

# **The Biblical Concept Of The One True Church**

**Lack of knowledge of the One True Church, relative to its nature and God-intended purpose, is resulting in the loss of multiplied millions of souls. This tragedy doesn't have to be, since God's word clearly reveals the information which is necessary to receive the salvation which is only available through Christ and His church.**

Never, since I've been around, has there been a greater need to understand the true nature and purpose of the One True Church, as it existed in the mind of God in accordance with His "eternal purpose." The gross ignorance which now prevails concerning the church nullifies the greatest blessing known to man, and which is available only through the church — the eternal salvation of one's soul. It seems so tragic, and unnecessarily so, that this most important matter which is so flagrantly misunderstood is clearly revealed in God's word. Those who want to know the truth about the church may easily do so by giving due consideration to **The Biblical Concept Of The One True Church**. However, in order for this to be done, it is necessary that the manifold misconceptions about the church be erased from the mind and God's word allowed to speak as God intended. It is our intention in the following discussion to focus upon some important facts about the one true

church as revealed in God's word.

The deadly misunderstanding concerning the church which has engulfed virtually the whole so-called Christian religion is clearly evidenced by oft made statements such as the following:

- 1. Join the church of your choice.
- 2. One church is as good as another.
- 3. Attend the church of your choice.
- 4. One doesn't have to be a member of the church to be saved.
- 5. The church doesn't save you (implying that it is not necessary to be a member of the church to be saved).

Not a single one of the above ideas has any semblance of Bible authority. All these ideas, and many others, are simply the ideas and/or doctrines of men. In addition to the above erroneous ideas, there are others which are often not so concisely stated. There is the assumed authority that men can establish their own churches, formulate their own doctrines and/or practices as they wish, call themselves by any name they like, and conform to whatever changes may occur in society, to name a few.

One tragic and widespread misunderstanding about the church appears to be the failure to recognize that the church was in the mind of God even before the beginning of the human race. The apostle Paul addresses this fact when he wrote: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11).

Not only does the above passage show that the church was in the mind of God from **eternity**, it also shows that

the church was a demonstration of God's wisdom. How could anyone minimize the importance of the church when it is an example of God's wisdom and was in God's eternal purpose?

A common error of premillennial people is that God intended for Christ to set up His kingdom when He came to earth. However, that plan was thwarted when so many of the Jews rejected Christ. Then, in lieu of the kingdom the church was established as an afterthought or a temporary institution. Paul's statement which we have just noticed, that the church was in accordance with God's "eternal purpose," clearly gives the lie to any such idea. If one believes that God was not able to carry out His purpose with regard to the church, how could that one believe God would be able to carry out His purpose with regard to other matters? To fail to accept God's word as unchangeable, or consider it as subject to failure, is to demonstrate a lack of faith in God's word as truth. This would foster all manner of false ideas, and has likely contributed to the current lack of knowledge about the one true church.

To help us understand **The Biblical Concept Of The One True Church** we shall consider several aspects of the church as revealed in the Bible. We begin with the following important one:

### **THE CHURCH IN PROSPECT**

Having noted that the church was in accordance with God's "eternal purpose," we would expect some allusion to the church early on in God's word. This is the case. In Genesis 3:15 we are told that the "seed" of woman would "bruise" the head of the serpent [Satan] and the serpent would "bruise" the heel of the seed of woman. Though the church is not specifically mentioned here, it is very evident that this had reference to the eventual coming of Christ when He would shed His blood as a once-for-all sacrifice, by which he would purchase His church (Acts 20:28). The blood which Christ shed to purchase the

church, would serve to provide forgiveness of sins under the law of Moses and also for those under the patriarchal age (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:15) The salvation of man is the central theme of God's word from the beginning.

In the furtherance of the promise made in Genesis 3:15, the promise is made to faithful Abraham, "...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Then later, in Genesis 22:18, an angel of the Lord told Abraham, "and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed..." The promise made to Abraham and passed on through Isaac and Jacob would ultimately become a reality when Christ came to earth and offered himself as a once-for-all sacrifice, and by his blood purchased His church (Acts 20:28). There is nothing else which even remotely compares with the blessing which would come to "all families" and "all nations" of the earth.

Isaiah, the messianic prophet, predicted more than seven hundred years before Christ that "the mountain of the Lord's house" would be established and "all nations" would flow into it. "...out of Zion" would "go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." This would come to pass "in the last days," the Christian dispensation (Isa. 2:2-3). The "Lord's house" was none other than the "church of the living God" (I Tim. 3:15). It was through the church that salvation would become available to all nations (Matt. 28:19; Eph. 5:23).

The prophet Daniel wrote, "And in the days of these kings [Roman kings] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed..." (Dan. 2:44). No kingdom, other than the church, will ever fulfill that predictive prophecy. And that kingdom is the church (Matt. 16:18-19).

Much nearer the time of the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15, Gabriel was sent to the virgin Mary to inform her that she would conceive in her womb "and bring forth a son, and...call his name JESUS" (Lk. 1:30-31). The Lord

would "give unto him the throne of David" and he would "reign over the house of Jacob for ever..." (Lk. 1:32-33).

From Matthew we learn that the above was clearly fulfilled as had been prophesied by Isaiah as recorded in Isaiah 7:14 (Matt. 1:21-23).

John the Baptist, in preparation for the coming of Christ the Savior was preaching, "and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying...Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Matt. 3:1-3). John would then decrease while Christ increased (Jno. 3:30). Christ, John, the apostles and the seventy sounded out the message, the kingdom is "at hand."

In the ministry of Christ He announces the building of His church, the kingdom. In response to Peter's confession of Christ as "the Son of the living God," Christ said, "upon this rock [Peter's confession] I will build my church...and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom..." (Matt. 16:17-19). The promise, first made in Genesis 3:15, is now about to be fulfilled thousands of years later. What God had spoken must surely come to pass.

The New Testament records the building of Christ's church. The details are clearly set forth in the first and second chapter of Acts. From Acts 2 onward in the New Testament the church is spoken of as being in existence, whereas before that time it was spoken of as in the future.

With the establishment of the church, for which Christ shed His blood (Acts 20:28), the prophets' predictions had come true. Christ now has His church, of which he is "head" and "savior" (Eph. 5:23). The Biblical Concept Of The One True Church with regard to its establishment as predicted by the prophets has now been made crystal clear. However, there are other important things relative to the nature and purpose of the church which need to be known. Thanks be to God that those things are revealed in the New Testament. Since God has revealed His

church in such a clear and forceful way in His word it would seem only reasonable that He would tell a number of things about it which would help us to better understand its nature and importance. This should do a great deal in increasing our love and appreciation for the church. This is something which is sorely needed in our time. The remainder of our discussion shall have to do with some of those important things about the church. We begin with a very simple yet highly important question. That question is:

### **WHAT IS THE CHURCH?**

In the first place, we must not go to *Webster's Dictionary* to find the answer to this most important question. Most definitions in our English dictionaries are based on the current usage of words or for some time in the past. This being the case, it would be sheer folly to expect a true definition of the word **church** as it is used in the New Testament. Why so? There are few New Testament words which are so terribly misunderstood as is the word **church**.

The greater majority of those who claim to be Christians think of the church as one or more [even all] of the hundreds and hundreds of denominational churches. Many of the denominations claim to be the church or at least a part of it. With some, who say one church is as good as another, it is simply a matter of which one is liked best; not which one has scriptural authority for its existence, beliefs and practices. The implication of this erroneous thinking is that the homosexual churches could be one's rightful preference as well as any other. We should be able to see how that this tragic misunderstanding of the church would contribute to people's belief that the church is not very important, or even not at all.

It is a sad day in spiritual Israel, but a fact nevertheless, that a great many members of the church of Christ are now denying the distinctiveness of the church revealed in

## the New Testament

The word "church" in our English translations is translated from the Greek word *ecclesia* more than a hundred times in the New Testament. The true meaning of this word is, "the called out," or "to call out." The word was first used in the secular sense to mean an assembly called out, such as the legislature. But in the spiritual sense, in which sense it is almost always used in the New Testament, it refers to those called out by the gospel, as in 2 Thessalonians 2:14. The gospel is the means by which people are delivered "from the power of darkness" and "translated into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Co. 1:13-14).

The "called out" [church] is variously applied: 1. The local sense, such as "the church of God which is at Corinth" (I Cor. 1:2). 2. A geographical area. Paul said, "as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia..." (I Cor. 16:1). 3. The universal sense, as when Christ said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). 4. The assembly. Paul wrote, "when ye come together in the church" (I Cor. 11:18). The word church never refers to a building.

Individuals make up the church whether assembled or not. This should be remembered relative to our manner of life and its influence. In some cases brethren have favored and practiced the innovation wherein the assembly is divided when it should not be. This practice has been referred to as "The divided assembly" or "Children's church."

What is the church to be called? It is most often called simply the church. But there are a number of scriptural designations which are used with reference to the church. Consider these: "The house of God" is used in I Timothy 3:15. Here "house" refers to a family, not a physical building. "The kingdom" is a designation used by our Lord when he said He would build His church and would "give unto thee the keys of the kingdom" (Matt. 16:18-19). "Kingdom of his dear Son" is used in Colossians

1:13. "The body" or "His body" are terms used by Paul in Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18). "Spiritual house" is a term used by Peter when he said, "Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house..." (I Pet. 2:5). Christ said, "My church" in Matthew 16:18. Paul says, "Church of God" when he wrote to the Corinthians. Paul used the term, "Churches of Christ" in Romans 16:16.

There is a very conspicuous absence of the use of such terms as are so often used by the churches which men have built, which may give preeminence to some person or form of government. I saw one church building which had a sign on it, "The Straight Way Church." Whether someone meant to suggest there were "Crooked Way Churches" I don't know. It is a matter of fact that the names of many churches give no "preeminence" to Christ.

Another highly important fact is:

### **THE ONENESS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH**

The idea of the **oneness** of the church is so foreign to so many people, yet it could hardly be more clearly taught than it is in the New Testament. New churches are coming into existence all the time, even though there is no need for any other than that which Christ built and purchased with His blood. It has been appalling to me that so many of our brethren are now denying the oneness of the Lord's church by accepting the churches built by men.

The oneness of the Lord's church was clearly shown even before its existence. It is never referred to in the plural by the prophets. "The Lord's house," not "houses" was to be established "in the last days" (Isa. 2:2). Daniel wrote, "And in the days of these kings [Roman kings] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed..." (Dan. 2:44). It was "a kingdom," not "kingdoms" that would be set up. This "kingdom"

was the same thing which Isaiah called "The Lord's house." The Lord's house is the church (I Tim. 3:15). When Christ, John the Baptist, the seventy and the apostles preached, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," they never said "kingdoms." There would be only one kingdom, and that is the church (Matt. 16:18-19). The idea of "churches" in the sense of denominations did not come from God, but from men.

Paul declares the oneness of the church. In Ephesians 1:22-23, Paul says of Christ, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body...." Christ's "body" and the "church" are clearly one and the same. Paul points out this fact just as clearly when he said of Christ, "And he is the head of the body, the church..." (Col. 1:18). If anyone has any problem of recognizing the singularity of the body or the church from the above, they should go to Ephesians 4:4. Here Paul says, "*There is one body....*" It is nothing short of amazing that men will talk about "The church of your choice," when it couldn't be made clearer that there is **only one** which has God's approval. There is only one choice which has God's approval.

In addition to the above, Paul affirms the oneness of Christ's church. In I Corinthians 12, Paul wrote: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (v. 13). "For the body is not one member, but many" (v. 14). "But now *are they* many members, yet but one body" (V. 20). To the Romans Paul wrote, "So we *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:5). Speaking of the Jews and the Gentiles, Paul says of Christ, "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross..." (Eph. 2:16). The Jews and Gentiles would be reconciled in **one body**, not even two, much less hundreds.

It is worthy of note that the apostles were all members of the same body or church. Not a single one of them ever joined a denomination, or started a church of his own. The Lord never added anyone to anything other than His

church. There is no reason to believe He would do differently in our day. Paul strongly rebuked the division which existed in the church at Corinth. This, however, had nothing to do with the denominations which exist in our time, though it is often used as if it did. The division which Paul was addressing was within the church. The denominations are not a part of the church. But we may know that if division within the church was wrong, and it clearly was, the setting up of churches by men and that without any shred of authority from God's word, would certainly be wrong.

The oneness of the church, the body of Christ, could hardly be made clearer, just from the passages we have noted, but there are many others. It is hard for me to understand (to put it plainly, I can't) why anyone who claims to believe the Bible to be God's word would deny the plain fact that there is only **one body** or **church** which has God's approval. No other has any God-approved right to exist. Yet, men are starting new ones all the time. The fact that Christ purchased only one church (Acts 20:28), His own (Matt. 16:18), excludes all others.

It is not difficult to explain why so many things are found within the denominations which are not in harmony with God's word. Though most people within these religious groups would say they believe the Bible to be God's word, their actions say they have a serious lack of respect for God's word. How could their practices which are in violation of the "doctrine of Christ" be accounted for otherwise? Adherence to the unadulterated word of God produces unity, not division.

A matter which troubles me so very much is that more and more of our own brethren are denying the oneness of our Lord's church. This is being done by those who have sufficient knowledge of God's word to know better. When it is taught outrightly or implied that one may be saved in a man-made church the oneness of God's church is being flatly denied. It is also saying that churches built

by men, and that without any semblance of spiritual authority, are just as good as the one purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). What is there that constitutes a greater affront to God than to say His church is not better than those of men?

It should be a matter of greater concern by more of our brethren that our erring brethren are actively engaged in destroying the oneness of the church, which is so clearly taught. Those who would do such an evil deed are no less than "the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18). It is so encouraging to hear from readers of *Banner of Truth* who express their great concern about what is happening to the Lord's church. This year has without doubt seen a quickening of the widespread changes which are occurring within the church. This is reflected by the increased number of calls from brethren who are deeply distressed and disturbed. It is indeed a good sign and a cause for hope when brethren have the courage to let their forceful outcries be heard at every opportunity. If we fail to cry out against those who would make of the true church just another denomination, the time will come when it will be too late. We cannot afford to sit idly by.

As important as it is to recognize the oneness of the true church, it is also important to know how one becomes a part of it. To fail to be a part of the church is to be excluded from that of which Christ is the head and savior (Eph. 5:23).

## **HOW DOES ONE ENTER**

### **THE ONE TRUE CHURCH?**

How thankful we should be that God has revealed how to enter the church. One's eternal salvation is dependent upon being a part of it. Though God gave his Son to purchase the church, it is of no value unless one enters it.

There is so much misunderstanding relative to entering the church. With the lack of knowledge on the part of so

many as to the nature and purpose of the church, this is to be expected. In the first place, with the idea held by so many that the church is not important, it is understandable that the how of entering it would likewise be unimportant. Also to be considered is the fact that entering the denominational churches involves different ways. I once attended a denominational church and two or three people applied for membership. A vote was taken, and they were accepted for membership. Of course this church membership on the basis of approval by vote is not from any New Testament teaching or example. By the same authority that people establish churches, they can also set up the terms of membership in those churches. When all is said and done, if the church is not essential to salvation, it makes no difference whether one is a member.

When The One True Church is considered, there are terms or conditions of membership. God, in His goodness, has given man this information in the New Testament. In the first place, it is important to note that the Lord did the adding to the church which He built (Matt. 16:18). In Acts 2, where the birthday of the church is recorded, we find that those who followed the apostle Peter's inspired instruction, in response to their question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (v. 37) were added to the church. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (v. 47).

Beyond the birthday of the church, we learn that people continued to be **added to the Lord**. Note Acts 5:14: "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." Then, at the preaching of Barnabas in Antioch the record says, "...and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11:24). The practice of "joining the church" as is commonly practiced today was unheard of in New Testament times. When the Lord's terms or conditions of membership were met, people were **added to the Lord**. This has not changed, and the Lord will still add to the church in our day as He did then.

It is now in order to consider those terms or conditions of membership in the one true church. It is highly important to note that the conditions are established by the Lord, not man. The apostle Peter reveals an important principle which relates to the conditions of membership in the church. When Peter realized that the Gentiles could obey the gospel and be added to the church he expressed a principle which involves conditions on man's part. "Then Peter opened *his* mouth , and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Jesus himself spoke of entrance into the kingdom, or church membership, when he said to Nicodemus, "...Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The "kingdom of God," as here used, is the same thing as the church. Being "born of water and of the Spirit" has reference to the baptism (immersion in water) of the Great Commission (Matt. 16:15-16). The Spirit is involved in this process in that He reveals God's will in the matter.

Baptism is the consummating act at which point one is **added** to the church by the Lord. There are, however, conditions which must be met before one is a fit subject to be baptized. This begins with the **hearing** of God's word. This is the means by which one comes to have the faith (Rom. 10:17) which is necessary to please God (Heb. 11:6). There is not a case of conversion recorded in the Book of Acts where God's word had not been heard.

The **faith** which is produced by the hearing of God's word must be of sufficient strength to lead one to obey God's will with respect to **repentance**. Christ said it is repent or perish (Lk. 13:3). Paul points out God demands repentance (Acts 17:30).

The **confession** of one's faith in Christ is seen in the example of the Ethiopian in Acts 8:37. The Ethiopian

said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Paul states that, "...with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

When the above conditions are met by an individual, that one is ready to obey the divine instruction given by the apostle Peter to be **baptized**. "...be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). It is worthy of note that in every conversion recorded in the Book of Acts, baptism was the last or final step taken in becoming a Christian.

It is through the obedience to God's command to be baptized that one's sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Entrance into Christ occurs when one is "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:27). It is also at this time that the Lord adds one to His church (Acts 2:47). People are "baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13), which is the same thing as the church (Eph. 4:4; Col. 1:18). How can the importance of baptism be overlooked? Yet, multitudes do that very thing.

Scriptural baptism can take place only when the subject for baptism is old enough to "believe," as is so evident from our Lord's statement: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). The action of baptism is that of a burial or immersion. Paul said, speaking of Christ, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:4). This rules out the practice of sprinkling or pouring water upon someone and calling it baptism.

Those not scripturally baptized are: 1) Not in the true church. 2) Still in their unforgiven sins. 3) Out of Christ. 4) Not true Christians. 5) Not able to have a living hope based on God's promises.

In addition to the church in **Prospect**, the meaning of the word **Church**, the **Oneness** of the church, terms of **entrance** into the church, another equally important aspect of the true church is:

## **THE SCRIPTURAL PRACTICE OF THE ONE TRUE CHURCH**

The work and or/practice of the church is limited to that which is scripturally authorized. John said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God..." (2 Jno. 9). In other words, one does not have God's approval. Things which are done without Bible authority are things which cannot be done on the basis of **faith** which comes from hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17). Things which are God-approved fall into three categories: **Evangelism** and **Edification**, as set forth in Matthew 28:18-20, and in other New Testament references. The other category is **Benevolence** (Gal. 6:10; James 1:27). The time was that most members of the church were in agreement on the above. But things have changed drastically!

Though God's word has not changed, the activities in vogue with a rapidly increasing number of congregations have changed greatly. The number of innovations is increasing at a rate unheard of before. Today, just about anything to be found in the denominations can be found among some of our own brethren. To my knowledge, there is virtually no attempt being made to justify these innovations from a Bible standpoint. This has set the stage for the introduction of more innovations. It seems that whatever brethren want, they are going to have. A "thus saith the Lord" is not necessary.

Looking back, it is evident that a floodgate of innovations was opened when the Nov. 12, 1978, issue of *The Nashville Banner* carried almost a half page ad by the Madison church of Christ. These innovations have included activities of entertainment as well as other non-authorized activities. The *Banner* ad began with: **Madison takes a Giant Step Forward!** The so-called **Giant Step** was the opening of their Family Life Center. John Stevens, Norvel Young, Claude Gardner, and Tom Holland were "Special Speakers On This Exciting Day."

From the *Madison Marcher*, Madison's publication, it was learned that the Family Life Center included a **gymnasium** and an **exercise room**. Such activities as: **Ladies Slimnastics, Ceramic Classes, Macrame Class, Bowling League, Volleyball League** were a part of the Family Life Center.

Within the past twenty years Family Life Centers have become a part of a great many congregations. Activities within the Centers and in other facilities of these congregations have come to include a wide variety of amusements, and entertaining programs of one kind or another. Some congregations boldly proclaim that certain people are going to "perform." There are "Praise Teams," various singing groups and even solos, "Special music," drama groups, movies, and a great many others. Some of our brethren may have gotten ahead of the denominations and come in first place in coming up with the "Andy Griffith Bible Classes." It is not hard to figure out that providing fun, food, and frolic to please the members takes a very high priority with many congregations. It is what the people want that matters. What God wants often takes a back seat. We have criticized the religions round about us for engaging in these unauthorized things, and rightly so, but now some of our brethren are doing the very same things.

So much of what is being practiced within the church today clearly appeals to the outward man and is clear evidence of the superficial spiritual nature of what is being provided by congregations. The reverence and respect which should characterize activities of worship is being replaced by a County Fair atmosphere. In addition, many things of a secular nature are now being provided by the church, things which never were a work of the church and will never be. It is sad indeed that the church is being pulled away from the God-given purpose for which it was established. Another sad thing is that so many members of the church have succumbed to a spirit of indifference. That the church is to serve as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15) goes unnoticed by

many.

It is a matter of sad fact that the church of today is in so many instances far removed from the New Testament pattern. This is unacceptable to God. A matter of great concern should be — Who is responsible for this departure from the Truth? We know God is not responsible. It has to be man. With reference to this we consider the following:

## **ENEMIES OF THE BIBLICAL**

### **CONCEPT OF THE ONE TRUE CHURCH**

From the beginning of the human race some have been enemies of God's truth on various matters. The Bible, including the Old Testament is replete with examples of those who opposed God's will. Paul warned of those who would "pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:7). Our Lord warned of "false prophets" (Matt. 7:15). Paul warned that some would "depart from the faith" (I Tim. 4:1-3), and some would "not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:1-4). Peter warned of "false teachers" (2 Pet. 2:1-3). John said "many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I Jno. 4:1).

In view of the above warnings it should come as no surprise to us that there are today **Enemies of the truth**. These enemies come in many different forms, and act in various ways. Though there are many enemies of God's truth outside the church, we are primarily concerned about those who are within the church. It should be noted that those who uphold and practice error are in reality enemies of the church as revealed in the Bible. The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). This means that the church is to uphold and support God's truth. This is indeed a most serious responsibility. When members uphold error instead of the truth, they have become enemies of the church.

**Who's responsible for the current division?** When division within the church occurs somebody is in error.

The terrible division which is now plaguing the church is doing untold hurt to the Biblical Concept Of The One True Church. When members of the church engage in practices which violate the "doctrine of Christ," they are painting a picture of the church which is not according to truth. Untaught members of the church are led to see a false picture of the church. Therefore, they are conditioned to accept denominational practices which are in soul-condemning error.

The horrifying division within the church which is due to false teaching and practices, reflects its severity of error in the following way. Those who "stand fast in the faith" (I Cor. 16:13) and those who "contend for the faith" (Jude 3) are often accused of causing the division, simply because they will not go along with error. This shows the evil of those who are responsible for division.

As to who is responsible for the current division, a major factor is often overlooked. It is true that men like Rubel Shelly, Max Lucado and other well-known brethren have done much to hurt the Lord's church. Truly, they are "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18). As evil as these men are, they are not totally responsible for all the error. Many members are being influenced by error on a more local level. Many members of the church do not know who these false teachers are. Yet, members by the scores are going into error. Why? Often because they are being influenced at home.

We can see an example of the above right here at home. In Murray the Glendale Road and University congregations are known for their error in using and fellowshiping false teachers. Just a few miles from us, in Benton, the congregation is very far out and engages in practices of error. These are not the only congregations to have false teachers for meetings. In the above examples, I don't believe either of the congregations have had Shelly or Lucado, but error is put forth at home nevertheless.

Preachers are responsible for some division. This is not

limited to rank teachers of error, but to some others also. An example of what we mean is the preacher who may preach sound doctrine, and no error. One may ask, "How can this type of preacher contribute to division?" The answer is found in what is **practiced**, not in what is **preached**. God has a law on fellowship. We must not bid "God speed" to those who transgress the "doctrine of Christ" (2 Jno. 9-11). We are to "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary" to the truth (Rom. 16:17). Brethren are to withdraw themselves from "every brother that walketh disorderly" (2 Thess. 3:6). We are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11).

When a "sound" preacher breaks God's law on fellowship he is driving a further wedge in division. The standing fast in a great many areas of truth never gives one a right to break God's law in some other area. Fellowship is an example. It is hard to understand why some seem to think in these terms.

Division often does much hurt to the church and serious efforts need to be put forth to try to eliminate it. Yet, God's cure for division must be respected. There are two ways by which we could have unity in this local area. One, everyone could just accept the current error within the congregations. Two, those in error could give up their error. We all should know that God would in no sense of the term be pleased with the first solution. The only way to have God-approved unity would be for those in error to repent and be restored to the truth.

Also responsible for division to some extent, are those members of the church who live a sinful life. Such living is not in harmony with the Lord's church which is to uphold the truth. It can cause people to look upon the church, not as the true church but as a church of men, which tolerates sin.

## CONCLUSION

God has revealed His one true church in the New

Testament. Its **oneness** is clearly shown, as is its **essentiality**. God has made known how to **enter** the church and to **live** therein. The **work** which God has given the church to do is set forth. In view of the above, how can one who claims to believe God's word reject **The Biblical Concept Of The One True Church?** Sadly, more and more of our own brethren are doing that very thing. How tragic!

- - - *Walter W. Pigg*

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## **JESUS, "KING OF THE JEWS" – A COLOSSAL MISCONCEPTION**

*John Q. Mitchell*

We begin with a Gentile priestly sect of Persia, called *Magi*, who came to see and worship Him who was born, "King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2-4). It is evident from this passage that the *Magi* had a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge as to why Jesus came into the world, that is, "to save sinners" (I Tim. 1:15). The *Magi*, like others of their time, obviously thought the mission of the new-born King would be political and that He would reign on an earthly throne, delivering the Jews from their bondage. Moreover, God's promise to Abraham that in him and his descendants all the world would be blessed, created a false expectancy of a kingdom of God on earth among the Hebrews. The reign of the great kings of Israel further formed popular and messianic expectation that the

kingdom of Christ would be one like the earthly kingdom of David.

So it appears this misapprehension was also the one under which the *Maji* labored. That they came to pay homage to the new-born king was indubitably a lofty and noble gesture, but nonetheless they came saddled with a misguided concept about the real reason for the advent of Him whom they came to adore, their in-the-east, hovering, shimmering stellar guide notwithstanding.

Now, after three decades, on to Pilate's office. Before him stood a barbarous mob, their rage punctuated by cries of , "Let him be crucified," "Let him be crucified" (Matt. 27:22-23). But what was the root of this civil unrest and violent upheaval of their spirits, with which Pilate had to contend?

The record shows (Matthew 27) that the mob was sadly mistaken about the mission of the Son of God. They thought whoever was the Christ must be the "KING OF THE JEWS," and would deliver them from the power of Rome, and restore the temporal dominion. The mob deemed Christ to be an impostor and accused Him of making Himself "King of the Jews," in order to gain position to pervert the nation and subvert the government. When the Lord was asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "Thou sayest" (Matt. 27:11).

When one understands the SPIRITUAL nature of the kingdom of Christ, that His kingdom is "not of this world" (Jno. 18:36), then the unavoidable extrapolation of the Lord's answer must be thus: "Yes, I am, though not as you mean." "I am a king, but not such a king as you expect me to be."

Pilate, in his infamous statement, "What I have written, I have written" (Jno. 19:22), had written, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS" (v. 19). Such an inscription by Pilate further illuminates our understanding of his colossal misconception of what

Christ came to earth to do. He did not come to overthrow governments like Pilate's nor did He come to declare Himself "King of the Jews." He did come to establish His kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, which is the church. It is a kingdom that cannot be destroyed and one which at the fullness of time would receive all nations (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 2:2-3, Acts 10:34).

Earthly kingdoms rise and fall, but the King of Kings and Lord of Lords shall persevere in His kingdom (I Cor. 15:24-27). Christ did not come to establish earthly kingdoms, and neither did He come to establish denominational churches, or man-made churches. Christ did come to establish His church (Matt. 16:18). No other church has ever had or will ever have God's approval. This should cause serious-minded people to stop and think.

In conclusion let us note that Christ did not come to be king over some temporal government, as the *Maji*, Pilate, and the boisterous mob thought. He came to deliver humankind from the blight of ruinous ways of sin (I Tim. 1:15), and to bind us into God's family, the church (Eph. 3:15; I Tim. 3:15). In His heavenly kingdom we shall abide as priests and kings. His kingdom is the "one body" (Eph. 4:4), which is His church (Col. 1:18). To Him be glory for ever and ever (Rev. 1:6).

251 S. Walnut Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773

**REMEMBER to send your change of address.  
Otherwise your name will be deleted. - Editor**

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**What Constitutes Nakedness?**

*Alan Adams, Assistant Editor*

What an interesting parable is that taught by Jesus about the "unrighteous steward" (Lk. 16:1-13). It's important that we note that the Lord did not condone this man of the world's dubious business practices, rather, in reference to the man's quickness and shrewdness of mind, He said that he had "done wisely." It was out of this background that the Master said, "the sons of the world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of light" (v. 8).

It is a fact that non-Christians are often "wiser" and more forthright in the world of unrighteousness than are Christians who are supposed to be "walking in the light" (I Jno. 1:7).

In a July '96 issue of the *Tennessean*, there was an article about Olympic swimmers. In that article one of the "sons of the world" spoke honestly and openly about sex and nakedness:

"...I'm glad we don't have rules like that [no sex while in competition. AA]." said Tripp Schwenk, a University of Tennessee swimmer, slowly shaking his head and not trying very hard to suppress a smile.

This is after all a water-logged U.S. delegation that includes Eric Wunderlich, who when asked why he is still in deep water at the age of 26, said: "**I stuck with swimming because I get to be naked.**"

I have had many conversations with Christians who simply will not be as honest and forthcoming on the topic of sex and nakedness as Mr. Wunderlich was.

If you are determined to give your blessing to your son, daughter, wife, or husband when they go to the beach or pool in their "suits" [I speak after the manner of men], at least admit, as this Olympian has, they are "naked."

Fathers and husbands: Please have the love and concern for your daughters and wives that will lead you to sit down with them and to talk openly and frankly about human sexuality, passion, and the power of lust. For far too long, we have sat timidly saying, "Shhh," while the world defines fashion and fun for us.

Sit down with the whole family and candidly discuss what Jesus said about *looking*, *lusting*, and *adultery*: "...every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28). Read *Exodus 20:26*, "Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not uncovered thereon." Then, turn to chapter 28:42, which explains how the priests were to avoid exposing themselves: "Thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach."

Brothers and sisters in Christ: The Holy Spirit says that we are "to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5). Can we be any less concerned about exposing "the flesh of [our] nakedness" than were the priests of old?

The bodies of men and women are to be kept pure and private: Pure for the day when you will give yourself in marriage; and, private to all except the one to whom God has joined you (I Cor. 7:1-7; Matt. 19:6). "Nakedness" is a shame; it is a sin.

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**Editor's Note:**

*Webster's* second definition of "naked" is: "without adequate clothing." By this definition, nakedness is such a common thing. It is not necessary to go to the pool or beach to see many examples. As the world becomes more worldly, a corresponding change is seen within the church. Some of us can remember when there was much more teaching on the subject of mixed swimming,

immodesty, and dancing within the church. Rather than standing out as being different from the world, in far too many cases it is difficult to see any difference between members of the church and people of the world. God's teaching on the subject of lust and immodesty has not changed one whit, but people have changed drastically as to moral standards.

**WELCOME NEW READERS!** If *Banner of Truth* is worthwhile to you, tell others about it. We are happy to add others to our mailing list to receive *Banner of Truth*.  
- Editor.

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## **The Billy Graham Crusade And Our Brethren**

Many Billy Graham Crusades have come and gone. Something which has characterized them over the years is the false teaching which is set forth, giving a false hope of salvation to multiplied thousands. The one which took place in Nashville, June 1-4, of this year was quite different as it related to some of our brethren in the Nashville area.

For several years now an increasing number of our brethren have been gravitating toward the outright acceptance of denominational, man-made religion. The above Crusade has provided the strongest evidence ever, of any one event, that a great many of our brethren are in the process of accepting denominationalism. Such activities as *Jubilee*, **The Tulsa Workshop**, and similar ones have shown a strong affinity for denominational religion, but this event has outdone all of them.

From information I've received, the following congregations of our brethren in the Nashville area actually took part in the promotion of the Crusade of error: Community Church in Hendersonville, the church at Smith Springs, the Harpeth Hills church, home congregation of Harold Hazelip. Otter Creek was scheduled to give information on the Crusade. Woodmont Hills scheduled "Classes for Crusade Counselors" for April 3rd. To what extent other congregations participated I do not know. Another bit of evidence of the acceptance of the Crusade is seen in that, according to reports, virtually no public opposition to the Crusade of error was evidence by the well over 100 congregations in the Nashville area. It should be noted that the Woodmont Hills brethren (false ones) played a big part in the Crusade by inviting Billy Graham to come to Nashville for the Crusade.

Additional evidence of support of the Crusade is seen in the fact that 37 teachers and staff from David Lipscomb University attend the Woodmont Hills congregation. It would seem reasonable to expect that those from David Lipscomb were in sympathy with that which their congregation supports. Just think of the evil influence of the 37 from David Lipscomb in the years to come, even now.

What did our erring brethren support when they supported the Billy Graham Crusade? They supported a wide variety of false teaching and practice. Never, to my knowledge, has Billy Graham ever taught people what the New Testament teaches as to how a person can be saved. It was reported by those who heard Graham's speeches that he omitted "baptism" from Acts 2:38 and Mark 16:16 when he mentioned those passages. There is no reason to believe this was by accident. We know Graham does not teach, as does the word of God, that baptism is essential to salvation. Among other errors taught by Billy Graham are: Calvinism, Premillennialism, use of instrumental music, praying for salvation rather than obeying the gospel, and that the

church is a matter of choice.

It is so sad that some of our brethren support such error as the above. It is a strong affront to God to bid "God speed" to teaching which is not in harmony with the "doctrine of Christ" (2 Jno. 9-11). An example of error in the Crusade is seen in a report by Ray Waddle, Religious Editor for the *Nashville Tennessean*. The report said that Barry Gregory walked down with his 6-year-old daughter who was responding to Graham's "invitation." The 6-year-old was among the 2500 who responded on the first night of the Crusade. Imagine a 6-year-old responding to the "invitation." The adults who responded were not told to do what the New Testament teaches one must do to be saved. Baptism was a part of every conversion recorded in the book of *Acts*, but Graham leaves out this gospel command.

The above is an example of the outright error supported by some of our erring brethren when they supported the Graham Crusade. If this most flagrant support of false doctrine is not enough to disturb our brethren, perhaps nothing could do so. These false brethren are "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18), in that they are saying salvation can be found in a religion which is unknown in God's word, and in no sense of the term was made possible by the cross of Christ, by which our Lord's church was made possible. --*Walter W. Pigg*

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## **Where Has All The Courage Gone?**

*Bob Spurlin*

We live in a day of sagging morals and erratic behavior, making our journey of living for Christ difficult. Preachers, elders, deacons, and Christians overall must stand up for right and oppose vigorously that which is erroneous and false. It's seldom easy to stand for our eternal God, but the reward will be well worth the effort. Paul gives the proper formula when he said, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (I Cor. 16:13). Jude said, "...ye should earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). The word "contend" comes from the original Greek suggesting a battle. There is a spiritual conflict, with the spiritual forces of light in conflict with Satan and his army. Paul writes, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God..." (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

I've recently received e-mail informing me of serious liberal trends, with hand-clapping, questionable literature, and scores of other matters which we cannot go into at this time. The title of our discussion, "Where Has All The Courage Gone?" is very appropriate for the elderships across our brotherhood. Far too many elders have refused to address the serious problems facing the church as the apostasy continues to sweep across our land. Courage has become deficient, as elders are often more concerned with "keeping the peace," than dealing candidly with matters of error in which many Christians find themselves. I am aware of an eldership that was very concerned about the church over which they had the oversight, yet decided to do nothing, due to the large amount of contribution they would lose if they exercised corrective discipline and subsequently the withdrawal of fellowship. What a sad commentary on an eldership as we ask, "Where has all the courage gone?"

A short time ago a preacher friend wrote me a letter with copies of it going to a hundred or so other preachers of the gospel. It was an admonition to urge the church where we may be laboring to teach on the subject of

"withdrawing fellowship from every brother that walketh disorderly" (2 Thess. 3:6). Exercising corrective discipline should follow this public teaching. I've devoted nearly thirty years to teaching and admonishing brethren on this subject. Paul instructed the Corinthians, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ...to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:4-5). The apostle Paul was clear regarding the swift action that should be exercised on such a sinful brother. It is clear this delinquent brother was withdrawn from and he apparently was restored, according to Second Corinthians 2. The practicing of withdrawing fellowship from the disorderly is essential if we would keep the church pure. Those who serve as overseers of the church have the responsibility to execute this command without favoritism or bias. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch in behalf of your souls..." was the command of the writer of Hebrews (13:17).

Great courage is needed for the leadership to implement the command under consideration. The command to withdraw from those who walk "disorderly" (2 Thess. 3:6) was not a suggestion, nor was it optional. Paul said it was a command and excluding it would be to disregard God's sacred word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). There are individual Christians who live in sin and must be withdrawn from unless they repent. Furthermore, churches that disregard God's will and use false teachers should be urged to repent. If they will not, fellowship should be withdrawn. John wrote, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds" (2 Jno. 9-11). To my elder friends, Where has all the courage gone? And, pray tell, why are you not fulfilling this fundamental obligation?

The practice of church discipline is not a "once in a lifetime" act, but a continuous performance of God's will. Discipline is comprised of two parts, instructive and corrective. We must be mindful of the fact that we cannot practice discipline without the execution of both. Once while doing local work, my wife heard a new mother say, "You know I love little Johnny so much that nothing could compel me to spank him." Beloved, the new mom knew nothing about love, because love requires us to act so the child will know that we are not satisfied with bad behavior. When a child is properly disciplined this is proof of one's love for the child. Scriptural teaching on church discipline requires us to act, because love is what moves us to do so. God only has to state something once for it to be binding, provided it is within the covenant under which we live. But church discipline is mentioned a number of times, underscoring its importance.

Summarizing, "Where Has All The Courage Gone?" as the church faces the twenty-first century? The future may be bright and glorious if we surge forward in a positive manner, carrying out with precision the word of God. God's gospel retains the same power it did in the apostolic age, and can accomplish the same results. However, if we enter the new century with doubts and skepticism we will be fruitless in our endeavors. God's people in the twenty-first century cannot pick and choose what commands are agreeable or unpleasant to us. A host of faithful elders and preachers, in particular, are needed to harness courage and determination to wage the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12).

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Editor's Note:

Brother Bob Spurlin has preached the gospel for some thirty years, but some years ago was stricken with an incurable muscular disease, which has worsened to the extent that he is now confined to bed. In spite of his

severe physical problem he continues to be active in the Lord's kingdom by writing. He is to be commended for doing what he can do, writing, rather than giving up. Many people under the same circumstances would no doubt just give up. We should make use of our talents while we can. The time may come, and will some day, when our talents will be no more.

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## IN THE NEWS

**Clinton's Proclamation Concerning Sexual Perversion.** "NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2000 as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month." In connection with the above proclamation, the President encourages all Americans to encourage sexual perversion by accepting the ungodly practice. What a shame on our country and those worldly people in high places!

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**THE "JESUS" MOVIE.** Wayne Jackson points out a number of things about the CBS miniseries, Jesus, which was to air May 14th. Bro. Jackson says of the movie: "This concoction is aimed at turning 'long-held Christian tenets upside down.'" As is so common now, just another effort to remove from our society every vestige of Godly influence.

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**TED AND KAREN LINGREN RETURN TO U.S.** Due to civil unrest, caused by the Muslims, during which a number of people have been murdered, the Lingrens planned to leave Gen. Santos City, in the Philippines, June 13th and return to the U.S. by way of Cambodia, for a time. After some years in Iloilo City, Philippines (where I worked for several weeks) the Lingrens moved

to Gen. Santos City. My last trip to the Philippines I preached in a meeting at Gen. Santos City. It was when I left there on my way home that I had a near-death problem in Manila.

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**COLLINS SUMMER LECTURES AT DLU.** The lineup of speakers for the above event at David Lipscomb serves as a "Sign of the times." Among the speakers: Harold Shank, Randy Harris, Steve Flatt, Randy Becton, Gary Holloway, Jimmy Sites, F. LaGard Smith, Buddy Bell, Walt Leaver, Robert and Donna King, and Mike Tanaro. If I had a college-age child and wanted it to **depart from the faith**, I would send it to David Lipscomb. Is that what people want who send their children there????

**JUBILEE.** *Love* Lines carried the following: "A special added attraction of Jubilee 2000 is the Thursday night concert by Christian musicians Randy Phillips, Shawn Craig, and Dan Dean. Tickets for this performance are being offered first to Jubilee registrants and will be available to the general public if any remain after June 1. They will perform at Jubilee 2000 for the incredible low price of \$10. Fees are \$25 for single registrations..."

The Hardin Baptist Church, Hardin, KY, has about an half-page ad in the *Murray Ledger & Times*, announcing "Youth Explosion 2000." The ad says: "Join 'Steve' ["The Crocodile Hunter"] as he tracks down the most dangerous creature of all time." Another feature: "And Nightly Performances From the Hit Vocal Duo Of LaRue."

Remember the time when you wouldn't have seen such as this, even in the Baptist Church? Now, some of our brethren, Jubilee is an example, will not be outdone in the field of entertainment. One difference — Our brethren demand \$\$\$\$\$.

**READERS' RESPONSE**

"Brother Pigg, Thank you so much for sending the May 2000 issue. Here's a very small donation to a wonderful publication. Yours in Christ - **Bill Milner.**" - **Richmond, British Columbia.** *(It is good to hear from a brother in B.C. In years gone by I have enjoyed some travels in B. C. Thank you for the donation. We don't consider it "very small." If others in your area would be interested in Banner of Truth, we would be happy to send a bundle of 16 of each issue. - Editor).*

"Greetings in the name of the Lord! I hope this letter finds you well. I received my first pack of Banner of Truth, back issues, and they are quite refreshing and exhorting. Whatever amount of intimidation, discrediting or opposition should not move you. Yes, 'Endure the life of a good fighter.' Continue issuing B.O.T. for the benefit of informing and educating the brotherhood. I'm looking forward to receiving more of the B.O.T., especially the current ones. God bless you abundantly - **Macdonald Manyenga.**" - **Marondera, Zimbabwe.** *(We are very thankful that B.O.T. is beneficial to you. I have current issues ready to mail. I do receive some criticism, but that is expected. I'm more determined than ever to stand up for what is right in God's sight, and encourage as many others to do so as possible. May the Lord richly bless you in your service to Him - Editor).*

"Brother Pigg, I enjoy your writings on Eldership. I'm a deacon in the church and desire to be an elder in later years. We have a leadership class at our congregation that teaches young men to be leaders and is taught by two of our elders, and your writings confirm what they teach. Keep writing the good things that you do so I and others will be able to continue to carry on the Lord's work when the elders of today are gone. God bless you - **Casey.**" *(It would be such a great blessing if many others had the same concern about the church in the future. It would also be a great blessing in many elders saw the need for training young men to be leaders. One of the greatest weaknesses in the church today is, in my opinion, the lack of capable and qualified leadership - Editor).*

"Dear brother, We did not receive the May issue of your Banner of Truth. Would you please forward May and June issues to our congregation. We appreciate your faithful presentation of truth by your paper - **Willie Long.**" - **Watertown, TN.** (*I have mailed the May issue, but I'm now working on the June issue. It seems impossible for me to catch up. It may be that you will yet receive the May issue. The P.O. is some times very slow. If in the future you fail to receive B.O.T. let us know - Ed.*).

"I would just like to say that your articles in Banner of Truth are very helpful to my wife and me, as we are dealing with the same problems you are writing about. Mr. Shelly's influences are being felt everywhere. We left one congregation because of the elders' refusal to stop the false teaching, being told that it was not their responsibility to do so. If not theirs, then who is to guide the congregation? Please continue the good and much needed work of making brothers and sisters in Christ aware of these 'wolves in sheep's clothing.' Our prayers are with you - **J. Patrick.**" - **VA.** (*We are continually hearing from brethren all across the country, and even in foreign lands, and there are problems within the church in virtually every part of the world. Men like Rubel Shelly and others take their error to foreign lands as well as here at home. You have put your finger on one of the greatest problems within the Lord's body — The lack of qualified elders. The tragic thing about this is that not only will the elders have to give an account for their unfaithfulness, those who are led astray by them will also suffer for their sins. We are encouraged by brethren, like you, who are concerned about the well-being of the Lord's church. Those of us who share that same concern should encourage each other as much as possible. (p. 16)*

"Issues of BOT just get better and better. I also could not help thinking as I read the May issue — How can brethren profess to 'love the Truth' when they endorse, embrace, use, and teach from the NIV and other perversions of the scriptures? Or, for that matter, promote

writings by those who have departed from the Truth. I believe Satan has learned well how to 'divide and conquer' and that he literally believed the words of Christ when He said, 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' Truth can be the only basis for unity in the Lord's church today - **Don Layman.**" *(The current division within the church is a tragedy. But the only way God-approved unity can come is for those in error to give it up and repent. I can't understand some of our preaching brethren; they preach the truth but in practice they violate God's law on fellowship. This just brings about more division. Preaching the truth on one or more subjects doesn't give one a right to violate God's law on any other subject - Editor).*

"We just wanted to let you know how much we appreciate Banner of Truth. Enclosed please find a check to help in your stand for the truth - **Ted & Vella Harshbarger.**" *(Your help is greatly appreciated, as is your interest in the truth - Editor).*

Editor's Note: Some of our readers know that my wife, Naomi, has been having some physical problems this year. Earlier in the year she had surgery on a carotid artery. An unsuccessful effort was made to put a stint in a renal artery. July 10th she went to the Vanderbilt Medical facility in Nashville. The doctor was able to put a stint in both renal arteries. We came home next day. It is believed her blood pressure problem will be greatly improved.

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**Please note the above address is a new one.**

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