

The Reflector

“We Believe ...”, But The Bible Says ...

Postal customers in this area received a flier this month from probably the largest denominational church in northern Jefferson County. It is a well-done attractive pamphlet inviting people from the area to become a part of that church family. Along with the testimony of some of their fine members and an appeal from their personable pastor there is a list of some things that they believe.

From all reports, both by word of mouth and in the media, this church probably has more exciting and entertaining activities and the greatest variety in its program of work than any church in the area. We have been particularly impressed with their public relations efforts. They are good at keeping the community posted on who they are and what they are doing.

Some of the spectacular programs that they have put on in recent years would rival the best of the entertainment world. P. T. Barnum could not have done it better. We can see why so many people are attracted to this church.

Of the baker's dozen “statements of belief” contained in the flier, we believe that the Bible teaches most of them. Things like the virgin birth of Jesus, the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, three persons in the Godhead, the fall of man and his need of salvation.

However, since it stated, “We believe that the Bible is the Word of God without any error, the *sole authority* for life” (*Italics mine, EOB*), we have a hard time understanding why they sponsor so

much recreation and entertainment — things that the Bible nowhere authorizes **the church** to do. Where is the Scripture that authorizes **the church** to build, equip, and staff what, as has been widely reported, will likely be the best recreational facility in the entire area when it is completed? Where is the Scriptures that authorizes the church to bring the greats of the entertainment industry to entertain its members and the community? Where in the “sole authority” does one find the words that authorizes such church activities?

We also would like to call our readers attention to two of the “statements of belief” concerning man's salvation.

Baptism

We believe that baptism is in obedience to the command of Christ and is by immersion after salvation.

It is the “after salvation” part that the Bible does not teach. The Bible teaches baptism then salvation rather than salvation then baptism:

Mark 16:15,16 — And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Acts 2:38 — Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 22:16 — And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Romans 6:3-4 — Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into

Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Galatians 3:27 — For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

1 Peter 3:21 — The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: (KJV)

and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (NIV)

There is also an antitype which now saves us— baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (NKJ)

which also after a true likeness doth now save you, (even) baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; (ASV)

Eternal Security

We believe that every person who truly is saved is

Steve Cundiff Here May 13

Brother Steve Cundiff will begin his summer's work as an evangelist with the church here on May 13. We are looking forward to his being with us. We think he is an outstanding young man, who will contribute much to our work during this his stay with us.

eternally secure in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This the what is sometimes called the once saved always saved (or the impossibility of apostasy) doctrine. Again, this is not what the Bible teaches.

The great Apostle Paul recognized that even though he had been truly saved that he could be cast away if he did not remain faithful:

1 Corinthians 9:27 — But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. (KJV)

No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (NIV)

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (NKJ)

but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means,

after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. (ASV)

Christians are warned against falling and departing from God. If it were not possible, then why this warning?

1 Corinthians 10:12 — Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Hebrews 3:12 — Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; (NKJ)

Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: (ASV)

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. (NIV)

It is possible for people who have been sanctified to so sin as to have nothing to look forward to but hell:

Hebrews 10:26-29 — For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which *he was sanctified* a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? (Italics mine, EOB).

So, while the church that sent out the flier may do many good things for the community and have many good people as members, you can see from the Scriptures that they believe and teach some errors that have a direct effect upon man's eternal salvation.

If you would like to study these matters further, we would be happy to study them with you. Just give us a call. — By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

GOSPEL MEETING

May 6-12, 1990

Granville W. Tyler

☆ Nightly, Sunday Through Friday At 7:30

☆ Sunday Morning Classes At 9:45.

☆ Sunday Morning Worship At 10:45

☆ Plain Book, Chapter And Verse Preaching.

☆ Congregational Singing At All services.

☆ Collection Taken On Sunday Morning Only.

☆ Calm, Quite, And Dignified Atmosphere At All Services.

☆ No Emotionalism Or Pressure Tactics Will Be Used.

Fultondale Church Of Christ

2005 Elkwood Drive

The Preacher's Job

In recent years there has been a trend among some brethren to minimize the effectiveness of public preaching, and to over-emphasize other methods of evangelism. As a result, gospel meetings are considered by some to be a waste of time, effort and money. The same critics complain about preachers who spend the bulk of their time preparing and presenting the truth to people who are already Christians—what we usually call edification—instead of getting out and knocking on doors. On this matter please allow me to make two brief points:

1. Preaching works! Whether it be public or private preaching, God is glorified when the truth is taught. It was God's choice that through the preached message men will be saved (1 Cor. 1 :21). While it is true that people aren't crowding into our buildings to hear the gospel, neither are they begging us to come into their homes to teach them. On the rare occasion when one shows interest in the truth—by attending an assembly or agreeing to a private study—we must be ready to plant the gospel seed into that heart. The heart of that person—not the method of teaching—is what will determine the outcome. There is a great need for all scriptural forms of evangelism . Therefore, there are corresponding needs for men who can skillfully preach in a public manner, as well as those who are skilled in private teach-

ing. These talents may or may not be wrapped up in one individual. As in the first century not all Christians had the same gifts (1 Cor. 12:1-11), so also in the twentieth century there are differing talents, and therefore differing responsibilities. The one whose outgoing personality makes him especially suited to personal evangelism should not look down on someone else whose personality and abilities make him more effective in the pulpit. And, of course, the man who may have a special knack at motivating Christians to faithfulness should not feel threatened by—or critical of those skilled in personal evangelism, for we are all “members of that one

Tim. 2:2). We must “preach the word” when it is well received and when it isn't, recognizing that some brethren will “turn their ears away from the truth” and bring in someone who will preach what they want to hear (2 Tim. 4:1-4). All these instructions and more are well within the “work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4:5). Certainly this does not mean that work in teaching alien sinners should be ignored, but neither should work in edifying saints be neglected or minimized.

Some may wonder what motivated me to write on this matter. On more than one occasion I have heard of elders (or other influential men) being pulled aside by a

“There is a great need for all scriptural forms of evangelism. Therefore, there are corresponding needs for men who can skillfully preach in a public manner, as well as those who are skilled in private teaching. These talents may or may not be wrapped up in one individual.”

body” (1 Cor. 12: 12-25).

2. A preacher's work is not limited to evangelism . A good part of his work is to edify those who are already in the body of Christ. A study of the letters written by the apostle Paul to Timothy and Titus will make this clear. Most of the instruction in these three epistles involves the preacher's work with other Christians. We must “charge some that they teach no other doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:3); we must teach men and women who are Christians how they are to behave themselves (1 Tim. 2:8-15; Tit. 2:1-10). We must “set in order the things that are lacking” (Tit. 2:5) working to help men qualify to serve as bishops and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-13). We must train others to teach the gospel to saints and sinners (2

visiting preacher (who is highly motivated in personal evangelism) to suggest they put the local preacher on a regimented schedule, telling him how many cold calls to make, how much time to spend on sermon preparation, etc. Then there are the checklists some have offered on how to choose a preacher, basing the decision almost solely on “performance” in the area of personal evangelism. These approaches are misleading because they limit the work of a preacher to one dimension. While there is a great need for converting alien sinners, it will do little good unless the church of which they become a part is strong and faithful. That will only be true if they are being edified. —
By Al Diestelkamp in *THINK ON THESE THINGS*

David Lipscomb Giles

Since our last bulletin, we have once again been saddened by the death of one of our members. Funeral services for brother Giles was held March 17. We extend our sympathy to his family. We will all miss him.

She Understood

Sister Funches, a black lady, was a faithful member of the church in Walla Walla, and I had been invited over to her little house to perform a wedding ceremony for one of her children.

The front room was crowded with guests, and it became evident that everyone would have to stand during the wedding. No provision had been made for any music, so I asked one of the young relatives, an excellent reader, to begin the ceremony by reading. I asked the whole group to say, "Amen," and there was a serious and resounding response. The wedding proceeded as usual, and I pronounced them husband and wife.

What happened next, I will never forget! The bridesmaid broke into sobs, rushed into the bedroom and slammed the door. She had been asked to cut the wedding cake, but she refused to come out.

The whole scene puzzled me, and I inquired concerning what troubled the young woman. Sister Funches quietly came to me and explained that the bridesmaid had suddenly become aware that she was wrongfully married. During the ceremony she had to stand facing a crush of people only a few inches away from her. Evidently, she felt that they were all looking at her. Then when the reader read from Matthew 19 and came to, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery"; she realized that this was talking about her. When all those facing her said, "Amen," she was overwhelmed. Though no comment had been made on this passage and though it previously had been unfamiliar to her, she immediately understood it, knew that she was wrong and that she must change.

I cannot forget the honesty shown by that young black wom-

an. She simply heard the passage and accepted what it said. No comment or explanation was needed. How different the way so many treat that same passage. Rather than take it exactly as given, for various personal reasons many feel they cannot live with this scripture unless it is accompanied by pages and pages to try to explain it away. Let's be honest with ourselves and with the Scriptures. —Marvin Noble Via **PAUSE-PROFIT-PONDER**

How To Get Rid Of A Preacher

It may be that you don't like your minister. Then there is a tested prescription by which you can get rid of him:

1. Look him straight in the eye when he's preaching and maybe say "Amen" occasionally. The man will preach himself to death in a short time.

2. Start paying him whatever he is worth. Having been on starvation wages for years, he'll promptly eat himself to death.

3. Shake hands with him, tell him he's doing a good job. He'll work himself to death.

4. Rededicate your own life to God and ask the minister to give you some church work to do. Very likely he'll keel over with heart failure.

5. If all else fails, this one is certain to succeed—get your congregation to unite in prayer for him. He will soon be so effective that some larger church will take him off your hands. —Presbyterian Life Via The Speaker's Sourcebook.

**How About A
Home Bible Study?**
☎ 841-5293

Schedule of Services

Sundays:

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.

Worship 10:45 a.m.

Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesdays:

Bible Class 10:00 a.m.

Bible Classes 7:30 p.m.

Fultondale Church of Christ

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