

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me"—John 5:39.



These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"—Acts 17:11.

"Devoted to the Search for Divine Truth"

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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

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PURGE OUT THE OLD LEAVEN

There is a definite quality about leaven that caused the Holy Spirit to use it in connection with the invasion of false teaching into the body of Divine Truth. Literally leaven is sour dough in a high state of fermentation mixed with new dough to prepare for baking. It was forbidden in the house of the Jews during the seven days of Passover, as a reminder of the haste with which they left Egypt (Deut. 16: 3), Ho offering by fire was to be made unto the Lord with leaven (Lev. 2: 11).

In the New Testament the idea of leaven was used to illustrate the effect of teaching, especially false doctrine. Since its fermenting quality indicated the effect upon new dough, the corrupting quality of error upon truth is the comparison. It also indicated corrupt practices as in the case of the fornicator in 1 Corinthians 5: 6, 7.

In Matthew 16: 6-12 Jesus warned the disciples to "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." Although the doctrines of these two religions differed widely, the same admonition was given regarding both. It makes no difference what the nature of the false doctrine is, we must beware of all of them. The disciples thought Jesus was talking about the fact that they had brought no bread, but he explained: "Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. "

There are some outstanding comparisons between the working of error and the working of leaven in bread. These are the points indicated in the state-ments just read from the word of God: 1) Leaven works silently and secretly. 2) It spreads by contact. 3) It affects the whole lump. 4) It changes every particle with which it comes in contact into its own kind. 5) It can only be destroyed by purging it out of the lump; no part of it can be permitted to remain or it will begin its work over again. 6) It takes only a "little" to do the job. The Lord gave a perfect illustration of the working of false teachers in the body of his disciples.

Paul told the Corinthians what to do about the leaven working among them: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5: 7). He warns: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5: 9). We must oppose sin in any form and to every degree in the church or suffer the whole body to be affected and destroyed by error. We had better learn this lesson well if we want to remain the peculiar people of God.

Since Jesus used the term "leaven" to describe the false and hypocritical teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees, it is important to learn what this meant to the people to whom he spoke. These religious leaders came from the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob who were delivered from Egyptian bondage and led by Moses to the mount where *the* law was given to Moses for the people. The law prescribed in detail the worship, priesthood, personal behavior and duties to God and their fellowman. The use of unleaven bread and the rejection of all leaven during the week of Passover was well known by every descendant of those to whom the law was delivered.

The Passover was instituted in Egypt before the children of Israel were delivered from bondage. The blood of the slain lamb without blemish was to be put on the side posts of the door and the upper door post. The first born of all in Egypt would die that night where the blood was not on the door posts. This feast of Passover was to be observed every year to the end of the Jewish dispensation. "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to

the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever" (Exodus 12: 14).

One important thing about this feast that was to be observed with strictest care was that no "leavened" bread was to be used during the seven days of the Passover. The law said all leaven was to be put out of the house for the seven days. No one was to eat any leaven. Any one who did eat leavened bread was cut off from Israel (Exodus 12: 15). Even strangers were cut off if they ate any leaven (Exodus 12: 19).

For seven days they were to eat unleavened bread. "Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters" (Exodus 13: 7).

The apostle Paul described the church at Corinth as being unleavened, and therefore, they should put away the leaven of immorality: the man among them who was guilty of adultery. This is what the Holy Spirit said: "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5: 6-8).

Jesus used the word "leaven" to refer to the "doctrine" of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Matt. 16: 6-12). The doctrine of the Pharisees produced vain worship because it was a doctrine based upon the "commandments of men." The doctrines of men are all doctrines that are not of God. The doctrine of God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is one; the doctrines of men are all that men have developed throughout the ages. They are all alike in that they reject and pervert the doctrine of God.

Paul said no other gospel was to be received because there was no other from Christ. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1: 8, 9).

The apostle John said: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10, 11). Anyone who gives sanction or encouragement to those who teach any false doctrine, are as guilty as the false teacher. John said so!

The application of the instruction of Jesus regarding the leaven of false doctrines of men must be made today as it was in the time Jesus made the statements. All leaven must be put away, out of the house. No one can partake of that leaven under any circumstances.

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" QUOTE

**"Be careful of your thoughts;
they may become words
at any moment."**

—Iora Gassen

UNQUOTE "

Editorial

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"ONE NATION UNDER GOD"

This year over 2,000 churches of Christ (some reports have suggested 3,000) worked together in a national campaign called "One Nation Under God". The elders of the Sycamore church in Cookeville, TN have "accepted oversight" of this project (Update brochure). The whole plan is the brainchild of Horace Burks a business man and deacon at Sycamore. He now serves as national chairman of the campaign.

Here is how this project works. Over 2,000 churches of Christ (and a few denominational churches) have sent money to the Sycamore church. I say they **have** sent it — actually, some churches have pledged large sums of money over a period of years. The Sycamore church and its elders have overseen the mailing of 102 million brochures into every home in the nation. This claims to be the largest mailing in U. S. history.

This mailing was preceded by a full page ad in the July 91 issue of *Reader's Digest*. The brochures were to be received between the first of July and the end of August. Many of these churches planned gospel meetings to be going on about the same time in July. The update literature sent out by Sycamore stated that responses that came in to the campaign headquarters would be sent to the "mission churches."

What started out as a 17 million dollar project was reduced to 10 million. I wondered if they just couldn't raise the other 7 million or if they almost wasted 7 million dollars. Supposedly, a million is coming out of two counties in north Alabama.

The plea for support says, "Perhaps for the first and only time in our lifetime, will our entire nation have an opportunity to receive the Gospel."

Future Plans

"One Nation Under God" did not end with the national mailing in July of this year. That was phase one. Phase two is scheduled to start in 1992. It will involve mailing brochures to homes in Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. There are other stages that continue on until the turn of the century (Central and South America in 1995, Europe in 1997, Africa in 1999). The final phase should begin about 2001 and cover Asia.

A Violation Of Local Church Autonomy

In the New Testament each local congregation was independent and autonomous. Elders were ordained in every church (Acts 14: 23). Their rule and oversight was limited to the local church where they were appointed elders. Peter instructed the elders to "Shepherd the

flock of God which is *among you*, serving as overseers..." (1 Pet. 5: 2, emphasis mine DVR). There is no authority for the elders of one church to oversee the work of any other church.

The "One Nation Under God" project violates local church autonomy. The Sycamore church is overseeing the work of over 2,000 churches. The *Christian Chronicle* (Feb. 91) stated that Bill Johnson, coordinator for the campaign, said that those who have become involved have done so because they see One Nation Under God as "an opportunity to evangelize their community, and in actuality, the entire nation, without having to devise a plan for doing so themselves."

If 2,000 or more churches can turn part of their work of evangelism over to Sycamore, then why can't they turn all of their work of evangelism over to them. Then, why not all of their other work? Where does it all stop? If Sycamore can oversee some of the money of these churches, why not all of the money?

The Sycamore elders have become brotherhood elders. All of the contributing churches are functioning (at least in this work) under the oversight of one church. They have formed a universal organization — a collectivity of churches. They have a universal treasury from which to function. All of this is foreign to the pages of the New Testament.

No Authority

The thing wrong with this sponsoring church arrangement is that there is no Bible authority for it. Paul said that we must do all things in the name of Jesus Christ (Col. 3: 17). John wrote that those who go onward and do not abide in the doctrine of Christ do not have God (2 Jno. 9). We had better make sure that we can find book, chapter and verse for a practice before we engage in it.

When God is silent on a matter that does not give us permission to act. Rather, it is a prohibition to act. Consider Heb. 7: 14 where Jesus was said to be of the tribe of Levi "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." Thus, Jesus could not be a priest on earth because God had not spoken on the matter. God had only authorized it for the Levites.

There is no Bible authority for the elders of one church to oversee the work of even one other church, not to mention over 2,000 churches. If it is authorized, where is the passage?

There is no Bible authority for one church to send money to another church to preach the gospel. If it is scriptural, where is the verse?

Parallel To The Missionary Society

Those who have supported the "One Nation Under God" project have opposed the missionary society. However, the sponsoring church is parallel to the missionary society. Every argument that can be made to justify the arrangement at Cookeville, TN can be used to justify the missionary society. Every objection to the missionary society can also be made against the sponsoring church.

Are We Opposed To Cooperation?

Not at all! When each church is working independently under the oversight of its own elders, each church

is cooperating with the others to accomplish the same end — spreading the gospel. All of the churches do not have to be joined together in a universal structure or put their money in the same pot or under one eldership to cooperate. Let me clarify that with an illustration from Raymond Harville. When three farmers plow a field with each man having a mule and a turning plow, these men are cooperating to accomplish the same goal — plowing the field. Even though they are cooperating, each mule is working independent of the others. Now, suppose that with double trees and single trees they tie all three mules together to the same plow. There are still cooperating, but each mule has lost his independence. Two of the farmers have surrendered control to other. In one case the mules are functioning concurrently and in the other they are working jointly or collectively.

No one opposes cooperation. What I do oppose is local churches functioning collectively under the oversight of one eldership. One is in the Bible, the other is not.

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OF WHAT DID JESUS EMPTY HIMSELF?

Robert L. McDonald

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During the early days of the church, there was an influence of philosophers who denied the actual humanity of our Lord and others who denied his Deity. To deny either is blasphemous. Evidently, these heretics were some of whom John wrote in his first epistle (**1 John 2: 18-ff**). It is sad when such characters can have an influence with some disciples so that the faith of the innocent can be destroyed by men who have lost their love for the truth of the Almighty.

I have been closely following the controversy in periodicals published by conservative brethren regarding the **Deity of Christ** and have tried to digest what they are saying. Some have been pressed that they have denied the Deity of Christ. This position has been denied! Then, I read where they say that Jesus did not divest himself of his Deity, but he "emptied himself of those powers and attributes to become man" (Wayne Greeson, *Faith & Facts*, October, 1990, p. 78).

When the position that Jesus emptied himself of the attributes of Deity is expressed, I have noticed that many writing on this issue make the same approach to what they are saying by turning to Philippians 2: 6-8 and implying that their doctrine is actually taught by the apostle Paul. But how do they prove their proof-text teaches such an idea? They go to other passages to prove their application of the controverted passage. This wandering through a maze of arguments is confusing to many by turning attention away from the passage which is supposed to prove their position.

What is the issue under consideration? Wayne Greeson explains that the issue is: "Do the scriptures teach that Christ possessed all the powers of God in the flesh?" He then affirms that the Word became flesh and "he emptied himself of certain of the attributes of God" (See *Faith & Facts*, October, 1990, p. 78). So really, the whole controversy must focus upon Philippians 2: 6-8. Let me invite you to turn to the text and analyze what is actually taught.

The Philippian epistle was written at a time when Paul was in prison at Rome and perilous times were confronting the saints of God. The reality of persecution and apostasy of saints prompted the inspired apostle to exhort the Philippians to maintain their faith regardless of the extent of their suffering. In the second chapter, the apostle urges them to be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and mind. Nothing should be done through strife, but in all humility and without any ambition of superiority of one over the other, but to esteem other better than themselves.

With this setting, Paul then writes, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2: 5-8). Let us look at the passage to see if the claim of some is actually taught therein.

"Who being in the form of God." The present participle, being, "implies His pre-existent Deity, previous to His Birth and His continued Deity afterwards" (Expository Diet., Vine). The declaration of the unchangeable one is the same person who is "yesterday today and forever" (Hebrews 13: 8). The expression of Paul is a similar affirmation as found in Exodus (3: 14), when Jesus applied the same to Himself (John 8: 58), and also indicated by John (Revelation 1: 4). All of these expressions show the pre-existent state prior to the moment and a continuance after the fact.

Before the Word became flesh (John 1: 14), He was in the form of God. The word form (from morphe) is defined by Thayer, "the form by which a person or thing strikes the vision; the external appearance" (Lexicon, Thayer, p. 418). In heaven the Word bore the form of Deity with all of His attributes, power and splendor. Is it possible for the human mind to grasp the idea of Deity and at the same time able to express it in the language of men? The human mind can only come forth with a minimal of understanding of His Being of the highest degree of omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and glory. The form here referred to must have been something before he became a man, or before he took upon him the form of a servant... He himself speaks of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was" (Albert Barnes, **Philippians 2**, pp. 169-170).

"Thought it not robbery to be equal with God." The word robbery (arpagmos) is an interesting word and especially so in this text. It means "a thing seized or to be seized, booty, (Lexicon, Thayer, p. 74). Thayer adds "a thing... to be retained, Phil 2: 6" (ibid). The import of this truth is Christ in reality was in the form of God, but He did not jealously seek to retain His equality with God, but was willing to divest Himself so as to appear to sinful man.

"But made himself of no reputation." The King James Version translates the word keno in our text, "of no reputation." Most of the translations of my reference use the word empty rather than reputation. Thayer tells us the word meant "to empty, make empty" (Lexicon, Thayer, 344). He further comments, "he laid aside quality with or the form of God (said of Christ), Phil 2: 7" (ibid). There was something of vast importance which our Lord was willing to give up, or empty Himself, so as to become a sacrifice for sinful man. The context tells us of what He emptied himself. It was not His Deity nor any of the attributes of Deity, but He divested himself of the form of God. This was in order to appear to man, not in the form of God, but in the appearance of man, in the form of a servant. Some of the liberal commentators express the idea of Jesus divesting himself of His

Deity (See William Barclay, *Philippians*, p. 45). I believe Albrecht Oepke expresses the truth on the matter. "What is meant is that the heavenly Christ did not selfishly exploit His divine form and mode of being, but by His own decision emptied Himself of it or laid it by, taking the form of a servant by becoming man" (Kittle, Vol. 3, p. 661).

"And took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." The word took (laubano) means to "take in order to wear, i. e. to put on" (Lexicon, Thayer, p. 370). Our Lord laubano, i. e. He "put on" flesh of men. His being was in the form of a servant. His mission was to perform the work of a servant and was regarded as such. By so doing, He descended to the lowest condition of humility, without a place to lay His head, and regarded as the lowest of any of the human family. He was defamed. False charges were brought against Him. He was rudely assailed. Men spat upon Him, smiting with their hands. Sport was made of Him as a means of entertainment. But, as a lamb, He opened not His mouth and went to the slaughter. However, nothing in all of the Word of God reveals that the **attributes of Deity** were divested, or emptied, when our Lord took on the form of man! To those who think that Philippians 2: 6-8 teaches that Christ emptied Himself of His Deity, will you please take the controverted passage and give us an exegesis which convinced you to believe such an idea?

"And being found in fashion as a man." The incarnation of Christ was a man in "form, bearing, language, action, mode of life, wants and their satisfaction, etc, in general the state and relations of a human being, so that in the entire mode of His appearance He made Himself known and was recognized as a man" (Philippians Epistle, H. A. W. Meyer, p. 77). Emptying Himself of the form of God and existing as a man with **all of the attributes of a human**, and at the same time possessed **all of the attributes of Deity**, provision was made for the only acceptable sacrifice for the salvation of man.

"He humbled himself, and became obedient." Christ humbled Himself, not to appropriate the dignity nor the appearance of an earthly sovereign before a materialistic people, rather that the demands of God's law might be fulfilled, in order that man might be redeemed. Jesus, our mediator, redeemer and saviour obeyed His own law in the giving of Himself as the only offering which could be made. Christ humbled Himself as He allowed lawless men to nail Him to the cross, abusing Him as they regarded Him, not as a man, but as a worm (Psalms 22: 6-ff) — and they killed Him!

And, I read where some have said, "Jesus was a man. He had given up, limited, surrendered, abdicated, or divested the privileges, prerogatives, and powers of the divine Son of God. While on this earth, he lived as a man, not a superman" (John Welch, *Faith & Facts*, October, 1990). No, reader friend, Jesus was not just an ordinary man, a guy like you and me! Jesus Christ, indeed the Son of God, "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2: 9). (From *The Discerner*, August 1991 originally in the *Preceptor*).

EDITOR'S NOTE

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BRASS
TACKS

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The foregoing article by brother McDonald expresses my own views on Phil. 2. Since I am unable right now to do my normal work at my desk (while recovering from back surgery), I wanted this to appear.

Brother John Welch in the last issue of *FAITH AND FACTS* has challenged for a debate in Louisville and has left the churches and preachers of this city under a cloud. It is his contention that the issue of the Deity of Christ is linked to the questions of "continual cleansing" and whether or not man "has to sin." The other preachers in Louisville can speak for themselves, but I do not believe there is a single one who would link these matters together.

I want to go on record that I believe brother John Welch and some other writers in *FAITH AND FACTS* have taught error on the nature of Christ. I do not believe that when he came to earth, he divested himself of the attributes of Deity. It is foolish to say one believes in the Deity of Christ and then start subtracting from him those attributes which make him divine. Others have already offered to publicly discuss the issue of the Deity of Christ with John Welch. I will add my own name to the list. I will debate him on the following propositions, provided honorable and equitable circumstances can be arranged:

RESOLVED: The Scriptures teach while Jesus was on earth, he possessed the attributes of Deity.

Connie W. Adams, affirms; John Welch, denies.

RESOLVED: The Scriptures teach that when Jesus came to earth he divested himself of the attributes of Deity and was just an ordinary man.

John Welch, affirms; Connie W. Adams, denies.

We have seen issues come and go but it is the studied conviction of this writer that no more serious issue has arisen in my lifetime than this one. The nature of Christ is central to everything I believe about him and all I do in his service. It is directly linked to my salvation. We shall see what we shall see.

Do A Friend A Favor

Do you have a friend or relative who could benefit from reading *Searching the Scriptures*? Why not buy a subscription for someone?

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT MY PRIORITIES ARE?

The young man who came to the Lord asking what good thing he should do to have eternal life probably would have said that spiritual concerns were his highest priority. But when he was told to sell what he had, give to the poor, and follow Jesus, "he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions" (Mt. 19: 22). What he may have said about his values indicated one thing. His actions indicated another.

If we are not constantly careful, our list of priorities can become disordered. At such times, being honest enough to face the truth about the situation is not easy. When anyone asks what is most important to us, the tempting thing is to answer in terms of what we know **should be** most important. Because we think we are moving more or less in the direction of putting first things first ("**I plan** to pray and study my Bible more just as soon as I can get my schedule under control, etc., etc., etc. "), we may think that gives us the right to say that spiritual concerns are our top priority right now. But the Lord does not judge what our priorities are by listening to our theories. He looks at our practice. And if we do not somehow gather our courage and look, as He does, at what means the most to us in actual **fact** — and repent accordingly — eternity holds no hope for us. Before it is too late to make any changes, we need to be asking ourselves some blunt questions about what our priorities really are.

What would others say our priorities are? Others may not know us as well as we know ourselves, but they are often more objective about what they do know. The neighbor who lives next door could probably sum up in a word or two what we are really about. Perhaps more than anybody, our children are able to cut through our preachments and tell what actually matters most to us in the rough and tumble of daily living.

What do we think about? Our true priorities are the things our minds are drawn to when they are "in neutral." When activities and obligations do not require us to be thinking about anything in particular, our thoughts are attracted, like filings to a magnet, to our real enthusiasms. The person who finds that he meditates on God only when he forces himself to do so is lying if he says the spiritual life is his overriding concern.

What do we talk about? The conversations we engage in arise quite naturally out of the things that are

on our minds. If we have to admit that we rarely talk about the Lord except in connection with the services of the church, that ought to tell us something. And even if we do sometimes talk about spiritual matters, if our acquaintances would have to say that our conversation gravitates more naturally and enthusiastically toward other things, then there is serious doubt whether our ultimate priorities are really spiritual.

How do we spend our time? Hardly anybody has as much "spare" time as he would like. But all of us have some, and the way we spend it displays our priorities. I have known families, for example, who "vacationed" by traveling to gospel meetings or Bible lectureships at congregations in distant states. Judging from their use of time that was theirs to do with as they pleased, one would tend to believe such folks if they said they loved the Lord more than anything. On the other hand, I have known folks who all their working lives complained that they did not have as much time as they wanted to do the Lord's work — and then spent virtually all of their retirement years in personal leisure, with perhaps less time devoted to the Lord than before! The fact is, the way we spend our time speaks loudly regarding our values.

How do we spend our money? Suppose a Bible class teacher recommended a \$25 reference book that would help us in our study of the Scriptures, but we said we could not afford it. Suppose a preacher recommended a \$15 a year periodical that would help us grow spiritually, but we said it cost too much. If it was known that we sometimes spent that much on sporting events and recreational activities, that it was not unusual for us within a month to spend that much eating out, that we would not object to spending that much on decorative home furnishing, etc., could anyone take seriously our claim that the Lord is our uppermost concern?

What "gives" when we face a conflict of priorities? Of the many conflicts involving priorities, perhaps none are more annoying than "scheduling" conflicts. Unable to be two places at the same time, we very often have to sacrifice one activity for another. When that happens, if we subordinate the things of the Lord to worldly activities, we give the lie to our professed priorities. In the matter of sports, to take a familiar example, if we can manage it such that our Softball league and the services of the church hardly ever conflict, that is all well and good, but it says relatively little about our priorities. When the occasional conflict does arise, **that** is when we make a statement about our priorities. The same is true of work. If, in order to make occasional business trips, we have been willing to violate our commitment to assemble with the brethren (we have likely persuaded ourselves that we "had no choice" but to go—without even telling our boss that we wished to be excused), we may try to make it look as if we chose between one thing that was "optional" and another that was not. But, in truth, we have simply demonstrated which of our various priorities we are willing to make the bigger sacrifice for. Indeed, it is when priorities **collide** that we learn the most about ourselves, our values, and whether the Lord reigns within us or not.

How then do I know — in all honesty — what my

priorities are? By looking at what I am, in fact, doing with my life. Paul wrote, "To whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness" (Rom. 6: 16). At least one thing would seem to be clear: I cannot pour the first and the best of what I am into pursuing what has euphemistically been called the American Dream and still turn around and say I love the Lord with all my heart. I cannot go "all out" for one thing and then truthfully claim that something else is more important. Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt. 6: 24). Where my priorities are, there will my energy and enthusiasm be also.

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MULES IN "HAWSE" HARNESS

Mammy, the indomitable slave in Margaret Mitchell's literary masterpiece, **Gone With the Wind**, had these pointed words of rebuke for her young mistress:

"... Miss Scarlett, lissen ter me. You ain' nuthin' but a mule in hawse harness. You kin polish a mule's feets an' shine his hide an' put brass all over his harness an' hitch him ter a fine cah'ige. But he a mule jes' de same. He doan fool nobody. An' you is jes' de same. You got silk dresses an' de mills an' de sto' an' de money, an' you give yo' self airs lak a fine hawse, but you a mule jes' de same. An' you ain' foolin' nobody needer. An' dat Butler man, he come of good stock and he all slicked up lak a race hawse, but he a mule in hawse harness, jes' lak you."

Wouldn't you agree that there are a lot of mules in hawse harness around today? Some of our national leaders fit that portrayal. They exhibit a lot of glitter. They manufacture a lot of smooth talk. But they show little concern for the true welfare of the nation. Solomon said, "Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more" (Eccl. 4: 13); and, "I have seen servants on horses, while princes walk on the ground like servants" (10: 7).

I have known of some church bosses who were nothing but mules in hawse harness. Some of these were self appointed, and some were recognized as elders of a congregation. But "bosses" best describes both their attitude toward the church and the relationship they sustain to it. They will have their way or bust. They are lords over God's heritage and the worst sort of examples to the flock (1 Peter 5: 3). They are cast in the mold of Diotrephes, who "loves to have the preeminence" (3 John 9).

Some preachers are mules in hawse harness. They are like the Pharisees who were meticulous about the external things of the law (which they should have been), paying their tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and yet neglecting the weightier matters of justice and mercy and faith (Matt. 23: 23). They strain out the gnats (which seems to be a prudent exercise), but they swallow the camel, hump and all.

These lords of the pulpit and printed word survey the brotherhood terrain faithfully to see if something is said that they might possibly take issue with. They give no quarter. They show no mercy. They are defenders of the faith, and pity him who dares to question their methods.

They are not invincible. But they often fit the description that Andrew Jackson gave of an opponent: He said that fighting the man was like wrestling a pig. You both get dirty, but the pig likes it.

These champions often leave a local church bruised, broken, and divided by their diatribes, tirades and polemics; and the community amused at the incongruity of one who knew it all and was aware of so little. They are "jes' mules in hawse harness."

Many women fit the description that Mammy gave of Miss Scarlet. Even some in the church. They are much like the women whom Isaiah described. The Living Bible paraphrases: "Next, he will judge the haughty Jewish women, who mince along, noses in the air, tinkling bracelets on their ankles, with wanton eyes that rove among the crowds to catch the glances of the men... the Lord will strip away their artful beauty and their ornaments, their necklaces and bracelets and veils... their scarves and ankle chains, headbands, earrings, and perfumes, their rings and jewels, and party clothes and negligees and capes and ornate combs and purses; their mirrors, lovely lingerie, beautiful dresses and veils..." (3: 18-23).

Not that most of those things are wrong in themselves. But those women were like those of whom Solomon had spoken: "As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion" (Proverbs 11: 22). A girl can wear her gold, diamonds, and expensive clothes; her false eyelashes, mascara, and beautifully coiffured hair. But her true beauty will not exceed her standard of righteousness and morality. Without such, she's "jes' a mule in hawse harness."

Let's look beyond the brass harness, and the spit and polish and take note of the critter that's prancing about.

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Let's not be followed by mules in hawse harness.

WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

Frank Himmel

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THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

Those who take liberties with God's revelation sometimes justify their practices by saying that while they are perhaps not adhering to the letter of the law, they are keeping it in spirit. By "the spirit of the law" they mean its general intent. They often brand those of us who insist on doing exactly what God has said, no more and no less, as legalists. Do we need to loosen up a bit? Is the spirit of obedience sufficient to please God?

The Letter and the Spirit

Paul contrasted the letter and the spirit in 2 Cor. 3. He said the letter kills but the spirit gives life. Does that mean doing the gist of what God says results in life, but following Him more closely sounds the death knell? Besides being illogical, such an interpretation ignores Paul's context. By the letter and the spirit (or Spirit), he meant the old and new covenants. The old was a ministry of death, of condemnation: it had no means of taking away sin. The new is a covenant of life, of righteousness, thanks to Jesus' atonement. Therefore it is clearly superior and far more glorious. Yet some at Corinth were stubbornly clinging to the letter, the inferior covenant, whose glory had faded. This was Paul's point. To make this general vs. exact obedience is to insert a completely foreign idea into the text.

Romans 2: 27-29 presents the same contrast with a different emphasis. The Jews gloried in their unique relation to God, their superior law from God, and circumcision, the sign of these things. But they made such poor use of their advantages that they were really no better off than the Gentiles. The value of circumcision was contingent on keeping the covenant it represented. To fail to obey it was to become as one uncircumcised, as one outside the covenant. Conversely, some Gentiles did a better job of keeping the covenant than the Jews did! That led Paul to conclude, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, **but** from God." As William Barclay ably put it, "To be a real Jew is not a matter of pedigree but of character."

The contrast is made a third time in Rom. 7: 6. "But now we have been released from the law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of Spirit [or spirit] and not in oldness of the letter." Like a woman whose husband has died, the Jews

are dead to the law of Moses through the body of Christ and free to remarry. Christ is the groom. When joined to Him we can bear fruit unto God. As in the earlier comparisons, the letter and the spirit stand for the old and new covenants. There is no hint of ballpark vs. precise obedience. In fact, Paul went on to explain that one of the great benefits of the old law was **that** it precisely defined right and wrong. The problem was that it had no means to remedy violations of it.

An Illustration

Having looked at the passages which make the letter/spirit distinction, let us now consider an O. T. incident which demonstrates God's thinking about obedience.

God assigned King Saul the task of punishing the Amalekites for ambushing His people when they were on the way to Mt. Sinai. His instructions were explicit: "Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, ox and sheep, camel and donkey" (1 Sam. 15: 3). Saul amassed a great army and immediately went into battle, winning a decisive victory. The general intent of punishing Amalek was accomplished. However, Saul spared Agag and the best of the animals.

Saul met Samuel on the way home from his conquest and greeted him readily. "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord!"

When Samuel pointed to the animals Saul was bringing back as evidence that God's will was not done. Saul explained that these were for sacrifice, but all else was utterly destroyed. Samuel was not impressed. Again he challenged Saul: "Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord...?"

"I did obey the voice of the Lord, and went on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites."

Saul felt good about his standing with the Lord. He was confident that he had obeyed, that following the spirit of God's command was sufficient. Samuel was equally confident that it was not. Which was right? Let God answer. "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands" (v. 11). Through Samuel, He went on to accuse Saul of rebellion and insubordination.

Conclusion

God did not reveal Himself so that we would have some ballpark idea of what he expects of us. The Holy Spirit directed the very words of Scripture to assure us a precise account of God's mind (1 Cor. 2: 12f). Who are we to dismiss the details of His requirements as non-essential, or to substitute for what He has specified under the guise of keeping the spirit of the law? If the spirit of the law is to do what God wills, what better way is there to show that spirit than to do precisely what He says?

Do you pray to God everyday?
(Daniel 6:10, 13)

MUSINGS

J. Wiley Adams

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THE QUEST FOR THINGS

This is a true story. The names have been omitted, not so much to protect the innocent, but to tell this account in a more objective way.

In a major southern city there was a fine family. The father and mother were both Christians with two fine small children. They all attended faithfully at a nearby church of Christ. They were a big asset to the church. They were all happy and the church was happy with them.

Things changed. He decided to take an early morning paper route in addition to his nine to five job. This was the beginning of sorrows. To get up in the wee hours in order to deliver his papers he had to go to bed very early and family life was interrupted in the evenings. On Sundays the delivery was very time-consuming due to the size of the paper. He started getting home too late to get ready to go to services so he sent the family on without him and he attended the evening service.

Things changed again. She decided to help out on their bills by taking a job also. She needed some new clothes and another car. This necessitated the need for a maid to come in and take care of the children. So in order to make more money it cost more and more to live thus increasing the need for more and more money. The rat-race was on.

The family life began to disintegrate. They hardly saw each other except to wave at each other in passing. Then the children became more and more unruly and would obey only the maid. They wondered why they loved the maid more than themselves. Well, the maid was there. That's why.

They became irritable and edgy and had quite a few family spats. Church attendance was relegated to the background in spite of the urgency of the elders for them to be faithful. Others from the church went to see them to encourage them to once again take their proper place in the congregation. All of this did not avail.

Finally, thank the Lord, they became so tired that they could hardly make it from day to day. Then, like the prodigal son they came to their senses. Once more they would allow the elders to help them figure things out. Here's what happened.

He quit the paper route. She quit her job. They sold the second car. They discharged the maid. They got their family back. They decided to live within their means on his salary, maintain a proper family life, regain their children, and came before the Lord and the church

asking forgiveness for their covetousness and resulting unfaithfulness. They cried for joy when they came forward and brethren cried with them. This case turned out all right in the end.

I am thinking now of many other cases here and there. It is evident that some are making the same mistakes as those we have mentioned. They are on a tread mill which gets faster and faster. Some cases have already resulted in a broken home and leaving the Lord and His people. Others will soon be there as well. Unless they heed the Word of God and the advice of faithful brethren.

Some of the most enriching times of our lives were when Wilma and I had less of this world's goods. That's when the family really has to pull together. That's when the family is truly close. That's when we learn truly what happiness and contentment is all about.

Let's now hear from the Scriptures on this. Hebrews 13: 5 says, "... be content with such things as ye have..." Proverbs 15: 16, "Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is then a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Again in Proverbs 17: 1, "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife."

Less is better than more if more leads you away from the God of Heaven and the family goes down the drain. I plead with the young families to heed the warning. We who are now older can see where you are heading. Will you take heed?

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

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WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP?

"Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matt. 13: 45, 46). Jesus used this man to demonstrate that when something is of supreme importance to us we're willing to give up anything to attain it. This certainly should be our attitude toward the kingdom of God.

One does not become a Christian and remain faithful without sacrifices. It's important that before you make the commitment to live for Christ that you "calculate the cost" (Luke 14: 28) of that commitment. Jesus said, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14: 23). Is going to

heaven the most important goal in your life? What are you willing to give up to go to heaven?

ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP YOUR PAST SINFUL CONDUCT? The Corinthians had to give up their sin (1 Cor. 6: 9-11). The idolater had to give up his idolatry, the adulterer his adultery, and the thief his stealing, in order to obey the gospel and have his sins forgiven. I am amazed at the fact that some seem to think that they can obey the gospel and continue to live just like they had before. People seem reluctant to give up their immoral dancing, their immodest dress, their corrupt language, and their social drinking. But give it up you must if you want to please God! If going to heaven is the most important goal of your life you'll be glad to make this sacrifice however difficult it may be.

ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP SOME OF YOUR FRIENDSHIPS AND FAMILY TIES? Jesus taught that this is sometimes necessary (Matt. 10: 36) and continued to say, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10: 37). One young man I know took a stand for the truth years ago and he remains in isolation from his father till this day. Some are counted as dead by their families because of their acceptance of the gospel. Are you willing to make that sacrifice? Is going to heaven that important to you? It ought to be!

ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE? Sometimes that decision on whether or not to give up social acceptance is not altogether yours. If you make the determination to leave a life of sin and live godly there are some who "are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you" (1 Pet. 4: 4). Past friends and acquaintances sometimes become uncomfortable with your new lifestyle and will feel betrayed because you have chosen to no longer live in the ways that they continue. They begin to avoid you. But such is sometimes the price of following the paths of righteousness. Whether or not we are socially accepted means little compared with the importance of going to heaven. If we must sacrifice such to go to heaven then so be it!

ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP MATERIAL POSSESSIONS? Speaking to the Hebrews, the writer said, "you... accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession..." (Heb. 10: 34). They obviously believed that going to heaven was important enough to give up their material possessions if necessary, and they did! However, we live in such a materialistic age that I fear more would be like the rich young ruler (Matt. 19: 16-22) than these Hebrews. The time that is needed to develop ourselves and our families spiritually is often sacrificed on the altar of materialism. The extra car or bigger house, to many, are more important than going to heaven and helping others to get there. But it should not be so! "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul" (Mark 8: 36)? On the day of our death the make or model of our car and the number of bedrooms in our house will make no difference at all. However, whether or not we made heaven the most

important goal of our lives will make a great deal of difference. No material thing in this world is worth the loss of even one soul. If you miss heaven, then you've just missed everything!

What is the most important thing in your life? Where is your time, talents, energies, and resources being spent? I hope, and the Bible teaches, that your most important goal should be heaven. Is it?

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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PULPIT AND PICK-UP MINISTERS

A few years back I received an unusual request to perform a marriage ceremony. Prospective brides and grooms have been known to be irrational at times, but this particular request was still a bit unusual.

First, the couple waited until the night before the wedding to call the preacher. All other arrangements had been made, and they knew that they would need a preacher, but they still put it off until the last minute. I had made other arrangements, and could not grant the request on such short notice.

When I told them I could not meet their deadline, they asked, "Well, do you know any other preacher who has a pick-up truck?"

Then I found out why they wanted me for the ceremony — I owned a pick-up. It seems that they wanted someone to haul their wedding presents from the reception to the house, and they lived on a side road that was more receptive to pick-ups than to automobiles. Besides, a pick-up had more cargo volume than the trunk of a car. I suggested another preacher who had a 4-wheel drive Bronco, and I guess the couple got married. I never heard.

The moral of this little episode is not that preachers are above lending a helping hand, or even a pick-up truck if he has one, but that some folks have some strange notions about the official functions of preachers.

Some brethren use the term "pulpit minister" in a derogatory way, indicating that some preachers follow a sectarian pattern in the performance of their duties, as opposed to a Bible pattern. I guess one would have to be blind, ignorant, or both, to deny that such situations do exist.

But on the other hand, just because a preacher spends a good deal of time behind a stand, or in an area designated as a pulpit, does not necessarily prove that

he subscribes to ministerial functions of a sectarian nature.

First, there is nothing wrong with standing or on a pulpit while preaching. The people built one for Ezra (Neh. 8: 4). When a preacher is situated where he can see, and be seen by, the audience, it makes more sense than sitting or standing out in the audience or in the back of the house.

Second, a preacher can still be called a minister, and perform the duties inherent in that term, without subscribing to some sectarian practice or theology (1 Tim. 4: 6). Further, he can preach to all who are in need of the gospel message, including weak or strong church members (2 Tim. 4: 1-5; Titus 2: 1-15). Most of the New Testament is addressed to those who are Christians, and after the apostles had baptized penitent believers, those converts were to be taught further (Mt. 28: 19, 20). Paul, Barnabas, Mark, and Silas went back and exhorted brethren in the churches even after elders had been appointed (Acts 14-15).

Therefore, while I am not going to endorse doctrines and practices of sectarian origin, neither am I going to be intimidated by the just-as-sectarian idea that a preacher cannot "locate" with a congregation and preach to an audience which contains members of the church. A few preachers have been born in the objective mood and kickitive case, weaned on sour grapes, while professing to be "free spirits" and accusing their brethren of being in bondage. Often, the very ones who accuse others of being judgmental, sectarian, and bond servants, are themselves guilty of that which they condemn (2 Pet. 2: 19).

In all this, preachers still need to keep themselves free from any situation which would tend to compromise their effectiveness and independence as good ministers of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 9: 19). And brethren need to refrain from expecting the preacher to do his work, as well as the work of elders, deacons, and half the congregation. If he is going to hold down four jobs, he should be paid for doing four jobs—now, and in eternity.

Under the best of conditions, preaching is a stressful activity. The very brethren who heap more stress upon him will sagely remark at his nervous breakdown or funeral, "It's a shame. He should have taken better care of himself."

For years I owned both an automobile and a pick-up truck. For the past few years, I have driven only pick-ups, and have no desire or plans to own another automobile. I enjoy the convenience of a pick-up for my own personal use, and delight in using it to help a brother or friend.

And, I have preached in all shapes and sizes of pulpits from Canada to Florida, and to the Philippines Islands and back. Brethren who know me also know that the gospel I preach is not for sale or compromise, and love me for it.

But if some strangers out there somewhere think that they can take advantage of a preacher just because he stands behind a pulpit or sits behind the wheel of a pick-up, they need to be educated in no uncertain terms.

PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

James R. Cope

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Temple Terrace, FL 33617



GOOD SAMARITANS FOR FLORIDA COLLEGE

They all showed up the same day and all except one left about the same time two weeks later. They came from "all over" in response to a genuine need of Florida College. Some were experts in carpentry, some in painting, some in general maintenance. All of them are active and well-along-in-years citizens in heaven's kingdom. They paid their own expenses to come from several states to be "Good Samaritans" in behalf of the young people who attend Florida College and to lend a helping hand to an already overworked year-round maintenance crew of Florida College. Some of them had sent their children here and grandchildren of some have been or are now enrolled.

The men who responded to our new President's request are the following: Gene Compton, Baytown, Texas; Willard Derryberry, Spring Hill, Tennessee; Jack Dugger, Nashville, Tennessee; Jeff Haselden, Sr., Lugoff, South Carolina; and Don Roberts, Brentwood, Tennessee.

Any person who has spent even a short time on the campus of Florida College is aware of various on-the-spot needs of this school. Some of these needs are obvious at a casual glance but to the carpenter, painter, plumber or general maintenance worker, that which needs attention immediately becomes an "eyesore." Fortunately Florida College is rich in such "friends of youth."

Our new president, "Colly" Caldwell, is well acquainted with many men who qualify as "friends" to hundreds of young men and women who have come here as students and left as graduates. Some have sent their own children and others have sent their dollars or become "overnight" parents to students and teachers visiting their areas in recruiting students, traveling with the chorus, debate, or athletic teams. Many who have never been on campus are among the most loyal supporters the College has.

So what did Colly do in his first few days as President of Florida College? The answer: He called on men who could carpenter, plumb, paint and pray to come for a few days in August to work with their heads and hands because their hearts were known to be identified with what the College has done for their own children and seeks to do for their grandchildren! Most of these men I have known firsthand for some 30 years or longer and one was a classmate 57 years ago.

With their own heads and hands these men have attended to physical needs on the Florida College campus which have gone unattended for many years — not because none was aware of these needs but because there were already a dozen needs ahead and crying for attention. These men have given more than money. They have given themselves! Yes, their time, their expertise, their energies, but most and best of all — themselves! This is the spirit that has made Florida College possible and will keep it going as long as there is need for the type education this school offers.

Only one other man has been officially connected with Florida College longer than I and none other knows better than I the thousand-and-one things needed to "make the old mare go!" When I see men my age willing to give their time, money, energies, and expertise as these men who have been here for the past two weeks have given, I know that there must be hundreds of others alive who thank God that their own sons and daughters were able to drink from the same fount of which they drank decades ago.

With the resignation of brother Lloyd Copeland from the Board of Directors at its last annual meeting, not one of the original Board members remains. Yet all present Board members I have known many years. There is not one of their number I do not trust implicitly regarding both character and his soundness "in the faith once delivered to the saints." Practically all of them are alumni or sent their children here. This Directorate made no mistake in its choice of Colly Caldwell to be the new President of the College, successor to Bob F. Owen, who served well for nine years.

The response of aging brethren of many talents to Colly's invitation to come and assist mentally and physically is evident that those who have known Florida College through the years believe it deserves their sweat as well as their dollars and tears. That God may bless you richly with students and finances essential to Florida College's continuing progress is the prayer and hope of your friend and brother, James R. Cope.

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PREACHER SUPPORT

Wallace H. Little

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Preachers depending on outside support are pleading for help. Without immediate relief many will have to stop preaching. Our economic recession is hitting them very hard. This is especially true overseas. An American preacher in Japan lost \$2000. 00 per month. In the first 15 days of January, one not-very-large congregation received 22 desperate appeals from preachers who had lost support. That number may be unusually large... but not much, and the situation is common.

I am also experiencing this while trying to raise funds for my March 1991 preaching trip to the Philippines. Faithful brethren there have appealed for me to come help in their work. Many churches have replied they are unable. Their letters read, "We have lost members, and our contribution is down," or "We are fully committed and cannot help anyone else," or, "The recession caused many of our members to cut their contributions. "

U. S. brethren are retrenching. Nowhere is this more so than in churches supporting preachers besides their local men. Church contributions are dwindling as members reduce their giving. In time of lowered incomes, this seems only proper. We regret sincerely the hardship we cause those who depend on our support. However, we believe it is beyond our control.

Nothing could be father from the truth.

I have a fair knowledge of life beyond our shores. I spent five military duty tours overseas, and later made five preaching visits to the Philippines. Even in recession, our standard of living and prosperity still far surpass every other nation on the top side of God's earth! We have duped ourselves into believing yesterdays' luxuries are today's necessities. We wallow in things. We take for granted we need refrigerators, stoves, freezers, TVs, electricity, VCRs, inside plumbing and all this means, telephones, air conditioning, dishwashers, and many other conveniences unavailable until recently.

In sharp contrast, I have been in the homes of many Filipino saints who have NONE of those. These brethren would give all they have just for running water in their homes. What we call "poverty level," they consider undreamed of wealth. Brethren, 50 years will get most of us. One hundred will get us all. Then it will not matter whether we had a new car every three years, one or two TVs and VCRs, wore silk or cotton socks or went bare-footed, ate steak, hamburgers, or went hungry. Only one thing will count. That is what John wrote in Revelation 2: 10.

This is more than a matter of perspective. By "re-trenching" and reducing our giving to maintain our standard of living, we jeopardize spreading the gospel by preferring our conveniences above others' salvation. Putting our "gimmies" ahead of the needs of Christians making great sacrifices to preach the gospel elsewhere, we slow the spread of God's Word. We also undermine our own salvation. Read James 2: 14-26.

Brethren, please don't quit supporting preachers because "times are hard." Don't let spreading of the gospel stop because we want to maintain our "standard of living." We don't know how exceedingly well off we are materially, even in the midst of "recession," nor how desperately others need our help.

I AM A SOUL WINNER

Thomas C. Hickey

5127 Holman Avenue
Hammond, IN 46320

I am happy to be a soul winner because more than anyone else in the church I, and thousands of others like me, insure that the church of the Lord will continue to exist in our communities.

No matter how great or polished a speaker may be, the churches of America today will cease to exist if we are to depend solely upon the effect of pulpit preaching within the four walls of our meetinghouses.

Little is known about Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, but that he heard John the baptist identify Jesus of Nazareth as the "Lamb of God," and went immediately to tell his brother (John 1: 41).

Philip achieved early notoriety by searching out Nathaniel and telling him, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth..." (John 1: 45).

Jesus commissioned the twelve apostles and sent them out to preach only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10: 1-15). He later sent out seventy (Luke 10: 1). After His death and resurrection He expanded the commission — "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16: 15). This latter plan was mapped out at the Ascension when He said, "You shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

The apostles worked from house to house, and the number of the disciples was increasing daily (Acts 2: 46-47; 5: 32). The apostles thought it improper to neglect the word of God, but rather used their time in prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6: 2-4), "and the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly" (Acts 6: 7).

Even those who were scattered by violent persecution

went about preaching the word, and people "were being baptized, men and women alike" (Acts 8: 4, 12).

Although the church of the first century grew by great additions, and proceeded further even to multiplications, the people did not beat a path to the doorway of the apostles. Rather, the apostles and others had to carry the gospel to the people. They were like salesmen for the Lord, presenting the message of the gospel to the people, and "asking for the order." People had to be persuaded with reasoning about righteousness, self-control and judgment to come (Acts 24: 25). Not every one obeyed, just as not all obey the Lord today. Learning to accept rejection is necessary for salesmen and soul winners! When one person declines, it is necessary to go on to the next one. Good and honest-hearted people like the eunuch, Cornelius, Lydia and the Philippian jailor are waiting eagerly for an opportunity to obey the gospel, but we need soul winners to teach and persuade them.

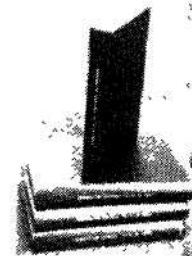
There is a growing spirit of professionalism on the part of some of our preachers by which they deem it improper to go out to win souls. They feel rather that they should do the studying, and the members should bring others to them. Even some elders see themselves serving only in an "advisory capacity." Such attitudes lead to the death of the local church. Soul winners must carry the banner forward, for only soul winners can blaze the trail which leads to growth and expansion in the kingdom of Christ.

Soul winners save souls from death, and cover a multitude of sins (James 5: 19-20).

As a soul winner you can do more to insure that the church will be here for your children and grandchildren than anyone else. Soul winning fills the pews. Standing in the forefront of the battle for truth sharpens our skills, strengthens our personal resolve to do right, and exposes our weaknesses like nothing else will or can.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

“... They rehearsed all that God had done with them ...” — Acts 14: 27

Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P. O, Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109

TOMMY THORNHILL SR. — I have been laboring with the MacDill Ave. Church of Christ, 5008 S. MacDill Ave., Tampa, FL 33611 since August 15, 1990. The attendance has increased and so has the contribution. There have been 8 baptisms and 3 restorations. This church is the closest congregation to MacDill Air Force Base. If any readers have relatives or friends that you would like me to contact. I will be glad to do so. The spirit is good and the brethren are determined to grow stronger. You can contact me at the above address, or telephone (813) 837-2384 (office) or (813) 837-5225 (home). I might add, this is my second time to work with this church. I labored with them from Sept. 1964-Sept. 1966, before I moved to Bergen, Norway for five years. Let us hear from you.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

PHILIPPINES — Dominador J. Neniell, 9404 Magpet, Cotabato reports ten restorations, four baptisms and two preachers to come out of the liberal group.

Body C. Gumpad, P. O. Box 808, Tuguegarao, Cagayan — Perhaps you have heard about the continuous eruption of the volcano in the province of Zambales. By God's help we are not directly hurt here in our area. We thank you for your prayers for us. Four volcanoes located here in the province of Cagayan (Mt. Didicas) are also showing abnormality and might also erupt. If this happens, great tidal waves are expected. May God continue to protect his people.

The effort at Tuguegarao continues to prosper. We had four baptisms in June. However, we have lost ten due to transfer. We also lost a young couple who went back to the Devil. We had 59 in attendance last Sunday (July 7, 1991) with P328. (\$12. 61) collection.

The dry cough of our little boy, Teddy, (two months old) has turned into a whooping cough, besides that he has Allergic Bronchitis and Allergic Rhinitis. We hope he will be cured soon.

William R. Lagan, Sr. — I don't know if there is a church of Christ in Samar, a neighboring province of Leyte and Bicol. Since I have been a member of the church, I have not heard of a single church of Christ in Samar. Samar is the birthplace of my wife. Since there are some relatives there (that we taught last year), my wife and I are willing to go there. I have seven languages to speak and preach, so I believe I can do the work of an evangelist in that area.

Samar is a place where many rebels are, such as the New People's Army and Communist Party, in the Philippines. This is the prime cause why many are afraid to go there. Please help us.

SOUTH AFRICA — Paul K. Williams, P. O. Box 324, Eshowe 3815 — On the second Tuesday night of the meeting David Ngonyama preached at Mapumulo, he introduced six young women who had been baptized that day. Several of the young boys at Mapumulo who were

baptized last year are not attending. Whether we can restore them I do not know.

Gladys Wells (81 years old) of Sacramento CA arrived in Johannesburg on July 14. Each morning Tressa Mithethwa (18 years old) comes to the house where Gladys tutors her in Braille. It will not be long until she will be able to read well enough to read the Bible in Braille. We are to put her on the plane for London Aug. 5.

Ray Votaw, Box 801, Springs 1560 — Brother Michael Mabena asked me if I would accompany him and others to Phola Village in the Witbank Highveld area for some preaching. As it turned out the preacher for the local "liberal" church met with us with most of *his* members. He wanted to speak and the Phola brethren gave him permission. He told them he knew all about me and how I had divided the church there and "carried away" some members. Brother Alfred Mogani stood up and went back some 20 years and related how that brother "Vote" had first brought the gospel to that area. With a vivid remembrance of people and dates he mentioned those who had been converted through the years by me and the preachers I had introduced in the area. Then he related how that just a few years ago apostate brethren from Withwatersrand (Benoni) came out and tried to disrupt the faithful church there. Although I enjoyed the activities there, it was through tear filled eyes that I drove back to Springs while thinking about all the sunshine which had recently gone out of our lives through the deaths of 2 daughters in the past year. What I'm trying to say, brethren is, Yes, I cry a lot these days. I get so tired I hurt. Many times I feel almost overcome with depression. But my work continues.

I have been urged by the white church in Port Elizabeth to come down in a couple of weeks for 2 or 3 days and evenings of "open forum." The church there is split into 5 or 6 different groups (Institutional), Christian church and Crossroaders).

I received a message from brethren in the independent black state of Venda — way up on the Zimbabwe border — to come and do some teaching. I still plan to work with and through the local black (Kwa-Thema) church in strengthening other black churches in both urban areas and homeland villages. We especially want to be active in the tribal state of Lebowa.

I realize that some of you have probably planned your budgets with the view in mind of my returning soon. In fact, I have already lost \$200 per month. We would like for you to keep us in mind as you make your plans for the future.

ITALY — Rodolfo Berdini, Via G. Perego, 58 H, 00144 Rome — Our congregation in Aprilia meets twice during the week, on Tuesday and Thursdays for Bible Studies, and on Sundays for Bible classes and worship. In June I was invited by the Pomezia church to lecture about

Mary. The lesson was well received, not only by brethren, but also by the non-Christians.

The Pontino local paper published several articles which I wrote on various Biblical subjects. I still marvel of what a good possibility we have to preach through a local paper.

Francesco Foschi, Via G. Leopardi, 5, 04011 Aprilia — In Latina Church the things are doing fine. Now we are studying about the devil's personality and in which way he is "seeking whom he may devour." In this way we will be able to fight against every error. Last Sunday there was 15 of us in attendance to worship. My radio program is continuing on Sunday morning. This is heard in many cities: Lantina, Aprilia, Cisterna, Nettuno, Anzio, Velletri and so on. We are receiving some phone calls from our telphonic secretary, but every one of them without result. I was invited by Pomezia Church (where Roberto Tondelli preaches) to preach about the Jehovah's Witnesses doctrines.

EASTERN EUROPE — Gary Ogden, 803 W. Maloney St., Plant City, FL 33566 — In June 1991 brethren Harry ("Buddy") Payne, Jr., Gary Ogden, Joe Rose, Lonnie Fritz, and David Teel spent three weeks on a "soil testing" mission in several Eastern European countries. We spent some time with the New work in Prague, Czechoslovakia. At least six have been baptized in the last few months. That work is going well, but the American preachers are leaving by the first of the year and we need someone to go and take up their work.

From Prague, we spent a couple of days in Brno, Czech, and found conditions ripe for the gospel. Dale Smelser is now going down to Brno from Prague and doing some follow-up teaching. After that, our itinerary included Budapest, Hungary; Bucharest, Romania; Sofia, Bulgaria and Belgrade, Yugoslavia. In each city we handed out Bibles and correspondence courses, talked with people on the streets and invited them to Bible studies back at the hotel in the evening. We distributed 1200 Bibles in English and various languages and studied with 60 people, some of them more than once.

We are convinced that there is indeed an open door of opportunity in these countries and that we must take advantage now. The denominations and our institutional brethren are going in by the droves. We must increase our efforts to spread the simple message of the gospel to a truth-starved people. If you would like more information about the work and what you can do, call Buddy Payne (813) 988-9426 or Gary Ogden (813) 752-2227.

SOUTH AMERICA — Fernando Venegas P., Casilla# 122 C. C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina — The work in Mendoza continues to march steadily forward. We have between six to ten visitors in attendance for most of our services. This is due to many factors. The Christians here have been sharing their faith with others. Our radio program, which has been off the air for nearly six months, still brings us some searching for the truth. It has been nearly three weeks since one visitor, Liliانا Bermudez, in her late twenties, was baptized into Christ.

MEXICO — Ray Madrigal, 165 Hillington Drive, Paducah, KY 42001 — During the weeks of July 28 - August 4, I had the opportunity to preach a series of Gospel Meetings in Guadalajara, Mexico. The series was unique in that special classes were arranged for the young people on the subjects of atheism, denominationalism, authority, evidence, courtship, marriage and divorce. Young people from all over the country (Monterrey, Matamoros, Linares, etc.) traveled to Guadalajara to participate in these classes. In many cases, they had to endure a 21-hour bus ride one way. Many had to take a week off (without pay) in order to attend. Typical housing arrangements included 10 or more people sharing a single bathroom and blankets on the floor for sleeping. The state of the church in Mexico is full of hope and prosperity. Much of this spiritual strength can be attributed to the work of Apolos Rodrigues, the local preacher in Guadalajara. On the final night of the meeting, four were baptized into Jesus Christ.

DEATHS

DORVAL L. McCLISTER, who labored in the Chicago area for 32 years as a preacher of the gospel, left this life on July 22, 1991, at the age of 62. He labored with the church in Crestwood, IL for 10 years and with God's people in Burbank, IL for 22 years. In January of this year he moved to Jamestown, KY to work with the brethren there. On April

5 dad was diagnosed as having an inoperable brain tumor. After his diagnosis he was not able to preach again due to the aggressive nature of his illness, the effects of the radiation and chemotherapy.

The funeral was held in Colombia, KY, just a few miles from where dad was raised. He was buried on July 25 in the McClister family cemetery in his home town of Fairplay, KY. Melvin Curry, a longtime friend of our family, and who first encouraged dad to take up the work of preaching the gospel, preached the funeral. Our family was well-comforted by several brethren in the Lord. To them all we express our sincerest appreciation. — David McClister, 7845 Cottonwood, Lenexa, KS 66216.

SPECIAL SERIES AT ANNANDALE, VA

The Annandale church of Christ is planning a special series of studies designed to "equip the saints" for the work of the ministry. The dates are Oct. 28-Nov. 1, 1991. There will be four sessions each morning.

At the 9: 00 a. m. hour the theme will be "Starting From Scratch — Building A New Work." Mon.: "Picking a place" — David Brewer. Tues.: "Door knocking" — Alan Williamson. Wed.: "Starting Classes" — David Brewer. Thurs.: "Discouragements" — Alan Williamson. Fri.: "Set in order" — Ron Roark.

At the 10. 00 a. m. hour Ney Rieber will speak each day on "Prison Efforts — Bible Correspondence Courses — Use Of Tracts."

At the 11: 00 a. m. hour the theme will be "The Church In The Twentieth Century." Mon.: "Using TV" — Rick Russell. Tues.: "Using Computers" — Tim Stringer. Wed.: "Using Newspapers" — Floyd Chapelear. Thurs.: "Newsletter." Fri.: "Ethnic Diversity" — Sam Turrentine.

At noon hour Floyd Chapelear with address the theme: "How to Teach The Bible In The Class Setting."

On Saturday (Nov. 2) there will be a special four hour class (9: 00 a. m. to 1: 00 p. m.) on song leading taught by Alan Malone.

If you are interested in attending and want a place to stay contact Derrick Proctor, 4731 Hersand Ct., Dale City, VA 22193 or call (703) 680-3420.

NEW WORK IN LAKE CHARLES, LA

A new conservative church has been established in Lake Charles, LA. We began meeting Sunday, Aug. 4. We are meeting, temporarily, in the Kinder Care Learning Center at 4630 Nelson Road, across the street from the new Wal-Mart Store, located on the corner of McNeese and Nelson Road.

There were 12 present for our first morning worship service and 13 present for the evening service. Our mid-week services will be conducted on Thursday evenings at 7: 00 p. m.

If you know of any contacts we can make in the Lake Charles area, please write to: Kenneth R. Hoyle, P. O. Box 6414, Lake Charles, LA 70606. If you are traveling in this area, we would be happy to have you visit with us.

SAINTS IN STURGIS, MS SUFFER FOR CHRIST AN UPDATE

BOBBY HOLMES, 219 Timothy Trail, Duncanville, TX 75137, **RON HALBROOK**, 654 Gray St., West Columbia, TX 77486 — As we pointed out earlier, when the Sturgis building was constructed about 1984, these brethren were put under the oversight of the Lee Blvd. church. The Sturgis brethren learned the truth about the autonomy of the church and requested in early 1988 that their treasury and deed be turned over to them, in keeping with the scriptures.

The Lee Blvd church relinquished Sturgis' treasury, but retained the deed to Strugis' property, though they offered to sell Sturgis the property for \$35, 000. When additional efforts were made in late 1990 to persuade Lee Blvd. to give the Sturgis deed to the Sturgis brethren, the deed was transferred instead to a third church: the Hwy. 82 church in Starksville. The Hwy 82 church planned to sell the property and evict the Sturgis brethren. When the Sturgis church asked for help in resolving this injustice, brother Thomas D. Keenum, Sr. of Booneville, MS recommended that Sturgis offer \$17, 000 to Hwy. 82 to settle for the property.

The Hwy 82 church agreed to sell the Sturgis church building to the Sturgis church for \$17, 000 but set a deadline of May 1991 to receive the money. Brother Keenum told Hwy. 82 that more time would be needed to raise the money, and understood that Hwy. 82 accepted this arrangement. Appeals for individual help in raising the

money began appearing during June and July 1991 in gospel papers published by faithful brethren. The response has been good. As this "update" is being prepared in mid-July, well over \$3, 000 has been received.

The Highway 82 church notified the Sturgis brethren to vacate the Sturgis church building because it has been sold to a denominational group for \$19, 000! Furthermore, Hwy. 82 says they have already spend the money on a building program for themselves!

Rather than take the Lee Blvd. and Hwy 82 churches to court, brother Keenum urged the Strugis brethren to suffer the wrong and *let the final accounting be made at the Judgment Bar of God*. He had urged them to find another piece of land to purchase, offered to provide any needed legal services free to secure a clear deed, and promised to locate brethren who will donate their labor to construct a new meeting place. He estimates that a modest building could be put up for about \$20, 000, including the land and materials.

These brethren are already searching for a new piece of property. Error and liberalism have no ethics. Let us unite our hearts in prayer on their behalf. Let those who have the ability to send \$5, \$25, \$50, \$100, or whatever we can to the Strugis Church of Christ Building Fund, P. O. Box 418, Booneville, MS 38829.

PREACHERS NEEDED

CLEVELAND, TENNESSEE — The Hwy. 64 church of Christ at Cleveland, TN is seeking a full-time evangelist. Cleveland is located 30 miles north of Chattanooga. The church is small (35 members) and has great potential for growth in a city of 29, 000. Some outside support will be required. If interested call Larry Butler (615) 479-9483, Bill Woodall (615) 339-0094, Robert Callahan (615) 479-8892 or John Stiner (615) 334-9664.

OGDEN, UTAH — The church in Ogden needs a preacher to work with them. Being small in number, they need a man who has retirement income, social security or who can raise outside support. They have a house, pay utilities and health insurance. If interested, write to Church of Christ, 910 23rd St., Ogden, UT 84401 or call (801) 394-1397, or call Mike Umphrey (801) 399-6363.

LAKE CITY, FLORIDA—The Lakeview congregation in Lake City, FL is in need of a full-time evangelist. We are self-supporting. Please address all correspondence to Lakeview Church of Christ, P. O Box 34, Lake City, FL 32056-0034, or contact Vernon Crawford (904) 752-2829 or Harold Taylor (904) 752-2476.

MERCED, CALIFORNIA — The 20th St. church in Merced, CA is looking for a full-time preacher. Attendance averages 50. Located in the center of the San Joaquin Valley 60 miles north of Fresno and 120 miles south of Sacramento. If interested call the elders: Wes Cox (209) 722-5440 or Dean Gibson (209) 722-7967.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

JOHN D. BERLIN, 3558 Concerto Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45241 — After nearly five years with the church in Evendale, OH we are looking to relocate. I have been preaching for 18 years. Please call if you are interested (513) 563-7439.

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