

MAGAZINE

TRUTH

“Rejoice Not in Iniquity”

Scandal in the Roman Catholic Church (1)

Greg Litmer

The Roman Catholic Church finds itself awash in a sea of scandal relating to sexual misconduct by priests. The misconduct primarily has been the abuse of young boys by homosexual pedophiles in the priesthood. The scandal involves not only the acts of abuse themselves, but the efforts of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the United States to cover them up.

The following is a thumbnail sketch of the principal events that have unfolded as this tale of sin and ungodliness has come to light. I am grateful to the library of *The Indianapolis Star* for research in the preparation of a time line of events that appeared in the March 24, 2002 issue of that newspaper. The time line, used with permission, serves as my main source of information concerning the events and their chronology.

On January 9, 2002, “Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston apologized for the crimes of the Reverend John J. Geoghan and implemented a zero-tolerance policy

for sexual abuse by priests.” On the 30th of January 2002 the Archdiocese of Boston turned over to the authorities the names of dozens of former priests, dating back 40 years, who left the clergy because of allegations of child abuse.

Within the six days of February 2–7, 2002, “Eight active priests who were suspended from the Archdiocese of Boston admitted allegations of sexual misconduct, and at least twenty names of current and former priests were delivered to the Massachusetts district attorney.” On February 9 and 10, the dioceses of Worcester, Massachusetts and Portland, Maine announced that they

would reveal the names of priests who had histories of pedophilia, and on February 15, the diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire, said that it had given the prosecutor the names of fourteen priests who had been accused of sexually abusing children from 1963 to 1987.

On February 22, 2002, “the Archdiocese *see “Catholic Church” on p. 312*

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

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Meeting in Mansfield

Mike Willis

I just returned from a meeting in Mansfield, Ohio that was conducted March 10-15. This was my second meeting in Mansfield, but my first meeting with the Grace Street church. This was an interesting week in the preaching of the gospel.

The Grace Street church has an interesting history spanning about forty years. The church began in the 1960s when a group of brethren decided that they could not continue to support the liberalism that was being practiced in the church located on Main Street. A group pulled away and purchased the building that is located on Grace Street. Shortly after the work began, that group divided and a second group began meeting on the south side of Mansfield on Mansfield Lucas Road. The group that left the institutional church was racially mixed. The division that occurred in the newly formed group that left the institutional church was along racial lines forming a black and a white church. What part racial prejudice played in the decision to go in different directions may be debated.



James Bond is the local preacher at Grace Street. Through the years, he has supported himself in secular employment while doing the work of the local evangelist at Grace Street. Brother Bond is well aware of what is going on among brethren and has actively worked to keep the church at Grace Street from having liberal preachers to hold their meetings. After the group left to form the congregation on Mansfield Lucas Road, brother Bond worked to indoctrinate the brethren at Grace Street on the truth about the various issues that affect the local church. Through the years he has been responsible for the Grace Street church inviting a number of faithful preachers for meetings, including but not limited to the following: Cecil Willis, Ron Daly, Lewis Willis, Ellis Webb, C.D. Plum, J.B. Grinstead, Don Willis, Don Wright, Jimmy Tuten, Larry Devore, Johnie Edwards, James Baker, Connie Adams, Doug Rousch, etc. Although the church is predominately black, the brethren have graciously invited many white preachers to conduct meetings because of their love for the truth.

No one should object to being reminded of the sinfulness of racial prejudice. The Scriptures emphasize that we are all one in Christ Jesus.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor

see "Mansfield" on p. 313

Searching For the Impossible

Andy Alexander

In 1512 Ponce de Leon traveled to this country in search for the Fountain of Youth. This was a mythical fountain that was thought to give life to those who bathed in or drank from it. Of course such a fountain would produce great riches for those who controlled it. His search ended in vain because such a fountain did not exist. He was searching for the impossible.

Searching for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is another such search. No pot of gold exists, therefore any search for it is a search for the impossible. A modern-day example of such a vain effort is the search for an engine that runs on water. People may search and search, but they will not find these things. They are a search for the impossible.

Why search for something so outrageous, something that seems so obviously false? Some may search for the impossible because someone deceives them. They actually believe the fountain of youth is real or the pot of gold is at the end of the rainbow. Others may be self-deceived. They desire something so much, they convince themselves it is true and then set out on a search for it. Money or greed is also a motivating factor in many cases. If one had possession of a fountain of youth, he would certainly become wealthy charging for its use. Others may just be looking for the easy way through life. Whatever the motivation, there are people who search for the impossible.

This is also true in religion. There are many who search for that which is impossible when it comes to the salvation of their souls. They have believed a lie or convinced themselves of some untruth and will find in the last day that they searched for the impossible. The one difference is, they believe they have found what they were searching for. Let's notice some of these things.

Salvation without Christ. The Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, and Hindus are all searching for the impossible when it comes to salvation. They are looking for that which cannot be found — salvation without Christ. It cannot be found, because it does not exist. The Scriptures are very clear on this point. Peter and John told the council, *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12). Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (John 14:6). This is a fact that deals with our salvation and the Holy Spirit made it as clear as it can be made — there is no salvation without Jesus

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Christ. Salvation without Christ is impossible and those who are searching for it are searching in vain!

Salvation without the sacrifice of Christ. Closely related to the last point is those who search for salvation without the sacrifice Christ offered on the cross. Forgiveness of sins is offered only through the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7). Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sins, and it is that blood and only that blood that washes away sins (Matt. 26:28; Rev. 1:5). No one before or after the cross can be saved without the sacrifice Jesus made at Calvary (Heb. 9:15; 10:10). The Just died for the unjust, the Sinless for the sinners (1 Pet. 3:18; Rom. 5:8). Those who reject Christ, reject his sacrifice and will be lost eternally (John 12:48).

Salvation without repentance. Some want to receive the reward God has for his children, but they not only want that reward, they want to hold on to sin at the same time. They are not willing to repent of their sins, so they attempt to justify their sinful actions. Discipleship requires repentance and faithful obedience. Jesus said, "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). The apostle Paul stated in the city of Athens, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Just as the Thessalonian brethren turned from their idols to serve the true and genuine God, all who will be saved must turn from their sins (1 Thess. 1:9). Fruitful works will follow genuine repentance (Acts 26:20). Those searching for salvation without repentance are searching in vain for they are searching for the impossible.

Salvation without baptism. Many religious people argue that baptism is not essential to salvation. They claim baptism is an outward sign of inward grace. In other words, one is baptized to show the world that he is already forgiven of sins. However, this is impossible because the Bible teaches that baptism is essential for salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). It is at the point of baptism that the penitent believer comes into contact with the saving blood of Jesus Christ. If one refuses to be baptized or is baptized for the wrong purpose, he does not reach the blood of Jesus and without the blood of Jesus he cannot be saved.

Paul teaches in Romans 6:3-4 that baptism is into the death of Jesus and it was in the death of Jesus that his blood was shed (John 19:17-35). Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, the penitent believer is raised from the waters of baptism to a new life forgiven of his past sins.

Saul of Tarsus saw the Lord on the road to Damascus, believed in him, and fervently prayed for three days (Acts 9:1-18). However, Paul's sins were not washed away in the blood of Jesus until he was baptized for the remission of

his sins. Ananias told him, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). The blood of the Lamb cleansed his sins when he obeyed the Lord's command to be baptized (Rev. 1:5).

Those searching for salvation without baptism are searching for the impossible. We urge you not to be guilty of making such a foolish search.

Salvation without the church of Christ. Some profess their faith in Christ, but claim the church that he built is unimportant or that membership in it is unnecessary. They make statements such as "You don't have to be in any church to be saved" or "Join the church of your choice." These people have a false concept of the church. They do not understand that one cannot be saved and be outside the church that Jesus built at the same time. The church is the saved. Jesus is the Savior and the saved are his church. Let's notice some Scriptures that support this truth.

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus stated that he would build his church. In Acts 2:47 we find Jesus adding the saved to his church. The saved in Acts 2 were those who heard the word, believed it, repented of their sins, and were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37-41). When we obey these conditions given by Jesus, we are forgiven of our sins and immediately transferred into his kingdom, the church (Col. 1:13-14). There is not one saved person outside the church of Christ, because Christ is the one who adds them to his body.

Paul teaches that penitent believers are baptized into Christ. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). He also teaches that we are baptized into his body. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13). To be in Christ is to be in his body, and to be in the body is to be in Christ. We cannot separate the saved from the body for the saved are the body.

An accurate statement would be, "You do not have to be a member of any denomination to be saved." That is true because Jesus did not build a denomination. In fact, he condemns them as divisive (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10-13). One searching for salvation without the true church that Jesus built is searching for the impossible.

We cannot be saved without Christ, without his sacrifice, without repentance and baptism, and without his church. Any one searching for salvation apart from these things is searching for the impossible. We urge you to search for that which can be found: salvation in Christ, through his sacrifice, upon the conditions he has given in his word. —
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Where We Have Been — Where Are We Now — Where Are We Going (4)

Bill Cavender

The years of 1947 to 1957 were dissentient, divisive, and decisive years for the churches of Christ in the USA and,

by extension, to others parts of the world through papers, preachers, and financially-prosperous churches who were sending men into many “foreign” countries to preach the gospel of Christ.

There were some fourteen to fifteen million men and women in the armed forces of our country during World War II. Some of these were dedicated Christians who took the Lord and the gospel of Christ with them into the military services. Wherever they went and were, they worshiped and they taught the truth to others. This was true in my own personal history in learning the truth. Brother Robert Vester Scott of Bemis, Tennessee, a boy with whom I grew up, one year of age older than me, a year ahead of me in high school, was a Christian. He was in the Navy in World War II. I was stationed in San Francisco. The Navy ship, a destroyer, he was aboard came into “dry dock” at Hunter’s Point, San Francisco Bay, in the early summer of 1945. R.V. had been at sea for about eight months in the South Pacific area of naval operations. During that time he worshiped aboard ship with a few others as best he could. He was so thankful to be on “dry land” again, able to meet with brethren. He attended every service with the Seventeenth Street church in San Francisco. Learning from his family back home in Tennessee that I was stationed in San Francisco, with Fleet Hospital #113, he contacted me and invited me to go to services with him. Thus began my association with people in the church of Christ, in the summer of 1945. Had it not been for R.V. Scott, chances are I would never have learned the truth of the gospel of Christ and would have continued a Methodist all of my

life. If each and every child of God would be faithful and true to our Lord Jesus Christ, wherever we are and with whomsoever we are found, we would save lost souls along the journey of life.

R.V. went to Freed-Hardeman College for two years after the war, then came to David Lipscomb for two years when I was there. We graduated from Lipscomb together in the spring of 1950. He married a fine young lady from Hendersonville, Tennessee, Junie Durham. I said their wedding ceremony. They moved to Tunica, Mississippi, where a handful of disciples were meeting. I went to Tunica twice in the early fifties to hold gospel meetings (in the courthouse, as the brethren had no meetinghouse). R.V. and Junie stayed in Tunica for the remainder of his life, for many years. They had several children. He never lived or preached anywhere else. He entered into some facet of the medical field and worked at the hospital and preached. He followed the liberal, institutional movement in the churches as it developed in the fifties. The church in Bemis, Tennessee, where he grew up, became very liberal in their thinking and teaching, being dominated by and so greatly influenced by Freed-Hardeman College, thirteen miles south (as were all the churches in that area of Western Tennessee) and by the *Gospel Advocate*. Almost all the churches used *Gospel Advocate* literature in their classes and most brethren subscribed to the *Gospel Advocate* weekly paper. One of R.V.’s brothers, Sid Scott, became an elder of the Bemis church and was very liberal in his thinking. Another brother, Curtis, was a deacon in

the congregation. R.V. died some years ago. I suppose Junie still lives in Tunica. Our fellowship, R.V. and I, where we had beforetimes shared so much in the faith, was severed in the late fifties. Whatever the *Gospel Advocate*, David Lipscomb College, Freed-Hardeman College, and promoters and planners brought into the churches, R.V. accepted, fellowshiped, and defended. It came to pass, rather rapidly, that we did not think the same way or talk the same language regarding the work and organization of the church, yet both of us were preachers, supposedly of the New Testament. This was, and is, one of my greatest personal sorrows in the divisions which have occurred in and among the churches. Brother Scott blessed me and helped me out of denominationalism. I lived to see him develop and endorse the denominational attitudes and practices which are leading most churches of Christ into denominationalism. Brother Harold V. Trimble (who preached for the Bemis church in the late forties, and who worked with R.V. and me in encouraging us to preach the gospel) and I often spoke afterwards of this paradox: that a man who “grew up” in the church and was taught the truth all his life would endorse and participate in the liberal movement, and a man who “grew up” in denominationalism and learned the truth would abide in the truth and oppose the errors of the liberal movement in the churches.

After the war was over and dedicated military personnel returned home, they remembered people in “foreign” countries where they had been, people whom they had taught, and baptized in many cases, and small congregations of disciples who were meeting and maintaining “the faith.” There was great interest and zeal in so many men’s hearts, wanting to go back to those places and peoples to teach and help them spiritually (Acts 15:36). Out of this zeal and best of motives, there came a number of unscriptural efforts, as well as scriptural works. It was in this period of time that the “Sponsoring Church,” “Sponsoring Eldership,” “Centralized Oversight and Control” concept arose among many brethren and churches. Certain congregations, usually “big-city” congregations with many members and large monetary contributions, well-known congregations with publicly-identified elders and members, brethren known due to their successes in business and professional endeavors, or by their attachments to various institutions as “board members,” became the “leading-lights” among brethren in promoting and practicing whatever was endorsed by these “sponsoring churches,” by influential brethren, by well-known preachers, and by papers, especially the *Gospel Advocate*. It was a revealing period of time. If one would gaze intently at events and persons, he could see Bible warnings unfolding before our eyes, i.e., that our “faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God,” and that we might learn “not to think of men above

that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another” (1 Cor. 2:5; 4:6). This is what happened in the churches, among the brethren. The “wisdom of men” was exalted and followed, resulting in brethren being puffed up for one against another. The criteria, the rules for testing spiritual works and “church” activities, and whether a preacher was preaching the truth, were no longer the word of God, what Jesus and the Spirit-guided apostles said, what the first century churches of Christ practiced, “to the law and to the testimony” (Isa. 8:20; 1 John 4:1-6), but became, in the majority and popular mind-set, what the papers said, what the colleges taught, and what “brother-so-and-so” preached and believed. Thus strife and divisions developed rapidly! Among brethren the “thoughts of men” and the “ways of men” became higher than the “thoughts of God” and the “ways of God” as revealed in the Testament (Isa. 55:8-9).

It is distressing and heart-breaking to look back upon those ten to thirteen years, 1947 to 1960, seen more clearly now in hindsight than could have been seen then in foresight, realizing that a united, numerically growing, Bible-teaching and Bible-preaching, “what saith the scriptures, debating and defending the truth of God” body of people right after World War II, could so quickly, so easily, so devastatingly, with devilish impatience and finality, divide themselves one from another. The majority of congregations and brethren were willing to alienate and eliminate a large segment, yet a distinct minority of churches and brethren, trampling upon their consciences, ignoring their arguments and warnings, demonstrating little or no love for brethren, and deliberately and intentionally sundering the body of Christ, the church of our Lord. The Scriptures regarding brotherly love, patience, “debating thy cause with thy neighbor,” conscience, stumbling blocks, unity among brethren, and the sinfulness of strife and divisions, were greatly ignored. It was, in the popular mind-set, not the innovators and institutional supporters who were



creating the problems. The opposers, the “antis,” were the trouble makers in Israel (1 Kings 18:17; 21:20). Divisions of a century before over the missionary and benevolent societies, over mechanical instruments of music in worship services of churches, giving birth to the Disciples of Christ-Christian Church movement, meant nothing to “institutional” brethren in the fifties. They would not see and admit that “he who drives the wedge splits the log.” To the “institutional” “liberal” brethren, we who opposed their innovations were “splitting the churches.” Their eyes were closed and their ears were dull of hearing. Their hearts were waxed gross (Matt. 13:13-15). They were “dead set” in their programs and promotions, and would tolerate no opposition. They could not see denominationalism and a repeat performance of the “Christian Church” movement in their future. They could not see the Roy Key, Ed Fudge, Leroy Garrett, Carl Ketcherside, Rubel Shelly, Max Lucado, Ira North, Ken Dye types of brethren and preachers that their arguments and attitudes would produce. They never envisioned “a harvest time” for the seeds of change, digression and departures from the truth of God that they were sowing. They could not see the Bering Drive and Community Church(es) types of congregations down the roads of time. I suppose that about eighty to eighty-five percent of the congregations and brethren followed the institutional, centralized congregational cooperation concepts and programs. I like to think, even now, that if those hot-headed, division-at-any-price, “yellow tag of quarantine” brethren could have seen ahead, in view of past history and the Christian Church, they might have done and thought differently. But, again, they possibly would have done just as they did. When jobs are at stake and when money is the root and criterion of convictions and speaking, then men say one thing and do another!

The *Gospel Advocate*, “Old Reliable” as it was called in the fifties, promoting various errors and using the *Advocate’s* past reputation as a deceptive cover, was the paper that brethren David Lipscomb and Tolbert Fanning began and used to stop the tide of digression and departures from truth a century earlier. Their personal influence and reputations for Bible knowledge and stability by sound, solid Bible teaching in that paper, saved most of the Lord’s churches in the south from digression. Yet “Old Reliable” became the prominent instrument, under the editorship of B.C. Goodpasture, in promoting error and initiating wholesale divisions among brethren. Its “ace writer” in those days was brother G.C. Brewer, the Isaac Errett of our times. Just as Errett was “soft” and compromising, and on the wrong side of every issue among brethren in his lifetime, so was G.C. Brewer in the twentieth century. Brother Guy N. Woods, though a rival of Brewer and one who did not “gee” and “haw” with Brewer, nevertheless formed a duo, a twosome, with Brewer to fight the “antis.” These two did more damage to the cause of Christ in their

opposition to the truth and endorsements of unscriptural programs, than did any other two brethren in their writings and debates. All this was backed and encouraged by B.C. Goodpasture, and “Old Reliable” was the instrument for disseminating their views. It was “Old Reliable” that published the ultimatum against brethren in Christ, i.e., that “A Yellow Tag Of Quarantine” should be hanged upon the heads and about the necks of all “anti” brethren, those of us who did not believe that local church maintenance and support of human institutions, and the centralized, sponsoring-church types of church cooperation, were scriptural. This quarantine was effective, very much so, as I will discuss in a later essay.

Through the centuries the history of our brethren has been repeated again and again. Most brethren have learned little from the warnings in the Testament (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:1-12) and the subsequent apostasies, resulting in Roman Catholicism. One hundred and fifty years ago most brethren could see nothing wrong with mechanical instruments of music in worship and the formation of societies to do the work of the churches. The Christian Churches, Disciples of Christ, with their inter-denominational affiliations and mergers are seen now. They are a people who have no certain doctrines and abiding places in the religious world about them. They have nothing to offer lost mankind. Fifty years ago most of our brethren could see no resemblance between their benevolent societies and sponsoring churches, as compared to and with the missionary and benevolent societies of the Disciples of Christ, the Christian Churches. In our present day, at this present time, most of the brethren can see no danger in a *Christianity Magazine* with all its doctrinal softness and compromising spirit, and the outright, plain, unequivocal teaching of error on Romans 14, by a prominent brother and editor-owner of that paper, as he upheld and endorsed another, now-deceased, prominent brother who taught blatant false doctrine on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Most of our brethren do not think it strange any more that four other prominent preachers, also owners-editors of *Christianity Magazine* would not take public issue with and refute the errors taught regarding Romans 14 in their paper by their fellow editor-owner. And most of our brethren do not see that it was alarming and “eye-opening” that error was taught in the Bible Department of Florida College regarding “the days of Genesis, chapter one.” “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?” (Lam. 1:12). (To be continued)

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Philippine Report

Kyle Campbell

On January 7-24, 2002, I was able to make my second trip to the Philippines with brother Jim McDonald and brother Todd Williams. I am thankful to the Lord for allowing me the opportunity to preach and make these two trips. I am also very thankful to have brethren who care enough to provide me not only the opportunity but also the financial means to carry out this work. The following is a brief summary of the activities I engaged in during the trip.

After landing in Manila on the morning of January 9, brother Jim McDonald, brother Todd Williams, and I traveled north with brother Rody Gumpad and several other brethren to the town of Rizal in the province of Nueva Ecija. I was met by brother Anselmo Veterbo and taken back to his home while brother McDonald and brother Williams continued to the province of Isabella to preach for a few days. During my stay in Nueva Ecija, I visited churches in San Jose City, Ganduz, Cambitala, Canaan West, and Casaligan. During my visit, nine souls obeyed the gospel and 42 souls obeyed the gospel during the visit of brother McDonald and brother Williams.

Late in the evening of January 13, all three of us returned to Manila. Early the next morning, brother McDonald, brother Ric Darasin, brother Lordy Salunga, and I boarded a plane for the island of Leyte. Brother Williams stayed in Manila and returned to the U.S. later that day. During our stay, brother McDonald and I were able to preach at congregations in Mahaplag, Baybay, Calingatnan, and Ormoc City. There were eleven baptisms during our stay. The island of Leyte is a growing work, with the number of churches increasing from eight to seventeen in the last two years. It will be very exciting to see how these congregations progress.

After traveling to Cebu City, we said goodbye to brother

Darasin and brother Salunga and we were joined by brother Jonathan Carino and brother Cipriano Carpentero. We traveled all night by ferry to the island of Mindanao and arrived on the morning of January 17 in Ozamis City. Brother McDonald and I were able to preach at Clarin, San Antonio, Oroquieta City, and Aloran. There were nineteen souls baptized into Christ over the course of three and a half days.

On the afternoon of January 20, brother McDonald, brother Carpentero, brother Carino, and I boarded a ferry to the island of Negros. We arrived late in the evening in Dumaguete City. Over the next two days, we preached to congregations in Bagacay and San Carlos City. There were two baptisms on January 22.

On the morning of January 23, brother McDonald and I separated. He would continue his trip for another two and a half weeks. After saying goodbye, brother Jonathan Carino and I boarded a ferry and traveled to Toledo City on the island of Cebu. We then traveled across the island to Cebu City and I stayed in the home of brother Carino that evening. He arranged for the congregation where he preaches to assemble at his home that night for a Bible study wherein I preached one time. The next morning I began my trip back to the U.S.

In all, I had preached 28 times and 83 souls were baptized into Christ while I was in the Philippines. It was a very fruitful trip, but it made me realize that there is much work left to do. Preachers and brethren need strengthening and many, many others are waiting to hear the gospel for the first time. If the good Lord wills, I will return one day to continue doing my small part for the cause of Christ. Filipino brethren also desperately need others who will go to their country to preach the gospel. Will you say, "Here am I, send me?"



Men of Success With God

Valerio Marchi

Success is essential in our life: it is natural that we desire to achieve the targets that we judge important. But success often is a kind of “god” for the people of the world, who want to obtain it at any cost.

- Success = The favourable or prosperous termination of attempts or endeavours. The attainment of wealth, position, honors . . . The successful performance or achievement (*Webster Dictionary*).

- “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it” (Ps. 127:1).

Success is essential in our life: it is natural that we desire to achieve the targets that we judge important. But success often is a kind of “god” for the people of the world, who want to obtain it at any cost. And sometimes it can become a *scandal* (“obstacle”) and a kind of idol even within the Kingdom of God, when we try to reach it without being in the right position in the sight of God.

In Luke 9:1-2, we read that Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. But we also read, in the same chapter (v. 40), how they failed in casting out a bad spirit that was tormenting a poor boy. In fact, the father of that boy said to Jesus: “So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.”

We may imagine the shame, the surprise, and the disappointment of the Twelve! But that unsuccessful result was a spiritual blessing for them. In fact, Jesus teaches us that we may find people performing great deeds in our Lord’s name, without having fellowship with him, whether they

are conscious of their lawlessness or not, the fact is that they are deluding themselves and many others. In Matthew 7:22-23 Jesus says about the Day of Judgment: “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you who practice lawlessness!”

Being “successful” without being true believers is a curse. On the other hand, failing because God is trying to teach us something, and learn his lesson, is a wonderful blessing and leads us toward true, divine success. So, let’s try to learn the lesson.

Whenever God gives us the power to do something and we cannot do it, it is possible that we have not correctly prepared ourselves in order to be good instruments in his hands. In Luke 9:41 Jesus says: “O faithless and perverse generation. . . .”

It happens that we Christians lack faith and goodness, just like this wicked world. So, before and while using God’s power (I mean the gospel), let’s work in our spirit and among ourselves in order to grow, to mature and to cultivate the right attitude toward heaven, our soul, the brethren, and the world. God was teaching the Twelve that true success consists in performing God’s work (in that context: miraculous operations) in his ways, as well. He tells us today that we must use the incomparable power of the Word with faith, obedience, and

love if we want to be really successful, that is effective and saved! Romans 1:16 says that the gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.

But Paul also taught, in Philippians 2:15, that Christians must “become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.”

We must not be like this faithless and perverse generation; on the other hand, we should be fervent examples of goodness among it, like Jesus also stated in Matthew 5:16, saying that our spiritual and moral light must shine before all men, and our good works must be visible to them, in order that they could glorify our God.

To remain in the realm of Luke 9, we see that Jesus prayed before feeding the five thousand (v. 16); again, he was praying alone when the disciples joined him (v. 18) and he took Peter, John, and James for a walk with him over the mountain to pray before the transfiguration (vv. 28-29). Mark 9:29 adds that Jesus, after healing the boy that the Twelve were not able to heal, said: “This kind (of spirits) can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

The disciples pretended to have a true success with God without concentrating and fighting with constant and fervent prayers, without working in accord with God. But it was not possible. Are we struggling in prayer? How much time and energy are we spending in our personal and congregational dialogue with God? How close are we to the source of the power? Praise be to God when he

doesn't give us the success that we don't deserve, because we are not doing all that we can for getting it!

Luke 9:46-48 (see also Luke 22:24-28) tells us about a dispute among the Twelve as to which of them would be greatest. How is it possible being really effective in the Kingdom, and preaching the Gospel *with* God, when we are not removing all the carnal disputes that waste our time and energies, being a shame within the church and in front of the world? We can't

have heavenly success when we are not doing what Jesus told us in John 13:35 for conquering the world for him: “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Going back to the context of Philippians that we considered before (2:15), let's listen to what the previous verse (v. 14) tells us: “Do all things without complaining and disputing.” Perhaps you have noticed how often Christians are ready to contend among themselves for matters of pride and opinion, though not able to fight with all their strength for the truth, both when they must struggle in the church and in the world. When we are so “bold” and strong for our human fights, but not brave enough or humble enough for God's battles, how can we be people of success in his sight?

Luke 9:41 shows how Jesus didn't withdraw in accusing the world and the disciples of their sins, and we have already considered how often we lack that frankness and boldness.

But it also happens that we become very rough and intolerant when we are supposed to be meek, gentle, and forbearing. This was the mistake of the disciples in Luke 9:51-56 when they asked the Master to allow them to punish with fire from heaven those Samaritans who didn't receive him. But Jesus said to them: “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of!”

How can we be successful with God when we are so immature that we firmly believe that our bad and wrong zeal is a perfect and “spiritual” weapon for the glory of God? Since so often we don't know when and how to be uncompromising and resolute, and when and how to be patient and merciful, we can't pretend to perform God's

works. Moreover, in Luke 9:5 Jesus told the Apostles: “Whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.” From this command, it was not hard to argue the strategy and the attitude of the Lord in such circumstances. In fact, see what he did on another occasion, when some people in the region of Gadarenes asked Jesus to leave that territory and the Master simply got into the boat and returned (Luke 8:37).

But, in Luke 9:54, we see the disciples being ready to kill those who did not receive their Master. In so doing, they didn't remember Jesus' words and they did not obey him. Sometimes, we long for success with the Lord without obeying his Word! Isn't it strange? The questions are: Are we really growing in knowledge, remembrance and obedience of God's Word? Does it happen that we claim to be his disciples and we want to perform great deeds as such, and to love Jesus, but we are not accurately

studying and practicing his Word? Never forget John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

In Luke 9:57-62 Jesus spoke about the cost of discipleship. Someone proclaimed to be ready to follow him everywhere; but some of those "followers" started to make excuses in order to postpone or to "water down" the hardness of the mission. They wanted to plough and to look back at the same time. This is like drawing with your eyes closed; have you ever tried? Sometimes we would like to do what the Lord gives us power to do through the gospel, but we don't want to pay the price, to put all of ourselves in the work we are doing. Even in the world you can't succeed if you don't give all of yourself to the job you are doing! If we pretend to have human assurances or to live a "double life," both with God and with the world, we will lose both, because we know that it is impossible to serve two masters, according to Matthew 6:24. Do you remember what the prophet Haggai (1:4) asked the Jews who were not doing enough for God: "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"

Just substitute the word "temple" with "church" and let's ask ourselves if we are doing what we are expected to do for Christ's body. The prophet continued, in Haggai 1:5-7: "Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways! You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes. Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways!"

Do you see how unsuccessful those believers were? And do you realize that they had a problem with God? that they had to change something in order to be successful, while God was ready to bless them as soon as he could see their progress and humbleness? In fact, in Haggai 1:8 the Lord says: "Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified."

Brethren, we are all living and cooperating in the Kingdom of God, trying to "bring wood from the mountains" with faith, zeal, and hard work, in order to be faithful workers in the building up of the church of Christ. You know very well how much toil there is in preaching and living the gospel in these last days. Sometimes we feel we are

not fit for the mission. Sometimes we realize how weak and "poor" we are. Blessed moments! We know that even the Apostles had to suffer and learn many things. Just read Bible verses like 2 Corinthians 1:8-11, 4:7-15, and it is always a blessing from God to understand how insufficient we are, so that we may ask him to help us in strengthening "the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for our feet" (Heb. 12:12-13).

We work for God because we desire to love him more and more and we want to be saved and to save those who hear and see us. As Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."

We must never quit praying. On the contrary, let's find more room in our lives to speak with God. We must be trained for the day in which it will be possible to speak with him eternally and without ceasing. Let's keep on studying, meditating, and practicing his Word, never forgetting it when it is the time to do what God has taught us. In so doing, let's increase our faith, because if we are with God he is with us and "all things are possible to him who believes" according to Mark 9:23. Let's also withhold ourselves from useless or inconvenient things that hinder our way to heaven. We must be "children of light . . . and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness . . . redeeming the time, because the days are evil" like Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:8; 11:16. Learning the time, the way, and the place for doing good, let's do it!

We are not looking for human, material, worldly success; neither do we want a false and hypocritical "religious" success. We are not seeking big numbers, but one sinner, one soul, one spiritual "miracle" as Jesus states in Luke 15:10: "I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

As we work in the Kingdom of God, we do the most important work of the world! We need to perform it well and people desperately need our good and faithful labor, especially when they don't know how much they need it. We actually have "power and authority over all demons and power to cure diseases, and Jesus sent us to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." Of course, I'm speaking in a spiritual sense. God gave us the gospel in order to be healed and to heal everyone to whom the gospel is preached, casting out all sins from our hearts by the infinite power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We all know very well the passage: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16).

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**The love of God cannot be
merited or earned, but it
can be spurned.**



A Day of Infamy

Larry R. Devore

“The day of infamy was a perfect September day in New York. The city had been stifling under a mask of late summer humidity; the night before it had broken in a torrential thunderstorm; an inch of water had fallen in a quarter of an hour. But the next morning was bright, blue, at the edge of crisp” (Richard Brookhiser, “Our Day of Infamy,” *National Review*, Oct. 1, 2001, 17).

There are dates, which seem to live forever in the nation’s collective memory. Some of these are July 4, 1776, December 7, 1941, June 6, 1944, November 22, 1963, and now September 11, 2001. The despicable terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York, and on the Pentagon in D.C. on September 11, 2001, is a day which equals Pearl Harbor in its unprovoked sneakiness and exceeds it in the magnitude of the loss of life. The loss of life at Pearl Harbor (2,403) was nearly all military personnel. The victims of September 11 (3,000+) were nearly all civilians going about their daily activities. War has come to the shores of our nation. There is no place of safety for the physical man. Many have considered our vast large nation, surrounded by two great oceans as a place of safety. No more! That illusion has been shattered!

Those folks in New York City, D.C., and Boston got up that morning, ate their breakfast, brushed their teeth, went to work, perhaps dropping off the children for school, or boarded one of the planes that were high jacked. They had no clue that this was their last few hours of earthly existence! Solomon wrote, “Because for every matter there is a time and judgment, though the misery of man increases greatly. For he does not know what will happen; so who can tell him when it will occur? No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no one has power in the day of death” (Eccl. 8: 6-8a).

Where was God when this calamity occurred? God was God on September 11, and he is still our Sovereign God. “Oh Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the nations and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?” (2 Chron. 20:6).

We are shocked and saddened by these catastrophic

murders of our fellow citizens. In these events, there is a great amount of symbolism with events in the book of Revelation. Consider: “And the kings of the earth who committed fornication with her and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying Alas, alas, that great city (NYC), that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.” “For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.” “And they threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate” (Rev. 18: 9-10, 17a, and 18-19 with insertions, lrd).

Ancient Babylon was the symbol of wealth, commerce, and corruption in the first century. The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center symbolized the nation’s economic might, the Pentagon symbolized the nation’s military might, and the White House and/or the Capitol (if that was the target of the plane which crashed in Pennsylvania) symbolized the nation’s political power. It is evident to me that the terrorists were attacking those symbols of our nation!

I am *not* saying that the events of September 11, 2001 were prophesied in the book of Revelation. I am saying there are some similarities between ancient Babylon and modern New York City. While there are a lot of good things about New York City, the city also has its seamy side, with sex shows, homosexual bars, abortion clinics, etc. that God does not approve of in his Word.

Even secular writers have noticed this. Richard Brookhiser wrote, “If the United States had no residents of foreign birth or ethnicity, and if it had no foreign policy dealings in any inflamed portion of the globe, it would still be the preeminent target of the postmodern age, for we, and especially New York, are the symbols of getting and spending, of capital and globalization. The fear of that power, as sin and symbol, is very great” (*Op. cited.*).

Let us not blame God for this catastrophe! It was foul deeds committed by evil men. Having said that, we know that God has unlimited power and could have stopped the

Church Universal/Church Local

The Importance of One

Donald Willis

The numeral one is used 1967 times in the Bible. It is used to speak of a definite number; often it refers to an indefinite person, thing. While one day is indefinite, the writer could signify that it was the thirteenth day (Esth. 8:12). Often the indefinite is used, with *no intention* of a definite day/time. “One day I plan to go to the lake,” while there is no definite time given.

One is used in a *definite* sense: Ephesians 4:4-6: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Therefore, there are not *two* of any of these. One body (the church), one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith (not 1000 faiths that differ), one baptism (not four), one God and Father. All of us can read and understand these uses in Scripture.

In the spiritual sense the *one body* is the *church*. Illustrative, the physical body is one, but has many members (1 Cor. 12:12). In the physical body, there is a designed function for the hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc. Paul concludes in this verse, “. . . so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (vv. 12-13). Paul utilizes the physical to illustrate the greater spiritual truth!

The *universal* church of our Lord is one (definite). There are not many churches pleasing to God. The old Jewish order was done away in Christ. The pagan temple worship was ineffective, self honoring; not God honoring. Every individual who obeys the gospel is added by God to his (universal) church (Acts 2:41, 47). God makes no mistakes.

The *universal* church is not the *local* church, and the *lo-*

attack if he so chose. He chose not to interfere!

Certainly, we are *not* saying the people who died in New York City and D.C. and Pennsylvania were more wicked than others and deserved their fate. Jesus taught in Luke 13 that this is not so. He said, “Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think they were worse sinners than all other men who dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:4-5). This is a wake-up call!

“The Lord shatters the plans of the nations and thwarts all their schemes” (Ps. 33:10, NLT). God still rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan. 4:32b), but we are too close to the scene to fully understand. It may be that God has a purpose for these events that cannot be divined by human intelligence. However, do not the events of September 11

reveal something about the hatefulness and total lack of love that is an endpoint of a false religion (Islam) based on works and that has no basis in the mercy, love, and grace of the God of the Bible? Our responsibility is to trust and obey him. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths” (Prov. 3:5-6). As I said earlier in this article, there is no place of safety for the physical man, but there is a place of safety for the spirit of man, and that is in Christ (Eph. 1:3-7). The only way to get into Christ is by faithful obedience (Gal. 3:26-27). If you are not in Christ, don’t delay! Believe in Jesus, repent of your sins, and be immersed into him while ~~you have life and opportunity!~~

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cal church is not the *universal* church. The local church is different. In one locality, there may be many local churches. Each local church is to be obedient to Jesus Christ. Paul was baptized into Christ (universal church), but the Scriptures noted that “. . . Saul assayed to join himself to the disciples” (local church). The local church for a while refused to receive his membership until they were convinced by Barnabas that Paul’s conversion was genuine. Then, “. . . he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem” (Acts 9:26-28). One is added to the universal church, but one will join himself to a faithful local church! There may be more than one faithful local church in a community (study Rom. 16:3-5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phile. 2).

Local communities harboring differing loyalties were encouraged to be *one*. “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul” (1 Cor. 1:13)? Scriptures are given that the revealed will of God might be known and implemented. Often, there will be divisive groups that pull themselves away from the revealed truth; these have gone astray. Note: this does not say that they pulled themselves away from a mother church; but they left truth, which makes men free!

Membership in a local church does not destroy *individual obligation*. Local members pool their abilities to bring people to Jesus Christ. Each member in a local church is important! They bring individual abilities into a working fellowship that together will labor to bring people to Jesus Christ, worship according to the New Testament order,

and are a source of fellowship and encouragement to one another.

Each member is important!

For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee nor again the head to the feet; I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another (1 Cor. 12:14-25).

The local church is comprised of members, each is important and talented, and is given individual duties for which each is individually accountable to use to the glory of God.

The local church is filled with able members, each has a duty to use his talent in reaching the lost, the weak, the fallen. Do not say, “I can’t do anything,” for each must serve to the extent of ability (and do not sell ourselves short, we are able). Let us rise up together — functioning, let us respond, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

I am only one, but this one is important. We will each stand before God in the judgment, and we will give an account of what we have done. We desire to hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant,” and will hear when we have used our ability to the glory of God.

Am I doing all that I can to please God? Am I teaching my family to become Christians? Am I setting the proper example to my family, neighbors, coworkers? I am only one, but an important one! I will stand before God; I will be judged! I will live eternally! Therefore, shouldn’t I be doing his will now, in my body? God bless each of us to the use of our talents!

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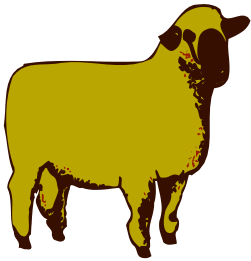
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Sheep: Dumb Animals

Steve Wallace



One criticism that some Lithuanians have had upon hearing of Christ's calling people "sheep" is, "Sheep are dumb animals." And they are! I have talked with a man who grew up on a farm raising sheep and he confirmed this. Further, our landlord has sheep in our back yard and I have had an opportunity to get to know them.

Please don't tell them I said this, but they confirm what the Lithuanians say. *Sheep are dumb animals!*

Why Are People Compared to a Dumb Animal?

The answer to the above question is easy: People are compared to sheep because that is their true state! They are created, limited, and dependent beings (Gen. 1). They do not have it in themselves to direct their steps (Jer. 10:23). The Bible says that, left to their own devices, they are "like sheep gone astray" and are viewed by Jesus as being in a pitiable state if they have no shepherd (Isa. 53:6; Matt. 9:36). Their only hope is to hear and follow the Good Shepherd's leading (John 10:27-29; 14:6). Further, they are yet capable of further blunders (sin) if they do not continue to follow him (Prov. 16:25; Acts 28:29-30). Because of man's very state as a created being he is ultimately helpless when confronted with the great problems of sin and death. Through Jesus' teaching we learn that he wants us to recognize our helpless, sheep-like condition (Matt. 5:3-6; Luke 18:9-14). This will cause us to seek his help.

Jesus: Help of the Helpless

Perhaps no text is so forceful in making the above point as is Mark 4:35-5:43. The passage tells of Jesus helping people in extreme situations. In the storm on the sea his disciples cry out, "We perish" (4:38). At Jesus' words "the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (4:39). He then meets one called Legion who "had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains" (5:3). After meeting Jesus, we later find him "sitting and clothed, and in his right mind" (5:15). Then a woman comes to him who "had an issue of blood twelve years . . . and had spent all she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse" (5:25-26). When she touched the

hem of Jesus' garment "straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up" (5:29). In the final part of Mark 5, Jesus goes to the house of Jairus, who has just heard, "thy daughter is dead" (v. 35). However, after Jesus speaks to her, "straightway the damsel arose, and walked" (v. 42). McGarvey correctly gives the underlying message of this part of Mark's gospel:

The argument of this section proves the divine power of Jesus by showing that he could control by a word the winds and the waves of the sea; could direct and compel the movements of demons; could by his touch remove incurable diseases; and could instantly raise the dead. In other words, it proves the sufficiency of his power to save to the uttermost all who come to him, by proving that all the dangers to which we are exposed, whether from the forces of the physical world, the malice of evil spirits, the power of disease, or the hand of death, may be averted at his command, and that they will be in behalf of all who put themselves under his protection (*Commentary on Matthew-Mark*, 297).

Sheep may be helpless animals but Jesus is more than able to give them the help they need!

The Choices: Sheep or Goat?

If the idea of being like a sheep offends you, Jesus does not give us a lot of choices to pick from when seeking another animal to model ourselves after. In fact there is only one other: You can choose to be a goat, which represents the rebellious who are unwilling to submit to Christ and will be lost at the final judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). Hence, we can either submit to our creator as humble sheep or reject him as rebellious goats.

Conclusion

Sheep are dumb animals. And, in spite of all his advances, man must become like a sheep before God if he is to have any hope in the next life. Also, he must see that philosophies and teachings from fellow-sheep are not going to give the help he truly needs. Only the Good Shepherd has that. Let us learn the lesson the lowly sheep teaches us lest we be "wise in (our) own conceits" and fail to follow him (Rom. 12:16).



The Causes of Teen-age Pregnancy

Abraham Smith

There are many factors involved in

this subject. And all of them should be considered if we want to arrive at a solution to this grave problem.

I talked to one of my sons who is in the 9th grade. He shared with me that he knew of at least 20 of his peers that were pregnant this year or the last. As in other communities, clearly we have a problem in this community with teen pregnancy. And I am glad that *Truth Magazine* has provided a forum to address this important issue.

Why is it that so many teenagers are having sex resulting in pregnancy? It is my conviction that the answer to that question has its roots in so many factors, with each factor having its own multiple variables. But like any set of directions, we cannot ignore any particular factor if we truly want to solve the problem.

My analysis of this problem and its remedy is moral and spiritual. That is, we must be willing to see the moral and spiritual nature of our subject. While most do not want to admit it, teenage pregnancy outside of marriage is ultimately a moral problem involving sin. Moral problems can only be correctly understood and addressed within the context of divine truth, the word of God. Therefore, I make no apology for affirming our need for God's truth to help us solve the moral and spiritual problem of teenage pregnancy. God has given us the Bible to guide us in obtaining the remedies we need. If we refuse to consult and conform to the will of the Creator, we should not be surprised at our continual failures to solve societal

problems which are rooted in personal sin. The heart must be changed for every moral and spiritual problem to be solved — including unwanted teenage pregnancies. So said Jesus (Mark 7:20-23; Matt. 23:24-26). God's simple answer is, "Wait until you are married to have sex or don't have it at all." Some may begin to scream at this point that adults don't follow this. But that only means that adult *should start* to obey their Creator by following his commands. But it seems that many teenagers and adults do not accept God's answer to this problem. They do not accept it because:

1. The love of God does not mean as much to us. Because we did not count it a holy thing that the Son of God came down to earth, died shedding his precious blood for our sins, was buried and rose again giving everyone the opportunity to rise to live with God in a happy state of blissfulness forever.

2. Because we do not believe that Jesus has gone to prepare a wonderful place for us. Where he is, we may be also. Thus we are not inclined to sacrifice (abstain from sex until marriage) for a life that is so short in comparison to the eternal joys of heaven. Think about this for a moment. If you knew that you were only going to stay in a place for a few minutes but then move to another place for 50 years, would you make the "pleasures" of the place of few minutes more of your focus than the one you would reside for 50 years? Jesus said, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but

Ultimately, we need to realize that, if Christ is in our hearts, thus the word of God dwelling in our hearts by faith, we will have the strength to be more than conquerors (Eph. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:36-39). "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works” (Matt. 16:25-27).

3. Because we fail to believe that *no unrepentant fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, drunkards, revilers or swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10)*. Or it may be that some do not realize that as all have sinned, all can repent and be washed (like it says in verse 11) when they confess their faith in Jesus and are baptized by the authority of Jesus for the purpose of the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:36-38).

4. Because we fail to accept that the excuse, “all sin” will not be enough for God. Because if “all do not repent” then “will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:2-5)?

5. Because we fail to realize that though we may not be able to avoid unintentional sins, we can avoid all sins for which we are conscious before hand with the help of God! If when I am tempted to sin, is the Lord too far away from me to hear me pray, “Lord I am weak but Thou art mighty, please help Your humble servant resist sin”? Is he too powerless to help me resist sin?

1 Corinthians 10:13: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” So if we knowingly commit sin, then it is simply an avoidable choice to disregard the wishes of the God who “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

6. Because we do not recognize that if we hide the word of God in our hearts, we will have the power to resist sin. Psalm 119:11: “Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.” The word of God can change our hearts.

Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

7. Because their parents have failed to make sure the word of God is ingrained in them, thus they are not able to fulfill God’s word. Deuteronomy 6:6-8: “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.” If every one of us started reading four chapters of the Bible every day beginning on January 1, on October 25 of the same year we would have read the entire Bible. But yet some of us go a lifetime and never even read the entire New Testament. How in all the world could such a person obey Deuteronomy 6:6-8? How could a parent teach what he does not know? So often we hear parents saying, “I talk to my children all the time.” The problem is, “What could you be talking about if you don’t know the Scripture?” We must realize that the power of conversion is *not* in our words, but the power to change the lives of all of us including our children is in the words of God. What would happen if we made our children read (from the time they were able to read) two or three chapters of the Bible every day? There are some who will challenge me at this point and contend that they do make their

children read the Bible. But the issue is how consistently. Can your teenager start at the beginning of Genesis and summarize it from that point to the end? If a child has been repetitiously reading anything, then that child will learn it. Thus when a child or an adult does not know “hide nor hair” of a book in the Bible, then that child or parent simply has not been spending much time in the Holy Scriptures as they have made themselves believe.

8. Because we do not demand and encourage our children to put in practice the principles of the Scripture from an early age. If I want my children to be kind, let me insist that, from an early age, they demonstrate kindness. Reward them for it. If I want my children to be full of courage, then I should encourage and arrange for challenges for success so that I can instill courage in my children. I help them do this from an early age. From an early age, I help them to learn not to follow the crowd. From an early age, I help my children to verbalize why they do or do not follow the crowd. Thus I help them to handle peer pressure by being a leader not a follower. If my children must wear everything “crazy” that everyone else is wearing, I might need to stop that early. If a child learns early, that they will not follow the crowd in what they wear, then they may not be so inclined to follow the crowd when the crowd insists on sex to be accepted.

9. Because from an early age, we do not teach our children loyalty. That means defending the authority under which they reside. That means we teach our children not to tolerate criticism of their parents. Not to tolerate criticism of the church for taking a moral stand, but rather to defend it and to speak out. A child that hears all day long the message, “Your parents sure are backwards” will absorb that message and the effect of that parent’s authority will be diminished. Thus all the talk of the parent about sex will mean nothing.

10. Because parents, the church, and others of authority are hypocrites. Parents need to tell their children that sex outside of marriage is wrong and then comply with that themselves. Too many preachers are preaching all the while living in sin. And then someone proclaims, “Taking your child to church won’t matter.” Maybe not if that church is full of hypocrisy. Maybe not, if between the lines of the song “Oh how I love Jesus,” we are backbiting every sister and brother. Maybe not, if the only thing that the child hears in the home is a negative view of the church. Then we wonder why it did not have a positive effect on their lives. If a congregation is bad (and not all congregations are good, particularly those that tolerate preachers living in adultery and those that do not teach the pure doctrine of Christ), then go to one where you can give it praise before your child. But I must say that a parent is not a hypocrite for having done wrong in the past if he has stopped such wrongdoing. A person, who used drugs and stopped, is not wrong to tell his children not to use them. Such a person has repented. Some time ago, I allowed the sin of pornography to enter into my life. I felt the need to confess to the church that I had allowed this sin in my life. Thus I repented. There is nothing wrong with parents telling a child that they don’t want them to make the same mistakes that they have made.

11. Because parents who are Christians do not set the right example in being proactive in teaching the gospel to those who are lost. This ought to be a goal for the Christian. The Christian should seek out ways for this to be done. The more this is the goal for the Christian, seeking out the good of his fellow man, the less the inclination will be to do wrong on any level. That same thing will be true for Christians whose children are Christians. A parent should set aside a time to talk to his children on how they will convert their peers who are lost. From day to day, such a parent should encourage his child to share with him how this is coming along. Then he can make suggestions. If this process is effective, then the child will bring a positive influence upon other teenagers rather than them bringing an influence upon them.

12. Because parents allow their children to engage in dancing where often times sexual gestures and close body contact is made which promotes an unhealthy atmosphere for sex. Songs are sung with filthy words and messages of sex outside of marriage. Parents allow their children to wear clothing that sets the tone for sex. Immodest clothes can be too tight or too little, not enough.

13. Because we do not recognize that our true value is that we are made in the image of God and that God loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have life everlasting. It should give a Christian great

delight that he is a child of the King of kings. But once that is abandoned, we often seek something else for our source of self-esteem. Thus young girls are trained by their peers to believe that their only worth is their bodies. A teenage boy hasn’t done anything if he does not “score.” In a similar manner, other good sources of self-esteem are discounted such as working hard to achieve good goals, being obedient to parents. Parents need to send a strong message early of what counts and warn the child of those who have different values.

14. Because parents are not around enough to supervise their children. Thus they raise themselves. Parents are not around to see their child slowly drift in the wrong direction to do something before they go too far. Parents do not show their love by being involved in the affairs of their children’s lives. Parents are too timid and hesitant to intervene in situations that the child finds difficult to handle. Such situations either will build confidence in the parent or will send a message to the child that “you can’t count on me to be around when you need me most.”

15. Because teenage girls hear the words “I love you” more from a boy (whose ultimate goal is *only* sex) than they hear it from their fathers, mothers, or care givers. It may be that the reason why parents don’t show their children love is because their parents may not have shown them love. Nevertheless, by seeking guidance from God’s word, parents must learn to become more loving toward their children in an affectionate way. Every child has a desire to be loved no matter how old he gets. Thus parents need to hug their children and express their love. Otherwise, the message to the child will be, “Do I love you and do I care?” Then the message of the child will be, “Why should I listen to you to one who does not care about me or love me?” and “Is the only time you want to say something to me is when something is wrong?”

16. Because we spend too much time making the excuse, “They will do what they want to do anyway.” That is about the silliest thing a person could say. How do you know what your child would not do if you set the right example yourself, insist that your child be acquainted with God’s word, and then made sure that the child demonstrates that faith in his every day life? Too many times we have parents proclaiming, “It won’t work” when they haven’t tried it. Or we have too many parents claiming they have tried something that they have not. An example would be the reading of the Scripture. If the adult or child read the Scriptures as much as they claimed, then after a short period of time, they would have read the whole Bible and would be able to recall much of its content. The faith to resist sin comes through the hearing of the word of God (Rom. 10:17; Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:4).

17. Because Christians have not learned that there is something called worldliness and we should not strive to be like the world. The song says, “This world is not my home, I’m just passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.” We need to consider the example set by Moses. “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:24-27).

Children need to be taught and have the example set before them that they love not the world neither the things that are in the world. 1 John 2:17: “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

All Christians need to absorb the message that if you live right, the world will think your life is strange. “For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead” (1 Pet. 4:3-5). Children from an early age need to be told in accordance with the above passage, that people will speak evil of you if you do not do what they want.

18. Because we do not seek out mates for our children that have the same values that your child does. I know of fathers who visit other congregations so that their teenagers will meet other *faithful* Christians. If your child comes into contact *only* with those lacking in moral values, then that is all they have to choose from. The result of following this advice (to put your child in contact with other teenagers with high moral values) is that no pressure will be put on one or the other because they both want to do what the Lord says to do.

19. Because sex education is nothing but a failure. Young girls are taught how to put a condom on a cucumber. How does this “sex education” stop the boy from slipping the condom off without the girl knowing it? Is the teen pregnancy rate going down because children are taught how to “prevent pregnancy”? That answer is clearly *no!* But, as it would seem, according to school policy it is a crime to tell the same child that sex outside of marriage is against the wishes of their Creator. The Bible says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools

despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1:7). And that is the reason why the world is so messed up today. Rather than accepting the instructions of the One who knows the most about us, because he created us, we reap the error of our rejection of those essential instructions.

20. Because parents do not realize that it is simply unacceptable to make the excuse “I have not been perfect in the past so that justifies me from refusing to change what I can in the present.” When we learn better, we should do better. And we should be determined that if we are imperfect on anything, it will be because of what we do not know to do. For what great shame there is in a parent who knows of something that he could do to benefit their child but refuses to do it.

21. Because for boys, there may be a corrupting influence within the family or a near relative. Relatives sometimes encourage immorality. Sometimes we as parents have to get to the root that leads to the sexual act. That most likely will be a pattern of thinking. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Prov. 23:7). We are a product of our thinking. If an older male (family member or not) tells a younger male that he isn’t anything unless he has “a lot of women,” then the parents need to talk to that child about the consequences of that line of thinking. The child needs to be told that “a lot of women” ultimately leads to a lot of children that he can’t take care of. They also should seek to limit the continued influence of that male with their child.

22. Because parents fail to teach their children that “doing unto others as we would have them do unto us” applies to sex as well. There are many children who can see this point if it is properly made. Many children can look around and see homes where the family *is* what it should be with two parents who love each other and love their children. They can see how these other children have their needs met. Then ask them, would you want that for yourself? Ask them would they want that for their child? Ask them, don’t your future children deserve a mother and a father who are committed to them in love? Then ask them, “Isn’t it selfish to engage in an act that will lead ultimately to a child having less than you would want for yourself?”

23. Because some of us fail to realize that the temptation of sex is often made greater than it needs to be because it is inflamed by what we see, hear, and various compromises to our conscience. If one drinks liquor, sex may become more appealing. If one views various forms of pornography, then one may find the temptation of sex to be greater. If one is continually involved in “heavy petting,” then the temptation of sex will be greater. A man or woman, boy or girl who wants to please the Creator will not allow their bodies to be stimulated under the delusion

Covering Our Nakedness

Marc W. Gibson

One of the principles of modesty is to cover the nakedness of the human body. Has God left us any guidelines as to what he considers “nakedness”? Can we know what areas of the human body should be covered to avoid exposing ourselves in an ungodly manner?

The Old Testament does reveal principles in the course of its teaching that would help us understand what God has considered as “nakedness” from the very beginning.

“And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs” (Exod. 28:42). In these instructions for the garments of the Old Testament priests, garments were to be made to cover their nakedness. These garments were to cover the mid-section from waist to thigh. Man did not learn here for the first time that this area of the body was to be covered. This is an application of the principle to cover nakedness first illustrated in the Garden of Eden. There, God considered as inadequate the coverings of fig leaves that Adam and Eve made for themselves (probably something akin to our modern bathing suits), and “made tunics of skin, and

clothed them” (Gen. 3:21). More than just a token covering of the private areas is necessary to be modestly clothed in God’s sight. Like the law of marriage, we need to go back “to the beginning” on what God considers as nakedness.

When God spoke of humiliating wicked Babylon, he spoke symbolically of exposing her nakedness: “Remove your veil, take off the skirt, uncover the thigh, pass through the rivers. Your nakedness shall be uncovered, yes, your shame will be seen” (Isa. 47:2-3). Here again we see that taking off the skirt and uncovering the thigh will render one naked. The human torso needs to be covered adequately to be holy in our conduct and dress. Everyone must determine where on his or her body the sexual (private) and thigh areas are and cover them properly. The line between right and wrong, righteousness and sin, should not be blurry or subjective. Direct principles of God’s word need to be taught and practiced today.

But am I trying to bring over the Law of Moses and teach it as the Christian’s standard? This allegation is made by some today when the above points are made (for example see Frank Jamerson, “The Law, Money and Modesty,” *Truth Magazine*, October 21, 1999, 14-15, “Reply to Review of Modesty,” *Truth Magazine*, March 2, 2000, 10-11, and “Dress Codes,” *Sound Words*, Southwest Bulletin, Lakeland, Florida, September 16, 2001 — copies available upon request). As far as I know, I am not trying to stitch up some Old Testament priestly garments today, but we should take note of the godly principles of covering nakedness that were applied to their garments. Why can’t we learn the same principles of covering nakedness today? Is what was nakedness for the priest less naked for us now? Is covering our nakedness just an Old Testament Law that has no application today? Sound biblical examples applying the principles of covering and uncovering nakedness should be instructive to us today. We can learn from Old and New Testament examples and the specific principles that guided such applications. This is not bringing over the Law of Moses as our authority, but gathering principles “from things written aforetime” to help us dress modestly. Remember, the principle of covering one’s nakedness goes back to the beginning of man, and must be applied regardless of time or covenant. Body areas that needed to be covered in the

that “we won’t go all the way.” But ultimately, we need to realize that, if Christ is in our hearts, thus the word of God dwelling in our hearts by faith, we will have the strength to be more than conquerors (Eph. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:36-39). “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13).

The more we love righteousness, the less we will love sin (Matt. 5:6).

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Using Our Talents Wisely

T. Sean Sullivan

Have you ever known someone who is incredibly talented? Someone who can do just about anything? The kind of person who can paint a picture, play an instrument, and even rebuild the engine in your car in his spare time? There are some very talented people in this world. Even in the Lord's church there are those who are very talented. They seem very at ease serving as song leaders or tending the Lord's supper. They may even teach when necessary and be able to do so at a moment's notice. It is a good thing that we have individuals like that, and they need to be appreciated for the good use of their talents. Sometimes, however, because there are those of us with less ability, we often want to let others do the work as we try to blend into the background. I suppose we tend to deny our own talents because we compare ourselves to others instead of just doing what we can do with our own ability. We all have abilities. We are all talented in some way. We must be good

stewards of the talents we possess, using those talents to serve and glorify God. We need to discuss our talents and how to use them wisely.

To use our talents wisely we must find our talents. We are all familiar with the idea of "hidden talents." As we travel through life, occasionally, we discover that we have an ability that we never knew we had. Most often it is because we have not had opportunity to express that ability in the past. It is like a man who stands in one spot for his entire life. He will not know if he can walk until he tries. To find your talents — try walking. The Hebrew writer instructs us to "consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). In other words, look around see what you can do. You might be surprised what talents you have hidden away inside you just waiting to be awakened. Maybe you are an "Apollos" — you able to speak well to

beginning need to be covered now.

I can learn many principles of giving from the practice of tithing without bringing over the specific practice of tithing regulated in the Law. I can learn about good preaching from the prophets without bringing over the specific message of the Old Law they preached. Thusly, I can learn principles about covering nakedness without bringing over any particular style of priestly garment from the Law of Moses. Hear this well — the modesty of the priestly garment was guided by the divine moral principle of covering nakedness. If there is no divine principle that guides the determination of what is the nakedness to be covered, then we simply have no divine basis to declare any particular clothing as immodest. I would rather use biblically defined principles of necessary coverings than to leave it up to the relative judgments of human wisdom. Accusing brethren of "drawing a line on the leg" serves only to distract from dealing with the immodesty being practiced among us. God tells us what nakedness is, and he draws that line as to what we should keep modestly covered. Styles change with time and customs, but all human bodies have parts that must be

covered to be modest in the sight of God. Who will deny this principle and the fact that it is illustrated in biblical examples? Why are we shy about preaching God's truth?

Those who believe there are no specific limits or principles for covering nakedness need to quit complaining about some clothing being "too short, too low, or too tight." If there are no specific limits, then there is no such things as too short, too low, or too tight. Shorter than what? Lower than what? Tighter than what? As soon as you say a piece of clothing is too short, low, or tight, a standard has been applied — now is it your own subjective standard or is it a specific standard derived from biblical principles? Just preaching that we should be "modest" tells people very little. We need to preach the principles of how God describes nakedness and the necessity to cover it. This will help us in knowing what clothes qualify today as modest dress.

From Leader, Lakeland Hills Church of Christ, Lakeland, Florida

teach others. Maybe you are a “Barnabas” — you are able encourage others in good work. Maybe you are a “Dorcas” — able to use your talent to supply other’s needs. As part of a local congregation we all have something to do. We are to be joined and knit together as an effective unit in which every part (each of us) does his share (Eph. 4:16). Every individual member doing his share causes growth of the body. In order for this congregation to reach its full effective potential, every member of this congregation must be working at his full potential. You will find your full potential by discovering and using your talents.

To use our talents wisely we must express our talents. We must, however, find the proper way of expressing them. There are two distinct areas in which we can express our talents. We can express them religiously. By religiously, I mean the use of our talents in specific authorized service. For example prayers, Lord’s supper, preaching, song leading, teaching, etc. Expressing our talents religiously demands staying within the boundaries of God’s authority. We must make sure that we are doing only that which we are authorized to do to the full extent of our ability (Rom. 12:4-11). Seeking to be the most effective worker for the Lord that we can be. We also can express our talents secularly. Many talents do not have an application in our specific service to God. One may be very talented with a musical instrument or be an incredible athlete. These are undeniable talents but they have no role in specific service to God. Not that instruments or athletics are wrong in and of themselves; God has just not authorized their use in worship or the spread of the gospel. We have a responsibility to use our talents in both areas fully considering God’s will. Remember that we are to be living an example every day. Paul records by inspiration, “Whatever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord” (Col. 3:17). This extends to all areas of our life and it serves as a warning and a reminder. This passage warns us to conduct ourselves righteously every moment of our life. It also reminds us all that we have is from God who gave us the opportunity of salvation through his Son. Knowing this we must use our talents to the fullest without allowing them to come before our service to God. We cannot skip out on services for a baseball game or to play in a band concert. We must have our priorities set in the right place and they must be fixed in their place (Matt. 6:33).

To use our talents wisely we must increase our talents. We all have room for improvement. We cannot be satisfied with, or rest on, what we have done in the past. We must only be looking ahead to what more we can do. Christianity is about growth. We grow (mature) by studying and increasing our knowledge of God’s word. Striving to be pleasing to the Lord (Col.1:10-12). We have a responsibility to our Lord and our brethren to develop our talents and use them to reach the goal laid out before each of us as Christians. We are compared to the measure of the stature of the fullness

of Christ (Eph. 4:13). Our full potential must be reached so that we might reach this goal. That is going to take effort on our part. God has provided you with the abilities, now you must develop them and use them to achieve the goal.

Each of us has, within us, the ability to find and express our fullest potential. The talents that we have must be developed and used each day. Take a step back and examine what you have been doing for the Lord. Ask yourself, “Is it the best I can do?” “Is it all that I can do?” Or is it, “All that I want to do?” Look inside, find your talents, develop them, use them, and become the most effective servant you can.

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“Catholic Church” continued from front page

cese of Philadelphia revealed it had recently dismissed all remaining diocesan priests it had ever determined engaged in sexual conduct with a minor. It admitted knowing of 35 priests who abused about 50 children during the past 50 years.” The Archdiocese of Saint Louis announced on February 26, 2002, that a priest had been removed, as an archdiocesan review of older sexual abuse cases revealed a fifteen-year-old sexual abuse charge against him. Also on February 26, Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua, of Philadelphia, publicly apologized to victims of sexual abuse by priests in his archdiocese and promised that no toleration of child abuse would be allowed.

On March 1, 2002, “the Archdiocese of Boston agreed to turn over the names of people allegedly molested by priests and details of the incidents.” March 3 found several Southern California priests told to retire or leave their ministries by Cardinal Roger Mahony due to their part in past sexual abuse cases.

On March 8, 2002, “the Reverend Anthony O’Connell, the bishop of the Palm Beach, Florida diocese, resigned after admitting he sexually abused a student 25 years earlier”; and on March 12, the church reached a settlement with 86 of Geoghan’s alleged 200 victims that could reach 30 million dollars.

On March 16, 2002, “court documents revealed that New York Cardinal Edward Egan, while Bishop of the Bridgeport, Connecticut diocese, did not aggressively investigate sexual abuse allegations, did not refer complaints to criminal authorities, and allowed priests to continue working for years after allegations were made.” March

18 found the Archdiocese of Miami choosing not to appeal the Florida Supreme Court ruling that prohibited the use of the First Amendment to protect the Archdiocese against lawsuits alleging that sexual abuse by priests had taken place, and on March 19, “the archdiocese of Miami confirmed that church leaders paid several men to keep quiet about sexual abuse allegations against a priest who resigned in August 1999.”

On Friday, March 15, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, reported that “as many as five priests in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati who have been accused of sexual misconduct with teens are still serving in priestly roles.”

There is a great deal more information available, but this is sufficient to demonstrate how massive and widespread this situation is. Even as we recoil in horror at the revelations of such abuse, it would be a grievous error to think that sexual misconduct is limited to the Roman Catholic clergy. Such is not the case. Other religious organizations have also experienced sexual sins among their leadership. Even the Lord’s church has not been immune to sexual misconduct that has torn apart congregations, wrecked homes, and brought reproach upon the church. Yet it must be admitted that the sexual abuse among the Roman Catholic clergy is astonishing due to the size of the problem and the extent to which the Roman Catholic Church has gone to cover it up.

In these articles we will address what has contributed to an atmosphere within the Roman Catholic Church that breeds such behavior among their priests. We will also seek to address an attitude prevalent within Roman Catholicism that has led to years of cover up and a failure to report such criminal behavior to the proper civil authorities.

This is not a time for wild, salacious, and unsubstantiated accusations against the Roman Catholic Church. As incredible as it may seem, there are even those now who make jokes about the sexual misconduct of Roman Catholic priests and who seem to delight in the current revelations. It is not funny, and true children of God do not delight in the iniquity of anyone. It is, I believe, a time of opportunity, in the sense that perhaps some of those who have embraced Catholicism will be moved to question the validity of such an organization in which abuse of this nature is so widespread among those who are called, “representatives of Christ Himself” and who are presented as “in a very true sense, another Christ” (*A Catechism of Christian Doctrine — Revised Edition of the Baltimore Catechism*, No. 3, 353).

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“Mansfield” continued from page 2

Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:26-29).

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons (Jas. 2:1).

Some of us were raised in cultures in which whites thought themselves superior to blacks. Unfortunately many of us believed what our culture taught us, without consciously examining what the Scriptures teach on the subject. As Paul said about the Ephesians, so it was true of us: “*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world*, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). We grew up doing what everyone in our society was doing without giving much thought to how we were treating our fellow man. We walked “according to the course of this world.” No doubt many of the things that we did because of the influence of our society were not sinful, but some of them were. During the week that I was there, brother and sister Bond spoke openly with me about experiences that their ancestors had in the church. To hear how white brethren treated black brethren during years of slavery and racial prejudice from the black point of view is not pleasant. I am embarrassed by our conduct. Growing up in East Texas, I can remember a little about the association the white and black churches had in our area. When black brethren attended our meetings, they sat on the back seats and were rarely invited to lead in prayer. When we attended their meetings, they invited us to sit on the front pews and graciously invited us to take leading parts in their services. Frequently, they invited a white brother to come hold their meeting, but I cannot remember hearing a black preacher while I was in school. Many of us who had no conscious feelings of racial hatred were part of a society that gave preference to the white race and gave little thought to how this came across to our black brethren, much less black people in general. As I reflect on how much improvement has been made toward racial equality in our country, I am thankful for the changes that have come, even though many of those changes were forced upon a reluctant people.

The Future in Mansfield, Ohio

The Grace Street church seems to have the best potential for the future of God’s people in Mansfield. Another church in town is involved in liberalism and the A.D. 70 doctrine; the other non-institutional church has a reputation for accepting those who are involved in unscriptural marriages, according to brother Bond. The church has had a spurt of growth created by two Christian families from California moving into Mansfield to work in the city. These two young couples, plus two other younger couples, give reason to hope for the church in Mansfield having a bright future.

Brother Bond's influence has spread throughout the northern part of Ohio, and beyond. He has held meetings in several churches in that vicinity and also in other states. He has a good reputation and is worthy of commendation. At the present, he is in contact with brethren in another city in northern Ohio who have recently divided when their local preacher wanted to apply for federal funds to build a nursery and day-care center. About half of the church refused to get involved, so the church split, with the more conservative side holding the building. Brother Bond is encouraging the local man who is doing most of their preaching to stand for the truth, not only on this issue, but also the other issues relating to liberalism which that local church has faced. We pray for success in salvaging this church.

An Enjoyable Meeting



New Name For Belview Heights in Birmingham, Alabama

The congregation known for more than fifty years as Belview Heights has now relocated and is called Pine Lane church of Christ. They are located at 3955 Pine Lane which is on the north side of I-459 at Exit 6 (Helena-Bessemer) and are easily accessible from the Interstate.

Barney Keith is presently working with the congregation there. The elders are Sam Short and John Vines. If you are traveling through the Birmingham area in that part of the city, please stop and visit with them. Barney Keith.

Americans Think Role of Religion is Declining

“Washington — A perception that religion is playing an increasing role in American life rose sharply after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, but that feeling has faded, a new poll says.

The Christ, The Cross, and The Church

by Larry Ray Hafley

Discusses issues that are current among brethren with reference to salvation and the church. Will be appreciated by those who wish to cling to the teaching of New Testament Scripture. #80263.

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My meeting in Mansfield was very pleasant. Our black brethren are much more active listeners than are white brethren. Their obvious involvement in the lesson was an encouragement to the preaching and an indication that they were listening. The brethren asked for a question-and-answer period following each lesson, and it was very well received even though this meant that our sessions lasted a little longer each evening. Some who traveled great distances excused themselves to head back home (one family traveled an hour and a half each direction and were present on all but one night), but the brethren generally enjoyed the question-answer part of the meeting.

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“Surveys taken near the end of the year showed more than three-fourths of the public felt the influence of religion was increasing. The poll released Wednesday, with Easter and Passover nearing, showed that 52 percent now think religion's effect is in decline — about the same number who felt that way a year ago.

“Religion was in the air after Sept. 11 in a way that hadn't been the case for a long time and may not be the case for a long time in the future,” said Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, which released the poll. “I've never seen such a dramatic change disappear so quickly.”

“... by a 2-1 margin, people said the September attacks were the result of too little religion in the world rather than too much” (The Indianapolis Star [March 21, 2002], A20.)

Archdiocese to Turn Over Names of Alleged Victims

“Boston — The Archdiocese of Boston agreed Friday to turn over the names of people allegedly molested by priests and details of the incidents. The agreement moves prosecutors a step closer to bringing criminal charges, at least in cases where the statute of limitations has not run out.

“In the past month, the archdiocese has given prosecutors the names of about 80 priests suspected of abusing children over the past four decades. But the information did not include names, dates, places or victim's names, promoting complaints from prosecutors” (The Indianapolis Star [March 2, 2002, A11].)

Cardinal Removes Priest Who Had Relationship With Girl

“Washington — A prominent Roman Catholic priest has been suspended after admitting he might have ‘crossed over a line’ with at least one teen-age girl.

“Monsignor Russell Dillard was put on administrative leave after two women contended in a complaint to the Washington Archdiocese that he had engaged in sexual misconduct with them over a five-year period that ended in 1984.

"He admitted that there was a physical relationship; he doesn't characterize it as sexual abuse," Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick said in an interview Thursday.

"Dillard, 54, has spent his entire career as a priest in Washington. The conduct in question occurred while he was associate pastor of St. Anthony Catholic Church. Since 1990, he has served as pastor of St. Augustine Church, a parish attended by Mayor Anthony A. Williams, who has consulted Dillard on issues affecting the city" (The Indianapolis Star [March 22, 2002], A9.)

For Better or Worse

"Married people are less depressed, suicidal, violent, and prone to drug abuse than their single and divorced cohorts, says a report issued February 14 by the Institute for American Values, the Center of the American Experiment, and the Coalition for Marriage, Family, and Couples Education. Married folks also live longer and make more money. So it seems that society should encourage marriage, doesn't it? The Bush administration thinks so, and in its welfare reform plan has proposed a \$100 million fund to promote marital unions. It's opposed by a group called Alternatives to Marriage Project, which says marriage is too personal a decision for government involvement. Meanwhile, local initiatives continue to flourish around the country.

"Marriage Savers continues to convince clergy not to marry couples without premarital counseling and a long-term courtship" (Christianity Today [April 1, 2002], 22.)

Presbyterians Reaffirm Fidelity, Chastity Rule

"Noncelibate homosexuals and sexuality promiscuous individuals still cannot hold church office in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). On February 19, conservatives gained the last vote needed from the denomination's 173 regional presbyteries to defeat Amendment A.

"The amendment of the church's constitution, easily passed by delegates to last summer's General Assembly meeting, would have removed language that requires clergy to live 'in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness' (ct. Dec. 3, 2001, p. 21).

"... This is the second time that the church has voted to retain the ban. Conservatives who rallied to retain the ban said the victory was bittersweet. They said it reflects the continuing division in the church over homosexuality" (Christianity Today [April 1, 2002], 25.)

Why the TNIV (Today's New International Version) Draws Ire

"A new Bible translation makes a break with its predecessor. It uses plurals to avoid man and brother where the text is not gender-specific. It changes Jews to Jewish leaders in parts of John's gospel. But when the 1996 New Living Translation made these adjustments, hardly any evangelicals raised a fuss. In fact, they rushed to bookstores: the NLT now ranks fourth in Bible translation sales. The King James and New King James versions outstrip it, and the New International Version (NIV) sits atop the chart.

"... Why so much anger against the TNIV? In part, we attribute it to the special place the NIV holds in the evangelical world. It was created, in fact, to be the premier evangelical Bible. . . . As Peter J. Thuesen wrote in his book *In Discordance With the Scriptures* (1999), 'The NIV finally offered evangelicals an ideologically safe alternative to the RSV, despite NIV committee members' occasional denials that their translation was specifically 'evangelical' rather than simply faithful to the originals.'

"Since its publication in 1978, the NIV has largely become the new 'authorized version' for conservative Protestants . . . If the NIV had not become an evangelical standard, this controversy might not be nearly so fierce.

"... 'Most (but not all) of the committee that translated this volume are not egalitarian (i.e., they do not believe women can do everything in ministry or can occupy every office),' says Dallas Theological Seminary New Testament professor Darrell Bock.

"... In keeping with this approach, however, the translators may want to take a second look at 1 Timothy 3:11. The TNIV's translation, 'women who are deacons are to be worthy of respect,' seems more ideologically driven than '[deacons'] wives are to be women worthy of respect' (from the British version in 1997). Why not just translate it as 'women are to be worthy of respect' and let the text speak for itself?

"The important lesson for all readers is to know well the Bible they are reading. Careful Bible study always involves careful engagement with the text, including the use of both 'dynamic/functional equivalence' and 'formal equivalence' translations. Knowing the theory behind your Bible's translation work and its relative strengths is nearly as important as knowing the message within the covers" (Christianity Today [April 1, 2002], 37.)

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