

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).

VOL. XC

LEBANON, MISSOURI • MARCH, 2018

NO. 3

BRINGING HOME THE GOLD

By *RICK MARTIN*

In the Bible we have an account of two kings who (at separate times in history) got into shipbuilding to further their kingdoms, power and wealth. Their names are Solomon and Jehoshaphat. Both men chose the same seaport of Ezion-Geber to build and launch their ships. One succeeded and one failed. Why was that the case?

First, we will notice what Solomon did. Solomon built ships that withstood every circumstance that came against them. Was there a secret to his success? 1 Kings 9:27 “And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon”. A key to Solomon’s success was he used experienced shipmen who had knowledge of the sea.

In about 992 B.C. Solomon succeeded in the building of a fleet of ships, 1 Kings 9:26-28. Those ships passed all the tests within the harbor at Ezion-geber, then left the shelter of the harbor and went out on the high seas. Solomon’s ships accomplished what they were built for! They brought back gold. 1 Kings 9:28.

Many years later (B.C. 897), King Jehoshaphat tried building ships at Ezion-geber to follow the example that Solomon had set. Jehoshaphat was not successful. Before his ships left the safety of the harbor, God caused them to be broken. This was a lot of work for nothing.

Why was it that Jehoshaphat, even with the benefits of Solomon’s success, could build ships in the same place, with the same working conditions, obstacles, etc., and yet be a failure?

2 Chronicles 20:35-37 gives us the reason as to why Jehoshaphat’s ships were wrecked at Ezion-geber. The

reason was Jehoshaphat joined forces with the wicked king, Ahaziah.

Jehoshaphat made an unwise decision to go into partnership with an ungodly man - a man who carried no convictions of right and wrong. There would have been “no way” that Ahaziah would have seen the need for the right, experienced men of knowledge who could see what was ahead, who knew how to prepare. Instead Jehoshaphat compromised, and his ships were broken.

This is a great lesson for us! The principles still apply today: “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”. 2 Corinthians 6:14.

Jehoshaphat paid a high price for breaking that Biblical principle and so, do we! Watch carefully who you go into any partnership with! They do and will influence you according to what is in their heart.

These ships can represent our Christian life. They can represent our vision and calling. They show us that there is a right and wrong way to do things in the Kingdom of God.

The right way is to use experienced knowledgeable people, who can see where we’re going in life; who have been out on the high seas themselves and have survived a few storms.

The wrong way is to involve people in positions of authority and responsibility who do not have a proven track record; people who do not hold to the principles of God. Just because Ahaziah was a king didn’t mean he had “what it takes” to enable Jehoshaphat to fulfill his vision. Because Jehoshaphat did not use God-fearing people “who had knowledge of the sea”, he was defeated!

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single Subscription One Year..... \$15.00
 Also On The Internet

Published Monthly by **Old Paths Advocate**, Lebanon, MO
 A.C. Brockman, 2033 King James, Lebanon, MO 65536
 periodical postage paid at Lebanon, MO 65536
 Send Form 3579 to **Old Paths Advocate**
 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550.

All articles published in **Old Paths Advocate** contain the view of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors and publishers. If you have any questions, please direct them to the author listed at the heading of the article.

Editorial

LEARNING FROM THE PARABLES

By DON L. KING

The parables of Jesus are beyond superb. While they read much as a simple story, what is taught is profound. The Savior became known for his parabolic teaching. It was undoubtedly interesting to hear, and the audiences had their minds stirred to new heights. The longer they thought about the parables He spoke, the more they were able to grasp what the kingdom of Christ, or church, would be like. It was an ingenious way to bring their minds into focus about the church, and that was His purpose in using the parables.

A parable is literally a “laying alongside.” Jesus would tell a story, which all understood, and then often say, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto...” In so doing, He would lay alongside of the story which all understood, the kingdom which no one understood and show the similarity. Please keep in mind that his audiences had no idea what His kingdom would be like. When they thought of a kingdom, it was likely that they envisioned a kingdom such as David had, or some other great man. They thought of a “King” as a fantastically wealthy person with a great palace and many servants. However, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords made his entrance into this world through a barn door. His friends were ordinary men, some of whom were simple fishermen. Our Lord had no money to speak of and no permanent dwelling place on earth. When it was time to pay the temple taxes, Jesus sent Peter fishing and told him to open the mouth of the first fish that came up. Inside, Jesus said, would be a piece of money, and he was to take that and pay the taxes for the group. (Matthew 17:27) Christ did not fit the picture of some earthly great King at all. Yet, he established a kingdom which would stand forever.

While all of the parables are wonderful, we would like to direct your minds to the one often called “the marriage of the king’s son.” This is found in Matthew 22:2-14. While many of His parables dealt with an immediate situation, this one covers quite a lot of time. It deals with some things even in the Old Testament which we can’t write about due to space. The basics are that a certain king made a marriage for his son and then encountered many problems with getting people to attend. Sometimes people assume the similar parable

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QUERIST COLUMN

By CLINT DE FRANCE

Question: Can men work miracles by the power of Satan? If not, how did the magicians in Pharaoh's court work miracles? What does the Bible mean when it condemns sorcery?

Response: We will address these two questions in turn. The first question: "Can men work miracles by the power of Satan?" is, from the perspective of this writer, one of the most important questions Christians may ask concerning the legitimacy of our faith. Miracles are at the heart of the Christian faith as the central evidence that our religion is indeed from God. In preaching to the unbelieving Jews on the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter appealed to the miracles of Christ as proof that he was ordained and approved of God: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know..." (Acts 2.22). In fact, Peter's own sermon was confirmed by the miracles he worked on that occasion (Mark 16.20).

It was understood by the Jews that miracles were a sign of divine endorsement. This is why Nicodemus said, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him" (John 3.2 - emphasis added) and why Jesus said, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"-then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." (Matthew 9.6) That last passage is particularly significant. Not every miracle worker had the power to forgive sins, but when Jesus claimed to have that power, and then worked a miracle, it was heavenly proof that his claims were true! When politicians are vying for the affections of the nation, we will see commercials making all sorts of grand promises and commitments and at the end the politician's voice will say: "I'm so-and-so, and I approve this message." Just so, when men worked miracles correspondent to preaching a sermon, God was saying through the miracle: "I approve this message."

All Biblical writers appeal to the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the single greatest reason for accepting Jesus as the Son of God, Savior, Lord, and Judge. "God [gave]

assurance ... to all [of His approval of Jesus] by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17.31). For these reasons I believe the late R. C. Sproul was correct in defining a miracle as something only God can do. If the Devil can work miracles, mankind has no assurance that any message is truly from God. One could even argue that Satan raised Jesus from the dead! The Biblical response is that only God can do these things. To suggest that miracles are the works of Satan, is what Jesus called the unpardonable sin and blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12.24-32)!

All human attempts at the miraculous, apart from God, are clearly distinguished as "false signs and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2.9). The magicians of Pharaoh's court were like Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8, hucksters and charlatans who recognized the inferiority of their tricks when laid alongside the power of God.

So then, to our next question, what does the Bible mean in its frequent condemnations of sorcery? If sorcery is just a silly show, why does the Bible speak such harsh words against it even condemning its practitioners to death in the Old Testament (Exodus 22.18) and Hell in the New Testament (Rev. 21.8)?

At least one evil of witchcraft is the fact that sorcery, while having no legitimate supernatural power, is a devilish effort to lead men away from the light of divine truth. In Deuteronomy 18.10-11, the Bible enumerates different kinds of sorcery: "There shall not be found among you anyone who...practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead." Bible Scholar James Freeman offers in-depth analysis of each of the seven Hebrew terms used here by Moses to describe various acts of divination or witchcraft (Manners and Customs of the Bible). In each case, we have an effort on the part of men to discover mysteries about heaven, the afterlife, or the future - bypassing the Word of God.

For instance, the soothsayer, or observer of times, is primarily one who distinguishes between lucky and unlucky days, years, or seasons. These use the stars and planets, and cards and books (called bibliomancy) to attempt to forecast the future so that people can make life decisions accordingly. We know this kind of sorcery in the modern horoscope and tarot card readers. Then he mentions interpreters of omens, sorcerers and conjurers of spells. Each of these refers to the various slight of

QUERIST COLUMN continued from page three

hand tricks that dupe ignorant people into thinking someone has more power than they do. The conjuror of spells seems to be more of a druggist, who manufactures and administers potions, herbs, and chemical mixtures with the promise that it will bring visions or greater clarity of mind. This is certainly the meaning of the New Testament word sorcerer, which comes from the Greek pharmakon or literally pharmacist! So this would actually have reference to recreational drug dealers and drug users. Finally, Moses mentions mediums, spiritists and those who call up the dead. These three terms refer to different approaches to contact with the dead. We know this is an extremely popular concept - even today.

According to the Bible, only God can foretell the future, give spiritual enlightenment, or raise the dead in any sense. There is no truth or light in these duplicitous shams. Those who consult magicians only receive lies and deceptions. Consider Isaiah 8.19-20, "And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony [that is the Bible]! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

We have, in the Bible a book of truth, sealed and confirmed by miracles - proven the production of God the creator. Rely on the Bible. Read it, believe it, and obey it - and rest in the truth that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY - WHEN OUR CHILDREN MARRY

By GREG GAY

Please note, the first paragraphs of this article are deliberately written rather "tongue in cheek," in an attempt to emphasize the seriousness of the topic and the application of the scriptural concepts as explained in the latter paragraphs.

When our children marry, our hearts may be filled with great joy, or dread, or a portion of both depending on our degree of approval and our perspective of the relationship's odds of success.

We often do not have a foundation of trust for the person our child is marrying even though we may believe we have come to know them quite well in the time they have been part of our child's life. Knowing someone, liking them, admiring and appreciating them are all important positive relationship characteristics, but they are not the same as the additional commitment that is required when we welcome someone into our family who is marrying our child.

Some parents, attempting to be inclusive, welcome their child's spouse as a son or daughter they have always known and loved. That is a wonderful sentiment and sounds nice in the wedding speeches, but is usually very impractical since they are new to the family, as family. No two families share the exact same preferences, even in the Lord's church. Something so small as what foods are included at traditional family gatherings and how they are prepared can derail such a fine intention.

Other parents make no attempt to create a good relationship with their new son-in-law or daughter-in-law and grudgingly tolerate them as an unnecessary invasion of their perfect family. Such parents rarely miss an opportunity to reflect openly on the inferior qualities all possess outside their family.

It follows then, in our parental musings, any negative issues in the future marriage will be attributed to the person our child is marrying, or to the family into which our child is marrying.

It is true, once in a great while, parents have a child whose behavior and character are so horrible they would be tempted to lead them to the gate for stoning, if we lived under the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 21 :18-21), but that is extremely rare.

It is far more likely we are parents who may be willing to acknowledge a few minor flaws in our child, but would not go beyond the ability to maintain a delusion of family infallibility, believing "our child can do no wrong." Furthermore, deep down we likely do not believe anyone is truly and completely worthy of a marriage relationship with one of our children.

Miraculously, when a grandchild enters the picture, our family's infallibility is presumed to continue in the child, except for those character flaws that must obviously originate in the family of the person our perfect child consented to marry.

While all of the above may sound overly sarcastic or even harsh, it is likely some of the statements given thus far have resonated uncomfortably with all who have ever had a child get married. The truth of how we cope with such change is likely closer to the middle than to either extreme described above.

When our children marry, we want a great life for them, but we know they are not guaranteed to live “happily ever after.” Their marriage may be wonderful or terrible. They may be happy or miserable. Their relationship may bring great joy or great heartache to the families on both sides of the wedding aisle.

We know it is God’s will for our children to marry, and has been from the beginning. The scriptures declare, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24 NKJV).

When we look to the scriptures we see a mixture of both good and ill in in-law relationships.

The marriages of Isaac and Rebekah’s son Esau are described in the book of Genesis. “When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah” (Genesis 26:34-35 NKJV).

The phrase “grief of mind” is explained by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown to mean the wives were “contentious or obstreperous to Isaac and Rebekah.” The wonderful word, “obstreperous,” means “Noisy and difficult to control,” according to the online Oxford dictionary.

By contrast, we see the beautiful account of Ruth’s interactions with her mother-in-law Naomi as an example of a remarkable relationship with a child’s spouse (Ruth 1:1-5). When Ruth’s husband died, she continued her relationship with her mother-in-law, Naomi. When Naomi urged her to return to her people, Ruth stayed with Naomi. Her commitment to her mother-in-law and to the God of her mother-in-law is expressed in some of the most beautiful words ever penned.

“Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. Where you die,

I will die, And there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me” (Ruth 1:16-17 NKJV).

At the end of the short book, the women of the community reported to Naomi their observations of the preciousness of the relationship she had with Ruth. They pronounced Ruth to be, “your daughter-in-law, who loves you...” (Ruth 4: 16).

While this beautiful relationship is what we prefer with the person our child marries, evidence usually indicates one or both of the parents struggles to contribute successfully to a love and respect filled relationship with their child’s spouse.

What follows are some suggestions for a positive relationship with the person our child marries. Parents of a child who marries would do well to:

Stop “raising” their child, and do not take on the task of also raising the son-in-law or daughter-in-law. The “leaving” of Genesis 2:24 is to be honored by parent and child, otherwise relationship chaos and resentment usually occurs.

Give advice very sparingly, preferably when requested. Advice is always received best when sought, rather than volunteered or forced upon us. Many parents work hard to attempt to be subtle in how they bring up a topic so they can “tell” their married child and his or her spouse something they just must get off their chest. By contrast, notice how careful Moses’ father-in-law Jethro was about giving Moses advice. “If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace” (Exodus 18:23 NKJV).

Be generous, but be very careful about attaching strings to your gifts. It is fine for parents to tell their married child something like, “I want to buy you a new dining room table,” but not if it is followed by the parents demanding the right to list the foods that will be served for meals. The Bible says, “A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet” (proverbs 29:5 NKJV). Certainly gift giving is wonderful for loving hearts, but receiving a gift that has strings may not be worth the price one has to pay.

Encourage spiritual growth and faithfulness to God. One of the greatest desires we have when our children

marry is that their spouse will be appropriate in their relationship with God. The values of the New Testament couples Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) and Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2-3) are in stark contrast. One couple encouraged one another to spiritual ruin while the other supported and encouraged one another in spiritual growth and service to God. The best way we as parents can encourage spiritual growth and faithfulness in others, including our children who marry, is to practice those values ourselves.

Encourage our children to seek God first in selecting a mate and in building a life together, as we all are to do in all our ways (Matthew 6:33). While marrying someone who has been raised in the church is no guarantee of a great relationship, it can increase the odds of success. Shared values do promote closeness as is proven by such verses as, “I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought” (1 Corinthians 1:10 NKJV).

As parents of a child who marries we would do well to remember the only one we can truly control in any relationship is ourselves. Instead of seeking and pointing out flaws in the person our child has chosen to marry let us consider how we can be who we need to be, which follows the scriptural principle given by Jesus: “And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? (Matthew 7:3). No one is ever built up by being “put down” by others. We never improve our status in our child’s eyes by running down their mate. “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up...” 1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV).

We certainly want our child to be treasured and treated well in their marriage, but mistakes do happen. It is best if the parents of a married child are not overly involved in such, but that is not usually practical advice. When relationship difficulties occur in our child’s marriage, parents tend to be too quick to blame our child’s spouse and will be sorely tempted to hold a grudge for the rest of their lives. Instead, the Bible reminds us to be ready to forgive: “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32NKJV).

Finally, let us be realistic about the character of our own child and recognize our adult child has to be responsible for his or her own decisions and their own relationship

with God. While we want our child to be treated after the beautiful imagery of the example of the relationship between Christ and the Church, he or she also has the obligation to do their part in cherishing and loving their spouse, as do we all in our marriage relationships. “let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Ephesians 5:33 NKIV). 5109 Chicago Ave., Fair Oaks, CA 95628, gregorypgay@gmail.com

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL PREACHER

By AARON BATTEY

There are many thankless jobs awaiting applicants. Medical and non-profit organizations are proper examples of industries that offer irreplaceable services; yet, they receive little praise. Being a preacher is no less a thankless service. I am not a preacher, but having been raised by one, worked with one, and looked up to one, I can testify to the truthfulness of that statement. This being true, please ponder some evidences for this claim, and consider a few ways by which you can support your local preacher.

The apostle Paul sacrificed as a preacher and apostle only to be constantly ridiculed and have his intentions questioned. Paul implied no less when writing 1 Thessalonians. This great preacher was treated spitefully in Philippi for teaching the gospel (1 Thess. 2:2), and even though he had spoken to those in Thessalonica with no deceit (2:3), without flattering words (2:5), and being as gentle as a mother to her children (2:7), there was apparently some criticism of Paul in his absence that warranted the apostle to justify himself in this first letter to the church. Similar circumstances prompted the same preacher to defend himself to the Corinthians in his absence; read 1 Corinthians 4 and 2 Corinthians 10 for proof. These and a host of like experiences are most likely why Paul encouraged his young protege Timothy to, “Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,” (2 Timothy 2:3). Likewise, after warning the elders at Ephesus that they would have to stop the mouths of wolves (false teachers) who would sneak into the church, Paul gives example of just how much energy this would require: “Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears,” (Acts 20:31). The job of a preacher is physically draining, mentally exhausting, faith challenging, and sometimes soul wrenching. Just because you shake the preacher’s hand on Sunday

morning and he says, "I'm doing alright," doesn't mean he is calm on the inside. Indeed, dealing with the problems that accompany the job can very well make the preacher sick and require a prescription (1 Timothy 5:23).

With a preacher's job being what it is, contemplate avenues by which you can lighten his load. There are a host of simple tasks any individual can carry out that will motivate the preacher and make his work for God a little easier. First, do not aimlessly complain about the preacher behind his back. Paul warns against backbiting in 2 Cor. 12:20, not to overshadow bitterness and evil speaking in Ephesians 4:29. The golden rule, "love your neighbor as yourself," will help guard against this. Ask the question, "Am I any better than the preacher in the thing I am complaining about?" Furthermore, "Will complaining about this detail do any good?" One unknown author distinguished between constructive criticism and complaining similar to this: pointing out flaws in someone or something without offering a solution is complaining. Constructive criticism offers resolution and edification. Second, offer the preacher your time and service. Many times, preachers are burdened with tasks that do not require a preacher. Paul commended Phoebe of the congregation in Rome because, "She has been a helper of many and of myself also." John Maxwell in his book The 21 Irrefutable Law of Leadership speaks to the importance of leaders empowering followers and delegating to them appropriately. Unfortunately, there is often a shortage of Phoebe's who are willing to offer their time and pick up delegation. Third, give the preacher a token of appreciation. Paul spoke of Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus in this manner, "What was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men," (Romans 16:17-18). Many subconsciously believe the preacher is such a confident individual, secure in his faith, so much so that he never grows weary and should never need someone giving him affirmation. Recall the burden that accompanies the work of preaching. A thank you card will suffice. Whatever the case, encourage the preacher in the work of God.

There are many preaching jobs awaiting applicants. There are many congregations starving for an evangelist to establish them. People wonder why there are not more young men chomping at the bit to preach. There are many factors that contribute to this present-day dilemma, but one factor has a simple resolution. Support your local preacher.

THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

There is a work in the church called "the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:6). Not every member is required to do this work. The Greek word translated "evangelist" is "euangelistes" and "means a messenger of good... denotes a preacher of the Gospel" (W.E. Vine). There is also a position in the church which we refer to as the eldership (Tit. 1:5-6). These two positions have been authorized by God. The qualifications of one office are not necessarily those of the other. Qualifications for the office of an elder are found in 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1. One of the qualifications required is that the individual be a family man. An evangelist is not so required. The apostle Paul was not married, and there is no indication that Timothy or Titus were married, but they were active in evangelism. Philip, "the evangelist" (Acts 21:8) was married and had four daughters (Acts 21:8, 9). So an evangelist may either be married or unmarried.

A person can be a local teacher, and not be an evangelist nor an elder. The writer makes it clear in Eph. 4:11. "He gave some evangelists...some pastors (elders) and teachers." All evangelists are teachers, but all teachers are neither elders nor evangelists.

The field of evangelism is unlimited (Matt. 13:38). Jesus says "go teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19), and "Go preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark. 15:15). The work of the eldership is distinctly different. It is a position in a local sense. The apostle Peter tells the elders of the church to, "Feed the Rock of God which is among you" (1 Pet. 5:2). Also, the apostle Paul tells the elders at Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). The responsibility and their authority is limited to one congregation where they have been appointed, and extends no further.

The work of an evangelist is primarily the preaching of the Gospel. The Greek word translated "work" in 2 Tim. 4:6 is "ergon", meaning "occupation, labor". (Not just a sideline.) When Paul was giving his instructions to Timothy, a young evangelist, he said, "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:1, 2). Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4: 11).

Again, the apostle Paul advised Timothy, “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine... Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them” (1 Tim. 4: 13, 15).

Evangelistic work includes, not only the preaching of the Gospel, but other duties as well. It includes “setting in order things that are wanting” (Tit. 1: 5), the ordaining of elders when men qualify (1 Tim. 3: 1, 2; Tit. 1: 6); the training of teachers (2 Tim. 2:2), and the disciplining of unruly members (2 Tim. 4:2-4) - including elders who sin (2 Tim. 5:22). And all of this is to be done without partiality (1 Tim. 5:21).

While an evangelist has been given authority by the Lord, it does not supersede the authority of the eldership. When an evangelist ordains elders, immediately he becomes subject to their authority. The elders represent congregational authority, and the Bible says, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim. 5:17). They are shepherds over the flock. This makes an evangelist who is a part of a congregation with elders, subject to that authority just like all other members. That does not make any less the authority nor the responsibilities of the evangelist. However, the writer of Hebrews says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account...” (Reb. 13:17). This submission shows respect for those men who have met the qualifications, and respect for their God given authority. Even so, elders are not to “lord it over God’s heritage” (1 Pet. 5:3).

The apostle Paul taught the Corinthians that “...the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel (be supported)” (1 Cor. 9:14). Again, he said to the church at Philippi, “... ye sent once and again to my necessity” (Phil. 4:16). In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul wrote, “I robbed other churches taking wages of them to do you service” (2 Cor. 11 :8).

The financial support of the church makes it possible for the evangelist to scripturally “forbear working” (1 Cor. 9:6), so that he is free to go into all the world and “preach the Gospel to every creature”, and to “teach all nations” (Mark 1:15, 16; Matt. 28:19, 20). “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). -OPA

THE 2018 PHILIPPINE TRIP

By DON L. KING

In early January, Brother Frank Brancato, myself, and our Grandson, Landon Baker made the trip to the Philippines. It turned out to be one of the best in several years. Brethren Edson Danao, Dario Estavillo, and Conrado Libertino, from Mindanao, joined us in Manila for the route chosen for us to make this year.

For the next several days, we journeyed among the congregations on the Island of Luzon with Frank and I taking turns preaching at each service. Good crowds greeted us almost everywhere and people began coming forward for baptism. After all the past years, it almost seemed like going home to me. Most of the places I had visited many times before and knew many of the brethren we saw on a daily basis. Brother Edson did all the driving for us and did very well indeed. Most of the translating was done by Dario Estavillo from Ilocos Norte. He does a superb job and does it easily.

We spent a couple of weeks among the congregations on the Island of Luzon and were encouraged by what we saw. Toward the end of our trip we all flew to the Island of Palawan where we have had churches for several years now. We hired a van with driver who took us where we needed to go, and we continued our preaching as on Luzon. By the end of the trip there had been 132 baptisms, 44 of which were on Palawan alone. The Philippines are a fertile field. At one place in the North there must have been two hundred or more at one of the services. If you have wondered how many of those baptized remain faithful, that would appear to validate the work.

The congregation in Baguio City will, Lord willing, receive some needed help from Brother Dario Estavillo in the near future. A beloved preacher, Fernando Alvaro passed away a number of years ago during his work in that city. His family has struggled to keep the church alive since then. It was good to have Bro Libertino preach there this year. Dario has agreed to go there and work soon and this will be a huge help. Baguio is a mountainous place close to 5,000 feet elevation. It reminds one of Northern California with its cool climate and pine trees. However, it has grown tremendously in the last 30 years and is now quite crowded with a large population. When Jerry Cutter and I first went there in

1981 it was not crowded, and we really enjoyed being there and just walking the city. It is still a great field and has much potential for growth. There are a number of colleges there which means there are many young people, some of which are attending religious schools.

It was a pleasure to have Frank with us again this year. As usual, he did a great job preaching and was a real joy to have with us. Landon, paid his own way to go just to see and experience the work. He says he really enjoyed it and would like to return sometime. The work continues to grow and expand; and it is such a joy to see many young people among the churches, some of who are now preachers, who have never known anything but the scriptural way of worship. Bro Libertino has worked hard and long in Mindanao; and while I have not yet visited that Island, the reports are encouraging. We sent him there to begin the work quite a few years ago. His steadfastness has been of invaluable help. Edson works in the area of Santiago (Luzon) and has also been a great help. We correspond regularly, as we do with most of the preachers, and together they have done a great work.

The work has not been without troubles through the years, but it continues to survive and flourish. To God be the praise. We continue to ask your prayers for the work. If you would like to be involved, feel free to contact us. There are almost always needs to be filled.
-DLK

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BRINGING HOME continued from page one

On the other hand, Solomon had learned a few things from his father David. He saw how David had succeeded in getting on the throne of Israel. He had built around him “men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do”, 1 Chronicles 12:32.

Christians are called first and foremost to serve God: to listen to Him and obey His call. When we listen to, and build (our lives, plans and, future) on His Word, then we will have good success.

If we don't listen, we will be “destroyed” before we even get out of the inner, quiet and peaceful harbor. Sailing on the high seas will only be a dream ... and will eventually turn into a nightmare! No one can fight against God and be happy!

We must continually examine our own heart and motives if we are to succeed out on the high seas. We must make very sure that we are doing what God wants us to do. It is much easier to “go with the flow” of popular opinion, but if we want eternal fruit and results, we will be wise to listen to the call of Jesus our Master.

Jesus summed up His teachings on “The Sermon on the Mount” with the illustration of a wise and a foolish man. Both men heard the same thing; yet one finished up a real success and the other a complete failure. Why was it that one was a success and the other a failure? The successful wise man, DID what Jesus said, and built his house accordingly. The foolish man did not DO what Jesus told him!

Solomon represents the wise man and Jehoshaphat represents the foolish man. We either build according to the pattern Jesus gives us, or we, too, will be swept away with the storms of life that eventually come to everyone. The only way we can be obedient to Jesus is for us to hear what He says and do it.

We must make sure we launch out properly prepared, and with the right, spiritually minded people around us. Then ... we will have the joy of “bringing home the gold”! mmartin@bellsouth.net

LEARNING FROM continued from page two

found in Luke 14:16-24 is the very same one. However, in our opinion it is not. The one in Luke 14 seems to have been spoken at a different time and place; (one at a meal and this at the temple) and while there are some similarities, there are also great differences. The one in Luke 14 appears to be at an earlier time when the feelings against Christ were not so severe; while in Matthew 22, the feelings had graduated to major hatred against the Lord by his enemies. Getting back to Matthew 22: those who were invited to the marriage simply refused to come. They marked their contempt for the invitation as strongly as they knew how. They didn't bother to make excuses, they just refused to attend. This indicates a severe situation.

Eventually, the king insisted that those even along the highways should be invited. We know that when the Jews were so disappointing to the Lord, the Gentiles were bidden to come. We can read this in Acts 10 when Cornelius and his house were baptized by Peter. From that time many of the Jews turned away while the Gentiles eagerly obeyed. Romans 11 is a wonderful study along those lines. But, back to the parable.

Though the king had killed a plurality of oxen and fatlings, the ones invited didn't pay serious attention to the marriage feast. One went to his "farm" (this word apparently could also mean his estate) while another went to his merchandise, or business. It would appear that one had already made his fortune while the other was seeking to do so. In other words, they had things they were far more interested in. This has been a problem with getting people interested in spiritual things all along. However, when others mistreated the servants who were giving out the invitations and even killed some of them, the king's anger became a real problem. He sent his armies and burned up their city. Richard Trench, in his excellent commentary suggests that this could only be the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Later in the parable, the king came into the wedding and saw a fellow who was not dressed in the conventional wedding garment. When the king asked the man why he was not properly attired, the Bible says, "... And he was speechless." (Matthew 22: 12) This is quite a powerful point. What a picture we have here. It would seem to present a man at the judgment who is not ready to meet the Lord. The wedding garment seems to represent righteousness in general. If so, here is the sad plight of

a member of the church who does not have a righteous life behind him. He simply has nothing with which to recommend himself to the Lord, the righteous Judge. What a sad day it will be for such who are members of the church. They have come to the wedding, so to speak, but they are not dressed to meet the Lord.

When one is baptized into Christ, he puts on Christ, (Galatians 3:27) That means we become, as much as possible, like the Lord ourselves. We die to sin, that is, we stop living a sinful life. A noticeable change takes place. Women let their hair grow (1 Corinthians 11-2-16) and dress modestly, (1 Timothy 2: 9,10; 1 Peter 3:3). Men also make the change and live as Christ would have us to be. If a man has been a drinker and is converted to Christ, he naturally stops that behavior. His language and everyday life becomes clean and wholesome. The point here is that when we put on Christ, His likeness and holiness become our wedding garment. If not, we are not ready to meet the Lord in judgment. We are not wearing a wedding garment. Ask yourself: "if the Lord came today, would I be speechless?" We need to consider very carefully this possibility. When one looks at the final end of the man who was speechless, it is not good. He is bound and cast into outer darkness! Jesus said there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Verse 13)

Not much doubt about the subject here. Now, look around and consider how often one sees members who are careless with their souls. Careless in where they go, what they do, how they dress, how they live, and how they speak every day. Do we manifest Christ in our lives?

Think on these things. -DLK

Announcement

To Whom It May Concern:

I cannot take part in military service in any form, directly or indirectly, in combatant or noncombatant service. Below are listed some of the reasons:

1. My duty and obligation to God is superior to all other obligations (Acts 5:29; Matt. 23:37).
2. My God in the Bible forbids that I engage in carnal warfare in the following references: "Put up again thy sword ... for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matt. 26:52); "For the weapons

of our warfare are not carnal” (II Cor. 10: 3-4); “Turn the other cheek” (Matt. 5:39); “Recompense to no man evil for evil” (Rom. 12:17).

3. To enter any military service, combatant or noncombatant, I would be compelled to “swear” (take an oath), but the Bible forbids that I do so. “Swear not at all” (Matt. 5:34).

4. To enter any military service I would be compelled to be yoked with unbelievers, which is forbidden. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (II Cor. 6:14).

5. To be in any branch of the military service in any way, I would be a part of an organization and would therefore have fellowship in the service, but such is prohibited. “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

6. To serve in the military service in any way, I would be deprived of obeying the command to assemble on the Lord’s Day to worship God in the Bible way, at least part of the time, hence would disobey God. (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Therefore, I cannot conscientiously engage in carnal warfare in any form or branch, and for the above reasons, I ask that my name be listed in support of the above principles.

11/30/2017

Johnathan Spradley
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Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, February 12, oldpaths@juno.com - The trip to the Philippines was a great success. (see report elsewhere this issue) It was a pleasure to have Brother Frank Brancato with us again this year. He is a hard worker and does a fine job. We want to especially thank Brother Ronny Wade for putting out the February issue for us while we were out of the Country. Though he was very ill, he got the job done, and it is a very good issue. Since arriving home, we have been busy getting back on American time. With a sixteen-hour time difference it takes several days to accomplish. For those of you who have enquired about my health: I am doing very well now. The broken arm is healed and the speech problems have disappeared. Lord willing, that will continue. It

has been my privilege to preach at home a few times and we look forward to more. We are getting ready to mail the copy of the March issue to the printers soon and we hope all enjoy it. Preachers, we need your articles and reports by the 12th of the month. Let us hear from you next month. Pray for the work.

Roger L. Owens, P.O. Box 239 Neosho, MO. 64850, 2017 - What Lack I Yet? No matter how hard we work at building our spiritual character, the attempt to reflect Christ character in ourselves seems always uncompleted, an uncompleted task in all areas needing that need to be built up in one’s life. Paul said I press toward the mark the high calling of God in Christ Jesus my Lord. God’s work last year was very difficult and the hours very long. The work in the Northwestern United States is progressing. We have reached a great number of folks through radio, TV, Newspaper, EDDM or every door direct mailings & old fashion cold calling. We have sent out a great number of Bible Correspondence Courses as well. We have noted a great increase in Casper and Cheyenne Wyoming. I have contacted inquiries from Idaho and Utah as well. We have had our greater success in Nebraska Scottsbluff to be exact. We now have a new, though small, congregation that has stood its ground since August of 2017. We have two interested brothers who have joined us in this effort, Thaddeus Young & Mark Whitaker both of Colorado. These two men have labored in the work leading the Sunday worship services. We have a number of home studies that are beginning to take place. Our financial needs are still way behind in the effort. I can also tell you that one congregation has paid for the TV program I think this is the third year in a row. We have a good number of listeners to the TV program. Please consider this congregation when traveling across the Northwest. I know well how important the work around the world is to all of us. But when I ask who does this work take in I think of the question, “Who is my neighbor?” Let us not be guilty of neglecting our nation and neighborhoods as we attempt to save folks on the other side of the globe. My neighbor isn’t just someone on the other side of the world, but the people I see every day. As for me and my house we will serve the Lord. The influences of this world are bad but what about my influence and yours on my family first and then all my friends and family? Folks if we neglect to speak the truth to those closest to us. How will we save those far away from us? Please pray for this effort and support it when you are able to do so. Thanks so much to the congregations that have sent to our needs. God bless this year and the fruits of our labors as we go forward in the Master’s cause.

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THE BACK PAGE...

IN CONCLUSION

By CARL M. JOHNSON

In 1975 my friend Karl Modgling had just graduated from Cal State Fullerton University and he asked if he could accompany me on some meetings during the summer months. After sitting in my audience through several nights of meetings in Florida and Louisiana, he asked, "Do you know what is my favorite part of your sermons?" I was intrigued by his question and replied, "No, what part?" He answered, "It's the part when you say, 'In conclusion.'" I have a hunch he is not the only one who has felt that way. In fact, I can remember Lynwood Smith saying on a couple of occasions that the definition of a true optimist is a lady in church services who would put her shoes back on when the preacher says, "And, in conclusion." I am reminded of those observations as I write this article as my final installment of the Back Page.

In February of 2003 Don King, owner and publisher of the Old Paths Advocate, sent a message to all the editors asking if we had any ideas about what we could do to improve the paper. I wrote Don and assistant publisher Ronny Wade back and suggested the Back Page. I had noticed that most religious and secular journals had begun featuring an article at the end of each issue, confined entirely to one page, and that it had become a popular staple in journalism. I proposed the Back Page could include a variety of types of writing, such as historically significant events, biographical sketches, exegesis of difficult passages, balanced treatment of controversial subjects, and commentary on current events. Each article would have to be confined to 850 words.

I told Don and Ronny, "At the end of the year we could evaluate the feature to see if we want to continue it. I may decide the page is too demanding of my time and you may decide it's not worth the paper it's written on. In any case, it might be something new and interesting for awhile. If you think this would be a worthy venture, I'll agree to do it. If you don't like the idea, just say so. It's not going to hurt my feelings."

Don wrote me back immediately and said he and Ronny thought it was a great idea. He put the proposal to the other editors and almost all of them agreed we should give the feature a try.

The first article came out in March of 2003 and seemed to be well-received. I began receiving positive feedback each month from readers and that feedback has continued for 15 years.

After the first several months an elderly preacher approached me during a break in a study at the Twenty-first Street church in OKC and said enthusiastically, "Carl, I really like what you are doing with the paper." Initially, I did not realize what he was talking about. Ronny Wade was standing with me and he could see the puzzled look on my face and he explained, "He's talking about the Back Page." The elderly preacher continued, "My favorite articles are the biographical sketches of the old preachers." He gave me some advice and encouragement and then parted with the words, "I am just anxious to see how well you do when you run out of material." I understand now what he meant.

Sometimes I have struggled to come up with articles in time to meet my monthly deadline. Consequently, I have had to finish some of the articles while on the road "with one foot in the stirrup" (as Buck Brown of San Angelo, Texas used to say). I have finished articles at McDonald's, Starbuck's, public libraries, airports, and brethren's homes. However, if I can get this article done by Saturday, I shall have completed 15 years (180 issues) without missing a deadline.

I know the Back Page has some critics. I expected nothing less because I understand that no one has a universal appeal. Regardless of how hard you try or how well you do, you are not going to win everybody's approval. That fact is well-illustrated in the nursery rhyme, "I do not love thee Dr. Fell The reason why I cannot tell I But this alone I know full well I do not love thee Dr. Fell." Criticism is not sweet in itself, and some of it may be justified, but I have understood from the beginning that the feature would not have universal appeal.

I have been overwhelmed, however, by the positive response the Back Page has generated. As I mentioned earlier, I have received positive feedback from EVERY INSTALLMENT over the past 15 years. I have a file cabinet drawer full of letters, cards, emails, texts, and phone messages from brethren expressing how much these articles have meant to them. I have kept every one of the messages and they mean more to me than all the money in the world.

In conclusion, I thank Don King for allowing me the Back Page forum, and I thank you, the readers, for your response to it. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com