

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

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NO. 9

FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES

The Silence of the Scriptures

By BRANDON STEPHENS

It is indeed troubling when brethren either embrace or refuse to oppose unscriptural innovations like instruments of music, individual cups or methods of teaching that model the “Sunday Schools” of denominations. However, as serious as these and other innovations are, it is important to recognize that they are symptoms of a much bigger problem. The real problem is that innovators refuse to respect the prohibitive silence of the scriptures.

I. What Is the Prohibitive Silence of the Scriptures?

To illustrate this concept, imagine that you order a pizza with pepperoni and mushrooms, and suppose the waiter brings out a pizza with pepperoni, mushrooms and anchovies. What are you going to say? You are going to tell them, “This is not what I ordered. I didn’t want anchovies.” What if the waiter replied by saying, “Well, sir, if you didn’t want anchovies on your pizza, then you should have said, ‘I don’t want anchovies’”? Would you think that he had a good point? Surely not.

When you specifically told them that you wanted pepperoni and mushrooms on your pizza, and you were silent about other items, then that meant that you only wanted pepperoni and mushrooms. You do not have to tell a pizza restaurant everything that you do not want on your pizza. You just have to specify what you want, and they should give you what you ordered without any additions.

Likewise, God does not have to specify everything that He does not want us to do in religion. He only has to specify what He wants. When God specifies what He wants and is silent about other ways of serving Him, then any other way than what He specified is prohibited. This is what is meant when brethren say that the silence of the scriptures is prohibitive.

However, in response to teaching about the bible’s prohibitive silence, some people say, “What about

songbooks and church buildings? If biblical silence is binding, then why do brethren use these things?” Such a question exhibits a misunderstanding of this subject. People who raise such an objection assume that respecting biblical silence means rejecting any practice that is not specifically mentioned in the bible, but their assumption is wrong.

Think about God’s instructions to Noah in Genesis 6. The Lord gave Noah specific instructions about the dimensions of the ark, and God told him to build it out of gopher wood. God said nothing about using an ax to cut the boards that were used in building the ark. So would an ax violate God’s prohibitive silence? Certainly if God had said, “Cut the boards with a saw,” then Noah would have been in trouble for using an ax. However, since God did not legislate what tools should be used to cut the wood, Noah was at liberty to use axes, saws, or whatever tools he needed.

Let’s use that same logic as we think about songbooks. Songbooks are not specifically mentioned in the Bible. Does that mean that they are an unscriptural innovation? If God had specifically said, “Sing from memory,” then there would be a problem with using songbooks; but God didn’t legislate (by command, example or necessary implication) as to whether or not we must use a songbook. Since songbooks aren’t the subject of God’s legislation, they do not violate the prohibitive silence of the scriptures.

Furthermore, it must be conceded that there is nothing in the scriptures about worshipping in a “church building” like the ones many churches use today. Does that mean that they violate the silence of the scriptures? If God had specifically commanded us to “assemble for worship in a person’s home,” then our Church buildings would obviously be unscriptural.

However, God simply commands us to assemble together in Hebrews 10:25. In addition, the New Testament shows Christians worshipping in the temple (Acts 2:46), in a schoolroom (Acts 19:9) and in people’s homes (Romans

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Editorial

SOWING DISCORD AMONG BRETHREN

By: ELAM B. KUYKENDALL/ HOMER L. KING

The editorial this month is good and should be helpful to all. The article originally appeared in the May, 1962 issue of Old Paths Advocate, and has a piece at the end by Homer L. King. He would sometimes use material written by others, even denominational or digressive people, and then write an answer, or comment, at the end. Bro Harper and others often did the same. As it happened, this was published soon after Dad’s stroke in March of the same year. In the same issue an update on his improving condition was also printed. I do not personally know the history of the writer, but the article struck a note and occasioned the comment at the end. Even today, the writings of both men still hit the nail on the head. We live in perilous times and occasionally discord is still sown among brethren. Anyone stooping to such deeds should be ashamed. God be thanked for those who “...follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” Romans 14:19. -DLK

“These six things doth the Lord hate;; yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren” (Prov. 6:16-19). The seventh of these abominable things is the subject of this article. This is not merely abominable to men but to God. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God”(Matt. 5:9). There is no blessing from God for the man who destroys the peace, but he is to be “marked” and avoided (Rom. 16:17). He is to be withdrawn from if he be a brother that is acting in such a vile fashion(1 Tim. 6:5). How could God show any greater disdain for anything than these statements from His Word show concerning the person who “soweth discord among brethren?”

Who Are The Sowers Of Discord? Perhaps the last to be accused of sowing discord are those who continually plead loudly for peace and are afraid of every disturbance of every sort. But before we clear this group completely perhaps we should read a warning God gave to Israel by His prophet Jeremiah. “They have healed also the hurt of the daughter

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Would you please discuss some of the things that occur during the worship service that might interfere with or distract from worship itself?

Answer: By way of definition worship is an act of homage and reverence we pay to a superior. We both honor and respect God when we worship Him. In the bible worship often involved falling down, bowing, kneeling, or prostrating oneself (Ps. 95:6; Matt. 28:9; ICor. 14:25). Worship is not confined to a specific time or place i.e. it is not restricted to the church building. (See James 5:13) There are times, however, when the church comes together, in a specified place and at a specified time for the purpose of worship. This assembly is important according to Hebrews 10:25 and there are certain items that are to be observed “when the church comes together,” that are not observed at other times, such as the Lord’s Supper ICor. 10:16 and the collection ICor. 16:1-2. Since this assembly is the subject of divine revelation, and since the participation in it is important for all Christians our remarks regarding those things that might hinder or interfere, will be limited to it. Perhaps I should begin by stating that it is impossible to eliminate every thing of a distracting nature that can happen during a worship assembly. I have personally been preaching when someone in the audience had a heart attack, or became violently ill and had to be removed. Both of these situations greatly impacted the service, but neither could be avoided. There are some people on medication that must, at times, go to the rest room. This is understandable. Unfortunately I have been in some assemblies where both adults and children are continually up and down going for a drink of water or to the rest room. This can and should be avoided. Parents should instruct their children that only in the case of an emergency should they leave the assembly. Some say, “well, they are just children, you know.” Yes, I know. However I have seen those same children lay in front of a T. V. almost motionless for hours, never once needing to go the restroom. Some adults are even worse than children. Over and over they are up and down, in and out disturbing others as they leave and return. In a recent meeting, where I was preaching, some young person was seated in a near front pew texting a friend who had gone to the restroom. Anymore it is not unusual for a cell phone to go off during the service. All of these things distract our real purpose and could be avoided. Then, of course, there are crying babies and children. Most of us realize that there will be times when a baby or young child will become restless and cry. This is not a

problem, however, when the child is allowed to cry and yell on and on, soon a great distraction exists. Mothers should not be ashamed to take their children out of the assembly when this happens. A brother recently shared with me his conviction that it is a major distraction for the preacher to go to the blackboard and write his sermon out while the congregation is still singing. His concern was that the preacher should still be singing and those singing were distracted by his writing. He theorized that the preacher would not like it if the song leader got up and wrote the number of the invitation song on the board while he was in the middle of his sermon, which would obviously be a distraction. I’m sure that there are other things I have failed to mention in this brief response that could negatively impact our worship to God in the assembly of the church. These, however, will suffice to remind us all that we need to be careful about our behavior when we gather to worship God. It is a time of solemn reflection, a time when we should, as much as possible, divorce from our minds, from the transient things of life and turn our whole mind and attention to the worship of the Most High God. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 800337 LaGrange, GA 30240 or rlwade@charter.net)

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16:5). One specific type of meeting place is not required. Therefore, whether we choose to meet in a home or in a church building is a matter of judgment. Just because you can’t read specific passages about church buildings does not mean that Church buildings violate the silence of the scriptures.

Something is not wrong just because it is not specifically mentioned in the bible. However, when God specifies how He wants something done, and then He is silent about any other way, it is then that His silence is prohibitive.

II. Why We Believe Biblical Silence Is Prohibitive

Unfortunately, even some of our brethren believe that the doctrine of the prohibitive silence of the scriptures is based upon human tradition instead of biblical teaching. However, a modern Church of Christ preacher did not invent this way of looking at the bible. This doctrine is founded upon a “thus saith the Lord.”

After revealing His Law to the people of Israel, notice what God said through Moses in Deuteronomy 12:32, “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.” This meant that they were to only do what God authorized-nothing less

and nothing more. This principle is illustrated in multiple Old Testament passages.

In Leviticus 10:1-2, The Sons of Aaron-Nadab and Abihu-were punished because they offered “profane fire... which the Lord had not commanded them.” Their sin was not in offering what God had specifically forbidden. God had specified the kind of offering that pleased Him, and He was silent about the fire that they offered. These men violated the silence of God’s revealed will. They added to God’s word, and because of this they paid a terrible price.

David also learned the consequences of not respecting the silence of the scriptures. In 1 Chronicles 13, David decided that he wanted to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. To do this, he put the ark on a new ox cart. I’m sure that David had the best of intentions (as many innovators do today), but God was not pleased by David’s disregard for His word.

The Old Covenant (Exodus 25:14 & Deut. 10:8) had specified that Levites should transport the ark by running rods through the rings on the corners of the ark, and they were to carry it by putting the rods on their shoulders. God had specified this one way of moving the ark, and he was silent about the use of ox carts or any other method of moving it. Even though the scriptures did not explicitly say, “Thou shalt not move the ark with an ox cart,” David sinned when he used the ox cart because he failed to respect God’s prohibitive silence. This led to the death of Uzzah (1 Chronicles 13:10; 15:13).

It wasn’t until David moved the ark “according to the proper order” or “according to the word of the Lord” (1 Chronicles 15:13-15) that God approved of and blessed his efforts. When God told Israel how to move the ark-and was silent about any other way to move it-His silence was prohibitive.

Based on these passages about Nadab and Abihu’s profane fire and David’s ox cart, we can see what God meant in Deuteronomy 12:32 when He prohibited Israel from adding to His word. They were to follow God’s instructions, and they were to respect the prohibitive silence of His word.

What about the New Testament? Is there such a thing as prohibitive silence under the New Covenant? This question is answered in several New Testament scriptures.

Colossians 3:17 commands us to do “all in the name of the Lord.” The phrase “in the name of” means “by the authority of.” All that we teach and do in religion needs to be authorized by the will of Christ. God doesn’t have to tell us everything that He does not want. When God

authorizes a specific practice, then we should simply do what He authorizes, and nothing more. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 4:6 that we are “not to think beyond what is written.”

In Revelation 22:18-19, John forbids New Testament Christians from adding to or subtracting from God’s word. Does that requirement sound familiar? It should. This is the same warning that God gave in regard to the Old Covenant (Deut. 12:32). Through the stories of Nadab, Abihu and David, we can see what God means when He forbids His people from adding to or subtracting from His instruction. This means that when God authorizes what He wants and is silent about other things, then He expects us to view His silence as prohibitive. He expects us to only do what He authorizes.

The doctrine of the prohibitive silence of God’s word is not a mere human tradition. God reveals to us that this is how we should treat His word, and it is so imperative that we honor His will on this subject. If one generation is ignorant of this foundational doctrine, then there is no end to the innovations that can come. When there are teachers or preachers among us who cast doubt on the prohibitive silence of the scriptures, may God give us the conviction to ensure that their mouths are stopped until their error is corrected. May we always have the conviction to uphold the truth on this vital subject. The future of our congregations depends on it.-11942 C.R. 485, Tebbetts, MO 65080, brandonandkelly@hotmail.com



SOWING DISCORD AMONG continued from page two

of my people slightly saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down saith the Lord. 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” (Jer. 6:14-16). Evidently there are times when “there is no peace.” Jesus referred to this same situation when He said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be

they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Matt. 10:34-38.) In thinking of Jesus as the "Prince of Peace" we must not lose sight of the fact expressed in the above Scripture-that under certain circumstances He brings a sword. This was so true in the early church that it was said of God's messengers on one occasion: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." (Acts 17:6.) Under what circumstances does Jesus, the Prince of Peace, bring a sword? When is there no peace possible in God's sight? Who does God want "marked" and "avoided," or withdrawn from? Certainly the man who seeks "the old paths" and walks in that "good way" could not be the one who is sowing the discord. Of course he may have failed to go far enough back and might be causing division. If he is merely looking for the way his fathers walked and is seeking to promote that way he hasn't gone back far enough. He must go all the way back to the "good way" ordained by God in His holy Word. The person who seeks peace on any other basis is merely seeking "to heal the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly." "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:17, 18.) The ones condemned here are those "which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned. This doctrine was learned from inspired teachers. It was, the doctrine which is in the New Testament today. Those here condemned were those who did not "speak as the oracles of God." (1 Pet. 4:11.) They did not continue in the apostles' doctrine. (Acts 2:42.) Instead they taught and practiced things that were of human origin. They were so sensual that they served "their own belly." This same kind of people are described in Philippians 3:18, 19, in these words: "(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, Who mind earthly things.)" When people insist on doing something in worship because they themselves like it, or when they seek to reach people by appealing to them through the human desires and appetites they are condemned by the above passages. People who are won by coffee and doughnuts, or must have these to cause them to remain interested, are really worshiping the wrong thing. They "mind earthly things." This same thing is true of those who insist on pageantry and theatrical performances in the church services. When a

person pays more attention to how a preacher preaches than to what he preaches he is minding "earthly things." Such people are the real cause of the discord and division that will inevitably come when godly men insist on going back to the "old paths" and walking in them. "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." (I Tim. 6:3-5.) This is the Lord's Own description of men who "teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ." They are to be withdrawn from. From this description it is clear that these are the ones who "sow discord among brethren." Let us never accuse the man who will not go along with things for which there is no "Thus saith the Lord" of being the one who sows discord among brethren. The real sower of discord is the person who insists on doing things for which there is no divine authority. This "new thing" may bring gain in numbers or otherwise, but "gain" is not "godliness." Only the word of God is "sound doctrine."

(From Gospel Digest) Comment

We are glad to pass on this timely warning above to our readers. If we had no signature or mention of what source it came, we would think it was written for the OPA by one of our writers whose names appear regularly in the OPA. I like the way this writer "hews to the line, letting the chips fall where they may." We are glad this writer knows and recognizes who are the trouble makers. That it is not the ones who contend for a "Thus saith the Lord," but the one or ones who advocate something new. Have you heard that before? We have always contended that it is never the man who pleads with his brother to leave off driving the wedge, who splits the log, but the man who insists on driving the wedge. Thus it was with the instrumental music question, the Sunday School, and the multiple of cups in the Lord's Supper. We begged them not to put them into the worship, but they drove the wedge that split the church. What is said here, also applies to some of the other "new things," or to some of the other contentions, which we begged brethren to cease agitating and advocating their opinions to the destruction of the body, or at least the unity, hence we see two assemblies in one community just because they insisted on driving the wedge. Come again, Brother Kuykendall, with more of the same, for all the brethren need such timely instruction and warnings. -H.L.K

Announcements

Texas Labor Day Meeting with Ronny Wade

A Gospel Meeting Conducted by the Fossil Creek
Church Of Christ Friday - Sept 2nd - 7:30PM
Saturday - Sept 3rd - 6PM Sunday - Sept 4th - 6PM
No Services On Monday, Labor Day

Preachers include:

- Clint De France
- Bruce Roebuck
- Doug Hawkins
- Billy Dickinson
- Kevin Presley
- Jerry Dickinson
- J. Wayne McKamie (if he's able)
- Ronny Wade

The meeting is held at the Grapevine Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas. Hotel info and more details are posted at www.TexasLaborDayMeeting.org or by emailing us at FossilCreekChurchOfChrist@gmail.com

Bonds of Matrimony

Strain-Floyd-On July 23, 2011 brother John Douglas Strain and sister Courtney Lynn Floyd were united in marriage in the presence of a large gathering of family and friends, at the church building in Ada, Oklahoma. John is the son of Deward and Sandy Strain and Courtney is the daughter of Roger and Sherry Floyd. John, originally from Harrodsburg, IN, is well known as a preacher of the gospel. Sherry, a fine young Christian of outstanding talent and charm is from the Atlanta, GA area. We wish for them the very best that life has to offer as they begin their journey on the way to forever together. I have known John all of his life and it was my privilege and a distinct honor to be asked to officiate at the wedding of these two fine Christians.

-Ronny F. Wade

Our Departed

STEHR - Mary Carolyn Stehr was born June 22, 1941 at Fayetteville, AR and departed this life April 19, 2011 at her home in Sulphur, OK. Early in life, Mary moved with her parents to Sulphur where she met Don Stehr.

She and Don were married August 7, 1959 in Hatboro, PA and later returned to Sulphur. She was preceded in death by her parents and one son, Brian Stehr. She is survived by her husband, Don, and daughter, Judy of Sulphur, and one grandson, Brandon Stehr, of Jay, OK. Mary was a faithful member of the church in Sulphur and will be remembered by many for sending cards and words of encouragement to others. I considered it an honor to be asked to speak at her funeral.--Johnny Elmore

LOUDERMILK - James Ray Loudermilk of Springfield, MO passed away from this life after a lengthy battle with Parkinson's disease on March 8th, 2011. Jim was born on September 11th, 1931 in Marlow, OK to Tom and Mary Adkins Loudermilk making him almost 79 1/2 at the time of his death. He was preceded in death by his parents and one brother, Billy Don. To mourn his passing is his beautiful and faithful wife of 61 years, Patricia Trigg; four children: Karen Loftin and husband; Richard; Robert and wife Denise; and Sue Marshall; one sister: Doris Streeter and husband Roger, 11 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren. Jim was a faithful member and leader of the Mission Hills Church of Christ in Springfield, MO where he had resided since 1972. Jim was known for his quick smile, witty sense of humor, and his Christian example as a husband, father, businessman, and friend. In his later years, Jim's body was robbed by Parkinson's. Yet, he still taught us the example of faithfulness to God by never missing a single worship service if at all physically possible to attend. Evangelist Jimmy Smith spoke words at the service that caused us to reflect upon their lifetime friendship, Jim's faithfulness to God, and Jim's impact upon those of us that remain behind for a few more days. Jim's resurrection site is at the Rivermonte memorial Gardens in Springfield, MO. -Tracy Stephens

Publisher's Note: It was my privilege to know and worship with Jim at Mission Hills in Springfield for many years. He was a dear friend. We first met in Wichita Falls, TX back in the late fifties. When he later moved to Springfield our friendship only deepened and grew. He was always jovial and pleasant, and working with him in the church was rewarding. He will be missed. -Ronny F. Wade

BAILEY- Sister Edna Conner Bailey, passed away August 4, 2011 at her home in LaGrange, GA. She was, at the time of her passing, ninety-one years of age. Edna had been a member of the Murphy Ave. church most of her life. For some time she had been in declining health, and had been unable to attend church services. Sister Bailey is survived by five children and a number of grand and great-grandchildren as well as many friends

and brothers and sisters in Christ. The funeral service was conducted at the Striffler-Hamby chapel with burial in Shadowlawn cemetery here in LaGrange. This writer conducted the memorial service and Brother Larry Thompson spoke words of comfort and warning at the grave site. -Ronny F. Wade

SPRADLEY- Sister Louise Spradley, a long-standing member of the Green Oaks congregation in Arlington, TX, died Thursday, April 2 at her home in Mansfield at the age of 89. She was born in Whitehall, TX, December 27, 1921, to Isom G. Vernon Hayes and Osha Pearl Hayes (Whitehall is located just out of Belton in central Texas). Louise was married to J.B. Spradley April 24, 1942, a marriage that lasted 69 years. She was a role model for Christian women everywhere in her devotion to J.B. and in serving in a supporting role as he helped lead the church. From simple, but wholesome beginnings in the Whitehall community, Louise ended up spending her life in the Fort Worth area, serving God, serving others, and doing good. Louise's crowning achievements in life were her spiritual accomplishments. She was baptized into Christ at the age of 14-that means she was a faithful member of the church for 75 years. And she attended the Church of Christ on Green Oaks in Arlington from its beginning in 1992. Her church attendance in Fort Worth began in 1939 when she moved there after graduating from Moody High School. She was faithful to attend church services every time the doors were opened and never neglected that practice until she could no longer attend; she came to services many times even when she was not feeling well. And her service to others was well known, always showing hospitality and welcoming others into her home. Many preachers and others across the brotherhood have reaped the benefits of Louise's hospitality. She was an avid Bible reader, having read the Bible through "from cover to cover" for many years running and even read it through three times in one year. Louise had a special interest in art, having painted many oil paintings and having made many, many porcelain dolls. She also liked to crochet and knit-she taught knitting classes for several years. Louise is survived by her husband, J.B. Spradley Sr., of Mansfield; a son, Joe Spradley and wife, Linda, of Fort Worth, and a daughter, Beverly Crouch and husband, Tom, of Mansfield; four grandchildren, Joby Spradley, Jim Crouch, Kristin Butler, and Kathryn Carr; 17 great-grandchildren; one sister, Jean Evitt; and two brothers, Bill Hayes and wife, Lila; and Vernon Hayes. She was preceded in death by her parents; a grandson, Jeff Spradley; sister, Evelyn Backus; and brother, J.C. Hayes. Members of the Green Oaks congregation greatly miss her presence. Her exemplary life and meek and humble spirit influenced everyone she met. It was an honor for this writer to be asked to represent the church in conducting final services for Louise April 25; Jim Crouch represented the family. -Joe Norton

TRENT - June 22, 2011 a crowd of over 500 gathered in Modesto, CA to mourn the passing of Megan Kathleen DePonte Trent, age 32. Megan died June 15 in New Mexico in a tragic automobile accident while traveling home to Norman, OK after a trip to California to visit family and for Matt to conduct a gospel meeting at Clovis, CA. Megan is survived by her husband Matt; three children: Madison, age 8, Micah, age 6, and Macey, age 2 1/2; parents: George and Cheryl DePonte of Oakdale, CA; sisters: Shannon Connor and her husband Ryan, of Amity, Oregon, Staci Smith and her husband Scott, of Dimas, CA; brother: Travis and his wife Shanna, of Oakdale, CA; grandparents: Edna Bumgardner of Oakdale and Angie DePonte, of Modesto, plus numerous nieces, nephews, and other relatives. Megan's life was devoted to God, her husband, children, family and friends. She was a wonderful young preacher's wife and a loving mother to her babies. She was shy, but had blossomed into a confident young woman who had great values and knew what she wanted to do with her life. Her family shared that she was a sister to be proud of, her mother's best friend, George and Cheryl's baby daughter, a beautiful blessing from God for Matt, and a wonderful friend to many. When Matt started dating Megan, he knew he had the good fortune to have found a great treasure in Megan. He asked her to marry him eleven days after they began dating. Matt and Megan's work includes working with congregations in Oakdale, CA, El Cajon, CA, Norman, OK, as well as foreign travel to England, Russia, and several African nations. At the funeral, Brian Osburn led the group in singing God's Children Are Gathering Home, Come Meet Me At The Throne, Some Day, and Homecoming Day. Matt wrote and recorded a song in honor of Megan that was played at the funeral. It can be heard on YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/BeautifulBlessing>. The music that accompanied a slide show during the funeral included a song Matt wrote and recorded for their wedding plus songs that Matt composed for each of their children. Many have asked how they can help during this time of shock and sorrow. All of the calls, cards, emails, texts, and facebook postings with expressions of sympathy and assurance of prayers have been great comfort to the family. For those who would like to contribute money, a trust has been established in Megan's memory. Contributions can be sent to the following: Trent Memorial Trust, Account # 3000596480, 842 E. Garland Ave., Fresno, CA 93704. This is Andy Trent's address, Matt's brother. Written condolences can be sent to the family at Megan's parent's home where Matt and his children are staying for now: George and Cheryl DePonte, 529 Hampton Court, Oakdale, CA 95361. The huge crowd at the service was a great tribute to Megan and her family as we mourned her passing. We do not sorrow as others who have no

hope, but with the assurance that she waits for us in paradise and we will see her again. I was honored to conduct the service at the funeral home. Larry Lay led a wonderful prayer to close the service and Don Pruitt said words of comfort at the graveside. Just twelve short years ago, I was delighted to perform Matt and Megan's wedding. Please keep Megan's precious family in your prayers. Greg Gay

Field Reports

carlmj@cableone.net July 10, 2011--I preached at Moore, OK today and I am scheduled to preach here at home next Lord's Day. I just recently baptized a young family man here at home. Chris London is a hard-working giant of a young man who labors in the oil fields, but he possesses a sincerity and tender-heartedness that matches his imposing physical size. His wife Lori has been a Christian for several years, but Chris surprised all of us by stepping out and requesting baptism for the remission of sins just recently. We are thrilled for Chris, Lori, and their children. I am happy to report our attendance at worship has been significantly improved over the past couple of months in spite of the fact that several folks have been gone for summer vacations. My last meeting was with the Stony Point congregation in Kansas City, KS. We had a good meeting and we enjoyed the hospitality of Paul Nichols and Kevin, Cheryl, and Cameron Harris. I treasure the personal time I had with Paul. We did a lot of catching-up. We attended two nights of the Sulphur Fourth-of-July Meeting. The temperatures were oppressively hot and the numbers in the crowd were comparatively small, but we enjoyed the services. My schedule for the next few months includes: Yuba City, CA (Sept. 2-4); Sacramento, CA 64th St. (Sept. 7-11); Greenville, PA (Sept. 18-25); Council Hill, OK (Oct. 7-9); Shawnee, KS (Oct. 12-16); Columbia, MO (Oct. 19-23); and Mountain Home, MO (Nov. 6-13). We continue to solicit your prayers.

Paul O. Nichols, 14217 Rosehill, Overland Park, KS 6621, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, July 7 Recently we have had a number of visitors at 79th and Kansas Ave., Stony Point, KS - both members and non-members. This is always encouraging, and we have had several confessions of faults. Our congregational teachers believe in good sound doctrinal teaching in order to root and ground members in the Faith. We do not import our teachers, but develop, use and exercise the talent of our local brethren, except in gospel meetings. In this way we are all growing together in the knowledge of the scriptures. In June we had a meeting with Bro. Carl Johnson of Ada, OK. with good encouraging preaching of the Gospel and enjoyable association. The Lord willing, I will be in meetings at Stockton, CA, Aug. 24-28; Bakersfield,

CA (Planz Road) for the Labor Day Meeting, Sept. 2-4, and Atwater, Oct. 16-23. I look forward to being with good brethren whom I have known, loved and worked with in years past. The Lord bless all who continue to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, johnnyelmore@att.net August 8- It has been a while since I have reported to the OPA. Since January Sally has spent 21 days in the hospital and 20 days in a local skill center due to her sickness. This has occasioned me to stay close to home. I was thankful to be able to be at Galey, OK and Council Hill, OK in weekend meetings, and at the study in Columbia, MO. It was hard for her to do but she was able to be with me at 21st Street in Oklahoma City for some brief singing instruction and a week's meeting. We were also thankful to be at Springfield for the 30th annual 4th of July meeting. We had a wonderful week of beautiful gospel singing and great preaching with the crowd reaching 925 on the biggest night. Things are very hot and dry here in Oklahoma but we look forward to August 26-28 when we will have the 4th Saturday singing and hear Bruce Roebuck preach.

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 800337 LaGrange, GA 30240 August 9- Since last reporting we have enjoyed a good meeting at Marietta, GA where brother Rick Marten lives and labors. Our crowds were good during the meeting and one young man was restored to duty. On July 24th we were privileged to be with Hwy. 84 church near Brookhaven, MS. One was baptized, two were restored to duty and nine people confessed faults, promising to serve and work better in the future than they had in the past. The Lord willing we will be in Ozark, MO August 14-21, Weatherford, TX August 24-28, Fort Worth, TX for the annual Texas Labor Day meeting under the direction of the Fossil Creek church Sept 2-4. We hope to see many there with whom we have labored in the past. May the Lord bless his faithful people everywhere, and may we all strive to serve Him with fervor and dedication in the days that lie ahead.

Eric J. Stone, 94-371 Ikepono St. Waipahu, HI 96797, ericstone101@yahoo.com Aloha! I'm so happy to announce our first baptism in Hawaii since our arrival! My son Evan Jay Stone, after a long talk with his mother and me, chose to become a Christian on the 13th of July! I'm sure many of you already know that there are no sweeter words to hear from your children than those expressing the need to obey our Lord's gospel! You would think, especially in Hawaii, that there would be no shortage of good places to find "much water" for a baptism, but it's not as easy as you would think. We ended up in Ewa Beach, which is not too far of a drive from the

church. The conditions were not the best, in that there were some pretty strong waves breaking on the shore. However, I timed it just right, and as a wave was going to hit us, I helped him under the water. This month has been somewhat challenging for our small group. One of our members was admitted into the hospital, where she stayed for almost a week. Another was involved in an accident while riding the city bus. After a trip to the ER, where no fractures were found, she's undergone some physical therapy, and is now improving. Tara and I have been helping her to make sure the city is taking care of these doctor bills. Thankfully, so far they have been. In both cases, our prayers have been answered, and the Lord has been very merciful to us all. The church was also very greatly blessed to have Bro and Sis Greg and Cassie Gay with us for two Sundays. Bro Gay gave excellent sermons both Sundays, and really helped to encourage the brethren here. I have a special love and respect for Bro. Gay since he was very helpful to me during my CO application. So, it was quite an honor to have him and his lovely wife come for a visit, and we're looking forward to a visit next year as well, Lord willing. In all things, His will be done, of course!

P. Duane Permenter, 1705 Pecan Dr, Cleburne, TX 76033, Aug 10- It has been my pleasure to preach the gospel in several places around the country. We have been to Chapel Grove, TN, Fairbanks, Houston, TX, and Mozier, IL, in the last several weeks. We have seen several confessions of fault in the course of these meetings to which we give all glory and praise to the Lord. The brethren in all the places we have been treated us well. We thank our brethren from the bottom of our heart. It has been our privilege to attend the meeting at Cleburne with Jimmy Cating doing the preaching. He did an outstanding job of presenting the truth of God's word. We appreciate Jimmy and his family very much. During our meeting at Houston we stayed with Randy and Cathy Ballard and enjoyed their hospitality. They were great hosts and it was a good thing to visit, study, and work with Brother Ballard for the week. We plan to work together in the future as opportunity is found. We will be in Mozambique during the month of September for the church at Field Stone, MO, has requested my assistance to Don Pruitt in that good work. Brother Bill Davis and the church at Field Stone are to be commended for the work being done in that place. Due to Bill's illness he is unable to return to live in the country or travel back there. Please remember Brother Bill and Daisy in prayer daily. We owe a great debt of gratitude to this man of God who served so many years in foreign work. We enjoyed hearing Kevin Presley recently at Fossil Creek, Mike McConley at Deer Park, and Doug Edwards at Midland, all of which were in TX. Jesus Christ has given us great blessings and honor in

His kingdom. God bless the brotherhood! duane_and_laurie@yahoo.com (817)-240-1944.

Greg Gay, July 8, 2011. I was in a meeting at Dothan, AL June 12- 19 that closed with one confession. The brethren were very hospitable and kept me busy the whole week. I enjoyed spending time with Kevin and Bethany Presley and appreciate the sacrifices of Darrell and Beverly Crawford who attended from Florida several times. I stayed with Daniel and Samantha Marsh who made me feel right at home. I missed Charles and Donna Marsh who are away from home for Charles' treatment. From Dothan we came home to conduct two funerals before heading to Missouri for the Springfield 4th of July meeting. The Springfield meeting was well attended and I appreciate the opportunity to preach to warn all about the dangers of digression making inroads among us and of bidding God speed to those who practice error (2 John 9-11). I really do not understand brethren, even preachers, defending things in other congregations I hope they believe are wrong and would not practice themselves. For example, I hope no one who attended or spoke at Springfield would knowingly use a digressive preacher in their pulpits at home, yet a few of them vigorously defend, and/or attend, and/or even preach at a congregation who did. While in Missouri I preached at Houston, MO and enjoyed my brief visit with the brethren there. Our work continues with the 64th St. Congregation in Sacramento. We recently had a baptism, the husband of a faithful sister who has shown a great example before her husband for many years. The Oakdale, CA congregation is sponsoring the Let the Bible Speak TV program with Brett Hickey on a Sacramento station and it is generating a lot of leads in our area. 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747 papagreg@aol.com

From Roger L. Owens Neosho, Missouri Freeman Road congregation. As we watch the global economy fall and the U.S. decline we are troubled. But I wonder if we are just as troubled as we stop to consider the millions lost in sin and dieing daily bound for hell. Our brotherhood seems to struggle with innovations of Satan. Attempts to drag members down and to lower the standard of Christ. Do we forget these are not our standards to adjust but belong to the Lord. I hear folks talk about how congregations can't disfellowship another congregation. Brethren what has this to do with not walking in darkness or having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Yes we can and must judge with righteous judgment according to the word. Yes we can say no to calling on or using men who allow things like open fellowship to go without question. When did the Lord open our pulpits to men who no longer love the truth? I know that if one is in question they should not assume they can travel the

globe and be accepted by all others. While education and higher learning are helpful in many areas of learning, it is not a prerequisite for becoming a Christian, a teacher, evangelist, or elder in the church. Christianity is not a social level or position gained by only learned men and women. The dress code of the church has always been modesty, not a specific clothing design or standard set by opinionated men. I salute the men and women of the church who hold the line and refuse to be tossed to and fro. The mission of the church is to save the lost. The Lord built our Ark, the Church. The Lord made our laws, the Perfect Law of Liberty. The Lord judges our life styles by truth. At Freeman road we are set to the defense of the Gospel of Christ. Please understand we will not allow family ties, members who give much money on Sunday morning, nor those who twist the truth to remove us from Him. Yes there will always be those who lie and tell untruths. We have had to deal with just such ignorance and foolishness in my 45 plus years of preaching and teaching. My dad always said, "Son I gave you my name clean I expect you to bring it home every night the same way." Open Fellowship is a black mark on the name of the Lord and the church, His bride. Please pray for us because we are praying for you. God Bless (1-417-776-8123) (rowens700@yahoo.com)

Bill J Ferguson, PO Box 140524, Broken Arrow, OK 74014, fergyl259@yahoo.com August 5 Our meetings this year have been very enjoyable. It was wonderful being with brethren in Grapevine, TX earlier this year. What a fine group of people who make up that congregation. While there, Ruth and I stayed with Lyndon & Lyn Cox. In recent years we've developed a great friendship with them and could not have been treated any better. I appreciate Joe Norton, Nathan Battey, and Greg Robbins for their support and encouragement during the meeting. The following month I, along with several other preachers, was asked to preach during a weekend meeting at the Whispering Pines congregation in Tuttle, OK where Glen Osburn labors. Though only there one night I preached before a large audience on the requested topic, *The Limitation of Liberties*. A few days later it was a privilege being with Carl Johnson and Joe Hisle as I was in Ada for an 8 day meeting. One of my first appointments when I first began preaching was at the Young People's Meeting in Ada in 1980. It was an honor to be asked by the brethren to hold a meeting there, and to be with Carl and Joe. We were also thankful for George Battey who helped support the meeting. What utmost respect I have for Bennie Cryer. I was privileged to be asked to assist him with the 4th of July meeting at Sulphur, OK this year. He and his sweet wife, Joann, were very enjoyable to be with during the meeting. Ruth and I hold them dear to our hearts and appreciate them greatly. What a joy it was to spend time

together. The brethren at Sulphur accommodated us with a house just a few blocks from the tabernacle. It certainly was spacious enough for comfort and relaxation for the 4 of us, along with the company of family and friends that we savored so much during the day. Glen Vandever, George Hill, Don Stehr, along with others at the Sulphur congregation were so helpful and encouraging to Bennie and me. Our thanks to all those men who preached and participated in the leading of each worship service. Our meeting here at home with Rick Martin was excellent. He did an outstanding job preaching. No finer preaching could have been done. We were so thankful that Jane was able to come with him. We appreciate them both very much. A few weeks ago it was a pleasure spending time with William St. John and Bruce Roebuck for a 5 day meeting at Paris, TX. I was grateful to be with them and all the brethren. It was also great having Jerry Dickinson who drove from Texarkana, TX to support the meeting. By the time you read this report I will have been at Radnor, WV and the Tennessee Labor Day Meeting at Chapel Grove. Next I go to Edmond, OK Oct. 14-16, and Council Hill Dec. 11. Pray for us.

Roy E. Deering, (580) 320-3243, or red1991@hotmail.com. We got our summer preaching schedule started by holding our second five-day meeting of the year at the Holdenville, Oklahoma congregation. In recent months, we've seen six souls added to the family of God in this small but hardworking congregation. To God be the glory. Next, we hosted the Deer Park (Houston) Texas congregation's annual Young Speaker's meeting the weekend of June 18. We stayed in the home of George and Iwona Sears and they were exceptional Christian hosts, as always. The topic was "Let No Man Despise Your Youth" which encouraged the young people to work hard for the church now. We are encouraged by their dedication to strengthening their youth and urge others to consider attending in the future. The following weekend, June 26, we held a weekend meeting at the small and relatively new congregation - Klamath Falls, OR and stayed in the home of Heath and Kim Jordan. They, too, extended wonderful Christian hospitality! It was a delight to become acquainted with these brethren who are working hard to grow in knowledge and faith. We then traveled to the Odell, OR congregation for their annual July 4th Camp Meeting, staying in the home of Sean and Julie Bohince along with dozens of other brethren from the OR, WA and CA area. In 3 short years this small congregation has built a large meeting which serves to strengthen the brethren for the rest of the year. The brethren in the area are making great efforts to support each other, to grow in strength, unity and fellowship with one another. Their efforts are producing fruit! It was an incredible weekend of worship and fellowship, held in the Mt. Hood valley,

amidst the splendor of God's creation. From there, we traveled to the North Plains, OR congregation where we stayed with Ralph and Roberta Osburn who were the perfect hosts. It was a time of spiritual feasting for us and we thank them for the work they do for the church. We were also honored to visit with Delmer Lee and Gayland Osburn and appreciate their tireless efforts in the work there. It was another special weekend of worship and fellowship and we enjoyed seeing visitors from several area congregations once again. Our final meeting in the Northwest was July 16-18 at the Pacific, WA congregation. We had the privilege of staying in the wonderful home of Nate and Tonya Brence, and once again enjoyed having several visitors from area congregations. The support of the brethren in these areas is truly amazing. Our hearts rejoiced to receive news the Monday after the meeting closed that a 16-year-old young woman who attended two of these meetings was baptized into the family of God. We returned home with more than 6,500 miles accumulated on the trips and encouraged by the spirit and faithfulness of these small and isolated congregations. We pray we left them all strengthened and encouraged and solicit your prayers and support for them and their efforts. Upon returning home, I received my passport, which I applied for specifically so that I might be prepared for mission work whenever and where ever the opportunity arises. I am eager and willing to travel where ever the Lord sends me, in gospel meetings at home or mission work abroad, His will be done. We look forward eagerly to the next scheduled meeting at the Houston, Missouri congregation, September 14-18. We continue to preach our regular appointments at Galey, Wynnewood, Davis and Holdenville, Oklahoma and hope to schedule more meetings in the coming months. God bless the Church and the work.

Brett Hickey, 8373 Highway 5 South, Mountain Home, AR, 72653, (870)736-0774 unityseeker@hotmail.com, LetTheBibleSpeak.com. During our meeting in Houston, MO, I was blessed to stay in the godly home of Ervin and Mary Baker. I enjoyed getting acquainted with the rich history of the church in that area. I was able to catch several TV leads home during the meeting and had Bible studies with three of them. Several of these attended the meeting. We enjoyed our brief stay with the Anderson's in Paducah. Our meeting was bittersweet as the Stripling family prepared for their move to Lubbock. Our most promising TV lead was unable to attend the meeting because of major illness, but he passed along some other names, one of which did attend. The meeting in Weatherford was timed right. Brethren from at least eleven congregations supported our efforts; evangelists Melvin Blalock, Bob Johnson and Duane Permenter also attended. We look forward to meetings at Lubbock,

TX (July 17-24); Birmingham, AL (July 29-31) and Hoyte, TX (August 6-14). We also look forward to the Missouri Labor Day study hosted by the Freeman Road congregation in Neosho. The Fourth of July meeting in Springfield was once again a great spiritual feast. The attendance Friday night was 900 and over 800 on Saturday night. At least six visited from the community. Bob and Drema brought four. Another couple walked in on Saturday night. Tracy Stephens and Bob Bennett met them, got their phone number and followed up with them. They enjoyed the service and said they were looking for a church. Louise and I were able to hear thirty-six sermons on Thursday through Saturday including fourteen by young men who aspire to be preachers and teachers. We appreciate the willingness of the Mission Hills brethren to expend the time, energy and money to make the meeting so accommodating. At Mountain Home, we had great meetings with Joe Hisle in May and Randy Ballard in June. I appreciate how genuine both of these men are. Every one of their sermons were relevant and compelling. It was fascinating to hear the report from Randy on the work in Ecuador and Peru. Thirty non-members attend Brother Hisle's eight day meeting and twelve attend Brother Ballard's five day meeting. Randy, Louise, Joey and I generating several good leads going door to door with a number of positive Bible discussions. We have four people to visit again. In the process, the congregation distributed hundreds of invitations to attend the meetings and watch the TV program. A cups/classes couple who have been watching the program in Dallas for over a year attended the meeting over the weekend. We are optimistic about them taking their stand with us in the future. Jay and Mary, a senior couple who I met at the gym, attended on Sunday morning. When the Lord's Supper reached them, she paused, he whispered loudly, "It's okay. This is the real thing." There have been two conversions from the TV program in Dallas over the past couple of months: Randy Ballard studied with one; Mark Bailey with the other. In only a year and a half the Dallas program is now receiving the number of contacts generated out of Springfield. From March to June, Springfield received eighty contacts (one week did not air with technical difficulties and another week was preempted) the Dallas program generated 106 contacts, Jackson-66, Birmingham-65, Shreveport/Texarkana-51, Sacramento-42, Little Rock-31, Lexington-30, Lubbock-25, Joplin 17. The program recently began airing in Waco and Fresno.

For more information see LetTheBibleSpeak.com. Let friends and family in these areas know about the program. May we continue to spread the gospel while we fight the war on error.

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THE BACK PAGE...

THE NOTE IN LINCOLN'S POCKET

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

Of all the exhibits in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois, the one that is most astonishing to me is the display of newspaper headlines and editorials that vilified Lincoln during his campaigns and tenure as president. Today, Lincoln is generally considered the greatest president in history. It is shocking, therefore, to see the malicious verbal and visual abuse American newspapers in the North as well as the South, and in Europe directed at him. He was mercilessly lampooned, viciously libeled, and relentlessly satirized in his own time.

His controversial policies concerning the Union and slavery were not the only things ridiculed in the press, books, and cartoons. His physical appearance also added fuel to the fire. His ungainly form, homely face, and awkward manner, became the favorite grist of political cartoonists. To paraphrase Lincoln, American pundits were portraying the Civil War with malice toward one, and that one was Lincoln himself.

The mockery began as soon as Lincoln emerged as a national figure, following his unexpected nomination to the presidency in May 1860. Cartoons usually depicted him as a country bumpkin with a wild thatch of uncombed hair, clad in ill-fitting pants and open-necked shirts, and wielding a log rail to ward off serious inquiries into his supposedly dangerous views on racial equality.

Some of the more vicious presidential campaign cartoons depicted Lincoln as a supporter of race-mixing, a highly unpopular position at the time. One example shows him happily welcoming a racially-mixed couple in a topsy-turvy society in which the black people ride in horse-drawn carriages being tended by white servants. Such pictures were meant to stir up a racist electorate by encouraging fears that a racially-mixed society would be inevitable if Lincoln were reelected.

Along the same line of attack, several caricatures hinted that Lincoln had African heritage. One cartoon by Baltimore cartoonist Adalbert J. Volck shows the president as an Arabian dancer, veiled to conceal his black ethnic features. An anonymous 1864 campaign cartoon shows him as an actor on stage, portraying Shakespeare's Othello, an African prince.

Lincoln's admirers loved his down-to-earth style and earthy way with a comic tale, but foes leaped on such qualities as evidence of Lincoln's coarseness and lack of dignity. One cartoon of the day featured him reacting to news of wartime slaughter by drawling, "That reminds me of a funny story." Such caricatures used humor to make Lincoln's humor a political liability.

Some Confederate caricaturists portrayed him as Satan incarnate, hiding behind the mask of a bearded statesman. Some British artists depicted him disdainfully as a crafty bartender serving the public a mixture of "bunkum, bosh, and brag."

The abuse, to quote presidential secretary John Hay, rarely bothered Lincoln. During his 30 years in the political trenches, Lincoln's skin seemed to grow thick enough to withstand any editorial abuse fired at him. Or, did it?

The contents of Lincoln's pockets on the night he was shot at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. on April 14, 1865, offer additional insight into his thinking. Those contents are on display at the Rare Book and Special Collections Division of the Library of Congress, and they include two pairs of spectacles, a lens polisher, a pocketknife, a watch fob, a linen handkerchief, a brown leather wallet containing a five-dollar Confederate note, and nine newspaper clippings favorable to the president and his policies. One of the clippings has a note scribbled on it that reads, "Abe Lincoln is one of the greatest statesmen of all time."

It is probable Lincoln's skin was not as thick as he let on, that he desperately needed the encouragement of those clippings and that note, and carried them in his pocket for reassurance at all times.

Just as Lincoln faced a civil war and the monumental task of maintaining the Union, Christians are engaged in spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-17), and we are faced with the task of achieving and maintaining spiritual unity (Jn. 17:21; Phil. 2:2).

We would do well to examine our role in this conflict regularly (2 Cor. 13:5). Are we among the verbal flamethrowers (Jas. 3:6), motivated by malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and backbiting (1 Pet. 2:1), that destroy the soldiers within our own spiritual army, or are we among the soldiers who do our best to help our spiritual comrades survive?

The apostles warn us to refrain from speaking words that cause dissension within the ranks, and to speak words that exhort and edify (Eph. 4:29-32; 1 Pet. 2:1-4). Solomon adds, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. 25:11).

Look for opportunities, therefore, to encourage those being assailed by the difficulties of life (Gal. 6:2). Your words can have the same effect upon them as the note in Lincoln's pocket had on him. They can be so reassuring to the many struggling souls on the road to glory, that they will keep them, not in their pockets, but in their hearts, and treasure them all the days of their lives. carlmj@cablone.net