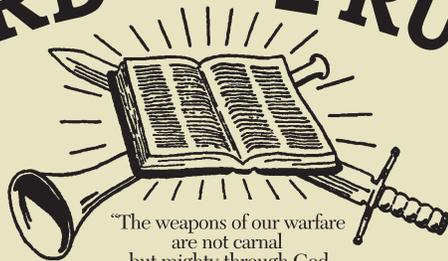


The SWORD and TRUMPET

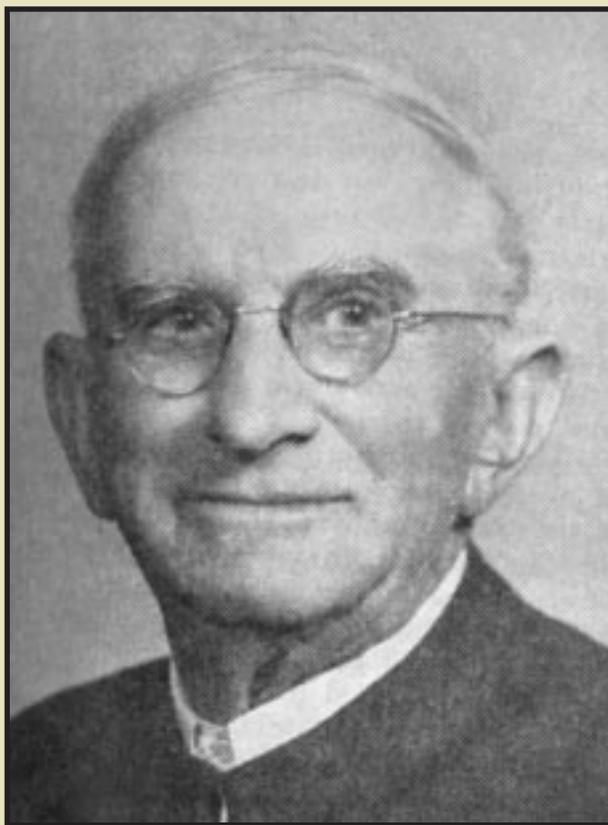


"Blow ye
the Trumpet
and warn
the People."

"The weapons of our warfare
are not carnal
but mighty through God
to the pulling down of strongholds."

"Take the Sword
of the Spirit
which is
The Word of God."

Guidelines



SAMUEL E. ALLGYER

MARCH 2005

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The Sword and Trumpet

Founded in 1929 by Geo. R. Brunk I

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SWORD AND TRUMPET GUIDELINES monthly magazine is a faith ministry directed by a Board representing various constituencies of the Mennonite Church. It is committed to defending, proclaiming, and promoting the whole Gospel of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It emphasizes neglected truth and contends for “the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” This publication exposes and opposes doctrinal error which compromises that faith and leads to apostasy.

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Person of the Month:

Samuel E. Allgyer (1859-1953)

Samuel Evans Allgyer was the youngest of the children born to Joseph and Barbara (Zook) Allgyer. His birth took place in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, on March 8, 1859.

When Samuel was 15 years of age his family moved to Wayne County, Ohio. The next year, in 1875, the family moved again—this time to Champaign County. There the family bought a farm which became Samuel's home for a good share of his life.

At 16 Allgyer became a member of the Oak Grove Church.

In 1883 Brother Allgyer married a Lancaster County girl, Priscilla Ann Umble. In time the Lord blessed their family with eight children—five girls and three boys.

Soon after their marriage Samuel was made assistant to the Sunday school superintendent. After he became the superintendent in 1891, the Sunday school started using English instead of German. He also helped reorganize the young people's meeting and helped found the Logan-Champaign annual Sunday school meeting and the quarterly mission meeting, as well as starting the Saturday evening Bible class that powerfully strengthened the work of the Sunday school over the next thirty years. He continued as superintendent until 1907.

In 1886 he bought the family farm. In addition to his farm work he and a neighbor operated a threshing rig.

Brother Allgyer had been a faithful church member and attendee but in the early nineties he began to question the validity of his Christian life. After attending a revival meeting he asked himself whether the Lord was real to him or was he just an ordinary church member depending on his own good works for salvation? That night, after the meeting, he and his wife spent time studying the Bible and praying, after which they found the way of salvation through God's grace. Their lives were transformed!

Samuel was ordained to the ministry in the Oak Grove congregation in 1905 at the age of 46. Because of his evangelistic preaching the Ohio and Eastern A.M. Conference appointed him conference evangelist in 1906. In 1908 he was again ordained—as bishop.

In 1912, when Samuel was 53, he turned the farm over to two of his sons-in-law. Brother Allgyer was then able to devote more time to church work and especially his ministry of evangelism. He held meetings in the East, South, remote parts of the West, and Canada with much good response on the part of the hearers. As a result he was asked to serve in the new post as a field worker for the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities in 1914. He continued in this ministry for twenty-five years.

Some of his evangelistic meetings lasted for many weeks and his wife was not able to go along, which was hard on her, but in 1923 he took Priscilla with him on a six-month tour of the Northwest which was a delight for her. *(continued on page 3)*

A Holy Church

*Holiness is not just a commitment to God,
but being the embodiment of God's purpose and presence.*

by Stephen Green

One of the many aspects of holy living that we do not explore enough is the aspect of communal holiness. What does it mean to call the people of God a “spiritual house, a holy priesthood, a holy nation”? Although these concepts hold many facets, I would like to explore the criteria we use to describe the church as holy, and what practices are essential to allow the church to live out of and toward holiness.

Is there a criterion we can use to convey the church as holy? Many people want to limit their understanding of Christian holiness to commitment. Some would say that if people, individually or communally, are committed to God they are holy. Commitment to God forms a significant component of holy living, but commitment alone is not a sufficient measure for Christian holiness. After all, we see examples of complete commitment to God that certainly do not reflect Christian holiness in radical Islamic terrorists. We can find other examples from the Church's own history. The Crusades, the inquisitions, the Thirty Years' War, and other instances of a desire for purity coupled with deep commitment to God show that commitment and a desire for purity are not enough criteria to define Christian holiness.

What makes Christian holiness unique is a specific vision of God that Christians share. When Christians describe who God is, we start with Jesus. He is the image of the invisible God who lived among us, ate with us, healed us, taught us, and embraced us. This Jesus is God's image and our good news destiny.

The Church is called to be the embodiment of Jesus Christ in the world today. We are to continue His work. Our purpose is to be His purpose. Anything less than the identity of Jesus Christ is not adequate criterion for Christian holiness—this would also include the holiness of His body, the Church.

So now we turn to the question of what is necessary to embody Jesus Christ in our world. I suggest that the practices necessary for communal and personal holiness will all allow the mind of Christ to be in and among His people. The presence of God in and among us enables us to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling. I propose that the Church must participate in three essential communal practices if we are to remain open to the mind of Christ. These practices are: reading Scripture in community (discerning God and the world rightly), praying the Scripture in community (communing with God and making God the sole subject of worship), and embodying the Scripture in community (participating in the person and purpose of God in the world).

There is a strange silence of the Bible in the common life of our congregations these days. The Bible, at most, becomes a footnote in our preaching, teaching, counseling, and administrative practices of the church. When I say footnote I mean what Hans Frei refers to when he describes “The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative.” We have moved away from discovering the purpose and presence of the God of the Old and New Testaments, and have substituted the agenda and pur-

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poses of this age. We look to management theory and therapy models to determine the shape and agenda for our lives, sermons, and church programming. We footnote the purposes and models of this world by running to our concordances to validate the agendas of the gods of this world.

We have failed to read consistently, contextually, and communally the old stories of the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the God who still reveals Himself in Jesus our Lord. Therefore, we fail to see the purpose and presence of God and His kingdom. This has allowed us to misunderstand greatness, power, wealth, and God's embrace. The kingdom of God is concerned with power being made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9), with the least being the greatest (Luke 9:48), with life being found in losing it. The kingdom contains neither "Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female," for all are "one in Christ" (Galatians 3:28).

God's purpose is not concerned with a congregation finding its "market group," nor "homogeneous unit." God's purpose is about putting last things first because only last things last.

We have failed to discern God's purpose and presence because we have failed to read, pray, and embody the Scriptures consistently, contextually, and communally. The Scriptures no longer function as a lens within to help us rightly see God, the world, and our lives. Instead, they have become at best a means to a worldly end, and a therapeutic way of coping with all that worldly ends bring to our lives. If there is an eclipse of reading, praying, and embodying the Scriptures, how can we know the mind that was in Christ? If we do not know the mind that was in Christ, how can we become His embodiment, His image, in the world? ■

—Reprinted with permission of the author from *Holiness Today* Nov./Dec. 2004

SAMUEL E. ALLGYER . . . cont'd.

Although he was loved and respected in his community by Mennonite and non-Mennonite alike, Samuel still suffered persecution on one occasion during World War I at the hands of vigilantes who dragged him from his home trying to force him to pay \$100 into the war fund. When he refused they used horse clippers to clip his hair. Although he was mistreated in this way he showed the love of Christ to his persecutors. Years later many of them apologized to him.

Over the years Brother Allgyer served faithfully on many boards and committees of General Conference and the Ohio and Eastern A.M. Conference. In 1919 he was sent to France by the Mennonite Relief Commission with regard to reconstruction work and the needs of fifty young Mennonite men working there in voluntary service.

There were two areas that were close to Brother Allgyer's heart and gave him much satisfaction—the Children's Home at West Liberty and the Mission Board's Old People's Home near Rittman, Ohio. Samuel served on the board of trustees of the Children's Home for forty-six years. In 1935 he spearheaded the project of rebuilding the Old People's Home which had burned down in 1919.

In 1946 his faithful companion of 63 years was laid to rest. Although Priscilla was no longer by his side he continued in active service for the Lord.

In addition to his other service and ministry he had oversight of eight congregations. In 1951, at the age of 92, he resigned from these responsibilities.

After having offered a prayer in the morning service at Oak Grove and leaving to go to a dedication service at South Union Church Brother Allgyer suffered a stroke. He died that day in his home near West Liberty, Ohio, on November 15, 1953, at the age of 94.

—Gail L. Emerson

From the Editor's Desk



Paul M. Emerson

The Big Five

At the recent *Sword and Trumpet* Board Meeting, a discussion identified five doctrinal issues currently facing conservative Anabaptists wherein we are most vulnerable to apostasy. In our opinion, those big five are: The Doctrine of Scripture—particularly its proper interpretation; The Doctrine of God—especially the matter of sovereignty versus the autonomy of man; The Doctrine of Salvation—specifically the issue of substitution; The Doctrine of Worship—expressly the tension between dead propriety and neo-pagan-based emotional subjectivism; and the Doctrine of Brotherly Counsel—distinguishing between the truly Biblical and the anti-Biblical.

Plans are to devote one complete issue of the magazine to each of these topics. The purpose of this concentrated exposure would be to warn as well as to instruct our readership. If you have written on any of these subjects or would be willing to write an article or are aware of a particularly well-written article by someone else, please contact this editor with that information. Selection of materials for

the respective special issues will be based on truth as well as editorial content and style. Our editorial policies have always valued content over who wrote the article. Put another way, we do not particularly care who wrote it—so long as it states the truth according to the Bible.

The series is projected to begin with the June, 2005, issue and continue for five consecutive months following the order of subjects as stated above. To be considered for publication, materials must be submitted 90 days before the month of the issue.

We expect some of these subjects as treated by *Sword and Trumpet* will be controversial. If this magazine had ever tried to avoid controversy, it would never have been born nor would it have existed these 76 years since its birth. Our Lord was and is the center of controversy and His disciples cannot live obediently apart from controversy. We will make every attempt to be loving but true love is not tolerant of error. Christian love lays down its life for the truth. ■

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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS



A Devotional Commentary



by David L. Burkholder

MARCH 6, 2005

The Sinfulness of Man

Romans 1:16-20; 3:9-20

The eight lessons for March and April are taken from the Book of Romans. (May's lessons are from the Book of Galatians.) All are geared to establishing us in the faith and making us effective Christians. It will be helpful to read and re-read the Book of Romans these first two months of the quarter.

Today's lesson, encompassing the first three chapters of Romans, focuses on man's desperate sinfulness. But it does not leave mankind wallowing in despair; it also shows God's provision for the penitent—the good news of salvation through Christ.

As Paul begins this letter he states his credentials, extends a greeting and expresses his long-standing desire to visit the church at Rome. He then states his confidence in the saving power of the gospel (v. 16). It is available and effective for everyone who believes, Jew or Gentile. Embodied in the gospel message is the means to achieving right standing with God, and a warning of the punishment God will inflict on those who reject the means of salvation. The gospel, Paul says, is a faith-imperative initiative, accepted by faith, lived by faith.

God has given ample evidence of Himself in creation (v. 20), the power displayed there pointing men to an all-powerful Creator. Therefore, Paul says, there is no legitimate excuse for rejecting God. However, as he goes on to explain, it is rather willful rejection that keeps man

separated from God's love, not a lack of knowledge. (Read on to the end of Chapter 1.) Therefore, God has no choice but to visit His wrath upon those who so blatantly spurn Him.

After outlining (1:21–3:8) the extreme wickedness of man, and declaring that God shows no favoritism because of race, even though the Jews have had special privileges, Paul asks the question (3:9), "Are we Jews better than others?" With an emphatic "No" he declares Jew and Gentile alike are under the condemnation of sin. He quotes from Psalm 14 to bolster his assertion.

Then, after declaring the general depravity of mankind, Paul again lists specific sins of which ungodly mankind is guilty. He is guilty of deceit, destructive speech, malignancy, falsehood, cursing, bitterness, murder, oppression, and discord. Tragically, such were living out their impiety with impunity, without fear of God or the consequences of their behavior.

Paul closes this section by stating emphatically that righteousness does not come through observing the Law. Right standing with God comes only through dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ, God's remedy for the world's sin (1:16, 17). The purpose of the Law was to show man his sinfulness and his incapability without God, and thus to drive him in utter helplessness to the only source of salvation—Jesus Christ.

For thought and discussion

1. For help in understanding these lessons, read background on the church at Rome and the theme and purpose of Paul's letter to them.

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2. Is it possible to be led to Christ through the natural creation? How? Explain.
3. While we understand that God does not show favoritism, ponder the advantages of a Christian heritage. Are there also detriments? Explain.
4. One need only pick up the morning paper for a confirmation of Paul's message about the wickedness of man. Is there anything we can do about it?
5. How do you counter one who says that doing good deeds, living a clean life, sharing of one's resources with the needy, and treating others with respect earns favor with God?

MARCH 13, 2005

The Righteous Judgment of God

Romans 2:1-16

Today's lesson text drops back into Chapter 2, sandwiched between the two passages studied in last Sunday's lesson. Last Sunday's lesson states and defines man's depravity; today's emphasizes the righteous judgment of God upon all who sin—whether the Jew with the Law, or the Gentile without a spiritual law. God's judgment is impartial. Every man, regardless of race or privilege, will be judged according to his own deeds. Jewish privilege or Gentile ignorance will avail nothing at God's judgment bar.

"Therefore," Paul begins (v. 1), "you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge another." Why? Because we ourselves are not guiltless. In our imperfection we find it easy to find fault in others, yet turn a blind eye to our own shortcomings. We somehow seem to think that God will overlook our sin and visit judgment on others whom we perceive to be greater sinners. Though our judgment is imperfect we are assured that God's judgment is both perfect and just.

We are also assured that God is longsuffering, guiding us in His goodness toward repentance. God does not overlook sin, but He is patient with the sinner, wooing

him gently toward repentance. But the hard and impenitent store up God's wrath against themselves, to be meted out on God's judgment day.

Verse 6 tells us that God "will render to every man according to his deeds." God is just and His judgment is fair and impartial. To those who by patient well-doing seek glory, honor, and immortality, He will give eternal life. By contrast, those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but follow unrighteousness, He will visit with His anger and wrath.

In verses 9 and 10, Paul reiterates the principles of verses 7 and 8, howbeit, in reverse order, and with the added statement "to Jew and Gentile alike." Then Paul simply states that "there is no respect of persons with God." He does not judge with favoritism, but from justice and according to man's deeds.

Paul makes it clear that all who do evil are subject to God's condemnation, those who sinned without knowledge of the Law and those who sinned with knowledge of the Law. However, those who live by the principles of the Law without having the actual Law will be judged righteous, just as those who with the Law live by its principles and are thus righteous before God. It is not possession of the Law that makes one righteous, but the practice of the Law's precepts. And, we add, to Jew and Gentile alike.

The judgment day of God will reveal the secrets of men's hearts. On that day all men will stand before God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to give account of his deeds. (See John 5:22; Romans 2:6; Matthew 16:27.) The standard of judgment will be the gospel of Jesus Christ as preached by Paul.

For thought and discussion

1. Is it true that the faults we so readily see in others are the faults we fail to recognize in ourselves? Think about it.
2. Is it also true that we tend to maximize others' faults and minimize our own? Why is this so?

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3. Why is it so dangerous to sin with impunity?
4. How would you answer someone who claimed God would be unfair to judge persons who had never heard of His plan of salvation?
5. Are you living in light of God's judgment day? Are you obeying the principles of the gospel? We should give this serious thought.

MARCH 20, 2005

Justified by Faith

Romans 5:1-11, 18-21

The two main themes in this passage are faith and justification, and the one is antecedent to the other. Faith comes first, then justification, the declaration of right standing before God. In our first two lessons we have established man's sinfulness and God's righteous judgment. In today's lesson we find the cure for sin and the escape from judgment, with the added benefit of peace with God.

In verse one Paul simply attests to what he has been previously teaching, that justification before God is the result of a faith-action on the part of man, and that that action brings a resulting peace with God. Justification means one is no longer estranged from God but has been brought into agreement with Him through faith in the person and work of Christ. And not only is this a present condition, it also encompasses a future hope, that of eternal glory with God.

Therefore, Paul says, the believer who understands the full measure of his right standing with God rejoices in trials and tribulations, recognizing that these outward afflictions serve to strengthen his resolve and develop his Christian character. Verse 5 emphasizes the jubilation of knowing the operation of the love of God in one's heart as witnessed by the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence.

Another cause for rejoicing is the

awareness that Christ died for us not as good men, but as sinful and ungodly persons (v. 8). It was nothing but God's great love that sent His Son to die for sinful man. So, not only are we justified through Christ's blood, we are also spared the wrath of God upon the ungodly. Therefore we rejoice for the provision of God by Jesus Christ, through whose atoning sacrifice the guilt of our sin is washed away.

In our last section of verses, Paul sets the one act of disobedience by which sin passed upon all men, in juxtaposition with the one act of obedience by which all men may be made righteous. (Read the intervening verses, 12-17.) As through Adam all men became sinners, so also through Christ all men may find forgiveness of sin. Man's separation from God as a result of Adam's transgression can be restored through the justifying work of Christ.

The purpose of the Law, Paul states, was to create awareness of sin, to show man his need, and his utter helpless, hopeless condition. (See also Romans 3:20; 7:7; Galatians 3:24.) However, the superabounding grace of God provides salvation from the death of sin and an entrance into right standing with God through the work of Jesus Christ. Thus eternal life begins now, as an enhanced quality of life, and extends into an unending future—all on the merits of Christ's justifying work on man's behalf.

For thought and discussion

1. Do you understand the concept of justification, and its full meaning in the life of the believer? Maybe you should refresh your understanding.
2. Trials and tribulations—are they a curse or a blessing? Spend some time thinking this through. What has been your personal experience?
3. Take a good look at John 3:16 in regard to the central verses of this lesson. Do you see the connection?
4. Contrast the difference between the "gift" of Adam and the gift of Christ. Notice in verse 19 the root of these gifts.

5. God's grace is amply sufficient for man's sin problem. However, what happens when man presumes upon God's grace?

MARCH 27, 2005 (Easter)

New Life in Christ

John 20:1-10; Romans 6:1-14

Today is Easter Sunday, the day we traditionally celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The lesson for today is divided into two sections. The first, from John 20, takes us back to the day of that event and the reaction of the disciples. The second part of the lesson, from Romans 6, shows us that by the power of Christ's resurrection we can also be raised to new life. As we reflect on the historical event, let's also rejoice in the provision it makes for us to "walk in newness of life."

The disciples were dismayed and perplexed over Jesus' death. They were also perplexed over the news of His disappearance from the tomb where He had been laid to rest. Mary Magdalene, that ever faithful follower, was one of the first to the tomb early that resurrection morning. She carried the news to Peter and John who ran to the tomb to see for themselves. He was not there, though the evidence of His having been there was plain to see. What did it all mean? Where was their Lord?

Only later would the wonder of that early morning excursion be made plain to them. Jesus had previously told them of His coming resurrection (Matthew 16:21), but their understanding was darkened. Later they also came to know the power that had raised Jesus from the dead and became living witnesses of His resurrection, and its meaning for otherwise doomed mankind.

As we turn to Romans 6, we leave the physical aspect of Christ's resurrection and focus on its theological implications. Christ's resurrection was the most dramatic event this world has ever seen. Our resurrection to new life is only less dra-

matic because it does not come from our own power.

Paul's argument here is that we should not presume upon God's grace. Those who have died to sin through Christ's resurrection power, recognizing their great deliverance from the grip and power of death, will not want to sin. Such have been raised to a new level of life where the focus is on avoiding sin. Barclay puts it this way: "The man who enters upon the Christian way is committed to a different kind of life. He has died to one kind of life and been born to another."

Our present security and our eternal hope are bound up in Christ's victory over death. He died once. But in His resurrection He destroyed the power of death—both over Himself and, by extension, over all who put their trust in Him. Therefore, we can also reckon ourselves to be dead to sin through our union with Christ.

And since we are now alive in Jesus Christ, we will not allow sin to reign in our life. We will deny its appeals. We will not yield to its enticements. Rather, our will, our desires, will be yielded to God and His control. Our desire will be to live for Him and serve Him in righteousness and holiness. Sin's stranglehold has been broken by the power that raised Christ from the dead. And that same power enables us to walk in newness of life in Christ, delivered from sin, living and serving in holiness of life.

For thought and discussion

1. We should never allow the message of Easter to become commonplace in our thinking. It's more than a story; it's our very life as Christians. Meditate deeply on its message today, and often.
2. Why had not the disciples understood Jesus' teaching regarding His suffering, death, and resurrection?
3. Which should be the greatest deterrent to sin—fear of its consequences, or love for the One who saved us from its clutches? Will not our motive say something about our commitment?

4. Think deeply about the concept of being dead to sin. Does that mean we can't sin, or we won't sin?
5. When such great power and privilege

are available to us as described in this lesson, why are there so many just so-so Christians? ■

Newslines . . .

by Rebecca Good

incidents events occurrences facts illustrations episodes committees vignettes proceedings problems
experiences crises adventures transactions meetings tragedies scoops reports conferences happenings
bulletins questions reports affairs dramas encounters personages actions tidings et cetera

Chinese Church Still Persecuted

Colin Powell recently described Chinese-United States' relations as the best in "over 30 years." China is the U.S.'s third-largest trading partner (two-way trade at over \$180 billion last year), and the U.S. counts on China in the standoff against North Korea. Consequently, the question of human rights in China is frequently overlooked.

In November, a top-secret Chinese government document was released in Washington. It had been leaked to and translated by the Texas-based China Aid organization. Only 750 copies were distributed in China among top-level government officials. The document, dated May 27, ordered the spread of Marxism against "Western" attempts to destabilize China with religion, or "evil teachings." The Chinese government fears that "Western" powers are using religion to influence China. The document's date and contents help to explain a sudden wave of arrests of Christians beginning in June. Around 100 Christians were arrested every month this summer and raids continue. Bob Fu, president of China Aid and a former house-church leader in China, believes this directive will make it harder for house-church

Christians, members of the notorious Falun Gong sect, and unauthorized Buddhists and Muslims. Fu commented, "Every local authority has to follow this order."

Compass Direct reported in November that the Chinese government issued three more internal directives in August. The first told how to discipline party officials who became Christians. The second ordered crackdowns on Christians in 11 coastal and central provinces and barred involvement with any foreign religious group. The third prohibited any religious observances on university campuses.

The U.S. State Department's 2004 religious-freedom report states that an estimated 30 million Protestants and at least 5 million Catholics worship in unofficial house churches. Unregistered churches are illegal, but enforcement of the law varies widely from region to region. In some places, hundreds of unregistered Christians gather freely for meetings in homes with officials' knowledge. In others, even a small home Bible study warrants arrests. Evangelism seems to attract persecution. Documents coming out of China the past few years indicate that the new younger leaders of

China are following earlier party leaders' example when it comes to oppressing religion. —from *World*

Persecution in Vietnam

Nguyen Hong Quang, the general secretary of the Mennonite Church in Vietnam who was arrested on June 8, was sentenced on November 12 to three years in prison. The charge: "obstructing people carrying out official duties." Quang is an attorney and an outspoken advocate of religious freedom and human rights. Five other Vietnamese Mennonites were also sentenced to jail. Compass Direct reported that a Vietnamese attorney said Quang and the other five were innocent. He said, "They are victims of a tyrannical regime that oppresses religion and other human rights." Western observers were prohibited from attending the trial. About 200 Christian supporters (including around 100 Mennonite pastors and evangelists from the Montagnard ethnic group where Quang has been influential) stood outside the court building during the trial.

The other five and the prison time they were sentenced to are as follows: Pham Ngoc Thach, evangelist, two years; Nguyen Thanh Phuong, evangelist, 12 months; Le Thi Hong Lien (a woman), church worker, 12 months; Nguyen Thanh Nhan, evangelist, nine months; and Nguyen Hieu Nghia, church elder, nine months. An appeal to Vietnam's People's Supreme Court is planned.

Quang's wife was ordered to cease holding worship services in her home, under threat of eviction with her three small children.

The Vietnamese Mennonite church is a house-church movement, and is not recognized as legitimate by the Vietnamese government. One estimate says the Vietnamese Mennonite church claims 10,000 members. On November

15, the Vietnamese government implemented an ordinance essentially banning house churches. The new law prohibits any church activities outside of church property. House churches do not own property. Some house churches have already been threatened with imprisonment if they continue to hold services.

Could the Vietnamese Mennonite church obtain official recognition by registering with the government? An unnamed observer stated, "In principle, the Mennonites don't object to that. However, it's very clear that they don't want to be part of a church controlled by the state."

—from *Mennonite Weekly Review*

Tenuous Unions

Massachusetts legalized same-sex marriage in May. Now same-sex divorce cases are trickling in. Opponents of gay marriage are not surprised. However, since the national divorce rate hovers around 50 percent, gay rights advocates retort that heterosexuals have no room to condemn.

—from *Daily News-Record*, Harrisonburg, Va.

Lost Tribe Discovered?

A people group called Benei Menashes think they may be one of the lost tribes of Israel. This ethnic group lives in the northeast Indian state of Manipur, between Myanmar and Bangladesh. When the Scriptures were translated into their language in the 1970s, they noticed that many of the stories and customs of the Jewish people were very similar to their own. Some of the leaders thought they must be descendants of the lost tribe of Manasseh. Perhaps this tribe fled along the Silk Road to India when the Northern Kingdom was destroyed in 721 B.C. Most of the 300,000 Benei Menashes were adherents to Christianity, but, after hearing the new hypothesis, about 5,000 converted

to Judaism.

Recently, a delegation of rabbis from Israel visited the Benei Menashes to decide if the Benei Menashes are indeed Jews and thus have the “right of return” to the Jewish homeland.

—from *Christianity Today*

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A Glorious Urbanism

During the 1960s and 70s, when people thought of New York City, they thought of screaming fire trucks, grafters, murder, burnt-out buildings, debris, and looting. In the South Bronx, 100,000 units of housing burned down and murder increased by 900 percent. Between 1985 and 2000, 5,386 residents of the Bronx were murdered, 5,000 succumbed to drug overdoses, and 12,460 died of AIDS. One Bronx high school graduated only 24 students out of an entering class of 1,200. At the same time, New York City’s white evangelical churches were shrinking. They tended to be blind to the times and on the defensive, e.g. the city’s Calvary Baptist Church prohibited illegal immigrants from becoming members.

Then, in the mid-1980s and 90s, the churches returned to life. Church leaders started working with leaders of other churches. They started new charities, schools, and arts ministries. In 1991, Billy Graham preached in Central Park to 250,000 people at one gathering. Promise Keepers met in Queens in 1996. In 1997, researchers at Columbia University found that over half of the Big Apple’s churches had grown in attendance every year. At one point in the late 1990s, a new church opened every three weeks in the South Bronx. In Brooklyn, one neighborhood’s churches grew from two to twelve in less than 15 years. Storefront churches in Manhattan can hardly handle their new members. Also in Manhattan, Redeemer Presbyterian Church began services in 1989. In 2001, Redeemer launched a church-planting

center that has planted over 100 new churches in greater New York City. There are now 7,100 evangelical, charismatic, and Pentecostal churches in the city.

Christian education blossomed as well. After hitting bankruptcy, The King’s College was relaunched in 1999; more than 250 students enrolled this year. Nyack College’s city-campus enrollment has tripled in the last five years. In fact, there are over 100 Christian schools and 100 Bible Institutes in the city.

Many New York City church leaders want to usher in a “glorious urbanism”—they long for the church to impact the city through compassionate service, principled politics, and multicultural arts. New York City is a glorious opportunity for Christians on many fronts.

An interesting note: Thirty-six percent of New York City residents were born in another nation—that is 2.88 million people.

—from *Christianity Today*

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Biotech and the Amish

Commenting on reality TV’s recent *Amish in the City*, Andy Crouch writes about how the show enhanced the reputation of the unpretentious Amish. “But should this Anabaptist movement survive for another century, they won’t just look different from other North Americans. More than ever, they will be different—because our culture will have changed the nature of a human being itself.” Crouch talks about how knowledge of the human genetic code may soon enable parents to choose their children’s height, hair color, longevity, and intelligence. Will twenty-first-century Christians join the quest for mastery of our race or will they, like the Amish, turn away from technology’s alluring facsimile? “Are we willing for our children to be less than normal, that they may understand something essential about humility, responsibility, and love?”

—from *Christianity Today*

Why Should I Join a Church?

by Jim Elliff and Daryl Wingerd

The title of this article raises a good question, doesn't it? Even among those who support the idea of church membership, there are valid reasons to wonder why most churches have established membership rolls as well as procedures for welcoming people into membership.

For example, we cannot overlook the fact that the word *membership* is not used anywhere in the Bible. No matter how hard you look, you will never find a verse or passage in the New Testament that directly commands believers to maintain membership roles or establish membership procedures. Such direct commands are simply never given. And there are no clear examples in the New Testament of written membership lists being kept.

With this in mind, one cannot help but wonder if the whole idea of church membership isn't an unnecessary addition to Scripture—a legalistic tradition added to the simplicity of the Christian life. If church membership is seen as such an addition, it is no wonder that it has become an unpopular idea.

Then, when one introduces into this discussion the individualistic philosophies of Western (particularly American) thought, church membership becomes even more unpopular. In a culture where *self-reliance*, *self-worth*, *self-esteem*, and *self-fulfillment* are considered to be the most desirable personal characteristics, membership in a local church, where mutual submission, accountability, and inter-dependence are the way of life, seems foreign and even counter-productive.

By the very fact that we have written this article, you know that we do value the idea of church membership. Hopefully, you have also become aware of how highly we value the Bible, not merely as the only message for the salvation of mankind and the divine standard for personal holiness, but also as the manual of instruction for the conduct of the church. With this in mind, we hope to answer the question, *Why should I join a church?* by giving you the following three biblical reasons for doing so.

Reason #1: Personal Safety

The worst thing that can happen to a Christian is not persecution, physical injury, or death. In many respects, these are the best things that can happen to us. Jesus said that we are blessed when we are "*persecuted for righteousness' sake*" (Matthew 5:10). Paul decided to "*take pleasure in infirmities . . . for Christ's sake . . . For when I am weak, then I am strong*" (2 Cor. 12:10). Jesus said to His followers, "*My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do*" (Luke 12:4). This makes perfect sense, because for the believer, "*to be absent from the body*" is "*to be present with the Lord.*" None of these earthly threats should hold any sway over us whatsoever.

But there is one thing that should make us tremble, and that is the prospect of being overtaken by sin. Sin is what Christ suffered for on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21). Sin grieves the Holy Spirit

of God (Eph. 4:30). Sin in the life of a true believer invites the discipline of the Father (Heb. 12:5-8). And sin, if it characterizes the life of a professing Christian, may indicate that the profession of faith is false (Titus 1:16; 1 John 2:3, 4). Even as those whose sins have been forgiven, we must never forget that sin is the one thing that sends people to eternal torment in hell.

As Christians, we are involved in a battle. Our arch-enemy is Satan who “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). The way in which he devours unwary people is by tempting them to sin—by convincing them that sin is a more rewarding master than Christ. He therefore disguises himself and his agents, and he makes the pleasures of sin appear very appealing to us. And Satan does not just attack us from the front where we can clearly see him coming; he attacks from every side.

How much better it would be, then, to have spiritual eyes in the back of our heads. If we did, we could see “*the wiles of the devil*” much more clearly. Even alone, we could guard effectively against his schemes. But we don’t have such panoramic spiritual vision, do we? In fact, it often seems that we don’t even have very good peripheral vision. We need help! And that is precisely the purpose of the church—the fellow Christians to whom we unite ourselves in a relationship of accountability.

That is why we are told to “*exhort one another daily . . . lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*” (Heb. 3:13). That is why Paul said to the church at Rome that they, being “*full of all goodness, filled with all knowledge,*” were to “*admonish one another*” (Romans 15:14). And that is why, in the familiar passage in Hebrews 10, we are told to “*consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.*” These passages all speak of the fellowship of the church as a preventative

measure—a means of restraining one another from sin.

Never in the New Testament are Christians told to “tough it out” on their own. On the contrary, for the person who thinks he can do that, in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul gives a number of Old Testament examples of failure—of sin that led to destruction. Then, in verses 11, 12, he says that “*all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition. . . . Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*”

We are not called to live the Christian life apart from the protection of the church. The fellowship of a group of committed believers is vital to our spiritual health and to our endurance in the faith. The church, in the midst of this “*crooked and perverse generation,*” is just as important for our survival as the ark was to Noah and his family; they simply would not have survived without it.

This need for the protection of committed brothers and sisters is seen most clearly in the fact that even with it, many Christians fall into sin. In Galatians 6:1, Paul writes, “*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*”

What Paul is describing here is a rescue mission. A soldier is down behind enemy lines having been wounded by enemy gunfire, and those who are able are to carefully, yet courageously rescue him. Paul is not describing a callous and prideful rebuke; he doesn’t want us to ridicule the soldier for getting himself shot. In another place he writes, “*Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*” (2 Thess. 3:15). What he tells us to do is gently, cautiously pull this wounded soldier back to safety, watching that we don’t get picked off by the same enemy sniper who shot our brother. In this context,

the lone soldier, apart from the protection of his platoon, has no chance of survival.

Likewise, when a person who maintains that his Christianity is “a private thing” is overcome by sin, he has no one to rescue him through such accountability. He may simply withdraw from the church he has attended, but never joined. If he has not committed himself to a particular body of believers, and they to him, he may weaken and die with no one ever realizing that he was even wounded.

Why should you join a church? Because your spiritual survival depends on it. In those churches where the fellowship always seems positive and upbeat, but no membership procedure is established, there may be a willingness to confront sin in a biblical manner, but there is no authority to take Christian accountability to its final degree when necessary. That kind of authority—the ability to properly and consistently exercise such loving accountability—is the subject of the next section.

Reason #2: Simple Obedience

We did say that membership is never directly commanded in the New Testament. But while it is never *directly* commanded, it is most definitely implied and also taught by example. This is most clearly seen in the commands given by Christ and the Apostle Paul regarding the removal of an unrepentant member from the church. In Matthew 18, verses 15-17, Jesus gives the church step-by-step instructions for dealing with a “brother” (a professing Christian) who falls into sin. If that “brother” persists in his sinful behavior even after being confronted privately, the matter is to be told “to the church.” Unless there is some kind of established dividing line—some way of knowing who is part of the church and who is not—we have no way of properly obey-

ing Christ’s command.

Further, if the brother still does not repent even after the matter is told to the church, he is to be considered “a heathen and a tax collector” (in other words, a non-Christian). Christ’s clear meaning is that such a person is to be cast out of the fellowship of believers (the term *excommunication* is commonly used to describe this church action).

Paul uses even stronger language to describe the removal of an unrepentant “brother” from the church. In 1 Corinthians 5, regarding a professing Christian who was leading a grossly immoral life, he tells that church to “deliver such a one to Satan . . .” (v. 5). He goes on to say that they were “not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral . . . not even to eat with such a person” (v. 11). Then, in verse 12, Paul makes a very interesting distinction. He writes, “For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?” What did Paul mean by distinguishing between those who were “outside” and those who were “inside.” It seems clear that he was referring to some sort of separation between groups. Those who were “inside” must have been a recognized group—a list (even if it was not written down) of the people who comprised that local church. This group must have been bound together by more than just an informal relationship—not just a bond among people who said they were Christians (remember that the man who was cast out was “named a brother”).

In other words, there must have been some system by which they *affirmed* one another as Christians—as members of that church. In what other way could these people have obediently followed Paul’s instructions in verse 13 when he said, “Therefore put away from yourselves the evil person”? If a person were

never affirmed or accepted as a member of that particular group, there would be no way to obey the command to remove him from that group.

In what other way could a Christian obey the command given in Hebrews 13:17, “*Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive . . .*”? How would a particular Christian know whom to obey, if not by committing himself to the leadership and care of a particular elder or group of elders? We certainly would not expect a Christian to follow the instructions or submit to the leadership of any and every person in his city, or state, or nation, who is considered a pastor. Think of the implications of that; think of the utter confusion that would certainly follow.

How else could a particular elder properly obey Paul’s command in Acts 20 when he passionately implored those in Ephesus to “*shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood*”? How would those Ephesian elders have known who in particular was under their care as a shepherd if not for some system of membership? For a moment, put yourself in the position of an elder. How else could you know which people comprise the group that Peter referred to as “*those entrusted to you*” (1 Peter 5:3)? What other way could you have of knowing those for whom you will be held accountable (cf. Hebrews 13:17)?

In addition to the commands to discipline and shepherd, believers are commanded to diligently care for one another—to “*do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith*” (Gal. 6:10). “*Love one another,*” Jesus says, “*as I have loved you,*” giving a command for Christians to love other Christians (John 13:34). The writer of Hebrews exhorts Christians to “*consider one another in order to stir up love and good works*” (Heb. 10:24). How do we know who these *one anothers* are? How do we know who belongs to this

“*household of faith*” if not for some system of membership?

The true intent of these commands is to demonstrate to the world that the church, in a given locality, is an intimately unified family—sons and daughters of God who rejoice together, struggle together, learn together, and grow together. These commands for commitment to “*one another,*” to the well-being of “*the household of faith,*” lose much of their emphasis when the church is nothing more than a loosely knit group of professing believers (and even admitted unbelievers in many cases).

Why should you join a church? Because it is an act of obedience to the commands of Christ and His New Testament Apostles. Where people come and go as they please, never demonstrating any kind of dedication or true commitment to a particular body of brothers and sisters in Christ, the church cannot be in subjection to Christ its Head; Christians cannot fulfill their purpose.

Reason #3: Christian Purpose

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, instructing them to “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*” (Phil. 2:12). In using the term “*work out,*” Paul was not telling those Christians to come up with their own plan for salvation (work out your own arrangement). He was also not telling them to work off a debt (like paying off a credit card) after it *seemed* they had gotten something for free. Paul’s meaning here comes from a single Greek word that is translated by the two English words, “*work out.*” It means, in simple terms, to fulfill your purpose—to accomplish that which you were meant to accomplish. Understanding, then, that every Christian was created by God for a purpose, we must ask ourselves what that purpose is.

Initially it seems that Christians have several purposes. We are meant to live a

righteous and holy life so that God will be glorified (Matt. 5:16; Eph. 2:10; Titus 3:1, 8, 14). We are commanded to do the work of evangelism (Matt. 9:36-38; 28:18-20; Mark 16:15). We are supposed to seek spiritual growth (2 Peter 3:11-18; Heb. 5:12-14). We must be teachers and guardians of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Peter 3:15; 1 Tim. 6:20). And we are told to care for those in need (Matt. 25:31-46; Gal. 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27).

These various Christian behaviors and qualities are undeniably commanded in the Bible. But is the core of the Christian purpose really so varied? Should we merely seek balance as we try to be and to do all of these things? Or can our purpose be reduced to a more central idea?

We believe that the purpose for the Christian and for the church is better understood as a singular purpose—one that promotes balance and stimulates obedience to all these other commands. That singular purpose is love.

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is love—to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. *“There is no other commandment greater than these”* (Mark 12:30, 31). When Paul referred to the commandment to love our neighbor, he concluded by saying, *“Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law”* (Romans 13:10). And when Jesus gave His disciples *“a new commandment,”* it was that they should love one another as He loved them (John 13:34, 35).

So it seems to us that our highest purpose—the one that encompasses and encourages all of the others—is the purpose of love. That is our supreme mission. And how are we to accomplish that mission? Are we supposed to be innovative? Should we strike out on our own initiative? Or do we have instructions to guide us in fulfilling our purpose? Have

we been given a context in which love will be learned, taught, and lived according to God’s design?

The New Testament speaks of the church as the context where biblical love should be given and experienced in its highest form. And most biblical references to the church are to the local church. When the New Testament writers speak of love, they use language that brings to mind unity among members and reliance upon one another. Nowhere do we find language that would encourage or affirm individuality.

For example, in Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus he spoke of Christ the Head of the church, *“from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love”* (Eph. 4:16).

Paul also pleaded with the Philippian Christians, saying, *“. . . fulfill my joy by being likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind”* (Phil. 2:2). After instructing the Colossians to *“put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering . . . forgiving one another . . .,”* he said in conclusion, *“but above all these things put on love which is the bond of perfection”* (Col. 3:12-14).

So the love of the New Testament is a *“likeminded”* love, a love that knits Christians together in fellowship and purpose, a love that bonds us together like the strongest glue. And all of this understanding is further affirmed by the New Testament metaphors used to describe the church—the metaphor of a building with individual Christians being building stones, and that of a body with every Christian being an integral and functioning body part.

When we relate Paul’s description of the church as *“God’s building”* (1 Cor. 3:9) to Peter’s description of individual Christians as *“living stones”* who are

“being built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5), we can easily see the need for a strong glue (or cement if you prefer) to hold this building together. Love, as Paul says, is that perfect bond.

When Paul describes the church as a body in 1 Corinthians 12, he consistently refers to the individual Christians as members of that body (vv. 12, 14, 18-20, 23, 25-27). Never does Paul, or any other biblical author describe a Christian as one who functions or exists in isolation from the whole. Paul closes 1 Corinthians 12 by mentioning spiritual gifts given to individuals as the Holy Spirit wills. But then, in his very last sentence he writes, *“And yet I show you a more excellent way”* (v. 31). The entire next chapter speaks of the perfection of love—a thing that exceeds even faith and hope in greatness (1 Cor. 13:13). *“Without love,”* Paul writes, *“I am nothing”* (13:2).

Where the New Testament presents love as *“the bond of perfection,”* and where the consistent metaphors that picture the church describe things which must be bound together in order to exist (a body or a building), love must represent something much greater than personal goodness or the idea of being nice to others. Even if an individual who remains uncommitted to a local church is loving on a personal level, the Bible still informs us that such a person cannot be exercising true Christian love according to its design. This is because Christian love is described as the bond that holds the building or the body (the church) together.

Why should you join a church? Because by committing yourself in that way you will help to fulfill your purpose as a Christian. It seems pretty obvious from these biblical metaphors of building stones and body parts that the Christian life was not meant to be lived alone. You, as a Christian, were designed and created by God, not for a

life of individuality and self-will, but to fill a niche in the spiritual building called the church. And as any police officer will tell you, individual bricks that are left lying around, unattached to a building, are more often used for vandalism and burglary, than for their intended purpose.

With that in mind, consider the words of Charles Spurgeon regarding the obligation of every Christian to unite with a church in membership:

I know there are some who say, “Well, I have given myself to the Lord, but I do not intend to give myself to any church.” “Now, why not?” “Because I can be a Christian without it.”

Are you quite clear about that? You can be as good a Christian by disobedience to your Lord’s command as by being obedient? There is a brick. What is it made for? To help build a house. It is of no use for that brick to tell you that it is just as good a brick while it is kicking about on the ground as it would be in the house. It is a good-for-nothing brick. So you rolling-stone Christians, I do not believe that you are answering your purpose. You are living contrary to the life which Christ would have you live, and you are much to blame for the injury you do.

If you desire to be used by Christ in the building of His body the church, then carefully and prayerfully find a local body of believers with whom to unite in membership. There, in the committed relationship of a local church, you can be protected from the deceitfulness of sin. There you can be fully obedient to the Law of Christ, enabling and encouraging others to be obedient as well. And there you can *“work out your own salvation”* in the manner described in the pages of God’s Word. ■

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Are Americans Stupid?

*Some liberals think so,
but they have their own problems with knowledge.*

by Gene Edward Veith

“How can 59,054,087 people be so dumb?” That was the headline in the British tabloid *Daily Mirror* announcing the reelection of President Bush. American liberals are asking the same question, concluding that the 51 percent of the public that voted against their man is just not smart enough to appreciate the liberal agenda.

New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd goes so far as to say that with the reelection of President Bush “we’re entering another dark age.” She and others are saying that a majority of Americans have rejected science (by which they mean belief in Darwinism or support for destroying human embryos for stem cells). We have embraced superstition (by which they mean Christianity). And we have become intolerant and oppressive (by which they mean not agreeing with same-sex marriage).

There was a time when the Democrats billed themselves as the party of the common man, appealing to the down-to-earth common sense of the masses against the aristocracy of wealth and privilege. That was before the party was taken over by the aristocracy of wealth and privilege represented by academics, special-interest crusaders, and “knowledge workers.” By definition, those who consider themselves intellectuals think they are smarter than the vulgar masses. This disdain, condescension, and disconnection with ordinary Americans is the main reason today’s Democrats keep losing elections.

Intellectuals think they should rule, but whenever they do, the result is disastrous. Plato’s *Republic* imagined the perfect society ruled by philosophical “guardians,” but even in theory this manifested itself in eugenics, immorality, and the elimination of freedom. Real-life states dreamed up and then implemented by the fascist intel-

lectuals and the communist intellectuals also eliminated freedom, rejected moral absolutes that would limit what man and the state can do, and sought to design the next stage of evolution.

In a perhaps less virulent way, this is what many people fear if today’s liberal intellectuals should ever get their way: Restrictions on liberties ordinary Americans prize (such as parental, private-property, and gun-ownership rights, economic liberty, religious freedom). The repudiation of morality (homosexual marriage, sexual permissiveness, abortion, cultural license). Experimentation that discards and seeks to redesign human life (the destruction of embryos for their stem cells, genetic engineering, cloning, designer babies).

But the question remains, are Americans stupid? Mental functions involve two different spheres: intelligence (mental ability) and knowledge (mental content). It is possible to have one without the other. Americans across the spectrum do seem to have intelligence, whether highly specialized mental abilities or down-to-earth common sense. They certainly are not so stupid as to allow intellectuals to rule over them. Americans do tend to be smart. Sometimes, though, they lack knowledge, or the knowledge they think with is untrue.

Many Americans, for example, think morality is nothing more than a subjective preference, ungrounded in the real world outside themselves. They assume that God, too, exists only inside their heads, if He exists at all, and that He need not be consulted in practical matters. Many Americans either know nothing of the past or believe that the wisdom of the ages should be discarded on the grounds that it is not modern. Many Americans go so far as to reject the very existence of *any* objective

truth, insisting that reality itself is nothing more than a construction of their minds, to be reconstructed in any way they please.

Such a combination of ignorance, confusion, and hostility to knowledge is held today mainly by our smart people. It is precisely our intellectuals who are questioning the value of reason and the possibility of knowledge. We have thinkers without beliefs, fine minds with nothing in them.

In America's democratic republic, citizens of various intelligence levels can take part. In the Christian church too, people with the whole range of intellectual abilities can find welcome and fulfillment. Some level of knowledge, though, is important for citizenship in both the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of heaven.

Americans are smart enough, but it would be helpful for Americans—liberals, conservatives, Christians, and everyone—to know more, to be open to truths that go beyond their own limited interests, desires, and preferences. "My people are destroyed" not for lack of intelligence, but "for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). ■

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When the Sky Falls In

Crisis Intercession for Missionaries

by Bill Commons

Have you experienced crisis in your personal life? Remember your struggle, your despair, your sense of cosmic loneliness, and you will know how to pray for missionaries.

We all live in a broken world. Nothing is as it ought to be. Everything tends to go wrong. The alienation sin wrought between us and God, ourself and others, continues to infect everything.

The same is true for your missionaries, only more so for them—since they usually serve in the darkest places, surrounded by degradation and desperation that tries to pull them down and distract them from a close walk with God. Today their world

may seem to be unraveling; it may feel like the sky is falling in.

Most missionaries experience intense crisis—whether spiritually, mentally, or physically—often affecting all three. Profound heartache and confusion may be impairing the missionaries for whom you pray today—in their marriage, family, ministry, or inner life. It may be so painful they cannot even talk about it, especially to folk "back home."

After all, aren't missionaries supposed to be "spiritual giants," triumphant in everything? If you only knew how vulnerable they are, no matter how strong or spiritual they appear to be.

Yes, God's grace is ultimately triumphant as your missionaries storm the "gates of hell" in the name of Christ. But the battle is never easy. The enemy knows our weaknesses and is ruthless in his assault. There are setbacks in the struggle, casualties among the troops. We do lose skirmishes in the process of winning the war.

So, faithful intercessors need to learn warfare praying. With humble, broken hearts before God, cry out to Him for His weary, struggling servants. Understanding the storms of life, claim the power of the Resurrection on behalf of wounded soldiers on the front lines. Pray the Scriptures, joining Paul by asking Christ to strengthen His ambassadors "with might through his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16b).

Remember also to pray for the missionary's personal purity, inner crises of faith, a forgiving spirit in the inevitable interpersonal conflicts that arise, and victory over personal temptations.

Were you hoping for a formula? I offer none. God responds to a broken heart, earnestness and sincerity, sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and spiritual insight gained from your own crises.

Remember that there are no great men of God, only little men (and women) who have a great God. So pray that your missionary will let God be God in his life and ministry, no matter what. ■

—Reprinted from *Message*, Fall 2004

Diotrephes—

The Dangerous Lure of Power and Praise

by Jerry Wragg¹

Robert G. Lee was a shepherd whose ministry was marked by a love for his people and a determined defense for the word of God.² It had been a simple but profound approach to his service in the church, and the result was a lifetime of usefulness and blessing. But how did such effectiveness come from such simplicity? The real secret lies in the lens through which Lee viewed his calling. Notice that his perspective was focused around two biblical commands³ which every church is called to obey. When a shepherd sees his labor as the highest act of submission to Christ he is most “useful to the Master, prepared for every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21). Unfortunately, such tireless dedication is becoming the exception rather than the rule as today’s generation of shepherds are easily seduced by the lure of public recognition, wealth, power, sensuality, and personal significance. The evangelical landscape has become a wasteland of shattered trust and scattered sheep, largely due to a crop of leaders who have traded their pastoral call for personal gain. The Apostle Peter exhorted the elders of the church to “. . . Shepherd the flock of God . . . exercising oversight . . . according to the will of God” (1 Peter 5:2). Peter reminds us of the profound mandate given to every overseer, a task that demands sacrifice and careful stewardship. The sheep are not the possession of their leaders but rather their immense privilege.⁴ The call to pastoral faithfulness is grounded in the purposes of God for *His* people, requiring a full-range care that befits *His* design. The trustworthy pastor, then, will serve God best by feeding the sheep with His food, proving them with His word, tending them with His heart, and disciplining them with His grace. There is no place in the ministry for personal gain or selfish ambition. Nor should the work of the church be

used to nurture one’s own desire for significance. The Holy Spirit calls and gifts a man beyond his human abilities, confirming that in the end all ministry effectiveness points to God’s significance.⁵ Dr. A. W. Tozer has pointedly remarked that

A true and safe leader is likely to be one who has no desire to lead, but is forced into a position of leadership by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit and the press of the external situation. Such were Moses and David and the Old Testament prophets. I think there was hardly a great leader from Paul to the present day but was drafted by the Holy Spirit for the task, and commissioned by the Lord of the Church to fill a position he had little heart for. I believe it might be accepted as a fairly reliable rule of thumb that the man who is ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader. The true leader will have no desire to lord it over God’s heritage, but will be humble, gentle, self-sacrificing and altogether as ready to follow as to lead, when the Spirit makes it clear that a wiser and more gifted man than himself has appeared.⁶

While many leadership pitfalls line the road to a blessed ministry, there are two particularly dangerous weaknesses that can quickly ruin a leader and bring lasting heartache to any church. Sadly, both weaknesses are graphically portrayed in a man called Diotrephes, mentioned in Third John 9 and 10. His ministry is the classic account of a leader for whom God’s people became a personal trophy. He had allowed his heart to drift into the treacherous waters of pride and conceit, seduced by the influence of personal power and human praise.

Love of Praise

Diotrephes was a church leader of some notable rank, probably a senior pastor by today’s standards. For all his achievements

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SWORD AND TRUMPET

in ministry he is described in Scripture as an egocentric personality who “[loved] to be first among them” (3 John 9). He had an insatiable desire for preeminence. His heart secretly delighted in the praises of others which fed his exalted view of his own abilities. When a leader satisfies himself with the cheers of men he lays the groundwork for a host of ministry-disrupting behavior. For example, Diotrephes’ love for preeminence led to an unsubmitive heart toward church authority (v. 9b). Furthermore, he became deceitful, “unjustly accusing⁷ . . . with wicked words”⁸ (v. 10). The egocentric leader is intolerant and hypercritical of others. Positioning himself for maximum attention he will readily dispense with another’s ministry gifts, talents, and ideas. Like Diotrephes, he will not tolerate anyone encroaching upon his territory.⁹ Such an appetite for man’s applause is the result of ingratitude for one’s gifts, and desiring personal significance outside of God’s will. The scriptures warn against “[searching] out one’s own glory” (Proverbs 25:27; 28:6, 7). We can avoid the lure of man’s praise by remembering that our significance is found in becoming useful to Christ. Moreover, we are told in 1 Peter 4:10 that we have “received” spiritual gifts from God and are merely “stewards of [his] manifold grace.” Apart from Him we can accomplish nothing!

Human praise always tests the character of a leader (Proverbs 27:21) because it brings true motives to the surface. All of us at one time or another have received a word of thanks for a job well done or praise for personal qualities and talents. In fact, according to Proverbs 12:8, it is natural for a man to be “. . . praised for his insight.” There is even a place for publicly praising a faithful servant, as Paul does when referring to Epaphroditus in Philipians 2:29, 30, “Therefore . . . hold men like him in high regard because he came close to death for the work of Christ. . . .” In ministry, however, striking a balance between humbly receiving a genuine compliment and seeking only the glory of Christ can be challenging. How can you

know whether you love the praises of men? A few simple questions may help: Do you withhold praise from others? Do you delight in getting attention? Are you uncomfortable in the presence of gifted peers? Would others describe you as self-promoting?¹⁰ If you struggle to rejoice in the usefulness of others you have laid the seedbed for cultivating a love of praise.

Love of Power

The lust for power in the ministry is equally destructive and always leads to isolation from those authorities to whom we are accountable.¹¹ Diotrephes opposed John’s Apostolic leadership because he viewed others as obstacles to the furtherance of his own power and control. Verse 10 says he was “not satisfied with” mere slander, but also tried to hinder the outreach ministries of other churches. In his resentment he refused to serve a traveling band of missionaries (“ . . . neither does he . . . receive the brethren”—verse 10). Leaders who love control are always suspicious of others because they fear the loss of importance or status. Scripture teaches that we are never to shepherd “. . . as lording it over those allotted to [our] charge” (1 Peter 5:3). The sheep are a *delegated* responsibility from the Chief Shepherd to whom we shall give an account.¹² When a leader does not tremble at the very thought of accountability to Christ he is left to his petty intimidations and oppressive tactics. Anyone who stood against Diotrephes became a target of his bitterness. He manipulated his own congregation and incited them to disfellowship with anyone who went against his orders. This is not leadership but personal domination! How can you know whether you have fallen into the power-hungry trap? Examine your life and look for the following evidences: Viewing others as a threat to your success; unteachable when contradicted; letting others be blamed for your failed decisions; withholding important resources and information needed by others; unwilling to delegate responsibility. These are the marks of self-centered and

self-protective leadership. The body of Christ suffers greatly when shepherds are lured away by power and praise. We must work against such weaknesses by cultivating a Christ-focused heart and mind. Paul's calling as an apostle was not to be undermined, but he personally saw himself as a nobody (2 Cor. 12:11). A tyrant in the ministry will foster a church full of abusers who fight each other for recognition. Loyalty to Christ is nurtured by leaders who love and promote Christ. Trust in God modeled by the leadership begets a growing faith in the hearts of the sheep. Where the elders are an example of humility, gentleness, and servanthood, the flock of God flourishes in peace and safety. We must flee the seductive influence of power and praise by putting our hearts in check, forsaking any Diotrephes-like tendency, and returning once again to the servant-life. God's people deserve the best of our stewardship. ■

ENDNOTES

1. Pastor of Grace Immanuel Bible Church in Jupiter, Florida.
 2. The Reformed Reader: "Baptist Cameos."
 3. These commands are found in Matthew 22:39 and 2 Timothy 4:2, respectively.
 4. 1 Peter 5:2, 3 outlines three improper motivations for ministry and their opposite quality: (1) Begrudged vs. wholehearted service, (2) Greedy vs. sacrificial service, (3) Domineering vs. exemplary service. Seeing ministry as an undeserved privilege mitigates against any neglect of proper shepherding.
 5. This is precisely the point of Psalm 8, where the splendor of God's work results, not in an exalted significance for man, but an amplification of God's own majesty.
 6. Cited by J. Oswald Sanders in *Spiritual Leadership*, pp. 31, 32.
 7. The accusations were fallacious as indicated by the verb *phularon*.
 8. *Logoi poneris*—"Malicious words."
 9. 3 John 9b, "Diotrephes . . . does not accept us."
 10. I include this question because it is healthy to ask for a critique from those under your leadership. Often a person's opportunism is excused as a "strong leadership quality." The scriptures teach, however, that strong leaders accentuate the usefulness of others and enjoy seeing someone else receive honor for faithful service (1 Cor. 3:5-7). Beware the man who boasts of his own gifts (Proverbs 25:14).
 11. Proverbs 18:1 teaches that all who isolate themselves and resist sound counsel are consumed with their own desires.
 12. Hebrews 13:17 is a similar passage which clearly refers to pastoral accountability, but includes the idea that such a responsibility should be a joy.
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Academic Freedom or Scriptural Integrity?

by Paul L. Miller

One of the marks of the modern, "informed" mind is that of academic freedom. Since no question is forbidden, some assume that any response is of equal validity. That appearance is false.

Let's say I may raise any question I can devise. I must, if my inquiry is honest, allow for an answer. While you cannot answer every question my truth-resistant mind can devise, that fact itself proves very little. God's truth is found by those who really want it.

If I ask, but want only to titillate the imagination, I will find no safe and solid answer. If I despise absolute truth, I will not be satisfied with the answer the Master Designer of the Universe gives. God has provided us with His Holy Spirit-inspired Word. Since that is sufficient, I cannot expect Him to devise something else for me.

His will revealed in His holy Word is enough.

I accept the proposition that the Bible declares God's will for my life. Can I prove that to everyone's satisfaction? Probably not. But I believe it enough to place the well-being of my eternal soul upon it. I rest my fears and doubts on that divine proposition.

If I am wrong, I trust Him to show me.

If I am right, He will keep His promises and reward me for accepting His Son as the answer to life's great questions. **Jesus Christ is my Saviour and Lord.**

Tell me, what have I to lose if I am wrong? What if the Bible is false and some day "I die like a dog"? What have I missed out on? Absolutely nothing! The way of Christ is a good path. I have His promises. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psa. 84:11b; note also Psa. 34:10). And what do I have to gain if I'm right? Everything good for time and eternity. (cont'd. on page 38)

“Seeking” Sunday Morning: What Is the Purpose of the Sunday Morning Service?

by Ronald L. Sumner

“**Seeker Services**” are a phenomenon that continues to grow, and a common theme is to make the lost “feel comfortable.” A Christian radio program recently aired an interview with a former Willow Creek member who was grateful that they gave him a place where he could “feel comfortable” hearing the gospel when he was lost. The questions that came to my mind were: **1.** Is making the lost “feel comfortable” the purpose of a church service? **2.** Is it possible that making him “feel comfortable” actually delays (or prevents) his salvation instead of moving him closer to it?

Within the past month I had a conversation with the pastor of a Baptist church where he expressed his belief that the Sunday morning service was for the lost. It should make them feel comfortable and address their needs, he told me, with sermons that would not confuse them with a lot of doctrine, but rather comfort them, because there are a lot of hurting people out there.

Since this pastor’s church did not have a Sunday evening service, I asked when the congregation would hear doctrine taught. His response was that they should understand that the purpose of the Sunday morning service was for the lost and if they don’t get anything out of the service they should get their need for teaching met in a week night Bible study or in Sunday school. I wondered aloud that if 90% of the congregation only go to the Sunday morning service, when would they get doctrinal teaching?

There was more to our conversation, but one of the things that really kept me thinking was the phrase, “the purpose of the service.” What is the purpose of *any* regular church service, Sunday morning

or otherwise?

The Mission for Believers

To find the purpose of a “gathering of believers”—sometimes occurring in the form of a “church service,” which we are told not to forsake (Heb. 10:25)—it helps to look at what the mission is for all believers, which the church was formed to aid.

When Christ addressed the disciples prior to His ascension, he said, “Therefore go and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them** to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:19, 20, emphasis added). The command here is to “make *disciples*,” or followers of Christ. Notice the command isn’t to just “Go get them saved,” but go make disciples and teach them. Granted, salvation is the first step in discipleship, and this article will in no way suggest that evangelistic outreach is unimportant or even less important than sound teaching. It just isn’t the *sole* emphasis of our mission.

Strong’s concordance lists the word translated “make disciples” as *matheteuo*, which can mean “to follow his precepts and instructions, to make a disciple, to teach, instruct,” and the word translated “teaching them” is from *didasko*, which can mean “to be a teacher, to discharge the office of a teacher, to impart instruction, to instill doctrine into one, to explain or expound a thing.” In some sense, the Lord felt so strongly that we should teach and instruct His followers that He said the same thing in two ways. A paraphrase might be: “Instruct people to follow what I’ve taught and teach them how to do that.”

That doesn't mean missions and evangelism are not important—they are critical to bringing the lost to become disciples. Being a disciple, however, is not just believing in God—the demons do that and tremble (James 2:19). Being a disciple is putting God above all else (Luke 14:26), being willing to die for the cause of Christ (Luke 14:27), being willing to give up everything one owns (Luke 14:33), becoming like the Master (Matthew 10:24), being willing to serve others (Matthew 10:42), loving the brethren (John 13:35), and bearing fruit in our lives (John 15:8), to name a few. Without those things there is reasonable cause to doubt whether one is a disciple (Luke 11:1; 14:26-33; John 13:35; 15:8), because being a disciple is to follow the doctrines and principles found in Scripture.

Once believers are turned into true disciples, they will in turn want to disciple others—that's where the outreach occurs. Second Timothy 2:2 commands, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses **entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others**" (emphasis added).

Ordering a Service

So, having briefly established that the mission of the church is to disciple, what is the purpose of that "gathering of believers" of Hebrews 10:25? In 1 Corinthians 14:26 we read, "What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification" (NAS95).

There has been some argument over whether this is a list of things that every gathering should have, or whether this is a list of things that the early church was doing to the point of chaos, but the passage does state that everything must be done for the strengthening of the church and all of the things on the list tend to be the type of things that we traditionally do in church services: hymn singing, doctrinal teaching,

and brief words of encouragement.

The singing of hymns certainly allows for much variety in cultural approach, and I believe is an important part of the fellowship of believers. The Book of Psalms is a book of songs. Christ and the disciples sang a hymn in closing what is called, "The Last Supper" (Mark 14:26), and we have all felt the ministry of the Spirit through song. Much is made of late concerning "worship" being the center of a service, but that is an argument I don't intend to involve here. Romans 12:1 urges "to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual *act* of worship," and worship involves far more than singing a few songs on Sunday morning. Better the worship of a holy life, than the worship of lips in song (Isaiah 29:13).

The final two on the list, "tongue" and "interpretation," I tend to see as the speaking of a known language for the benefit of those who do not speak the language common to the rest of the congregation. If there are those who speak Spanish, but not English, in an English-speaking congregation, someone is going to have to translate for them, and vice versa.

The speaking of a foreign language becomes a "gift" only when the person involved has no prior knowledge of that language and becomes supernaturally able to speak or interpret it for the benefit of someone who needs to hear the gospel. The church at Corinth had many of different backgrounds represented and many different languages. Without question, if all were to speak their native tongue and/or translate for each other at the same time it would be chaos. In any case, Paul makes it clear that this kind of speaking of a foreign language is reserved for those who are lost, and is not for the benefit of believers (1 Cor. 14:22-25).

"Prophesying," on the other hand, is for believers (v. 22) and, in this case, *Strong's* defines "prophesy," *propheteia*, as "a discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God,

whether by reproving and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden.” In the New Testament, *Strong’s* suggests the word is “used of the utterance of Old Testament prophets, of the prediction of events relating to Christ’s kingdom and its speedy triumph, together with the consolations.”

In other words, *preaching*—the expounding of Scripture—is what the believers should be doing when they gather, (vv. 24, 31), so that all may be “instructed and encouraged” (v. 31). Both 1 Corinthians 14:31 and Hebrews 10:25 suggest that the purpose of gathering together is to encourage the believers, while 1 Corinthians 14:31 tells how: by expounding Scripture.

The idea that this expounding has to be a “sudden impulse” to qualify as what Paul describes is not necessarily supported by 1 Corinthians 14:32: “The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.” In most cases today, the prompting of the Spirit happens when the preacher is preparing the sermon, although I have experienced and have witnessed a prompting in the middle of a sermon to include something that wasn’t originally part of the sermon, which is equally grace granted by the Holy Spirit.

That preaching is indeed prophecy, or “a thing which can only be known by divine revelation,” is supported by Matthew 16:15-17, where Jesus asks a question: “He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because **flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven**’” (emphasis added).

Anything revealed by the Father comes through the Spirit, and is a divine revelation, even if it is the repetition of doctrine. Second Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for *teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness*, so that the man of God may be

thoroughly equipped for every good work”—exactly what is described above. Prophecy, as used in 1 Corinthians 14, is the expounding of Scripture, and the expounding of Scripture is exactly what believers need when they gather together.

The Core Mission of a Service

The core mission of the assembly of believers—the regular church service—is to instruct the believers in the Word, to “equip for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17), to “cleanse [the church] by the washing with water through the Word” (Eph. 5:26), to be a workman who “correctly handles the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15), to “keep the pattern of sound teaching” (2 Tim. 1:13), to watch their “life and doctrine closely,” encouraging believers to “persevere in them” (1 Tim. 4:16), and to “entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim. 2:2).

The church should teach *all* of God’s Word, leaving nothing out, for after explaining to the disciples the severity of the fiery judgment to come and making sure they understood it, Jesus said unto them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed [discipled] about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old” (Matt. 13:47-52). In other words, a preacher should preach the whole Book from cover to cover.

Second Timothy 3:16-4:2 tells us, “**All Scripture** is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: **Preach the Word**; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (emphasis added).

Any who decide to do otherwise do so at their own peril, since James 3:1 tells us, “Not many of you should presume to be

teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.”

The Responsibility of the Congregation

In the regular church service, the responsibility of *the preacher* is to present the Word. The responsibility of *the congregation* is to question what is said. Acts 17:11 tells us, “Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”

First Corinthians 14:29 describes the order of a service as, “Two or three prophets [preachers] should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.” The word translated “weigh,” or *diakrino*, is defined by *Strong’s* as “to separate, make a distinction, discriminate, to prefer, to learn by discrimination, to give judgment, decide a dispute.”

Strong’s even goes so far as to suggest it means “to separate one’s self in a hostile spirit, to oppose, strive with dispute, contend to hesitate, doubt.” The church is not to accept glibly what is said from the pulpit because if its preachers have done their job, the church will be equipped to know what is Biblical and what is not.

Pleasing the Lost in Our Midst

But what about the “seekers”; what about those who are looking for God? To be frank, Romans 3:10-12 states clearly, “As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one’ ” (NIV). In this passage, Paul quotes Psalm 14:1-3, which states without reservation that *there are no seekers* of God. To say otherwise is to call God a liar.

If that be the case, what are the lost who are coming to “seeker” services really

seeking? They are seeking to fill what has been called, “A God-shaped vacuum.” Since their sinful natures don’t allow them to truly seek God, and their lack of the Holy Spirit does not allow them to understand Scripture (1 Cor. 2:14), they are in search of something that the church cannot and should not attempt to supply. If one strives to make them “comfortable,” it will destroy the purpose of the gathering for believers.

If one looks to human nature to answer the question of what the lost are seeking, they are seeking “religion” as a nice substitute for repentance—a “form of godliness” that denies the power of God (2 Tim. 3:1-5). In order to please them, you won’t preach the Word, because the lost don’t want to hear it; it confuses them and they don’t understand it (1 Cor. 1:18; 2:14). If you try to please them, you will soft-pedal the Word and spend more time on other things.

The lost don’t want to hear about Hell. They find it distasteful, and if you try to please them, you’ll never talk about Hell, even though Jesus preached on Hell more than any other subject (70 times). The lost don’t want to hear that they are sinners (2 Tim. 4:3). It makes them uncomfortable, and if you want to make them comfortable, you won’t talk about sin. Unfortunately, if you don’t talk about sin, it means there’s no real reason for them to get “saved.”

The lost want to hear things they can understand and “tickles” their fancy (2 Tim. 3:1-5). They love to talk about themselves. To please them you’ll talk about pop psychology and how they “feel,” not the Word. They want to hear men’s wisdom, and not God’s. To please them, you’ll need to talk about philosophy, not the Word. They want to hear myths (2 Tim. 4:4). To please them, you’ll need to talk about legends, history, and stories of what people do, rather than Scripture. They *love* entertainment (2 Tim. 3:4). To please them, you’ll need to have a flashing “worship” hour, with plenty of top-notch singers, and

a big band, and PowerPoint presentations, and on and on, *ad extremum*.

The lost would rather watch movies than listen to the Word, so use film clips instead of Scripture to make your point. The lost want to have “church” without all the guilt. To please them, you must emphasize camaraderie and not the Word. They want to be *seen* as religious (Matt. 6:5; 23:5), but deny the true power of the Word.

In other words, if you want to please the lost, you’ll set up a “seeker” service. The result will be what Christ describes in Luke 13:18, 19 as an overgrown tree “where the birds of the air perched in its branches” (*i.e.*, a huge church full of the lost). This type of teaching will “spread like gangrene” (2 Tim. 2:17), and their leaders will be so consumed with growing a large church that even from among believers “men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30).

Pleasing God in Our Services

But if you really want to please God, you’ll not give the lost what they want, but what they *need*. You will “**Preach the Word**; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and **careful instruction**” (1 Tim. 4:2, emphasis added). You will preach the Word because “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17).

You will preach “not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power” (1 Cor. 2:4).

You will not pull your punches for fear of making the lost uncomfortable, but will “preach Christ crucified,” even though doing so may be “a stumblingblock to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1 Cor. 1:23). In John 6, Christ Himself preached “hard teaching” (v. 60), even though He knew that it would “offend” some (v. 61), and “as a result of this many of His disci-

ples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore” (v. 66).

I am quite sympathetic with a strong desire to bring the lost to Christ. That is the heart of God, clearly displayed by how often in Scripture He says, “*Come!*” But using the worldly wisdom of marketing techniques and “feel good” pop psychology instead of Scripture is *not* the answer.

This may sound overly dramatic, but it is nonetheless true to say that asking the lost what they want from a church service is similar to going to a funeral parlor and asking the man in the coffin what sort of service he would like at his funeral. Funeral services are not for the benefit of the dead, they are for the benefit of the living, and the Church is not made up of the lost who are dead, but the believers who are living—God “is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matt. 22:32).

The Word Wins the Lost

The “gathering of believers,” which we are told not to forsake (Heb. 10:25a), is for the sake of believers—to encourage, exhort, indoctrinate, and challenge believers (Heb. 10:25b and following). That isn’t to say that the lost aren’t welcome. Paul suggests it’s possible the lost may show up at a gathering of believers, in 1 Corinthians 14:23. But the lost are not—and should not be—the main focus of the normal, regular gathering (although I would encourage having special services aimed directly at the lost).

In the passage just mentioned, Paul suggests that by the preaching of Scripture (*propheteia*), the lost will be convicted of sin if they are there. He at no point suggests that they are the sole reason for gathering, and he at no point suggests that the believers needed to be careful about what parts of Scripture they present, but that Scripture itself needs to be presented. “Hearing of the Word” (Rom. 10:17) is the formula by which the lost are saved, and no other. Making the dead man feel comfortable in his suit in the satin-draped coffin does not help him.

What he needs is the breath of life, and nothing else.

Some argue they have an aversion to “Christianese,” and that’s why they avoid doctrine on Sunday morning. An aversion to “Christianese” is good, because that’s the kind of thing that Paul was disparaging when he said that if everyone were speaking in a foreign language the lost couldn’t understand; they’d think you were crazy or drunk (v. 23). “Christianese” is indeed a foreign language to the lost, which is why Paul said it was better to preach Scripture, because that is what convicts, *i.e.*, “Hearing the Word” (Rom. 10:17).

Giving the Lost What They Need

A really excellent illustration of how to avoid what the lost want and give them what they need is found in the example of Christ talking to the woman at the well. The woman at the well wasn’t interested in discussing Scripture—that was too convicting. She was interested in discussing religion and broad questions, not sin. But in every case, Jesus avoided what she *wanted* and gave her what she *needed*.

When she wanted to talk about the politics of race hatred (Jews vs. Samaritans); He brought her to the gift of God and who He was.

When she wanted to talk about historical events and who was more powerful or important an individual; He brought her back to the importance of what He was offering.

When she misunderstood what He offered and expressed interest in her misunderstanding, He brought up her sin (the element which cuts off fellowship with God).

When she dodged the subject of her sin and brought up the differences in religion, He emphasized that the only thing that matters is what God wants, not man, and that the only way to worship God is the way in which God wants to be worshiped (in spirit and truth), and it is irrelevant how man wants to worship.

When she was finally ready to talk

about what is true, Jesus revealed Himself as the Way to overcome sin.

The instruction from what Jesus did is this: Don’t allow unbelievers to be distracted from a focus on their sin and their need for repentance. Don’t let them turn you away from the Gospel by suggesting they want to hear about something else. Don’t neglect pointing out their sin, even if you’re afraid it might repulse them—having an understanding of their sin is the only way they will understand they need a Saviour.

Anyone who seeks something other than an answer to his sin, isn’t a seeker. Twelve-step programs for hurting individuals, or addicted individuals, or confused individuals may be all very well and good (if Christ is their center, not some Higher Power), and can be found in dozens of sources other than the church, but it begs the point. Until Christ makes them a new creation, they have no hope. No hope of living a “normal” life (normal in God’s eyes is holy; *cf.* 1 Peter 1:15, 16), and no hope of “taking back” their life (only by losing one’s life can one truly gain it; Mark 8:35).

What the lost need is not to feel good about themselves, but to be converted and become true disciples. Paul emphasized preaching the Word in 1 Corinthians 14 because it is how the lost will be *convicted of sin* (v. 24), which is what they need in order to be saved (v. 25).

Preach the Word

Preaching the Word and reaching out to the lost do not have to be mutually exclusive. Preaching the Word and teaching doctrine can always include the plan of salvation. The gospel is woven into every thread of the Bible and it is never far from the heart of God. A message on doctrine, no matter how deep, will always be an easy segue to man’s fallen nature and the need for a Saviour. Yet Romans 10:17 is clear that the *only* way for the lost to be saved is by the hearing of the Word. If it isn’t the central focus of a sermon, the lost are not likely to be convicted

of sin; and if there is no conviction of sin, there will be no repentance.

What I mean by the “central focus” is not to take a Biblical *principle* and expound on it, but rather to take a Scriptural *passage*, or passages, and expound specifically on them. Sometimes the tail wags the dog in topical sermons, although I do believe they have their place. Taking two verses at the beginning as a springboard for a sermon and never referring to Scripture again is not a Scripture-centered sermon. Finding a couple verses to back up what one is saying is not a Scripture-centered sermon. What Scripture says (literally says, not just a principle) about a topic should be the central theme, not what man or man’s logic can say about it.

That goes for exegetical sermons, too, for that matter. God did not promise that *our* words wouldn’t return empty, but that *His* Word would accomplish the purpose for which He sent it (Isaiah 55:11). What other Scriptures say about a passage or the topic of a passage is far more important

than what a particular preacher can say about it—hence the saying, “Scripture is the best commentary on Scripture.”

Second Timothy 3:16 implies there is a special relationship between Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit (our true teacher, John 14:26) that goes far beyond any logic or explaining that any preacher can do. When listeners hear a sermon they should feel so bathed in Scripture that they will be compelled to “fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’ ” (1 Cor. 14:25).

If you truly want to see saints blessed and sinners brought to repentance, “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: **Preach the Word**; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Tim. 4:2). ■

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Separated Unto God

by J. C. Wenger



A great book
that was out of print
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How to Deal With Discouragement

by Harold S. Martin

A Bible Helps Booklet No. 354

In the 42nd Psalm, the writer expresses his yearning for God, and tells about the depth of his distress. The words in verse 5, and again in verse 11 of that Psalm, are at the heart of the cry: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” One translation says, “Why be so discouraged and sad?”

The 42nd Psalm was written to encourage us to hope in God—to remember God’s goodness, and to think of His faithfulness, and to simply trust Him for the future. Discouragement (by definition) is a gloomy and dejected frame of mind that comes when one feels deprived of hope and confidence. Discouragement, if nurtured and fed, can grow into despair—even to the point of needing medication to survive.

1. Reasons for Discouragement

It is safe to say that all of us at some time or another have had to deal with some degree of discouragement. There are several reasons for discouragement.

a) A distorted, self-centered nature

By nature, all of us to a degree are immature and self-centered. God is not finished with any of us yet. Even a small child is self-centered. Small children are cute, but they are self-centered. The child believes that all things exist for him. He wants what he wants when he wants it. He wants his bottle, his mother’s attention, his uncle’s watch, his playmate’s toys, etc. If you deny a child what he wants, he often gets angry and sometimes goes into temper tantrums. The child would be dangerous if he were not so small and so helpless.

Because we are human, we find it easy to pity ourselves, and to give in to the pull

of the flesh nature. Sometimes we feel that we have not been treated right, and so we pity ourselves. Or, we sense that we don’t always have victory over certain bad habits, and so we brood over our lack of self-control.

After speaking carelessly, we say, “There I go again; I made a mistake one more time,” or, “I skipped my Bible reading again today”—and we get discouraged because of a lack of victory.

In response, we must repent and confess our wrongs and set new goals—and move on. The Christian life is a series of new beginnings! We must not give up in fighting our inner corruptions.

b) Failure to embrace the sovereignty of God

Some folks seem to believe that human beings are the mere playthings of fate. They think of men and women as creatures without purpose or goal in the universe. Life is just a sequence of good-and-bad-luck experiences. But the genuine Christian can keep calm even when he goes through trials and testings, because he knows that the promises of God are true, and that our Heavenly Father is in supreme control.

Disappointment can be a traumatic experience.

—A beloved family member dies at an early age.

—A young husband learns that he must have serious surgery.

—Finances decrease during hard times, and people are laid off from their jobs.

These things can be discouraging. The question often asked at such times is this: Can I trust God? Does He have it all

together? Or, is He up there biting His nails wondering what is happening here on earth?

c) Deliberate attacks by Satan himself

You can be sure that at some point along life's journey, the devil will do his best to plant in your mind the thought that you've been a complete failure.

The young couple that has several children early in their marriage, all born close together, feels trapped by the heavy responsibilities of raising a family. They discover that little babies are not always "soft little bundles of love," but that small children can be noisy, fussy, and demanding creatures—and sometimes the parents think they must be doing everything wrong. And when children get older, they can be defiant and stubborn, often demanding their own way.

Satan will try to get us to castigate ourselves and become discouraged because the family does not seem to be turning out well. But things are generally not as bad as they may seem in their worst moments. We must not let gloom become a way of life.

And so, some of the sources of discouragement include a distorted, self-centered nature, failure to embrace the sovereignty of God, and deliberate attempts by Satan to discourage us.

2. Bible Examples of Discouragement

There were several persons in Bible times who were deeply discouraged. We want to look at their experiences.

a) Moses succumbed to discouragement.

We would think that Moses was a man who was above discouragement. Moses had observed the plagues that God brought upon Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. Moses had seen God lead the Israelites out of Egypt on the dry land through the Red Sea. Moses had communicated with God in a brief encounter on Mt. Sinai when he received the Ten Commandments.

If any person should have been above

discouragement, it was Moses. And yet, in Numbers 11, we see Moses so defeated and so discouraged that he cried out, in essence, "If this is how you are going to deal with me, kill me, I pray . . . and let me not see my wretchedness" (Num. 11:15).

The thing that brought on this discouragement was the mixed multitude of people (Num. 11:4, 5) who had traveled along with the Israelites out of Egypt. They longed for the fish, cucumbers, melons, and onions of Egypt, and in their rebellion, they cried out against the Lord and against Moses (Num. 11:10). Moses became preoccupied with the criticism; he saw every complaint as a personal attack against him. He forgot about the faithfulness of God, and how God had promised that He would provide for Israel, and protect them on their wilderness journey. And, as a matter of fact, God did come to the aid of Moses, described in Numbers 11:16-20. God provided seventy men to help Moses, and He sent food for the complaining people. There was no reason for Moses to be discouraged.

b) Elijah fell victim to discouragement.

God had called Elijah to be a prophet, but it seemed as if the entire nation had gone after Jezebel, and the idols which she brought with her from her pagan background.

Without apology, Elijah declared himself to be a messenger of God (the true and living God)—and in a showdown with the false prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, Elijah set out to prove to Ahab and Jezebel that the God of Israel was the only true God! The prophets of Baal were defeated in a dramatic display of God's power. They cried all morning to their pagan gods, but when Elijah prayed, God immediately sent fire from heaven which consumed the sacrifice on the altar.

When Jezebel learned what happened, she was angry—and she retaliated by giving Elijah only 24 hours to live (1 Kings 19:2). She said, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the

life of one of them [the dead false prophets] by tomorrow about this time.” And Elijah was scared. He ran far into the wilderness and sat under a juniper tree, and prayed to God “that he might die” (1 Kings 19:4).

It may seem strange that this bold prophet was afraid, especially after the great victory on Mount Carmel, but Elijah was weary and exhausted, and the thought of one more battle (this time with the wicked queen) just overwhelmed him, and he was ready to quit. Elijah was a human being; he had emotions like we have (James 5:17), and he felt like giving up.

If we read on in 1 Kings 19, we learn that God ministered to Elijah’s need. The Lord sent an angel to encourage him, but the angel did not deal with his spiritual problem first. The angel did not tell Elijah to get down on his knees and pray; instead, the angel told him to get up and eat food, and then he’d be prepared to deal with the problem (1 Kings 19:5-7). And then God told Elijah to get busy in the work He had for him to do. It included anointing Hazael to be king over Syria, anointing Jehu to be king over Israel, and calling Elisha to be another prophet.

Surely this was not time for Elijah to be lying around in a cave feeling sorry for himself, and thinking that he was the only one left in Israel who was faithful to God (1 Kings 19:9, 10, 18). It was then that the Lord assured him that He had seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

c) Jonah was also enslaved by discouragement.

Jonah was the prophet who landed in the belly of a great fish. After the experience in the fish’s belly, Jonah obeyed God and preached in the streets of Nineveh. The people of Nineveh repented and were delivered from judgment. But then, Jonah complained to God (Jonah 4:1-3). The Bible says that Jonah was greatly displeased. He knew that because the people repented, God would bless their country (Assyria), and that eventually Assyria may even overrun his own nation Israel.

Jonah lamented to God. He said, “I

pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.” (The statement is found in Jonah 4:2, 3.) Jonah was saying, “That’s why I went in the opposite direction in the first place, instead of going to Nineveh. I knew you are a gracious and compassionate God, and that you would bless Assyria if the people repented; now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.” Jonah was discouraged because he saw things in terms of how they affected himself. He didn’t seem to care much about the judgment which could have fallen on the people of Nineveh.

Thus we have noticed that some of the noted men spoken about in the Bible were given to periods of discouragement.

3. Steps to Conquer Discouragement

There are some steps to take that should help us overcome discouragement. Maybe you have been rejected by your parents. Maybe you have a deplorable job with no chance for advancement. Maybe you married a self-centered and insensitive partner. Maybe you have some serious physical impairment. Maybe you are scared by the current world situation. To be delivered from discouragement, there are some steps to keep in mind.

a) Learn the art of being grateful in every situation.

It is important for us to recall God’s blessings and to remember God’s faithfulness. We should thank Him for what He has done even in the midst of trials and hard places. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 we are told to give thanks “in everything.”

Murmuring and complaining are always condemned in the Scriptures; singing and praising God are always

looked upon with favor. In Acts 16:25, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns at midnight, even though at that time they were fastened in stocks. The Scriptures continually admonish us to be thankful, not only for happy families and decent jobs and strong bodies—but also, we are to be thankful in the midst of life’s circumstances, even for deep disappointments. Thanksgiving is rooted in the belief that God is in control of everything that touches our lives.

There is nothing that will quicken the step of a tired and discouraged person like the singing of a hymn of thanks and praise to God.

b) Do something encouraging for others.

One of the things many of us can do is to write letters of encouragement, or make a simple phone call to those who are in the midst of discouragement.

J. B. Phillips was a man remembered for translating the New Testament into modern English by using a gripping style. He translated Romans 12:2 with these words: “Don’t let the world squeeze you into its own mold.” But throughout Phillips’ adult life, he struggled with dark periods of discouragement.

One day a letter came to Phillips’ home from a woman who had used his translation in her daily devotional reading, and for many years she had found it to be of great help. She wrote, “I can’t explain the compulsion I feel to write to you today, but I want so very much to thank you personally for the peace that your great effort has often brought to me, and for its challenge to my commitment to Christ and the church.”

Phillips answered with a few words of thanks for her encouraging letter, saying that, though she couldn’t explain her compulsion to write, perhaps he could. “I am in the midst of a depressive illness,” he said, “and I have noticed that the good Lord seems to arrange matters so that I get a letter such as yours at a time when I am tempted to feel that my life has been pretty useless.”

Perhaps there is a strange compulsion within one of you who is reading this article—to write or call someone and offer an expression of thanks for what that person means to you. If so, I encourage you to do it as soon as possible. It will bless your life.

c) Remember that God uses our problems for good purposes.

The Bible speaks of the unlimited power of God. He has sovereign control over the affairs of nature, and He works out His plan for each individual life.

Joseph (in Old Testament times) was hated and betrayed by his brothers. They sold him into Egypt. He was schemed against by Potiphar’s wife. He was unjustly locked up in prison, where he was ignored and forgotten. But God was in control! Eventually Joseph was freed, and became next in power to the king. And through God’s help, he was able to save Egypt and the surrounding nations from starvation.

The famine in the Mideast finally brought Joseph’s brothers down to Egypt to buy food, and in time, Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers. They remembered how they had hated him, and sold him many years before—and they feared for their lives. But Joseph replied, “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life” (Gen. 45:5). Joseph said, “You sold me, but God sent me.”

Joseph knew the cure for discouragement. He knew that the Lord only allows those things to happen to us which will eventually work together for good, as the Apostle Paul says in Romans 8:28, that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

The Bible from beginning to end teaches that God is completely sovereign; God is infinite in wisdom; God is perfect in love. God in His love always wills what is best for us; God in His wisdom always knows what is best for us; and God’s sovereignty enables Him to bring it about.

To have a simple trust in God, acknowledging that the circumstances of your life have not gotten out of the control of an all-wise God, is the major cure for discouragement. The God who cares for sparrows (Matt. 10:29-31) is screening the experiences of your life (and of my life), so that we are not the mere victims of fate.

Remember that adversity and difficult circumstances are not always an indication of sin in our lives. If we have sinned, the guilt can be removed by honest confession and genuine repentance (1 John 1:9). And we need to do that. We must repent, and confess our sins; we must not try and hide sin. But don't let Satan lead you to believe that there must be a link between some sin in your life and the adversity you are facing. God often uses hard places to make good people even better.

In my judgment, there is little doubt that Joseph's brothers needed punishment far more than Joseph did! They are the ones who sold him into Egypt, and lied to their father, and smeared goat's blood on Joseph's garment to make it look like an animal had killed him. Yet, as far

as the record goes, none of the brothers suffered like Joseph suffered.

God, in His infinite skill, blends together the events of life in order to make us the kind of persons He wants us to be—and someday, by the grace of God, we shall say, "It has been good."

It is just as important for us to trust God as it is for us to obey Him. When we disobey God, we defy His authority and despise His holiness. When we fail to trust God, we doubt His sovereignty and question His goodness. In both cases, we do an injustice to God's majesty and His character. There is really no reason for our souls to be cast down!

Fanny Crosby, in one of her hymns, says:

All the way my Saviour leads me;
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who through life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well! ■

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Ready Bible Answers

by Geo. R. Brunk I



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Raising Virtuous Children in a Generation of Vice

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Peter 1:1-10).

by Pastor E. O. Jack Jones

Today we are faced with the specter of a rising generation of “Christians” indistinguishable from the “children of this world.” Their value systems, their moral perspectives, and their behaviors, largely coincide with those of their friends who make no profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Peter admonished Christians to remember who they were and what they were about! “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises [virtues] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

Virtue Defined

By dictionary definition, virtue has to do with morality, and the conformity of life and conduct with moral principles. It is moral practice or action. It is conformity to a standard of right such as Divine Law or the Highest Good. It is moral excellence. It is integrity of character. It is uprightness of conduct. It is rectitude.

Joseph Butler observes that virtue “is not to be considered in the light of mere innocence, or abstaining from harm, but as the exertion of our faculties in doing good.” The man who thinks himself to be virtuous simply because he has done nothing particularly heinous is mistaken.

The virtuous man acts in accordance with moral principle. He has formed a character habit involving the choice of excellence in his conduct. The oft-quoted

rhyme says it well:

*Good, Better, Best,
Never let it rest,
Till your Good is Better,
And your Better Best.*

The Seven Cardinal Virtues

We speak of The Seven Cardinal Virtues. This describes them as pivotal, “cardinal” coming from a Latin word for hinge. The seven are further divided into “natural” and “theological” virtues. These are not to be seen as comprising an exhaustive list of virtues, but perhaps as the seedbed from which others grow.

The natural virtues are so designated since they were thought to be seen in nature. They were taught by heathen philosophers five hundred years before Christ, and they are four: Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice.

The theological virtues are Faith, Hope, and Charity, added by the Church as those virtues which give promise that the natural virtues will find expression in life.

It appears that Peter may have followed a similar line of reasoning when he described certain additions to faith that would keep the Christian from idleness and unfruitfulness, and encourage perseverance, for “if ye do these things ye shall never fall!”

“And beside this, giving all diligence add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to

patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.”

Notice the proximate correspondence between the Scripture and the natural and theological virtues:

Peter teaches that it is the duty of believers to show forth the virtues of God, and to progress from one aspect of virtue to another.

Jesus said that when we were “born of the flesh,” that is of our parents, we were “flesh,” or “fleshy-carnal,” in a moral sense. When we were “born again” of the Spirit, we were “spirit,” “spiritual,” in a moral sense. The image of God which was marred in the Fall leaving us with a fallen nature inclined to sin, is now renewed by the regenerating, “re-birthing,” power of the Holy Spirit, writing the Law of God in our hearts and inclining us to righteousness.

Lest we lose the battle for a distinctively Christian lifestyle, we intend to clearly delineate and explain these virtues, and to call believers to do the things that will guarantee they will “never fall.”

We will thus give guidance and moral underpinnings which will facilitate moral literacy, and enable people of all ages to make right decisions based on the moral character instilled in them. They will be able to stand against group pressure, because they will know how to discern the right and be equipped to reject the godless influences brought to bear on them. “For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall!”

Virtues in the Homes

Seven Cardinal Virtues: Prudence. Temperance. Fortitude. Justice. Faith. Hope. Charity. Virtue is its own reward, but virtue must be cultivated. The implications of each virtue must be worked out. One must apply such standards to his life in order to benefit from his knowledge.

I wondered how my parents had taught me these virtues. They certainly never told me they were about to teach me the Seven Cardinal Virtues and to listen carefully. No, they slipped them into the everydayness of

living, and I learned them unaware.

Take **Prudence**. When I was a child I can remember being heart-broken over the kinds of things that disappoint children—a broken toy, a missed time of play because of sickness, having a friend displeased with me. My mother could often turn my tears to laughter by asking, “Oh, honey, what will it matter a hundred years from now?” With that perspective my burst balloon did not seem very important and I could laugh.

Of course the lesson was not limited to disappointment. With the passing of time the one-hundred-year test became a standard for judging how to invest a lifetime. The effect of the present on the future became a point of concern. And prudence became part of my decision-making process.

“A stitch in time saves nine.” “If you take care of the pennies, the dollars will take care of themselves.” “What goes around, comes around.” “Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.”

So prudence was reinforced by proverbial sayings, and the universal law of retribution was enforced by pointing to instances of it in our lives and the lives of our friends.

I was taught **Temperance** in much the same way. In the ordinariness of life there were those occasions when I tried the childish way of attaining my ends. But finding privilege denied because I had failed to obey, or finding pain at the end of disobedience caused me to rethink some things.

One cannot force another to obey. But if the pain of disobedience is great enough, whether it be administered by the rod or by observing the hurt and disappointment of a beloved parent, one may choose to obey. Self-control is taught by the parent who makes the alternative to it painful enough that it is chosen.

Fortitude was taught by example as well as precept. I observed my parents enduring weariness and pain in order to finish what they had started. They insisted that “anything worth doing is

worth doing well,” and, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again!”

We were always required to do our best, and to finish what we had started. We learned to scoff at pain and weariness, because, “Whatever must be done, can be done.” If life was not always easy, it was still do-able! We learned about the little engine that could, and identified with it.

Justice was no option. “It is always right to do right, no matter what others are doing.” “Right is right if no one is doing it, and wrong is wrong if everyone is doing it!” “Right and wrong are not determined by a majority vote.”

“Honesty is the best policy.” “Tell the truth if it kills you.” God always knows the truth whether anyone else does or not. You can hide nothing from God. You may deceive men but not God. “Be sure your sin will find you out.”

The Virtue of **Faith** as fidelity was taught in regard to family loyalty. We were not always approved, but we were always loved. We would cast every deed in the best possible light if one of our own was criticized.

We knew marriage was made by God, not men, and that it lasted a lifetime. Fidelity was required, and until a person was ready to pledge that fidelity and forsake all others, he must not marry. Divorce was no option, and “If you make your bed hard, you must lie in it.”

Hope was large in our lives. Economic deprivation was our lot in life—I do not say poverty. It seems that poverty is a way of life that involves far more than economic deprivation.

We were of the sort that believed the sentiment expressed by President John Kennedy. “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” So we were poor, but independent. We did not take what we did not earn. We would go hungry, but we would make our own way. How ingenious people become in finding ways to improve their personal economy when they are hungry!

I say we did not live in poverty as a way

of life, but we had no money. We were clean—very clean. People referred to me as “the little boy who looks as if he has been scrubbed and boiled.” They were closer to the truth than they knew!

We were required to do our best at school, and homework was always finished and presented for approval to our parents before it went to school. We had to speak correctly, and politely. Trouble at school meant trouble at home, so we had very little.

We ate meals together, and talked of religion, politics, and business, and learned table manners. Philosophical observations were part of our training, and the verbal battle of debate was our family sport. We were familiar with the King James Version of the Bible, and learned to read it early by taking turns at family prayer time. Our vocabularies expanded because of it, as well as syntactical ability.

But we were economically deprived, and so when illness came we prayed. When things were especially tough we could count on Mother to read from Revelation. She read about heaven—the Christian’s hope. We wept as she wept. We made up our minds right then to see inside the place the Lord Jesus Christ had gone to prepare for us. It helped to keep us straight!

Then we also learned **Charity**. We knew the difference between saying we loved God and actually loving God. We knew the difference between saying we loved our parents and actually loving them. We knew the difference between saying we loved others, and actually loving them.

Loving God and loving parents implies obedience. The Greek word for charity, sometimes translated love, means loyalty. “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word [commandments], in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him” (1 John 2:4, 5). “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his

brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20). "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:2, 3).

The Apostle John also describes love for others: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). Out of our meager living we were taught to share with others, even if it meant a spare cupboard at our house. It was simply the outflow of love and the outworking of the Golden Rule.

Never did my parents list seven cardinal virtues for us to commit to memory, but they were woven into our lives unobtrusively, and became the warp and woof of character. It was taken for granted that we would all love God, but it was made quite clear that one did not need to love God in order to be a decent person—one who would never disgrace himself or those who trusted him. The four Natural Virtues—Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice—should become the moral furniture of all men who expect the respect of their fellowmen. Even without the theological virtues, universal grace is sufficient to enable the natural virtues.

Faith, Hope, and Charity establish and facilitate the expression of all virtues. Faith brings the New Birth, makes a new man! Hope has a purifying influence, for one with a goal of inhabiting heaven prepares himself for it. Charity keeps one rightly related to God and parents, as well as to neighbors.

And Charity is the greatest of all the virtues! There is no need for Faith or Hope when all is seen and accomplished, but Love defines the atmosphere of heaven! When our spirits inhabit our glorified bodies, Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice will flow from our Love with the vision of perfect knowledge and the proportion of perfect wisdom.

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The Self-Evident Value of Virtue

The self-evident value of the virtuous life makes it desirable for one to acquire the virtues at any age. The assistance of the Spirit of Truth will be present even before one has come to faith.

How can our nation which was founded on such virtues long survive without people who embrace and example them? Think of the effect such virtues would have in the decaying homes of our land, in the schools, in the legislatures, and even in the churches!

We are not ignorant of them, for we have defined them. We have shown how they can be taught in the everydayness of life. It is regrettable, but not fatal, that not all will pursue them. Ten righteous men in the population could have saved Sodom and Gomorrah!

It is said that when formerly great nations of history were in their decline it was common for men to say, "What can one man do?" But after they had fallen it was common for men to say, "I could have done my part!"

*I am only one, but I am one.
I cannot do everything, but I can do
something.*

*What I can do, I ought to do.
What I ought to do, by the grace of God,
I will do!* ■

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ACADEMIC FREEDOM OR . . . cont'd.

If you doubt that God said what He meant and still means what He says in His Word, what have you lost? It is too horrible to contemplate!

Let me live and die with the Lord Jesus at my side. He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). I trust Him to tell only the truth.

I love Him. Count me a disciple of Christ. That way life makes sense. Otherwise, life seems almost a cruel joke and not a funny one at that. ■

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SWORD AND TRUMPET

Preparing for the New Relationship

Parents Relating to Married Children

by Eby W. Burkholder

The thought of married children may seem very remote to young parents. Most of their time is taken up with daily family duties. But children do grow up, and before long they begin leaving rather than arriving.

Family life brings many changes and transitions. The wedding day is only the beginning of this lifelong process. Soon the first child arrives. Before long he is a scholar, then a teenager, then a courting youth. Then comes the hustle and bustle of the first wedding. It is best to prepare for and accept these family changes in a positive way.

In a world of strained interpersonal relationships, family associations are often among the most affected. When children marry, the family in one sense loses a member, but in another sense gains a member. Suddenly another person is added to the family circle. Relations with in-laws come into focus. The quality of this relationship will be governed by the quality of the people involved.

Some of the most notable friendships in the Bible were family relationships. David and Jonathan were brothers-in-law, and their souls were knit together in love and loyalty. Ruth and Naomi provide another excellent example of good relationships between in-laws. Together they faced some very difficult problems, yet their friendship thrived.

The Bible also records strained and stressful family relationships. The problem between David and Saul involved years of frustration and a tremendous waste of resources and time. Jacob and Laban provide another example of a strained relationship. Many other Bible

examples could be given on both the positive and the negative sides.

All relationships must be governed by divine truth and love. The Bible does not list two sets of standards, one for friends and another for family. Those at home who know us best should receive the best of our love and care. Too often the opposite is true. We are inclined to save the best of ourselves for others.

The new relationship of parents and married children begins on the wedding day. But in reality, the transition is made gradually, over a period of time. What can parents do to prepare themselves and their children for this change?

1. *Parents need to "grow up" with their children.* In fact, they need to grow up ahead of their children. If we arrive at these points of transition without forethought, the results can be rather stressful.

As children grow up, parents will need to relate to them in a different way than before. As children mature, the gap narrows between parents and teenagers. This does not mean that parental authority is relinquished or that respect for parents is diminished, but rather that a partnership relationship is nurtured. This developing relationship should be governed by the teenager's level of maturity and his ability to accept personal responsibility.

When young people leave the parental home for marriage, they are assuming adult responsibilities. Are they prepared to cope with this change? Is the young man ready to "leave his father and his mother, and . . . cleave unto his wife" (Genesis 2:24)? The answer to these questions is greatly influenced by the quality

of the parent-child relationship before marriage.

2. Parents must teach personal responsibility and initiative. A marriage establishes a new home. To be successful, every home must be properly furnished and managed. These skills are learned before the wedding day.

Sons will need to learn how to earn, save, and spend money. Many marriage failures are a result of financial stress. As a teenage son matures, money management should be gradually transferred to him. He should learn well the principle of frugality. The old proverb, "A penny saved is a penny earned," is still very applicable in our modern age.

Daughters should learn how to cook, to wash, and to spend money wisely. If our teenage daughters work outside the home, it is best to involve them in domestic-related occupations. Generally, a wife is responsible for the purchasing of food and household goods. Frugality in this area will greatly influence the financial success of the home. It is still true that "a wife can spoon it out faster than a husband can shovel it in." The foundation of diligence and frugality is established in the parental home.

3. Parents must prepare for the social adjustments. Marriage involves a leaving and a cleaving. The most cherished family association will now be laid on the altar to establish the new home. Parents and young people must prepare themselves beforehand for this change. Certainly, profitable relationships will continue, but the most intense social interest will be centered in the new home. The "apron strings" must begin to be cut before marriage in order for the new home structure to develop and prosper after marriage.

Occasionally, an intimate mother-daughter relationship has developed that will hinder the development of the new husband-wife relationship and can frustrate the new home. The new relationship should be contemplated and discussed before the wedding day so the necessary

adjustments can be made before difficulties arise.

4. Parents must avoid the development of undue dependency. This problem can begin in early childhood and extend into youth and adulthood. By the time children come to the middle teenage years, they should be able to leave the home for a period of time without experiencing severe emotional effects. For example, a young person should be able to leave home and adjust to a three-week stay at Bible school. Sometimes parents tend to increase a problem that may already exist by making too many visits and telephone calls when their youth are away from home.

It is good for young parents to contemplate changes that will eventually come.

Decision making can be very difficult for some young people. Parents must deal decisively with this problem. Sometimes a parent must say to an inquiring youth, "This is a decision you must make." The discipline of deciding and living with the consequences will help to develop healthy independence. An indecisive person is ill-prepared for the demanding responsibilities of home life.

Children reflect the values of their parents and homes. In a marriage, two are brought together in a unique God-ordained relationship. The values of both homes are blended together into a new family unit. It is good for young parents to contemplate changes that will eventually come. Whatever they can do now in laying a foundation for the future is time and effort well spent. Opportunities come a day at a time and accumulate into years of influences and impressions that will eventually bear fruit. ■

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Congregational Singing: The Approved Form of Music in Christian Worship

by Clarence Fretz

Christ introduced music into the New Covenant dispensation by singing a hymn with His disciples after instituting the ordinance of communion (Matt. 26:30). Music in this form, the singing of hymns, was enjoined upon Christians in their worship (Eph. 6:19; Col. 3:16; James 5:13).

On the whole, the Christian Church has acknowledged these Scriptural injunctions, and we Christians in the twentieth century are heirs of a rich treasury of hymns and spiritual songs. The Mennonite Church in particular has made much of singing in its worship, and has found much blessing therein.

However, a large part of Christendom now uses other forms of music besides the congregational singing of hymns. There is instrumental music and the singing of special musical numbers (anthems, choruses, oratorios) by choirs of selected voices. Sincere, thoughtful Mennonite people have seriously questioned whether we should not enrich our services by the introduction of these features.

While other phases of the use of music in Christian worship are worthy of study, let us confine ourselves to a frank consideration of this pertinent question, *Shall the Mennonite Church include instrumental and choral* music in its worship?*

I. WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES

1. *The New Testament does not support the use of instrumental and choral music in Christian worship.*

It is to be admitted unhesitatingly that the use of instruments and of special choirs is commended in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms. *But nowhere in the New Testament is there*

any direct command that such instrumental and choral music should be carried over into Christian worship. Instruments are alluded to in the New Testament, but in other connections. Christ refers to their use on social occasions (Luke 7:32; cf. 15:25) and Paul alludes to their disagreeable, lifeless, and unintelligible sounds (1 Cor. 13:1; 14:7, 8), but neither Christ nor Paul even faintly suggest their desirability in Christian worship. In Revelation 5:8, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders are said to have harps, which they use in worship, but this description, with its sealed books, golden vials of incense, and many-eyed beasts is not intended to furnish a pattern for Christian worship. Nor is there any case for choral music in the New Testament. Revelation speaks of the heavenly choirs, but this is done in an attempt to describe heaven's glory, and is not intended to suggest that Christian worship should be similarly elaborate. We may consider the argument from silence inconclusive. The question we must now consider is, *Does the embellishment of Christian worship with instrumental and choral music after all fit in with the New Testament ideal for Christian worship?*

2. *The New Testament ideal for Christian worship excludes the use of instrumental and choral music.* Let us note here the contrast between Old Testament and New Testament worship. The former was elaborate and full of ceremonialism; the latter was simple, with just a few simple ceremonies. The former stressed externals, the latter the inner state of the worshiper (John 4:24). The former was representative and sacerdotal (priests and

*In this discussion, by choral music is meant "music sung by an organized company of singers."

Levites represented the people before God), while the latter was based on the High-priesthood of Christ in heaven which has made possible the universal priesthood of believers, all with direct access to God (Rev. 1:6; Heb. 4:16).

Consequently, the New Testament ideal for the musical part of worship is that it should be simple, spiritual, and congregational. Let us examine the direct teaching of the New Testament on this.

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18, 19).

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

“Is any merry? let him sing psalms” (James 5:13b).

The emphasis in Christian music is on expression and edification rather than impression and inspiration. Our songs are to arise out of an inner experience of joy, and are to serve as an expression of that joy, not to bring it about, not to induce a mood of reverence, but to express our Holy Ghost joy. It is not dependent upon outward circumstances; Paul and Silas sang in the dungeon with bleeding backs. Note James’ word—“Is any merry? let him sing psalms.” The world reverses that and says with Saul of old, “Come play your harp and drive the gloom away.” Shall the church say, “Bring the organs and choirs to awaken in us holy and joyous thoughts and aspirations”? These Scriptures teach that it is the infilling of the Spirit and the indwelling of the Word that are to awaken joy and holy praise. Moreover our singing is to reach the intelligence, it is to teach and admonish the participants (not hearers)—“speaking to yourselves”), not to please or charm them. Musical instruments do not speak or teach, and choir members are rarely, if

ever, chosen like ministers and Sunday school teachers, for the depth of their spiritual experience and consequent ability to edify, but for their ability to satisfy and please the musical ear.

The question might be asked, if it was right to have instrumental choral music in the Old Testament, why is it not right under the New? Does God change? No, but men do. Some things were permitted, even commanded, in the Old Testament because of the hardness of men’s hearts and the dullness of their understanding, e.g. divorce, polygamy, war, slavery, etc. “From the beginning it was not so,” said Jesus relative to the first of these. Might not this be true of instrumental music? Musical instruments were invented by one Jubal, of the wicked line of Cain, not the godly line of Seth (Gen. 4:21). They were introduced into divine worship by David (1 Chron. 6:31; 16:4-7; 25:1, 2; Ezra 4:10), and not by Moses, who received complete instructions for Israel’s worship directly from God. In Amos 6:5, a woe is pronounced on those who “invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David” (cf. Isa. 5:12; and Dan. 3:5). Therefore one is led to feel with the late George R. Brunk that the exhortations in the Psalms to praise God on “psaltery and harp” must be put in the same class with those which urge the destruction of the wicked.

How did the early church understand and apply them?

3. *The use of instrumental and choral music is contrary to the practice of the early Christian church.* Paul, in the passage in Ephesians, speaks of the use of “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” This divinely inspired statement reveals the practice of the Christians in the time of the apostle. The “psalms” were undoubtedly those of the Old Testament as were the “hymns” its canticles. According to E. S. Lorenz, in *Practical Church Music*, the “spiritual songs” were probably the creation of the new Christian church, and dealt with Christ and Christian themes, and were born of the rapt

experiences of the saints. This we do know, definitely, of first-century Christian music.

One may wonder why we do not have more statements concerning music in the apostolic age. The fact of the matter seems to be that, as Lorenz suggests, the apostolic church laid little stress on the use of music. They did not want to be elaborate in their hymns. The very spirituality of the new Faith made ritual or liturgy unnecessary. Well does Paul give the instruction, "making melody (literally, playing the harp) in your heart to the Lord." The early Christians sang to express in a practical, social way their common faith and experience. Far was it from their thoughts that there was any divine or magical power in music itself. They were concerned chiefly with the spirit and essence of the music they used in worship. They had much more powerful agencies at their command as methods of expression—those forms arose in connection with their new, vital religion, such as personal, public prayer, testimony, prophecy, the gift of tongues. There was no ceremonial ritual to adorn. In the first generation, the freshness of the content of their doctrine and the depth of the new-found experience with Christ satisfied them. There was little need of laying stress on music.

It has been pretty generally agreed by careful students of this subject that *the early Christians did not allow the use of instruments in either public or private life.*

No mention is made of instruments by the early writers of the Church. When reference was made to them later, it was with denunciation. Clement of Alexandria says, "Only one instrument do we use, viz. the word of peace wherewith we honour God, no longer the old psaltery, trumpet, drum, and flute." Later Ambrose chides those who preferred the lyre and psaltery to singing hymns and psalms. Jerome insists that, "A Christian maiden ought not even to know what a lyre or flute is, or what it is used for." Lorenz.

These early Christians did not even want to use melodies and tunes, if they knew they were used in instrumental music. What happened that these early ideals and practices were forsaken?

4. *The introduction of special choirs and musical instruments was a Romish invention, and based on pagan ideas of worship.* An important change occurred in Christian worship in the succeeding centuries—the development of a formal and elaborate liturgy, connected with a growing emphasis of the priestly class. As early as 112 A.D. there is evidence of the beginnings of the development of ritual. In that year Pliny the Younger wrote to the emperor Trajan as follows: "They (the Christians) had been accustomed to come together on a fixed day before daylight and to sing alternately (responsively) a song to Christ as God." This practice of antiphonal singing existed in the Church at Antioch during the second century, history further reveals. This was a departure from the spontaneity and informality of earlier days. Perhaps not a serious error at first, it steadily developed into something that was quite foreign to apostolic Christianity, being hastened in this evolution by a number of causes.

Formality and ceremony were being introduced into the other parts of the service, and the leaders wished to do the same with the musical part of the service. The clergy began taking more and more powers, and when heretical sects used songs to popularize their leading doctrines, the clergy began to assume control of church music, and gradually to take over its performance. Then, too, the great centers of population had given opportunity for large congregations to develop, whose worship "demanded" greater and more minute organization because of their numbers. Moreover, the Church was becoming more and more influenced by the elaborate and spectacular rituals of the pagan temples about them.

This brings us to the real reason why a change took place in the music of the

church—the church was changing. It was leaving apostolic standards and practices, and becoming like the pagan religions all about. Its theology was being affected by Greek and Oriental philosophy. The priestly idea developed, borrowed from pagan sources, which regarded the clergy as a higher order than the laity, the latter's mediators with God. The church's organization became more and more rigid, based on the autocratic Roman Empire, the control by the priestly class became more and more complete, and it did not stay out of the realm of music.

All this was foreign to apostolic ideals and practices. It had been drawn from pagan sources, and was in a sense going back to the old covenant with its priesthood and ritual. What an insult to the finished work of Christ, who had nailed all the Old Testament ordinances to His cross!

A papal choir was organized in the first half of the fifth century and although opposition to instrumental music continued sometime longer, once the one step had been taken, the other followed eventually. In 666 Pope Vitalian at Rome introduced the pipe organ to "aid the singing of the congregation." Strange paradox, that after practically all of the singing had been taken away from the congregation, they should need an organ to help them!

Could such conditions permanently exist under the guise of being New Testament Christianity, without attempts at reform? We shall take up the answer to this question in the next section.

II. WHAT SAY THE REFORMERS?

The Protestant reformers restored congregational singing and abolished choirs and instruments to the extent in which they were thoroughgoing in their return to New Testament teaching and practice.

Conditions in the worship service of the Roman Catholic Church on the eve of the Reformation were far from satisfactory. The service of worship was monopolized by the priests, and the people were allowed but small part in it. This condi-

tion could not persist, especially in Germany. Even more than other peoples, the Germans had always been a song-loving people. In the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries all the music of the church service was in Latin and sung only by the clergy. The people were permitted to sing only the response, "*Kyrie eleison*" (Lord, have mercy), and moreover were allowed to sing nothing but "*Kyrie*" on all other occasions.

Luther, foremost of the popular Protestant reformers, made a great improvement in this situation. His was a changed situation. His was a changed conception of Christianity. He denied the necessity of a mediatorial priestly class, throwing personal responsibility on the individual, and asserting not only his duties, but also his rights and privileges. All men, he said, are kings and priests, with direct access to the Father through the merits of Christ alone. Consequently, the office of worship was considered the privilege of laity as well as clergy, and hymn singing by the people was introduced in the place of the chanting of priests and choirs. This was taken up by the people with the greatest of enthusiasm and proved a powerful force in the propagation of the evangelical faith.

However, Luther went no further in his return to apostolic modes of worship with music. Having taken Amalek, he spared Agag. He wanted to retain everything in the Roman Catholic usages of worship which he thought was not expressly forbidden in the New Testament. So he kept both choir and organ. Often the choir and congregation were expected to sing together, the unison chorale of the people being accompanied contrapuntally by the choir. At other times the choir sang alone. At first the organ was used only for preludes and interludes, but about 1600 the organ took the place of the choir and the choir developed into a separate anthem singing unit of the music of the church.

What was the result? As long as the fires of the Reformation burned brightly, the people sang with great enthusiasm, but as

spiritual fervor declined, they neglected this great privilege, and were content to have their musical worship done for them by choirs and organs. A German lady who had lived in England is quoted by Curwen (*Studies in Worship Music*, Vol. II, P. 145) as saying: "In our Lutheran service, the clergyman does everything. We, the laity, remain passive; we have nothing to do but sing two or three verses, and this is done in such a dragging, lifeless, and unvaried fashion that it must prove a torment to any musical ear."

Zwingli, the great Swiss reformer, took a far different position from Luther's. Before describing Zwingli's drastic reforms, it should be noted that they seem to reflect rather a violent reaction against Roman Catholic ritualism and imagery than a return to New Testament teaching and practice. Zwingli and his associates not only broke down the images and tore out the organs, but rejected all church song, forgetting that when the Lord instituted His holy communion, He closed the ceremony with the singing of a hymn. Zwingli established the policy of his group in an unusual way. When he appeared before the City Council of the city of Zurich to urge the abolition of church song, he sang his plea. When objection was raised to his method of presentation, he replied, "If you find my presentation of the case absurd, why should anyone insist on approaching the great God after the same absurd fashion?" Need it be said that they accepted his views and the voice of song was silent in Zurich until 1598. In fact, nearly a century elapsed before church music entirely recovered its place in the Reformed churches of eastern Switzerland.

Calvin, however, took a much less extreme attitude, and yet did not imitate Luther's policies, but earnestly attempted to return to what he thought was the apostolic position. He shut out the choral part of the service entirely and rejected the use of instruments as contrary to the New Testament. He provided for congregational singing in unison only, and con-

fining it to metrical versions of the psalms and canticles. The efforts of his group along this line resulted in the compilation of the *Genevan Psalter*, a remarkable collection which persisted for more than a century.

But in one respect, Calvin seems to have been more rigid than the New Testament. He permitted only the use of Old Testament poetry for singing, while Paul seems to have allowed for other forms—"psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Calvin restricted himself to Old Testament forms and matter in the worship of God under the New Covenant. This meant, as Isaac Watts once pointed out, that the Calvinists sang few hymns to Christ or about Him.

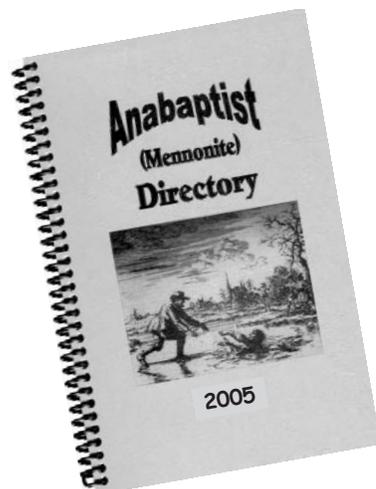
It was the Swiss Brethren, commonly called Anabaptists, who came closest to New Testament teaching and apostolic practice. Like Calvin, they rejected on grounds of principle both the use of choirs and of musical instruments in Christian worship. But they did not limit themselves to the content of the Old Testament in their singing. A great body of hymnology soon grew up among them, which referred to Christ and the Christian life and warfare, including many hymns about those of their number who had been martyrs for the Lord. Many of these hymns were gathered together in the *Ausbund* of 1564.

Both the Calvinist and Anabaptist tradition on the use of music in Christian worship has been perpetuated to the present day in some portion of their denominational descendants. But a larger portion of the bodies descendant from them have surrendered this unique apostolic position and have brought in again the choirs and organs rejected by these thoroughgoing reformers. The reason for this may perhaps be found in a study of church music in England, to be taken up in the next section. ■

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(to be continued in next issue)

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