

## BANNER OF TRUTH December 2002

### Looking Back Over Year 2002

Generally it is the case that it is better to be looking **Forward** rather than **Backward**. When I graduated from high school in 1942, our class motto was: "Forward ever, backward never." The apostle Paul said, with reference to his pursuit of that eternal goal, "...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14). What a worthy goal for the future.

As profitable as it is to **Look Forward**, it can also be very worthwhile to **Look Back**. For example, just think of the benefits by looking back to the Old Testament scriptures. In this regard Paul said, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

We cannot look back in the sense of thinking we have done enough to allow us to cease from our serving of the Lord, that is, a vacation for the rest of our lives. We can, however, review the past to give us hope and enable us to profit from our past mistakes. The apostle Paul obviously gave the ultimate in serving the Lord.

As he neared the end of his earthly life he expressed the utmost confidence in his future reward. This was on the basis of his serving until the end. He said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not unto me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

If Paul could live in such a way as to warrant such confidence in his future reward, there is no reason why brethren cannot do the same in our time, as we look backward and forward. This involves looking back and also forward.

**Banner of Truth.** We are now in our eleventh year of publishing the paper. We began with a mailing list of just over 200, and in 2002 we saw that number reach almost 7,000. The response from our readers has been most encouraging, with at least 95% of it very positive. We expect, and do receive, some criticism. There is one interesting thing about the criticism, and that is, nearly all of it has such similar characteristics that it could have almost been written by the same person. There is almost no scripture set forth in these criticisms. This leads us to believe the critics are generally simply expressing their dislike for something which has come from God's word. Hardly ever is there any mention of a scripture which has been violated. This is somewhat disappointing in that we don't want to be in error in what we write and carry in *Banner of Truth*. When critics are faced by some truth which they do not want to respect, it is not unusual for them to criticize and say unkind things about the one who sets forth that truth.

During 2002, we have not seen the state of the church improve. To the contrary the incidence of unscriptural innovations seems to be speeding up. We hear very often about things which are happening which would not if the brethren loved the Lord and His truth as they should. More and more brethren are opting for the man-made religion of denominationalism and its "doctrines" of men. Even right here in our own area, where the Lord's church was quite strong, the majority of congregations are no longer striving to walk in "the old paths...the good way" of Jeremiah 6:16 While we long for the time when more brethren will awaken to reality and see the most serious and urgent need to return to the Lord's way, that time is not yet.

One important lesson we can learn by looking back to the year 2002, is that error will not be defeated by anything other than God's powerful word. Error will not die of its own accord, and neither will it be thwarted in growth by sweeping it under the rug, as some have believed. There was such a great need for more brave and dedicated brethren to stand up in support of the truth. God's word says we are to "Contend for the faith" (Jude 3). Paul says, "stand fast in the faith" (I Cor. 16:13). Fellowship with unsound congregations and individual brethren should be stopped. As long as brethren fellowship those who "abide not in the doctrine of Christ" (2 Jno. 9), they are bidding Godspeed to error.

We have been greatly encouraged by the great way in which our concerned brethren have supported *Banner of Truth* financially. So many have chosen to be "fellowhelpers" to the truth, thereby relieving us of the need to ask for support. The voices of support for our part in the Lord's work have been greatly appreciated as well as the financial support which has made our work possible.

We owe a special thanks to those who have given physical help in getting the paper ready to mail each month. Some from both Dexter and Hickory Grove have given of their time. Many people-days are involved in getting out every issue of BOT. We thank brother Garland Robinson for doing our mailing labels. We appreciate Hickory Grove serving as our sponsor.

How grateful we would be if some retired couple would move to our area, and help us with the paper. If we had more help we could increase our circulation to 10,000 or even more.

Looking back over 2002 brings to mind, with sadness, the growing evil of liberalism, It is wreaking such havoc within our Lord's precious body, the church. In December of this year I will have been preaching fifty years. I've seen changes which many younger people have not seen, and those changes were more rapid than ever last year. I can look back to the time when a very great majority of congregations were considered as being faithful or sound. In traveling about the country it was not a great problem to find a sound congregation with which to worship. Now, as I look about, and hear from brethren all across this country and from some foreign countries, the spiritual scene is no less than appalling.

Cries from concerned brethren ring out with great urgency with respect to the state of the church. How sad it is when brethren, even in areas where there are many congregations, cannot find a place to worship with a good conscience. I think often of the voices heard from brethren in their 70s, 80s, or even 90s. This is not to say that younger brethren are not concerned, and thanks be to God for those who are, but with the passing on of elderly, faithful brethren the scene can only worsen.

Much of the above can be attributed to what we call LIBERALISM. As I am using the term here, liberalism is a failure to respect God's word and abide therein. It is to loose where God has not loosed. It is a failure to take God at his word.

To give a good view of how **liberalism** has adversely affected our Lord's church within the past year and before, we are carrying a long article by our brother Roelf Ruffner, entitled, "The Tragic Fruit Of Liberalism." We commend the article and encourage our readers to study it carefully, and then rise to the task of helping to control this tragic evil.

The article will begin on page 4.

Walter W. Pigg, Editor

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## ***“We’ll Sing Them In”***

I visited a congregation last summer where a new thing to me transpired. A short time before the worship hour was to begin, about half the congregation was in the auditorium, and various ones were milling about. Suddenly, the song leader started singing, and a few others joined in. People began to come into the auditorium. The lack of reverence and respect were evident. After the service I brought this up to the song leader, and I believe one of the elders. I related to them how concerned I was that an act of worship, singing, would be used in such a way. The response I got was: ***“We sing them in.”*** If one act of worship can be used in such a way in pure bedlam, what about another? Would it be in order to “pray them in”? Or Lord’s Supper them in? - Editor

## **News and Notes**

A new set of commentaries is now being advertised. The commentaries are called: **Truth For Today Series**. It is being published by **Resource Publications** of Searcy Arkansas. The series will have 40 volumes, at a price of \$26.00 each.

Twenty-eight writers will be involved. Of those writers I know only a few of them by name. Of those I know, a number of them have been known for false teaching and/or compromisers of the truth. I see a name or two which would not normally be associated with several of the writers.

Knowing what a number of the writers and what they have stood for, I would not be surprised at the error which will be taught in these books. Brethren, error is having a heyday! Let us stand for Truth.

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## **Having financial problems? Would you like to solve them?**

The church in Farmington, Kentucky is purporting to offer a solution to financial problems. The Jan. 5, 2003 issue of their bulletin, *The Pillar*, discusses this solution. Mike Ray, Farmington’s preacher says: “I’m excited to tell you that we will be offering Dave Ramsey’s Financial Peace University program here beginning in January.” Mike then goes on to laud Ramsey’s program. He says further: “Following the morning worship service today and next Sunday (and at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>), you are invited to stay for an orientation and registration session for Financial Peace University....the classes will start on January 28 and will meet at 7 p.m. each Tuesday night....”

It is said further: “All material is biblically based and taught via entertaining video by Dave Ramsey. Ramsey’s “team” is made up of five people, including two FUP Church Advisors and an FUP Church Director. There’s no indication any of the team are New Testament Christians. The *Mayfield Messenger* of 1/11/03 Advertises the program at Farmington.

Does the above sound like a work of the church? If it is, why not provide programs on an unlimited number of subjects, any of which might help people in their secular pursuits? We just never know what to expect next, within the church. - - Editor

## The Tragic Fruit Of Liberalism

Roelf L. Ruffner

“Ye shall know them by their fruits, Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:16:20).

In the short passage above the Master lays down a **universal principle** concerning false teachers and false doctrine: “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” This principle is especially self-evident in the area of religious liberalism. What is **liberalism**? Quite simply, it is loosing what God has not loosed. It is an attempt to “go beyond the things which are written” (I Cor. 4:6, ASV). For a generation it has brought havoc to the body of Christ.

But brethren are often surprised to find purveyors of this false way as “nice guys.” They should not expect to find a prickly pear cactus, with spines a bristling in warning; rather a wolf in “sheep’s clothing” (Matt. 7:15). Satan’s servants often transform themselves to resemble “ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:14-15). Evil is often quite attractive as Adam and Eve discovered in the Garden of Eden (I Jno. 2:16). We should always “try the spirits” (I Jno. 4:1), by the word of God to determine their validity.

Yet liberalism, after a period of ferment, can bear tragic fruit. It is a rotten, putrid thing to the nostrils of the Father. In the following we shall examine some of this “evil fruit” of this “corrupt tree.”

### GROWING DISOBEDIENCE

A fruit of the faithful Christian is obedience to his Lord. As Jesus’ obedience to the Father was born out of love, so we should display loving obedience to Him. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jn. 14:15). “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works” (James 2:18).

Yet liberalism, often dripping with piety and religious enthusiasm, disregards the word of God in favor of novelty and mimicry. An example is the unauthorized practice of **handclapping in worship**. Or as the Pentecostals are fond of saying, “Let’s give Jesus a hand!” But the New Testament is silent on the subject. Why? Because it is unauthorized. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all *in the name of the Lord Jesus*, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17). There is no command, approved example or inference authorizing us to clap in worship. The Bible does authorize us to “sing” with our hearts (Eph. 5:19); continue to “pray” (Acts 2:42); “preach” the gospel (Rom. 10:14); “partake” of the Lord’ Supper (Acts 20:7); and, “give” as God has given us (I Cor. 16:2). I have as much authority to replace the emblems of the Lord’s table with pizza and milk as I do to clap in worship. None! But the spirit of disobedience so prevalent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century knows no bounds.

As a preacher I have often wondered that if it is “all right” to clap in appreciation of a sermon, why can’t one “boo” as well? If not, why not? Or has the lack of applause become an indication or sign of disapproval? Those so inclined to clap show a low regard for an understanding of the doctrine of authority in the Bible. As a brother once wrote, “The only one authorized to applaud in worship is God.” We have not come to worship to be entertained, but rather “that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (I Pet. 2:9). Let us not be in rebellion against the living God as the vast majority of humanity is. “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).

## RAMPANT WORLDLINESS

There should be no doubt in the mind of the child of God concerning this present world. “And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness” (I Jn. 5:19). This world has many allurements for the fleshly part of man but none for those seeking a closer walk with God. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (I Jn. 2:15-17). No **friend of the world** can remain a friend of God. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jas. 4:4).

In times past the message of the church of Christ was clear – NO WORLDLINESS ALLOWED. Gospel preachers vigorously condemned “drinking, dancing and debauchery.” Members were given “book, chapter and verse” condemning sin. There was no doubt to the world where we stood. The message was clearly presented from the Scriptures so all could understand. The clarion call for repentance reverberated through our meeting places and was echoed in the lives of faithful Christians. Worldly Christians who, after much pleading, did not repent of their sins were withdrawn from (2 Thess. 3:6). The cleansed body of Christ went on to convert millions the world over.

Liberalism today will have nothing to do with such preaching/teaching. It is too “judgmental”! They teach **moral relativism** filled with vagueness and wantonness. They dare not speak against what the Bible condemns! For example, the drinking of alcoholic beverages, whether socially or privately, is condemned in the Bible as harmful to the body (cf. Prov. 23:31-32; Hab. 2:5,15; I Cor.6:12, 19-20). Liberals tippy toe around these passages and claim that only “drunkenness” or public intoxication is sinful. So they wink at and even embrace social or “moderate” drinking. What about such examples of moderation as “recreational drug use” or “occasional marital unfaithfulness”? “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9)? There can be no compromise of God’s word, no peace treaty with the devil. “And what concord hath Christ with Belial?” (2 Cor. 6:15).

The same can be said of the teaching against **dancing**. The Bible has many warnings about “lasciviousness” and “revellings” being activities obvious or “manifest” as “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19-21). The modern dance has caused many to fall into Satan’s trap and be lost. “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:28). But liberalism sees nothing wrong with the modern dance. I remember a few years ago listening to a tape of a liberal preacher’s sermon. In it he derided the idea that dancing was sinful. He admitted allowing his daughter to go to dances. On her first such dance he secretly followed the couple to the dance so he could be sure they had arrived safely. He should have been more concerned about her soul’s safety!

As our world is drawn even deeper into the pit of sin, many Christians stumble down the “broad way” behind them (Matt. 7:13-14). Liberalism with its message of **toleration of sin** is at least partially to blame. In the Day of Judgment many on their way to eternal punishment will look back and plead with their liberal teachers, “Why didn’t you teach me to judge?” Brethren, we must all teach others, young and old, how to judge between good and evil, between worldliness and righteousness. “Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (Jn. 7:24).

## FELLOWSHIPING THE DEVIL’S TREE

Satan, the father of all lies and liars (Jn. 8:44), is desperately trying to thwart the church that Jesus built. He knows it is the home of those who have accepted the **one true way to heaven** (Jn. 14:6). He knows that he and his children are headed for the “second death” (Rev. 20:14-15). For the last two thousand years he has been cranking out flawed versions of the church built upon the rock of religious error and deception. Millions have flocked to their beautiful edifices seeking salvation but finding only damnation. For centuries many of these sects have even claimed to be “Christian” or

rather a denomination; a part of the church that Jesus built. But the faithful child of the King has examined this pseudo-Christianity and found it to be but the evil fruit of the corrupt tree. The Bible showed them wanting and destined to be “rooted up” when the Son returns on judgment day (Matt. 15:13).

In generations past the churches of Christ were known as enemies of denominationalism. The religious sects and their damnable doctrines were denounced from the pulpit. Many a chart, chalkboard and bed sheet sermon illustrated the evil of fellowshiping with the devil’s tree. New Testament Christians were known as kind and neighborly to their religious friends but intolerant of their false religion and eager to show them the error of their ways. Often this was accomplished by vigorous public debate but usually across the kitchen table with a cup of coffee and an open Bible. Denominational hirelings loathed us but their members had a respect for us as “the people of the Book.” Millions were drawn away from the devil’s tree to the “tree of life” and fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

For many, those days are only a fading memory. Our pulpits are filled with men who have heads packed with denominational drivel rather than the word of God. They preach tolerance of religious error and the fellowshiping of denominations as “Folks who love the Lord like we do!” But religious division is a sin, even within the church. To the church at Corinth, Paul wrote, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all **speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions** among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (I Cor. 1:10). We must know that if the Lord would not permit division within His church, He surely would not sanction the divided religious world built by men.

Can any honest student of the word of God say that we should just “agree to disagree” with the man-made churches and “forget our differences” for the sake of unity? Such compromise is foreign to New Testament Christianity. “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

A case in point is how increasingly preachers are joining the local “Ministerial Alliance.” Years ago our brethren avoided these denominational odd fellows as hypocritical. Many represent religious groups which have glaring disagreements in doctrine amongst each other. But they feign fellowship for the sake of “good works” they try to do. This façade of good feeling is often only skin deep and has long ago given up on the true unity that Jesus requires (Jn. 17:17-21). True Christian fellowship is based upon the truth of God’s word not on the toleration of sin. But many of my preaching brethren are enamored by religious piety and “touchy-feely” religion. Besides, they can sit around the table with these folks because they believe the same things they do. They have drunk from the well of denominational error for so long they don’t accept Truth anymore.

Brethren, **the issue of fellowship** is fast becoming the main issue in the churches of Christ. Increasingly many of our brethren are fellowshiping the denominational world. It is a tragic fruit of a generation of liberalism in the church. But we do not have to be on board the “good ship fellowship” which is destined for perdition. We can continue to only fellowship those whom the Lord fellowships. Our guide for fellowship is the word of God, not what we feel. And the word of God warns us concerning fellowshiping the devil’s tree: “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 houses, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 Jn. 9-11).

### EVENTUAL UNIVERSALISM

We must never forget the classic definition of religious liberalism: “loosing what God has not loosed.” Liberalism is always seeking a bigger and bigger tent of fellowship; not by evangelism but by embracing those God does not embrace. The denominations are no longer seen as enemies of the cross but “friendly folks.” The body of Christ in a universal sense is no longer spoken of as “the church,” but

as “our fellowship;” a subtle indication that there are more on board the “good ship fellowship” than just New Testament Christians. The logical conclusion of this man-made unity is Universalism or the belief that all souls will eventually find salvation by the grace of God.

An inspired preacher once wrote, “...and there is no new thing under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9). In the area of religious liberalism this axiom is certainly true. A case in point is the **digression** in the Lord’s church during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Starting in the 1840s, brethren in America began to digress from the pattern of the New Testament by the introduction of the American Missionary Society. After the Civil War mechanical instruments of music were introduced into many meeting places. Concurrent with this trend was the acceptance of denominations and the denial of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. Brave soldiers of the Lord such as Ben Franklin (the preacher), David Lipscomb and others fought this digression from the pulpit and with the pen. But their valiant efforts could not stem the tide of apostasy. Bible-believing brethren were often forced to leave congregations where they had been members all their lives since their conversion. By the beginning of the twentieth century it was obvious that there was now a distinct denomination called the Disciples of Christ or Christian Church, which had left the churches of Christ, the church that Jesus purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

As time passed and liberalism had its way, this denomination drifted farther out from the will of God. Before long they had women elders, deacons and ministers; **full fellowship** with other denominations/false religions in the World Council of Churches; denial of the Virgin Birth of the Lord, along with His miracles recorded in the New Testament. Now included would be the acceptance of unrepented homosexuals, The list of digressions from the Truth could go on and on. Now, all but a tiny conservative faction have embraced Universalism in all but name only. They have replaced New Testament Christianity with a Social Gospel and political activism. “And also all that generation was gathered to their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Jud. 2:10).

Present day liberalism in the churches of Christ is following this same cycle of apostasy. How long will it be before the same congregations which fellowship the denominations open their arms to anyone: Moslem, Hindu, etc.” This may seem farfetched to some but the pull of religious pluralism and “tolerance” in our society seems to become stronger day by day. And these brethren are extremely sensitive to what the world thinks. They brag about being a “seeker-friendly” church and “meeting people where they are.” If our Lord had cared what the world “thinks” He wouldn’t have died on the cross. The next logical step in this path of digression is **Universalism**. And with the fast paced changes in our world it may not take as long as in previous generations to get there. Brethren, when you leave the authority of the Bible (Col. 3:17) behind, ANY THING is possible!

The fruits of liberalism are as tragic as sin in itself, separation from God. Many today are gobbling up the rotten fruit of that corrupt tree eagerly. Many are following “blind guides” destined for the pit of hell (Matt. 15:14). Only the Judgment Day will reveal the damage done to the cause of Christ by liberalism and digression.

### **TWO IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER**

1. We do not have to go the “easy, broad way” our liberal brethren are taking (Matt. 7:13-14). We may not have the numbers, facilities and resources they have, but we still have the Truth. We still have the Bible, the love and fellowship of God, and the unity which faithful adherence to His word supplies. “Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9). Do we need anything else to conquer our world for the Master? “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

2. We have an obligation (“burden” – Gal. 6:1,2) to lovingly warn our beloved brethren which are caught up in the net of liberalism. They need to come out of this ungodliness. They need to separate themselves from liberal congregations or those with liberal tendencies that will not repent

before the Lord “will remove thy candlestick out of his place” (Rev. 2:1-5) “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord...” (2 Cor. 6:17).

May the Lord bless His church!

- 3418 Meadowlark, Carlsbad, NM 88220

**Editor’s Note:** The above article brings to mind how that many of our brethren of the past worked so hard to get people to come out of denominationalism and accept the true way of the Lord. Their efforts were very successful, but the devil would not rest until he interfered with this great progress. How sad it is now to see so many of our brethren trying, and succeeding, in taking many brethren back into that which many sought to extricate themselves from. Our Lord must be greatly displeased, and so should we!

## **Notice!**

### **Special Announcements**

**Forwarding *Banner of Truth*.** Many individuals or congregations receive bundles of BOT. These are **NOT TO BE** mailed to individuals unless a 37 cent stamp is added. Someone in Arkansas dropped 13 copies of BOT in a mail box, without paying postage on them. The Postal Department sent them back to me and charged 37 cents for each piece. **Please Take Note!!!**

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**New E-Mail Address. My e-mail address has been changed to:**  
[wpiggbot@earthlink.net](mailto:wpiggbot@earthlink.net) Please note!

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**Cataract Surgery.** I am to have cataract surgery on both eyes. It is more than a month away, but it is possible that it will interfere with my work to some extent. I ask for your prayers that all may go well with the surgery. - - *Editor*

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**Planned Articles.** Quite some time ago I had planned a number of articles, but have not been able to do them. Some of the articles I have planed include: 1. An Update on Islam. 2. The Lads to Leaders program. 3. The Rise and Fall of the Madison church. 4. The Secularizing of American Society, and a number of others.

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**Changing Address????** If you wish to continue to receive *Banner of Truth*, send us your change of address. This will save us \$\$\$ and you will not miss an issue!



**Third Annual  
Banner of Truth  
Lectures – June  
23 – 26, 2003**

**Theme: *Back to the Old Paths, The Good Way***

**20 Speakers – 28 Subjects**

The Lectures are for all those who love the Truth of God. There will be a good number of preachers present, but there will also be many who are not preachers. Many who have attended the *Banner of Truth* lectures before have expressed how much they enjoyed the lessons, and the association with brethren of like faith.

The facilities for the lectures are in the Curris Center Theater on the campus of Murray State, here in Murray, KY. There are comfortable seats and a good sound system, etc. This is an ideal opportunity to be built up in the faith and strengthen the Lord's church in this area and in other places.

We encourage people to make their plans now. We trust that activities of congregations will be scheduled to leave this date open, if possible.

## **When Spiritual Maturity Is Lacking**

Viewing the multitude of problems which are plaguing the church today, brethren are asking, and rightly so, "What's our problem?" If we reduce it to a single problem it would be **A Lack of Spiritual Maturity**. To this one problem may be attributed a wide variety of problems, a few of which we shall consider briefly in the following discussion.

**1. ENVYING, STRIFE, DIVISIONS** resulted in the church at Corinth due to carnality. Paul had fed them with "milk" rather than "meat" because they were not able to take the "meat." They had not grown spiritually as they should (I Cor. 3:1-3). When brethren "walk as men" today the same results will follow as in the days of Paul. Truth does not produce strife and division; it is when truth is replaced by the ways of men that such occurs. Spiritual maturity respects God's truth and it is the lack of such maturity that has fostered division in so many congregations of the Lord's people.

**2. FAILURE TO WALK WORTHY** may be attributed to the absence of knowledge and respect for God's will. Paul prayed for and desired that the Colossians "might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:9-10). The lack of study which is necessary to gain the proper knowledge of God's word (2 Tim. 2:15) is having a telling effect. Coupled with the lack of knowledge is a lack of respect for what is known. Self deceit results when people are not "doers" of the word, but "hearers only" (Jas. 1:22). People used to ask, "How could Pat Boone go into Pentecostalism?" He had enough knowledge to know better, but evidently did not have proper respect for what he knew. This happens quite often. It is hard to believe that some of our brethren today do not have the knowledge to know that their actions are not in harmony with the teaching of God's word.

**3. THE WEAK ARE NOT RESTORED OR STRENGTHENED** by the spiritually immature. Paul commands: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness...” (Gal. 6:1). Note that it is the “spiritual” (mature) who have the responsibility, not the weak brethren. If all those who have grown weak and died (spiritually) could be restored, as we have the responsibility to try to do (Jas. 5:19-20), the church buildings in many places would not hold the crowd for services. But there are not many spiritually mature who are devoting their efforts to the task.

**4. WRONGDOING IS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE** when brethren are spiritually weak. When members of the church do that which is wrong there is evidence of spiritual sickness. Spiritual sickness, if not cured, will result in death. The spiritually immature cannot be counted on to apply God’s remedy. “All the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) is not applied in the proper dosage. “False brethren” may be “Given place by subjection” (Gal. 2:5), thereby not “allowing the truth of the gospel to continue.” Man’s wisdom often refuses to solve problems by “nipping in the bud” for fear of making someone unhappy. It is tragic that the immature are often willing to offend the Lord rather than offend some wrongdoer, but so it goes. When wrongdoing cannot be corrected, God’s remedy is “church discipline,” even to the point of withdrawing fellowship. Note such passages as: Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5; 2 Thess. 3:6; 2 Jno. 9-11. But this “forgotten command” is not likely to be obeyed by the immature, and there are few who are mature enough to respect God’s will in this important matter.

**5. A LACK OF LOVE WHICH “REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY”** (I Cor. 13:6) is evident among the spiritually immature. Pure love, that which we are to have for God and for our brethren, has no pleasure in that which is error, much less rejoices in it. It rejoices in the Truth. Peter says, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (I Pet. 1:22). A lack of love is often reflected in a lack of love and appreciation for God’s truth. Love, in its highest form (agape), is often replaced with a perverted love which

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condones evil rather than opposes it. John says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments...” (I John 5:3).

**6. A LACK OF STABILITY** is a sure sign of spiritual weakness. James says, “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (Jas. 1:8). To be “double minded” is to be unsteady, fickle and undependable. One of the qualifications of a deacon is that he be “not double tongued” (I Tim. 3:8). The one who lacks maturity is likely to sway with the wind, to follow the majority, and be conspicuously absent when there is need to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

**7. THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS** may seem reasonable to those who have not grown spiritually as they should. Some think that if the motive is right and the **end** is right, all **means** are permissible. There is little doubt but that those with a right motive have contributed greatly to the variety of unscriptural innovations which are now seen within the church. Due to a lack of knowledge they are not aware that we must have scriptural authorization for that which we practice. We must never act upon the basis of what pleases us, but rather upon **WHAT PLEASES GOD**. The spiritually mature recognize this. However, not all that practice the philosophy that **end justifies the means** are unlearned in God’s word. A case in point is seen in the efforts of some of our brethren to uphold the use of women translators. When “the end justifies the means” philosophy is practiced, there is evidence of a disregard for God’s word as our only source of authority in matters religious. This is spiritual immaturity at its worst!

**8. LACK OF COURAGE TO REPENT** may characterize the immature. Though the necessity of repentance is clearly set forth, it is not unusual for supposed repentance to be nothing more than a farce. For example, when one says, “If I have done anything wrong,” a lack of

acknowledgment of sin is evident. True repentance acknowledges sin. True repentance does not try to uphold wrong or justify sinful action.

Brethren, we need to get back to THE BOOK. We need to rely upon the “sincere milk of the word” to produce spiritual growth. We, as God’s people, are being “destroyed for lack of knowledge” as in the days of Hosea (4:6), and until we commence to grow spiritually our problems can only increase and become more pronounced.

Note: The above article was originally run in *Banner of Truth* in 1997. The need for **Spiritual Maturity** is just as great now as then. - - Walter W. Pigg

## Can One Trust What God Has Said Regarding Salvation?

Marvin L. Weir

God not only can, but should be trusted when He addresses any subject. Herein lies the problem – man does not always do **what he should** do when it comes to *believing and acting* upon what God has decreed.

The September 7, 2002 *Dallas Morning News* (Section G, Religion) reports that “the Rev. Carlton Pearson, the high profile pastor of Higher Dimensions Family Church, is under fire from fellow evangelicals for teaching that almost everyone will be saved, even those who do not accept Jesus.” This proclamation was even rejected by his [ultra liberal] alma mater, Oral Roberts University, and they removed Mr. Pearson from serving on the board of the school.

Mr. Pearson stated, “Most people...will go to heaven because of Calvary, because of the unconditional love of God and the redemptive work of the cross.” The article ends by stating, “Hell is for those few who ‘deny in their hearts that there is a creator, who have disrespect for the deity.’”

Let us go back to the Bible. **First**, the word of God teaches the opposite of Mr. Pearson regarding those who will be saved. The One who died on Calvary’s cross declared, “*Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it*” (Matt. 7:13-14). Mr. Pearson teaches that most people will go to heaven, the Lord teaches that most will be lost. What qualifies Mr. Pearson to be believed above God?

**Second**, the Word of God teaches the opposite of Mr. Pearson regarding those who refuse to accept Christ and His teaching. The Bible says, “*Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son*” (2 Jno. 9). Jesus has never given any hope of salvation to one that refuses Him and His word. Instead, the Master forthrightly declared, “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*” (Jno. 12:48).

**Third**, the Word of God does **not** teach that “most people... will go to heaven because of Calvary, because of the unconditional love of God and the redemptive work of the cross.” These things are all part of God’s grand scheme of redemption but they do not negate man’s obedience to the will of God. The truth of the matter is clearly stated by the apostle Paul, who said that when the Lord returns He will render “*vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might*” (2 Thess. 1:8-9). We are grateful for the love of God that allowed Christ to die

for us while we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8), but such does not mean that we can continue in sin, abuse God's grace (Rom. 6:1), and go to heaven.

**Fourth**, Mr. Pearson contends that Hell is reserved for those few who "deny in their hearts that there is a creator [and] who have a disrespect for deity." Does Mr. Pearson explain how it is possible for one to respect deity while refusing to accept Jesus? How can one respect deity and refuse to do the will of deity?

The dictionary defines respect as a "willingness to show consideration or appreciation" and "the state of being regarded with honor or esteem." The Bible equates respect for God with doing His will. The Psalmist said, "*Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way*" (Psa. 119:127-128). Moses told the children of Israel, "*Ye shall observe to do therefore as Jehovah your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the way which Jehovah your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess*" (Deut. 5:32-33). One does not respect God who refuses to **do** what God has commanded to be done.

Jesus said, "*If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments*" (Jno. 14:15). Can one "respect" deity while failing to love the Lord? Absolutely not! Mr. Pearson is thus wrong in contending that most people will be saved. Many who believe in a Creator and think that they respect God will be lost. It is as Christ said, "*Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven*" (Matt. 7:21).

There is a plan of salvation available to all: Hear God's word and believe (Rom. 10:14; Heb. 11:6). Repent (Lk. 13:3). Confess faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9-10). Be baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:27). To refuse to obey Christ is to be eternally lost (Heb. 5:8-9). Is your trust in God or in man?

-- P. O. Box 975, Rowlett, TX 75030

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## Synagogues And The Denominations

Alan Adams, Assistant Editor

In recent weeks I heard an old argument that I hadn't heard for quite some time. Some people believe that Paul's going into the Jewish synagogues, and later his participation in the purification rites in the temple (Acts 20:20-26), provides justification for Christians going into and visiting the denominations, and even participating with them in various activities. Let's see.

First, I should make it clear that Christians may go anywhere, anytime, if their purpose is to "stand and speak...to the people the words of this Life" (Acts. 5:20). I was once invited and went to a denominational church for the express purpose of "preach[ing] the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). I would do the same thing now if given the opportunity. I lovingly, yet clearly showed them the error of denominationalism and the errors of their denomination in particular.

What I'm talking about is brethren going to and participating with denominations in a social, congenial, "I'm-OK-you're-OK" setting. I'm talking about going out and eating fried chicken with, singing with, and to; and, in general playing with and having fun with man-made religions, getting together and having a "high 'ole time." Does Paul's going into the synagogues, or even latter participating in the purification rite have anything to do with all this? No.

“When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4). This is a wonderful passage that relates to the purpose and the plan of God. Working through many centuries of human history, God carefully laid into place every thing that was needed to bring the Christ into this world and allow Christianity to rapidly spread all over the globe. The law of Moses, *given by God* to the Jews, accomplished its temporary role of “tutor” bringing people “unto the Christ” (Gal. 3:25). The synagogue was an important part of God’s plan. After the dispersion of the Jews, and particularly the carrying away of the Jews into Babylon, the synagogue became a part of the Jewish religious life. Being taken away from their homes, synagogues, local assembly places, allowed Jews in alien homes to be able to assemble together for worship (see Eze. 14:1; 20:1). We’re told that the Perfect Jew, Jesus, during his preaching work in Galilee, “came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read (Lk. 4:16).

The apostles had been commissioned to go first “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:6). Paul said the gospel was “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). When Paul went out on his missionary journeys, as he entered each city, he looked first for a synagogue. It is easy to see the hand of God in history and He brought about the establishment of the local synagogues which served as the perfect springboard for the spreading of the Gospel. Now, what, if anything, does all this have to do with denominations? Nothing.

One big difference between the Law of Moses and synagogues on the one hand, and denominations on the other hand is: The Law and the synagogue were of *Divine* (read it again) origin, and the denominations are of *Human* origin. Denominations, usually called “churches,” are religions established and founded by men, not God. They never had, and do not how have, the *Divine* right to exist. The Law and the synagogue were of *Divine* origin and played an important part in God’s plan to bring Christ into the world. Trying to compare denominations and the synagogues in the New Testament is a classic case of comparing apples and oranges; in fact it’s worse.

We read of the “Samaritans” (Jno. 4:39) in the New Testament. When Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, the conquerors carried away the most able and talented Jews, such as Daniel and his friends (Dan. 1:4-7). They also brought conquered people from other places and put them in with the Jews that were left. These foreigners and Jews intermingled resulting in a people called “Samaritans.” Unfortunately, the Samaritan’s religion also became a mixture of Judaism and paganism (2 Ki. 17:24ff). Later, the Samaritans wanted to help in rebuilding the temple. They were told “No,” and this set in motion a great hostility between them and the Jews (Ezek. 4; Neh. 4). The Samaritans later built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim and set up their own system of worship and priesthood. So, there were *two* temples; both claiming the right to exist and both claiming to be of *Divine* origin. This gives us the background of John 4, where Jesus met the Samaritan woman at Sychar, where Jacob’s well was (Jno. 4:4-5).

This woman was smart. She perceived Jesus to be a “prophet” (Jno. 4:19) and so asked His opinion about an age-old argument between Samaritans and Jews. Which is the true temple, the true place of worship? The one “in this mountain” or the one “in Jerusalem” (v. 20). Jesus first affirmed that the “hour cometh” when the question of which place will no longer apply; but, in the meantime, according to the Law of Moses, He said, “Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews” (v. 22). The temple in Mt. Gerizim had no right to exist. There was one, and only one, true temple of God, and today there is one, and only one, true temple, the church (Eph. 2:21; 4:4; I Cor. 3:16-17). Denominations are simply *other* “temples.”

If you’re going to make comparisons between synagogues and denominational churches, then you might as well compare the temple in Mt. Gerizim and in Jerusalem. Can you conceive of a faithful, knowledgeable Jew going up to Gerizim and visiting their worship services, and participating in their activities? Neither can I fathom a faithful and knowledgeable Christian doing the same today with the denominations.

In Hebrews 7, there is the marvelous discussion about the priesthood of Jesus. He is a “priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” (v. 17). Since it is both true that Jesus is a priest and the Law would not permit him to be one; then, the conclusion is obvious: “For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law” (v. 12). Jesus is “a priest forever” (v. 21), and consequently the law has “changed” forever. No one today lives under the Law of Moses. Jesus “took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross” (Co.l. 2:14). All human beings, “every creature,” are amenable to the gospel of Christ, the New Testament (Mk. 16:15-16).

But now, when the Bible says that there is a change of Law; it must be remembered that this is a change from one God-given Law to another God-given Law. You see, on the surface, it is clear that this has no connections whatsoever with denominations. Denominations are not God-given in any sense of the term. They have no relation to God-given Law, whether Old or New. Let it be affirmed that no Christian today, could, with God’s approval, participate in a Nazarite vow with its attendant sacrifices as was done in Acts 21. As to going into synagogues: that would be no problem if the sole purpose was to refute error and teach truth (Acts 17:1-4). But, let me hasten to add, wryly, the picture of, say, Paul, Barnabas, Silas and Timothy forming a quartet and going around to sing in the synagogues and calling it teaching just doesn’t fit into all this.

But, back to the Nazarite vow. Was Paul wrong? Did he contradict earlier teaching? Is this a pattern for today? No. No. No. All of this can be understood if you stop and ponder the procedure that is involved when you change from one law to another law. And in this case, it’s not just a matter of changing or altering one piece of legislation, as might be done by our congress, but rather changing from one Law System to another Law System. We’re talking complete overhaul here. This is a procedure that involves time and steps. It involves complete and careful transition. The Book of Acts is a record, among other things, of the transition from the Old Law to the New Law.

It is true that the Law was “nailed to the cross” More precisely, it is true that the “law changed” after Jesus ascended back to Heaven, because “if he were on earth, he should not be a priest” (Heb. 8:4). But, this change of Law must be announced to the whole world, thus the Holy Spirit was sent to “guide” the apostles “into all truth” (Jno. 16:13) and to go with them into “all the world” and to “confirm” their preaching with “signs” (Mk. 16:15-20). The Book of Acts records this announcement of the law change with all of its implications. But this announcement didn’t take place in the “twinkling of an eye.” It took time. It was a step-by-step, orderly, methodical process, as are all of God’s doings. From the apostles’ baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2) to the closing of the book with Paul in prison is a period of about 33 years. It was during that time that we see the careful unfolding of God’s Plan and the incremental growth in understanding on the part of the apostles as to the Law of Moses and its relationship to the Law of Christ. Sometimes we fail to remember that we are reading all this after the fact. We have the whole story before us with time and opportunity to study and ponder. The apostles lived right there in the middle of this amazing transition.

Think about this for a moment. There were Jews scattered among every “nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). Many of those were faithful, devout Jews. They had lived all their lives according to the Law of Moses, they loved God and wanted to please Him. For that matter there were even Gentiles, living faithful lives under the Law God had given Adam, the Patriarchal Law. Many, if not most of these people did not know of the Christ and His Crucifixion at the time it occurred. Can you imagine that two seconds after the death of Jesus, or even after the ascension of Jesus, that these faithful Jews who were continuing to follow that original God-given law were in an instant doing something wrong which had been right just two seconds before? No. Ample time and opportunity were given to make all aware of the transition, of the change from one Law to another Law. This transition is one of the things we see in the Book of Acts.

I don’t know the technical legal term, but I do know that human legislation also involves this principle of transition. Our congress passes a bill and the President then signs that bill into law. When, for example, one of our former presidents signed the bill into law which lowered the speed limit to 55

mph, if I had happened to be driving 65 two seconds after the signing, was I breaking the law? No. There must be ample time and opportunity for the nation to be appraised of this change. Signs have to be changed, drivers manuals changed; public broadcasts made. And this only involves one single law. Imagine what would be involved in a complete change of the law system.

From Pentecost in Acts 2 to the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10 is a period of somewhere between eight to ten years. During that time Peter studiously avoided preaching the Gospel to Gentile people. Study the events in Acts 10 and listen to Peter as he said to Cornelius, “Ye yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come in unto one of another nation, and yet unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean” (v. 28). Peter, an apostles guided by the Holy Spirit, for several years, believed it “unlawful,” that is, according to the Law of Moses, to “join himself with Gentiles.” Was Peter guilty of sin in so doing? No. This was all part of the transition from the Law of Moses to the Law of Christ. Would I be guilty of sin today, if I, like Peter, refused to preach the Gospel to a particular race, group or class of people? **Yes!** The transition is long over; ample time and opportunity were given to all men long ago to know of this change. All men are now under the Law of Christ.

In Acts 13, Paul and his cohorts went into a synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia. They were invited to speak and Paul did (Acts 13:13-41). At the end of the sermon they were invited back for the next week (v. 42). Some of the audience, “Jews and devout proselytes” (v. 43) followed Paul and Barnabas. Before they left, Paul and Barnabas “urged them to continue in the grace of God” (v. 43). Just as one can’t “fall from grace” if one is not first in grace (Gal. 5:4). Neither can you continue in grace if you’re not first in grace. So, were Paul and Barnabas out of order in telling these non-Christian Jews to continue in the grace of God? No. These were devout and faithful people living according to the Law God had given the people. This incident is all a part of the transition from that Law to the new Law. If I were to go into a synagogue today, preach, arrange to come back next week, and leave saying “continue in the grace of God,” would I be wrong in saying that? **Yes!** The transition is long over.

Now, for those going into the denominations and playing with and performing for them, and then calling it teaching, I ask you: Can you leave them and say, “Continue in the grace of God”? Are they “in the grace of God”? Being “in the grace of God” is the equivalent of being saved. If they are saved, what is it that you need to teach them? But, of course, they are not saved; they haven’t “obeyed the Gospel” (2 Thess. 1:8). Not being saved, they are not “in the grace of God.” You can’t urge them to “continue” in the same. Well, that being true, then the apostles’ going into the synagogues and teaching people who were living under the Law God had given them has nothing to do with going into denominations which are **not** living according to the Law God has given to all men: The Law of Christ.

Let me hasten to add: We ought to go anywhere we have the opportunity to “preach the word,” to “reprove, rebuke and exhort” (2 Tim. 4:2) and that would include denominations. But, going into the denominations so as to play with, perform for, fraternize with; and, just in general to leave everybody with a warm feeling of “Hey, I’m OK,” and you’re OK,” is **W-R-O-N-G**. You might as well say to them “continue in the grace of God,” because by your actions that is the impression that is being left.

No one has the right to take events from the Book of Acts which occurred during the transition from one God-given Law to the other God-given Law, and then apply them to going into and participating in denominations and their activities. This is a classic case of “twisting the scriptures” (2 Pet. 3:16).

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**JUST THINK:** Every religious building which is not used in the practice of true Christianity is a monument to the deceit of Satan. How can our brethren have anything to do with such and with the people who use them? Jesus said, “He that is not with me is against me; he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad (Matt. 12:30).

## ***Banner of Truth* Financial Report**

We will have a Financial Report in the January 2003 issue of BOT. This will include Oct., Nov., and Dec. This will get us back on our regular schedule of two month reports. – Editor.

## **As “Our Schools” Go, So Are A Great Many Congregations Going**

Whereas at one time most of “our schools” had a concern for standing for the basic fundamentals of New Testament Christianity, this has almost completely changed. A case in point [one among many] is the Elmwood Church of Christ in Lafayette, IN. This church has scheduled “Dr. Jeanene Reese” of Abilene University to conduct a seminar on Ephesians, Feb. 1, 2003. This woman will be speaking to a mixed audience. It is clear that this woman and the congregation have **No Respect** for what the Apostle Paul teaches in I Tim. 2:11-14 and I Cor. 14.

### **Helpers Urgently Needed!**

My work with *Banner of Truth* has increased to the point that it is almost more than I can do. This accounts for my being behind with the paper. Whereas I’m now working on the Dec. 2002 issue, I should be working on Feb. 2003. It would be so great if some retired couple would move to this area in order to be **fellowhelpers to the truth**, by assisting in getting BOT out. Our circulation is nearing 7,000 each month, and if we had enough help it could be increased considerably, even to 10,000. The paper is getting the Truth out to thousands here, in virtually every state in the U.S., and in a number of foreign countries. - - *Editor*

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### ***Readers’ Response***

“This is to let you know that my address has changed. We enjoy reading B.O.T. Would like to keep on receiving the paper. You are doing a good work. Here is a check for \$25.00 – **Ezra Proffitt.**” – **KY.** (*Thanks so much for sending your address change and the check. – Editor*).

“Enclosed is a check for \$100.00, to help with publishing and mailing Banner of Truth. Keep up the god work and I pray that you and bro. Adams can and will keep the Banner of Truth for 2003 – **Kenneth D. Pylant.**” – **GA.** (*It is my intention to keep Banner of Truth going as long as I am physically and mentally able. Never has there been a greater need in our time for standing up for God’s Truth and encouraging others to do so. We thank you for the check to help us carry on the work – Editor*).

“I enjoy receiving ‘Banner of Truth.’ It is a very sound and well-needed paper in today’s world. I noticed in your last issue under the editor’s note heading, you’re willing to send a bundle of sixteen. I preach at a small congregation of the Lord’s church and would appreciate receiving a bundle of sixteen



each month to distribute to members. Thank you for your help. May God continue to bless your work with the paper and other avenues as you strive to serve Him. Pass on my appreciation to the eldership at Hickory Grove and to Alan Adams for the work they do – **Roger Genung.**” – **AR.** (*Glad to accommodate. –Ed.*)

“We thank you so much for all your works, including BOT, and your firm stand for the Truth. May God continue to bless you and your good wife and helpers in BOT – **Ted & Vella Harshbarger.**”(Thank you! – Editor).

“Someone gave the copies of ‘Banner of Truth’ that covered ‘The Community Church,’ to use as a teaching reference. Please add my name to your mailing list – **Wm. L. Schwegler.**” – **LA.** (*Name is added – Editor.*)

“Very pleased to get the pkg. of copies of ‘Banner of Truth.. Send a bundle of 15 or 20. I will place them in hands of people I am trying to help spiritually. Keep up the good work – **Grady Bailey.**” – **TN.**

“Thanks for the great work you are doing! We are proud to help you spread the word – **Donald Ginn.**” (*Thanks for your help. The Lord will bless – Editor.*)

“I appreciate your magazine so much. Prayers and encouragement are sent your way, so continue the good work you are doing. I receive B.O.T. monthly. I am sending \$50 to help – **Mrs. Erra Belle Talley.**” – **TN.** (*Your prayers and encouragement are so greatly appreciated. Thank you for helping us carry on the work – Editor.*)

“I have just finished reading the article in Banner of Truth, ‘The Importance of Reputation.’ It is very impressive. It made tears come to my eyes to know how far the Lord’s church has drifted. I’m 90 yrs. And there has been a big, big change....I want you to put \_\_\_\_\_ on your mailing list. He’s an elder in the congregation, and a good one. I thought by him reading it he would order some for the congregation there. I’m sending you a check...I’ll be praying for you and the work you are doing (*Name withheld by editor. I just received word from a reader that the elders of one congregation said B.O.T. was “too negative.” To them, Paul would also be too negative. – Ed.*)

“Greetings brother Pigg. Appreciate so much your good publication. I thought the Mountain View congregation was getting your publication. I just found out that someone was leaving theirs on the table. Please send a bundle to Milton Mathers.... Would it be possible to send the last two months; the months I missed. Thanks, God bless. I pray that God will bless you and your good wife in years of service to Him and His cause – **Milton Mathers.**” – **TN.** (*Thanks for your interest, Milton – Editor.*)

“Happy New Year brother Pigg. I hope that you and yours are continuing in God’s grace. It is my desire to receive Banner of Truth. If you will be so kind as to add me to your mailing list I would appreciate it very much – **Michael Prewitt.**” – **IN.** (*Name added – Editor.*)

“I have been receiving BOT for one year now. Please keep me on your mailing list and may God bless your efforts to keep the truth before us. I’ve enclosed a small donation to help with postage....I would even like to receive old issues of BOT if available. Thanks again – **Wayne Crum.**” – **OH.** (*We’ve sent some back issues. We have back copies of many issues of BOT. It costs us \$1:70 to send up to 32 copies – Editor.*)

“I’m writing to you to tell you how much I enjoy reading your publication and I appreciate so much that you are sending it to me. I also wish to be left on your mailing list for the year 2003. Thank you again for sending your publication – **Charlie Turner.**” – **TN.** (*Glad to continue you on our mailing list. If there are others in the congregation who like to receive BOT, just let us know – Editor.*)

“I really do enjoy reading BOT. It is very informative. I agree so far with all I have read. I was beginning to think I was the only person who believed it was wrong to swim in public with such little covering of the body, immodest dress, dancing, etc. I believe if you are going to live the Christian life, you are to be on guard at all times, set good examples, protect the name of the church and not hurt it....a lot of churches have become more like a social club. We need to watch our manner of speech, dress, example, try to be as Christ-like as we can...- **Wanda Graves,**” – **TN.** (*It is sad that many*

*things which used to be considered wrong are now a matter of choice. Since God's word has not changed, the only way to account for the change is that many are no longer concerned with what is right in God's sight. We are thankful for those who do care, and it is high time that we speak out for Truth –Editor).*

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Visit BOT at David Lemmons' web at:  
<http://www.hcis.net/users/ddlemmons/BOTlist.htm>

Readers may get on David's LemmonsAid Email List:  
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