

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 9

REBECCA, MOTHER OF NATIONS

By MICHAEL W. BOLTON

Rom. 9:10-12 “And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.”

In the 24th, 25th, and 27th chapters of Genesis we find the beautiful story of Rebecca. A godly example, who like the patriarchs in her life was not perfect, but still she served as an example of the faithfulness of God. While only mentioned once in the entire New Testament, she stands in the light of greatness because of her trust in God.

Concerning her genealogy, Rebecca is first mentioned in Genesis 22. There the genealogical list is extended just enough to mention her. It is in chapter 24 of Genesis that the idyllic narrative of her life begins. There she is discovered as a potential mate for Isaac and one begins to glimpse the pious character which was to predominate in her life. Like her mother-in-law Sarah, she was barren for 20 years. Rebecca and Isaac were true, and God according to his promise, blessed them with twin boys. Esau was a grief of mind to his parents because of the crowd he ran with. But Jacob was a good son. Because of that and an oracle spoken of him, Rebecca sent him away. Her deception in this matter may have been the cause of their separation for the rest of her life.

As with Bible characters in general there are practical applications to be learned from Rebecca's life. In this case there are at least three. We can learn valuable lessons by seeing God's providence

in her life as well as noting her example of modesty and prayfulness. We see that although she was a good woman she was not perfect yet her life was not reprobate because of her imperfections.

The first idea taught by Rebecca's life is that God has a plan for each person. No not specifically whom we marry or what career path to choose. Contrary to common confusions today God allows our choice to be prominent in our life sometime to our detriment. In Mt. 18:11, 1 Ti. 2:3,4, 2 Pe. 3:9, we learn the will of God for each person. That will is plainly declared in 1 Thes. 4:3: our sanctification. This is accomplished by obeying the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When we hear, believe, repent, confess the good confession, and are finally buried with Christ in baptism, then and only then are we raised up a new creature in Christ. Able, because we are sanctified and justified, to put off the old man and live a new life holy, acceptable and pleasing to God which is our reasonable service.

Rebecca is a goodly example for us today because she was modest in behavior and attire. In Ge. 24:64, she demonstrated the respect a godly person should always demonstrate. It was in those days custom to not remain seated in the presence of a person of superior rank. The scripture records for our admonition that Rebecca got off her ride and walked when she saw Isaac. This type of well-mannered behavior was once practiced everywhere. It used to be that a gentleman stood to his feet when a lady walked into the room and that children were expected and made to yield their seat when an adult entered. Too often today young people are disrespectful when a sister approaches them to greet them. It is quickly becoming a rare thing to see proper manners and decorum practiced even in our assemblies. It ought to be expected that when a lady, a sister approaches us to greet us that

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Editorial

WHY ARE WE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

BY: DON L. KING

I recently read an interesting article in a religious journal discussing this type of topic. It caused me to think about the title of this piece. Have you ever considered why you are a Christian? Why are you a member of the church of Christ as opposed to some denomination? For that matter, why are we members of the church of Christ that worships as we do?

Surely we have some reasons for being as we are. Our reasons may vary, of course, but one would think all of us have a reason. Do you worship as you do because you are convinced it is Biblically right, or do you worship as you do because of some other reason? Perhaps some are members because they were raised in the church and never knew anything different. Others may have been converted by a friend, someone they worked with, or their mate. Some are perhaps members because they were searching for the truth and found it. Whatever your reasons are it is worth consideration. Our eternal destiny depends on our having made the correct choice Biblically. Our worship can be read in the Bible. That has always been thrilling to me. My mind would not permit me to leave what I know to be the truth. However, one wonders if we are all that way? The careless behavior of some, in light of eternity, is staggering. Brethren who have known the truth all their adult lives sometimes become careless in their attendance of worship services, Christian principles, and consideration of Bible truths. They may be accepting of loose or liberal trends among church members or preachers. The world becomes seemingly more important than the church. This is seen when midweek services are much smaller than Sunday morning. Only the Lord's Day morning worship is important to them. Sporting events may claim attention during Sunday evening or midweek rather than the work of the church or even some television program. When this happens the question comes to mind: why are we members of the church of Christ? Do we really love the church? Are we as dedicated now as when we first obeyed the gospel?

When we see people who are members of the church, sometimes for many years, fall away into

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Would you please discuss what a church should pay a preacher for conducting a gospel meeting?

Answer: The Scriptures speak to the right of supporting gospel preachers in 1 Corinthians chapter 9. Here, Paul argues forcefully that he and others were worthy of hire or wages for having preached and ministered to people in that location. The laborer is worthy of his hire according to Luke 10:7. I should note, however, that I don't know of any preacher among us who "preaches for money." Our brethren are willing to go and preach regardless of the amount they are supported for their efforts. There is a point, however, beyond which one cannot go. Every preacher has financial obligations, and when what he receives for preaching no longer allows him to meet those obligations he is then forced to seek employment in addition to or beyond what he is compensated for his preaching. With that being said, I will now proceed to answer the above question. The amount that a congregation pays a preacher for conducting a gospel meeting is obviously up to the congregation, and while I cannot dictate to any church the amount that should be given, I will try to offer some guidelines that will be helpful. The first thing that should be considered is the expense to which the preacher goes in getting to the place where the meeting is to be conducted. The U.S. government allows in excess of fifty cents per mile for operating an automobile. Hence if you call a preacher who lives 500 miles from where the meeting is, his car expense will be at least \$250.00 each way for a total of \$500.00. In addition the cost of a decent motel will be around \$100.00 per night. That will be an additional \$200.00. Food will run in the neighborhood of \$15 to \$20 dollars per day. So before the preacher ever preaches the first sermon he will have been out in the neighborhood of \$400.00 dollars each way or a total of \$800.00 for expenses. (If he flies or uses some type of public transportation the figures will be different.) Most meetings today consist of three, five or eight days. The average pay for these engagements ranges from \$1000.00 to \$1500.00 for a three day meeting, \$1500.00 to \$2000.00 for a five day meeting and \$2000.00 to \$3000.00 for a week or 8 day meeting. If you subtract the amount of expenses the preacher incurs you will have the net amount he actually receives for his efforts. For example if he comes 500 miles and is paid \$1000.00 his net income is \$200.00. Remember these are averages. Sometimes churches pay more and

some pay less. Unfortunately some churches are still paying what they were giving five years ago when gas sold for less than a dollar per gallon. Today gas is near \$4.00 per gallon in many places. There are some churches who realize that preaching is a labor of love and they give the preacher much more than usual because they know there are times when he is greatly underpaid. It is especially discouraging when a preacher struggles to make ends meet, while many churches have in excess of thousands of unused dollars in the treasury. In many areas it is a common practice for churches to call in someone to "preach" for them on Sunday. In many instances these churches still pay what they were paying three to five years ago, without any seeming regard for the fact that expenses have doubled or tripled in the past few years. In fact I know of some churches who pay exactly what they paid ten years ago. Seldom do preachers preach about or talk about the fact that they are underpaid. Many of them extend themselves year after year because of their love for gospel preaching. Some who criticize them and feel they are "over paid" fail to realize the sacrifices they make. Few men are willing to leave home and family over and over again, and travel thousands of miles each year without the guarantee their expenses will be met. Those few who do, are to be honored and duly supported for their efforts. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

Foundation Principles

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS CONGREGATION

PART 1

BY CLINT DEFRANCE

Many years ago one of the more heated controversies in the religious world was over the place of the church in the process of salvation. You had for one the Roman Catholics who taught that the church was an earthly empire with a headquarters and a supreme leader who had the ability to extend and withhold salvation and determine what was and was not to be called the will of God. On the opposite end of the debate were those, whom we sometimes call denominationalists, who considered there to be many acceptable churches, that these were nothing more than institutionalized efforts of Christians to serve God, and that membership in them had no effect either way on a person's salvation. For more than two hundred years the latter of these views has reigned in the religious landscape of North America and most people today would agree with that assessment of what the church means to the Christian faith. The New Testament however paints a remarkably different picture. The Bible doesn't give the human aspect of the church the infallibility and divine authority that Roman Catholicism suggests, (Authority

in religion and salvation rests solely in the Word of Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:23) but it does give the church a higher position in the scheme of redemption than the protestant community.

Most Protestants believe that after a person is saved he should affiliate himself with a certain religious group or denomination “of his choice.” This sometimes called joining a church. Now many years ago those preachers who were trying to promote New Testament Christianity and get back to the religion of Jesus and His Apostles pointed out that the Bible doesn’t teach that man gets saved and then joins the church, but rather, “the Lord adds to the church.., such as should be saved.” (Acts 2:47) We further read that Jesus Christ, “loved the church” that he “gave Himself for her; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph. 5:25-27) And in Acts 20:28 the Apostle Paul says that Jesus purchased the church with his own blood.

Now then it is patently unscriptural to teach as some have and some do that it is possible to be saved outside the church, and more to the point, the very one church Jesus Christ established. Those old time preachers fought a worthy fight against that error by showing time and time again that salvation was in the church, rather than a man coming into a relationship with Jesus and then later seeking to join some denomination. But there was a danger in some things that were taught back then. Some said, you don’t join the church. In one sense that is true, only Jesus can put you into His church, because he is its head and king, but listen closely now, when this has occurred you are required to join a church, or else you will have no chance of making heaven your home one day.

The Church in Two Senses: Universal and Local

Now then what do we mean by all of this when we talk about there being “One True Church” that Jesus, and He alone, can add you too, and yet you have to join a church? The answer is that the church is spoken of in two ways, which represent two senses, and these although distinct are inseparable; two sides of the same coin if you will. These two senses are the church universal and the church local. Now there is one sense in which every person who is saved is, by virtue of that fact, in the church. We have already noticed some scriptures that clearly describe the church as being the blood-bought, redeemed in Christ, and the Apostle Paul uses this sense of the church extensively in his discourse on the plan of salvation in Ephesians 1. In this sense the church contains all saved people and only saved people (when a person becomes a transgressor of the law of God they leave the church in this sense).

When the Bible speaks of the church this way it is

speaking of the church universal, all saved people in heaven and on earth, living and dead. When Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “Upon this rock I will build my church...” he was speaking of the church universal, and his establishing it as a part of the scheme of redemption. Now there are some important characteristics of the church universal for us to be familiar with. 1) the church universal is not corruptible. Because it is a spiritual institution, bound up in the plan of salvation, God has not made it possible for the church universal to be hijacked or polluted by enemy forces. “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” (Daniel 2:44) In other words, regardless of what the Pope in Rome or anyone else might claim, the church universal is subject only to Jesus Christ and His word. 2) the church universal is not visible. Now I use that language very carefully because there is some false doctrine that has come out of misapplying this, but I mean to say that we do not know all the saved on earth. There may be, somewhere a band of Christians doing exactly what the Bible teaches and we have no idea that they exist. That’s fine!

The church universal does not have a directory or a website. On the same token it is important to understand that since the church universal and the saved are the same people, you can walk through the threshold of a building and occupy a pew but without obedience to the gospel you are not in the church, in this sense. 3) the church universal is not an organization. Listen very carefully, there is no organizational structure and function in the church universal, the church universal does not have a work or a mission that has been assigned to it, and we will talk more about that in a moment, but it is important to understand that when you are in the church universal you are not a member of a worldwide club with borderless chapters, as some seem to think. Now occasionally we talk about the brotherhood, and I am going to be plain and straight when I tell you that much of what I hear said about the brother hood is altogether unscriptural.

Now the brotherhood is a biblical concept. In 1 Peter 2:17 we are told to, “Love the brotherhood.” This word literally means the “fraternal relationship of Christians” (Barnes) and is used only one other time in the New Testament in 1 Peter 5:9 where it is translated brethren. Now then what Peter means is that all true Christians in the world have a relationship, are children of God, and brothers and sisters in Christ that we should cherish and protect by being mindful of how our actions will impact other Christian in other places and so on. But what is being spoken of here is NOT an organization, it is a relationship. There are no brotherhood colleges, brotherhood papers, brotherhood websites, brotherhood meetings and so on and so forth. The largest and in fact the only organizational structure that a Christian is a part

of is the local church, or congregation. Just as we find many cases where the Bible writers use the word church in the universal sense we find many cases where they speak of the congregational sense as well. There is one universal church, but Paul said, "The churches of Christ salute you." (Rom. 16:16)

In Matthew 18:15-20 Jesus taught that there is no higher court one may approach on this earth for conflicts between brethren than the local congregation. Now there are theoretically going to be several congregations in the world and perhaps in a given area, but each of these congregations is independent from one another and autonomous in its operation.

You can see this in the New Testament and perhaps nowhere as clearly as when the work and authority of elders is described. "The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you..." (1 Peter 5:1-2) "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28) "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you..." (1 Thess. 5:12)

We further see the independency of churches by the epistles Paul wrote to them in the New Testament. Most of these epistles were written to individual churches, such as the church at Corinth, and addressed problems or issues within their congregation. Now the Epistles were to be passed among the other churches to be read so that the pattern would be known when similar problems or issues arose in their respective congregations. But in the New Testament, cooperation between congregations consisted of the fact that all of them loved each other, were thoughtful of each other, and were together obedient to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles and thus, "were of like precious faith." (1 Pet. 1:1) Because of this autonomy and independency, as far as his work, responsibility and function was concerned the church was no larger than the congregation an individual Christian was a member of.

In fact when Paul was writing to the churches and their members he sometimes used terms that are occasionally applied to the universal church to speak of the local congregation. For instance, in 1 Cor. 12 Paul speaks of the local church as the body of Christ, and those who were a part of that congregations were members of that body as a functioning unit. Now then, having seen that there is a scriptural difference between the church local and the church universal next month we will look at what it means to be a part of a congregation, or a church of Christ.

BUILDING A CHRISTIAN HOME LEADING CHILDREN INTO THE CHURCH

BY HOMER A. GAY

Parents should know that the gravest responsibility they have in this world is their children. And one of the most honorable things that they can accomplish is to bring their "children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." It certainly is sad to see children neglected physically, - dirty, thinly clad in rags, undernourished, uneducated, and so on, but it is a thousand times worse for their souls to be neglected! Regardless of how much money and land I might leave for my children to inherit how much education I have given them or how high in circles of fame I may help them to go in this life, if I fail to lead them to Christ and into His Church, I have made a miserable failure.

I am faced often with good Christian parents, whose children have been educated and given a good start in the financial world, but have never obeyed the gospel. These parents want me to talk to their children to get them to obey the gospel. Now, these are hard facts, facts that we might as well face: those children of ours were as so much clay in our hands and we have molded them into what they now are. Just today, I have been talking with some parents who have sent their daughter, who was recently baptized into Christ, off to college. There is no loyal congregation where the daughter is, and NOW they are wanting Me to try to get the girl in touch with a congregation. Why did these parents not think of the church first? Don't you think that the parents made the girl think that they thought more of the school than they do of the church?

The evil influences of Satan are strong enough at the best, and children are going to be influenced by some of them, but the parents have the first chance at the children and surely can lead them into the church, if they will start in time. When Hannah prayed for a man child, she "vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt, indeed, look upon the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life" (1 Sam. 1:11). She evidently believed that she could have an influence over this boy - and did. In Acts 16th chapter, we notice that Lydia and her "household" were baptized, also the Jailor and his house - "household" - were baptized. The Angel

told Cornelius (Acts 10), "He shall tell thee words whereby thou and thy house shall be saved." Paul said to Timothy, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that In thee also" (2 Tim. 1:5). Again: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15).

If we expect our children to come into the church, we must prove to them that we appreciate the church. Jesus "loved the church and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5), and we should LOVE THE CHURCH and do all in our power to make of it a success. When we spend more money for cold drinks, tobacco and such like, than we contribute into the Church, we are showing the children that we do not think much of the church. When we go to ten times as much trouble and expense to educate our children than we do to get them to the services of the church and to have them taught the Bible; when we find fault with all of the members of the church; when we allow company, a little muddy road, a little headache, and other such things, keep us away from the services of the church, we cannot expect our children to be very much interested in it themselves.

Parents should always be careful to live in a community where both they and the children can attend the worship. It is far better to live on less and have the influence of the church to help you with your children.

We should talk about the church, its benefits and advantages and blessings before the children. We should go to every service of the church; be a real booster for the church with our time, talent and money. Let the children know from infancy that the church and its work and needs come first with us.

The church needs young folks in it, and young folks need to be in the church. I hear some parents say, "well, I want my children to get through sowing their wild oats and settle down before they come into the church," but Solomon says "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth" (EccI. 12:1). How much better it is to not sow those wild oats at all!

I do not believe that parents should over-persuade their children nor try to scare them into the church, but it will be easy to LEAD them into church if we will always see to it that the church is first with us.



BRIEF HISTORY

The Northwest Church of Christ

By RONNY F. WADE

Below you will find an article by Brother Tom Atkinson regarding the Northwest Church of Christ. I first came in contact with Tom when he contacted me about some historical data regarding the non-class churches of Christ in Georgia. As our correspondence proceeded I eventually sent him material on the matter of individual cups. After reading and studying he came to the conclusion that the scriptures did not support their use. Shortly thereafter I made a trip to Tennessee and we met face to face for the first time. He told me of his intention to give up the cups and all unscriptural worship. Soon thereafter, plans were made to begin the congregation of which he speaks. I personally believe Brother Atkinson is sincere in his convictions and fully capable of carrying on the work in his home area. I commend him to the brotherhood as worthy of support. Upon leaving those brethren with whom he previously worked and worshiped, he has been without support, with the exception of small amounts I have helped raise for his benefit. He is unable to leave his home area and feels that over time he will be able to establish a good congregation there. He tells me that he needs at least \$1000.00 per month to make ends meet. That is not much, and surely there are enough churches who will commit to sending him one or two hundred dollars per month so that this man can continue to preach and spread the gospel in that area of Tennessee. You can contact me at P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or 417-501-8771 for more information. - Ronny F. Wade

A Brief History of the Northwest church of Christ

The establishment of the Northwest church of Christ is in part my story as much as it is the story of the congregation. In 2011, the congregation where I grew up celebrated 100 years. The East Point church of Christ (East Point/Atlanta, GA) was established in 1911 by evangelist S. H. Hall. My great grandparents, grandmother, her brothers and sisters, my mother, and many more extended family members all obeyed the Gospel at the East Point church.. My roots run deep in the restoration movement.

To celebrate the congregations history, I decided to revise a research paper I had written (1986) on the history of the work. I wanted to add more details, pictures and other general information on the congregations in Atlanta during that period in history. The result of my efforts was a 60 page booklet entitled *The History and Influence of the East Point church of Christ: Selected stories of the Restoration Movement in East Point, GA 1911-2011*.

In the course of my research I learned of a debate that took place at East Point in 1951. Brother Cecil Abercrombie represented the Union City church (Union City, GA). Union City was a non-class congregation. I wanted to expand my material concerning the debate and give more general information on non-class congregations in Atlanta. However, to my surprise, I could find very little information at all about these groups (even though I knew of several that once existed and still exist. I also had an uncle that had been an active member of one of the congregations).

All the research material I consulted (both my original source files and additional church history material) contained little, if anything at all, about the congregations of the non-divided class persuasion in Atlanta. Therefore, I then decided to research and write a book myself, dealing mostly with the non-class churches of Atlanta.

In the course of my study I discovered something else as well. I discovered that there were various groups of "non class" churches, some of which used only one cup in partaking of the Lord's Supper. I knew that such congregations did exist, but in all my years of ministry work, I had never lived near any of them, no one had ever asked me my view of the subject, thus, I had never really given the issue much thought. In fact, I always assumed that some congregations preferred one cup, probably for any number of reasons, but beyond that the matter never crossed my mind. In addition, the vast majority of conversations I had with people concerning the Lord's Supper centered around the question why we should partake of it every first day of the week.

After realizing this I then made a decision to research why some of the non-class churches adopted multiple communion cups and why others did not. I was amazed at what I learned and it opened a whole new area of study for me. I came to the conclusion that the way in which it was done in the 1st Century was

with one chalice/cup and one loaf. Furthermore, there was a symbolism involved that, for me at least, makes perfect sense.

Not only is the one cup a symbol of the one covenant, but it also symbolizes unity, and a common bond between fellow believers! A sense of harmony as we all gather around the Lord's table and share in the unity of other believers in Christ. Thus, I made the decision to start contacting various ministers and members within congregations that worshiped in this manner.

The closest congregation to our area is the Paduach church of Christ (Paduach, KY). They were without a regular minister and I offered to start going over on Sunday mornings and preach for them. While there I was privileged to meet Dwight, Robin and Zane McCoy who were actually traveling further than we were to attend Paducah. The McCoy's lived within close proximity to where we live.

The trip to Paducah was difficult because of, among other things, the high cost of gas, and the distance involved (120 mile round trip). The McCoy's were traveling an even further distance. Thus, I offered to help in establishing a work in this area and after discussing it with the McCoy's we decided to begin and held our first meeting at the home of Brother Zane McCoy in Martin, TN on January 8, 2012.

After the first meeting it was decided that we would continue to meet in our homes, as that is not only a first century practice, but a much more financially feasible choice at the present time. We also decided to start dividing our locations, alternating our services between Union City and Greenfield, TN. In this way we all share in the work and expand our area of outreach into two counties.

We are, quite literally, in our infancy as a congregation. Lord willing, we will continue to serve him in this way and as we continue to plant the seed, we pray that He will grant us the increase. It is our desire to simply worship the Lord in a manner in which the 1st Century church worshiped and to honor him in all that we do! Prayers are solicited for our efforts. All are welcomed!

Tom Atkinson April 30, 2012

From our website <http://www.northwestcoc.com>

REBECCA MOTHER OFcontinued from page one

we show respect by standing to our feet.

In verse 65 of the same chapter the Book tells us that Rebecca took a veil and covered herself. It was considered wanton to be in public with your head uncovered if you were a lady in those days. While 1 Co. 11 clearly shows the veil to be our sisters uncut hair today, a head covering is not what is used to determine modesty. How close may one wear their dress or skirt and still be modest? What is acceptable apparel according to I Ti. 2:9? "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety not with braided hair, or gold or pearls or costly array." Upon careful study one may learn that "modest apparel" refers to both the specific type of attire and length of said garment. See the word "katastole" in a Greek lexicon. There is no room for pants or mini-skirts on our girls. Parents should teach modesty according to the Bible tradition rather than use some new, enlightened understanding. Our daughters can be active, competitive, and involved and still maintain the Bible standard of modesty.

The last positively notable characteristic portrayed in Genesis of Rebecca is that she was a woman of prayer. Ge. 25:22 says that the boys in her womb "struggled" Then the most curious statement, "she went to inquire of the Lord." This indicates her trust. She intimates that she knew where to find the answer. As a woman of prayer she is in good company, great women of the Bible like Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and the mother of Jesus, Mary, and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. It is good to know that we serve a mighty God who hears and answers prayer. Ps 34:17, "The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Pr. 15:29, "The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." Jn. 9:31, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." -Michael W. Bolton, email: mwbolton2001@yahoo.com Ph# 903-491-6802

WHY ARE WE MEMBERS OF continued from page two

digression or denominationalism it brings to mind that perhaps some are not as sound in the faith as we believed they were. The current problem of people, in a few places, falling into liberal ways and practices is sad and alarming to say the least. The words of Paul in Galatians 1:6 are brought to mind. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." Again in Galatians 3:1, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" Paul was astounded that brethren could be so weak and that in a short time.

After Peter made a terrible mistake and was hypocritical by first eating with the Gentiles and then refusing when his Jewish brethren were present Paul rebuked him. He said, "...I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed." (Galatians 2:11) What the church needs today is more brethren who are willing to stand up and be counted when the chips are down. It is easy to be strong when there are no enemies confronting us. When everyone agrees with us and slaps us on the back we can stand tall. However, when problems arise and some we love are falling into sinful ways it can require more backbone than some have. This is especially difficult if financial considerations figure in. If it is our boss who, has become loose spiritually, we are more reluctant to speak out for what is right. Yes, we wonder about some things. Why are we members of the church that has always insisted on a thus sayeth the Lord? When we learn of denominational practices among some and others are slow to see the problem, something is wrong. When some preachers seem to have difficulty in seeing the problem, something is indeed wrong. Gospel preachers are to set in order the things that are wanting. (Titus 1:5) We who preach the unsearchable riches of God are not supposed to just go along with the flow, so to speak. We are duty bound to make a difference in this old world because we stand up for what is right no matter who disagrees or where the problems are. That is the sort of man the apostle Paul was. We need more like him now.

Doctrine is important to many of us but apparently not so important to others. Doctrine is accorded a great deal of importance in the New Testament and we had better not forget that. Today, few passages

may bring about as much derision as the one found in 2 John 9. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." The liberal minded insist that is only the teaching, or doctrine, about Christ. They insist that means only that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God. They deny that it refers to what Jesus and the apostles taught. However, their wresting of scripture cannot negate what it really means. Paul wrote Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, AND UNTO THE DOCTRINE; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Timothy 4:16) Sounds as though the doctrine of Christ is something we not only believe but something we do! Paul said "continue in them." Could he have meant only that we must continue to believe in Christ? Who believes it means only that? It is obvious that those who are willing to remain rooted in the teaching of Christ and His apostles may rely on the blessed truth that both the Father and the Son are with us in remaining firm and continuing to do the doctrine of Christ. In other words, do what Christ and the apostles taught us to do. Those who drift away have no such comfort. John said if we do not abide in the doctrine of Christ we have not God. May we say with all the conviction we can muster, there is no safety in any teaching not found in the Scriptures, no benefit at all.

God be thanked for faithful brethren everywhere who will not be moved away from the truth. We know a few have drifted and that is tragic. It is difficult to realize how brethren who have been so strong can become so weak but it happened in Bible times as well. We must press on no matter what happens. We look forward in eager anticipation to the final Day when the faithful will be rewarded. When the Lord comes again there will be those who are still firm and steadfast. We are thankful for such wonderful brethren and we still see them everywhere we go. Many know why they are members of the church and they know where they are going when the end comes. Think on these things. DLK

THE CHIEF SHALL BE A SERVANT

By RICK MARTIN

We are living in a day when selfishness seems to be the prevalent attitude in our society. Many people are concerned only with themselves and we have many "takers", but not many "givers". Most people are willing to grab all they can, but very few are willing to

give of themselves. We have many people who want to be in the limelight, but they look with great disgust upon the idea of being a servant.

This type of attitude was certainly not portrayed by our Lord Jesus Christ. One of his reasons for coming to earth was to serve and give, Phil. 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. In one instance, to show his disciples that he was a servant, he took water and washed their feet, John 13:3-5. Since Jesus came to this earth to serve and give; I think it is only reasonable to think he expects us to do the same. Perhaps the greatest model for servant hood, except for Jesus himself, was Paul.

Here was a man who was radically transformed from a strong-willed official in the Jewish religion to a bond-servant of Jesus Christ. In looking at the writings of Paul, we see that he thought of himself as a servant. If ever there was a person in the Lord's Church who could have demanded and expected preferential treatment it was Paul. However, he most often referred to himself as a "servant".

When we think of a servant today we think of the poor soul who was a slave and forced to do his master's bidding. With this in mind it comes as no surprise when some people laugh at the idea that a leader should also be a servant. God's word does not convey this attitude because it gives a much different understanding of servant hood---one that is compatible with leadership.

One of the first things involved in being a servant of Jesus Christ is unselfishness. As strange as it may sound, our own worst enemy is with us wherever we go. He follows us to church, he sings and prays with us, and he goes home with us. His name is "self". He is afflicted with a disease called "selfishness" and he demands to be satisfied. Phil. 2:3-5 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. In these verses we are told that we are not to be selfish. We are not to let our care and attention to be completely absorbed by our own concerns. The interest and welfare of others should be near to our heart. No man is at liberty to live for himself and disregard the needs of others. As servants, we must be concerned about others.

As servants of Jesus Christ, we must be givers. We need to look beyond ourselves and become servants and givers. Jesus replaced the self-centered philosophies of his own day and ours with the other-centered perspective of God. We should regard others as more important than ourselves. This requires looking for ways to encourage, support and build up others. This requires an attitude of giving rather than

receiving or taking.

The Bible very specifically teaches us that we should live as servants. Rom. 12:10- 13 [Be] kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 1 Thess. 2:7-8 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. 1Thess. 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. These scriptures about servant hood do not imply inferiority.

We are valuable before God and completely dependent on Him. The attitude of our Lord on servant hood is found in Matt 20:20-28. At this particular time, the popularity of the Lord was on the rise, the knowledge of his kingdom was spreading and the disciples began to be anxious about being recognized as members of His chosen band. In this account, the mother of two of the disciples got involved. She is the mother of James and John. She asked that her sons be allowed to sit, one on the right and the other on the left hand of Jesus in his kingdom. Just in case you are wondering what the other ten thought about this, verse 24 tells us the ten became indignant. Why did they become indignant?

Because there was no way they were going to give up those top spots without a fight. They got downright mad that James and John might get the glory they wanted. Now, I ask you, does that sound familiar? In this scene, we see that Jesus calls his disciples over to him and says "Fellows, if any of you want to be great then minister to others and whoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant."

Our primary calling as followers of Jesus Christ is to be servants. Some lose sight of this and get the "celebrity syndrome." They think they are better and more important than others. In the body of Christ, there is only one head and that is Jesus himself. The rest of us are in the class that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 20 and that is "servants."

Hear the words of Jesus in Matt. 20:25-27, But Jesus called them [unto him], and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: -Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189, mmartin@bellsouth.net

Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com August 15- The meeting at West Point, GA was a delight. We enjoyed the company of Don Jackson who faithfully labors among these good people. Our crowds were good throughout. The church in LaGrange cooperated with members present for nearly every service. Sickness hindered some, but on the whole it was a good week. From West Point we went to Greenville, PA . It was my privilege to stay with my dear friends Don and Sis Bee. Their hospitality is truly outstanding. Crowds and interest were good throughout. Several came from Indiana, PA and Flemington to help make the meeting a success. Currently we are in an effort at Mtn. Grove, MO. The church here is small and struggling against formidable odds, yet they continue to press on. We look forward, Lord willing, to the Texas Labor Day meeting, the first part of September. Fossil Creek in Ft. Worth conducts the meeting each year and are to be commended for their dedication to truth and right. May the Lord continue to bless His people everywhere.

Darrell Crawford, 208 E Baldwin Rd Unit S Panama City, Fl 32405 bugz1955@hotmail.com We hope everyone is doing well this time of year, It has been a while since my last report. Things are going well here in Panama City. We continue to have a lot of visitors. For this we are very thankful. It seems that almost every week we have visitors from out of state and from the local area too. Some who come on Sunday morning return for the afternoon service as well. Starting Aug. 1st we began having a midweek service on Wed. night at 7:30 pm. We will have these services the 1st and 3rd Wed. night of the month for now. The first service we had two from the community. They seemed to like the service and said they will return. If you are in our area please make plans to attend. We love visitors.

Our Friday Fest booth is going very well. We continue to have several stop by each month, some say they are looking for us, this is encouraging. The couple who attended the first Wed night service came as a result of the Friday Fest booth. We continue to give away a Bible each month and offer free Bible correspondence course. We have sent out about 18 so far. This helps us to get the word out about the church. Many have been heard to say that they thought we were not meeting

anymore. We are still having digressives attend and others showing more interest. We really enjoyed attending the meeting at Oyster Bay with Brother Allen Bailey. They had good attendance, and Allen did his usual great job delivering the word of God. We also enjoyed seeing his family that was with him. Please let us know if there is anyone in the areas that we can visit, or contact about attending church. Please keep the church here in your prayers, and that we can always use wisdom in the work that we are doing. We are available to make one Sunday appointment per month, also we are available for a few meetings a year as we go along. Let us always stand for the Old Paths and may the Lord bless His church everywhere.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, E-mail old_paths@juno.com, August 13- We closed a good meeting yesterday at the New Salem congregation near Brookhaven, MS. There was one restored and one confession of wrongs. Brethren from nearby congregations attended well and cooperation was very good. Crowds were also good with the house nearly full all week long. Some from the community also attended one or more times. New Salem brethren are hospitable and took good care of us all week. This was Lynwood Smith's old home congregation and he is buried in the adjoining cemetery. We still miss him. We appreciated a number of preachers who attended all week as well. There is a good spirit among all we were with from the congregations in the area which bodes well for the future. Lord willing, we will return in August 2015 and we look forward to that. We begin this coming Wednesday evening at Liberty, KY. We were with them some time back and anticipate a good meeting there, if the Lord wills. After Liberty, Ky we plan to be with the church in West Chester, Ohio where we once lived. We wish all our brethren well and pray the Lord's blessings on the Brotherhood everywhere.

Zambia Land of Opportunity

BY DUANE PERMENTER

So many things have occurred in our lives and here in Zambia since I left Lusaka nearly eighteen months ago that I should have shared with you, for the work in Zambia is the Lord's work that

is developing and moving forward. God is an awesome God, and I am grateful to be alive and able to serve Him! Please remember that I would be glad to come and talk with any congregation personally and answer any questions about the work. Thank you again for all your help!

Edwin Morris and the Oakwood church of Christ

I know that many have helped to support this work through the years and that the Lord will assist the efforts in Zambia. The church in Edmond, Oklahoma is to be commended for all they have done for our Lord's great cause in this region since its beginning in the 1980's. Brother Edwin Morris is the one who spear-headed this effort and we miss him dearly! He was such an inspiration and motivator to foreign work.

South Walnut Street church of Christ

After we moved back to the United States in January of 2011, the church in Edmond decided that they would like for another congregation to take responsibility for assisting the work in Zambia. I approached my home congregation in Cleburne, and they were willing. We have taken on this responsibility of helping to manage finances and so forth from the United States. Please do not misunderstand; this responsibility has nothing to do with congregational autonomy in Zambia or America. Neither the church in Edmond nor the church in Cleburne has anything to do with decisions made by Zambians in the work. The church at Cleburne tries to coordinate the support of a few preachers. We also know that it is important to make periodic trips to help and encourage the work.

These people have had someone from America living in the country for over 25 years. To just leave them would be a mistake. Our goal, though, is to continue weaning the Zambians. Only time can reveal what the situation actually is. God bless all concerned! Duane_and_laurie@yahoo.com

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GOING OVERBOARD ON GRACE

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

In a recent interview Christianity Today asked Max Lucado, who just completed his latest book, *Grace: More than We Deserve, Greater than We Can Imagine*, “Have you ever seen a church go overboard on grace?” Lucado answered, “I never have.” With all due respect, however, Lucado goes on to show that “go overboard on grace” is precisely what he has done.

Lucado, a former Church of Christ preacher who has written over 50 books, says that during his days as a Church of Christ preacher he had trouble with the doctrine of “Once saved always saved.” He says, “That [doctrine] really tripped me up. I felt it was irreverent. How dare I say, ‘God saved me, and now that I’m saved, I’m forever saved.’ But, now I say, ‘How can I say otherwise?’”

Lucado continues, “I’ll admit that for the first few years of my ministry, I was teaching a grace that saved us but did not sustain us, in which the miracle happened once but it didn’t happen daily. It seems crazy now. Why would God save me one day and then turn salvation over to me? That’s not really salvation, is it? But that was something I had to work through, and I’m grateful that I’m very much at peace with the eternal security of the believer (once saved always saved).”

Lucado adds that he also believes “we are born with a proclivity to sin,” and that “we’ve inherited the sin of our ancestors.”

It is no wonder that in 2003 Lucado removed “Church of Christ” from the name of the Oak Hills Church he is associated with in San Antonio. His beliefs about grace are more closely aligned with Augustine and John Calvin than they are with Churches of Christ. In fact, many Calvinists departed from such beliefs during the American Restoration Movement and vigorously condemned them.

The word “grace” derives from the Greek word *charis*. In secular Greek it meant “to rejoice.” As far back as Homer it denoted sweetness or attractiveness. It came to signify favor, goodwill, and loving kindness—especially as granted by a superior to an inferior. In the New Testament, “grace” (156 times) takes on a special redemptive sense in which God makes available his favor on behalf of sinners who actually do not deserve it.

The New Testament places tremendous emphasis upon the fact that salvation is the result of Heaven’s grace. This beautiful truth should never be minimized, but at the same time it must not be perverted. For centuries, however, many people have hijacked the term and foisted upon it a meaning foreign to the truth. Grace is accessed initially at the point of gospel obedience. It is shocking that so many sincere people are unaware of the fact that grace and obedience are not enemies. Paul says grace is accessed by faith (Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 2:8-9). It is not, however, a faith void of loving response to God; it is a faith that acts (Jas. 2:21-26).

Paul says we are “saved by grace through faith” (Eph. 2:8). Later he says that sinners are “cleansed by the washing of water with the word” (5:26). “Saved” and “cleansed” represent the same idea. Scholars almost universally acknowledge that the “washing of water” is an allusion to baptism. It is clear, therefore, that the reception of grace by means of the “faith” system includes immersion in water.

The initial state of grace we access through obedience to the gospel must be embraced continuously or we will fall from divine favor, and our initial reception of Heaven’s grace will have been “in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10).

If one cannot fall from grace, why did Paul urge his fellow-believers to “continue [present tense—sustained perseverance] in the grace of God”? (Acts 13:43). The Scriptures warn of certain Christians who attempted to revert to the law of Moses for salvation, and as a result they were severed from Christ and “fallen from grace” (Gal. 3:26-27; 5:4).

Lucado says in the same interview that he would rather “err on the side of appearing morally lax in the effort to promote grace, than to be accused of legalism for promoting righteousness.”

He suggests, for example, that we should not begin our teaching of unmarried couples who are living together or homosexuals by condemning their current situation, but we should begin by emphasizing the grace of God in hopes that they will eventually come to the truth of their sinful condition.

Is not this approach the very thing Paul condemns in Romans 6:1-2? (“Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.”) If people are not made aware of the fact they are sinners they will see no need of a Savior full of grace.

Grace is a soul-thrilling concept and it must be deeply appreciated, but if you distort and manipulate it as many have done you have gone overboard. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com