

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. 11

EXPRESSIVE WORSHIP?

By JERRY DICKINSON

My dad recently gave me a copy of the Religion Section of the Houston Chronicle he had saved in which there is an article about the birth of the modern Pentecostal movement 100 years ago. According to the article the movement began in Houston where a man named Charles Fox Parham started teaching the idea of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in a religious school he operated near downtown Houston. One of his students was a black preacher from California named Seymour who took Parham’s ideas back to California and effectively began the movement.

Three days before the devastating and infamous 1906 earthquake in San Francisco, a different sort of force rocked another California city. In a run down church on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, the modern Pentecostal-Charismatic movement began when William Joseph Seymour, the son of former slaves, began a revival in which people supposedly received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues. The revival ran for three years and became a sensational story, however most all mainline denominations condemned it as heretical and scandalous. The following excerpt from a Los Angeles newspaper describes the revival services.

“The people cry and make howling noises all day and into the night. They run, jump, shake all over, shout to the top of their voice, spin around in circles, fall out on the sawdust blanketed floor jerking, kicking and rolling all over it. Some of them pass out and do not move for hours as though they were dead. These people appear to be mad, mentally deranged or under a spell. They claim to be filled with the spirit.”

Things have really not changed much in 100 years, because I have personally visited charismatic churches and have seen exactly what that paper reported way back then. I was invited to a church service in Victoria, Texas back in the 1970’s and, almost unbelievably,

saw men, women, and children running into walls, screaming, dancing wildly, and jerking uncontrollably to the beat of the band. A man in a dark suit passed out and lay on the floor just behind where I was sitting for a long time before he revived and got up. By the way, the only time I witnessed this out of control behavior was when the music was playing. And it was loud music, too! I later told the folks who had invited me that I had no doubt it was the music, the amplifiers, and the preacher shouting into the microphone that caused all the antics, not the Holy Spirit. Where in the Scriptures do we read about Spirit filled people running, screaming, and jerking uncontrollably? Where? In I Corinthians 14 Paul says all things in our assemblies are to be done decently and in order. One reason for this is so that when visitors and outsiders come into our assemblies our reverent and controlled demeanor in worship will cause them to praise God. We do not want people to think we are mad! We want them to be impressed with our scriptural, spiritual, and composed worship service.

The Houston Chronicle article quotes from a book entitled, *The Charismatic Century*, written by S. David Moore and Jack Hayford. They write that even though mainline protestant churches at first condemned and scoffed at this new charismatic movement, eventually opposition waned until in the 1960’s tongue speaking broke out in the denominations themselves. Of course, there were some even in so called churches of Christ who claimed to have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Today, the movement is about as mainline as you can get and great mega churches like the Potter House in Dallas and Lakewood in Houston are held up as the epitome of what it means to worship and serve the Lord.

Moore and Hayford make the following observation in their book, which I found very revealing. “Even churches that do not recognize Pentecostalism have been impacted through expressive worship style such as hand waving, exuberant music and increased emphasis on healing services. Thirty years ago if you

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Editorial

CHURCH OF CHRIST CONFSSIONAL

By: RONNY F. WADE

Note: This article (Church of Christ Confessional) as written by Brother Wade in December 2000. Because it is still so relevant we decided to reprint it as an editorial for our readers. This is of serious import and needs to be considered by all. -DLK

In the year 1215 the Roman Catholic Church began its now famous “auricular (in the ear) confessional.” Under Catholicism when a person sinned he was considered unfit to take the communion until confession was made. The confession might be followed by some requirement imposed by the priest, in order to impress upon the individual the seriousness of his guilt, thus turning him to righteousness.

Once the requirement was fulfilled the sinner then returned to the priest for absolution or forgiveness. The basis of the Catholic confessional is couched in the idea that ordinary Christians are not fit to pray for forgiveness themselves, hence they must confess to a priest. Such a doctrine and practice overlooks the plain Bible teaching regarding the vital work of Christ as our High Priest. After atoning for our sins on the cross He offered His blood to God as our priest and obtained eternal redemption for those who believe. The New Testament teaches that this was done once for all time (Hebrews 7:27; 9: 12; 10: 10-14). Through the high priesthood of Christ all Christians are priests. We learn from Rev. 1:6 that we are a “kingdom of priests.” The entire body of believers is designated as “a holy priesthood” (1 Peter 25) and a “royal priesthood” (I Peter 2:9). There is no special priesthood in the church of Christ. Every child of God has access to the throne of grace and is exhorted to “come boldly” thereto in order to find grace to help in time of need. Unfortunately today some preachers are sounding strangely like the Catholics in their attempts to get Christians to come down front and make confession of their sins. Such statements as “every Christian needs to make a public confession every now and then,” or “it doesn’t hurt anybody to make a public confession every so often,” or “Christians should make a confession at least three times a year” (the Catholics said at least once a year) have absolutely no basis in Bible teaching whatsoever.

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QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question:

Would you please explain the meaning of the phrase “let a man examine himself” and “he that drinks unworthily” in 1Corinthians 11:27-29?

Answer:

The verses in question read as follows: “Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.” The word “examine” is from the Greek “dokimazo” meaning to test, or prove. Each person is to test or prove him or her self. I cannot examine you, you cannot examine me. I know my heart, but I do not know your heart. I am out of place if I try to determine what is in your heart. But why am I to examine myself? The answer lies in verse 27. I must not eat and drink the Lord’s Supper unworthily. Unworthily is an adverb of manner and tells how one does something. What is it that I must do when I eat the bread and drink of the cup? Paul says that I must “discern” the Lord’s body. Discerning is a translation of the Greek word diakrino, which means to “judge correctly.” When I partake of the communion without properly realizing that it is a memorial of the body and blood of Christ, and treat it as nothing more than a common meal, I eat and drink damnation to myself. Participating in this observance in a worthy manner has nothing to do with our being “worthy” to participate. I have heard some say “let everyone examine himself to see if we are worthy to participate.” Paul did not say that, nor did he command it. We are to examine or test ourself to make sure that we are discerning the emblems as being representative of the Lord’s body and blood. But what if one partakes and his/her heart or life is not right? Does that affect me? I don’t believe it does. I am responsible for myself, and no one else. Since I am not a mind reader I don’t know what exists in the mind of others. Nor do I always know what might exist in their life. This is undoubtedly the reason Paul tells us to “examine ourselves.”

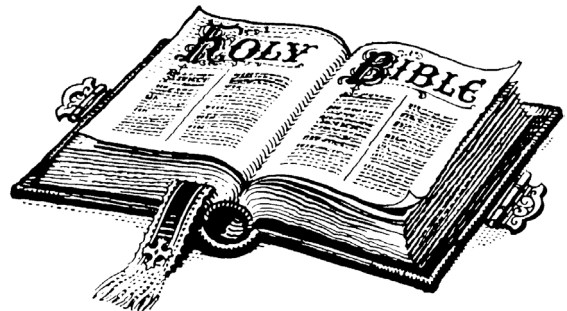
Question:

Does James 4:13-17 teach that it is wrong to make plans for the future?

Answer:

The sin of these verses is not the making of future plans, but rather making them without taking God into account. The people of these verses were assuming that “tomorrow” they would go into a city, spend a year there, buy, sell, and even make a gain.” Inspiration answers: “how do you know that?” None of us know what will happen tomorrow, first of all because we don’t even know if we will be alive tomorrow. James points out that our life is like a vapor that appears briefly and then is gone. He then tells us that we should say “if the Lord wills” we will do such as mentioned in these verses. I suppose all of us have plans for tomorrow and even into the distant future. It is not wrong to make plans. Jesus taught the advantage of planning in the statements of Luke 14:28 with reference to the man intending to build a tower. Wise people have always planned, The passage in James under scores the truth that the future lies in the hands of God. “If the Lord wills” we will do such and such. This should be a solemn reminder to all of us that our lives are temporary and uncertain. We are here today and gone tomorrow. Thousands have undoubtedly planned to obey God at some point in their future only to fail because death intervened. Felix and Agrippa are prime examples. How many plan to right wrongs they have committed, or reconcile with alienated brethren or friends, “tomorrow?” The list goes on and on. Failing to take God into account has been the downfall of many well-intentioned people.

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Foundation Principles

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS CONGREGATION PART 2

By CLINT DE FRANCE

Before we discuss what it means to be a member of a local congregation, I want to briefly examine what the essential characteristics of a church of Christ are. 1) A church must have a local identity (i.e. the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2) or the church that meets in Philemon's house (v. 2)) there was no concept in the New Testament of a church that met occasionally in the woods during deer season. 2) A church must have a regular assembly, at least on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7) There was no New Testament concept of a church that met only three or four times a year. 3) A church must have consistent evangelism. The purpose of assemblies and work of a church is not only to provide a place to worship for the Christians who are there, but to provide an opportunity for the conversion of unbelievers. (1 Cor. 14:23-25) 4) A church must have leadership, as we noticed in our last article. 5) It must have treasury. (1 Cor. 16:1-2) Now I am going to be blunt about what this means. Two Christians fishing on a creek bank or vacationing in Europe and pausing to worship and read the Bible is not a church of Christ.

The Necessity of Local Congregational Membership

I want to make it clear that all variations from the above pattern are not lawful condition for the Christian to live in because membership in a local congregation is required for faithfulness to God. There is a necessity of being a member of a church. Listen very carefully, the salvation we attain in obedience to the gospel must be sustained in obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. (1 Cor. 15:1-2) You can come into the church universal by being saved, but if you do not join yourself to a congregation of Christ you will not stay their long because you can't be of the church universal without the church local. (See Christian and His Congregation Part 1)

1) Membership in a church is necessary because it is taught and exemplified in the New Testament. In Acts 11:26 the Bible shows that when Saul and Barnabas went to Antioch they assembled (or congregated) with that church; now some seem to think they were just guests there and not members, subject to the leadership, but look on up in Acts 13:2-3, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted,

the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

Now the church at Antioch sent these men out, had they not been in, that is a part of the congregation, they could not have been sent out. Further they separated them from the church there; up to that time they had been members of the congregation at Antioch, but at this point they were separated and they went to establish a new church and become a member of that congregation. Now this is a consistent picture of life in the New Testament men and women joined themselves to and were received by congregations as members and then were bound to them as members of that body.

2) We see the need for local church membership in the fact that certain commands given to the Christian cannot possibly be followed without the assistance of a congregation. In 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." Jesus said "this do" and thus, to not do it is to transgress the Law of Christ!

Now I want you to notice what the Apostle Paul says in chapter 10:16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Now that term communion means "joint participation" that not only implies, but demands the presence of more than one person, "individual communion" is an oxymoron, a contradiction of terms like jumbo shrimp or dry rain! We might remember that when we hear people speak of individual communion cups. Furthermore the Bible says that the Lord's Supper is to be observed when "the church comes together into one place." (11:20) In Acts 20:7, not only did the disciples "break bread" on the first day of the week, but they "came together" for that purpose.

Notice also the command to sing, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns

and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Col. 3:16) Now here you see this is to be done by one to another, implying a group activity.

Notice as well, 1 Corinthians 14 the Bible gives a number of instructions regarding the teaching that is to occur in the assembly, we find again that it is done when the “church comes together.” In 1 Corinthians 5 we find that God desires each Christian to be subject to a church leadership in case the need for discipline arises, but if you aren’t a member of a congregation, then you can’t be disciplined.

Finally, in 1 Cor. 16:1-2 the Apostle Paul said, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” Now if you are not a member of a congregation and assembling with a congregation you cannot build up a treasury with a congregation for the needy saints or the work of the church. And so we see that membership in a congregation is not optional, it is required for faithfulness and spiritual life. Now many people will agree with what we have thus far noticed, but not many take the time to think about what this really means to them practically speaking.

The Responsibility of Local Congregational Membership

There are certain responsibilities that come with being a member of a congregation. In Acts 2:42 the Bible says that those first Christians, as they began to organize into churches, “continued steadfastly...” in the teaching of God’s word and worship and work and fellowship. And that means that they were consistent and serious about it. Now for a church to fit this mold all the members have to be dedicated to doing their part.

You remember the Apostle Paul called the congregation a body (1 Cor. 12) and he compared the members to eyes and ears and feet to show that each one was vitally important. Now what if my eyeball decided to take frequent sabbaticals and just not do anything for a few weeks, or chose to take a vacation and go visit another body 3/4’s of the time I needed it? Well I am glad that it doesn’t have the option because it would do me no good at all and my body as a whole would suffer greatly for that. Well that is exactly the condition of many

churches across this land. The body is suffering because some member or group of members who have convinced themselves that they are unimportant have chosen to do nothing or to spend their time away in other places.

The local church you attend is not just there for your convenience so you have a place to worship when you’re not on vacation. It is a body of which you are a member. When you are talented, qualified and able to assist in leading the worship, or teaching and you choose to do nothing, or to abandon it all the time you are injuring this body. Your home congregation needs money to exist and to work, and because of the structure God gave it, it is only as wealthy as you and your fellow-members make it by weekly contribution. Now it is bad enough that many who do come to the services consistently do not give as they should, but when you are gone so much that your church receives nothing from you, you are injuring the body.

Your home congregation needs you to be an active force in its evangelistic work. It needs you to attend its services and gospel meetings, and it needs you to be an active worker in the community talking about Jesus and living a life that reflects positively on the church. (Tit. 2:11-19) And I might say that if at all possible we need to make our home at a congregation we live close enough too to work for. And I might further say that it is the churches business how its members are living. For the good of the Christian and the protection of the church there must be accountability that can make discipline possible.

Before we leave this subject I want to say even if you are not in a position to take an active role in the worship, or a leadership role, you do this church good, and you do it the service you owe by coming here and assembling, offering your brothers and sisters encouragement, partaking of the Lord’s Supper and giving what you can to the work.

Now I am sure that something on people’s minds is gospel meetings and traveling: if we are to be so loyal to our home congregation, how is it scriptural for us to go to another church’s meetings or to travel and miss our services at any time? Well that is a good and fair question, and we do have scriptural support. Two early church members, Priscilla and Aquila had a church that met in their home (1 Cor. 16:19) but we do know that they at times traveled and met with other Christians and assisted in works. (Acts 18:18) Paul, who as already noticed,

had a home congregation was sent out to preach and at times he preached at existing churches like Troas. (Acts 20:7)

And so we can at times travel and attend the gospel meeting and services of other churches, but we must be careful not to neglect one responsibility by tending to another! Many preachers have spent their life in tireless service to the church, but have neglected their homes and lost their children and even their wives in the process. The key is to find the balance and to remember the priorities set in the word of God, and undoubtedly the Bible sets the home congregation as a priority. In our next article we will look at some of the blessings of local church membership, until then, think on these things. - CED

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE HOME

By HOMER A. GAY

God has taught from the beginning of man that death separates husband and wife (Gen. 3). And Jesus shows in Matt. 22, that the family tie ends at death. We will not be fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, children, etc., but will be as the angels in heaven. The home, therefore, must accomplish its purpose in a very short period of years - which only emphasize the importance of the things I have said in the foregoing articles.

I recently visited in a Christian home where the couple had lived together for fifty years! This is far beyond the average. If nothing but age cuts us down, we can stay here a very little while, and it is not very often that both husband and wife leave this life at the same time. "No snow falls lighter than the snow of age; but none is heavier, for it never melts." While we are young we constantly look to the future, but as we grow older we are inclined to look back over the past of our lives. We begin to live in and for our children and not for ourselves. The hope of Christian parents is to live to see their children grown and settled in life for themselves. Though we cannot keep back the tears when our children marry, yet, we realize that it is only natural and that God has always intended it to be so.

Dissolution of the home in this way, if children are brought up right and are choosing Christian companions, is only natural, and is a blessing to the human race. Too many times parents act as if their children have forsaken and turned against them just because they are getting married - forgetting that they did the same thing a few years ago. It is not right for parents to be so selfish as to expect their children to always stay with them. The separation of Christian

parents which we have been studying is sad, indeed. I have had the sad experience of conducting the funeral for a good Christian father, who was leaving behind a Christian wife and Christian children. I have conducted the funeral of a good Christian mother, who was leaving behind a Christian husband and Christian children. In either case it is certainly heart rending. We have minute accounts of such as this as far back as Gen. 23, where "Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. And Abraham stood up before his dead and spake to the sons of Heth, saying: I am a stranger and a sojourner with you, give me a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

Even though Sarah was well over a hundred years old, she was still the "beloved wife of faithful Abraham." Abraham is held up to us as "the father of the faithful", and Sarah is held up as the "mother" of faithful Christian mothers today (1 Pet. 3:5).

It is hard for young people to realize that death will ever separate them, but as we grow older we realize that we cannot always live, and begin to look toward the grim monster.

Death

No sex is spared, no age exempt. The majestic and courtly roads which monarchs pass over, the short and simple annals of the poor, all lead to the same place. "Dear, we've been long together, through pleasant and cloudy weather: 'tis hard to part with those so dear, in grief we shed the scalding tear."

Here is a little poem that I feel very fitting right now:

One of Us Two

"The day will dawn, when one of us shall hearken
In vain to hear a voice that has grown dumb,
And morns will fade, noons pale, and shadows darken,
While sad eyes watch for feet that never come.
One of us two must sometime face existence
Alone with memories that but sharpen pain
And these sweet days shall shine back in the distance
Like dreams of summer dawns, in nights of rain.
One of us two, with tortured heart half broken
Shall read long-treasured letters through salt tears,
Shall kiss with anguished lips each cherished token
That speaks of these love-crowned, delicious years.
One of us two shall find all light, all beauty
All joy on earth, a tale forever done;
Shall know henceforth that life means only duty,
Oh, God! Oh, God! have pity on that one."

- Ella Wheeler Wilcox

When these hands of ours shall be pulseless and cold, and motionless as the grave wherein they must lie, when the winding sheet shall be our vesture, and the close-sealed sepulchre our home. As our bodies rest in their beds of clay, and our spirits recline in the bosom of God, if we are conscious, may we be able to see - like the reflection of the sun's rays after it sinks behind the western horizon, sheds its beauty across the sky - the golden influence of a Christian Home still echoing and re-echoing in the world.

A PLAN FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN LIFE

By DAN STUBBLEFIELD

“There was a man sent from God” (John 1:6-8). He came to the world as God’s messenger. He was on God’s business (Luke 2:49). Each Christian today is likewise “sent from God” into the world (John 17:18). If we are sent from God (and you will know who you are), it is on some definite errand. God has a plan (Acts 8:26), a purpose for every Christian life. No soul is an accident. No person who obeys the gospel is without a mission (Mark 16:15-17). We need to think of this when we consider our brethren, our sisters and ourselves. People sometimes suppose that such men as Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist and Paul were exceptions. They are not exceptions! They had their own specific talents, abilities and missions. God sent them on definite errands. But surely we think “I am not sent from God” in the same sense. We are! We will not see God in a burning bush or receive our commission directly from His lips. No angel came before our birth to announce what we were to be and do in this world. We had no revelation of bright glory striking us down in blindness.

Of the genuineness and authenticity of God’s instructions to us in His word, there exists no doubt, but as to the inspiration of what we might perceive to be a direct communication, the gravest doubts would exist as there is no infallible witness as to the authenticity of conscience or feelings. In the Bible we find God’s will for our lives.

Today God works through His word. The Holy Spirit works the same way. Today God’s word calls us to action and to work. God speaks to us in His word. The Bible is God’s instruction to us “All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim 3:16,17)

The purpose of the Bible is to call us, to teach us, to reprove us, to correct our lives and to instruct us in right, (God’s will, God’s way, The Mind of Christ). It makes us wise unto salvation 2 Tim 3:15. It is a mirror to look in that we may correct the smudges in our lives

and be doers of God’s work. (James 1:23-25)

We are “sent from God”. Every brother and sister of us has definite work assigned as did Moses, John, Paul, Priscilla, Dorcas, Lydia, Eunice and Lois. Are we living out God’s will for us, what He had in mind when he made us and led us to obey the gospel, forgave our sins, cast them into the sea of forgetfulness and set us out on a new course without the baggage of sin? Are we doing in this world what He wants us to do? These are important questions; and we should not stop short of honest answers. We will have to account to God at the end of the day for each talent we’re given and for how we used them to fulfill our mission. Any Christian life is a failure which does not accomplish that which God sent it into the world and added it to the church to do. We can find our work and our mission by simple obedience to God’s word, submission to His will, prayer, Bible study and conversation with older trusted brothers and sisters. We must be ready to walk toward the need and stay in the Light. The work of the Lord in the church prepares us for the place He is preparing for us (John 14:2-3). At the right time He will lead us into it too. We can, indeed, miss our mission in this world, but only by taking our own way rather than God’s way. The way of the Cross may seem hard to us at times but it is the only way that leads home (John 14:6).

“He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light” (John 1:8). The mission of every Christian, male and female is to bear witness of the Light. Some are preachers, some teach in public, some privately. Some are elders. Some are evangelists. Some are song leaders. Priscilla as a woman had to teach Apollos privately along with her husband, Aquilla. She did! (Acts 18:26). Some like Lydia offered their homes as house churches and centers of operation for Paul (Acts 16:14-15). Dorcas worked tirelessly for the poor and needy (Acts 9). Eunice and Lois made sure their son and grandson knew and loved the gospel. The Bible says that the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord (Prov. 20:27). The candle is not lit until we obey the gospel. It is capable of being lit, but until it is lit, it is dead and dark. When the candle is lit, however, it shines within us. It is brighter in some than in others. People can see it. Our lives bear witness of the Light. It is Christ. It is the Word. It is the treasure in earthen vessels shining for all the world to see (2 Cor 4:7). Our light is but a little of His light breaking through our poor dull souls but when combined with the lights of brothers and sisters stepping in Christ’s light it can be very bright indeed. Everyone who sees us sees in us a few gleams of that true Light. And they see - these are Christians!

There is another way also in which we can bear witness of the light. We cannot alone light the way for anyone to heaven. We cannot save a single soul. We cannot save the life of one dead or dying soul. We can tell the poor, sick and dying of the fullness, comfort, hope and

forgiveness there is in Christ. We should bear witness of Christ and His love in many ways. We can tell others what He has done for us. We can give God the glory for every good and perfect gift He has given to us. It will be a blessing to others too. If a physician heals us, we will speak well of him or her to our friends. Why should we not bear the same witness for Christ when He heals us? He died for us that we might live. No one will ever love us more than Christ loves us.

We also bear witness of our Christianity by our lives showing others the joy a Christian life offers. We should all first be good and faithful Christians. It is required in a good steward that he be found faithful (1 Cor 4:2). We should never give any wrong, negative or harmful impression of Christ, the scriptures or the church either by word, act or manner. It would be sad indeed if anyone lost or saved should get a wrong thought by looking at us, listening to us or by observing our lives. We need to be most careful that we never in any way misrepresent or bring reproach on the cause of Christ. We should do no harm.

We are not that light. This helps us to minimize our own importance and helps to keep us humble. We are however sent by God. We are His messengers. That makes our mission important. We have His treasure, His message for the lost and the church in our earthen vessels. The Truth is the only way to heaven. The ladder of the brotherhood is not tall enough. The ladder of the sisterhood is not tall enough. But this treasure we bring - the plan of salvation, the items of worship, the second law of pardon, the instruction for Christian living are enough to give us access to the merciful love and grace of God that can take us all the way home into eternal life and into His eternal love. Any soul, any Christian life is a terrible thing to waste. We should not waste a single one and certainly not our own. We tend to judge ourselves by what is in our heart. God judges our acts. We must know and work our plan. -OPA

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EXPRESSIVE WORSHIP?continued from page one

wanted to find expressive worship you went to a Pentecostal-Charismatic church, but now you can go to a Southern Baptist or Presbyterian Church and find enthusiastic, participatory worship. They co-opted the worship style.”

Expressive worship? What they mean by that term is a worship service where people express

their emotions by raising their hands, clapping their hands, shouting “praise the Lord”, constantly chanting amen after each song, etc. That is styled expressive or participatory worship. It started with the modern Pentecostal-Charismatic movement 100 years ago. What concerns me, brethren, is that we have some in our brotherhood who are flirting with this expressive style of worship. I have heard some raise the question, “What is wrong with raising our hands during worship or even clapping our hands? What about saying ‘Praise the Lord’ to show our excitement during our worship services?” My answer is, please show me where the New Testament gives examples of such expressive worship. If you are raising your hands, clapping your hands, and saying Praise the Lord in your services, where did you come up with the idea in the first place? In the Scriptures? Where?

The truth is some of our own people have co-opted the expressive worship style from the Pentecostals. They have seen the televised services of these huge mega churches where people are waving their hands, clapping, dancing, and shouting Praise the Lord and have been seduced by the lure of emotionalism. Some equate an emotional service with a spiritual service. The truly spiritual service is where we, from the heart, worship the Lord according to the pattern we can read in the New Testament.

Interestingly, in an article next to the one I have been referring to in the Houston Chronicle there was an article about a church in Nashville that has a Creative Arts Pastor. No, I had never heard of a Creative Arts Pastor either! This so called “pastor” says, “In our church we have a band and we are very contemporary in style. I’m more influenced by what is culturally relevant. We have moved away from singing hymns to participatory music.” May the Lord help us, my brethren, to be more interested in what the Scriptures teach than what is culturally relevant. May we continue to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs as Paul instructs in Colossians 3:16, rather than so-called expressive participatory music. No, we will never attract the crowds the mega churches do with simple New Testament worship. The crowds are going to go where they can be entertained and feel like they are at a rock concert instead of a church service. Let us hold our ground and keep our services simple, elegant, scriptural and deeply spiritual. - 502 Mitchell Ryan Wake Village, TX 75501 misterjld@msn.com

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 CHURCH OF CHRIST CONFSSIONAL . . . continued from page two

For someone to intimidate an audience by suggesting that “everyone here must be perfect” since no one has come forward, is an indication that the preacher is way out of line. In most of our services the preaching is preceded by a prayer. In that prayer the brother usually prays for “God to forgive us of all our unforgiven sins.” Did God hear that prayer? Did God answer that prayer? Then why the “high pressure” and “guilt trips” used when the invitation is extended? Someone may be thinking “you must not believe in anyone making a public confession.” Wrong. I do believe in people making public confessions if they have committed public sins. However, I do not believe it is right for people to come before the church and confess private sins, or-sins against individuals, whom they have failed to approach, as the Scriptures indicate they should. When someone makes a confession before the church such as: “I just feel I haven’t been as close to the Lord as I should have,” or “I have had some bad feelings lately about some of the brethren,” or “I just feel spiritually weak, and want the prayers of the church” they are confessing matters that should have been taken care of privately. I recently had an individual come forward to make a confession. After telling me that was their desire, I asked, “What have you done? They replied, “Oh, that’s personal.” Well, if it’s personal then it should be handled on a personal basis, and not before the church. We are getting mighty close to Catholicism, when Christians are led to believe that the only way to handle personal and/or private sins is for them to come before the church and confess to a preacher, what they have done, and then have him pray for them. What sins must be confessed? The Bible teaches that all known sins must be confessed to God (I Jno. 1:9). The only way we can be forgiven is to repent of our sins and confess them. But, to what extent should sins be confessed to the brethren and before the congregation? In Acts 8: 18 we have the account of Simon who offered to buy, with money, the power given by the Holy Spirit. Peter’s reply to him is straight and to the point: “Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money.

You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.” Peter did not say, “YOU need to come before the church and make a confession,” but he said,

“Repent and pray to God.” Simon was a Christian, albeit a weak one. –As a Christian he was a priest and had access to the throne of grace. Peter told him to use it. Why not a public confession before the church? Evidently Simon, the apostles, and God were the only ones involved in this matter, hence no need to bring it publicly before the church. The fact that Simon requested Peter pray for him only underscores the truth taught by James in 5: 16 of his epistle i.e. that we should confess to one another and pray for one another in such situations. In Matthew 18: 15- 17 we read, “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” In these verses we see the journey from private to public clearly charted. At first had the sinning brother repented and confessed his sin, prayer could have been offered and the matter would have been ended. Secondly, had he listened to the two or three and repented and confessed, prayer could have been offered and the matter ended. Finally however, when the sin was brought before the church and became public knowledge the only recourse was public acknowledgement with repentance, confession and prayer for forgiveness. Hence, sins known only to God should be confessed only to God; sins known only to one or a few, should be confessed only to the one or the few; public sin, sin known to all, should be confessed publicly and before the church. Consider carefully the words of Guy N. Woods in his book Questions and Answers Volume 11, “The deplorable practice of establishing, in religious meetings, a “confessional,” in which the purest and best and most faithful members of the church are prompted by contrived and emotional devices to respond to a public invitation to confess sin because of the shortcomings common to all of us, is a travesty of God’s plan and ‘prostitution of the teaching of the New Testament touching the proper procedure in such matters.” But what about the idea that it “doesn’t hurt anyone to make a confession at church every now and then? ‘Is such an idea right? Only if the sin is public. There is simply no scripture that teaches such confessions are desirable or necessary for private, personal sins. If so, where is it? Brethren, we need to be careful that we do not demand, or encourage practices about which the Bible is silent. Playing on the emotions of sincere people in an attempt to get them to do something God has not required is serious business.

Announcements

Tucson's 8th Annual New Year Meeting

S. Country Club Church of Christ Tucson, Az.

December 27 through 30, 2012.

Evangelist Danny Rodriquez

Thursday 7:30pm

Friday 7:30pm

Saturday 8:00pm

Sunday 10:00am and 2:00pm

Contacts: Troy Seals 520 762-1468

Jim West 520 495-4790

Randy Seals 520 237-7433

Steve Lanier 520 437-9080

Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield, MO 65814 or ronnywade36@gmail.com October 16, The past few weeks we have been privileged to preach at several of the churches in Southwest Missouri and Northwest Arkansas. In so doing we were able to renew old friendships that have stood the test of time for many years. Currently, Autumn has come to Ozark mountain country. There is no place like the Ozarks this time of year. As mother nature prepares to undress for the winter her colors of orange, yellow, red and green are simply breath-taking. God's creation is truly wonderful. The Lord willing we will be in a meeting at West Chester, OH October 17-21, Piedmont, AL Oct. 31 - Nov. 4 and Longwood, FL Nov. 8-11. We look forward to these arrangements with anticipation and hope.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com October 15- Matt Trent was with the Fremont congregation this past Saturday night and Lord's Day and really did an outstanding job preaching the Gospel. Matt and I have made three trips together to the Philippines and he has grown in stature so much over the years. We pray God's richest blessings on him and his family. It was recently my privilege to preach one time at the Grants Pass, OR congregation. We enjoyed being with them all again. Lord willing, Pat and I will leave this Thursday for a week's stay with the church in Honolulu, Hawaii. We plan to hold some studies, if possible, as well as hold a short meeting with the church. This will conclude the year for us and we will start getting ready for our yearly trip to the Philippines. The plan is for Frank Brancato and I to depart January

2 and return January 22. As always, we look forward to a profitable effort among our Filipino brethren. The work has grown so much over the years and has spread over all of the major groups of Islands there. Those of our brethren who have been involved in the work can be assured that a great work is in progress there and continues to grow. To God be all the praise and glory.

Steven Bowen 105 N. Lenard, Red Oak, Texas, 75154 By the time the summer of 2012 ended, the Lord had abundantly blessed us in the work in Lexington, Oklahoma. It was nothing new, of course, because every day for four summers (and one or two weekends a month during the school year), the Lord has graciously showered us with blessings. From day one, there never was a doubt that He was working with us in the efforts here. As great as the blessings of the last four years have been, this summer offered even more. In mid-summer, a family of three - a son of 45 years and his parents - took their stand with us after worshiping their entire lives with the "cups and classes" brethren. The father and son walked into the door one Sunday afternoon in Lexington looking for truth. I was home in Dallas at the time and would not meet them until the next Saturday. When we met six days later, the son R.J. saw the truth immediately and took his stand. Once he read the scriptures' accounts of the Lord's Supper, he responded, "How did I miss this all these years." Our meeting was merely to confirm and test what he had already discovered. It took his mom and dad a couple more weeks, but they, too, found the truth was something they could not resist. (We were reminded of so much truth about the gospel through these people's accounts. Perhaps we'll be able to share more on these events in an article later.) We have to share another story, too, because it also shows the power of the gospel Paul spoke of in Romans 1:16. A couple of weeks after R.J. and his family took their stand, a gentleman named Dale with whom we had studied for over a year obeyed the gospel. Through the years, Dale had seldom if ever attended church; but when his wife Tammy returned in the spring of 2011, he was willing to let us sit in his living room and share the gospel with her and their two teenage children. I was delighted at our first study that he sat in his recliner right in the middle of the study. I knew his presence would validate the value of what we were doing, and it did. He never missed a study in over a year, and he always contributed with reasonable and sound observations. From the beginning, the Bible made sense to him, even as it will to all if we'll listen to it without prejudice (Matthew 13:16). After about two months of our studies, Dale showed up one Sunday at church with his wife Tammy and their children Montana and Allison. Since that time, he only missed one Sunday. A couple of weeks ago, we had to ask him

if he were ready to obey the gospel. He said, "I was going to talk to you before you left about that. I'm really thinking about it, but I don't feel worthy of it." That, of course, is a common response, and we discussed it for awhile. At the end, I told him that if he didn't obey the gospel then that he really needed to think seriously about it until I came back in a couple of weeks. When we studied two weeks later, he didn't bring it up, and I reluctantly left that night, packed up the next morning, checked out of the motel, and headed back to Dallas. Before I hit the freeway, I checked my phone to make sure he hadn't called. Sure enough, his wife Tammy had left me a message asking me to call him. I did so, and, as a result, we gladly made a U-turn and checked back into our motel. That night - under the stars of a clear Oklahoma sky- his family and I joined him as he confessed his faith in Jesus Christ and was baptized for the remission of sins. Dale is one of the best men I know and is a great blessing to his family, the congregation at Lexington, and, of course, to me and my family. Finally, a couple of weeks after Dale obeyed the gospel, we were worshipping together on a Wednesday evening. At the end of the service, I wanted to encourage the congregation to continue praying for the work because the Lord has blessed us so much already. When I got to the front and turned around, there sat a gentleman who had been with us quite a bit over the past four years. He had gone through some discouraging times and had let his faith grow weak, as it is easy for us to do. That Saturday, our friend Steve Cloud and I visited with him a long time out at the Cloud's "acreage" outside of town. The decision to return to the Lord had been weighing on our friend's mind, and he decided that Saturday afternoon that he could not put off the decision. Our good friend Trent took his stand, and we all had prayer together according to James 5:16. Trent is one of the best song leaders and singers I know and is such an asset to the church. Obviously, it was a tremendous summer. There is other good news, too. Unlike the previous four summers of work, if the Lord be willing, this summer will merge into fall and the fall into winter and spring. After 28 years of teaching and coaching basketball, we stepped aside from that work so we could continue the "summer" church work all year long. We'll spend almost two weeks a month working up here in Lexington (two trips a month of about 6-7 days each); and we'll spend the remainder of our time helping the congregation at Duncanville, Texas with their work. There are a great number of leads at Duncanville from the TV program with Brett. So after about six years working among some great friends at Green Oaks in Arlington, in September we made the move to Duncanville to try to encourage and assist the enthusiastic brethren and sisters there. Please remember Marilyn and me in both of these works and pray that the

Lord will grant us good health and continued blessings moving forward. We are thankful and humbled that the Lord has given us an opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. We'll plan to stay in touch periodically. We'd love to hear from you, as well. God bless you all. (972-825-3890; steven.bowen@redoakisd.org)

Gregory S. Robbins, 3016 Gardenview Terr. Danville, IN. 46122 Since I began the work in August of 2011, we have had visible growth in the Church. In November of that year we began studying with Mike and Lorie Hawkins, they both in January of 2012 obeyed the gospel. There is more good news to be told because between December 2011 to the present, we have aired "Let the Bible Speak." We have had several contacts and about 40 people enrolled in the Bible Correspondence courses. Though most of these are shut-ins, however on May/27/2012 Lon McCoy obeyed the gospel (He since has passed away to await the resurrection). He visited the congregation because he caught the broadcast of Let the Bible Speak. Recently Logan Wilks made his stand with us and we look forward to great things from him, the Cole family has started meeting with us and they are such a great asset to the Church. We have also decided to mail-out a Newsletter that will work as a journal. It will be mailed out every second week of the month which informs those contacts that are still enrolled in the Bible course of upcoming sermons of Brett Hickey's, as well as area gospel meetings, we also run articles written by local Preachers in the paper. In the course of a years' time I have labored in the vineyard not looking back, through these efforts four precious souls have been added to the Lord's Church. I pray the work of the Lord will continue to produce fruit throughout the coming years. In September we attended the Eastern Labor Day Meeting conducted by the Bedford Congregation, they with the assistance of Jerry Dickinson did an outstanding job. We have not seen Jerry and Judy since we moved from Texas it was wonderful to visit with them. I am in Jerry's debt because after he asked me to speak Saturday morning of the meeting he told the brethren if they have not called me for a meeting then they need to. Like Brother Jerry our preachers need to stand together in the gap asking for the old paths. I will be speaking at the Pleasant View Various Speakers meeting 2-4, as well as holding a meeting at Pleasant Grove in Brazil Indiana Nov 30-Dec-2. We are looking forward to our meeting with Brett Hickey Nov 7-12 at Rockville Rd. The Lord bless us all, as we endeavor to labor in his vineyard.

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NO NEED TO PANIC

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

Some people professing Christianity become skittish when new scientific discoveries are announced that seem to challenge our belief in God and the Creation. One such discovery was made and announced with great fanfare this past July at the European Center for Nuclear Research, the world's biggest atom smasher near Geneva, Switzerland. Scientists presented evidence for a particle called the Higgs boson, or the so-called "God particle." Some physicists say the Higgs boson lends credence to the Big Bang theory because it explains why particles have mass-and why, in turn we exist.

Some scientists claim the discovery is a severe blow to religion. One Cambridge professor said the Higgs boson was "another nail in the coffin of religion." Lawrence Krauss, a theoretical physicist at Arizona State University argued that the Higgs boson, "posits a new story of our creation" independent of a supernatural creator; it tells us, some scientists argue, how something came from nothing. One scientist predicted that "within 15 years" NO ONE would believe in God or the Bible account of creation.

We have heard similar bold predictions many times before. During the 18th Century's Age of Enlightenment, French philosopher Voltaire boasted he would discredit the Bible and predicted there would not be one found on earth before his century was over.

During the same period Thomas Paine, an American Revolutionary War statesman, wrote an attack on the Bible called The Age of Reason. He predicted that within 50 years the Bible would completely disappear except for a volume in a museum here and there.

In 1925, Clarence Darrow, probably the most famous lawyer in the history of the United States, volunteered to defend John Thomas Scopes in the famous "Scopes Monkey Trial." Scopes was a biology teacher indicted for violating a state law by teaching evolution in high school in Dayton, Tennessee. Darrow, an avowed atheist, offered to defend Scopes "without fees or expense" because he knew the trial would give him an international forum for discrediting belief in the Bible and God.

History has shown, however, that true scientific discoveries do not discredit the Bible, but rather they confirm it-over and over again. For example, the Bible declared the earth to be spherical in shape centuries before the scientific community accepted the fact (Is. 40:22). The Bible declares that God has "stretched out" (expanded and may be continuing to expand) the universe (Job 26:7; Is. 45:12), while the scientific community did not uncover this truth until the 1920s and has just confirmed it in recent years. The Bible was also first to reveal the earth is supported in our solar system by gravitational force, and nothing physical (Job 26:7), and that the stars are too numerous to be counted (Jer. 33:22).

A couple of centuries after Jeremiah said, "The stars cannot be numbered," a Greek astronomer named Hipparchus said, "There are 1,056 stars in the heavens. I have counted them." A couple of centuries later, Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemy (A.D. 90-168) agreed, "There are 1,056 stars and that is all." It was not until A.D. 1610 that Galileo looked through the first telescope and exclaimed, "There are many more stars than we thought!" Yale University astronomers reported last year that there are more than 600 sextillion stars about which they know! Once again the scientific community is finally getting the full picture and is confirming what the Bible revealed centuries ago!

These few examples should convince us that true scientific facts will never contradict the Bible. If there appears to be a contradiction between the two, we have either misunderstood the Bible or the scientific community has not yet unraveled the full picture. Therefore, Christians should not be skittish of new scientific discoveries. There is nothing to fear. We should welcome scientific advancement and knowledge. Truth is what sets us free in any realm.

At the same time we should ignore crusading atheists who run around half-cocked, trying to shoot down our belief in God and the Bible with theories that have not been proved by the scientific community.

James Gillies, a spokesman for European Center for Nuclear Research that claims to have discovered the Higgs boson ("God particle"), says scientists will keep probing the new particle until they fully understand how it works (Yahoo News, Frank Jordans-Wed. July 4, 2012).

I rest my case. Scientists readily admit they do not fully understand this latest discovery, so it is premature for anyone in that community to declare boldly that the Higgs boson discovery is going to make an atheist out of anyone.

As has happened so often in the past, it is much more likely that the Higgs boson discovery, and others like it, will help us understand more clearly what the Bible has to say about God and the Creation. Therefore, there is absolutely no need for panic. We can approach any scientific discovery with complete trust in the reliability of Scripture, remembering that "heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth with all that is in it" (Deut. 10:14). cmithebackpage@gmail.com