



There is another side to the story. Some churches have come more and more under the influence of a most liberal and worldly crowd. Those who were our brethen thirty years ago who were tempted to digress by the promoters of the social gospel and of denominational machinery have divided among themselves into the liberal and the more liberal camps. It is very interesting to read *Contending for the Faith* and other such papers that are fighting the most worldly elements. They are putting up a good fight, considering their own stand for sponsoring churches and such like.

Shall we bring all these who win special honors such as the "Church of the Year Award," and those who believe in theistic evolution, into this united church? What about those premillennial churches who can help sponsor Billy Graham? The sign outside their buildings say "Church of Christ." A box in the vestibule would not satisfy them. Let none think that this fanciful movement for unity is not meant to include these millennialists.

One thing that can calm fears to some extent about this UNITY WITHOUT CONVERSION MOVEMENT is that it will not work. These promoters of family life buildings, central agencies for big displays, and such like things do not want to be in a building with us even for a few minutes. They do not even take to public discussions of our differences. It would be easier to bring about a sort of unity unity between the Disciples church and our most effective opponents (our former brethren) than it would be to get us and our most bitter critics together.

If we all were of one heart and one soul we could get together without boxes in the vestibule. Each could drop his contribution to good old Pepperdine University or to the decadant Herald of Truth in the post office. The post office would, for a little price, take a contribution for any one to "Childhaven, Tennessee Orphan home, The Herald of Truth, Tennessee Bible College, David Lipscomb College, Pepperdine University, or any other project which he, as a Christian, deems worthy of support." Each institution gladly accepts donations from individuals.

Those who envision a happy unity among all these diverse elements may invite a skilled follower of the Ketcherside philosophy to conduct a meeting in which "the old time gospel" is preached. I do not deny the ability of such preachers, nor the need for the old time gospel, but there is some fear that the influence of the buddy, buddy man from the Ketcherside camp might not be altogether like that of the Lord's ambassadors.

Those who envision a happy unity among all these diverse elements may be unable to see any real danger in the aggressive and successful Crossroads movement. Workers under the Crossroads influence start unique and modern Crossroads churches and not churches of Christ. The Crossroads church at Gainesville, Florida is not a promoter of unity, but it is a builder of a growing splinter group. One of their churches in Missouri, Florida, or in any other state is in its own Crossroads party and no part of anything else.

Who would be the preacher at the united church if it started? What would he favor and what would he oppose. Who would be the elders? Would they represent each element or would they all be from the dominant element? THE BOXES IN THE VESTIBULE WOULD NOT ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS. IT IS AMAZING AND DISTRESSING TO ME TO HEAR OF BRETHREN WHO ONCE FOUGHT LOYALLY FOR TRUTH NOW

*
* THE REFLECTOR is published monthly by the *
* church of Christ meeting at 2005 Elkwood *
* Drive, Fultondale, Al 35068. Our mailing *
* address is 3004 Brakefield Drive, Fulton- *
* dale, AL 35068. *
* EDWARD O. BRAGWELL, SR., EDITOR *
*

* TIMES OF OUR REGULAR SERVICES *
*
* SUNDAYS: *
* Bible Classes..... 9:45 A.M. *
* Worship.....10:45 A.M. *
* Worship..... 6:30 P.M. *
* WEDNESDAYS: *
* Bible Class.....10:00 .M. *
* (when children are in school) *
* Bible Classes..... 7:30 P.M. *
*
* *****

SUGGESTING SUCH A PLAN FOR UNITY IN DIVERSITY
INSTEAD OF STANDING FIRMLY FOR THE FAITH ONCE
DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

"LET'S MAKE ROME GREAT AGAIN"

By: Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

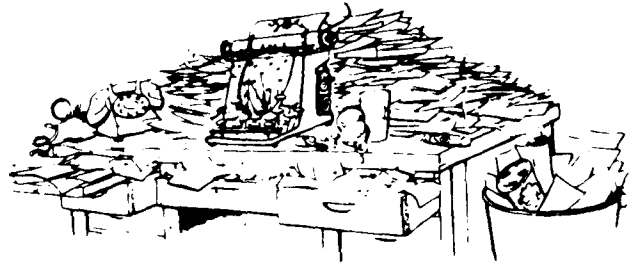
There are several of my brethren who seemingly would like to see the following anonymous epistle included in the New Testament:

*To the saints throughout the empire.
Greetings.*

As you know, the moral fiber of our nation is in a great state of decline. Everywhere you look, there is a complete disregard for any semblance of decency and morality. You can enter any city in the empire and see priestesses behaving lasciviously in the streets, citizens openly worshipping graven images, and public slaughter of Christians in open areas. At this rate the empire is destined for certain doom. Just look at what happened to the Babylonian and Alexander's empire.

The only way to prevent the fall of Rome is for all concerned Christian citizens to let their voices be heard. I urge each and everyone of you to write your senator in Rome and to join with me in campaigning against the moral decay of our nation. It is the duty of all concerned Christians to make sure that our society is a fit one in which to bring up our children and in which to live ourselves. We must get competent senators and a competent caesar in Rome. That is why I am working so hard to get Reaganus

EDITOR'S DESK



OUR MEETING with brother Tyler (notice the ad elsewhere in this paper) will be a good one. Brother Tyler is well-known in this area for his ability to proclaim and his love for the truth. I have often said that I am prejudiced in his favor. There is no way that I can adequately express my appreciation for the encouragement that he has given me over the years and especially the added boost that I needed as a very young man. He has kind of been a second father to me and a third grandfather to our children. We love him most for his standing for the truth against tremendous pressures to have gone with the "liberals" in the 50's. His stand has even gotten stronger with age. We wish we could say the same about one or two of the leading editors of the 50's who played a significant role in helping us to take the stand that we have taken now for over a quarter of a century.

* * *

Just as we thought the BOX-IN-THE-VESTIBULE had long since been dead, like Lazarus, "by this time (it) stinketh" - in fact it always did; it has been proposed again. A young Christian recently came up to me and asked what I thought of this "new idea". Of course, he was not around when it was widely discussed in the past. Elsewhere in this paper we have reprinted a fine article by brother Irven Lee from the GUARDIAN OF TRUTH (3/4/82) Read it and profit.

* * *

OUR WORK AT FULTONDALE seems to be doing nicely. Oh, yes, there is much room for improvement. We consistently are having from around 100-120 AT ALL SERVICES (except Wednesday Mornings). From week to week there will not be more than 10 difference in the attendance figures for all four services (Sunday classes, worship, Sun. P.M. and Wed.P.M.). Our contribution now averages more per person than ever. In my estimation, the edification program (classes, etc.) is better than it has been in my memory. (Those responsible seeing that the arrangement is carried out are doing a very good job). As I said, there is room for improvement -- so, brethren, let get busy with the task.

* * *

I have been saying for some time that the MARRIAGE-DIVORCE-REMARRIAGE-ISSUE is a gathering storm. I have said that it will be the cause of the next major split among brethren. The recent law suit that has made the news recently in this area over a church's withdrawing from a couple over the matter ought to make us more keenly aware of the problem. I am appalled at reports I am getting concerning brethren (even among "conservatives") who are "soft" on this issue. As more and more people are being divorced (5.3 for every 10.9 marriages in 1980) it is evident that more and more people, divorced for reasons other than fornication; and have married again will seek to be in the fellowship of local churches and more and more churches will accept and retain them in the fellowship for fear of losing numbers and the needed revenue to finance their program of work. Emotions will run high because of friendships and blood relationships (it is nearly impossible to reason a person out of a position he has not reasoned himself into). Elders and preachers are going to increasingly find the "rationale" for either justifying these people in their marriages or for justifying the church in accepting and keeping them in their fellowship. May we have the courage to do the Lord's will first and emotional ties and numbers second. It is amazing how difficult a passage of Scripture can become when we have so much to lose on earth in its application.

"LET'S MAKE ROME GREAT AGAIN"

elected caesar. Every concerned Christian should do the same. Anyone who does not is certainly not a true Christian. "Now I know that there are some preachers who think that they have more important things to do. Even some of our apostles, such as Paul and Peter, feel like they have more important work. But I fail to see how any-thing could be more important making Roman leaders and, Roman people more responsive to true moral values.

There is one other thing that bothers me. It is deplorable how the rights of Christians are going unprotected. They are being arrested and taken from their homes and even killed. Even the ones whose lives are spared, are having possessions or job taken away from them. It is time that we stood up for our rights. If all else fails, get yourself a spear or a bow and arrow and protect your rights, your home, and your property.

"We cannot stand by and let this empire continue to crumble. Let's make Rome great again! Amen."

No, this fictitious epistle does not appear in the Sacred Pages. I guess it is because no inspired man saw fit or was guided to write such sentiments. It seems that the apostles and early teachers were more interested in getting the gospel to the lost and preparing people for a heavenly kingdom than in making the earthly kingdom more desirable. It may be that the early teachers realized that the kingdom of God was not of this world. (John 18:36) They may have also realized that you don't change a person's heart and moral attitude by changing society around him. They knew that if society was going to get better, hearts had to be changed. They probably even realized that it really didn't matter what ultimately happened to them in this life, as long as they were in His kingdom when they left this world.

Christians today need to realize that their main mission is to save themselves and take the gospel to others. (I Tim. 4:16) They have a spiritual campaign to wage not a political or social one. (Eph. 6:12) While it is true that we are to abhor evil and speak out against it (Rom. 12:9; Eph. 5:11), we must not become so obsessed that we neglect our primary mission. It seems some preachers, elders, and members spend so much time trying to stamp out immorality in society, that they fail to see it under their own noses in the local congregation. They become more concerned with whether society and government are fit for Christian than if the members of the church are fit for God's kingdom. Housewives leave their homes to campaign against women's lib, abortion, and

other such issues, instead of staying home and making sure their children have the spiritual training and guidance that they need. They seem to be more concerned that their children will have a good society to live in when they are grown, than whether or not they will be members of God's kingdom.

Let us always remember that we are first members of the kingdom of God and then members of family, society, community and nation. (Phil. 3:20) We would all do well to consider what the New Testament writers did say about the Christian and government. Read Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:13-17.

WE INVITE YOU TO ATTEND A SERIES OF *Gospel Meetings*

APRIL 11-16

Preaching by

Granville Tyler

Sunday Services:

9:45 a.m.

10:45 a.m.

7:30 P.M.

Monday—

Friday

7:30 p.m.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

2005 ELKWOOD DRIVE
FULTONDALE, ALABAMA

Second Class Postage Paid at Fultondale
Alabama 35068.