

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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THE ASSEMBLY IMPERATIVE

By CARL M. JOHNSON

The Lord’s Day assembly of the church was authorized by Christ, set in motion by the apostles, honored by disciples of all ages, and fully recognized as a sacred obligation for all Christians by the inspired writer of the book of Hebrews (10:25).

The assembly is an indispensable part of Christianity with at least a three-fold purpose. It allows Christians to worship God in a corporate capacity (Jn. 4:24), it is a source of mutual edification among Christians (1 Cor. 14), and it provides mutual exhortation necessary for Christians to maintain their faithfulness (Heb. 10:24; Cf. 3:13).

Two of the five items of corporate worship are inextricably linked to the assembly (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14). We can sing, pray, and teach on any occasion, but we are commanded to participate in the collection and the breaking of bread during the assembly upon the first day of the week. This assembly, therefore, becomes an imperative.

Hebrews 10:25 says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

The expression “Not forsaking” means this requirement is a command, and is, therefore, binding. The command to assemble is not to one individual or one congregation only, but to everyone addressed in the Hebrews letter, which means the entire brotherhood.

The details about when the assembly is to occur and what is to be done during the assembly are not mentioned by the writer of Hebrews, but obviously the early Christians were well-acquainted with those details.

Some of the details are revealed to us as Paul gives instructions to the church at Corinth concerning the collection: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Paul’s words are an “order,” or command. According to J.W. McGarvey the expression “in store” (thesaurizoon) means “put into the treasury,” and necessarily implies the assembly of the church. If each man laid by in store in his own house, all these scattered collections would have to be gathered by Paul after his arrival and that is the very thing Paul wants to avoid. Paul’s words reveal, therefore, that the church assembly took place upon the first day of the week. The Revised Standard Version says, “On the first day of EVERY (kata) week” (1 Cor. 16:2).

Notice now the instructions of Paul concerning the Lord’s Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:20-33. He explains that after Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper Jesus said, “This do,” (ver. 24, 25) which makes the Lord’s Supper a requirement, not an option. Paul says it is to be observed within the assembly (ver. 20, 33), and is to be repeated until the second coming of Christ (ver. 26).

Hebrews 10:25 and 1 Corinthians 16: 1-2 have already established authority for an assembly upon the first day of each week. 1 Corinthians 11 :20-33 establishes a requirement for partaking of the Lord’s Supper in the assembly and repeating the practice until the Lord returns. What we lack to get the complete pattern for when to observe the Lord’s Supper at this point is a Scripture that ties the above three passages together, and Acts 20:7 is the passage. Luke says, “Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...”

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Editorial

PERSONAL EVANGELISM

By DON. L. KING

One of the most enjoyable things I have done is hold a home study. It also has been very productive through the years. Some try to follow a prescribed method in home studies while others are more relaxed and informal. Personally, we have always been pretty informal and just let the studies go where the need seemed the greatest. However, if you feel more comfortable following a more rigid pattern, that is just fine. The idea is to teach the truth to those who don't know it and are lost. That is the most important thing. When we moved to the Bay Area in 1971 the church was very small and without much leadership. I had no prior knowledge of this area and was greatly indebted to Bro Billy Orten and Jack Cutter who had been here for some time, and Billy had a list of potential converts he had saved for me. While I didn't know any of them personally at the time, at least I had a place to start and that is how we began the work. Soon, we were having private home studies virtually every night, and it wasn't long before we began baptizing people. One lead would often generate another, and we soon found that we had quite a list of folks who were willing to study with us and some were also attending services. When we began construction of a building, I recall that we eventually baptized several in the baptistry before it was hooked up to water and we had to fill it with a hose from outside. How thrilling that was!

One Lord's Day, a young couple and their children walked in our little house we were using for worship. We learned that they had been worshipping with the cups and class people on the other side of town but happened to see our place of worship and decided to stop in. We soon began private studies with them, and while they could see the truth, they were confused by what the other group had been telling them about us. They asked if we would study with them and allow the other people to be there. On the night we had agreed upon, I went alone and two elders and about three class teachers (women) were also there along with the couple with whom we had been studying. I was young, and a bit nervous, but decided to just teach what the Bible says as I always did. To my delight, they had no answer as to why they were worshipping in a different manner

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QUERIST COLUMN

BY CLINT DEFRANCE

Question: If no men attend the assembly, may women conduct an assembly themselves?

Answer: This question was posed by a very sincere Christian widow in a difficult circumstance at no fault of her own. It is important to understand that. Such circumstances may exist. We are reminded of Lydia. Under the old Jewish system, she and other women found themselves in a city with no synagogue. Rather than form one themselves, they did what they could - they gathered on the Sabbath to pray, and evidently prayed for God to deliver them from that situation to one more ideal. It should also be noted that God answered their prayers.

If Christian women find themselves in a situation as the one described in the question, it is not appropriate to form an all-female congregation or to conduct an all-female assembly. This would be a violation of God's order (1 Corinthians 14.34). However, the noble example of Lydia shows the proper course. Do not abandon the faith. Do what can be done. Let the women gather privately for bible reading and study and prayer. Pray that God would deliver you from that situation to something more ideal. Adding to that, let the spirit of Paul be in all gospel preachers, that wherever such difficult circumstances exist we would hear the cry of "Come help us!" and make efforts to do what can be done rather than simply to judge and condemn from afar.

Question: If only a few of the apostles wrote books for the New Testament, what did the others do?

Answer: After Acts 1, the Bible does not mention the majority of the apostles again by name. The only information about their lives and work is in traditional histories. Some aspects of these traditions are highly suspect and doubtful. Other parts are rooted in fairly compelling evidence, particularly in the case of where they labored. Andrew preached to the "barbarians" around the coast of the Black Sea and to Scythians, and even as far as Russia and Scotland! Nathaniel, or Bartholomew preached in Parthia, which is modern Iran, Lycaonia (which is part of modern Turkey), Armenia, and into Central Asia. Matthew preached in Ethiopia and Arabia; James, the son of Alpheus in Spain, Britain, and Ireland; John worked in Asia Minor, in what is now Turkey, and his brother James was martyred early while preaching in Judea. Matthias preached in Cappadocia, which is in the central part of modern Turkey. Phillip preached in Phrygia. Simon the Zealot began his work in Egypt, traveled throughout north Africa, and ended in the British Isles. Thaddaeus preached in Syria, and Thomas traveled throughout the

Parthian Empire, bringing the gospel all the way to the Hindus and Buddhists of western India.

What did these apostles do other than simply preaching, making disciples, and organizing churches? They laid the foundation in the hearts of all believers in the world upon which the authority of New Testament Scripture came to rest when it was composed, circulated and compiled under the direction of those who wrote it.

For example: When the apostle Thomas went into the Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist communities of western India, after leading people to Christ and bringing them together into congregations, He would share his eyewitness testimony of the life and teachings of Jesus, especially His death, resurrection, and ascension. He would tell the story of his own experiences: encouraging the others to die with Jesus during the time of great opposition (John 11.16), the time he thoughtlessly asked Jesus to "show them the Father" as though He had not been doing so all along (John 14.9), and the account of his own doubts against the resurrection which were answered by "many infallible proofs" until with a heart of full assurance he cried out to Jesus: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20.24-28). He would tell about the Day of Pentecost and the growth of the church and the work of the risen Jesus during the early days of the Christian Era. He might, in later periods, discuss how Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and how it transpired exactly as He predicted - showing that God had moved on from the Old System. He would talk about his co-workers, Peter, and Paul, and John, and Matthew and other respected prophets like James, Luke, Mark, and Jude. He would work miracles, proving that God was with Him. He would impart the gifts of the Spirit by laying his hands on men and women in the congregations (Acts 8.18). This placed prophets and those where able to discern between evil and lying spirits and the Holy Spirit and other gifted persons in the communities to allow them to be built up in the truth even before they had a single book of sacred scripture.

Later, when the New Testament books were sent to them, they knew the names Paul, Peter, and John; they were familiar with the incidents and sayings of the life of Jesus; the testimonies and witnesses in those writings corresponded perfectly to what Thomas had told them at the beginning. The teachings of James, Peter, and Paul corresponded precisely with the things Thomas had charged them to do concerning worship, moral living, and the organization of the church and not only corresponded, but perfectly represented and encapsulated those teachings. So they could receive those books on a foundation of apostolic and prophetic testimony. Thus all of the apostles had a significant role in the formation of the New Testament - even those who did not write any portion of it.

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PAGES FROM THE PAST

Whenever we think about the idea of partners, we usually think about husbands and wives. Maybe some fictional characters come to our mind, like Batman and Robin or the Lone Ranger and Tonto. Even within the church certain names come to our mind such as Homer Gay and Homer King or Johnny and Ronny. In the March 1954 issue of the Old Paths Advocate Brother Clovis Cook wrote about the idea of partners. He writes about the relationship that existed between Philemon and Onesimus and then gives us five types of partnerships to consider. In any endeavor it is always good to have someone you can work with and depend upon. —Rick Martin

PARTNERS

The Apostle Paul wrote four personal letters; the fourth being a letter to Philemon, in which he set forth a relationship between master and slave; the like of which was not binding on them before their conversion. Both Philemon (the master) and Onesimus (the slave) were Paul's converts. Philemon, was under Roman law, and being a master, could have done by his slave as he chose, for the slave had no civil rights under Roman law. However, after conversion they were "neither bond nor free" (Gal. 3:28). So, it now becomes necessary to instruct both master and slave concerning their new relationship. One of the most forceful points made by Paul in this letter, is found in verse 17, in which he introduced the idea that both the master and the slave are now partners in the Lord. To have this kind of a partnership, the kind the New Testament pictures, it will be necessary to consider a few things:

1. Partners in Purpose

What is our purpose? Do we all have the same purpose? Are we in the work for the good of the cause, or do we spend our energy fostering our own cause? When Barnabas came to Antioch, he "exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23). We have never had greater opportunity to prosecute the Lord's plan with such telling effect, if we only go forward, as partners with one purpose.

2. Partners in Theology

It becomes imperative that we be partners in sound theology. Paul said, "let us all walk by the same rule" (Phil. 3:15). Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott reads, "Let us

all walk by the same line." Thayer says it means to walk in the steps of one: or follow his example (page 589). Thayer also cites Rom. 4:12 for an example, which says, "But who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham." We are taught to walk the line of faith, and be controlled by the same rule, which I understand to be the rule of faith which is produced by "hearing the word," and not the opinions of men.

3. Partners in Love.

Peter said, "see that you love one another with a pure heart" (1 Pet. 1 M). Do we really love each other with a pure heart? Show me partners that love each other with a pure heart, and I will show you partners that trust each other and each one willing to give the other one the benefit of every doubt until his confidence is betrayed.

4. New Partners

There are many firms into which new partners are taken. If the new partner expects to make good, he should be willing to sit down and counsel with his more experienced or elder partner. There is no substitute for experience. If he wishes to appear original and incorporate some of his new or young ideas into the firm, he should talk them over with his senior partner. It could be that the elder partner once had some of the same ideas, and maybe tried them only to find out they were not practical. What a great lesson the young partner could learn right here. It could mean the difference between success and failure. Would not it be much better to hear the elder partner say, "Son I once had the same idea or similar ideas, but I found out they would not work, however, I am glad you talked to me about it, and I will be glad to study it more with you," than to begin putting his plans to work untried, etc? Let us be swift to hear, slow to criticize the elder partner. "Let no man despise thy youth" (1 Tim. 4:12). Let us be model partners.

5. Experienced Partners

The experienced partner should remember that he was once a new 'partner. He would do well to remember that we need new blood. He should be willing to give out any valuable information to the new partner. If the new partner has too much pride to ask about matters of which he is not sure; let the more experienced partner use his experience and knowledge, informing the new partner of the things he should know without wounding his pride, if possible.

WHAT TIME IS IT?

By RICK MARTIN

How many times in a week do we hear the question “what time is it”? How many times do you ask it? It might be concerning going to bed at night or getting up in the morning. It might be about our meals or an appointment we have made. It could be about what time to take our medication or about catching a plane to take a trip. It is very important for us to consider time.

Have you ever thought about the confusion that would be created if we ignored time? A little clock in a jeweler’s window stopped one day for half an hour at twenty minutes past eight. School children, noting the time, stopped to play; people hurrying to the train looked at the clock and walked more slowly; businessmen stopped to chat a little longer. All were late, because one small clock had stopped. Never had the people realized how much they had depended on the little clock until it had led them astray.

As important as that is, in this article we are not talking about physical time. We are talking about paying attention to spiritual matters. Do you know “what time it is” regarding the spiritual things of life?

We are living in a confused world where people have replaced the real thing of value with the counterfeit and artificial things of life. People have gone after things that do not matter and have left the things that do matter; Isaiah 5:20 “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” The problem is not with God’s clock; the problem is man is so caught up in today’s world until they don’t know what time it is, and they will not check and see.

First, we see it is time to awake; Romans 13:11-12 “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now, is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light.” Satan has lulled people to sleep; Ephesians 5: 14 “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light”. To be in the light of Christ we must wake up out of our sleep. The Prodigal woke up out of his sleep of sin and “came to himself.” Many need to come to themselves and awaken to their responsibilities to serve the Lord.

Second, we see it is time for men to seek the Lord; Hosea 10:12 “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you”. It is obvious that man needs to seek the Lord. The time to seek the Lord is now. This is when one becomes accountable-this means when a person is able to understand; Romans 6:17 “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you”. From this passage we see that a man obeys from the “heart.” This means understanding. The Gospel is what awakens people. It is God’s power to salvation; Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”.

Satan tells us tomorrow, but the Lord says now; 2 Corinthians 6:2 “For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

Many are like Felix and look for a convenient time to seek the Lord; Acts 24:25 “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee”. There are some who would seek the Lord, but the time is not convenient for them. They have other things such as the world, family, or jobs that are keeping them back. We are urged to seek the Lord while He may be found; Isaiah 55:6 “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near”. It is a dangerous thing to not seek the Lord. Men often delay and the opportunity passes them by.

We are to seek the Lord after the due order; 1 Chronicles 15:13 “For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.” Isaiah 34: 16 “Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them”. Many want to find God in some modern religion. They look for Him in a religion of convenience or one that suits their taste. The Lord of heaven can only be found in the Bible.

Third, we are to redeem the time; Colossians 4:5 “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time”; Ephesians 5:16 “Redeeming the time, because

the days are evil". Notice that Paul admonishes two different churches to redeem the time. Therefore, it must be an important thing. What does it mean to redeem the time? The apostle is talking about buying up moments while others seem to throw them away. He is speaking about steadily improving every present moment, so that one may in some measure regain the time that was lost. Time should be our chief commodity. We must buy it up and use every portion of it. Time is that on which our eternity depends and in time we are preparing for the kingdom of God.

We must do this with diligence because time is short; Psalm 89:47 "Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" Soon we will slip away into eternity and we must use our time wisely.

Finally, we see time is in God's hand; Psalm 31:15 "My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me". Daniel said to Belshazzar," in whose hand thy breath is in" Daniel 5:23. The God of heaven controls the time and one day he will declare time to be no more. We must make good use of our time here on earth. Our time should be spent serving God and advancing His kingdom on earth. Do you know what time it is?

Rick Martin

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HOLES IN OUR SIGN

BY *STANLEY R. OWENS*

Very often when driving across the country, especially it seems this is true in more rural areas, I will pass all kinds of Signs with Holes in them. Upon closer inspection it is apparent that these are from some type of ammunition. In the past I have thought this might be someone testing out a new firearm that they have purchased; it could be someone is target shooting; it might be a frustrated hunter that wanted to shoot something; a young person out doing wild things with their friends; or I suppose there is a possibility it is some revolutionary that is not happy with the government. I do not know, and probably never will know the exact reason this is done, but my main guess is someone is wanting others to notice. I think they want to be able to say, if only to themselves, "Look what I have done". No matter the reason, they have damaged something that has been placed at certain points to give direction or to keep people safe. I think

the same is true of some in the Church. We are to be a light to those in the world, that city on a hill (Mt.5: 14-16), so that we may give them direction and draw them to the safety of the Heavenly Father. As a Sign to the lost, I fear that damage has been caused to the Body of Christ because some want to place themselves above the purpose of the Church.

Ego can be such a fragile thing with so many today. When I was younger I would hear it said about others from time to time "If you don't think they are good at what they do, stick around awhile and they will let you know". And that is very true of so many in the world, but it should not be so among members of the Body. It is shooting a Hole in what we are to be. The Apostle says in (Phil.2:3) "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. "

Strife has to do with causing factions and putting one's self forward. It has to do with wanting to be in charge, it is causing contention and being angry when we do not get our way. I have spoken with those who were around and even owned the Model T Ford. These had to be started by turning a crank that was on the front of the vehicle. Cranks may be fine for running a car but they have no place running the Church.

Vainglory is empty pride, self-conceit. It is an attempt to bring honor to one's self. It goes directly against the command that follows "let each esteem other better than themselves." We cannot reach this level without the modesty and humility that is contained within the "lowliness of mind" that we are to have. This kind of thinking often leads to "will worship" that Paul speaks of in (Col.2:23). Who of us, as Christian People, would dare make the claim that we are willing to forsake the Will of God to follow our own will? But yet, every time we ignore what Paul is saying, we do not have the mind of Christ (Phil.2:5) and the Holes In Our Sign are showing.

He continues in (Phil.2:4) "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." No one has the freedom to live for and think only of himself. Our duty is to do our best to convert those who are lost in sin. The only way this can be done is through the teaching and preaching of the Gospel (Mk.16:15-16). We are to be the Sign that points people in the right direction. As has been often said: "People will never care how much you know until they know how much you care". Jesus was interesting TO others because He

was interested IN others. In listening to some of the preachers in our own Brotherhood, you would think that they are the greatest at converting the world since the Apostle Peter. They have forgotten, if they ever knew, that our job is simply to plant and water, it is God that gives the increase (I Cor. 3:6). He repeats that in the very next verse (Vs.7) when he says “So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. “ We are mere men. We have no ability outside of God and no authority beyond the Word of God. If we cannot get others to accept the Truth because we cannot get ourselves out of the way, we have failed. They have seen the Holes In Our Sign.

We can read of a man named Diotrefes in (IIIJn.9) “who loveth to have the preeminence”. John continued in (Vs. 10) “Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.” This man thought himself to be in a lofty position and he wanted others to treat him that way. He thought he was such a grand individual he could disregard the teachings of the Inspired Apostles. He thought he did not have to comply with Apostolic Authority. John in essence said: “I will handle him when I come”. It brings to mind the words of wisdom found in (Prov.25:27) “It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory. “ When men set and sound forth their own praises to gain the honor of men, this is not praiseworthy. It is a dishonorable thing. In fact, the wise writer goes a step further. He says in (Prov.16:5) “Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord:”. Although I may be relating it to Holes In a Sign in this article, it truly is a disgusting thing in the sight of God. When we follow the example of the Savior, the One who left the glories of Heaven to die on a cross in our place (Phil.2:6-8), what great humility that should cause each of us to have. I am sure there will continue to be Holes put in Signs, and some of those may even be put there so others can say “Look what I have done”. But may that never be said of us as Christian People, especially when it comes to anything regarding the Church of our Precious Lord. 8432 Cox Rd, West Chester OH 45069.

THE ASSEMBLY...continued from page one

These four passages form a complete, authorized pattern for the time to observe the Lord’s Supper. We are commanded to assemble upon the first day of every

week and during that assembly we are to observe the Lord’s Supper. It is a practice we must not forsake, but on the contrary, Christians must continue the practice until the Lord comes again.

Because the contribution and the communion are inextricably linked to the Lord’s Day assembly, the assembly itself continues to be an imperative.

Note the connection between “forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” and the “sin” of apostasy in Hebrews 10:26. The author of Hebrews repeatedly points out the dangers of falling away (2:1-4; 3:12-14; 6:1-8), and forsaking the assembly is regarded as a visible sign of such apostasy.

At the time of the writing of Hebrews, however, some were already abandoning the assembly for various reasons, including persecution from Jews which tempted disciples to forsake Christianity altogether and to return to some form of Judaism (Cf. chapters 7-9; 12:4; 13:9ft).

In addition to this abandonment, the assemblies also suffered from misuse and abuse in the early church. The Corinthian church perverted the assembly by making a common meal of the communion (1 Cor. 10-11). They also abused the spiritual gifts they had received and were using them in the assembly in such a way as to cause confusion and chaos at the expense of edification (1 Cor. 12-14).

Since that time the assembly has continued to suffer abuse, deemphasis, and abandonment in many different forms. Therefore, it is imperative that we never lose sight of Christ’s exalted purpose for the Lord’s Day assembly and our sacred obligation to be a part of it. carlmj@cablone.net.

PERSONAL...continued from page two

than what the Bible plainly states. They left looking defeated and embarrassed. All things considered; I believe it was the most wonderful study I ever had. The young couple took their stand for the truth the very next day at services. That was a tremendous encouragement for me. It caused me to love, trust, and appreciate the Scriptures even more than ever.

Private home studies, as effective as they can be, must not take the place of public preaching. It has always

saddened me to be holding a gospel meeting and notice someone missing. You think: “that is strange, they have been attending every night.” Then, you learn that a private study has been going on, and they missed the preaching to attend a study. That is too bad. If we had a gospel meeting going on in the area, we always tried to take our people we were studying with to the meeting. We always felt that was best. Yes, private studies are wonderful and were used in Bible times, but they didn’t replace public preaching. 1 Corinthians 1:21 says, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (James Macknight, In his excellent commentary, comments that preaching in verse 21 indicates public preaching.) Also, the word “preaching” here is from “KERUGMA” and of it Thayer says: “that which is promulgated by a herald or public crier, a proclamation by the heralds of God or Christ...” (see page 346). In Acts 20:20 Paul reminded the church at Ephesus that he had kept nothing back from them and had taught them “... publickly, and from house to house.” It seems obvious that Paul makes a difference here when he says he taught publickly and from house to house. I understand that means he taught privately as well as in public. My point is that while he did indeed teach privately at times, he also saw the need by the inspiration of the Spirit, to preach in a public manner. It seems that at least one of these passages would have furnished a good place for Paul to have mentioned Bible classes if indeed they were permissible, doesn’t it? However, no mention is found anywhere! We must look to men for that arrangement for teaching. By the way, that’s what Bible classes are. They are not a “method” of teaching at all. Rather, they are an unscriptural “arrangement” by which teaching is done. Such an arrangement is foreign to the Bible. We never read of an apostle arranging a “class” in the Bible. As Homer A. Gay used to say, “you couldn’t read it in the Bible if you were twins. Because it just isn’t there.” To hear some laud the benefits of class teaching one would assume it is on every page of Scripture.

Personal evangelism has its place, it needs to be done. We are all for private home studies as long as Paul’s inspired regulations found in 1 Corinthians 14 are not violated and this is vitally important. However, let us never think they can replace the powerful public preaching of the Word of God. Always remember 1 Corinthians 1:21: “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” Think on these things. DLK

Our Departed

GRAHAM - Voncile Hester Smith Graham passed away September 3, 2020 at the age of 90. She was born in Fox, Oklahoma to Arthur and Bonnie Witcher Smith on December 22, 1929, She met Noah Graham at the Old Bit Shop Church of Christ at Sullivan’s Corner in 1947. They were married at Fort Smith, Arkansas on February 18, 1952. Voncile worked at the Round Up Cafe in Oklahoma City for 35 years and retired in 1995. She is survived by her granddaughters Leslie (Graham) Mills, Christine, and two great grandchildren all of California; grandsons Jon (Annie) Graham and Christian Graham all of California; one brother Earnest (Jan) Smith of San Tan Valley, Arizona; numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, sons Ronald Eugene Graham and David Lee Graham, four brothers, and three sisters. She was a long- time cherished member of the Moore Church of Christ. Cremation has taken place due to COVID-19. A memorial service will be held at a later date with Cousin Pat Smith officiating.

MORRIS - Oscar N. Morris was born in Baxter County, Arkansas, on November 11, 1929 to Elige Theodore Morris and Mildred Rogers, He passed away August 9, 2020, at the age of 90, Oscar was raised in the Ozarks, a founding member of “the barefoot gang” of children who knew and loved the beauty of the area. With his siblings Austin, Lois, Bernie (Butch), Melba, and Carolyn he grew up in a close family. Though he never lived in Baxter County as an adult, he loved and shared the memories of those times for the rest of his life. Oscar served in the Korean War for 18 months, honorably discharged with the rank of a sergeant. After his discharge, he moved to Wichita, where he renewed an acquaintance with a beautiful young lady, Wilma Thompson, from his hometown. They were married on June 28, 1953. They both worked to achieve the goal of an engineering degree for Oscar. After graduation, Oscar worked for Fisher Industries in Marshalltown. In 1963, Oscar and Wilma and their two daughters moved to Webb City, Missouri, where Oscar began his long career with Cardinal Scales Manufacturing Company. Oscar was a licensed professional mechanical engineer and president of the Southwest Professional Engineering Society from 1975-1976. He also graduated from Missouri Southern State University with a business degree. Oscar was a strong community supporter and served on many advisory committees. His greatest

endeavor was his service to the Lord. He served as an elder of the Leawood Village church for 35 years, until his death. He and Wilma ministered to many, always ready to listen and give kind words of advice. His love of laughter and fun made being with him an adventure. He was famous for jokes and pranks, to which his family, coworkers, and friends can attest. He especially loved children, and they gravitated to him, sensing a kindred spirit. He devoted time to his immediate family, always ready to organize a fishing or hunting trip, or a visit down home. Wilma preceded Oscar in death passing away on June 24, just short of 67 years of marriage. Oscar is survived by two daughters, Kathy Gray (Jerry) and Karen Talbot (Drew); grandchildren include: Lindsay Rice (Dan), Matt Jones, Karli Godwin (Scott), Alex Talbott (Jamie), Jerrod Gray (Mary) Gordon Gray (Melissa), and Jessica Hinderliter (Frank). They were blessed with 14 great-grandchildren: Tatum, Dalton, Maddox, Kate, Elle, Brooks, Jackson, James, Jensen, Logan, Owen, Trenton, Devin, and Erin, I first met Oscar in April of 1971; during a gospel meeting I was conducting at Leawood Village. Our personalities clicked immediately and we began a friendship I treasured for almost 50 years, I was honored to be asked by the family to officiate the funeral along with Ron Lankford. —Carl Johnson

WILSON - William "Bill" Eugene Wilson was born May 31, 1931 at Wilson, Oklahoma to the late Charles R. Wilson and Roxy (McKee) Wilson. He departed this life on Thursday, July 9, 2020 at a healthcare facility in Temple, TX at the age of 89. Bill graduated from Wilson High School and soon after joined the US Navy. He served honorably during the Korean War and returned to the Wilson/Healdton area upon his discharge. He married Charlene Ogletree on October 8, 1955 at Ardmore. Most of his working years Bill was employed by Southwestern Bell Telephone. Bill was very active in Healdton community affairs. He served as mayor and councilman for many years, was on the school board, and was chosen as Citizen of the Year in 1988 for his countless devotions to the community. Most importantly, however, Bill was a faithful member of the East Lincoln Church of Christ in Healdton. Bill's close friend Johnny Elmore baptized him when Bill was in his 70s. Preceding him in death were his parents; wife, Charlene Ogletree Wilson; son, Roger Dale Wilson; and siblings, Ruel Wilson, Virgie Mae Roycroft, Donna Raye Williams, Betty Lou Aycox, and Raymond Wilson. Survivors include son William "Billy" Eugene Wilson Jr. and wife Pam of Lorena, TX; daughter, Donna Sue Householder of Farmerville, LA; daughter-in-law,

Judy Wilson of Healdton; grandchildren, Lana Nissen and husband Jonathan, Cassie Hykel and husband Jeremy, Grant, Lexi, Austin and wife Hallie, Candice Wilson, Olivia Post and husband Luke, Audrey Smith and husband Deron, Lara Medlock, Cole Householder, Jared Wilson and wife Janene and Wade Wilson; great-grandchildren Sydney, Abree and Eden Post, Fischer Sawyer and Thatcher Smith; Alexis, Madelyn, Vince and Savanna Wilson, Abe, Will Rue, Nissen, Conrad, Chloe Hykel; numerous other family and friends. Bill and I shared several passions. He loved to read and especially enjoyed westerns. He read every Louis L'Amour and Elmer Kelton novel and was anxious to give a critical review of them. One time he grinned mischievously at me and asked if I had noticed that the heroes in L'Amour's books are all 6'4" while the heroes in Kelton's books are all only 5'10" I thought about it a moment and realized Bill was correct. I shall miss those discussions and many other things about him. Billy gave a beautiful eulogy at the funeral and I read reflections written by family members and gave a message of hope and comfort. —Carl Johnson

BULLARD - Jolene Helen Bullard, 90, of Vinita died August 4, 2020 at St. John Medical Center in Tulsa. She was born May 2, 1930 in Strang to Joseph Henry Reed and Bertha Louise (Stewart) Reed. Jolene was married to Edward N. Bullard on March 17, 1948 in Salina, Oklahoma. They made their home in Tupelo, Oklahoma for many years. After Edward's passing, Jolene moved to Vinita in 2007. She and her son Billy opened J&B Alterations, where they met and befriended many in the community. Jolene held many jobs in her life, but the ones she was most proud of were as wife, mother, and grandmother. The needs of others always outweighed her own, and as a preacher's wife, she cared for many members of local congregations as well as strangers just passing through. Always a wonderful hostess, Jolene made everyone feel at home with a hearty meal and a contagious laugh. She was also immensely proud of her Cherokee heritage and was a wonderful storyteller. Ed and Jolene were bluegrass and gospel musicians who traveled the U.S. playing original music at festivals and concerts. Their bluegrass band, Ed and Jolene and Their Favorite Four, even played at the Grand Ole Opry! Their music was a big hit in Germany and Scandinavia. Back at home, Ed and Jolene's Coal County Country Jamboree was a Saturday morning staple on KHKC and KEOR out of Atoka for many years. The show became so popular that it went into syndication and earned Ed and Jolene a nomination for disc jockeys of the year. Preceding her in death are her husband Ed, son Buddy;

siblings Susie Higdon, Emily Kinnison, McThevah “Dude” Oxford, Mandy Baker, Lena “Cotton” Johnston, Ethel Blair, Billie Louise “Sister” Brown, and J.D. “Brother” Reed. Surviving Jolene are her children E.N. Bullard Jr. and wife Suzanne of Ada, Harmon L. Bullard and wife Fran of Crofton, Maryland, Deborah A. Kirkpatrick and husband Charles of Durant, and Billy D. Bullard of Vinita; siblings Dhreoma Burford of Ohio and Roger S. Reed and wife Theta of Collinsville; nine grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews. Jolene was a wonderful preacher’s wife. She was not only Ed’s constant companion, but she was his helper in every way. I was honored when Billy called and asked me to officiate the gravesite service here in Ada. —Carl Johnson

TATE - On a cool August morning a large crowd gathered outdoors in the small Southwest Texas town of Woodson to honor Dee S. Tate and pay their respects to his family. Dee was born October 6, 1932 in Padgett, Texas and passed away August 1, 2020 in Munday, Texas. Dee and Carolyn Little were married January 31, 1959. The Lord blessed them with over sixty-one years of marriage. Dee and Carolyn were blessed with two sons and one daughter who survive him, David R. Tate and wife Kelli of Wichita Falls, Texas, Raymond Paul Tate and wife Teri of Auburn, California and Penny Tate of Bakersfield, California. His five grandchildren, Luke, Katie, Sam, Jackson and Olivia, and three great grandchildren, Hunter, Blakely and Isaac, also survive him. Dee obeyed the Gospel of Christ on November 18, 1951, and was baptized by Johnny Tate in a cow pond west of Newcastle, Texas. Johnny Elmore ordained him an elder at the Gardens Edge Church of Christ in Wichita Falls on November 21, 1982. Dee had convictions without being divisive. His deep belief in God, his high regard for Scripture, his complete dependence on a “thus saith the Lord,” and his opposition to any kind of unscriptural innovations in the Church made him unique in the times we are living. -Dee believed that the Lord meant what He said - that He would do what He promised. His word was his bond and a handshake sealed a contract. Prayers never memorized, favorite book of the Bible, Acts of the Apostles, the book of conversions, because he loved the Lord and wanted others to experience what he had found. He was humble and generous, believing strongly in supporting the work of the Church and helping his neighbors. And so we said farewell to our brother on that cool August morning in Woodson; Texas. Others and I will miss this man of God. May the One who gave us him, give us many more like him. “ ... I heard a voice from heaven saying to me,

‘Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’ (Revelation 14:13) Paul Tate led the singing and Marcus Mathis worded the closing prayer. It was my honor to speak at the service. —Ted Warwick

Announcements

Brethren, please note:

We have been notified, and asked to report that the congregation at Valliant, OK has discontinued worship and merged with the congregation at Golden, OK. Make a note of this, please. DLK

I’ve recently moved offices. My updated address for all mailing, including orders for the book advertisement is: 14844 E 36th Pl
Tulsa, OK 7 4134

The second edition of my book, *One Loaf and One Cup: A Scriptural and Historical Survey* (expanded and corrected) is now available.

The Covid-19 crisis has challenged the closeness of Christian fellowship, especially in worship, more than any issue of the last 100 years. However, the scriptural and historical case for sharing the loaf and cup in the Lord’s Supper remains unchanged and unchallenged. The new edition is available for \$20 a copy. Shipping is included in that cost. Please send checks payable to Clinton De France to
14844 E 36th Pl
Tulsa, OK 7 4134

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, September 14. Unfortunately, there isn’t a lot to report these days other than the obvious and usual. The virus continues to keep most of us close to home. However, we can report that the church at Livermore continues and is at peace. It has been refreshing to learn that a few meetings have been held in various places and a few more are scheduled, Lord willing. The thrilling thought of a vaccine on the horizon is like the thrill a child experiences at the thought of a long hoped for ice cream cone promised soon. I can hardly wait to attend a gospel meeting or hold one again. We realize many of our preachers

are less busy than normal. However, we would enjoy reports of the home church and your activities for the Cause. Our brethren in the Philippines are also shut down, but it sounds as though they are doing their best to keep the churches alive until this is over. Brethren, the paper needs your support. We need your articles, reports, and please keep your subscriptions current. If you can subscribe for a needy brother, why not do so. Winter is coming and they might enjoy reading the paper during the cold months. Lord bless the faithful everywhere is our prayer.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bdickinson@juno.com, Sept. 7. Today Judy and I are celebrating our 47th anniversary! I am struck with how time has passed by so quickly and I'm thankful that our good times have outnumbered the bad (which is all a person can hope for in this life). A faithful and self-sacrificing wife is what a preacher must have by his side, if he is going to preach the gospel unhindered, and Judy has helped and encouraged me every step along the way. The Dickinson brothers' "Virtual Meeting" in Tulsa, OK is now history. Jerry and I taped four sermons each and viewers had the opportunity to listen to them on the dates of Aug. 2-9 on the 11th Street congregation's Web site. However, you can still take advantage of viewing those discourses on the Internet. All you have to do is watch them on YOUTUBE (searching for them under BS P of Tulsa). Jerry's sermons are the following: "God's Fighting Forces"/ "Come Go With Us, And We Will Do You Good"/ "What The Blind Man Saw"/ & "The Root Of Bitterness." Here are mine: "Why I'm Not A Member Of A Denomination"/ "The Organization Of The Church"/ "Saints In Caesar's Household"/ & "Unshakeable Certainty." It is our prayer that many souls will be touched by the gospel through this endeavor. Although the pandemic has affected our attendance in a negative way, we have recently had several visitors worship with us from various places. We were blessed to listen to two fine sermons from Daniel Smith yesterday and welcome him back at any time. Let's continue to pray that this pandemic will end soon and things will get back to some normalcy.

Carl M Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@cableone.net, Aug. 31. We have been very busy this summer despite the pandemic problems, Phyllis and I traveled to Greenville, Pennsylvania in June for a 5-day meeting. The folks at Greenville are longtime dear friends and we had an excellent meeting. En route we stopped in Springfield, Missouri and I preached at Pleasant View on Lord's day. It was great to visit with elders Irvin Barnes and Kent May and the

brethren there. In July we traveled to Temple, Georgia for an 8-day meeting. We had excellent attendance including preachers Matt Tison, Rick Martin, Aaron Studdard, and Terry Studdard. A lot of folks from the Atlanta and Piedmont areas supported the meeting. One young man was baptized after the meeting. From there we went to Dothan, Alabama for a 5-day meeting. We enjoyed immensely the opportunity to spend some time with Kevin Presley and family. We were blessed to have Roger Owens and family with us during the week as they were visiting their newborn grandchild. We had not been to the deep south of Alabama in a long time and we renewed some longtime friendships there. I have also preached at Healdton, OK and the Leawood Village congregation in Joplin, MO recently. We still have meetings scheduled at McAlester, OK (Sept. 30-Oct. 4) and Columbia, MO (Oct. 7-11). We have taken every precaution we know to take in our travels during the pandemic and so far God has blessed us with safe travel and good health. To Him be all the glory!

Stan Owens, 8432 Cox Rd West Chester, OH 45069, September 14, 2020. I recently closed a meeting at the Bandy, KY congregation. I was supposed to be there earlier this year, but it had to be postponed due to the virus. It is always a privilege to be there. Robby Barron labors at this congregation and it was great to be with him. The passing of Bob Barron in July was a tremendous loss to that congregation and to the area. The crowds were excellent and the support from surrounding congregations always helps. It is always humbling to have the preachers and teachers from the area come out to support the meeting. Bandy has a wealth of young men that take part in the worship and they are doing a tremendous job. It has been a privilege to work with those young men the last several years, and they certainly do their part in their studies. There is a great amount of hope for the future in that area. We are doing well at home, in spite of having to make adjustments to the length of our worship for a while due to the times we are in. We had a young man from the community start coming to worship with his fiancée. He obeyed the Gospel earlier this year. She has a digressive background and we are prayerful she will soon make a stand for the Truth. They are now married and they have been faithful in their attendance every week. We also had a Brother restored who had been away for many decades. We are truly thankful for the Seed that falls on those honest and good hearts. Let us keep in mind, God's Word may not accomplish what we want or when we want it to happen, but it will always accomplish the purpose of God on His time-table (Isa.55:11). Keep The Faith.

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WALKS THROUGH THE BIBLE...

GOOD LOOKS!

By JERRY DICKINSON

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.” (Hebrews 12:2-3) The summer after Lynwood passed away I was in a meeting in Brookhaven, Mississippi and Kevin Presley (who was living there at the time) and I decided to browse through Lynwood’s study. While I was perusing through his books, Kevin was looking through his sermons, and every now and then Kevin would call out a sermon title. I had heard, of course, many of Lynwood’s masterful sermons through the years and nodded as the titles were called out.

Suddenly, Kevin called out, “Here’s one entitled, Good Looks!” I immediately wheeled around and said, “Good Looks? I never heard that one.” Kevin handed me the outline and I read through it and decided I was going to borrow that idea and make my own version of the sermon. The title, Good Looks does not refer to the way we look, but to what we look at. We need to be careful where we look! There are some things we do not need to be looking at. There are movies and television programs we look at to our peril and moral detriment. We know brethren, even preachers, who were once faithful who have fallen away because they looked and imbibed books and writings that perniciously destroyed their confidence in the reliability of the Scriptures as a guide and pattern for our lives and worship. Be careful what you look at!

There are, after all, bad looks as well as good looks. When tempted by the serpent, Eve looked at the tree and saw that it was pleasant to the eyes and took the fruit and ate. David on his rooftop looked and saw Bathsheba bathing, and the look led to lust which led to adultery, lying, and ultimately murder. Noah’s son Ham looked at the nakedness of his drunken father Noah, and when Noah discovered how his son had disrespectfully leered, he pronounced a curse on Ham. The men of Beth Shemesh lifted the Mercy Seat and looked inside the Ark of the Covenant and thousands of them perished because of their irreverence. Better be careful where you look! Let us rather maintain our good looks.

1. Look Up. “My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.” (Psalm 5:3) I have a Norman Rockwell print I bought in San Angelo, Texas a few years ago at a flea market that I love. In the background is a church, and a man is on a ladder putting a message on a marquis. In the foreground is a sidewalk in front of the church with people walking in both directions. All of the men and women walking have their heads down with worried and forlorn expressions on their faces. Unnoticed to them, the message on the church sign above them declares optimistically, Lift Up Thine Eyes. When your head is bent by discouragement or sorrow instead of looking down, lift up your eyes and look up!

2. Look Around. “Look not every man on his own things, but also on the things of others.” (Philippians 2:4) Look around. Someone needs your help.

3. Look Within. “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.” (2 John 8) One translation renders this, “Watch yourselves...” I like that rendering! Instead of watching you, I better watch myself. Paul declares that when we eat the Lord’s Supper each person is to “examine himself” to be sure he is discerning what he is doing. Look inside yourself before you look at everybody else.

4. Look To Jesus. In Hebrews 12:2 Paul admonishes us to “look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” He points out that we “consider Him” who suffered and died on the cross for our salvation, lest we be weary and discouraged. Are you tired of the load you are bearing? Are you discouraged? Are you truly contemplating quitting? Can you feel yourself sinking and falling away from the Church? Look to Jesus! Consider what He endured for you, and that will give you fresh courage to bear up and keep going.

5. Look Forward. “For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 3 :20)

Look on the brighter side, Shadows will pass away, and your heart will sing with gladness.

Trust in the Lord to guide, He’ll keep you every day, and will roll away your sadness;

When you are bending low, Evils your life betide, and you almost lose your courage.

Look! Look! Look! Look on the brighter side!