

GOSPEL MEETING: APRIL 20-25

Brother Tommy Poarch of the Westwood congregation will be with us April 20-25 for a series of gospel meetings. Our Sunday morning services will be at the regular times. Our Sunday evening service will be at 7:30, instead of the regular 6:30 hour. We are looking forward to having brother Poarch with us for that week. We would like to invite all our friends from this area to be with us for each service. The services Monday through Friday at 7:30 P.M.

Meetings In The Future:

We have two meetings per year scheduled for the next three years. Brethren Hiram Hutto, Billy Ashworth, H.E. Phillips, Granville Tyler, Frank Chumbley, Bill Hall and Aude McKee will be our speakers.

Florida And Alaska Meetings:

Your editor is scheduled to be with the church at Myrtle Grove (Pensacola area), Florida April 6-11. He is to be with the brethren in Anchorage, Alaska May 4-11.

Attendance And Contribution:

Our average Sunday Bible classes attendance for January was 145 with a high of 153 and a low of 139. Average at the Sunday morning worship assembly for January was 162 with a high of 171 and a low of 150. January's contribution averaged \$1173 with a high of \$1247 and a low of \$1067.

Our average attendance for Sunday classes in February was 148 with a high of 158 and a low of 129. The Sunday morning worship assembly averaged 162 with a high of 171 and a low of 150. (Who says we are not consistent? Look and compare with January's worship attendance). February's contribution averaged \$1276 with a high of \$1561 with a low of \$1159.

I am sorry that I have failed to record all the figures for Wednesday evenings. They have generally run in the 120's, occasionally a little above or a little below. This is not as it should be. We should have about as many for these classes as we do on Sunday morning for classes.

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is a satire designed to make us think. I believe that we would have to characterize this age as the age of buck passing. Much of modern psychology is aimed at helping folks find a way to place responsibility for one's problems upon someone else (be it parents, society or what). However, there is a much respected school of thought in psychotherapeutics called "Responsibility Therapy" which seeks to make the patient come face to face with the fact that he and he alone is really responsible for his behavior. One does not do another any favors by trying to help him find a way to distribute responsibility for his misbehavior and its consequences among other folks. He must be made to see that while others may put an occasion to do wrong in his path, that it is HIS responsibility to avoid it. And that while the one who becomes a stumbling block will have to answer for so doing -- it still does nothing to lessen the guilt of the stumbler to have him look to anyone but himself as the cause of his sin and for responsibility in correcting it.

Dancing Is Dangerous

You may have seen the following items in the **Parade Magazine** in the May 6, 1979 issue of your Sunday newspaper:

Police say the "Freak" which is sweeping the nation's disco, is the most dangerous new dance in a long time. Some call it "the dance of death" or "the sex dance", other "the dance of jealousy" or "the trouble dance."

When Jim Moore performed the Freak in Detroit with his girlfriend, an incensed young man named Jimmie Rogers allegedly shot him in the chest three times. Rogers has been charged with first-degree murder.

In the same city, Oscar Ross is accused of shooting his young wife Sharon after watching her do the Freak at a neighbor's house.

The Freak is danced by partners who bend their knees, spread their legs, advance upon each other with whirling hips until they touch. At this point, some couples retreat while others improvise.

Young people often ask us what is wrong with dancing. It is not the exercise nor the fact that you are being entertained. We don't try to find some way to limit your activities or social acceptability. We are not looking for something wrong.

The issue is the question of modesty as it has always been. It is not modest to move one's body in such a way as to excite lustful or indecent thoughts in others. It is not modest to touch and feel and allow oneself to be touched and felt by members of the opposite sex. It seems that even young Christians often lose all sense of shame and regard for self-respect and personal dignity on the dance floor. We must abstain from sin (Gal. 5:19; 2 Cor. 12:21).

Young people often say to me, "But in modern dancing we do not even touch." Truthfully ask yourself, "are his eyes upon me in a way that would embarrass me in other places?" "Would I move this way in front of him elsewhere?" "Does God approve my thoughts and his?" "Is the FREAK really so different from some things I do?".....**Colly Caldwell**, from **BIBLE TRUTH**, Lewisburg, TN.

The experiences of life over the years reveal that most of the fears and worries which beset everyone from time to time are needless. But even if we are aware of that, most of us cannot refrain from worrying every day about a great many troubles that "never happened" in our daily round, in our work and in our business activities. . . A certain amount of worry is a natural part of our daily lives. It pushes us to get things done, and makes us aware of what would happen if something were not done.—**WALDEMAR SCHWEISHEIMER, M.D.**





Romans 4:12

THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Hebrews 11:13-16



A RELIGIOUS DEPRESSION

W. E. Brightwell

Human efficiency has failed. Denominational machinery is falling by its own excessive weight. Institutionalism has destroyed the life and energy of the church today! These could be the words of J. Frank Norris in his thunderings against the regular Baptist machine. They could be the words of William T. Ellis, syndicate writer on the Sunday school lessons, anent general church conditions. For that matter, they could be the words of a score of minority leaders in various denominations. But the words are not quoted. Neither do they describe some far-away condition which does not concern the church of Christ.

The next religious war will be fought around the issue of institutionalism. We have a condition in religion analogous to the one which produced the economic depression. The church, speaking in a general sense, has lived too high, built too much machinery, trusted too much to human wisdom and human organization—it has become grossly inflated . . .

But what has all this to do with the church of Christ? A plenty. Only those who have hid their brains in the sand like an ostrich are unaware of the danger to us. We are not as highly inflated as some of the denominations, to be sure. We were late in starting. But give us time, for we are headed right smack in the same direction. Church debts, institutions, and cooperative enterprises will as surely enlave and destroy us as it has enslaved and destroyed others. The curse of humanism plays no favorites. We cannot do the same things, for the same purpose, and in essentially the same manner as the denominations and hope to escape through the mere technicality of names. It is time to get our heads out of the sand.

RESTDY AUTONOMY

The first step back toward sanity and Jerusalem is to restudy and reemphasize the autonomy of the local congregation. In plain American English, autonomy means the right to attend to your own business. It has been cleverly suggested that a man should spend half of his time attending to his own business and the other half letting everybody else's business alone. That is good as far as it goes, but it does not cover all cases. The local congregation will probably have to divide its time three ways—one third to planning its own work, another third to letting other churches do the same, and the last third to giving philanthropic meddlers and professional beggars to understand that they must let its business alone! If churches of Christ do not begin to assert their independence, they will soon have none to assert.

Every congregation is not only free and independent, but it has everything that is needed for its successful operation. It has all the organization, laws, and committees needed. It is composed of saints, elders, and deacons. The two

latter represent its mild but efficient organization; the New Testament contains its laws and regulations; and every saint is a committee of one, clothed with power to act. Is any proof needed? If the Lord has provided the complete equipment for the local congregation to function, and has made no provision whatever for Christians to act in any other way, or through any other unit, is that not a sufficient hint as to how we are expected to work? But the history of the church for nineteen hundred years teaches us that the autonomy of the local congregation must be sacredly guarded if we would remain true and loyal to the teachings of the New Testament; for when men have departed from that principle, they have not only violated the will of God in that particular, but it has led into all kinds of error and corruption.

HISTORY'S WARNING

The Roman apostasy came by degrees over a period of centuries. The first step was simple cooperation. Rome excused herself with the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope. Reformers did not attempt to tear down the ecclesiastical machinery which had been built. They merely sought to correct certain abuses and corruptions. The so-called "Restoration Movement" swept away all the rubbish of organization which had accumulated through the centuries, and built on the original foundation. But some were not content. Some entered the movement with the germ of distrust in the all-sufficiency of God's word and his plan still in their hearts. "We must have organization to have cooperation," they said. Despite their brave start from the old landmarks, they have built a denomination among denominations in the name of expediency! But we who have fought within and without for the all-sufficiency of God's word and for congregational autonomy, are we entirely free from the same delusion? Do we fully trust God? If so, then what meaneth the "bleating of the sheep" and the "lowing of the oxen" of institutionalism within our own ranks, which some of us—yea, many of us—can so distinctly hear?

—November 29, 1934,

"If a separate organization to own and operate a children's home is not unscriptural, then I do not understand why it would be unscriptural for the same board of directors to operate a missionary society, because the matter of preaching the gospel to the heathen and the matter of taking care of our orphans certainly are a similar work."

—George Pepperdine (quoted by James A. Allen), June 15, 1933

[EDITOR'S NOTE: International outlaws commit outrages against the citizens of a country -- it is the country that receives the more criticism. Common criminals endanger society with violence -- society must be suspected of being at fault. Hoodlums terrorize school personnel -- the school needs investigating. Grossly ungodly church members persist in sin and must be dealt with by the church -- there must be something wrong with the church. If you are getting a bit weary, as I am, of this kind of liberal philosophy so prominent in today's world, then you might find the following "epistle" interesting. Not being schooled in either higher criticism or lower, for that matter, I will not attempt to vouch for its authenticity nor date.]

EPISTLE TO PORNOS OF CORINTH

Apologias, chief among the excusers of the school of self-vindication and comfort of Athens, unto Pornos of Corinth, a beloved brother whose sin has gotten him into hot water.

Thine urgent request for suggested defenses to be used before the assembly and possible ways to be comfortable with thyself has been forwarded to me from our chief of sophistry (he being unable to find a reasonable argument to prove thee innocent). He asked me to look at thy request, along with the copy of Paul's epistle to the church there that you sent, to see if I might find something that would allow thee to plead guilty and at the same time excuse thee. Rejoice evermore, beloved brother, I have found it! It will help thee to deal with the church as it presses the matter and permit thee to live with thyself without enduring much affliction and sorrow that accepting full responsibility for thy problem would cause.

The drastic action urged by Paul against thee by the church is shameful. The nerve of the fellows, indeed much learning has made him mad -- suggesting that turning thee over to Satan would help thee and the church. In his epistle, alone, there is a wealth of material for distributing thy guilt among others. Now, thou canst not deny thy conduct, it is a matter of public knowledge. It seems to me that thy best defense is our "underlying causes" package. It is also called the "I have sinned, but..." approach. The trick of this method is to make thine accusers feel responsible, at least partly, for they plight.

Consider thy father. If he had not brought a young wife home, none of this would have happened. It is really his fault. He really blew it. After thy mother died (remember thou loved her) thou needed thy father's undivided attention. But, no, he was interested in a new wife. He found her and virtually threw the two of you together in the same house.

The church at Corinth is at fault too. Consider all the church problems there. If there is anything that will drive one to ungodliness, it is church problems. All that division, strife, lawsuits, carnality, disorderly meetings, Lord's supper abuse and who knows what else they may be covering up is enough to discourage anyone from living right. Who can blame thee for not having the strength to remain pure when the church is in that kind of mess? If they had offered thee more stability in a peaceful atmosphere thou wouldest, without doubt, have never turned for security in that kind of relationship. Paul, in the thirteenth section of his epistle, suggest what may be at the root of thy problem, the church needed to be more loving. If thou doest decide to go ahead and admit thy sin, be sure to remind the brethren of these things. It will be of great comfort to thee. It is not fair for thee to accept full responsibility for thy deeds.

What about those people who ran to Paul with the report of thy behavior? Are they not to be blamed, somehow, for spreading their evil report?

Remember, beloved brother, that Paul who pushed the church into

action against thee is also vulnerable. In my book, he is not without fault in this matter. First, he seems to have trouble making himself clear, even one of his good friends says that he writes things hard to be understood. What about his openly judging thee without "telling thee thy fault between thee and him alone"? Is not this a clear violation of the teaching of Jesus? What difference does it make that thy sin was not actually a matter just between thee and Paul, but one out in open and public view? Thou canst still point to this passage and say that Paul did not go about it right, thus gaining sympathy from many brethren, especially those "of Cephas" and "of Apollos". Keep in mind the "judge not" passage, it could be useful.

Did Paul even talk to thee about the matter? Has he ever been by to see thee? If not, I would dismiss all that he has to say in the matter. He really has no right to tell thee what to do anyway, seeing he admits that he must buffet his body to keep it under subjection. Put the brethren in remembrance of these things and give them to understand that before they look for thee to correct thy sin that they must correct their short-comings. Too, Paul needs to apologize to thee for his strong language against thee -- his brother in Christ! If Paul had taken time to come to Corinth and to talk personally with thee, rather than fire off that epistle (for everybody to read), thou wouldest likely have straightened this whole mess up right then and there, so, in a way it is his fault that thou are still in thy present distress. Take comfort in thinking on these things.

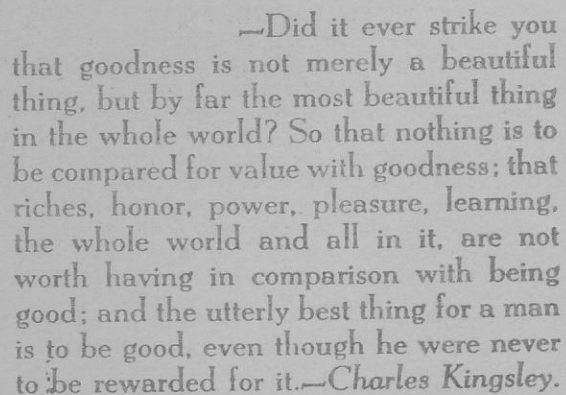
Be of good cheer. Do not become overmuch distressed by guilt feelings. Let another bear your burden of guilt and responsibility. This is the best that I can do for the present, but do not lose heart. Give our researchers time and they will come up with a way to blame it all upon Paul, the church, the elders, thy family, or someone -- anyone will do. Then thou shalt once more feel secure in thy position.

Above all else, resist the temptation to fully repent. Why should thou do it when there are so many others who done wrong, at least in my judgement? If thine were the only fault at Corinth, it would be different.

If thou canst not stop the church from putting thee away, write me again and I will send thee my booklet, "101 Technical Mistakes I Have Seen In Church Discipline", which will show thee how to declare their action null and void. Chances are good that they will make one or more of these mistakes. Thou wilt still be able to maintain thy present status without being shamed and, at the same time, gain support from those who had rather not rock the boat. Too, thou canst gain sympathy from those who, by nature, tend to resent firm action against a brother.

It seems to me that unless thou art willing to take full responsibility and resort to godly sorrow leading to repentance and follow it by reformation without any "if's", "and's", or "but's" (which we strongly discourage as being old fashioned) -- that my advice is the best course for thee if thou art to live with thyself and keep the brethren off thy back.

Peace be unto thee.



—Did it ever strike you that goodness is not merely a beautiful thing, but by far the most beautiful thing in the whole world? So that nothing is to be compared for value with goodness; that riches, honor, power, pleasure, learning, the whole world and all in it, are not worth having in comparison with being good; and the utterly best thing for a man is to be good, even though he were never to be rewarded for it.—Charles Kingsley.

GOSPEL MEETING

April 20-25

TOMMY POARCH, Speaking

Sunday 10:45 a.m. - Sunday thru Friday 7:30 p.m.

Come study with us.

Playing It Safe

A Southern farmer was sitting on the door-step of his rickety shack, smoking his cob pipe, when a stranger happened along. The farmer made a disconsolate picture.

"How is your cotton coming along?" asked the stranger.
"Ain't got no cotton," replied the farmer. "Didn't plant none. Skeert of boll weevils."
"Well," said the stranger, "how is your corn?"
"Didn't plant none. Skeert there wouldn't be no rain."
"How are your potatoes?"
"Ain't got no 'taters. Skeert of 'tater bugs."
"Well, what did you plant?"
"Nothin'. I jest played safe."

He just played safe. Aren't many of us playing too safe when we excuse ourselves from inviting, visiting and teaching others because we are "skeert" of failure for one reason or another? The Lord promises: "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). Are you sowing the seed of the Kingdom, or are you "skeert" it won't rain?"

...Grover Stevens, Lubbock, Texas

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sundays:

Bible Classes	9:45 A.M.
Worship	10:45 A.M.
Worship	6:30 P.M.

Wednesdays:

Bible Classes	7:30 P.M.
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