

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. 4

THE SAVING FAITH OF RAHAB

BY RICK MARTIN

Rahab was not just any woman; she was a prostitute. Regardless of her past, James said her faith was on a par with Abraham’s, it was active (Jam. 2:25-26). Thayer defines such faith as “conviction...and trust, conjoined with obedience” As we look at the salvation of Rahab we can see some similarities with our own salvation.

Rahab’s faith was certainly crude (Jos. 2:9-13). It rested on what she had heard about Israel’s God, and she did not know much when the spies approached her. She had never seen a miracle, but she had heard about them, and she believed the testimony was true. In contrast, Israel saw some of the greatest miracles God ever performed, but they still would not believe.

Acceptable faith involves more than just accepting testimony. It also requires trust, commitment, and action. Rahab was convinced God would overthrow Jericho. She trusted the spies’ word as men of God and committed herself to helping them. Then, she activated that commitment by helping them. Her faith would not have been acceptable if she had refused to act on it.

Rahab knew of the coming destruction. She did not set the terms of her deliverance. The two spies are the ones who set the terms that were given to them by God. Rahab did exactly as she was instructed. Some would call this legalism, but it was not. It was faithfulness. Christians today are called “legalists” when they obey God-as if obedience was a terrible sin. Those who make this charge are liars and are doing Satan’s work.

We all want deliverance from everlasting destruction. Rom. 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”. We also see in Rom. 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Everyone deserves everlasting destruction or death. We must realize that

we do not set the terms of deliverance. Those terms are set by God. We find those terms in the New Testament.

People may desire deliverance and desire to go to heaven, but many desire it in their own way. Many believe they can pray for salvation. Many believe that faith alone will bring them salvation.

Rahab had conditions placed on her deliverance. She had to place the scarlet cord in the window of her house. When she met the conditions, she was delivered. We also have conditions placed on our deliverance. What are those conditions? Those conditions are to believe in God, Heb. 11:6, John 14:1; Repent of your sins, Luke 13:3; Confess Jesus as God’s Son, Rom. 10:10, and to be baptized for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38. When we meet these conditions, God will save us.

Safety was in and not out of the designated place. For Rahab safety was in her house; All of Rahab’s family had to remain in her house several weeks. If anyone told the authorities what was happening, she and her family would probably be killed. Would you make such a commitment and then follow through with it? People who will not stand up for Christ today when false doctrine is taught and/or immorality is practiced would not have done what she did! Yet, that is the only way acceptable faith can respond. Faith can be very expensive, and it has always been so. Allegiance to Christ could cost you your job, career, friends, money, family, pleasurable habits-even your life. It will certainly cost you unlawful relationships and sinful practices. Paul was ready to die for Christ (Acts 21:13). Would we be faithful if it required our life: (Rev. 2:10, 1 John 3:16)? Do we have Job’s attitude. “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15)?

The truth of our profession is proven by the works of our life. James 2:18 “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works shew me thy faith without thy works,

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Editorial

PRAYER OR PROFANITY?

By DAVID GRIFFIN

It has become commonplace in recent years for people to express surprise, shock, or amazement by using an expression that is disrespectful to God and thus profane. You hear it everywhere—on television, the radio and internet, the marketplace, at school and the workplace. It has become so common in fact that many Christians scarcely even notice its use among the worldly, and some may even have adopted it into their own vocabulary.

Some people attempt to justify the expression by appealing to what they think is its use in the Bible. The expression “O my God” appears 21 times in the Old Testament; it does not appear in the New. Two simple observations demonstrate that the expression as found in the Bible is not the same as the one so freely thrown about today.

First, the Bible expression always occurs within the context of a prayer or as praise in a psalm in direct appeal to God. A couple of examples will demonstrate: “For You, O my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build him a house. Therefore, your servant has found it in his heart to pray before you” (1 Chronicles 17:25), and “O my God, I trust in you; Let me not be ashamed...” (Psalm 25:2).

The expression, “O my God,” as used in such prayers and psalms is a far cry from the flippant, careless, and irreverent usage of modern times. When a person is thrilled to win a new car on a game show, he is not using the Bible expression as prayer or praise; when the recipients of a remodeled house on a “home makeover” program, repeatedly shout the worldly expression as they tour the new home, they are not imitating the reverent appeal of the Psalmist; when a wife is elated at the moment she learns her husband has given her a new diamond ring, it is not the Bible expression on her lips nor its spirit in her heart; when a teenaged girl learns from her best friend that the former has received an unexpected phone call from a boy they both like, neither girl is making an appeal like that in the Bible while they both squeal the worldly expression with glee in their hearts. All honest minds can see that the Bible expression and the common expression are not simply “two versions of the same thing.”

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QUERIST COLUMN

By *RONNY F. WADE*

Question: Is it wrong to use olive oil in the bread for the Communion?

Question: Would you please write something about how the bread for the communion should be prepared. Is there a recipe that everyone should follow?

Answer: The above questions are worthy of serious consideration. I must admit that I am often dissatisfied and greatly disturbed when partaking of the loaf in various congregations. At times it is almost impossible to break bread because the loaf shatters when one tries. At other times the loaf is not bread but actually dough that hasn't been baked thoroughly so as to be bread. In such cases one has to pull off a piece instead of breaking bread as the scripture demands. Since the observance of the Lord's Supper was instituted during Passover week when Jesus was eating with His disciples, it logically and scripturally follows that the bread must have been unleavened bread. Ex. 12:8" And they shall eat the flesh (of the lamb without blemish) in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs they shall eat it." In verse 15 the scripture continues "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread." Since Jesus would have honored the law, we conclude that the bread used on the occasion of Mt. 26:26, Mark 14 and Luke 22 was unleavened bread. Greg Gay in his tract *The Bread Which We Brake* says "The word leaven literally means "to raise" and, as applied to bread, leaven is that which initiates the gradual change in dough that causes it to rise." Hence the bread used in the Lord's Supper should contain no yeast or any ingredient such as baking powder, baking soda, eggs etc. that would cause the bread to rise and become leavened bread. The type of flour is not specified. The flour used by the Jews of that day could have been wheat, rice, barley, rye or some other grain, we just don't know, therefore we cannot specify a specific type of flour that must be used. Added to the flour is some type of liquid, again not specified. Liquids would include water oil, or milk. Using olive oil does not result in leavened bread. Some have questioned whether salt could be used. We do know that it was included in the unleavened bread of the meat offering in Leviticus 2, and would therefore not cause the bread to be leavened. These ingredients in proper proportion are to be mixed and prepared for baking. The loaf should be flattened out either rounded or squared and baked until it can be broken. It should not be cooked until it breaks in pieces or taken out of the oven before it is actually bread. The person preparing the loaf might have to bake several until they find the proper recipe. If the loaf is still dough it needs to cook longer. If it is brittle and shatters it has been cooked too long. I would suggest that the person preparing the loaf

will need to experiment until they find the right amount of each ingredient and the proper baking time. Since all ovens are different what might work well in one oven as to time might not be appropriate in another setting. Below I have included two recipes for the bread that were given by Brother Gay in his tract.

Recipe number 1

2/3 cup flour
1 teaspoon olive oil
Dash of salt
3/4 cup of water

Stir flour before measuring but do not sift. Thoroughly mix flour, salt and 1/2 t olive oil with a fork. Add water and mix until it sticks together and forms into a ball. Knead on floured wax paper until dough can be handled. Place dough in a pyrex dish oiled with 1/2 t. olive oil and pat out into a round loaf Bake 250 degrees for 20 minutes. Turn loaf over and cook another 20 minutes.

Recipe number 2

2/3 cup flour
4-5 tablespoons oil
1/8 cup water

Work the oil into the flour with a fork; then add water a little at a time-use only enough so dough isn't sticky. Roll dough out to fit bottom of pie plate. Cook in oven at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes. Lower temperature to 200 degrees. Cook for another 8-10 minutes. Watch close as not to brown.

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THE SAVING FAITH continued from page one

and I will shew thee my faith by my works". People can say anything they want to, but what we really are is proven by what we do. Would you be willing to have such a Faith?

What is the designated place for us? It is in Christ. Eph. 1:7 "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;" Col. 1:14 "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" Rom. 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

To be in Christ is to be in His church Eph. 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" Eph. 1:22-23 "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all "The church makes up the saved; the saved are in the church, Acts 2:47 "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

How do we get into Christ, the church, the designated place? Rom. 6:3 tells us how to get into Christ "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Acts 2:38-41, tells us how to get into the church; "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls...and then verse 47 says, Praising God, and having favour with all the people And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved".

Rahab was required to remain in the house. If she left the house destruction awaited. If anyone left the house

they would be killed Jos. 2:19.

We must remain faithful in the church. We must endure to the end; Matt. 10:22. We must be faithful and steadfast in service, 1 Cor. 15:58.

Rahab lived in a city that was slated for destruction. God had already determined that Jericho would fall. I am sure people felt pretty confident and reasonably safe behind the walls of their city, but God had passed sentence and they were doomed for destruction.

So it is with many today. Many feel secure and do not think they are in danger. However the Bible tells a different story. The lost are condemned already, John 3:18 The lost abide under the wrath of God; John 3:36, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9.

Today all must follow the example of Rahab. There should be no delay. Everyone must get in church, the designated place. Do you have a saving faith like Rahab?

PRAYER OR PROFANITY continued from page two

Second, that the Bible expression and the one in common use belong to separate categories of speech is evident when the two appear in print properly spelled.

The Bible expression begins with "O"; the popular expression begins with "Oh." The difference is not a small one. The "O" in the Bible expression is what is called a "vocative particle." That's just a fancy way of saying that it refers to "calling upon someone in formal address, or invoking their attention." The form is somewhat old-fashion and out of use, but we might recognize it in the lyrics of a song we sing, "O Careless Soul, why do you linger..." These lyrics obviously make an appeal for the attention of the Careless Soul. The "Oh" in the other expression however changes the utterance from a form of address to a mere interjection. It is thus no longer a heartfelt request for the ear of an Almighty Protector but a frivolous, thoughtless expletive. It is safe to say that most people who so carelessly toss the worldly expression about are not truly seeking the attention of the Almighty; rather, were He indeed to turn His attention their way, they would no doubt flee from before Him and instead invoke the mountains and rocks! "O Mountains! O Rocks! Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

Christians must therefore reject this expression as well as its abbreviated form, “OMG,” as used in texting and email. If we’re in the habit of uttering the expression with our lips or “tapping” its abbreviation with our finger-tips, we should henceforth cleanse our mouth and fingers of all such profane use and “sanctify the Lord God in our hearts,” for He is holy, and all who come before Him must regard Him as holy (1 Peter 3:15; Lev. 10:3). It’s not a prayer; it’s profanity!

PAGES FROM THE PAST

One of the biggest problems with any organization is people who caused problems. As a school teacher my job was made much harder when I had problem students. Problem members in the church are hindrances to the work of the church. In this article from the May 1964 issue of the Old Paths Advocate, Barney Owens points out the different members who cause problems in the church. It should be our aim to never be a problem member in the Lord’s church.

Rick Martin

THE CHURCH’S PROBLEM MEMBERS

The church, or body of Christ, is composed of many members as stated by Paul in I Cor. 12:27, “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” We are all members of this spiritual body; just as our physical body has many members, so does the church. With each member doing his part, the church can grow See Eph. 4:16. But, as we all know, some do not do their part, leaving a problem for the church. I should like to notice some of these problems. I do not expect to notice them all, however, I shall endeavor to consider some of the more prominent ones.

The Problem of Unconverted Members - We read in John 6:66: “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” We can see that this was a problem from the first. The Master taught us in Lk. 13:3, “I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” One then must repent or turn from the world and live for the Lord, lest he perish.

This kind of member was also a problem in the life of Paul, as we read in II Tim. 4:16, “At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.” Here, he is speaking of being on trial and those whom he had

held as his friends had forsaken him at a time when he needed them most. This should encourage us today; as friends of the Lord, when life becomes difficult for us, let us not do as Paul’s friends, but stay by the Lord. A good motto is: “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.”

The Worldly Member-We read in James 4:4, ‘Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.’ James refers to them as “adulterers and adulteresses,” including spiritual adultery, by having excessive attachment to the things of the world. As Christianity is a sacrificing religion, this would be that state of worldly mindedness which will make no sacrifice for religion. It is true that most would profess to be children of God if this were not true. “The friendship of the world is enmity with God;” enmity means hatred, or whatever is opposite to love. As the world is arrayed against God and refuses to submit to Him, those who love the world are against Him. “Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God;” enemy is an adversary, one opposed to the Most High, as those who become friends of the world are opposed to God, and His word. This, of course, is done of ourselves when we disobey His commands and yoke ourselves with the world. Notice the example of Demas, 1 Tim. 4:10, “For Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world “ We read in Ex. 32:9, “And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people.” So, we can see this problem is not a new one, as these were stubborn, unyielding, or “stiffnecked.” Let us return to our Maker and cling only to Him. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon” (Matt. 6:24).

The Compromising Member - Read II John 9-11. Those who do not abide in this “Doctrine of Christ,” we are not to receive into our house. I understand the church to be the House of God. We are not to receive them as a brother. Of course, this does not mean that we are to bolt the door to keep them out; we are not to allow them to teach their doctrine. Neither are we to bid them God’s speed, as he who would encourage or support anyone in this false doctrine would be just as guilty as the one actually in error. Paul warns us that false brethren unawares will come in to spy out our liberty. Read Gal. 2:4. Let us be ever alert!

The Lazy Member-We are to study God’s word, II Tim. 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God “ By studying, we are able to give an answer to every man

that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. Read I Pet. 3:15 I do not believe this means that we will be able to answer any and all Bible questions, but that we all should be ready to answer every man concerning the hope which we all have. This is to be done in the right spirit "with meekness and fear" Jesus taught us the works that one must do. Read Matt. 25:34-40. We should all strive to do all of these as often as they are needed. Notice, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." James 1:22 reads. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" - not a hearer only, but a doer.

The Contented Member-The gospel, being the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1:16, and being given to all men, Tit. 2:11, it is our duty to make it known to all the world. Mk. 16:15 "GO ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Matt. 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations " Those who have supported the work in Africa and other fields are to be commended; it would be impossible for everyone to go, so by sending those who can go, we are just as much a part of the work.

The Problem of "Too Many Chiefs and Not Enough Indians." Many troubles arise in the local church today because we do not have the proper leadership. The church is to have elders to watch over the flock. Read I Pet. 5:1-4. They are not as lords but overseers, to take charge and to keep out the bitter foes. More of the men, especially the younger, should prepare for the office of a bishop, I Tim. 3:1-7. The question arises, what congregations which have no elders, such as those just starting, etc.? Often we make the mistake of helping a church get started, and then fail to provide the leadership needed. They struggle along never growing, with no interest, except for a few days a year during a gospel meeting or something of that nature. Is the Lord pleased with this? Paul wrote to Titus in Tit. 1:5 "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee:"someone to care for and protect until the elders are appointed. This would take more time and more effort, but in the long run, would it not be better? May all of us be less, of a problem?



THE HERALD OF TRUTH ERROR

By NATHAN BATTEY

What is the Herald of Truth?

Herald of Truth is a missionary society that operates both a nationwide and international television and radio program. In addition to its media efforts, in recent years Herald of Truth has begun to sponsor numerous missionaries in foreign fields and conducts its own foreign works. In short, Herald of Truth is an organization operating separate from the church to do the work God gave the church. Herald of Truth is funded by numerous digressive churches of Christ as well as donations from society as a whole.

How it began:

Herald of Truth began as a radio program and evangelistic effort of the Highland Avenue Church of Christ in Abilene, TX in 1952. Herald of Truth began airing on 31 American Broadcasting Co. stations and, within its first year, it is estimated over 5,000 people were converted.

Because of the tremendous success of the radio program, Highland Church decided to begin a television program to pair with its radio program. In 1953 a fund raising campaign was begun with the hope of raising enough money to broadcast Herald of Truth on 62 television stations across the nation. The goal of the campaign was to get 1,000 churches to commit to sending \$27 per week so a potential viewing audience of 10 million viewers could be reached.

The television program was successfully launched in 1954 on 50 stations and by the 1970's had expanded to 468 radio stations and 152 television programs. The program met with much success, but was not without controversy.

By the mid 1950's and throughout the 1960's, the Herald of Truth program was the source of heated debate. Defenders of the program included such noted men as Guy N. Woods, Thomas B. Warren, and Batsell Barrett Baxter while other noted brethren such as Roy E. Cogdill and W. Curtis Porter opposed it. Papers and publishing companies also got involved in the controversy with Gospel Advocate defending the program and Gospel Guardian and Truth Magazine opposing it. Numerous formal and written debates resulted including the

Cogdill - Woods debate, and the Arlington Meeting. The Herald of Truth controversy ultimately escalated to the point of major division between what came to be known as the Main Line Churches of Christ and the Non-Institutionals.

Why the controversy?

Why would brethren and faithful preachers oppose a program that was converting thousands? What could possibly be wrong with Churches of Christ being put on the map and a good program gaining national attention and competing with the denominations? How could such a blessing be the source of so much division and controversy?

Points of controversy:

In discussing the points of controversy, one of Herald of Truth's defenders will be allowed to present his own case for consideration. The following quotes come from Jack Meyer Sr. and are recorded in his book, *The Preacher and His Work* and were delivered as a strong defense for Herald of Truth.

Argument #1:

"Now those who oppose Herald of Truth and any such form of congregational cooperation, have, quite sincerely in most cases, "gone to seed" in using this "no example" argument. Every such argument which they make is made by the anti-class ... group." (p. 166).

"This is where you are going to have to make up your mind as to where you stand, and I appeal to you to think long time before being stampeded into extremism by a radical doctrine that crusades under the name of keeping the church sound, but is actually headed into the same results as those of the anti-Sunday school and Ketcherside-Garrett groups." (p. 171)

Meyer's Argument: Those who oppose the Herald of Truth are making the same arguments as the anti-Sunday school proponents (and must therefore be wrong).

Meyer correctly observed what many who were opposed to the Herald of Truth failed to realize: The arguments used by Roy Cogdill and others were essentially the same arguments used against Sunday school classes. In classic digressive fashion, Meyer felt he had answered the issue by merely labeling those opposed to Sunday schools and the Herald of Truth as "Antis" Unfortunately for Brother Meyer, the linking of the two topics did not and does not prove the Scripturalness of either Sunday

school classes or Herald of Truth.

What Brother Meyer failed to realize is that Bible silence forbids rather than permits (Colossians 3:17). If Scripture does not authorize a practice, it is to be rejected. Quoting passages that authorize teaching (such as Matthew 28:19-20) does not make void the rules for how the teaching is to take place (1 Corinthians 14) or how the church is supposed to accomplish its task (1 Corinthians 3:10; 2 Timothy 1:13-14).

Argument #2:

"But before you are deceived by that line of reasoning, be sure that you are not driven to extremism by extreme pressing of a true principle. And mark this: when brethren do this, they wind up by taking positions or urging principles that are not true. Press a true principle to an untrue extreme, and you will the manufacture untrue principles." (p. 166)

Meyer's Argument: "Press a true principle to an untrue extreme, and you will the manufacture untrue principles."

Meyer's second argument appears to be an attack on logic. Truth cannot be pressed into error. Truth can be abandoned in favor of error, but truth cannot be taken to untrue extremes. Asking for Bible examples or patterns that support Sunday school classes or the Herald of Truth program is no more extreme than requiring such a pattern for baptism or communion (Colossians 3:17). Labeling a thing as "extreme" does not prove it to be unscriptural.

Argument #3:

"For example, they argue that when Homewood church, Birmingham, with which I labor, sends money to Highland church in Abilene, TX., to help support our national gospel broadcast, The Herald of Truth, our congregational autonomy (independence) is violated. On the contrary, we exercise that congregational independence by deciding to send that money, by earmarking it to be sent for a specific purpose. The Highland church exercises its independence by deciding to invite churches to assist, by accepting the money, and carrying on the program with money sent for that purpose. The autonomy of no church is violated. Highland church contracts for the program and can terminate the program when thought best. But we understand that when we send our money and send it with that knowledge. Just where has any contributing church, including Highland, lost its autonomy? Only in the charges of those who continue to make these false

charges and make good brethren believe such to be true.” (p. 167)

Meyer’s Argument: Autonomy is not violated since the money has been freely given and is earmarked for a certain work and then used for that work.

First, Meyer contradicts himself by speaking of the Herald of Truth program as an independent work of Highland Church and at the same time stating, “to help support our national gospel broadcast,” (p. 167). To whom does the program belong? Does it belong to Highland Church or to all sponsoring churches?

Second, Meyer correctly notes autonomy has to do with independence, yet is wrong in claiming Highland Church was maintaining its independence while conducting the Herald of Truth program. Meyer himself notes this fact later when he states, “assisting Highland with a program which those brethren found themselves able to carry on in part, but for which they need help maintaining in its entirety.” (p. 169). Highland Church, though full of good intentions, bit off more than it could chew when attempting to air a television program on 62 channels and reach an audience of 10 million people. When a church starts asking 1,000 churches to donate \$27 per week to their program, they are creating a dependent work. Whether Highland church was dependent on 1,000 churches, or 100 churches, or 1 church makes little difference other than magnifying the dependence. Dependence is dependence regardless of severity. The fact that Highland Church had to settle for beginning 50 television programs rather than 62 emphasizes they were dependent and unable to act independently of a brotherhood.

In extreme situations a congregation may be forced to become dependent on other congregations (such as the Judean churches in 2 Corinthians 8), but such a situation is a far cry from creating dependency through a national television program. There is a difference between a congregation suffering unavoidable dependence (2 Corinthians 8) and a congregation creating debt and expecting the brotherhood to tote the note for them. When congregations decide to take on a work, they must “count the cost, whether they have enough to finish it.” (Luke 14:28).

Lastly, halfway through his argument on autonomy, Meyer switched from discussing Highland Church’s independence to discussing her ability to self-govern. Both independence and self-government are a part

of autonomy, yet independence and self-government are not the same thing. Here is why the distinction between independence and self-government must be maintained: A congregation cannot scripturally choose to become dependent upon another congregation and at the same time claim autonomy. When a church chooses to undertake a work greater than her ability and then requests assistance of accomplishing said work, she is not acting autonomously.

Argument #4:

“Then they charge that Highland church is turned into a missionary society, and that contributing churches are sending their money to such an organization. Wrong. The difference is this: a missionary society is a board of men, members of various congregations, over the country, banded into an organization outside of and separate and apart from a congregation to do the work of the church, in competition with the church. But Highland church is not such an organization, but is a congregation under the oversight of its elders, according to New Testament authorization. (Acts 20:17,28; 14:23) So, in supporting this great program of blanketing our nation, and many adjacent nations, with the gospel, you are not sending money to a missionary society, but to a congregation.” (p. 167)

Meyer’s Argument: Herald of Truth does not operate as a Missionary Society.

First, even if it could be argued that Herald of Truth was not a Missionary Society in the 50’s and 60’s, it is freely admitted it is such today. Thus, those who opposed Herald of Truth on the grounds of where it would lead have been justified by time.

Second, it is impossible for a single congregation to scripturally and independently maintain a work that spans 468 radio stations and 152 television programs. Such an endeavor requires organization in the areas where it is being broadcast that is beyond the scope of a single congregation. To argue such is possible is to argue a single church can successfully (and scripturally) conduct mission efforts in 468+ cities each week all on its own.

When a substructure greater or smaller than the local congregation begins to be established and aids in or accomplishes the work of the congregation, a missionary society is being formed. Such was the case with the Herald of Truth program and brethren who recognized such digression were to be commended.

Third, though Meyer correctly defined a missionary society, he misrepresented the issue by stating, “But Highland Church is not such an organization, but is a congregation under the oversight of its elders, according to New Testament authorization.” No one was arguing Highland Church was a missionary society, but rather they had formed a missionary society of which they were head; there is a difference between the two statements.

When a single congregation receives money to do a work greater than their ability to independently maintain, and is forced to organize or coordinate with several other congregations in order to get “their” work accomplished, a missionary society has been formed to compete with the work of the local congregation. God designed each church to complete its work independently, rather than as part of a superstructure. When a church attempts to do a work larger than its ability, autonomy will be forfeited and a missionary society (however great or small) will be established.

As time unfolded, the Highland Church grew tired of operating a program as large as what Herald of Truth had become. As a result they established Herald of Truth as an independent organization under its own oversight and in charge of its own funding. The end result was merely a solidification of what had long been established. Make no mistake; a missionary society had existed for a long time before Highland Church openly admitted its existence.

Argument #5:

“Then some of them charge that Herald of Truth is separate from the church, because for it Highland church, in Abilene, TX., has a separate bank account, a separate treasurer, and with one elder delegated to supervise it. They seem to forget that congregations often employ this practice for special projects. For example, when Homewood congregation launched a project looking ultimately to the building of our second and “main” building, we created a separate building fund account, and with one brother in charge of that fund. That money was kept separate from our general fund, and the general fund treasurer never touched a dime of it. That wasn’t because we lacked confidence in our general fund treasurer. On the contrary, his job was a big one, and this treasurership for the building fund was to be a big one. Further, to keep the two separate not only spread work among treasurers, instead of overloading one, but it simplified bookkeeping. Too, we kept before the people that every penny which went into the building fund would go for that purpose, and could be spent for

nothing else. That helped to establish confidence and increased incentive. Only after the building was finished and duly financed did we abolish the separate fund and vacate the office of a separate building fund treasurer. While we had that plan, did that mean that our building fund was separate from the Homewood church? That our treasurer for that fund was separate? Did that mean that such fund constituted a separate organization? That is all that the separate Herald of Truth fund in Highland church operation means ... The foregoing Homewood practice has been standard with congregations, and it is not questioned in any quarter.” (p. 167-168)

Meyer’s 1st Argument: Highland church has a separate account for the Herald of Truth program, but this is no different than having a separate building project fund.

Meyer argued that when congregations sent money to Highland Church for the Herald of Truth program, the money belonged to Highland Church and not Herald of Truth. The natural question would then be: Could Highland Church use the money sent to her for any purpose she deemed worthy? Or, must money sent for airing the Herald of Truth program only be spent on the program? If the program were to end, must Highland give their money back to sponsoring congregations, or are they free to roll it over into another fund?

Earlier, Meyer acknowledged his home congregation of Homewood sent money “earmarked” for the Herald of Truth program to Highland Church. Question: If the money belongs to Highland church, what business does Homewood have in telling them how to spend it?

When one congregation sent money to another congregation in the New Testament, it was for the sake of a temporary need with the concept of completion in mind rather than an unending burden (2 Corinthians 8:10-15). The Herald of Truth fund could not and cannot be classified as a temporary need; it was and is both ongoing and a want rather than a “need”.

The problem with Meyer’s argument is that a church’s independent building fund does not parallel with the dependent Herald of Truth fund. Had Meyer paralleled a dependent building fund with Herald of Truth’s dependent fund, he would have been onto something (however unscriptural both sides of the parallel might have been).

Meyer’s 2nd Argument: How the money is separated for Herald of Truth is how we have always done things and must therefore be right.

One of the greatest tragedies of the church is its willingness to base current practices on tradition rather than Scripture. Arguing how something has always been done is no answer for a "Thus saith the Lord" (Isaiah 45; Colossians 3:17).

Argument #6:

"We are carrying on our own program, and assisting Highland with a program which those brethren found themselves able to carry on in part, but for which they need help maintaining in its entirety." (p.169)

Meyer's Argument: We are completing our own work and assisting Highland church with hers, though she makes her own decisions.

Question: Why must Meyer clarify his congregation is completing its own work only to admit that Highland Church is not completing hers? Why clarify one congregation is operating independently if such does not matter?

Furthermore, Meyer's statement begs the question of how much of their own work Highland Church was carrying. If it takes 1,000 churches to make a weekly commitment to begin a work, it is questionable how much of the load the "owning" church is carrying.

The Bottom Line:

The Herald of Truth was and is an abandonment of the Biblical pattern and the creation of a monumental state of dependency. The end did not and does not justify the means. Division occurred because brethren recognized a departure from the biblical pattern, though they refused to see it in other areas (Sunday school) where the same arguments were applicable.

May the Lord's people learn from and remember the error of the Highland Church and the Herald of Truth program. May congregations recognize their obligation to do all they can for the cause of Christ, yet not over extend themselves beyond what they are able (2 Corinthians 8:12) or what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6).

Announcement

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES - The new Let The Bible Speak series of Bible correspondence courses is currently available. It consists of six lessons and is recommended for unbelievers and believers who

would like to increase their bible knowledge. There is no charge for the courses we only ask that you pay the postage. The lessons were written by Ronny Wade and have been used for years in television work. In the past brother Bob Powers has both printed and distributed them. Recently however he underwent brain surgery and is no longer able to continue his work. We ask prayers in his behalf. Send all orders to Ronny Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814. (any number may be ordered)

Our Departed

LANCE - Francis B. "Curly" Lance was born July 23, 1923 in Elizabeth, Arkansas, to Homer and Bertha (Calloway) Lance. He passed away late Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at Mercy Hospital in Joplin, Missouri, at the age of 93. Curly was a longtime Joplin-area resident. He was part of the US Army during World War II. Following his service, he returned home and worked as an airline mechanic for Boeing and Rocketdyne, and later as a furniture repairman for Laz-y-Boy before retiring in 1989. He was a faithful member of the Leawood Village congregation in Joplin. Curly loved softball, pitching horseshoes, and squirrel hunting. He married Zelda Thompson on October 8, 1948. He is survived by Zelda; one son, Terry Lance and wife Kathy of Noel, Missouri; one daughter, Joan Kearney and husband Tom of Joplin; one sister, Pauline Fast of Branson, Missouri; Five grandchildren; six great grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren. Curly and I became friends over 45 years ago and we remained friends until his death. I always enjoyed his company. I had the pleasure of baptizing his and Zelda's daughter Joan. Any time I conducted a gospel meeting in the Joplin area I could always count on seeing Curly at the services. I shall miss him. A large crowd assembled at the Jason-Woodard Mortuary to pay their respects to the memory of this good man. Murl Helwig and I were honored to conduct the service. -Ronny Wade

Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade - P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 ronnywade36@gmail.com. March 13 - We just recently held meetings at Temple, GA and Brooksville, FL. At each place large and interested crowds greeted us for every service. Both congregations are at peace and working for the good of the cause in their area. The Brooksville church is of rather recent origin. Their new

building is very nice and located in an area of town that is easy to find. The Hernando congregation cooperated throughout the meeting with their presence, as well as visitors from other nearby churches. Lord willing we go next to Columbia, MO for the annual study. Then to Kansas City, KS for a meeting March 24-26, Fieldstone, MO April 12-16 and Dothan, AL April 19-23. May the Lord's blessings rest upon all His people.

Frank Brancato - 12718 Larkin Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93312. February 22, 2017 email: frankbrancato@sbcglobal.net - Since returning from the Philippines, I am very happy to report that the work here locally in Bakersfield is moving along nicely. We have had two more baptisms this month for which we give God all of the glory. We continue to have visitors from the community every Lord's Day morning, and our building is usually about full. The TV program is generating a few leads, but the majority of our prospects have come from personal invitations from our members. I have a number of private Bible studies going on every week, and we pray that we will see more of God's increase very soon. If the Lord wills my Spring meeting schedule will be as follows. Auburn, CA (March 19th), Ada, OK (April 9-16), Walnut Grove, KY (April 30-May 7), and Columbia, MO (June 4-11). Please pray for the faithful everywhere, and may God bless all of our efforts this year.

Carl M. Johnson - 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820 cmjthebackpage@gmail.com. March 9, 2017 - We concluded our 41st annual March weekend meeting last Lord's Day afternoon here in Ada and it was a great meeting. Our crowd numbered 265 on Friday night and over 300 on Saturday night. The crowds on Lord's Day were of similar size. Cullen Smith conducted the meeting and shared the pulpit with Lane Branch, Landon Hughes, and Jason Coon. They all did an outstanding job of discussing, "What Is Truth?" They dealt with the task of harmonizing truth and tolerance and clearly defining what it means to own your own faith. I am scheduled to preach at McAlester this coming Lord's Day, and then we go to Council Hill, OK for a short meeting the next week. Frank Brancato is scheduled to conduct our spring meeting April 9-16, and I am scheduled at Nashville, TN, April 21-23, and then to Miami, OK, May 3-7. We continue to solicit your prayers.

P. Duane Permenter - Duane_and_laurie@yahoo.com (808) 600-5909 home (808) 221-8903 cell. Mar 2 - The work in Hawaii continues to move forward. It is a

pleasure to be a part of our Lord's vineyard in this part of the world. It has been difficult to find people who are interested, just like it is on the mainland. The living conditions are good just as anywhere else in America. I have learned if we convert people to the Lord and we put him first, we can build a strong church. We have a few people who are very dedicated and working for the master. God will give the increase. We have an average of fifteen every Sunday. Last year when Laurie and I came to stay for two months, the first Sunday we had only nine people, so the church has maintained some of its development even while I was away preparing to move. The three men continue to teach and grow which is a tremendous improvement; one year ago, there was only one teacher. My first goal has been to build up the people and bring them together more effectively as a Christian family. I have worked on developing the leaders and have spent most of my time with the people in the congregation. We do have some outside interest and leads. Our son Philip and his family plan to arrive here in July the Lord willing. Philip's prospects for teaching are high, and he is meeting with recruiters from Hawaii in Dallas the end of March. Please make special prayer for us as we begin this work. We have been here one month and are off to a good start. We are thankful for the church at Livermore and the congregation here in Waipahu for giving us this opportunity to help our Lord's great cause. Many others support us financially and morally for which we thank you and give praise to the God of heaven. God bless all the faithful in Christ Jesus!

C.A. Smith - 7 Old Lampassas Trail, Odessa, TX 79765 - I have been asked recently, why I no longer sent articles to the OPA. It has been some time since I have. My answer has been, I haven't since my dear wife passed away, for she was my promoter and encourager. However, I have taken notice of Brother Paul Nichols, a dear friend and fellow preacher who has continued to send edifying articles, though he too lost his wife and that encourages me to once again, do the same. Thank you my brother, for your example. We are struggling in Andrews, with fewer numbers than we have had but we are still pressing on with courage that we are doing the best that we can, and sincerely believe that better times will be forth-coming. I still love the OPA and believe it to be the best paper for the cause, and the times that we are living in, and pray that it will continue on. I pray that God will bless the church and its faithful members wherever they be, to remain faithful and strong, in the Lord. Pray for us!, as we labor in the vineyard of the Lord.

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THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

By CARL M. JOHNSON

The 23rd Psalm has often been called the “Pearl of the Psalms.” It is a beautiful psalm of confidence, trust, and satisfaction in God. It is such a comforting message to needy souls that it probably has been read at more funerals than any other passage of Scripture. In the middle of the psalm, however David introduces an unsettling thought when he says, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (verse 4).

In the first three verses David talks about the quiet paths of righteousness and peace, and he uses the third person singular to describe his journey “HE leadeth...HE maketh me to lie down...HE restoreth my soul...HE leadeth in the paths of righteousness for HIS name’s sake.”

Suddenly these quiet paths remind him of the exact opposite—the dark and dismal way through the valley of the shadow of death. David instantly drops the third person for the second person singular ‘Thou!’ ‘Thou!’ ‘Thou!’ He is no longer talking ABOUT the Shepherd. He is now talking directly TO the Shepherd.

The phrase “valley of the shadow of death” is translated from the Hebrew word “sal-mawet,” and should not be limited to the experience of death. There is a subtle significance to the word “shadow” that can be easily overlooked. The shadow of a dog cannot bite, the shadow of a sword cannot kill, and the shadow of death cannot harm the child of God. The expression implies a situation where death looms over you, but it may not result in actual death. Therefore, a situation of grave danger, sickness, trials, and hardships can all be considered as the shadow of death, even if you emerge unscathed.

Where there is a shadow however there must also be a substance. The substance is actual death itself. So, the valley of the shadow of death represents any difficult experience that causes us to cringe in fear including our own inevitable appointment with death (Heb. 9:27).

David knows something, however that allows him to “fear no evil” while in the valley of the shadow of death. He says, “I will fear no evil, for thou are with me.” The presence of the Good Shepherd quiets the fear David has in the valley of the shadow of death.

In mountainous terrain with steep cliffs and deep ravines, the shepherd walks near the clumsy sheep to steer them past dangerous places, through the narrow and slippery paths. During these times of potential harm, the shepherd no longer leads his sheep but moves alongside them with his rod and staff to give the help and encouragement only he can give. The rod is a heavy cudgel with which the shepherd can stun or kill an attacking beast, and the staff is the shepherd’s crook, which he uses to assist the individual sheep. Thus, the rod and staff become symbols of the Good Shepherd’s loving care over those of us who are members of His flock (Acts 20:28).

God does not promise to spare us from physical death, illness, or the loss of material possessions. He does promise, however to abide with us through the dark and difficult valleys and lead us ultimately into eternal life with Him. Therefore, there is no need to fear death’s power (1 Cor 15:25-27).

Many years ago a brother said, “During the spring of the year I went to my doctor for a regular checkup, and was told, after a series of tests, that I had a malignancy. At first, it was difficult to believe it was true, then, it was difficult to adjust to the rather disturbing possibilities that lay ahead. During the period of waiting, the time of the surgery and the month-long period of recuperation, my family and I went through the ‘valley of the shadow of death.’ During this difficult period God’s promises were of inestimable value. During this period of uncertainty about the future, there was never a time when I prayed that I might get well, or that I might live. Others prayed for my recovery and I continue to be grateful for their prayers and concern, however my own personal prayers were that God’s will might be done—whatever that will might be. Of course, I wanted to live very much, but I felt God’s knowledge of what was best was far better than mine, so I simply prayed that His will might be done. During this time of uncertainty it was a great comfort to rest upon the promises of God (Mt. 11 :28-30; Phil. 4:6-7).”

I envy this brother’s complete trust in God. He discovered the Psalmist’s secret. It is the same secret that can give you and me hope and peace of mind when we are faced with imminent danger or terminal illness. We too can fear no evil even in the fearful valley of the shadow of death. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com