

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. 12

AND THE DISCIPLES WERE CALLED CHRISTIANS

By GREG GAY

Acts, the second chapter describes the amazing time when God’s plan for how mankind can be saved in the New Testament era is implemented for the first time. Peter was the honored speaker on the Pentecost occasion when thousands of Jews, “devout men out of every nation,” (Acts 2:5) were in the audience. At the end of his sermon, in response to the Jews’ awareness, conviction, and horror that they had murdered Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, he told them how they could get right with God. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one 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” (Acts 2:38-41).

Who is this new group of people that obeyed what Peter taught? Notice that those who were baptized are called “they” and “them” in the last verse of the quote. The saved are also called “all that believed” (verse 44).

We know the group who obeyed were added by the Lord to their number (Acts 2:47), to the church, the ekklesia, those called out of the world by the good news of Jesus Christ, fulfilling what Jesus said, “... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

The group grew by leaps and bounds. From the initial 3,000, we see the number of men alone increased to 5,000 (Acts 4:4) and a short while

later, the word “multitude” is used to describe the size of the group. “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul” (Acts 4:32).

Still, we have not yet been introduced to how to address the individuals in the group, other than that they are collectively members of the church. We get one answer to our quest in the story of the neglected widows. There we find the designation of “disciples” used to refer to the redeemed. “And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration” (Acts 6:1).

The use of the word “disciples” is not a new name, but it is being applied in a new sense here to refer to members of the church. Prior to the beginning of the church, Jesus’ “disciples” are noted frequently in the Gospels, referring to those who were students of Jesus. Vines says that the word translated “disciple” means one who is “a learner.” In the New Testament we have disciples of John (Matthew 9:14), disciples of the Pharisees (Matthew 22:16), disciples of Moses (John 9:28), and disciples of Jesus, referred to in many places. The word “disciple” is also used of those who are learning of Christ but are not yet saved, as in the group Paul found at Ephesus who only knew of the baptism of John (Acts 19:1-5). In the sense of being “a learner,” followers of Christ will and should always be disciples.

Jesus places conditions on those who would be his disciples. A disciple of Christ must follow his word. “As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:30-31). Jesus’ disciples will love one another. “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this

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Editorial

HERE AND THERE

By: DON L. KING

A positive attitude is always helpful in any venture. Regardless of the effort, an energetic and positive mindset will stand us in good stead. If we approach our work with an attitude of “I don’t think we can get this done,” we probably won’t. It is certainly possible to defeat ourselves before we start unless we believe we can be successful. In this brief article we want to notice some Bible examples to illustrate the point.

In Exodus chapter 14: 12 we find Israel discouraged and completely negative. The Lord had delivered them from Egyptian bondage, and they were on their way to freedom. However, they encountered obstacles and difficulties along the way. It finally got the best of them. In verse 12 they said, “is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.” Notice they claim to have told Moses before they ever left Egypt that the rescue attempt would not be successful. How did they know? The truth is, they didn’t know but they had no faith, no belief, that anyone could lead them away from their slave relationship under the Egyptians. This same attitude is sometimes seen in modern times. Someone suggests that an effort to establish a new congregation would be beneficial. However, the pessimist is heard to say, “How do we know that can be done?” Honestly, we never know what the future holds in any venture spiritual or otherwise. One thing we can be sure of, however, is that unless we try it cannot be done. When a farmer plants his crop he cannot be certain of a great harvest but he plants in hope. Solomon once wrote: “Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.” (Ecclesiastes 11:1) His point was that we must prepare well in advance of our planting (preaching) so that we may see success many days later.

When a congregation plans a meeting some seem to feel that all they need to do is schedule the preacher they want and set the dates. Little else is done by way of preparation. All who hold meetings may recall the times they have arrived to find no preparation for the meeting at all. No advertising has been done, no sign is posted outside, no flyers

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: The Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew, and the Sermon on the Plain recorded in Luke 6: are these two separate sermons preached by Jesus, or two renderings of the same event?

Answer: The effort to harmonize the accounts of the sermon in Matthew and the one recorded in Luke 6, have given rise to disagreement among a number of bible commentators. Burton Coffman contends that “there is no way logically to view this as a report of the same sermon Matthew recorded. This sermon followed immediately upon the naming of the Twelve; Matthew’s was long before that.” In contrasting the two he noted that in Matthew Jesus was on the mountain, in Luke He was on the plain. In Matthew Jesus sat, in Luke He stood. In Luke the sermon has thirty verses, in Matthew there is over one hundred verses. He also notes that the “woes” given in Luke are not in Matthew’s account at all. His conclusion is that these are two different sermons given at two different times in which both, contain similar contents. H. Leo Boles says “Luke gives a record of the sermon which was repeated at some later time than the record given by Matthew.” Anthony Ash in his commentary on Luke says “Though this passage (Luke 6:20-49) may be identified with the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), it is possible that Jesus delivered similar teachings on different occasions, or that both Matthew and Luke used the occasions of these great sermons to present a complex of the teachings of the Lord in a way consonant with the purposes of their respective gospels.” He further points out that forty-one of the verses from the sermon in Matthew are not paralleled in Luke, even though the plan of both is the same. On the other hand there are a number of commentators who believe that both Matthew and Luke refer to the same sermon in their accounts. They argue that several of the points mentioned by the above commentators are easily explained such as “Jesus on the Mountain” and “Jesus on the Plain,” by claiming Jesus found a level place on the Mountain and stood there to deliver the message. It is, we believe, logical to assume that Jesus repeated at different times some of the same teaching to different groups. It is common today for preachers to preach the same sermon over and over. It is also likely that when so doing they don’t always use the same identical language. To this writer this appears to be the case here. The Sermon on the Plain recorded

by Luke is a different sermon than the one recorded in Matthew, but with the same or similar contents. It may be that differences over this situation may never be settled to the satisfaction of all involved. I think it is important to remember that whether this is the same sermon referred to by both writers, or a different sermon at a different time with the same or similar contents both accounts are inspired of God and the teachings relevant to all people for all time. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

By BENNIE T. CRYER

Whether we like it or not God has chosen what man may call and has called peculiar things in his scheme of redemption. He has made choices for us in religion and he expects these choices to be honored today though he made these choices almost 2000 years ago. God had to make these choices for man because man with their vaunted philosophers could not come up with a scheme that would take man from earth to heaven. These wise men in their day could not come up with a plan that would forgive any man, be he great or small, that would bring about forgiveness of a single sin much less forgiveness for a life time of sin. But God could and did. Not many liked all of God’s choices but a few did. Some of God’s choices are described in these verses.

1 Corinthians 1:27, But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

For his scheme of redemption God selected, picked out, or chose the Savior of the world who, when born among men in a lowly manger and into a family that men may have considered of low esteem and ended up dying on a Roman cross, to many, a shameful death. It is evident (vv18, 23) that the Jews stumbled at this fact and the Gentiles considered it foolishness that such a man could be the Messiah, the Christ. God did this to put all who rejected this choice of God to shame. This seems to be the meaning of “confound.” The Jews had no excuse because in their writings they could read how God chose a strategy that seemed weak and foolish to bring down the walls of Jericho. No worldly wise general would have chosen the strategy God chose, Jeremiah 6:1-25. However, to those who

let the words of God enlighten their minds it was the thing to do. So they marched around the walls of Jericho one time each day in a certain order for six days. Then on the seventh day they marched around those same walls seven times. The trumpets blew and the people shouted and “the walls came tumbling down.” Do not be ashamed of the simple things God has chosen. Stand fast in the faith.

1:28, And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

God has chosen things with these characteristics also. Thayer defines “base things” as those among men who are held of no account. This is in contrast with “noble” in v26 who are the “well born” and who are of higher rank by virtue of their birth. When Jesus chose his apostles and they began to go out into the world this description generally characterized them in the eyes of the world. What and who God chose as his ambassadors were often “despised” by the world. And this caused some to reject their message. So far as the world was concerned their rank in life made their message void and caused the message to have no effect in their lives. But God is not finished with this thought. He also chose things or persons who “are not.” God chose men to carry his soul saving message to the lost that the philosophers and the nobles considered as “nobodies.” In reality they were considered as “dead” (as far as society was concerned) and therefore not capable of doing such important work. But in the sight of God those he chose that society considered less than nothing were his instruments to show that philosophers, noblemen, and the wise men were less than nothing when it came to providing salvation to a lost and dying world.

1:29, That no flesh should glory in his presence.

God wanted the wisest and most sophisticated of men to know they had not and could not come up with a plan that could save a single soul from his past sins, start him on the path that leads him toward heaven, provide him with a resurrection from the dead, and give him a new and different kind of body that could live in heaven in eternity. Not one single man or company of men had the power to accomplish such things and guarantee it would all come to pass. But God could and did. No man can boast of such knowledge and power on his own in this area. It had to come from heaven

and the mind of God, 2:10. No human being on his own can expect to stand in the presence of Jesus Christ, the judge of all men, and say, “Here I am and I thought it all up about how to be saved and I lived a good life so now give me my crown that I have earned.” Paul in Phillipians 2:10-11 tells us exactly what such a man would do in circumstances like that: “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” This action will happen so it is best for every one to humble themselves before Jesus and confess his name to glorify God now. You can do that in joy now, but before the judgment bar it will be to your shame. Glorifying God is the chief purpose for us in this life. John wrote, Revelation 1:5-6, “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” God gave us an example in Leviticus 10:3, “Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.” What had happened and why did Aaron hold his peace? Aaron’s two sons, Nadab and Abihu had offered strange fire, that God had not commanded. Fire went out from God and devoured them and they died. Aaron was agitated because, I suppose, he had just lost two sons. But when Moses explained what God required of those who came near him and that he was to be glorified when the priests appeared before the people, Aaron held his peace. Aaron’s son did not give God the honor and glory he deserved because they offered something not commanded. Aaron now understood, at least for a while, how serious God is about what he has chosen. I think God is still that serious today about choices he has made because he has chosen these choices so man can manifest glory to God by his honoring these choices. Some people sneer at us for not using the modern day Sunday School method of arranging members into classes for the purpose of teaching the Bible. I just opened my encyclopedia and it tells us this about the Sunday Schools founder: “Raikes, Robert (1735-1811), an English publisher, first developed Sunday Schools on an extensive scale.” Wouldn’t it have been wonderful if they could have written, “God developed Sunday Schools...” But they could not do it because God did not develop The Sunday

Schools. Robert Raikes developed the system and therefore receives the glory. Various religions have taken to that system. But it never was God's choice. Remember and accept what God had chosen and bring glory to him.

Foundation Principles

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS CONGREGATION Part 3

By CLINT DEFRANCE

In our final article on this subject we must notice that membership in a church is not all requirement and responsibility, it also carries a great blessing. There is an encouragement and strengthening that your faith will receive from a local church family that cannot be replaced. Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Now this passage tells us more than simply that it is wrong to forsake the assembly. It tells us that great stability, strength and encouragement can come from making the church a consistent and dedicated part of our lives. In Eph. 4:16 Paul says, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." We receive nourishment, increase of strength and edification through our working with other members of the body (our local congregation). And furthermore, we are able to nourish and build up others and have a great role in the furtherance of the kingdom of God. It is no small thing, for you or the Lord's work, to do your part to build up the local church!

Accountability

Throughout these articles, we have talked about accountability and for many that is the worst thought of a home church, people always looking over your shoulder, asking where you are and what you are doing. Most of us, in America especially, simply want to be left alone! I have recently had the sad case of a friend who has not only left the church, but is furiously embittered against the church for "prying into her personal life". She could not believe that the church would be so nosy as to ask her about unsavory allegations that had been made

against her. In fact she charged the church with sin and has said that she is looking for a place where people mind their own business. But friends it is the body's business how its members are behaving! It is the church's business how its members are living! In Titus 2:1-19 that Apostle said that within the conduct of each Christian, from the least to the greatest, is the power to exalt or blaspheme the church and the way of God! And so the church must know for its own protection how its members live beyond the walls of the meeting house. But friends what a blessing that is for all of us! Thank God for concerned brethren; for the network of accountability God has designed into his family! What an anchor in times of doubt and confusion. What a hedge to guard against temptation. There have been times in my own life, even since I began preaching, when temptation became very strong, troubles became very severe and my faith was very small. Had it not been for the fact that people would have been calling, coming by to see me, checking what was going on, I might of slipped away! Thank God for the church's concern! What comfort to know that you have a Christian family who will pray for you and assist you in your struggles and hardships! As those in Acts 2, we can demonstrate the great love of Jesus Christ by taking care of each other in our needs, leaning on each other for support and coming together as a family. But the only way this will work is if we know our body and the body knows us.

A Gear in the Evangelism Machine

Secondly, we have in our congregation the privilege to be a part of a divinely organized machine unto the spreading of the gospel. We all have friends, neighbors and loved ones in our communities that we would love to see converted. If our congregational memberships will dedicate themselves and commit to working together, we can accomplish great things in spreading the message of salvation to the lost. Let me say a few things about how we can help this happen. Aside from living a right life and telling people about Jesus, one must be positive about the church. For many people the way they speak of their local congregation to unbelievers is such a bleak, miserable picture that no sensible person would want to be a part of it! Those who have torn down the church in this way will have to answer for their anti-evangelism on the day of Judgment! Another important part of cooperating with the evangelistic efforts of the church is by attending meetings and services. Let us never complain about the lack of growth in our congregation if we are not there to encourage the success of the gospel

meetings and regular assemblies; when we are so busy with football, band and school functions that we don't have time to bring our friends to hear the gospel preached! A third thing of great import is studying together and with others privately. We do not have Sunday Schools or Bible Classes, and rightly so because the pattern teaches that any assembly called by the church must be in one assembly with one many speaking at a time and men only doing the teaching. (1 Cor. 14) But we do believe in house-to-house, or private study! (Acts 20:20) Invite your brethren into your home. Visit with them about the word of God. Learn together and talk to friends and neighbors together about the Bible. Be proactive for the growth of your congregation instead of waiting for someone else to do what needs to be done!

A Stone in the Temple of God

Finally in a beautiful passage, Paul told Timothy that when the church comes together for worship it is the House, or the temple of God. (1 Tim. 3:15) You are a stone in this temple! When you and your brothers and sisters spend time together in worship, you build a communion with one another and God. It is difficult to worship meaningfully with those you do not know. And true worship is such a grand experience we want to share it with others! As I write this I am in Tanzania, Africa holding a meeting. I have been worshiping with these brethren and what a blessing! The joy that they show excites and encourages me in my own worship, and I do the same for them! I am happy to say that the same experience is found in my home congregation in Wichita Falls!

Cherish the awesome privilege you have of being a part of a congregation of Christ! Now you might think that your congregation is a far cry from what I have just described, but the only chance it has to be what God would have it, is that you take your position in it seriously and get to work influencing and improving for good! - CED

DARE TO BE A DANIEL

By MICHAEL W. BOLTON

Daniel was a teenager, by all accounts, when he was taken from his home in Jerusalem into captivity by the Babylonians in 605BC. And he was in his eighties when he received the vision of the prophecy of the seventy weeks in Daniel 9. In the more than sixty years of captivity and servitude in Babylon, Daniel faced many challenges. But in

all those years, he grew stronger in his fervor for God and right.

We know very little about Daniel's personal life. His family history is not mentioned. We do not know if he had a wife and children. We do not know if he had siblings, or if his parents were taken captive also. Scholars indicate he and his three closest friends were likely of an upper-class family in Jerusalem. While it does seem unlikely that Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, would have selected a trainee for his court from the poor and disadvantaged, scripture does not make this clear. But the divine record does inform us that Daniel was a man of extraordinary abilities.

Daniel was a man of deep piety. Even though he was enslaved as a very young man he maintained a purpose to live according to the standard of God's law. In moments of crisis, while serving a foreign sovereign, he turned to God in prayer. And by keeping company of a like mind he surrounded himself with friendship that is priceless and pure.

These three things lift Daniel from just another captive, to a position which we should emulate even today in this New Testament era. Daniel 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart ... Causing us to remember what the wise King Solomon said in Ecc. 12.1, we come to understand that Daniel's heart was right before God. The food that was most likely served to people of his stature at that time had been offered to and idol or was on the forbidden foods list for the Jewish people.

The fact that Daniel purposed indicates there was some risk involved. He was evidently aware that not just his life but the life of his friends and their caretaker was put at risk with this conviction-based decision. Daniel was firm in his religion. They had changed his name but they could not change his religion, nor alter his determination to please God. One can understand from this that Daniel knew the law. While this is evident, there is some weighty matters and hand in this simple statement. He appears to have been trained, most likely at home in the ways of righteousness. He appears to have loved right more than life or even what seemed good. His desire then was to please God only.

Daniel was firm in his religion. The life of the Jew in the O.T. was centered around prayer; as should be the life of the Christian in the N.T. In chapter two of Daniel when he was faced with the unreasonable demand of his earthly king, we see Daniel going to his house not for a strategy session,

or even in despair whining about why his lot was so, no Daniel prayed and he asked for closest friends prayers concerning the matter at hand. As was the case when faced with the Lions Den. Daniel prayed.

This outstanding characteristic of his life and work is the result of a man whose confidence was in God. He was certain that if he was not given the dream and the interruption God would deliver him, maybe in death but he was sure deliverance would come. He was sure again that even if God did not stop the mouth of the lion, he would receive a greater reward than the wicked king could ever offer. Like his three friends in chapter 3 he was not careful concerning these issues. Rather he was certain that his God would deliver.

Lastly, note Daniel's people. The three mentioned above must have been men of similar background, for he went to them for help in prayer during times of great trial. Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his fellow captives served God as he did. They shared the same conviction. And fought the same battles. Truly the blessings of men of like precious faith cannot be told by the tongue of men. A man once said, "I'd rather have my friends pray for me than the prayers of all the people the world over". This sentiment is shared by those who face great affliction. This is why we go to the congregation in times of great distress. This is why we seek comfort from our brethren. There is no greater gift a man can give than to mention his brother, his friend in prayer.

Let us be a people who like Daniel have purposed, in our heart, not to defile ourselves with worldly treasures that soon fade. Let us be a people who pray constantly even in danger. Knowing that God in His faithfulness hears us. Let us be a people who treasure our brethren. And by treasuring them, trusting them to pray for us in our difficulties.

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ZAMBIA REPORT

I Timothy 1:12: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

Recent Work in Zambia June 4 through July 5 by P. Duane Permenter. June 4, It had been nearly a year and a half since leaving Zambia when I entered from Malawi. Brother Roy Siansobanda from Ibex church of Christ met me in Blantyre. We traveled from Blantyre, Malawi, to Chipata, Zambia, where we began our work in Eastern Province. We spent some time visiting churches and encouraging brethren in this part of the country before moving on to Lusaka or Chamba Valley, our base in Zambia. Eastern Province We have had some problems in this part of Zambia, and it shows in the churches. To get to this part of Zambia is like traveling from El Paso to Dallas in distance; however, the road is narrow and rough. There is no 80 mile an hour speed limit, and if a person traveled at more than 50, he would probably end up wrapped around some tree or in some canyon. The road conditions among other problems have kept this work from receiving as much attention as it needs. Also, we have never had the solid leadership in this part of our Lord's vineyard that we need. We have tried to train different ones; nonetheless, it just has not worked out. During future trips, we will continue to try and build this part of the work. It probably is going to be necessary to move a Zambian who is well trained and trusted out there to help them. We made two trips there on this tour and have made a difference with the Lord's help. I also helped some of the church leaders with transportation to come to the annual meeting in Lusaka. This was a valuable encouragement to the work as well.

The Work in General

To know for sure if the work is going to make it as well without someone living in the country from America will be difficult. Only time will really help us to know exactly how the work is going. We have tried to help with problems, give advice where needed, and encourage all concerned.

Since we left, a problem with registration and the government has again occurred. Unfortunately, in Zambia if a church is found worshipping without proper registration, all the worshippers can be arrested. This is an issue that mostly affects the town congregations; nevertheless, the registration has been a big problem. The government is a carnal organization and when they try to interfere with the church and its workings, it just becomes a big problem. We are so blessed in America with freedom-I wonder sometimes if we really understand how blessed.

Some erring brethren took advantage of this government ordinance and tried to rule the churches as a headquarters. Bennie Cryer told me that this

was a problem all the way back to the time he came to Lusaka in the mid 1980's. Finally, it came to a head and the brethren were forced by these evil men to do something about it. This problem with the government after months of struggle was finally resolved. We praise God for this!

My Goal for the Work in Zambia

Some around have said that because of this problem I was deported out of the country in January of 2011. This is not true. I did have many problems to deal with from evil brethren; nevertheless, I was never asked nor ordered by anyone to leave. I decided to move back to the USA after nearly 8 years of labor. This was my goal when moving to Zambia in 2003. Edmond suggested if I wanted to come home early, then I was free to make that choice. The Zambians agreed that this was fine. We were ready to go home. We left by choice four months before the time planned.

Lusaka International Airport

It was an amazing day. When we left there were representatives from over Zambia, some 100 congregations came to Lusaka to wish us well and to tell us bye. They also made us promise that in the future when this difficulty with the government was resolved, I would come back. This I have done. Please, Brethren, pray for the work and that our brethren in this faraway place can continue to do their own work for our Lord!

Roy Siansobanda's Report

Annual Gospel Meeting in Zimbabwe; I traveled to Zimbabwe which is one of our neighboring countries to attend an annual gospel meeting. They were having an annual meeting over the Easter holiday. I took my family too.

Brother Roy is married to Esrie the daughter of Wickson Dzalegwa's an older preacher from Zimbabwe, pdp) The trip takes about 10 hours by bus. The travel to this place is about 500 miles. It is necessary to cross two different borders. I found the brethren ready for this meeting.

Ron Courter and Roy Siansobanda; They used Ron Courter and myself to preach most of the services during the meeting. (It is exciting to me that the brethren in this country have grown to respect and love Roy as much as the Zambians, pdp) One of the topics I taught was "Scriptural Fellowship." It was my choice to

use the following chapters: 1 John 1 verses 6-7, 2 John 9-11, Ephesians 5:8-11, Psalms 19:1-2, 1 Corinthians 1:9-10, 1 Timothy 5:20.

Brother Ron Courter taught on how God reveals His will. There were 5 baptisms in Zimbabwe. On the last Sunday Brother Ron preached and I waited on the Lord's table. There were about 300 that attended the meeting.

Much Work is Being Done: I have visited many different congregations and have been involved in several meetings and studies. What I have discovered is that there is need to visit regularly. Most of these congregations are behind in many Bible topics and subjects.

The Work Is Progressing Scripturally; The work in Zambia is moving along and we praise and thank God for this. I would like to thank the brethren in America for the love and support that you give toward this great work in Zambia, Africa. It is my sincerest desire that the Lord will richly bless you all. Roy M. Siansobanda.

You may email or telephone: P. Duane Permenter, duane_and_laurie@yahoo.com or Permenter@att.blackberry.net, Telephone: 931-762-3517 cell phone is 931-629-8980; Melvin Blalock, melvinblalock@sbcglobe.net, Telephone: 817-641-1668 Cell phone: 817-988-0417

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AND THE DISCIPLES WERE CALLED continued from page one

shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 14:34-35). And, Christ's disciples will be fruitful. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8).

In the early church, we are told, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). Interestingly, the use of the word "disciples" to designate the members of the church stops with the book of Acts and is not found in the rest of the New Testament. There are other designations of God's people in the New Testament. Members of the Lord's church are called brethren (Acts 15:36), brothers and sisters (1 Corinthians 7:15), and saints (Acts 9:32). The word "saints" is particularly interesting. Barnes

comments “The word ‘saints,’ hagioi, means those who are holy, or those who are devoted or consecrated to God. The radical idea of the word is what is separated from a common to a sacred use...” Notice that being a saint is accomplished while we are alive and does not have to wait till we pass away, as one large religion falsely teaches. When Paul wrote our brethren at Ephesus he said, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 1:1).

There is a new name given in the book of Acts that has great significance in our study. In order to understand how wonderful this new name is, let us look briefly at a couple of Old Testament prophecies. Isaiah prophesied about a new name for God’s people. “Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off” (Isaiah 56:5). “And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name” (Isaiah 62:2).

Even though the name “disciples” is used of the redeemed, it does not appear to be the “new name” that Isaiah promised. There is a name though, that fits the promise of a new name: the name, “Christian.” We are introduced to the new name as follows: “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:19-26). As we might guess, being a “Christian”

means being a follower of Christ.

Additional verses use this wonderful name. “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28). Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf’ (1 Peter 4:16).

Today, let us continue to be disciples of Jesus, in the sense of being life-long learners who will keep God’s word, love one another, and bear much fruit. Let us be saints, as in leading holy lives, set apart for God. Let us be part of the family of God, as brethren, brothers and sisters in Christ. But, let us identify ourselves as Christians, followers of Christ, members of the Lord’s church, the Church of Christ, wearing the name of Christ gladly in our lives individually and collectively. 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747. papagreg@aol.com



HERE AND THERE..... continued from page two

have been sent to prospects or other congregations, no studies have been conducted with outsiders or those who are out of duty, no personal work has been done by the members in anticipation of saving a soul from sin. Then folks feel their meeting has not been successful. Don’t expect the preacher to accomplish in a week, or less, what has been left undone all year. When the preacher arrives, it is a little late to begin preparation. No preacher who loves to preach is unwilling to visit someone to encourage them to come to church. However, that is a work the members should have done in advance to the beginning of the meeting. It is discouraging to hear someone lament that gospel meetings do no good in our modern times. The gospel has not lost any of its saving power. It is as powerful now as on Pentecost. It does require an audience to hear it. We see large numbers obey the truth in foreign lands. Why not here? Perhaps because we sometimes hold meeting after meeting with almost no one present needing to obey the gospel. What is the underlying problem? We often tell ourselves our meeting will do little good anyway so why work to invite people. Until we change our attitude, we will likely continue to see little results.

It is discouraging to realize we have an ongoing war against the truth. We realize that. We hear of those who sing, or chant, during the communion

service or place a name on their building that doesn't show ownership of Christ. We hear of a few holding a midweek service in someone's home where the ladies are encouraged to speak and teach Bible things, etc. We are opposed to all such things and are saddened to think of those who leave the Bible pattern. It is such a thrill to realize most of us are content to worship as the early church did two thousand years ago. God be praised and thanked for a brotherhood of good brethren who insist on the Bible way. Such brethren still want to do things in the Bible way and call things by Bible names. We must never give up. Think on these things. DLK

Obituaries

BRAY- Raymond Bray was born October 6, 1918, in Healdton, Oklahoma, to Walter and Bessie (Simmeral) Bray. He died Monday, October 15, 2012, in Healdton. He married Juanita Ratliff in Healdton, August 31, 1940. They made their home in Oklahoma City from 1941 to 1965, and lived in Mena, Arkansas, from 1965 to 1983. In 1983 the couple returned to Healdton. Raymond opened a bookkeeping and tax service after his retirement. Preceding him in death were: his wife Juanita; brother, Glenn Bray, sister, Evelyn Bray, son, Bill Bray, Sr.; daughter, Kathy Bray Henderson, and grandson, Bill Bray, Jr. Survivors include: one daughter, Rebecca McLemore of Healdton, one son, Tom Bray of Pennsylvania; brother, Don Bray of Mena, Arkansas; 7 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and chosen family member Janet Reynolds. Raymond enjoyed fishing, gardening, and candy-making. Like the late Edwin Morris, he was also a dedicated walker, walking 3-5 miles a day. His primary love, however, was the Lord and the church. He was a devoted reader of Scripture. Even though macular degeneration destroyed all but his peripheral vision in his later years, he continued to read and study the Bible until his death by using a machine that enlarges and projects the text. The East Lincoln Church of Christ ordained him as an elder several years ago and the members say they will miss him greatly. I got to know Raymond when I was just a boy preacher and our friendship continued for the rest of his life. He often told me he wanted me to preach his funeral when he died, and I am thankful the Good Lord permitted that

request. Bruce Caskey and Bill Renfro also addressed the large crowd that came to pay its respects. May God bless Raymond's family and his loved ones who survive him.-- Carl M. Johnson

Field Reports

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, November 10, 2012, email: old_paths@juno.com We recently returned from a trip to visit the church in Hawaii. It was a joy to be with those we have known for a number of years. We were there for the very first worship service some years ago and have seen the church go through the growing pains often encountered in a new work. The church has historically been made up of Filipino members although several Caucasians have been involved as well. Bro Virgilio O. Danao moved there several years ago to do the work and worked very hard to see it become a success. Through the years we have made a few trips to visit the work and preach. Since the passing of Bro. Danao, Eric Stone, of Texas, has been there working with the brethren. He, along with his wife, Tara, has worked hard to keep the church sound and free of innovations. Their two sons are now members and take an active part in leading singing and the older one has begun teaching recently. We held a short meeting while there and are encouraged about the future of the church. The brethren love one another and enjoy being together. Lord willing, we plan to make another trip next year if all works out. The church at home is at peace and working together. God be thanked for sweet peace. We plan a trip to the Philippines in early January, in company of Bro. Frank Brancato. We look forward to that as always. Pray for us.

Michael W. Bolton- Address: 5118 FM 196 N, Pattonville, TX 75460; mwbolton2001@yahoo.com 903-491-6802. Time passes quickly, and as this year draws to a close we have a time of reflection and thankfulness. God is surely good. He has provided a way when there seemed to be no hope and despair was mounting rather quickly. We are grateful for His watch-care and bountiful provision. Though'

there have been trials aplenty, His word is ever faithful to show us the way of righteousness. I remember, as though it were yesterday, as I was leaving the pastorate of the Church of the Nazarene preparing to obey the gospel and become a Christian. I was told if you go that route you may as well give up the ministry, because "they will never let you preach": That proved to be another lie of our enemy because I have been busy in the service of the church and working in the vineyard more than I ever dreamed. This was in 2003, and in 2012, I have had the privilege of preaching 70+ times and in eight different congregations, in three states. I am glad to find that hospitality is a common occurrence amongst us. It is my honor to have stayed in the homes of some of the finest people on the planet. The congregation here at home, Paris TX, is at peace. The word is preached without fear or favor and we are growing. I am happy to be associated with a group of people who love the truth and who love the Bible way. The congregation at Mena, AR is also at peace, the Brusters are some of the strongest and most faithful people I know. I and my family look forward with great delight to our monthly trip there. They are small but passionate about their faith. The congregation in Denison, TX is strong in their stand for the truth. While they are small in number they are great in faith, and are always working to convert the erring. We look forward to our work in these areas in the coming months. We covet your prayers for us and these congregations, for growth yes, but mostly that God's word will be upheld and we will remain faithful till he comes again.

Darrell Crawford, 208 E Baldwin Rd Unit S. Panama City, Florida 32405 bugz1955@hotmail.com We hope this finds everyone doing well. The weather here in Florida is beautiful this time of year. Things are going great here. We are seeing more interest, some digressives are still coming some, even on Lord's day morning, for this we are thankful to the Lord. Two sisters from digression are now studying the issues with us. They are very receptive to the truth. They seem eager to learn what the scriptures say regarding these matters. One saying that she had never heard the truth on these things. We believe that soon,

she will take her stand for the truth. We are still trying to work with the couple that we have been working so hard with. We are still having a booth at the "Friday Fest" a "fair" like gathering in downtown the first Friday of each month. November was the last one for this year. It will start up again in March. We hope to have a computer with a Bible quiz program here by then, hopefully this will stir more interest in the work. We have given away a bible every month, and sent out many bible correspondence courses, given away many teaching CD's and other material about salvation and the church. Plans are to continue this work next year if the Lord wills. We also are doing many home visits, nursing home visits and are offering rides to church to those who need them, One of the studies we are having is from a digressive sister in a nursing home. She is blind, but has attended services a few times with us. She is a dear sweet sister in Christ. If possible, we plan to try to obtain a crisscross directory to send out flyers for the church in the community as well. We have also started a midweek service at church. We have not had one in many years if ever. Several people from the "Friday Fest" have expressed an interest in coming on Wed. night. Right now we only have this on the first and third Wed of the month. If all goes well, we may start it up on every Wed, after the first of the year. Thanks to all for your support, advice, and most of all, your prayers in this work we are doing. The church has been here about 60 years. It was started by brother J.W. Kornegay in about 1950. At one time there were about 50 members I am told. Many have died, or moved away till we are very small right now, less than ten if everyone is here. I don't think anyone has really worked the area, at least in many years. We have been here for two and a half years so far. we plan to stay as long as we can if the Lord wills. May God bless you all, and may He bless His church everywhere.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"In helping others, we shall help ourselves, for whatever good we give out completes the circle and comes back to us."

Flora Edwards

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THE BACK PAGE...

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS' WIFE AND OTHER FABLES

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

The Apostle Paul warned Timothy that a time would come when Christians would not endure sound doctrine, but would turn away from the truth and be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4). He warned the Thessalonians that Christ will not return until after the "falling away" comes, and he cautions that the falling away had already begun in his day (2 Thess. 2:3-7). Paul emphasizes repeatedly that the safeguard against falling away is a close adherence to the Word of God (Cf. Acts 20:32).

In spite of Paul's warnings, departures from the New Testament pattern gained momentum in the second century and heresies began to grow rapidly. Each sect began to put into writing the things important to it and some of those writings have survived unto this day. This entire collection of uninspired writing is generally referred to as "apocryphal" (i.e., "doubtful"), and the early church refused to add them to the inspired writings of the Old and New Testaments. Eusebius, a Fourth Century church historian, says they were rejected because they are obviously "forgeries of heretics." (326). Eusebius mentions a number of these rejected works including, Acts of Paul, Shepherd of Hermas, Apocalypse of Peter, Barnabas, the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, the Acts of Andrew, John, Peter and other apostles.

Several of these heretical works were written by a sect called "Gnostics," and those works have enjoyed an incredible revival in popularity in recent years. "Gnostic" is from the Greek word gnosis, which means "knowledge." The sect taught that they were receiving special "secret knowledge" from Jesus and His apostles over and above the knowledge found in the Bible, and, as you can see from the list above, they wrote a number of documents they ascribed to the inspired apostles. The nature of the knowledge they claimed to have received varies greatly among the different Gnostic sects, but it is almost invariably characterized as "secret," which ought to raise a red flag immediately!

The Gnostics had fertile imaginations. Their many theories are sort of a Mulligan-Stew mixture of Christianity, Judaism, philosophy, pagan mystery religions, and a lot of wild dreaming. While their heretical writings were challenged and refuted by the early church, many liberal theologians are reviving them today to challenge the inspired teachings of the Sacred Scriptures.

In 2003, Dan Brown published a blockbuster book entitled *The Da Vinci Code*. He makes references to the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas to support his theory that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. Militant feminists were giddy with glee over that revelation and have begun to champion Mary Magdalene, going so far as to declare Mary to be the first apostle.

In 2006, the National Geographic Society announced it was publishing a Gnostic document that had been lost for 17 centuries called the Gospel of Judas. In this document Judas is not depicted as a traitor, but as a hero who is given a "secret" mission by Jesus. According to this text, Judas hands Jesus over to the Jewish authorities only because Jesus secretly instructs him to and then Judas ascends to heaven as a reward. Conversely, the inspired Gospels say Judas handed Jesus over because of greed (Lk. 22:1-6; Jn. 12:4-6; Acts 1:16-18).

The latest headline-grabbing announcement from the Gnostic world sounds almost like pages ripped from *The Da Vinci Code*. Karen King, a Harvard Divinity School professor says she has acquired a fragment from a Fourth Century manuscript written in Coptic (Egyptian) that may suggest Jesus had a wife. She has sensationally styled the fragment, *The Gospel of Jesus' Wife*.

The fragment contains just 33 words spread across 14 incomplete lines and looks like an ancient crossword puzzle. According to King the fragment says, "Jesus said to them, 'My wife'" The rest of the sentence is cut off.

What does the truncated sentence mean? There are endless possibilities, including that Jesus was referring to the church, His bride (Eph. 5:23-25; Rev. 21:2). Of course the most sensational inference and the one that would do the most damage to the history of Christianity is that Jesus was married.

In an interview with *Smithsonian* magazine, King makes no secret of her hostile approach to the history of Christianity. She openly criticizes the Bible's own claims about its inspired origin, referring to it as the "myth of origins" (77). Still, she concedes that if the fragment is actually an authentic document from the Fourth Century, it does not provide any historical evidence that Jesus was ever married. It would only show that centuries after Jesus died, some sect believed He had a wife.

That statement describes in a nutshell the entire worth of all of the uninspired, heretical writings in existence today. In spite of sensational claims by liberal theologians, these writings tell us nothing about Christ and the doctrines of the first-century church. Their only worth is to give us a glimpse into some of the fanciful fables believed by the heretics Paul warns us about. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com