

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 in 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. 3

TOO MUCH INFORMATION

BY KEVIN W. PRESLEY

Many things are inherently worthwhile but detrimental in some circumstances. Satan uses benign things to ensnare the unsuspecting. For example, money is necessary to our survival but has doomed the souls of millions who overestimate its worth or misuse it. There is nothing necessarily wrong with television. It is but an electronic device that receives and interprets electro-magnetic waves that are broadcast over the air. What appears on television, however, is often wrong for Christians to watch. Used properly, television is a wonderful medium that has even been instrumental in the conversion of many to New Testament Christianity. In the 1960’s scientists began envisioning a way to connect computers to share information. This primitive process called “packet switching” was the precursor to the modern internet. No, a United States Vice President did not invent it; he only encouraged its later development in Congress. When the concept was hatched, computers were giant machines that belonged to the government and the scientific community. They filled entire rooms and were complex but yet very limited systems for managing information. I doubt many of the scientists then could truly imagine what would come 40 years later. Computers that fold into a backpack or a briefcase can be opened just about anywhere in a populated area and connect to a literal world of instant information. In fact, forget computers as we typically think of them, now you can type a message to someone around the world or look up information from millions of sources on a cell phone. One wonders how much farther innovation and technology can take us but I’m sure they wondered that many years ago, too.

Technology has enriched and simplified our lives in many, many ways and paradoxically, it has complicated and cluttered our lives at the same time. It has opened doors and closed others. I have worked in the television news industry and can tell you that medium and just about every other medium

of journalism is undergoing a metamorphosis thanks to nothing less than the internet. Three iconic male anchors delivering our news to us for 30 minutes in the evening is a thing of the distant past. Local newscasts are shedding viewers not only because of the explosion and cable and satellite offerings but due to the rise of the internet and the blogosphere. There are thousands upon thousands of sources for “information” at the click of a mouse. As a result, facts and civil dialogue are buried beneath an avalanche of shouting pundits, mean-spirited and agenda driven bloggers and people who use the internet to gain their minute of fame or let their voice be heard. The internet is a tremendous tool and a valuable convenience but it is also becoming, in my opinion, the bane of our society. Too, it is becoming a destructive weapon of the devil among God’s people. It goes without saying that the internet has made pornography anonymous and easily accessible and has poisoned many minds and led many Christians into sin. With that stated, that is not the primary problem we shall address. A problem of equal significance is that of “too much information.” Good information is a vital thing but too much information can be harmful.

A PIPELINE FOR GOSSIP

The internet makes it possible to assassinate someone’s character, plant doubt and suspicion about the innocent and spread misleading rumors with the click of a button. In warning us to control our tongue, James said “Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” (James 3:5) Our tongue can be misused by letting our fingers on a keyboard speak for it. The web is such an instant form of communication, it is as easy to use it impulsively as our tongue is. The anonymity offered by blogs, forums and chat rooms and incognito email addresses make it easier and more tempting for people to tale bear with little or no accountability. Of course, God knows our “handle” and keeps a record of every word.

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550
Fax 925-454-8995

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
P.O. Box 800337 LaGrange, GA 30240

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook	Greg Gay
Bennie Cryer	Carl Johnson
Billy Dickinson	Barney Owens
Jerry Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Johnny Elmore	

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE WEBSITE:

www.oldpathsadvocate.org
Rick Martin, Website Publisher
Terry Studdard, Website Asst. Publisher
Brandon Steward, Webmaster

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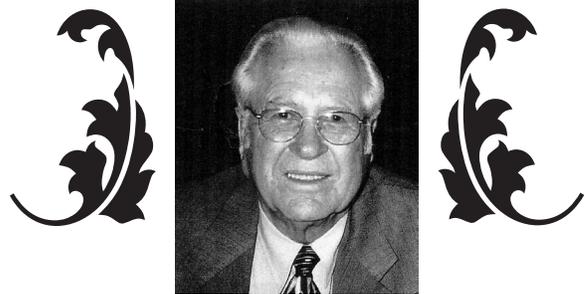
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Editorial

HONORING OUR OLDER PREACHERS

By RONNY F. WADE

Clovis T. Cook



Brother Clovis Cook is currently the oldest living preacher among us. He is, at this writing, in his ninety-sixth year. He began his preaching career on the second Lord's Day in 1932 and actively continued preaching until 2008. His mind is still clear and he recalls many of the incidents that have occurred during his life with amazing accuracy. He said that he was baling hay when he first began to study about giving talks. Brother Reed Chappell sent him an outline on "The Christian Race" which became the topic of his first sermon. During the ensuing years Clovis preached over a greater part of the United States holding meetings and conducting singing schools. During his younger years his family farmed near the Wichita Lake (near Wichita Falls, Texas) later he returned to that area and conducted a meeting in which twenty were baptized. During his long career Clovis has moderated in countless religious discussions. He assisted at least eight different preachers in such endeavors. He was skilled at taking notes. In the days before recorders this was very important. Many times when he and I worked side by side I depended on him to write down exactly what had been said. Such information was invaluable. In fact, just a few days ago I was going through some old debate notes and found several hand written inscriptions Clovis had passed to me during the course of the debate. His first call for extended work came from the Lowery and Earlytown, Alabama area. While there he conducted two meetings resulting in 67 responses to the gospel. In 1940 he was called to California to assist Ervin Waters and Chester King in the mission work taking place in that State. Later on he spent two years in mission work in West Virginia. Much

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

BY RONNY F. WADE

Question: Can God be characterized as a prodigal or someone who is reckless or wasteful?

Answer: The above question springs from an article sent to me by a brother in which the writer says “We call the boy who left home the “prodigal” son, for that adjective means “recklessly wasteful” and this wayward lad squandered his entire inheritance in wild living. But the real “prodigal” in this story is the father—the father who runs to meet his returning son while he is still a long way off, who welcomes the erring boy home without conditions, whose heart so bursts with joy that he cannot understand why everyone is not happy as he. God is this way, Jesus is telling us—recklessly wasteful in mercy, extravagant in grace, squandering his kindness on undeserving children. That is why Jesus welcomed sinners. That is why he still does.” While the writer of this piece may be trying to extol the goodness and mercy of God it is grossly inaccurate to accuse God of being “prodigal.” God is neither reckless nor wasteful. He acts with both purpose and plan. There are, in the view of this writer, several serious mistakes in the above quotation First of all we need to understand the place of grace in our salvation. Paul wrote “The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should righteously, soberly, and godly in the present age.” Titus 2:11. If grace alone saved, then all men would be saved. We know, of course that all men are not saved. Therefore man must have some responsibility in claiming the grace of Christ. The bible teaches that we accept God’s grace by obeying His commands. Notice carefully that Paul declared “the grace of Christ **teaches us...**” In Galatians: 1:6 he further writes “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.” In these verses “the grace of Christ” is put in apposition to “a different gospel.” The idea is that the grace of Christ is revealed in the “true gospel,” hence, we access or appropriate the “grace of Christ” by obeying the gospel. That is how we are saved by

grace. We did not deserve it, we did not earn it. Grace is a free gift of God, however we must avail ourselves of this “free gift” by complying with heaven’s requirements which are revealed in the gospel of Christ. The fact that God’s grace appears to all men doesn’t in any way indicate that God is “prodigal” or “reckless.” God, with purpose, makes His grace available to all men. We are the ones who become reckless when we squander it by refusing to accept it. It is also a mistake, I believe, to say that the prodigal in Luke 15 was received back without conditions. There were conditions. This young man repented (he came back home) he confessed (“I have sinned against heaven and before you”) it was upon these conditions that he was accepted back. The implication of the writer seems to be that “the sinner has nothing to do in coming to God.” That is not the case. Had the prodigal remained in the “pig pen” he would not have been forgiven. The sinner who remains in sin, will not be forgiven nor will the fallen church member who remains away from God. Both must comply with heaven’s requirements before they are saved by grace. It is true that some men refuse to accept God’s grace and they, in effect, waste it by not taking advantage of it. This, however, does not mean that God wasted it in making it available. He was neither wasteful nor reckless and to so accuse him is wrong. It is true that we were undeserving. God commended his love for us while we were yet sinners. Was that wasteful or reckless? No, a thousand times no. The super-abundance of God’s grace in no way indicates that he was prodigal nor that it was squandered on us even though none of us earned or were worthy of it. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 800337 LaGrange, GA 30240 or rfwade@charter.net)

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KEEPING UP WITH THE JONES'

By MICHAEL BOLTON

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONES' An age old idiom intended to indicate that one is trying to keep pace with the lifestyle of those around him. This can be funny or detrimental to normal life but when it is an attitude of a congregation in the LORD's church it is devastating. God has always desired a people to be separate unto him. His requirements are that we be apart from the world.

In I Samuel 8 we can an example of the people of Israel doing this very thing. For many generations they had been led by judges of God's choosing who delivered them and tried to lead them in paths of righteousness. However here at the end of the life of what could be considered the greatest judge in Israel's history they wanted a change. In verse five they said to him "Thou are old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations"; and again in verses nineteen and twenty we can read "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles".

This was displeasing to God. This attitude of wanting to be like the nations around them was not what God wanted for them. They were willing to supplant human leadership and ingenuity with God's authority and rule. The same principles apply to us today. When we seek to have our own way because it is more palatable to society or because it makes us fit in better we become displeasing to God. Our goal should not ever be to fit in rather it should be to do God's will regardless what societal considerations are. The fact remains this was sin for the elders of Israel in that day. This attitude is also sin for us today. When we decide to go against God's will it is sin. When we procrastinate to go that which we know is God's will for us it is sin. And insisting to do things our own way it is sin. Sin in this way comes about as a result of worldliness. Worldliness is portrayed by loving the world more than loving God. Sometime this attitude of love for the world is allowed little by little. One can casually allow this to creep in to ones heart. The Church at Ephesus had this type of problem (See Revelations 2.1-7) This record of the first mini-epistle to the seven congregations in Asia Minor tells of their loss of love for Christ. But in order to discover the symptoms that brought Christ's judgment on them one can go back to Paul's epistle to the same congregation. There the student will find several clues that indicate the underlying causes of this negative judgment. Eph 4.22 - Here we see that they wanted to be as close to the world as they could while keeping good standing with God. Paul said "put off... the old man which is corrupt

and deceitful". (see also Rom 12.1-2) In verse 23 he said "be renewed in your mind". Here is the catch, If one is being transformed by the renewing of the mind how can they still be practicing such conformity to the world? Paul proceeded to exhort the brethren in Ephesus to put on the new man "which is created in righteousness and true holiness". To be true to the scripture it must be concluded that one cannot wear the clothes of righteousness and the clothes of worldliness at the same time. In Matthew 6.4 we read "No man can serve two masters".

Another symptom of the congregation at Ephesus was their relationships with each other. In chapter five we read that wives are to be submissive to their husbands, husbands are to love their wives, children are to honor their father and mother, and servants are to obey their master. It seems apparent that this was either not happening or there were at least some problems along these lines. This implies scripturally that our relationships with each other and how we deal with each other is not just important to God but is a factor in our love and relationship to Him.

Secondly, this O.T. story should serve as a warning to us individually as Christians and collectively as congregations in the Lord's church. Sometime simply don't want to offend our brother. Sometime we want to be as attractive to the world as we can without actually being a part of the world. But the Old Testament gives us this command from Jeremiah in chapter six verse sixteen "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 for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein". It is easy to want to be like the Jones because we are being pushed and pulled from many directions. Heretics would have us compromise the what the word of God says and take a lesser way. The world itself will tell the servant of God that "as long as you can meet at the cross there is common ground and we are brother and sister." Fleshly desire will cause many to try to keep pace with those around them. And while it can be argued that it is natural for man to take the easy out; and that one sometime just grows weary of the fight: the man of God simply cannot afford to settle for these excuses. Those who love God make their chief desire to "Enter in at the strait gate" (Mt 7.13) and does not turn aside for ought.

Thankfully, there are those who will purposefully and consistently only do God's will. These are the ones who seek God's will first and most regardless the cost to them individually.

HOMELAND SECURITY

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

The tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001 showed how critical it is that America has a coordinated and comprehensive strategy to help protect against terrorist threats and attacks. That is why the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was established. It is a Cabinet department of the federal government and its responsibilities have to do with terrorism and responding to natural disasters. According to what I have read, it has more than 200,000 employees. Indeed, the events of 9/11 had a great effect upon our nation and it introduced this expression into our vocabulary- "**homeland security**."

THE CHURCH

There is a sense in which we should have this same kind of vigilant attitude toward spiritual matters or things pertaining to the **church**. That is true because the security of certain truths has been entrusted to our care, making it our responsibility to protect them from harm. Brethren, we must not be indifferent when the enemy tries to rob the church of its distinctiveness and doctrinal purity, but we must "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). Does it really make a difference if an assault against the truth comes from outside the church or from within? Surely not! In fact, history demonstrates that some of the greatest threats to the church have come from **within**, when "men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). If we allow friendships, family ties, or worldly concerns to hinder us from exposing error, we have failed the test of true discipleship (Luke 14:26).

A "WATCHMAN"

We should be concerned about "homeland security" in Christ's kingdom because God will hold us accountable if we fail in this regard. Consider what God told Ezekiel in the long ago: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning... the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Eze. 3:17-18). A "**watchman**" in Ezekiel's day was a sentinel who

occupied the walls of ancient cities. He dared not go to sleep on the job because it was his responsibility to warn the city of any hostile force that was coming against it. This is what the prophet of God was likened unto.

Does this have any application to us today? I believe that in principle it does, especially for those who are preachers, teachers, and leaders in the Lord's church. I say that because Paul applied this very principle to himself: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27). Brethren, we should be afraid to go to sleep on the job and fail to do our part in keeping the church secure from those forces that would do her harm.

THE FAITH

Here is something that we must guard and protect: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 6:20-21). Just as the evangelists of the first century were expected to guard "**the faith**" (gospel) that was entrusted in their care, we must be committed to proclaiming that same gospel in all of its purity and power. Paul also exhorted Timothy to: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13). This obligates us to keep pure the essence of the gospel- the "heart" of all that is distinctive about it.

Christ must be proclaimed as the Son of God (in all His majesty and power), His redemptive work upon the cross must be preached, and men need to be told what to do to be saved (just as the conditions of salvation were given/obeyed in the first century). There are many churches today that do a lot of "**preaching**," but it is void of "Christ, and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). I say that because the sinner is never led to obey the gospel (in response to Christ's redemptive work). When Philip rode in that chariot with the Ethiopian eunuch, he "preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). Please observe, however, that by such preaching the eunuch came to understand that he needed to be baptized into Christ (Verses 36-38). Shame on the man who claims to preach Jesus, but fails to lead people to gospel obedience (2 Thess. 1:8)!

THE FLOCK OF GOD

We should possess the **caring attitude** that Paul expressed to the elders at Ephesus: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears” (Acts 20:28-31). Have you shed any tears for the church lately? Brethren, we live in a dangerous world; dangers are a part of the reality of life. Yet, some want to act as if they are oblivious to the dangers facing the church today! It is time for them to wake up, wipe the sleep from their eyes, and seek to be a part of the solution (not the problem).

The church has always faced dangers, so it shouldn't surprise us that there are things today that must be dealt with. Worldliness, a spirit of compromise, false teaching, confusing excitement/emotionalism with edification and true spirituality, problems facing the family. . . just to name a few. When we let our guard down and no longer cry out against these things, the church is in greater danger than we realize! Here's how a preacher can prove his worth: “But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith. . . If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed until now” (1 Tim. 4:1; 6- ASV). The word “**if**” in this statement-- “*If thou put the brethren in mind of these things*”-- makes it clear that the preacher has the responsibility of warning brethren about the dangers of apostasy. Don't you want to be that “good servant” of Christ?

WILL A MAN ROB GOD?

BY PAUL O. NICHOLS

In society two of the most despised of characters are liars and robbers. A liar cannot be trusted, and the robber will steal from others, even if it means

running the risk of being punished.

In the Old Testament God accused His people of robbing Him. He said, “For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? **Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation:** (Malachi 3:6-9).

This was a terrible indictment against a people who were favored by God and who had been given the law of the Lord, but failed to appreciate their position. They had been blessed abundantly, but were too stingy and self serving to return to their Lord that which was His. However, some Christians should be more merciful in their judgment of these people, because they themselves may be guilty of the same sin. The apostle Paul warns, “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest **doest the same things** (Rom. 2:1). Are we guilty of robbing God?

Giving of our means upon the first day of the week is commanded by the Lord in the New Testament, just as tithing was commanded in the Old Testament (1 Cor. 16:1,2). Yet, many members of the church seem to take this command very lightly. The Lord is not a beggar and His demands are not unreasonable. The Bible teaches us to “seek first the kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33) and He promises to see to all of our needs. The expression, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt” was an expression used by Jesus in speaking to Peter upon one occasion. Perhaps it is applicable to some of us today. “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2:20). Do we really believe the Lord will supply our needs if we put God first in our lives?

Some have been led to believe that even though the Lord has told us to give, He has left the amount entirely up to us. But is this true? I believe God not

only tells us to give, but tells us how to give, as well. It is true that we are taught to give as we purpose in our own hearts (2 Cor. 9:7), but our giving must be determined according as we have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:1, 2). If our prosperity increases, we are to give more. “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase (Proverbs 3:9). We must have the right attitude for our contribution to be acceptable. “For if there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not (2 Cor. 8:12). One must not give grudgingly nor of necessity for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 7:9). “He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity... (Rom. 12:8). The marginal rendering of the word translated “simplicity” means “liberally”. “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6). Do we actually believe this?”... And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:36). The Lord blesses those who give as the scriptures teach.

It is possible for one to sin, even if he does give to the Lord. We have all heard the saying, “Actions speak louder than words”. In Acts chapter 5 we have an incident recorded from which all can learn a lesson. Ananias and Sapphira his wife sold a piece of property and wanted credit for contributing all the money for the benefit of the needy saints. The fact was, they were only contributing a part of the proceeds and the apostle Peter accused them of lying to God and to the Holy Spirit - Ananias by his actions, and his wife by verbally claiming an untruth. They paid the penalty with their lives. We, too, may be guilty of lying to God by our actions if we do not give as the word of God teaches, and furthermore we are guilty of “robbing God” if we do not give as we are prospered.

The Jews were compelled by God to tithe - give 10% of their income to the Lord for His cause. The Pharisees tithed (Luke 11:42), but with a wrong attitude, Their unrighteousness was pointed out to Jesus. And He taught His disciples, “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:20). Giving to the Lord and His cause is serious business. It would be terrible to go through

life thinking that we are serving the Lord in an acceptable way, only to hear in the final day the Lord say to us, “You robbed me. Depart from me into everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels.”

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A BACKDOOR FOR UNSCRIPTURAL PRACTICES

The internet is a relatively new medium and, therefore, its place in the work of the church continues to evolve. We should remember that the same patterns and teachings of the New Testament that govern every other aspect of the church’s work govern its use of the internet too. For instance, we believe it is wrong for a woman to teach or preach publically (1 Timothy 2:12, 1 Cor. 14:34). Most of us would conscientiously take exception to a woman expounding upon spiritual matters via a radio program, television program or a street-corner pulpit. Well, FACEBOOK, forums, blogs and other such sites are just as public. Another example pertains to church autonomy. The New Testament teaches that every congregation is to be governed from within and is responsible for its own work. There is nothing in the Bible that permits the universal church or brotherhood to organize into anything larger than each local, self-governing church. Any arrangement that is unscriptural on paper or in person is just as unscriptural in cyberspace. The internet has reduced the size of our planet drastically. It has taken a coast-to-coast journey that used to take many days by automobile and perhaps a week or more by mail and reduced it to the length of time it takes to type a message and click on “send” or “publish”. The temptation is more prevalent to treat the church as one big entity, ignoring the walls of church autonomy. Recently, a young man posted some things he ought not to have on a social networking site. I pointed out his error to him and then referred the matter to the leaders of his home congregation to deal with as they saw fit. Again, the internet does not exempt us from the patterns and regulations of apostolic teaching!

A FORUM FOR INCINDIARY RHETORIC

Civil conversation is rare in the political sphere today, in large part, because of the internet. If you follow political news, have you read many of the blogs on the internet lately? The atmosphere is charged with

hate and vitriol toward opposing sides and nothing has fueled that more than the internet. People can lob their written firebombs at the “enemy” and then hide behind the anonymity of the internet. They wouldn’t dare sign their name to a letter that spewed the same venom that their anonymous comment or email spews toward others. Jesus said we will be judged by “every idle word” (Matthew 12:36-37) and God is just as aware of what we write on-line as what we say with our lips.

A PULPIT FOR FALSE TEACHERS

This is perhaps the greatest danger of all. Freedom of speech is a cherished right in American society but it is NOT a right afforded in the Kingdom of God. Paul warned Titus about the false teachers at Crete who were pedaling their own brand of Judaism from house to house within the church. He said “whose mouths must be stopped.” (Titus 1:11). The internet makes Paul’s teaching more difficult to follow. Some people do not deserve a platform because they are ignorant of the Bible’s teaching and reason from emotion or false precept and others have an agenda they are trying to foist upon the church, just as in Titus’s day. The internet provides such men with a platform. Hardly a church in the country will allow them to occupy their pulpit and so they turn to the internet to spread their heresy. Unsuspecting church members receive their emails and read their blogs, not knowing who these men are or their relationship to the churches where they have been and caused trouble. These men should be identified and denounced just as loudly as those who attempt to teach false doctrine in a church assembly. We are seeing the destructive forces of liberalism and false teaching unleashed upon the church today and much of it is taking place via the World Wide Web. There’s not much we can do to stop them but we can be vigilant and warn the faithful to beware.

The internet opens a thrilling door of opportunity for the spread of the gospel but it is also fraught with pitfalls and dangers. Remember, whatever applies to churches and individuals in any other forum or medium, applies in exactly the same way on the internet. Church leaders and parents would be well advised to warn their flock and to warn their children of the dangers of “too much information.”
94 Sandalwood Trail, Brookhaven MS 39601

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HONORING OUR OLDER .. continued from page two

of his preaching was done when times were hard. His pay often only covered his expense in getting to the place of preaching. He went anyway again and again. My first recollection of Clovis goes back to about 1948. I was twelve years old at the time and he came to the Vaughn Blvd. church in Ft. Worth, Texas to conduct a meeting. Little did I know that this preacher and his family would become my lifelong friends and that Clovis and I would some day work together in efforts to spread the Kingdom. He was a man of many talents, not the least of which was his ability to meet people and create a relationship that often ended in that person becoming a Christian. His personality was such that almost immediately he seemed to be a friend and old-time acquaintance. “Ole Clovis” they would say “came by the other day.” And then go on to recount what had happened. He could talk to people about fishing, hunting, and other such things until they felt like he was part of the family. After I began moving about the brotherhood holding meetings, when people would learn that he and I lived in the same place they would ask “how’s ole Cook doing?” He endeared himself to countless individuals during the time he held meetings from place to place. In the early 70’s when he moved to Springfield to assist in the Television program little did anyone realize what an asset he would be. Running down leads allowed him to do what he did best, i.e. meet people and win them to the truth. He appeared with me on numerous programs in question and answer sessions thus becoming well known to the viewing audience. When he knocked on someone’s door they immediately recognized him, thus allowing the conversation to begin which ultimately ended in a bible discussion. Today Clovis is failing somewhat in health, but is as strong as ever in spirit and his convictions about the truth. He wrote: “Homer L. King, Homer A. Gay, Ervin Waters and Ronny Wade were some of the preachers in the brotherhood that helped me in my years of preaching. They all studied hard and were never afraid to preach just what is in the Book.” It has been my privilege to know Clovis for over sixty years. My prayer is that his last days on this earth, will be among his best, and that his accomplishments during his life will be a source of comfort to his family. *(You may write or send a card to Brother Cook at 212 W. Morningside St., Springfield, MO 65807.)*

Announcements

NEW SONGBOOK

The new songbook "Glory Echoes" is set to be released by this May. The book will be attractively bound with entirely new type-setting and music engraving which will make the book uniform in its appearance and very legible. It will contain a blend of old and new songs I am presently taking pre-orders. There is no need to send money now. Provide me with your name, address and order and the items will ship as soon as they are printed. You may then add the shipping expense to the purchase price. The book will be \$5 and a companion CD will be available for \$10. I have attempted to conform to the style and format used by Bro. Lynwood Smith over the years. I humbly approach such a task. If you would like to order books or CDs, you may contact me at legacymusicpublishing@gmail.com or you may write to P.O. Box 1001, Brookhaven, MS 39601. More information can be found at www.legacymusicpublishing.com. - Kevin Presley



NEW ADDRESS

Darrell and Beverly Crawford 208 E Baldwin unit S Panama City, Fl.32405 Darrell 405-473-6407 Beverly 405-474-5510 bugz1955@hotmail.com



PUBLIC BIBLE DISCUSSION

Seminole, OK 3511 Hwy 99

March 13, 2010

6:00 p.m. Baptism is absolutely essential for salvation. George Battey - Affirms Randy Zinn (Pastor of Dustin Baptist Church) - Denies

Our Departed

RHODES- Our Dear Sister Lillian A Rhodes, of Summertown, TN, passed, this life January 10, 2010, in Nashville, Tennessee. With her Daughters by her bedside singing the song "till we meet again". Sister Rhodes was a faithful member of the Chapel Grove congregation since 1945. She was a humble Christian and with that Christ like spirit she touched many lives, which was indicated at her funeral with the out pouring of love and encouragement for the family. Sister Rhodes was a faithful wife to the late Marshall Rhodes and a great mother to her children, but still had time to keep a diary, and if others wanted to know about dates of baptisms in that area or sermons preached by others of the congregation

they knew where to go to find the information. Her daughters, Patti Attkisson, Carole Beth Rhodes and Gayle Faulkner, survive her. Lillian was the sister-in-law of brother Johnny Fisher. Funeral services were conducted at Chapel Grove Church of Christ, 2:00 PM Wednesday, January 13, 2010. The singing was beautiful, Randy Burns, Ed Daniel, and the writer endeavored to speak words of comfort. Interment was followed at Chapel Grove Cemetery. Please remember the family in your prayers. Bobby J. Pepper

NICHOLS- Wilma Jean Nichols, 79, passed away on Sunday, January 10, 2010, at her home in Overland Park, KS. She was born on November 18, 1930 in Kenova, West Virginia, to James W. and Ruth Priscilla (Johnson) McKeand. She attended schools and graduated from Buffalo High School in West Virginia. She was married to Paul O. Nichols on November 28, 1949, and they recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Wilma and Paul lived in the Kansas City area for 16 year after moving from California. She is survived by Paul and 2 daughters, Paulette Moran and her husband Michael of El Cajon, CA, and Cheryl Harris and her husband Kevin of Overland Park, KS; 4 sisters, Glenna Weilman of Kenova, WV, Alfreda Wade of La Grange, GA, Lillian Stephens of Tavares, FL, and identical twin Willa D. Allen of Huntington, WV; 1 granddaughter, Vanessa McGrath of San Diego, CA; 2 grandsons, Marcus Moran of El Cajon, CA, and Cameron Harris of Overland Park, KS. Wilma personified the virtuous wife described by Solomon in Proverbs 31, and as a preacher's wife her value was indeed "far above rubies" (Prov. 31:10). She devoted herself to making a home and helping Paul in his missionary efforts around the world and at home. She enjoyed sewing, cooking, and crocheting. As her health failed her in recent years, Paul devoted himself to caring for her. The first time I can remember seeing Wilma was when she came to Ada with Paul in the 1950s to conduct a gospel meeting. They were an impressive couple. They became friends with my parents and all of my family. Later, as I began to preach the gospel, Phyllis and I met and befriended most of Wilma's family in West Virginia--her mother Ruth, her sisters, nephews, and nieces. Our friendship is something I treasure to this day, therefore, I was humbled and greatly honored when Paul called me and said Wilma requested that I conduct her funeral. A large crowd gathered at the Stony Point Church of Christ to pay their respects and to remember and celebrate Wilma's life. May God's richest blessings be upon Paul and the whole family during this time of loss. -- Carl M. Johnson

The Passing of Wilma J. Nichols

On the morning of January 10, 2010, Wilma J. Nichols, the wife of Paul O. Nichols, quietly passed from this life. The passing was at 11:47 Lord's Day morning, during the time the home congregation at Stony Point, Kansas City, Kansas was observing the Communion.

During the two years her family cared for her at home she was generally patient, even though suffering from Parkinson's and the result of a massive stroke, which left her almost completely incapacitated except for the limited use of her right arm. Although she was not able to attend the church services but a very few times, when confined at home she would ask how large the crowd was, who did the teaching, and sometimes while losing track of time she would ask if the contribution check was made out for the Lord's day. The church and the Lord's work were her life for the sixty years she was married to Paul. She made many sacrifices as a preacher's wife in order for her husband to preach the Gospel around the world. She was a Christian mother who set the example and helped rear two loving daughters, Paulette Moran and Cheryl Harris, who helped to care for their mother, with the help of Paul, Kevin and Cameron. When the end came and we had to say goodbye for the last time, Paul, Paulette, and Cheryl were by her bedside along with a nurse from Hospice.

The memorial service held in Wilma's honor was attended by fellow Christians, family members, and friends from ten states. The flowers were profuse and indicated the Christian influence she had on the lives of many others, as well as her family. Brother Carl Johnson, fellow preacher and family friend from Ada, OK, was chosen by Wilma to speak at her memorial service. He pointed to the scriptures and spoke words appropriate for the occasion.

"For me to die is gain," said the apostle Paul. Again, he said for him to "die and be with Christ" was far better. And in Wilma's case, while her passing makes us sad and we miss her so, the fact remains that this is the Lord's will and she no longer suffers, and it is far better for her to be in Paradise in the care of Christ. We will continue to live that we may meet again on the other side in the sweet forever. The Lord has promised, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" and we trust in Him.

Written by Paul O. Nichols, her loving companion for over sixty years.

Field Reports

Frank Brancato 12718 Larkin Dr. Bakersfield CA., 93312 (661)588-7338. On January 1st, Brother Don King and I made another trip to the Philippines. As usual, we spent the majority of our trip on the Island of Luzon where we visited a number of churches. We worshiped in Manila on the first Lord's Day and witnessed 12 baptisms. After traveling to Bagio City, we preached in various places in Tarlac, Pangasinan, and Paniqui where 17 more were baptized into Christ. We then travelled to Ilocos Norte, then Isabella while stopping to preach in Lapogan along the way. We were grateful for God's increase as there were a total of 106 baptisms and 2 restorations on the Island of Luzon. On January 16th we flew to Palawan to meet Brothers Alan Bonifay and Greg Cardosa where we preached at several places. We were grateful for God's increase there too, as another 27 were baptized into Christ and 16 were converted out of digression. On January 18th we held a preachers study where we taught on subjects that were either requested or needed. We felt that the study went well and that our time was well spent. By the time that Brother Don and I left the Philippines there were 151 total responses. I would like to thank Brother Virgilio Danao and his brother Eduardo for all of their hard work. I am so thankful for the privilege of working with them. I look forward to working with them again if it be the Lord's will. I would also like to thank Brother Don King for inviting me again to be a part of this great work. Brother Don has been one of the great influences in my life and I love and appreciate him very much. May God continue to bless this great work!

Sean S. McCallister, 1009 Republic Street, Ardmore OK 73401-- February 8, 2010. The year of 2010 holds great promise. I began the year with around four hundred other Christians at the Dothan, AL New Year's Meeting. This is one of the highlights of my year as we consistently have good teaching, singing and fellowship. On the first Lord's Day of the new year I was asked to speak at the Wichita Falls, TX congregation where the subjects of zeal without knowledge and true Bible unity were preached. These lessons were well received and commended to the congregation by Brother Jimmy Caving who works with that congregation. At the end of January I held a meeting at West Monroe, LA. The sermons preached were: "Taglines of the Liberal Movement," "Is It Wrong to be Right?" "Hear, O Israel," and "Confusion and Union." These sermons contained many modern religious issues such as the need for scriptural practices, the Christian's attitude, hypocrisy, liberal opposition

to scripture, church history and biblical unity. The meeting was well attended by community visitors, area congregations and fellow gospel preachers: Kevin Presley, Cullen Smith, Bruce Roebuck, Al Felder and Michael Conley. The size and diversity of the crowds indicated the hard work that the brothers and sisters of the congregation accomplished for the gospel. I appeal to all of our evangelists and teachers to preach some basic principles which are in dire need and to spend time with our youth. History proves that we need to indoctrinate our youth with solid scriptural principles in order to win future battles. I look forward to the next meeting which is to be held at the 79th and Kansas congregation, Kansas City KS on March 12-14.

Kevin W. Presley, 94 Sandalwood Trail, Brookhaven, MS 39601 - February 8, 2010 In January, I spent several nights with the church at Blue Springs, KY teaching rudiments of music. We had a profitable time and I feel like the church is better equipped to learn new songs. I love the brethren there and always look forward to being with them. I also conducted a meeting for the church in West Point, GA. I have preached there many times over the years and this may have been our most well attended meeting to date. The congregation there has grown and they are enthusiastic. Bro. Don Jackson is a great influence for good in that area and I appreciate him and his preaching so much. Here at home we are looking forward to a good meeting with Clint De France. My next meetings will be at Council Hill, OK (Feb 12-14); Edmond, OK (Mar 7 -14); and Neosho, MO (Mar 28 - Apr 4). It was to our benefit to hear the good preaching of Sean McAlister at West Monroe, LA last month. He will hold you a good meeting if you call him. I am anticipating an early May shipment for the next songbook "Glory Echoes." I'm taking pre-orders now. You can find information elsewhere in this journal or at www.legacymusicpublishing.com. The Northside congregation in Springfield, MO will be hosting a singing on Sat, June 19 to learn songs from the new book. The church there has wonderful singing and you'll enjoy it if you can attend and participate. We look forward to seeing many of you from place to place throughout the coming year, the Lord willing.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, February 14, old_paths@juno.com We closed a very enjoyable meeting last Lord's Day with the Fossil Creek congregation in the Dallas Fort Worth area. Weather cooperated nicely as did the area congregations and we enjoyed being with several we hadn't seen in some time. We appreciated the hospitality of Randy and Rhonda Cantrell, where we have always enjoyed our stay. In fact, the hospitality of the church there was impressive.

The weather turned bad after the meeting closed and quite a lot of snow came in but by that time the meeting was history. Sad to say there were no visible results but we pray good was accomplished. We appreciated a number of preachers who attended including Melvin Blalok, Shaun McAlister, Nathan Battey and Joe Norton and perhaps others I have overlooked. After returning home we enjoyed hearing Clint DeFrance at Manteca one evening. Our meeting with Rick Martin is now in progress and we look forward to it. The church has put forth a lot of effort to advertise it. Allow me to say also that I enjoyed the trip to the Philippines with Frank Brancato. Please, see his report this issue. The work there is progressing in spite of efforts to divide it by enemies who seek to sow tares and we give God the praise for the growth. Bro Danao and others provided invaluable assistance while we were there and indeed the work has needed the efforts of the local preachers from the beginning. They must not be overlooked as we think of those who have worked for success there. Preachers, you may resume sending your material to me as usual after the 15th of Feb and my sincere thanks to Ronny Wade for his work in putting out these past two issues.

Clint De France, 5036 Clark Lane #101, Columbia, MO 65202, Cdefrance87@yahoo.com, January 13, 2010 - the last year was very productive in the work of Christ, both here in Columbia and abroad. Here at home we have had growth. I had the honor of baptizing Hunter and Haley Smith into Christ. These are the grandchildren of Brother Ronny Wade and we are all very proud of them for making the good decision to serve Jesus. I had a full year of gospel meetings that were very encouraging, and the TV program that brother Brandon Stephens and I do in this part of the country has received encouraging responses from the community. After a year of good results and good times with the wonderful brethren here the time has come to move on. I have accepted an offer to move to Wichita Falls, Texas later this year. I am not sure right now of the exact dates when I will move but I will write back into the OPA when I know. The arraignment that I will have with Wichita Falls will allow me to hold more gospel meetings. As of right now I intend to continue the work here until the time comes for me to move. Because of this my meeting schedule will be full until the latter part of Summer. My schedule for Late Winter and Spring is as follows: Feb. 4th-15th at Manteca, CA; Feb. 17th-21 st at Brookhaven, MS (Hwy. 84); Mar. at Weatherford, TX; Mar. 24th-28th; Mar. 24th-28th in Texarkana, TX; Apr. 23rd 25th in Lebanon, MO (Lee Summit).

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THE BACK PAGE...

IN HIS STEPS

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

In September of 2009 I realized a lifelong dream when Phyllis and I made a trip to Rome and spent a few days retracing the steps of the Apostle Paul. We saw the Appian Way, which is the ancient road by which Paul and his companions made their first entrance into the city (Acts 28:15), the Roman Forum where emperor Nero resided, and Mamertine Prison, the place where Paul was most likely kept until his execution and the place from which he wrote 2 Timothy. We also saw the probable place of his burial. In about the year A.D. 300 a sarcophagus (stone tomb) was found outside the original walls of Rome with a stone marker on the top that says, "Paul, Apostle, and Martyr." Many historians believe this sarcophagus contains the actual remains of the apostle.

One day I would love to make a similar trip to Jerusalem and retrace the steps of our Lord. A family friend who just returned from such a trip said his tour guide told him an interesting story about a visit to Jerusalem by astronaut Neil Armstrong, the first man to set foot upon the moon.

While visiting Jerusalem in 1988, Armstrong and his guide approached the temple mountain from the south side. The temple mountain is where the beautiful Dome of Rock stands today, but 2,000 years ago it is where the Jewish temple stood. The first temple, built by Solomon about 1000 B.C. had been destroyed, but it was rebuilt by Herod the Great just before the birth of Jesus. The temple mountain was not large enough for the beautiful rebuilt temple, so Herod enlarged it by building a massive retaining wall around Mt. Moriah. On the south side, he built broad steps that were the main entrance to the temple in Jesus' day.

Herod's rebuilt temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, just as Jesus had prophesied. However, the massive wall around the temple mount and the broad steps leading up to the temple were not destroyed. Beginning in 1968 Professor Benjamin Mazar excavated the south wall of the temple mountain, and he uncovered those broad steps that people had used to enter the temple in Jesus' day.

As Armstrong and his guide approached the steps Armstrong asked, "Do you suppose Jesus actually stood on these very steps?" The guide answered, "Of course." Armstrong continued, "Can you be absolutely certain?" The guide assured Armstrong, "Jesus was a Jew and went to the temple many times, and these steps were the main entrance to the temple. Of course Jesus stood on these steps!" Armstrong was quiet for a few moments, and then said, "It means more to me to stand here in the footsteps of Jesus than to have stood on the moon."

While I may never have the privilege of retracing the steps of Jesus up the south side of the temple mountain, there are other more important footsteps He has left behind that are available for me to follow. These steps also lead to a far more wonderful destination than the top of Mount Moriah. Peter explains, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).

Following these steps of Jesus will take us through the waters of baptism (Mk. 1:9-11) where we enter into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), and where we find remission for our sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

These steps of Jesus will lead us to the house of worship on a regular basis (Lk. 4:16; Jn. 4:24; Heb. 10:25), point us toward regular prayer (Mk. 1:35; 1 Tim. 2:8; Jas. 1:5), and immerse us in unselfish service to others (Acts 10:38; Phil. 2:5-7).

The steps of Jesus will take us through the wilderness of temptation. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness immediately after His baptism, yet He did not succumb to temptation at that time or at any time during His life. He promises that if we walk with Him, God will not allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to stand (Mt. 4:1-11; Heb. 4:15; 1 Cor. 10:13).

The steps of Jesus will also lead us inevitably to the garden of despair (Mt. 26:38-40; Ps. 27:10), the cross of suffering (Phil. 3:10; Heb. 5:8; 13:5), and the valley of death (Heb. 9:27). We are comforted, however, in the knowledge we will not walk this part of our journey alone. The Psalmist assures us, "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" (Ps. 23:4).

Ultimately, these steps of Jesus lead us to a much loftier height than the top of Mount Moriah or even the moon for that matter. They lead us to heaven where we shall inherit all things and dwell with God our Father and Christ our Savior forevermore (Ps. 24:7; Rev. 3:21; 21:7). carlmj@cableone.net