counted over twenty-five young people from ages eighteen down to newborns in attendance with their parents and grandparents. It was wonderful to see Brother B.B. Cayson, who we have known for so many years, again. Brother Cayson has just had his ninety-first birthday and he is still an able and strong leader in the Church. The care and respect that the men of the congregation give to him is inspirational as well. While we were there, a baptism took place with a young man that Brother Harvey Anthony had been studying with. As we understand, that makes well over one-hundred baptisms at this congregation since they moved into their current building in 1995. While we were there, we made our home with Sister Michelle Carr and her sweet daughter, Destiny. Their care for us was wonderful and we are in their debt. The members of this congregation are all such a delight to be with! I encourage anyone traveling near Memphis to stop and worship there. We were also very glad to make acquaintances with Brother Sullen and other members of the Hollywood Church of Christ in Memphis who attended the meeting. T.L.S.

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MISUSING BIBLE VERSES FOR OUR OWN ADVANTAGE?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Eric J. Bargerhuff says he deplores the misuse of Bible passages for one's own advantage, and he has just published a book entitled, *The Most Misused Verses in the Bible*. In a recent interview Owen Strachan of Christianity Today asked, "What would you say to athletes who latch onto Philippians 4:13 ("I can do all this through him who gives me strength")? Bargerhuff replied, "in that passage, Paul is teaching on contentment and arguing that no matter what our situation is, we should learn to be content ...This verse doesn't necessarily mean that Jesus will give the player victory, but rather that he can be content either way because of God's strength in him. It's not about God giving you the strength to dunk the basketball as much as it is [learning] ...to be content no matter what happens in the game" (Apr. 2012, 79).

I became weary a long time ago of ballplayers who wear passages such as Philippians 4:13 displayed on their bodies to suggest they have invoked God's help in order to win the contest. Bargerhuff does a good job of exposing the popular misuse of this passage.

However, another question that Strachan asked Bargerhuff shows that Bargerhuff himself is not above misusing Bible verses for his own advantage. Strachan asked, "is there a danger, when reading Acts 2:38 ("Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'"), of thinking that baptism is a pre-condition of salvation?"

Bargerhuff responds, "This was a specific command given to a specific group of people who were to express their salvation through baptism. There is a difference between the means of salvation and an obedient response to salvation. Baptism was an expression of what had already happened in the heart. Baptism was not to be linked with salvation, because that would make salvation the product of a specific action, contradicting the teaching that salvation comes through faith, not works."

I am amused, to say the least, that Strachan suggests it is a dangerous thing to read Acts 2:38 and conclude baptism is a condition of salvation. The real danger lies in Bargerhuffs declaration that "baptism was not to be linked with salvation."

The Lord Himself connects baptism and salvation in a straightforward and unequivocal way. In the Great Commission Jesus says, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved..." (Mk. 16:16). Matthew's account agrees completely with Mark's (28:19-20). Those who heard or read these words for the first time must have understood the connection between baptism and salvation; it is the only natural reading of the words. By divine appointment a part of the saving process involves baptism. Peter agrees by saying, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21 KJV).

If baptism does not have any special saving significance, why would it be mentioned in the Great Commission at all? If its connection with salvation is no different from any other good work Christian's are commanded to do, as is suggested by Bargerhuff, why is baptism alone singled out for this lofty honor? Why do we not read, "He who has believed and has visited the fatherless and widows in their affliction shall be saved"? Or, "He who has believed and has given to the poor shall be saved"? Or, "He who has believed and has kept himself unspotted from the world shall be saved"? As important as all these duties are, none is chosen for this honor. Only baptism merits inclusion in the Great Commission as a condition of salvation comparable to faith, repentance, and confession.

Bargerhuff also argues that "baptism is an expression of what has already happened." In other words, he contends Peter is saying in Acts 2:38, "Be baptized because your sins have been forgiven." Such a conclusion is absurd based solely upon the context. The whole point is that the Jews sins are not forgiven, and they are asking Peter what they must do in order to receive forgiveness (Acts 2:37).

The Greek construction of "for the remission of sins" in Acts 2:38 is exactly the same in Matthew 26:28, where Jesus says, "For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." No one would argue that Jesus shed His blood because our sins had already been forgiven, and no one can consistently argue that we are to be baptized because our sins have already been forgiven.

I salute Bargerhuff for warning us about misusing Bible passages for our own advantage, but with all due respect, he is guilty of the very thing he condemns in others. Paul says in Romans 2:1 that such behavior is inexcusable, and I am not misusing that verse for my own advantage. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com