

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

H. E. Phillips

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How Do Men Forsake The Right Way?

Goals and motives play an enormous role in determining what people will do and how strong their convictions will be. The most important places in life require dedication to principle and faithfulness to duty. Those who desert the principles and duties to which they dedicated themselves, especially when they are associated with others, do the same damage as if they served the enemy of their cause. There are many in the church who have deserted the Lord Jesus Christ and his word.

A compromise of one's conviction will allow sins that destroy the cause for which Christ died. Where did the idea that mild sins or "human weakness" will be tolerated by God? The idea that mild slander, little white lies, little deceitful conversations among members of the church, taking liberty with the authority of Christ came from compromise attitudes. It did not come from sound doctrine. It came by the promotion and approval of preachers, elders, teachers and Christians as they silently consent to the practice of sin by not speaking against it and not using such discipline as is necessary to keep it out of the church. Every teacher or practitioner of "evil communication" out of the mouth is a traitor to the Lord. They have forsaken the principles of truth and have become the enemies of God.

We also have the universal problem of indifference among members of the church. Apathy is the product

of Satan and is opposed to the way of Truth. All apathy produces lukewarmness and finally spiritual death. It is from the lack of real conviction. The Laodiceans were nauseating to the Lord because of the "lukewarmness" toward their responsibilities. They were told to repent. God will not tolerate such attitudes, and the church cannot afford to be guilty of tolerating and endorsing such today. The church at Ephesus was industrious, but they had left their first love. This condition could not continue; they had to repent or have the candlestick removed. It is as true today as it was then. Mechanical exactness in rituals is not obedience to the Lord. One must do exactly what the Lord requires, but it must be done with love and zeal.

Emotional and sentimentalism are supplanting true worship in spirit and truth in many congregations of the Lord's people today. More time and energy is spent in relating an emotional account of human experience than in rebuking sin and admonishing to be faithful to the Lord. If you want to have the anathema of important men upon you, just speak out against the modern philosophy of preaching among the notable in the church today. Go easy, speak softly, do not rebuke or condemn; compliment and flatter the church, do not call names, speak in glowing terms of the accomplishments and greatness of the church; do not expose weakness and lack of faithfulness. This is the modern day philosophy of gospel preaching. One has but to glance at the New Testament to be convinced that this sort of deceptive handling of the word of God breeds religious traitors to the cause of Christ, and never produced faithful workers in the service of God.

Turncoats in the church are on the increase because of apathy and worldly ambitions within the church. We cannot blame the world for the weak spiritual condition of some churches. Such evil was present when in the fullness of time God brought into existence the kingdom spoken of by the prophets. The church IS the "called out" from the world into Christ. We have been delivered from the powers of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1: 13). The real reason why so many turn from the truth is that many "in the church" have never been converted to Christ; they have never been convicted of sin in their own lives; they have never really accepted the authority of Jesus

Christ as taught in the New Testament.

This is no little matter. It has become a real problem. We need to be strong in the Lord and in the word of his power. We must oppose sin in every form and in every place. We must insist upon complete obedience to Jesus Christ. To walk in the truth is to abide in Christ and have the hope of eternal life.

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" QUOTE

"If you don't like someone, the way he holds his spoon makes you furious; if you like him, he can turn his plate over into your lap and you won't mind."

—Irving Becker

UNQUOTE "

Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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Haters Of Good

Paul warned of "perilous times" during the "last days" (2 Tim. 3: 1). "The last days" refers to the gospel age and not just the last few days of that age. Throughout the tenure of the last days there would arise times especially difficult for the Lord's people, times which would test their faith and conviction and sorely try their patience. The very time in which Paul wrote that was "perilous" for believers. Many of the characteristics he listed in verse 2-7 were all too obvious even then. Half of the world was enslaved to the other half with every evil attending such a circumstance. Pagan religion distorted the true concept of God and promoted the grossest perversions, all in the name of the "gods." In the midst of it all, the true Christian was an oddity. Peter said "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (1 Pet. 4: 4).

But look at Paul's list of characteristics of those who would make the times difficult for the godly. "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, HATERS OF GOOD, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3: 2-7-NASV).

The context here indicates apostates who have rejected the faith. They manifest the same spirit and behavior as those who never knew the truth. But, tell me, as you read through that sad list, did you recognize anyone you know? Are not these traits present in megadoses in our own time?

Focus with me on the phrase "haters of good." The King James Version reads "despisers of those that are good." The positive form of the word here is used in Titus 1: 8 of elders: "lovers of good." The negative form appears in 2 Tim. 3: 3, "not lovers" or properly "haters" of good.

A Hedonistic Society

It is time for Christians in America to awaken to the fact that this is not a decent society anymore. Every sin

in the book has been dubbed "an alternate lifestyle." The political scene reeks of scandal. Negative campaigning is the order of the day. Confidence in elected officials is at an all-time low. Social engineers have recommended every sort of approach except respect for God and his word to control alcoholism and other forms of drug abuse, unwanted pregnancies, and venereal diseases, by pouring gasoline on the fire. Prohibition was bad, so it was argued that the government should issue a license to merchants to sell the stuff. Bars could offer "happy hours" for people on the way home from work during rush traffic. We had to have more sex education (without moralizing) and now students pass around condoms and other forms of birth control devices in classrooms, go on field trips to drug stores to inspect condoms and report back to class on their findings, or schools dispense these devices to high school students. They are told to practice "responsible sex" and then are given devices to help them be "responsible."

Under the guise of clarifying values, students of all ages have their values scrambled so that they cannot tell the difference between right and wrong. The Bible cannot even be read in the classroom and school prayers are out. The only legal reference to the Bible is an effort to ridicule what it says about creation, morals and human responsibility. And should some systems and teachers be so bold as to defy this mandate, there are high powered and well financed legal organizations ready to leap into action, drag the offenders to court and wrap the educational system in a cocoon where they are shielded from the nefarious influence of the word of God. Freedom of religion has come to mean freedom from religion. Good is called evil and evil is called good.

Television and movies have become major purveyors of this hedonistic society. The music industry plays a major role in the corruption of the nation's morals. In the name of "artistic expression" anything goes. Let's grant right up front that there are religious phonies who even use television to rake in millions from sympathizers who have no better judgment than to forward their last dollar to these bandits. But why does every preacher, or religious figure portrayed on the TV screen have to be made out to be some kind of pervert, or sissified incompetent? Are there no good, decent people to be praised? Well, I believe there are. Our work takes us all over the country where we meet people who are truly the salt of the earth.

But a stroll through any shopping mall, or theme park, or just standing in line at a checkup counter to pay for your gasoline, exposes you to a herd of people indelicately dressed, buying beer, or lottery tickets, and assaults your hearing with foul language.

What Are We To Do?

We might as well face the fact that we are in the minority. Your voice at the PTO meeting may be indeed a strange sound to many. Standing your ground at work on some matter of principle may expose you to ridicule, or even hinder a promotion. At school, you may become what every teenager dreads — different! At home, you may be the last hope of sanity in a domestic world gone crazy. But you CAN make a difference. You MUST make a difference. If a handful of unknown fishermen, a tax

collector, and a militant member of the Jewish underground movement could be transformed into faithful servants of God whose lives changed the destiny of the world, then surely there is something WE can do in our own time. Faithfully, persistently and militantly they preached and practiced what Jesus taught them. Whatever has been decent in men of every nation since that time is directly traceable to what they did in fulfilling the Lord's mandate to "go into all the world" with the gospel. The gospel is still God power to save. As it saves, it changes not only the lives of those it saves, but the environment around those saved by its power. They are a genuine blessing at work, at home, at school, at play and in the government. I'm not talking about imitation Christians, hypocrites who disgrace the name of Christ, but about the genuine article.

I would also strongly urge my brethren to do everything possible to spread the gospel into the other nations of earth while we have the means to do it. Not only should this be done because it is right, but one of the side effects may be that we will be casting bread upon the water which will return after many days. For you see, we may just need gospel preachers from India, Nigeria, the Philippines or eastern Europe to come to this country someday to try and rescue our Grandchildren from the gods of hedonism.

Let's make sure that we are "lovers of good" and that we give no ground to those who are truly "haters of good."

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A Review Of Jerry Bassett's
*Rethinking Marriage, Divorce
& Remarriage* (No 5)

Donnie V. Rader

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Lexington, Alabama 35648



May the Guilty Party Remarry? Divorce, Remarriage and Fellowship

This is the last of the series of articles that review Jerry Bassett's book. The last two sections of his book deal with the guilty party and the fellowship question as it relates to divorce and remarriage.

The "Guilty" Party

Chapter X of Bassett's book is presented differently than any other chapters. In the other chapters he states his convictions about other aspects of divorce and remarriage. However, in this chapter, he makes it appear that he is undecided. He presents arguments both "for" and "against" the guilty party remarrying. He tells us that "There are strong, logical arguments on both sides of the question... Neither side, however, seems to me to have a clinching argument on this point. From the standpoint of the argumentation based on Jesus' wording, it could be either way" (Bassett, p. 112).

To any perceptive reader it is obvious that he thinks the guilty party (one put away for fornication) can remarry. He tells us that 1 Cor. 7: 27-28 demonstrates "that a divorced person is not prohibited from remarrying just because he has been put away" (Bassett, p. 114). He further wrote, "Shall we tell the one who has been put away on the grounds of his own fornication that without any doubt he has as much right to marry as anyone else? If so, on what statement from God shall this advice be given?"

"Shall we tell this one who has no spouse, having been put away lawfully, that God absolutely forbids him to have one? What declaration from God states this?"

"There is no question that the mercy of God is ample, on the basis of this man's repentance, to release and forgive him to the extent that he could be allowed to enter another marriage covenant" (Bassett, p. 117).

This above quote is interesting in light of the fact that Jerry had stated a few pages earlier that "when the New Testament was revealed, it contained no express provisions for the divorced party in a case based on sexual immorality to remarry" (Bassett, p. 111).

Brother Bassett presents three basic contentions. (1) He argues that there is no prohibition concerning the put away fornicator remarrying (Bassett, pp. 114, 117). This

is not true because Jesus did prohibit the put away one's remarriage. Jesus said, "... and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt. 5: 32b). "... and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19: 9b). "... and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband commit-teth adultery" (Luke 16: 18b). Notice that there is no exception phrase in the clause we just quoted. The exception in the first clause applies to the one who puts his mate away.

(2) Bassett also argues that the exception phrase applies to both clauses in Matt. 19: 9. He goes on to point out that this does not prove that the put away fornicator has a right to remarry. But, he thinks it proves that the put away fornicator is not forbidden to remarry.

The exception phrase cannot grammatically modify both the first and last clauses of Matt. 19: 9. As it modifies the first clause, it is an *adverbial* phrase (qualifying "shall put away"). This cannot be done grammatically! I wrote to Bruce M. Metzger asking him, "Does the exception clause ('except it be for fornication') modify the phrase 'and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery?'" His answer was "no, it qualifies the preceding clause." Dr. Harry Sturz (another noted Greek scholar) said, "In my opinion, the phrase, 'except it be for fornication,' applies to the first clause but not to the last."

Jerry tries to parallel the phrase "unless they repent" (Rev. 2: 22-23) to the exception phrase of Matt. 19: 9. He says it applies to the clause "I will cast..." (previous to the phrase) and to the clause "I will kill..." (following the phrase). However, the construction is not parallel. The phrase in Rev. 2 could apply to both as an adverbial phrase. But, if we try it in Matt. 19: 9, it is used as an adverbial phrase in the first clause and an adjectival phrase in the second. We encourage brother Bassett to find a passage that is really parallel.

(3) Jerry contends that God's mercy is ample to forgive the fornicator who repents so that he is released and allowed to enter another marriage (Bassett, p. 117). I wonder if God's grace is ample to forgive any divorced or divorcee? If so, (and it is), then any divorced person or divorcee is forgiven, released and allowed to remarry? Would Bassett argue that anyone in a divorce situation can remarry?

There is no authority for the put away fornicator to remarry. Brother Bassett himself admits this point (p. 111). To act without authority is a sin (2 Jno. 9). God's silence is not permissive, but prohibitive (Heb. 7: 14). We must abide by the authority of Christ in this area as in the work, worship and organization of the church.

Fellowship

A side issue that has been raised in the divorce and remarriage controversy is the question of fellowship. Brother Bassett devotes two chapters to this problem.

Four points are made in Jerry's book. (1) In congregational matters we must agree (p. 128), yet in individual matters we may differ. He contends that Romans 14 is a discussion of individual matters.

(2) Bassett clarifies that if one teaches a doctrine that is "indisputably contrary to the doctrine delivered by the

apostles of Christ" the congregation should take action against the individual. Furthermore, if an individual involves himself in that which is "clearly immoral" the church should take action (pp. 130-131).

(3) Jerry raises the question of whether we can differ over matters of doctrinal consequence. His answer to the question is yes (Bassett, p. 134).

(4) He parallels the issue of divorce and remarriage to the war question (pp. 145-148).

Romans 14 deals with matters of indifference. Whether one eats meats or does not eat meats made no difference. Neither one would be guilty of sin. No matter which he did, God received him (v. 3). The one who eats does so *to the Lord* (v. 6). The one who does not eat does so *to the Lord* (v. 6). The brethren were told not to judge one another in this matter (v. 13).

This is obviously in contrast to matters that involve sin. Unscriptural divorce and remarriage involves one in the sin of adultery. God does not receive him, but rejects him (Heb. 13: 4). God does not expect us to receive him, but commands that he be disciplined (1 Cor. 5). One who commits adultery cannot do so to the Lord. We are to judge the one who is guilty of adultery (1 Cor. 5).

In all fairness to brother Bassett, he acknowledges that Romans 14 deals with matters that are "doctrinally inconsequential" (Bassett, p 132). However, as his section on fellowship continues, I am left wondering if he doesn't put the varying positions on divorce and remarriage under Rom. 14.

He tells us that there are "matters of doctrinal consequences about which Christians can disagree with one another but continue to work together within a local church" (Bassett, p. 134). He says these matters may even involve questions of spiritual and even moral implications. He draws a parallel between the divorce and remarriage issues and the war question.

Whether one believes that the war question is parallel or not may depend on his view on the war question. Since we still fellowship those who teach and practice differently on the war question (a moral question), Bassett thinks we can do the same on divorce and remarriage. I wonder why we couldn't do the same on the moral questions of homosexuality and polygamy.

Bassett said that one who teaches a doctrine that was indisputably contrary to the doctrine of Christ ought to be dealt with. Furthermore, one whose activities were clearly immoral ought to be disciplined (Bassett, pp. 130-131). Adultery is clearly immoral (Gal. 5; 19-21). Those whose teaching encourages divorce and remarriage contrary to Matt. 19: 9 are indisputably contrary to the doctrine of Christ. So, how can we fellowship the one who teaches error on divorce and remarriage or the one who lives in harmony with his teaching?

We must not forget two basic principles; (1) We cannot fellowship sin or those in sin (Eph. 5: 11; 1 Cor. 5). (2) We cannot fellowship those who teach error (2 Jno. 9: 11; Rev. 2: 18-21).

Knowing that I would be writing a review of his material, brother Bassett asked that I address the question of excluding from fellowship those who agree with Bassett and others on divorce and remarriage

while including some who teach the "mental divorce" view (Jerry Bassett's letter to me, March 11, 1991).

In any issue there must be some tolerance and the spirit of longsuffering (Eph. 4: 1-3). I am not ready to mark off every brother who disagrees with me on the "mental divorce" issue or even whether the alien is amenable to the law of Christ.

However, when either one of these brethren press their positions so that churches are disturbed or people are comforted in adultery, they become the teacher of 2 Jno. 9-11.

Quite frankly, I don't see much difference in the consequences of either position. If either are adhered to, adultery is the result.

Indeed, it is time to rethink marriage, divorce and remarriage.

Bassett-Holt Debate On Divorce-Remarriage

Robert F. Turner

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Burnet, Texas 78611

The speakers were Jerry F. Bassett, preacher at the Coburg Road church, Eugene, Oregon; and Jack Holt (the younger), preacher at Oaks-West church, Burnet, Texas, but supported by West Avenue church, San Antonio, Texas. They met first at San Antonio, Feb. 10-11, where Bassett affirmed "an alien sinner whose marriage ended by divorce for a cause other than fornication, and who is now married to another person, may be forgiven by obeying the gospel, **and should maintain his second marriage.**" Feb. 13-14, Holt affirmed "may be forgiven ... **provided he is willing to divorce his second wife.**" Then, Mar. 9-10, 12-13, they met in Eugene, Or., on the same propositions but in reverse order. W. L. Wharton was the moderator for Bassett in both places; while Elmer Moore moderated for Holt in Texas, and Robert F. Turner moderated for Holt in Oregon.

In both places the speakers conducted themselves in an excellent way, deferring to one another; and the hearers were polite and refrained from demonstrations. Numerous charts were used, expertly handled, and for the most part the audience could understand the issues being presented. In Texas and in Oregon the attendance was good, and included many preachers and elders of both persuasions. This writer believes the truth was admirably upheld.

An obvious issue in this subject is "repentance" and what it requires. Holt contended one must cease that error of which he repented; and Bassett agreed, but said the error **was not sexual in its nature** but consisted of

two things: divorce and the making of a second covenant (the marriage ceremony). One could "repent" of these two things, and maintain his marriage with the second wife. Holt contended one committed adultery in the second marriage, and true repentance required that this second relationship cease.

Their difference demanded a definition of "adultery" in Matt. 19: 9 et al.; and Bassett said the word was used figuratively, referring to the "adulteration" of the covenant made in the first marriage ceremony. He contended the verb "marry" had no sexual connotation, as is found in the noun "marriage." Holt cited context (Matt. 19: 10-12) where "not to marry" was related to the making of eunuchs by self containment ("for the kingdom of heaven's sake"). He also cited 1 Cor. 7: 9 "better to **marry** than to burn;" and asked if covenant making alone quenches the "burn"? Then, in Matt. 19: 9; Lk. 16: 18: "whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." This "whoso" could be one who had never before made a marriage "covenant." How could "adulteration of covenant" apply here? Holt showed the adulteration of covenant argument is deeply flawed.

Bassett contended a married couple can not commit adultery with one another; while Holt cited Rom. 7: 2-3 to show the second marriage is adulterous "so long as (the first husband) liveth." Bassett dismissed Rom. 7: as an "analogy," and Holt replied in essence. "So what? Each facet of the analogy is still true." Holt also cited Mk. 6: 17-18 and said the marriage of Herod and Herodias was adulterous; but Bassett said it was only incest. Holt replied that incest involved uncovering "the nakedness of thy brother's wife" (Lev. 18: 16); and effectively used a chart which quoted Rom. 7: with names supplied. "For the woman which hath an husband (**Herodias**) is bound by the law to her husband (**Philip**) so long as he liveth ... So then if, while her husband (**Philip**) liveth, she (**Herodias**) be married to another man (**Herod**), she shall be called an adulteress."

1 Cor. 7: received much attention. Bassett said v. 24 (abide as called) referred to marriage; hence meant the converted alien should not change his marriage state. When Holt asked about polygamy, Bassett used v. 2 to say "context" forbade that. Holt then said the **immediate context** (vs. 18-24, circumcision, slavery) dealt with matters of indifference as respects serving Christ; and further context (Vs. 10-11) forbade divorce and remarriage. Bassett applied these verses only to saints who **initiate** divorce, he said "loosed" of v. 27b meant "divorced," and v. 28 said if such an one marry he has not sinned. Holt said the context (vs. 25-26) deals with never married people. (See "virgins" "so to be," Cf. Rev. 14: 4, rft.) He also reminded us, to divorce and remarry are the two elements Bassett says makes the sin of adultery. All of us should remember. "Don't Mess With Context!"

Differing concepts regarding Christ's teaching during his personal ministry surfaced repeatedly. Both men recognized that Jesus lived under Judaism and was usually speaking to Jews. But His message was not simply a rehash of the Law of Moses. It was a preparation for things to come. Holt saw the final and complete revelation of God's will in Jesus Christ (Heb. 1: 1-2); "All

truth: set forth by Him and His witnesses (Jn. 16: 12-13; Lk. 24: 45-49), for "all the world." Bassett seemed to think that Jesus' exposition of Moses' Law meant an approval of "moral" conditions under that law for today. Since the Jews asked Christ about Moses' **command** which he **wrote** (Bassett emphasis) relative to divorce, he seemed to think the standard of Deut. 24: 1-f, applied to today. Because God used Esther's place in King Ahasuerus' harem to accomplish some good end, and did not charge her with immorality, Bassett sees God's approval of such "unchanging" moral conduct today.

Holt pointed out that Jesus said those standards were "suffered," because of the hardness of hearts, "but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19: 8). Compare Acts 14: 16; 17: 30; Rom. 2: 4; He recalled that God used wicked nations to accomplish His purposes; even "winked at" idolatry, "but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." The "moral capacity" that is universal in every accountable being made in God's image, has come to be regarded by some as a "moral code" by which divorce and remarriage is regulated. Holt asked if this "code" was objectively or subjectively determined, and I did not hear a clear consistent answer.

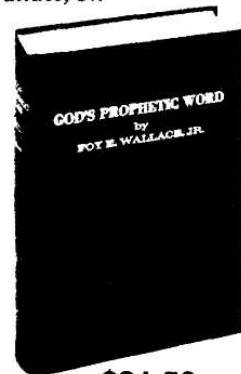
I suppose the reader can tell my conclusion about this debate, but regardless of personal views on the subject, all should thank the participants for shaking complacency and making us think of the various concepts involved. Perhaps of first importance is a basic understanding of divine revelation—on this or any subject. And certainly, in the present moral climate, we must be concerned for preservation of the home—and society. Churches are divided over these matters: by zealots, compromisers, and people who allow emotions and bizarre hypothetical "cases" to take the place of calm sane Bible study. We should neither invent "issues" nor ignore them. But there is scarcely an individual this subject has not or will not touch. If you have not considered its pros and cons, the tapes of this debate will give you food for thought, and I recommend them.

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Sending Outside Support

I know what it is like to feel the same gratitude felt by the apostle Paul when he gave thanks for the church at Philippi for sending more than once to meet his needs (Phil. 4: 15-16). At the time of this writing five churches provide my salary on a regular basis. I have also had the experience of working with churches that, like Philippi, had the financial resources to send to evangelists in other places. It is not easy to raise support to go into a difficult area. But neither is it easy to have more requests for help than money to send. The following suggestions are offered with the hope that they can help make the decisions easier for churches as well as the financial arrangements more secure for the evangelist.

KNOW THE MAN YOU SUPPORT. It is impossible to emphasize this point enough! You must be confident that he will be faithful and active in preaching the truth, not lazy. He needs to have a measure of good judgment in dealing with people problems. When possible, knowing something of the man's past work is very helpful. If he has a record of splitting churches you need to know!

KNOW SOMETHING OF THE WORK WHERE HE IS GOING. This is especially important if you have two or more requests, all from worthy men, with resources to help only one. Sometimes even good men don't use the best judgment in where they locate. Good stewardship demands that the Lord's money be put to the best use possible. The work in some areas has been like a black hole which has devoured the efforts of a lot of good preachers and thousand of dollars of the Lord's money with little or no progress to show for it. Some churches are satisfied to let other churches support their preacher with no seeming concern for the need to become self-sustaining. This is not right! It's understood that the work in some areas is hard, growth is going to be slow, and patience to support such work is needed. But it's also true that some churches have never grown for other reasons (like cantankerous, lazy members). It is bad stewardship to send money to support men in such areas when the fields are white unto the harvest elsewhere.

ONCE THE DECISION IS MADE, PROVIDE SOME SECURITY FOR THE EVANGELIST BY MAKING A COMMITMENT TO HIS SUPPORT. It's hard for man to do an effective work when he must wonder from month to month whether or not he is going to receive a check from a given source. Therefore it is good to make

a commitment which, barring unfortunate circumstances, provide a measure of security. The following is a portion of a letter I received from a church which now supports me. I think it is a good model and the elders of this church are to be commended:

"This support will be provided to you for a period of five years in the hope that the work there will become self-supporting in that time. In the event that it should become necessary for us to reduce or terminate this support for financial reasons, we will give you one year advance notice so that you will have adequate time to find replacement support. At the end of the five year period, we will evaluate the need to continue the support.

"Should you decide to stop preaching, the support will be terminated immediately. It will not be passed on to your successor or used to continue the work in that area. Should you decide to go elsewhere to preach, the support will be terminated unless you advise us in advance and obtain our consent to continue the support in the new locale. If it should be reported to us that the truth is no longer being taught, we will inquire to ascertain the facts before taking any action with regard to the support."

I recognize that some churches may not be able to make what amounts to a five or six year commitment to support an evangelist. But the length of time is not nearly so important as the commitment. The foregoing letter provides a sense of security in that it lets me know exactly where I stand with this church that supports me. Some churches have fallen into a "three month" pattern. That is, they will give the evangelist they are supporting only three months notice of discontinuing his support. This may sound generous at first but consider the following scenario which I think is typical. A church decides in its January business meeting to discontinue support to a particular preacher giving him three months notice (they'll support him through March). They write this preacher a letter to inform him of their decision and he receives it a week later (it's the middle of January). This preacher gets busy trying to raise the support he is losing, writes letters to several churches, and these letters are received by the churches in time for the February business meeting. It is not at all unusual, perhaps standard practice in most congregations, to receive a request one month and postpone any decision about it until the next so that the treasurer may be able to look closely at the accounts to determine whether or not they have the funds. By now we have gotten to the March business meeting and the preacher in need has already received his last check from the church discontinuing his support. If this first set of letters does not produce a positive reply to his needs, he will go lacking adequate support to meet the needs of his family in the month of April and perhaps beyond. The point is this: when a preacher is having to seek support from churches that operate out of a business meeting, a three month notice to terminate his support is really not adequate. If the church from whom he is seeking support has elders he may be able to get a quicker reply, but not necessarily. A man who devotes life to the preaching of the gospel deserves at least a small measure of security from his brethren which just a

little consideration in this matter could amply supply.

KEEP IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH THE MEN YOU SUPPORT. Bring them in for a weekend meeting to allow them the opportunity to give a detailed, face-to-face report of the work they're doing. Ask members of the congregation to write them an encouraging note. I deeply appreciate the letters I get from members of the churches which support me. They really mean a lot, especially when you are a little discouraged and wondering if anyone cares.

PLEASE, HAVE YOUR TREASURER BE ON TIME WITH THE CHECKS. A lot of us preachers have fallen into the habit of eating and don't want to break it (although I should for a while). Seriously, a preachers bills are due just like everyone else and he is depending upon you to have your check to him on time so that he might meet those bills. Years ago I had a check fall about two weeks overdue. I called and the treasurer had gone on vacation so I called back a couple of days later when he returned. He promised to get the check in the mail immediately. Two weeks later, after still not having received the check, I called again and he had decided to wait until the next month and just double the amount to make up for it. I wonder what would happen had he gone up to the pay window where he works and his boss had said, "We're not going to pay you today. We'll wait until next week and double up?" Some people just aren't considerate.

There are many other things that perhaps need to be said but maybe these provide some incentive to more thought and consideration on the subject. There are new fields of labor that are opening up every day that will present to all of us new challenges. I'm confident that, with the Lord's help, we will arise to meet those chal-lenges. We must use our abilities, our time, and our resources to do the most good that we can.



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Same Song, Same Verse, Over and Over Again

I have before me a copy of **One Body**, Winter, 1991, in which Bob Shaw of Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada, has an article "Instrumental Music: A Matter of Faith or Opinion?"

Brother Connie W. Adams called me and requested that I review this article for **Searching The Scriptures**, which I am glad to do.

Bob Shaw tells the reader in the article that "I spent the first 25 years or so of my life fighting against instrumental music in worship.... but during the last 10 years or so, I've become more and more convinced it is, indeed, a matter of opinion.... I have the right to change my views when I become convinced that I have been in error." No one would object to an individual changing his position from error to truth, but in this case, Shaw has changed from **truth to error**. He wants people to know he has been convinced the instrument is just a matter of opinion. He may be convinced, but he has not been convinced strongly enough to defend his position in public debate.

Some seven or eight times in his article he makes reference to the fact that he does not feel that the Scriptures **clearly** teach the instrument to be sinful. He says, "the Bible does not clearly teach that instrumental music in worship is sinful." Says who? Right now there are people saying that the Bible does not clearly teach that divorce and remarriage, except for fornication, is sinful. Someone could say that the Bible does not clearly teach that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That does not mean the Bible does not teach such. It just means someone could say such; however, saying such does not make it so. Who is going to determine if the Bible **clearly** teaches the instrument to be sinful in worship? Is Bob Shaw? What would the Bible have to say for him to admit that it **clearly** teaches it to be sinful?

The Holy Spirit **clearly said** on the subject of music to be used in worship of God, "sing." One word says it all. Is that not clear? If Bob Shaw's wife or mother sent him to the store for "milk" would that be clear? Not according to his argument on the instrument.

He tells us "God has not clearly spoken..." on the question of the instrument. Now, God either did or did

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not speak on the subject. If God did not speak, then we do not know His mind. If He did speak, then we either can or cannot understand His revelation. If we can not understand His revelation, then it is not a revelation at all. If I can understand His revelation, then I know what He has revealed! God has spoken (Acts 3: 21; Heb. 1: 1-2). The sum total of all God has said is "sing" (Matt. 26: 30; Mark 14: 26; Acts 16: 25; Rom. 15: 9; 1 Cor. 14: 15; Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3: 16; Heb. 2: 12; James 5: 13). Is "sing" clear? What would have to be added to "sing" in order for God to make it clear? All God said was "sing" and when you start taking away from what God has said you have "sin."

Reason For Change

After 25 years, Bob Shaw changed his position due to "An honest, open, heart-searching look at our 'position' and a diligent search of the Scriptures." But he did not give his readers the benefit of his "search of the Scriptures." "What was the result of that? I am interested in what the Scriptures say. Did he find the verse for the instrument? NO! Twenty five years ago the Scriptures said "sing" and they still say "sing" and he will never find anything different. Rather, his defense of the instrument is the same song, same verse, that has been sung over and over again.

(1) He tells us the references to singing is to the individual and not the church. I am well acquainted with that argument, having heard it many times over the years. On benevolence our liberal brethren have said passages addressed to the individual were actually applicable to the church. Now, this liberal just reverses the argument. Let us look at it.

Just for arguments sake, let us grant him his argument. What does that prove? It proves in the worship of God the individual is limited to singing. Bob Shaw still doesn't have the instrument in the verse. One of the things singing does is "teaching and admonishing one another." How could one teach another without being assembled with that one or ones? Shaw saying the assembled church is not involved does not make his statement so.

(2) Shaw tells his reader that if millions will go "to hell for using instrumental music in worship, it will be on the basis of violating a law that cannot even be found in the books!" His saying the law does not exist does not make it so. The law says "sing." His problem is he just will not recognize the law. A drunk that does not recognize the white line in the middle of the road does not do away with the line. A liberal preacher intoxicated on his own human wisdom refusing to recognize the law of God does not mean God's law does not exist.

3) Shaw says "if this were a matter of vital importance to God" he "would have made it crystal clear." How much clearer would God have to make it for Shaw to understand it? If he cannot, or more appropriately **will not**, understand one word - "sing" - how much more trouble would he have with a whole sentence?

(4) He says we do not read in our assemblies those Psalms that mention instruments. That is not so! If I were Shaw I would be accurate. His lie with honest people will only show him up for what he is - a twister of

Scripture (2 Peter 3: 16-17).

(5) He tells us that those who use instruments have "hermeneutics" that "differ from ours." That is what makes Catholics. People have a different hermeneutic. They think the Pope is the final authority instead of the Bible. The Christian Church people use the hermeneutic of "I want the instrument in worship and am going to have it regardless of what you say" rather than what the New Testament teaches.

(6) He tells us a brother said "the Bible clearly teaches that instrumental music in worship is sinful" and that "really struck home." He says, "Can I just say honestly and sincerely, the Bible **does not** clearly teach that instrumental music in worship is sinful!" (sic). He may not say it, but I will until he gives us the New Testament passage that teaches it.

(7) He affirms "God is going to hand me a harp... in heaven." Does he intend to affirm man's physical body will be in heaven? Will the hand that God puts the harp in be one of flesh and blood? Paul said, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15: 20). He also has "God handing me a harp just after he has sent millions to" hell for using instruments of music in worship. He can't have it both ways; some in hell for using it in worship and some in heaven. Let him tell us which one he wants, but he can't have it both ways.

(8) Finally, Shaw tells us that the argument that condemns the instrument, condemns other things. So what? If a thing can not be shown to be scriptural, then we ought not to be practicing it. But just because he says other things are condemned does not make it so. We must come to the Bible to prove everything. We cannot say something is just as scriptural as something else. A thing is either authorized or not.

How strongly does Bob Shaw feel about the instrument not being a matter of faith? I will deny the following proposition if he has the courage to affirm it: "The Scriptures teach the use of instruments of music in the worship of God is a matter of opinion and should not be made a test of fellowship."

Now, let us see if he is willing to work toward having such a discussion?


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A Reader Defends the "One Nation Under God" Campaign

Two articles relating to the "One Nation Under God" Campaign appeared in this column in the January and February issues. One dealt with the sinfulness of local elders overseeing a churchhood project and the other was an open letter to Furman Kearley, who praised the "success" of the campaign in the *Gospel Advocate*. A reader from Kosciusko, Mississippi has sent a brief response.

I read your article in S. T. S. (O. N. U. G.) Of course I disagree with you. We have to keep in mind God did not bind one way only, on us. We don't have scripture for a church building either, but because we don't have one, it's not wrong. I realize there are two extremes in the church, legalism and liberalism. Both are wrong! We must not loose what God has bound, nor bind what God has loosed. —Jim Mordecai, Kosciusko, Mississippi. Dear Jim,

If God did not bind or limit the authority of elders of the local congregation they oversee, then we should be able to read where he allowed them to oversee the evangelistic work of other congregations as they are doing in the "One Nation Under God" Campaign. I can put my finger on the verses that limit their authority. They are 1 Peter 5: 2, Acts 20: 28, and Acts 14: 23. Elders were to be appointed in every church. This is unnecessary if we can have a centralized eldership that oversees the work of other churches. (The right of elders to oversee any part of the work of other congregations is the right to oversee all of it). But God limited their oversight to the flock "among you, " "over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers" (1 Pet. 5: 2; Acts 20: 27). Sponsoring church elders, in overseeing "brotherhood" projects, go beyond the bounds God set by overseeing more than their local work. The elders at Sycamore have admitted that "O. N. U. G. " is a "brotherhood" project.

Brother Jim, what verse can you put your finger on that allows one church to oversee any part of the evangelistic work of several thousand congregations? Or even two congregations? It isn't in the Bible. I am glad it isn't for it would contradict the above verses.

If you mean by "God did not bind one way only" that the Bible doesn't say "thou shalt not have a Sponsoring

Church over brotherhood projects, " neither does it say "thou shalt not sprinkle for baptism, " "thou shalt not count beads (rosary), " "thou shalt not use hamburger and coke on the Lord's table, " "thou shalt not use instru-mental music in worship, " etc. Surely you see the point. We only have authority to do what is authorized. It is unnecessary to have a "thou shalt not" for every prohibition. It is the obligation of the promoter of a practice to show there is scriptural authority for it (on its behalf). Since no one can show scripture on behalf of hamburgers and coke on the Lord's table then it is forbidden. Since no one can show scripture on behalf of "Sponsoring Church" elders overseeing the work of flocks that are not "among you, " then it is forbidden.

Brother Jim, if God did not bind "one way, " did He bind anything regarding the oversight of elders? If so, what? If you agree he did bind something, you will come up with the same thing I did, that congregations are independent and oversight of elders is to be over no more than the local church "among you. " But if you say there is no limitation, then "anything goes. " (conventions, conferences, associations, synods, dioceses, etc.). Either there is a pattern, or there is not. If there is, you must conclude it is found in 1 Pet. 5: 2; Acts 20: 28; 14: 23. If you have scriptural authority for such "churchhood" projects as this Campaign, surely you would have given it. That is what I asked for in the articles you responded to. But there is not one verse of scripture in your letter. Why, Jim?

You said, "We don't have scripture for a church building either, but because we don't have one, it's not wrong. " Colossians 3: 17 says everything we do is to be done "in the name" (by the authority) of the Lord Jesus. The word *iniquity* means "without law" (Mt. 7: 21-23). We are to have authority (book, chapter, and verse) on behalf of all our religious practices. If we are doing anything we don't have authority for, we should quit that practice immediately. If you do not have authority for a church building you should cease using one immediately, for you are sinning. I have heard this statement about church buildings a number of times and it reveals the great dearth of teaching among institutional churches on our need for authority and how it is established. How would you regard this parallel to your statement? "We don't have scripture for hamburgers and coke on the Lord's table, but because we don't have one, it's not wrong. " With your statement on church buildings you could not consistently oppose the person who wants to add to the Lord's Supper. We do not have specific authority for a church building, but we do have general authority. Hebrews 10: 25 commands regular assembling. That necessarily implies that a **place** of some kind is required. The kind of place is not specified, therefore a building would meet the requirement. 1 Cor. 11: 20 also requires a "place. "

You said there are two extremes. By "legalism" you imply that I have bound something God did not bind. But I can put my finger on the verses that limit the oversight of elders, thus I have not bound what God has not bound. You cannot put your finger on any verse that allows elders to occupy a dual role of (1) overseeing their local work (1 Pet. 5: 2), (2) overseeing a multi-church project

(scripture?). Number one is in the Bible. Number two (which you defend), is not. You have loosed where God did not loose and are guilty of what you called "liberalism." The Bible doesn't say sing **only**, but it only says sing. It doesn't say bread and fruit of the vine **only**, but it only says bread and fruit of the vine. It doesn't say elders' oversight is limited to "the flock... among you" **only**, but it only says "the flock... among you."

I have publications from institutional brethren where elders of one church are overseeing churches in other states and countries. This is sinful. They do so in rebellion and disregard for the scriptures. I have noticed that institutional brethren will try things outside the U. S. that they seem afraid to try here because some are not ready for that much liberalism — such as, "Church of Christ" hospitals, "Church of Christ" headquarters, etc. The Garden Oaks Church of Christ (a "Sponsoring Church") in Houston, Texas oversees its "Minister of Missions" in Honduras who is the President, Board of Directors of the corporation called "Churches of Christ of the Republic of Honduras. Do you defend this, Jim? If not, what scripture does it violate? How about 1 Pet. 5: 2; Acts 20: 28; 14: 23? If such is right in Honduras, why not in the U. S. A. ? Give them time. When brethren start saying "we don't have to have scripture for everything we do" (as you implied), there is no end to how far they can and will go.

We need men today with backbone to speak forth boldly (Eph. 6: 20) and who will fight to keep the church pure from the wisdom of men. Men who have the courage to expose the error that needs exposing and refuting so badly. Error is having a field day because it is easier to go along with the majority. Jim, I beg you to leave the liberalism you are promoting. If I can help you, please call on me. Brotherly, Dick Blackford

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Is The Eldership Any More Than A "Deliberative Assembly"?

Deliberative assemblies are those whose primary purpose is to meet and talk and make decisions, mostly about actions to be taken by other people. It is hardly possible for any group, large or small, to act collectively without some such deliberations—despite their obvious drawbacks, we have to have deliberative assemblies. Congress immediately comes to mind, but daily life brings us into contact with many others: the local school board, the board of directors at the bank, etc. True, the members of deliberative assemblies sometimes do more than deliberate, and granted, the decisions sometimes bear on the decision-makers themselves. But still, the main purpose for which a deliberative assembly exists is to have meetings and make decisions. To a farmer or a factory worker, no doubt, "deliberating" sounds like something people would do who were unacquainted with real work. Nevertheless, we do sometimes have to have people whose work consists of little more than talking and deciding things.

But, in spiritual matters, what about the eldership? Do the elders of a local congregation of saints, acting scripturally as the bishops or overseers of that church, constitute a body which is primarily deliberative? That is, is it the main part of their job to have meetings and make decisions about the work of the congregation, decisions which are to be carried out mostly by other members of the church? I think not. And the question is one of more than slight importance.

One does not have to be a grandparent to remember a time when, in very many congregations, any meeting of the elders at all was a rare occurrence, and elders who had regularly scheduled meetings were almost unheard of. That situation has changed for the better, obviously. It is not uncommon for elders now to have a room in the church building more or less set aside as their meeting room. Few except those who deny scriptural teaching about the oversight function of elders would fail to see the good that has come from the practice of elders meeting on some kind of regular basis. But has the pendulum not swung so far in some cases that another problem has arisen? If we have come to think that attending meetings is virtually **all** there is to being an elder, are we in

significantly better shape than when elders did not even see the need to meet? Unless I have seriously misread what the New Testament teaches about it, the eldership is not merely a deliberative assembly — and if we have let it become that, we have narrowed the eldership to something that can do us little of the good the Lord intended.

If elders were never described as anything but "bishops" or "overseers," we might conclude their work was largely administrative. But in both Ac. 20: 28 and 1 Pet. 5: 2 those entrusted with the oversight are charged to "Teed" or "shepherd" the church which is under their superintendency. And Peter is clear that elders do their work under the watchful eye of "the Chief Shepherd" (5: 4). Can there be any doubt that elders are to model their feeding and shepherding work after that of the Lord himself? It was He who said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep ... I know My sheep, and am known by My own" (Jn. 10: 11, 14). Can we imagine the Lord trying to shepherd His flock merely by having meetings with His apostles? No, it is much easier to picture Him, as the Gospels frequently do, in direct contact with the people — personally teaching, encouraging, exhorting, and uplifting those who needed Him.

Having meetings, per se, is not what the elders' work consists of—it is preparatory to that work. And if elders have a room in which they hold their meetings, that room is not where the elders do their work — it is where the planning for that work goes on. In Heb. 13: 17, the writer said that saints are to obey those who rule over them,, "for they watch out for your souls." Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Ac. 20: 28). These and other passages indicate that the crux of the work of elders is seeing to the spiritual welfare of those entrusted to their shepherd-ship. This involves not only seeing that the flock of God is nourished and protected so that problems do not crop up, but also being vigilant for signs that any problem has cropped up. When any member appears to be in spiritual danger, then elders are to do what they are uniquely qualified and responsible to do to strengthen the weak and restore the erring.

Faithful saints are not kept faithful, weak saints are not stabilized, and erring saints are not rescued without the actual **word of God** being fed to them. And we have erred, I believe, in supposing that it is enough for elders to do this by "hiring it done," i. e. by retaining a gospel preacher to work with the congregation. There is more to watching for souls and tending the flock than support-ing an evangelist. That elders are to keep the flock healthy, strong, and safe by feeding it personally would seem to be obvious from the fact that they are required to be able to do so. What else could be the point of the qualification that an elder should hold fast "the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict" (Tit. 1: 9)? Or the stipulation that an elder be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. 3: 2)? The elder himself is to be

skillful in applying the word of God directly to the various needs that his brethren will have.

The word of God is the nourishment that is needed both to prevent spiritual problems and to deal with them when they do arise. There is simply no substitute for it. The problems that fall within the scope of the elder's work just cannot be dealt with adequately if substantive Bible teaching is not a major part of the strategy. And yet, how often do elders personally initiate on-going "home studies" with members whose spiritual lives are in jeopardy? For that matter, how many elders even take their Bibles with them when they make a one-time visit to a struggling saint? Elders are required to be spiritually mature and adept at applying the Scriptures to real-life needs—and I maintain that a man never comes closer to doing the real work of an elder than when he sits down personally with an individual member of his flock, opens the Bible, and leads his fellow-saint in an edifying study of whatever passages contain the nourishment that is needed in that particular case.

It is sad commentary on how little vision we have of what truly is involved in being an elder that we have so few men supported financially to devote themselves full-time to shepherding the saints. When we think of the work of elders we think simply of occasional elders' meetings to discuss the church's work, and we wonder what a man would do with "all that time" if being an elder were his only occupation. But the eldership is far more than a group that meets and talks and makes decisions. When elders meet, they may well **plan** their work of tending the flock, pray about it, etc. They could not oversee the church very well without some kind of deliberative meetings. But the eldership is not **merely** a "deliberative assembly"—and I have an idea that God is pleased when He sees elders at somebody's kitchen table with an open Bible!

Smith — Hicks Debate

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**SWORD OF
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Huntsville, Alabama 35805**Rumor Upon Rumor**

Ezekiel said: "... rumor will be upon rumor" (7: 28). He was not prophesying of our day as a glance at the context will demonstrate. But the statement is nevertheless true in our time. So often we see preachers and others jumping on the bandwagon and repeating rumors with-out checking facts. Since I've been guilty of such myself, I do not write these things out of a haughty spirit.

One rumor that just refuses to die is that the president of Proctor & Gamble Co. appeared on the Phil Donahue show proclaiming that he was a satanist and that the company's moon and stars trademark is a satanic/occult symbol. The company has spent a fortune in the past dozen years trying to quell this rumor and explain that no spokesman has appeared on any talk show with such a message and that P&G has nothing to do with satanism.

The trademark has been used since 1850. It started as simple markings on crates of Star Candles, an early P&G product, and evolved to a formal design showing a man-in-the-moon, a popular figure of the 1800's; and thirteen stars representing the original colonies.

The company has established a toll-free number (800) 331-3774 and a special staff to deal with the thousands of calls and letters they receive each month in relation to this rumor. Recently they have filed lawsuits against individuals for circulating this report.

Another rumor is that Madelyn Murray O'Hare, the infamous atheist, has been granted a federal hearing on "FCC Petition #2493 which would ultimately pave the way to stop the reading of the gospel on the airways of America." Allegedly she has 27, 000 signatures to support her and we need one million to oppose her.

This number has not changed since I first say this report some twenty years ago. Just recently, two different individuals with deep concern and urgency, have brought to me the petition to counteract Mrs. O'Hare's alleged movement. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has received millions of letters about this petition and their standard reply is that such a petition does not and has never existed.

Several years ago I reproduced in a church bulletin an article that told of Charles Darwin's death bed confession of Christian faith and repudiation of his anti-biblical positions. I received a letter from an irate atheist

who happened to be on the mailing list. He informed me that the so-called "Lady Hope story" had been in circulation for decades and researchers had uniformly de-nounced it as an unfounded rumor. He wanted to know what kind of ignoramus would publish such garbage. Well, I wasn't sure just what kind I was, but after going to some trouble trying to find verification for the story I admitted my blunder and apologized for circulating the rumor.

Recently I have seen "the missing day" story again. This time it appeared in the paper sent out by the faith (fake) healer, Robert Tilton. According to this widely circulated rumor, supposedly confirmed by "a group of experts at NASA," some astronomers at the observatory in Green Belt, Maryland were "rewinding history" by using "the advanced technology of computer animation." They were attempting to plot the positions of the stars and planets in the past centuries.

Everything moved as expected "past the days of George Washington, Henry VIII and Alexander the Great. However, as the computerized model approached the era of Moses, all functions suddenly came to a halt." The mechanism announced that something was wrong. There was a discrepancy. "A day was missing in time and space."

Fortunately one of the scientists recalled a story he had heard as a child in Sunday School. Some ridiculous tale of how Joshua had asked the Lord to make the sun stand still "about a whole day" (Jos. 10: 12-14). Well, the computer showed the elapsed time of Joshua's day to be 23 hours and 20 minutes. But the computer showed that 40 minutes were still missing.

Again the Sunday School-trained scientist came to the rescue and informed his colleagues of the biblical account of the sun moving backwards in the time of Hezekiah and Isaiah (II Kings 20: 9-11). "By all astronomical standards." we are told, "ten degrees is 40 minutes." So Joshua's 23 hours and 20 minutes plus Hezekiah's ten degrees added up to the exact 24 hours the computer was missing. They had discovered the missing day.

I have seen this rumor in several publications. I have heard preachers tell it as an established fact. I suppose that it has been well over twenty years since I first heard this story. I'll admit that the fellow who wrote the article for Tilton's paper was the first one that I know of who claims to have been there when it happened! But the rumor has been around for years.

I do not know much about computers, but I know you can't get out the them what has not been programmed into them. The very best that such a model could accomplish would be to reveal where the stars and planets should have been based upon the data we have available. Without objective evidence of where they in fact were, there is just no way that such a discrepancy could be noted by the computer.

Such ridiculous tales destroy our credibility before the world. Before we repeat rumors, or sign petitions, or write letters to government officials or companies, let's check out the facts and make sure that we know what we are talking about.

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**Do you read your
Bible
every day
(Acts 17: 11)**

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

ROBERT A. BOLTON, 504 Goodwin Dr., Richardson, TX 75081—I take this means to thank all, many of whom we did not know, who offered assistance, help and encouragement to me and my wife after we were mugged and robbed in Florida at our motel at the close of the Florida College lectures. The love expressed to us in so many ways, including financial assistance, was much a manifestation of practical New Testament Christianity in action that the manager of the motel, where the incident occurred, was deeply impressed with what being a Christian is all about. So many phone calls and inquiries concerning our welfare have come from all over the country that we continue to be overwhelmed.

As to our situation, at knife point we had taken from us some \$1, 770 in cash and possessions, all of which will be replaced by insurance, except for sentimental value. My wife, Billie, is suffering from a broken left foot which she received in her struggle with one of the robbers, and will probably be in much pain for several weeks to come. We thank God that we were not seriously injured or killed and we are doing well. To our knowledge, as of this date, the two men accosted us have never been arrested. Again, thanks to all for your prayers and expressions of concern.

EVANGELISTIC EFFORT IN MINNEAPOLIS

RICK LANNING—July 19-31 are the set dates for our planned efforts to "seek and save the lost" of Minneapolis. There is but one sound church in this city of 1, 500, 000. We hope to find many contacts through an intensive door-knocking effort over this two week period. The second week will include a nightly gospel meeting with Sewell Hall. In past efforts of this kind in other cities nearby brethren from many parts of the country have sacrificially come to help us. We are again asking anyone interested in helping us save souls, whether for only a few days or two weeks, to please contact either Wilson Copeland (612-424-4097) or Rick Lanning (612-425-2385). We will gladly offer lodging for all, along with a good feeling of having worked together for the Lord.

SERIES ON CALVINISM

DENVER NIEMEIER, Jamestown, Indiana—A five-lesson study on the Calvinistic TULIP will be presented June 15-19 at Jamestown, Indiana. Jamestown is one mile south of Interstate 74 some 20 miles west of Indianapolis. The building is at the corner of Mill and Darlington Sts. (next to the water tower). On Monday Mike Willis will speak on Total Depravity; Tuesday Bob Dickey will speak on Unconditional Election; Wednesday Boyd Sellers speaks on Limited Atonement; Thursday, Morris Hafley will speak on Irresistible Grace and on Friday J. R. Bronger will speak on Perseverance of the Saints.

PATRICK L. KELLY, P. O. Box 822, Portland, Maine 04104—We recently baptized one here. Several studies are underway. One steady visitor is Japanese. One unfaithful member is showing renewed interest.

NEW CONGREGATION

A new congregation is now meeting in Prescott, Arizona in the Odd Fellows Lodge building at Sunset and Whipple Streets. When in this area call 778-7695 (Leroy Tope) for more information.

JOE D. WINLAND, Route 1, Box 148, Ridgeway, VA 24128—March 29th completed 6 months with the Ridgeway church where we have been working to improve our singing. During this time we have had two 30 minute classes each week with all who would attend. Fifteen men are now able to direct singing using correct patterns for all time signatures. I have also been in similar efforts recently in West Carrolton, Ohio, St. Paul, MN, and Newton, NC. I will not undertake an effort of this kind for less than 4 months and prefer 6 months. If you believe a similar effort would be helpful in your situation, let me hear from you. Phone (703) 956-5357.

CLIFFORD SHEFFIELD, P. O. Box 295, Terrell, TX 75160—Eight families were baptized here in 1991 with others in gospel meetings where I preached. My son, Raymond, a senior at Washington University in St. Louis, MO, had surgery several months ago to remove some tumors from his chest. There is also an abnormal growth at the base of his brain on the pituitary gland. Though my wife's insurance will pay 80% of the hospital bills, the remaining 20% has already built up a large bill. For references and further information feel free to contact Robert Gabhart in Ft. Worth, TX at (817) 232-2518 or Robert A. Bolton in Richardson, TX at (214) 234-0296.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

ARGENTINA—Carlos Capelli reports from Buenos Aires that one was baptized in a meeting in Mercedes — San Luis. The preacher there is Jorge David Rodriguez, a teenager. At Jose C. Paz congregation several have visited from the radio program which the station manager had commended as having a large audience. One was baptized at Jose C. Paz. On April 4 he leaves for preaching in Columbia and Ecuador.

RUSSIA — THOMAS G. O'NEAL is trying to get THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH by Roy E. Cogdill translated and printed in Russian. Two individuals, one an American and the other a Russian, are now working on the translation. This book is already in a dozen languages and the American Braille Society has put it into braille. It has been through over twenty editions in the last fifty years and is still in great demand for Bible classes. Many preachers have found it to be an excellent book of sermons. Tom has recently been in contact with Phil Morgan of Paris, Kentucky and Greg Gwin of Knoxville, Tennessee both of whom spent three weeks in Russia last summer, and also with Lena Zakheim whom they baptized while there. Greg Gwin has plans to return for work in Russia.

The cost of translating and printing 5, 000 copies of THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH will run about \$1. 60 per copy. These books will be given to Russian people just as we would give a tract, Tom says. Those who might be interested in this project should contact Thomas G. O'Neal, P. O. Box 723, Bessemer, AL 35021. Phone (205) 425-4320.

IRELAND—Tracts and correspondence courses are urgently requested by a small, struggling congregation in Ireland for a forthcoming gospel effort. If any have such materials you could send, please contact: JOHN McCOURT, Church of Christ, 74 Earlswood Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland BT4 3DZ, or phone 0232 651337. An additional letter from brother Me Court reports a midnight baptism

in "an icy cold ocean." I quote the following appeal from him:

"We are a small congregation struggling to teach ourselves more clearly the Lord's way. We urgently require a preacher to help us. Anyone willing to come would need to find his own financial support and be very patient with us as we struggle with the legacy of liberalism which we inherited. We have our own meeting place which we are in the process of comprehensively renovating." (Editor's note: Here is an open door. Who can go and help? Who will help those who will go?)

PHILIPPINES — ROBERT GAMIAO reports 14 baptisms at Santo church, Rizal. A new work has been established at Rome Enrile, Bagayan with attendance of 18.

JOY NOTARTE reports on the recent visit of Wallace Little and Jim Puterbaugh. They conducted classes at Davao City, Samal Island, Bansalam, Dungan Pekong, Maymana and Bajada. The preaching at Bansalam was attended by brethren from 15 congregations. Julie and Joy Notarte (these are MEN, brethren) translated for them in that area. Three were baptized in Davao after the preaching there. They also accompanied them to the Visayas. In Ormoc City they saw the terrible damages from the recent flood and also met affected brethren. In January a new work began in Senuda, Bukidnon, 3-4 hours travel from Davao City, and about one hour walk from the highway.

RODY L. PORTALES reports five baptisms in February. He says that the forthcoming presidential election on May 11 is producing dangerous situations in some areas with eight aspirants fighting with "words and destroying one another and using goons and guns to get the throne of the Presidency." Rebel groups are going about urging people to boycott the elections.

ROMANIA — DAVIL TEEL is now in Bucharest. In the month of February 34 classes were conducted with 21 students. An open Bible study was held in a hall in the center of town with five previous contacts and four new ones. One has been baptized and two others appear to be about ready. Wendall Watts will be coming home in April. He hopes to be able to return later. Teel says "There is elbow room aplenty, so come and join us! We need your heart and your hands."

HUNGARY—RICHARD COPELAND reports from Budapest that the work is taking longer to take root than hoped. Many efforts are under way to reach people with the gospel. "Jeff and I are in the process of getting a correspondence course translated into Hungarian."

SOUTH AFRICA — PAUL WILLIAMS reports "Between Feb. 17 and Mar. 17, 17 persons were baptized as a result of the efforts of members of the Eshowe church. Many of these were students of the correspondence course who answered "Yes" to the final question in lesson 6 — 'Do you want us to assist you in being scripturally baptized?' David and Funda have been making preaching trips to find these students."

PREACHERS NEEDED

ANTHONY, FLORIDA — This is a rural area ten miles north of Ocala. Fulltime preacher desired. Have new building with 30 members. Can supply about \$1500 a month plus a lot for mobile home or house to be built on our property. Prefer a mature man with children at home or retired. Contact Morgan Johnson (904) 368-5792 or Chuck Gates (904) 622-5812.

BRADENTON, FLORIDA — The Bradenton church, P. O. Box 10932, Zip 34282, needs a gospel preacher. Average attendance is about 40. At present we can supply \$800-\$1000 a month in support and will gladly assist in efforts to obtain additional support with a goal of being self-supporting as soon as possible. The Bradenton church (formerly West Bradenton) is the oldest congregation in Manatee County and has a rich history. About 18 months ago we sold our building which had become too old and costly to maintain. We are presently meeting in a Day's Inn but we are looking for a suitable structure or land to purchase. Since September, 1991, Dale Wilson has been driving 90 miles from Ft. Myers on Sundays and Wed. nights to preach and teach. Those interested may contact Ramon Bradley

(813) 755-8676; Dan Taylor (813) 7892-4345; Jim Trammell (813) 355-0474; or Dale Wilson (813) 275-6245.

PEORIA, ILLINOIS — The Paris Avenue church needs a fulltime preacher. Sunday A. M. attendance averages about 90. We are self-supporting and help support two men overseas and two in other areas of the U. S. If interested, please contact Jim Green (309) 822-0291; Harold Otwell (#09) 383-4470; or Austin Farr (309) 691-9685.

PREACHERS AVAILABLE

EDWARD W. PAGAN, Rt. 2 Sulphur Well Rd., Nicholasville, KY 40356 — I am looking to relocate. I am 32 years old and have about 10 years of preaching experience. If you are interested in knowing more about me, you can write to the above address or call (606) 885-1423. Reference will be provided.

KEN FRIEL (Phone 901-738-2258) — Robert H. Bunting of Bartlett, TN sends the following:

"Let me introduce Ken Friel. Ken has had quite a journey to the truth. He has preached for the conservative Christian Church, but left them when he saw their error. Ken next found himself associated with the institutional Churches of Christ and attended the Memphis School of Preaching. Ken saw the errors of liberalism, renounced the errors and left the School of Preaching. He has a strong desire to be right with God, and I appreciate his courage.

"If you are looking for a preacher, Ken might be your man. He is 35 years old, and married. He and Sally are interested in working with a good church. He knows what it is to sacrifice for truth, and for difficult area will not frighten him. To the best of my knowledge, he is godly in life and sincere in his convictions. If you feel Ken may be able to help you, have him come and talk to you." (You may reach him at the above phone number.)



JULY SPECIAL ISSUE

A number of readers have already expressed their delight over the forth-coming July special edition on "Women Professing Godliness" (A Study of the Role of Women). We have already received a number of advance orders. This is a live subject (red hot might be more apt) among the institutional folks. Journals published by some of them bristle with controversy on the subject. We also need to be aware of the sources of tension among ourselves over this issue and focus our minds on what the word of God teaches. 100 copies will cost \$65/ 50 copies will sell for \$40. Order from STS, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109.

MEETING SCHEDULE CHANGES

The editor will not speak on the Miller Avenue lectures in San Jose, California as reported in the February issue. My California schedule for June has been revised as follows: June 19-21 Modesto, CA; June 22-24, Folsom, CA; June 28-July 1, Lakeport, CA. Also we listed a meeting for Nov. 15-20 for White River near Greenwood, Indiana. That congregation has now disbanded. Instead we will be with the church in Canal Winchester, Ohio (near Columbus) that same date.

DAVID JOY

We were just in a meeting at Middlebourne, West Virginia where our good friends Paul and Gennie Casebolt work for the Lord. While there we were glad to see our good brother, David Joy (son-in-law of the Casebolts) who lives in Paden City, WV. Seven years ago, David had a heart transplant. Since then he has continued to teach school, preach at first Fly and now Mellot Ridge in Ohio and conduct several

gospel meetings. His health at present is precarious and he is on a waiting list for a second transplant. He attended two nights of the meeting and visited with us afterwards for awhile both times. His mind is continually on the things of the kingdom. His spirit is radiant. He is not a complainer. David and Patti's older son, Jeremy, is 17 now and preaches somewhere nearly every Sunday and has been doing so for two years. While we were there we learned that the younger son obeyed the gospel at Paden City on Sunday, March 29. This is a remarkable family in many ways. While his teaching work has provided him with good insurance, the medical bills have been astronomical and much has had to be paid which insurance has not covered. David did not mention any of this to me but I learned that they could use some help to catch up on some medical expenses. Also, a note of encouragement would mean much to a noble family. The David Joys, 313 S. 4th Ave., Paden City, WV 26159.

ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

This editor might never have thought of preaching had it not been for that time we kept the preacher at our house during a 10 day meeting. Bonds Stocks came down from Washington, D. C. to conduct a meeting with the church in Hopewell, Virginia where we attended. In a business meeting after services a week before the meeting, there was a general reluctance to volunteer to keep the preacher. I think there was some intimidation over the fact that before he began preaching, brother Stocks had worked on the staff of a senator from Mississippi, and, after all, who were we to house one who had mingled with senators! My father volunteered, much to the chagrin of my mother. We did not, at that time, have indoor plumbing, not even running water in the house. But, stay with us, he did. What a rich experience for all of us. He was a good sport about our conveniences, or lack of them, had more funny things to tell than I had ever heard and was a thorough delight.

One day he invited me to ride over to town with him to check something about his car. On the way, he said to me "What are you going to do when you grow up?" I replied that my brother and I planned to go to Nashville, Tennessee and play on the Grand Ole Opry. He said, "Well, that sounds like fun, but you know we sure do need a lot more preachers of the gospel." I reacted with "Oh, I could never do that." He said "I'll just bet you could." And he sounded like he really believed it. It fell silent.

Before we got home he said "You know, I have been doing a lot of study on the errors of the Catholic Church. If you would like to, I'll let you copy those notes while I am here." I was overcome. When we got back to the house, I rushed in and rounded up several sheets of paper and spent a good bit of time at the kitchen table laboriously copying notes from the work of Brother Stocks. I still have them.

That was the seed which sprouted and was watered by my Grandmother and later my parents which started me on the road to preaching the gospel. Gospel preachers, take notice of the children. Take a few minutes to chat with them. Ask about their future plans. Encourage them in the direction of kingdom service. I doubt that Bonds Stocks had any idea how big a fire he built in a 12-year-old boy's heart that sultry summer afternoon in Virginia. But then, maybe he did!

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS
RESTORATIONS

(Taken from bulletins and papers
received by the editor)

316
79