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Worship 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.
Bible Study

— READERS' RESPONSE *continued from p. 13*

"Thanks for the package of BOT's. I am so glad that you published this material on that evil and false doctrine of the Catholic Church and the pope. I am doing what I can to set forth and defend the Truth and expose and refute that damnable doctrine. I write a short article in the Orlando Sentinel each week. Two weeks ago, I wrote about the Pope, the priests, and the Catholic Church and it was published. The next week I wrote another but they called me and told me that they could not publish it, could not call names. You see the influence that the false teachers have. But that does not stop me...All of us can do some good and save some souls. Let us press on! We do pray that your health is greatly improved. My wife has not been well for eight months. I hope to celebrate my 90th birthday on the 25th of this month, for which I'm grateful. Pray for us as we do for you. Fred R. Boyle." — **FL.** (*It is most encouraging when brethren like you stand up for the truth in their golden years. My health is better now but I have had quite a siege of more than two months – Editor.*)

"The brethren want to help with Banner of Truth publication. You will find \$250.00 enclosed. We hope to see you at the lectureship, Your brother in Christ. Earl B. Claud." [for the church at Land Between the Lakes] — **TN.** (*We appreciate so much your concern and help in making the paper possible. It is most encouraging when brethren are concerned with getting the truth out to the many in the world who need it. – Editor.*)

"Would you please add this name to your mailing list? I'm enclosing a donation to help with the postage. Thank you very much. Colleen Anderson." — **MI.** (*Thank you for sending us a name and for the help with postage. Our readers can help us get the paper to those who will benefit by reading it. – Editor.*)

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The Family – In God's Plan For Man

Editor's Note: Before commencing this discussion, let me mention a few things by way of explanation to our readers. First, let me express my regret that I have been unable to get the monthly issues of Banner of Truth out on time. It is now July 4th and I'm just starting on this issue. Second, the above problem is due to the fact that I have been sick for about two months. I'm now feeling some better but am not well. I have been seeing two doctors, and am scheduled to see one of them tomorrow. Third, I was first thought to have pneumonia, then bronchitis, and now my second doctor thinks I have pulmonary fibrosis, an incurable disease. It is not yet conclusive that I have this disease, but if I do it is in its early stages. Fourth, I feel that I will be able to get back into my regular routine soon. I would greatly appreciate the prayers of my brethren.

When God created Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden, he saw that man needed a suitable companion, "an help meet." God made "a woman and brought her unto the man." It was at this point that God ordained, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). It is from this account that we first read of "the man and his wife," which made up the first family (vs. 25).

This shows that from the beginning *The Family* was in *God's Plan For Man*. The family is the first of three God-ordained institutions: the home, the church, and civil government. Since it is said in the creation account that all that God created was "good," who would in honesty dare question that God's arrangement for the family

was, and is, good as well? In fact, history will verify that the family has played a vital role in the stability and the well-being of civilized countries in the past and still does so today. In spite of this fact, however, God's plan for the family is being challenged by powerful forces in our nation at present. Tragically, these forces have already succeeded, to an alarming degree, in bringing about a dissolution of the family as God intended it to be, and as it existed in a large measure earlier in this century in our country. We shall call attention to the extent of this later in our discussion.

From the very beginning of the family, that of Adam and Eve, problems within the family have occurred. In that first family Cain killed his brother, Abel. History records problems in many →

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Continued from Page 1

families since that time. But those of us who have lived through a major portion of the past century have seen a tragic and alarming increase in family problems, as so many homes have broken down, and most especially has this been true in the period beginning with World War II until the present. The condition of families has only worsened with the past three or four decades. Many of the adults living today have never seen the family stability which existed to such a great degree before the war. Those who have never seen a much more stable state of the family probably fail to realize the plight of the family in today's society. This may well help account for some of the unconcern which is presently being displayed with regard to the state of the family. In order to help our readers see more clearly the condition of today's family, we shall call attention to some sad facts relative to the family, and reflect upon what the family used to be as seen by some of us. Later, we shall set forth some of the guidelines for successful families as contained in God's word. It is indeed possible to have families today which are as God

intended families to be, but this does not happen in the absence of a great desire and a willingness to put forth the greatest of efforts to achieve that most important objective. Let us now turn our attention to:

I. SOME SAD FACTS ABOUT THE STATE OF THE FAMILY IN OUR DAY

Divorce and Remarriage. From the institution of marriage from the beginning, God intended marriage to be a life-long union, broken only by death. Under the New Testament period Christ has made only one allowance for divorce and remarriage. That is in the case of "fornication" of a spouse as set forth in Matthew 19:9. In this case, where only the innocent spouse has a right to remarry and eligible person, the guilty spouse has violated God's law on marriage and is not eligible to remarry.

Today, our country has the infamous distinction of having more divorces than any developed country in the entire world. Statistics are now saying that there is one divorce for every two marriages. In some areas of the country the number of divorces is much greater. To give us some idea of just how much change there has been in the divorce rate, consider the following. In 1900 there was one divorce for every 37 marriages, whereas today there is one divorce for every two marriages. On that basis, there would be just over 18 divorces for every 37 marriages today. If there is any indication that this divorce rate will change for the better I have not heard of it, though I wish it were otherwise.

In addition to the half as many divorces as marriages, the number of unmarried couples living together, with no more moral compunction than beasts of the field, reached more than four million quite some time ago. A recent report said that some 60 percent of the couples in Sweden were living together without being married. What a shame on the human race.

To make matters even worse, there is so very little evidence of concern about this tragic condition. Divorce has become so commonplace that few people pay any attention to it. Hardly any extended family is without one or more divorces. If this trend continues as it has in the recent past, it will not be many years until families built upon God's plan will be few and far between. Whereas marriage used to be looked upon as a serious relationship involving permanency, many of today's marriages are consummated with only a tem-

"among whom are ye also called"

Incidental statements speak volumes. Of course, let us hasten to add, nothing in the Bible is incidental in the sense of being trivial or meaningless. It all has purpose. We speak of an adjective here, a descriptive phrase there, that sort of thing; or, things which kind of fall in-between more well known passages of Scripture.

In Romans chapter one, Paul introduces himself and sets forth his Divinely ordained "separation unto the Gospel of God." He moves to note that this Gospel was "promised afore" and is about "God's Son," who, though born like all other men—and in His case, through the lineage of David—was yet, "declared to be the Son of God...by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:1-4).

Of this "Son of God," Paul says it was "through Him we received grace and apostleship unto obedience of [or, obedience to the, KJV] faith among all the nations for His name's sake; among whom are ye also called..." (vv. 5,6). It is particularly this phrase, "among whom are ye," with which we are concerned. In this age of I'm-OK-You're-OK ecumenism, Paul's use of this qualifier would be deemed downright divisive, intolerant, and exclusive.

The pronoun "whom" refers to "all nations, and the preposition "among" carries the meaning: as compared with. In other words, within, yet out of, this class of all nations, there is a smaller class with marks or features which set it apart from the rest. Come to think of it, that is precisely the meaning of *ekklesia*: An assembly or group of people within the larger group of all men, yet distinct from it; consequently, a group of people who "live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12), but are distinct from it (cf. I Corinthians 5:10; Romans 12:2).

— AA

Storage in Limited Space

I love Sherlock Holmes. Dr. Watson, amazed at the genius of Holmes, yet remarked, "That his ignorance was as remarkable as his knowledge." He wondered at how little Holmes knew of literature, philosophy, and politics. It's neat the way Holmes explained to this matter to Watson:

I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things, so that he has difficulty laying his hands upon it. Now the skilled workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent...It is of the highest importance not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones.

This is why Solomon said,

The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written uprightly...words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads; and as nails well fastened are the words of the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And furthermore, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. (Ecc 12:10-12)

Ignorance is neither bliss, nor is there value in knowledge without point and performance. This is especially true when it comes to knowledge that relates to the eternal spirit and destiny of man. So, Paul admonishes, with reference to "the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God," "Set [your] mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth." No person is educated who lacks knowledge of what God has communicated in the Book of Books.

— AA

Boor Training

Not in the Curriculum at NWFSBS

Traveling among the churches is generally a delight. You can run into some great brethren and gospel preachers. But sometimes impressions are less pleasant. A few times the thought has come to mind: There must undoubtedly be a *Boor Training School* out there somewhere. More than few “preachers” have made boorishness into a fine art. Surly, cocky, uncivil, ill-tempered “little people” should have no place working as evangelists for churches of Christ, but they do.

At the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, we are working hard not to add to the boor population. If one leaves here a boor, he does it despite training and example, and not because of.

As it should be, our program is brutal on the academic end of things. A graduate will *know* things he needs to know. But, there is also great focus on the preacher, his character, work and life. We are most proud when firm, tough, poised, and balanced christian gentlemen go forth from NWFSBS to serve in the churches. We’ve sent out several like that. What a delight and joy it is to watch them at work and to hear from others that NWFSBS has done its job.

So many BOT readers are, and have been, cooperating with the Milestone church of Christ in Pensacola, enabling us to provide this two-year training program for preachers. Are there others who would like to join this good work? Do you know of “preacher material” that’s out there? Contact us; let’s join hands.

Sunny--albeit of late “windy--Pensacola is the home of the Milestone church of Christ whose work is the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies. We are on 4051 Stefani Road, Cantonment, FL 32533. (Tel) 850- 474-9257. Check out our webpage: www.nwfsbs.com. Or, email me at: anailwun@nwfsbs.com. — Alan Adams

Sweet Words and Cheap Tears

I guess we’ve all been around folks when a family member or friend has died. This can sometimes be a surreal experience, especially if you personally know/knew the survivors and the deceased. What could be tears and sentiments born of love and respect for the decedent can be misleading if you know for a fact that true love and respect were not forthcoming when the dead was alive.

Washington Irving (in *Sorrow For the Dead*) wrote, ...the love which survives the tomb is one of the noblest attributes of the soul...From its peaceful bosom spring none but fond regrets and tender recollections. Who can look down upon the grave even of an enemy, and not feel a compunctious throb, that he should have warred with the poor handful of earth that lies moldering...But the grave of those we loved—what a place for meditation! There it is that we call up, in long review, the whole history of virtue and gentleness, and the thousand endearments lavished upon up, almost unheeded in the daily intercourse of intimacy...Ay, go to the grave of buried love, and meditate!...Then weave they chaplet of flowers, and strew the beauties of nature about the grave; console thy broken spirit, if thou canst, with these tender, yet futile tributes of regret: but take warning; by the bitterness of this, thy contrite afflictions over the dead, and henceforth be more faithful and affectionate in the discharge of thy duties to the living.

I know a mother who lost her 20 year old son to drugs and alcohol. She would go and sit on his grave and weep and speak of her love for him. This was the same mother who, when the son was but a child, divorced his father and forced a child to grow up without a home. Sweet words and tears are cheap after the fact.

Not a few parents need to now show their love for their children by themselves living a life of submission to Christ. Children need to likewise now show love and respect for the parents.

Remember we are “reconciled to God by the death of his son,” but “much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom 5.10). Let us be “more faithful and affectionate in the discharge of [our] duties to the living.” — AA

porary arrangement in mind. If either spouse decides to cut out, it’s no big deal. After all, that is the way it is with so many of today’s marriages. Years ago a friend of mine related how that a girl in his class in college said just before the holiday vacation, “I plan to get married during the holidays, but if it doesn’t work out, I’ll see you back in school. Divorce carries little stigma today.

One Parent Families. Another **Sad Fact** about the state of the family today is the rapid increase in One Parent Families. In our discussion we are not including those families where a spouse has died. When this happens the family is not under the control of one parent due to some fault of a parent. Our discussion involves the instances where a one parent family is the result of divorce, and especially those cases where a woman has given birth to a child out of wedlock, which is always contrary to God’s will and His plan for the family.

As divorces increase so does the number of one parent families. When divorce occurs God’s law on marriage has been violated. In the majority of cases, when divorce occurs the mother take control of the family. If the father is the guilty party in the divorce, the mother is forced into being the one parent in the family. In this situation, though the mother cannot avoid being the one parent in control, there is still the reality that the children have the benefit of only one parent. The results of this arrangement do not result in the building of strong families but to the contrary. In a number of instances the mother may be the guilty parent in a divorce. It is not unusual for the mother to become the one parent in the family, even though she is guilty of breaking God’s law on marriage. She is a bad example for her children.

There is much evidence that the one parent families which result from the birth of children out of wedlock are contributing to the breakdown of the home as God would have it, in a serious and frightening way. Current reports are that about 35 percent of children are now being born out of wedlock. In some areas the percentage is well over half.

It is a sinful act of no little consequence to bring a child into the world knowing it will not have the invaluable benefit of a father and a mother, which it both needs and deserves. God intended that children have this benefit. It seems to me that it would be heart rend-

ing to those who have any care about them, to think of the precious little boy or girl growing up, wondering why it can’t have both a Daddy and a Mom, like other children. Parents of such children bear a great responsibility for having fulfilled their sinful lust with no concern about bringing a helpless and innocent child into the world., which so often occurs from the parents evil actions. Those children usually come to realize, sooner or later, that their existence is the result of their mother’s and some ungodly man’s engaging in sin to gratify their sexual desires in violation of God’s will. It is a matter of fact that many children born under these circumstances grow up to follow the same course as that of their parents, contributing to a further breakdown of the family.

Our government, as it is increasingly influenced by secularism, is contributing greatly to the breakdown of the family by encouraging more out of wedlock births. It is a matter of fact that women have been paid for having more children out of wedlock. Many have been the instances where women have plainly said that if they have another child their welfare check will be increased. It is sad indeed that politicians have encouraged such for political purposes. Another sad thing about children being produced just for material gain, is that in such cases those children are not likely to be cared for as are those who come into the world in accordance with God’s plan for the family. Currently, our society hardly frowns upon the sinful practice of out of wedlock births. Unless there is a drastic change in this regard, it can only spell a further breakdown of the family as God intended it to be.

The Family As It Used To Be. Families as they used to be were not perfect, but before World War II they were much more stable, and as God intended them to be, than they are today. If the state of the family sixty years ago was far superior to the family of today, that is solid evidence that today’s families could be much better. But the state of the family will not improve accidentally, nor on its own. It will require a desire on the part of a greater portion of our society to burn back to God’s plan for the family rather than a turning away from it.

From personal experience I cannot speak at length with regard to what families used to be in the cities and metropolitan areas. I grew up in a rural area in middle Tennessee, on a small “Two horse farm.” →

The greater majority of rural families that I knew ere not well off financially. They didn't have the conveniences and luxuries that most people enjoy today, but the state of the family was much better than it is today. Most families were larger then, affording the children with the experience in getting along with others. The parents showed their love for their children, not just by the giving of material things, as is so often the case today, but by showing their concern for their well-being with warm hearted affection. It is a great mistake to try to equate the showing of a father and mother's love for their children with material things.

Families back then enjoyed a spirit of togetherness so often absent today. The members of the family were usually together at least twice each day at meal time and often three times. For the most part the family was together virtually every night.

Before the war, children born out of wedlock were a rare thing indeed. Such was looked down upon by society as a shame and a disgrace. Divorce seldom happened and when it did it was frowned upon by most of society. In some communities, the citizens simply would not tolerate a unmarried couple living together as is so common today.

It is tragic that society shows little concern about the current breakdown of the family. From all indications it will get even worse. Until more concern is demonstrated here is no reason to expect things to get any better. But we are thankful to God that some people are deeply concerned. among those concerned as those who are often referred to as "The religious right," and some times "The radical religious right" as they are vilified by those who have little or no concern about morality. It behooves those who are concerned to encourage others to be likewise. This is a battle worth fighting.

By looking at some of the causes of the family's breakdown, it should enable those who are concerned to contribute to the well-being of the family in a greater and more effective way. It is with this in mind that we consider the following:

II. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE BREAKDOWN OF THE HOME

Gambling. We are not attempting to consider these factors in the order of their influence, nor do we plan to

be exhaustive. We begin by considering gambling because of its hurtful impact upon our society and the family, yet it is so over overlooked as to the detrimental influence it is having upon the family. It is only recently that some attention is being given to this problem by some in our government and others.

The June 1999, issue of *Reader's Digest* carries an article from the *Los Angeles Times*, entitled: "Addicted to Luck." The article is by Matea Gold and David Ferrell. We encourage our readers to read this article. In the following we are setting forth "in quotations" some of the eye-opening information from that article.

"Gambling is exploding across America, from the mega-resorts of Las Vegas to the gambling parlor of Indian reservation, from the river boats along the Mississippi to the corner mini-marts selling lottery tickets. Now, with all but three states – Hawaii, Utah and Tennessee – sanctioning legalized gambling, evidence is mounting that society is paying a steep price."

"In 1997 bettors blew a shopping \$50.9 billion – roughly five times the amount lost in 1980."

"Compulsive gambling has been linked to child abuse, domestic violence, bankruptcies, welfare fraud and other criminal ills Today, 37 states run their own lotteries – \$12 billion in net income – and spend millions on seductive advertisements."

"Today, though, increasing numbers of women are getting hooked. And senior citizens are a lucrative new customer base.... A third of problem gamblers now women.... Older, retired people are losing their life savings. The suicides, the heartbreak...."

It is not inappropriate to call gambling a "plague."

To the above could be added other matters of concern. Among the victims of the evil of gambling are a great many of those who are on our welfare rolls and others with low incomes. Children and other family members are often left in want because the family income is wasted on gambling.

The number of family problems which are directly related to gambling are increasing. The compulsive gambler is more likely to mistreat family members, to be the cause of emotional instability, to engage in criminal activities to feed the gambling habit. A great many divorces can be traced to gambling. And, gambling is growing.

The evil forces which promote gambling are powerful. The gambling interests are willing to spend mil-

arouse are eventually expressed in fornication.

It is not uncommon to hear the remark that so and so is "a real sexpot." It seems that such words are often spoken in admiration. What does "sexpot" mean? *Webster's* says "a conspicuously sexy woman." Again, it would be a person that conducts him/herself in such a way as to arouse sexual desires in others. One that has a reputation as a "sexpot" did not get such a reputation without demonstrating a patter or conduct and/or dress. Friends, it is not funny when someone really is a sexpot, and it sure enough is not a matter of honor for our family members to be called such.

When someone puts out a list of "The Ten Sexiest Men in America," just what are they saying? Surely by now we know what that means. And, with our knowledge of "sexy," surely none of us want to joke about such a list, and surely none of us would aspire to someday make the list of the top ten sexiest individuals.

Maybe you have noticed that the music of our day has many references to being "sexy." Not surprisingly, those references to someone or something being "sexy" always seem to be portrayed as being something favorable. Perhaps you have heard the title of a country song that was popular not long ago: "She Thinks My Tractor's Sexy." Brothers and sisters, that song is not cute. Anything that portrays "sexy" as innocent, is something to beware of and avoid.

Because I know what "sexy" means, I cannot joke about it, I do not admire or condone the wearing of a "sexy" outfit, and I cannot conscientiously listen to or praise songs that hold up the concept of being "sexy" as a normal, healthy thing. How about you?

We all understand that even when we dress and conduct ourselves in a modest fashion, that there will be some who have evil thoughts. There is nothing we can do about such. But we sure enough can make sure that we and our families do not dress in a sexually provocative manner. The word "lasciviousness," which is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19), includes not only the aspect of unbridled lust on a person's part, but also the idea of a person causing

others to have inappropriate thoughts. Application? If we wear "sexy" clothes that cause others to lust, then we are guilty of being that person's stumblingblock (Lk. 17:1-2).

My brethren, "sexy" is not a harmless word. It has a clear meaning. Let us all be careful in the way we use that word. At the same time, let us guard our heart from "sexy" appeals, whether they be through what our eyes see, or what our ears hear. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:3). Finally, let us educate all our young people, including our kids and grandkids, about the inappropriateness of sexy clothing, sexy stories, sexual innuendoes, and an admiring tone of voice when using the word "sexy."

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

— 4865 Bates Pike SE, Cleveland, TN 37323

READERS' RESPONSE

"Please remove the following address from you mailing list. Thank you. Church of Christ, Tony Price." – **Alaska.**

"Please take us off your mailing list. Thank you. Bill Maurer." – **MI.**

"Please remove us from you mailing list. Keith Stephenson." – **GA.**

(We appreciate it when people who do not want to receive Banner of Truth let us know. There are various reasons why people do not want to receive the paper. With some it is because of the material carried in the paper. When such is the case, we would be very thankful if we were informed of any error which it is believed we have set forth. We want to be right, according to God's word. Our salvation depends on it. — Editor).

"I recently had the B.O.T. shared with me and was very impressed with its sound content. Could you please put me on you mailing list. Russell Snyder." – **TN.**

"We hope everything is going well with you. We hope you had a great Memorial Day weekend. Thank you for all you do. Jake & Rose Taft." – **AL.**

"I get Banner of Truth from our congregation. Enjoy it very much. We are sending a donation in lieu of flowers in memory of Bess Johnson. Keep up the good work. Louise Wilks." – **TX.**

Continued on p. 16

the ecumenical movement – the very thing that New Testament Christianity is opposed to.

Third, he regrets their “efforts to bring various parts of the church together.” Let me speak clearly – the Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ are not a part of the Lord’s church. The apostatized long ago and formed a man-made denomination.

Fourth, he states that he regrets they “have often overlooked our brothers concerned with the restoration aspect of the movement.” How can one have Biblical unity if he is not interested in or overlooks the restoration of New Testament Christianity? This shows that all most folks care about is “unity in diversity.” In other words, you worship your way, I will worship my way, and we will agree to disagree.

The Skillman Avenue congregation does not deserve to wear the name church of Christ. They are a full-blown apostasy. It is sad that they have so much in common with the Disciples of Christ and the ecumenical movement.

Amos asks a pertinent question that deserves an answer even today. “*Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?*” (Amos 3:3). Skillman Avenue plans a “Stone-Campbell Reunion Worship” service with denominational churches. Do you read of a worship service in the Bible that wears the name of some man or men? The Bible teaches that our worship is to honor God and Christ.

I did not attend this gathering, and I do not regret it. A faithful Christian cannot fellowship works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). More so, a loyal soldier of the cross must reprove workers of darkness. Skillman Avenue is much more interested in fellowshiping error than they are in reprovng error.

— 5810 Liberty Grove Rd, Rowlett, TX 75030

EDITOR’S NOTE: Some may ask, “Why do you carry such articles, rather than some more positive? I have seen what has happened to the Lord’s church in the past 50 years, and is now happening at an accelerated pace. As long as I am able I will try to warn people that many brethren are denying the distinctiveness of the Lord’s church, as they show an increased affinity for the churches of men. The above example by brother Weir is a case in point of what is happening. It is a time for faithful brethren to stand tall for the Lord’s way as never before. Christ died for His church, but for churches of men He died not.

“SEXY”

Roger Campbell

At some time or another, probably most or all of us have used a word or expression without really knowing the true meaning of what we were saying. Perhaps we grew up hearing such terminology and never gave serious thought to its implications. Or, maybe at later stages in life we heard a lot of other people saying something and we just began using such words in the way that they do. In all this, most likely we have had the purest intentions, and certainly there was no desire on our part to say something that others might find offensive or that would cause others to have inappropriate thoughts.

I believe that the word “sexy” is a word that well-intended people sometimes use in an inappropriate fashion. I am convinced that if they really knew what the word means, then they would cease using it as they do. Just what does “sexy” mean? *Webster’s 9th New Collegiate Dictionary* defines it as “sexually suggestive or stimulating: erotic.” As noted, the synonym for “sexy” given by *Webster’s* is “erotic,” which the same dictionary defines as “of, devoted to, or tending to arouse love or sexual desire....strongly affected by sexual desire.” What do these definitions indicate? That “sexy” and “erotic” refer to what which stimulates others in a sexual way.

It is plain, is it not? To describe something or someone as “sexy” is to say that such a one or thing arouses sexual desire. A mom that beams with delight when she says to her teenage daughter, “Honey, you look so sexy in that outfit,” is sending a message to the daughter. The message from Mom is, “I think its great that you are wearing sexy clothes.” Surely no Christian mother wants her teenage daughter to think that it is acceptable to wear clothes that arouse sexual desires in males! Dads and moms, it is not a joking matter when we can truthfully say that our kids are dressing in “sexy” clothes. If we can honestly describe our kids’ clothing as “sexy,” then such clothing needs to be tossed. If it isn’t, we should not be surprised when those sexy clothes do what sexy clothes are designed to do, which is to arouse sexual desire, and we should not be shocked when those sexual desires that sexy clothes

lions to promote their harmful activity. The lure of promoting ambling for the cause of education or some other worthwhile purpose is deceiving, since it completely overlooks the harm that is being done to our society and the family. It is such a shame that our government is in the forefront of promoting gambling at the cost of the further breakdown of the family and its stability. It seems that our present society is so carried away with materialism that the moral standards upon which our country was largely built mean little or nothing.

Lack Of Family Discipline. It is sad, but true, that our society has virtually become an undisciplined one. Though a number of factors are involved, the failure to practice discipline can be traced primarily to the home. There is valid reason to say, “That as the home goes, so goes society.” Discipline involves respect for authority. Never in my lifetime has there been such a lack of respect for authority in the home as it is now. Someone has suggested that in the home the husband has lack of respect for the authority of God; the wife has lack of respect for the authority of the husband; and, the children have respect for the authority of no one.” There is just cause for concern that there is much truth in that.

It is simply a matter of fact that in a great many cases today, children are hardly disciplined at all. The evidence of this is seen almost everywhere. I see little fellows only two or three years old who pitch temper fits, scream, slap at their parents, etc. And, would you believe it? Parents and grandparents some times think such actions are cute. Don’t they realize that they are helping the child to be disliked, and to pay a price for lack of discipline in the end?

I know what it is to have children; we have four and I think highly of them. I’ve come to realize why they call grandchildren “grand.” We have several. But I have never intentionally tried to show my love for them by encouraging a lack of discipline. It is nothing more than pseudo love to allow and even encourage children to do whatever they like, whatever they want to do. It is a common thing in our undisciplined society to see parents who think in such a warped way.

Parents are quite often heard to say, “I want my children to have the things I didn’t have when I was growing up.” In some instances that may be a well-

intentioned view, but in others it can be foolish thinking. Many parents didn’t have virtually everything they wanted, without putting forth in any effort, while growing up. Was that bad? Was it a bad thing to learn a sense of responsibility, and that it is a noble thing to learn to work in order to have the things we want? It was said of John D. Rockefeller that he had his sons to run a paper route to earn spending money. He could have given them much money.

Today too many parents don’t want their children to have what most children had when growing up a generation or so ago, discipline. It is the lack of discipline in the home which has in such a great way contributed to the lack of discipline in the different areas of society. Let us consider a few of those areas.

In The Schools. The problem of lack of discipline in the schools is largely due to a lack of discipline in the homes of the children. Not only is it the case that many parents don’t attempt to discipline their children, they don’t want them discipline in school, or any other place. How many times have you heard a older person say, that if they got in trouble in school, they were in trouble at home when their parents learned of it? Civil authorities have made discipline in school just about impossible. But this never would have happened had parents believed in discipline as they should.

In Our Government. We have just recently seen a display of the lack of discipline in the White House, which represents the top post in our government. President Clinton was impeached in the House for his sordid and illegal activities, but the Senate displayed cowardice, fearing the majority of people in society who made it clear they didn’t care about discipline in government, or moral standards. Disbelief in discipline didn’t stop with the President, it included many of his associates, advisors, etc. Many who acknowledged that discipline was in order went against their conscience by opposing discipline.

Instead of our government acting in behalf of the law abiding citizens, as God intended (Rom. 13), it has in many instances become the supporter of evil activities. Law enforcement people have become so disgusted with judges and courts which often let criminals go scot-free, that they are reluctant to make arrests for violation of our laws. Discipline is woefully lacking. →

Within The Church. Discipline is so often lacking within the church. Church discipline, in the broad sense, includes various instructions and training which should be of high priority within the church. Discipline in the sense of withdrawing of fellowship from those who engage in sin and will not repent, it unheard of on many congregations. All sorts of violations of God's will occur and as so often is the case, not one thing is done about it. This is outright rebellion against God's authority as plainly set forth in His word.

Consequently, the lack of discipline which so often begins in the home, influences other areas of society. There is an interrelationship between these different areas, each one affection others. Due to space limitations, we are calling attention to only some of what God's word teaches relative to discipline in the home.

In the following we are calling attention to some of the statements in Proverbs which relate to children and their need for discipline.

“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (13:24). “Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (19:18). “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (22:15). “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell” (23:13-14). “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother shame....Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul” (29:15, 17).

What an extensive difference would be made in the homes of today if the above instructions were seriously considered. The fact is, however, that fewer and fewer parents are concerned with divine instructions. The lack discipline themselves. Children are often like their parents.

Some direct instructions relative to family relationships are given in the New Testament. We shall briefly note a few important ones—

Paul speaks of the responsibility of children when

he said: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honour thy father and mother: (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth” (Eph. 6:1-3). Parents who truly love their children will teach them to respect their parents as God intended. It is a downright shame how that some children of today flaunt the instructions given them by their parents, and some times the parents allow it with impunity. We note here that Paul was writing to Christians, but children which are not brought up with respect for parents in their younger years are not likely to have much respect when they grow older.

Paul now gives some most serious instructions to fathers (children are to obey their “parents,” and this includes the mother) when he said: “And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). It is such an injustice for parents to bring children into the world and then willfully deny them the benefits which God plainly says they owe them. Sadly, this very thing is happening more and more within the Lord's church. It is no less than heartbreaking to see so many children who are being mistreated because of the neglect of their parents. So many children cry out for discipline but to no avail. Their parents are lacking in the love they should have for them. On various occasions adults have testified to the importance and the effects of discipline, or lack of it, which they received when they were growing up. Of course, children often fail to see the need for discipline in their early years. To the sorrow of some parents, the lack of discipline is seen only after it is too late, when the lives of their children may have been ruined.

Discipline should begin in the home with the parents who make up that home. God has not been unmindful of the need for instructions in that respect. Such is set forth by Paul in a very few, but important words: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the loved the

Skillman Avenue Church Of Christ's Worship Service With Denominations

Marvin L. Weir

In my possession is a copy of the bulletin (Vol. 13, No. 20, June 1, 2005) of the *Oak Cliff Christian Church* meeting at 1222 Kiest Blvd. in Dallas. At the top of the page is the following announcement:

Stone-Campbell Reunion Worship
Sunday, June 5, 2005, 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.
Skillman Church of Christ

Heirs of the vision of Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell will rekindle a vision of community and cooperation as we gather together to worship the God who makes us one. Sisters and brothers from the Churches of Christ, the Christian Church/ Churches of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) will celebrate our common heritage and our distinctive ministries across the Metroplex.

The Senior Minister, Rev. Steven Digby, has this comment on the back of the bulletin:

We Disciples of Christ are part of a tradition that began with two objectives, restoration of New Testament primitive Christianity, and unification of the body of Christ. Sadly, for more than a century, we have fallen far short of those objectives. Our strangely fascinating history is of great success matched with failures. As the years which followed the early days of the movement passed, different parts of our tradition focused on one or the other objective. The Disciples have had our preoccupation with unity. We have clung fondly to Barton Stone's words, “*Let unity be our polar star.*” We have made significant contributions to the ecumenical movement. I have regretted that in our efforts to bring the various parts of the church together, we have often overlooked our brothers concerned with the restoration aspect of the movement. Our divisions have weakened us all.

A number of years ago, in Mississippi, I participated in a time of worship consisting of people from the non-instrumental Churches of Christ, In-

dependent Christian Churches and our own Disciples of Christ tradition. While there are many things over which we have historically disagreed, and we still have many differences, there was a sad sweetness to our gathering. One of the ministers wept in the pulpit, saying we belonged together. While we have many differences, we do all belong to the body of Christ.

This Sunday afternoon at Skillman Avenue Church of Christ, we have an opportunity [sic] share together in a very special way. I hope you will be part of this significant family reunion. Regrettably, I am unable to attend. I'll be in Athens preparing for Chi Rho Camp.

Those in the Dallas area know all too well the congregation that meets at Skillman Avenue. They are not on the Lord's side, and neither are they any more the Lord's church. They no doubt feel right at home with members of the ultra liberal Disciples of Christ denomination. One verse of Scripture describes well both the Christian Church and the congregation meeting at Skillman Avenue. “*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest they all are not of us*” (I John 2:19).

Space limitations will allow only a few observations regarding Steve Digby's comments. **First**, if the Disciples of Christ truly want to restore New Testament Christianity and unify the body of Christ, they go about it in a strange way. they have incorporated just about every innovation imaginable into their worship services. Where is Bible authority for women preachers, women elders, instruments of music, unity in diversity, etc.? No, the Disciples of Christ are interested in going far beyond New Testament Christianity.

Second, he mentions the Disciples' “preoccupation with unity.” This lip service sounds good. But two sentences later he says, “We have made significant contributions to the ecumenical movement.” The dictionary defines the word ecumenical as meaning, “concerned with establishing or promoting unity among churches or religions.” Is this the Biblical for which our Lord prayed (John 17:20-21) and the apostle Paul demanded (Eph. 4:3)? Far from it. One cannot be committed to the cause of Christ and contribute to →

The 5th Banner of Truth Lectures

The lectures are now history. As noted elsewhere, I was unable to attend any of the lectures, due to sickness. Therefore, the following comments will be based primarily upon reports I've heard from those who did attend.

Various people have commented on the subjects addressed in the lectures. All reports that I have heard indicated the subjects discussed were considered timely. It was our intention to cover a wide variety of subjects, based on Old Testament passages which in some way relate to our present time.

Several comments have suggested that the speakers covered the subjects assigned and stayed within the allotted time.

Not a single comment which I've heard has indicated that any speaker got off the path of truth and taught any questionable thing. This is the kind of speakers we want to participate.

As far as the attendance was concerned, we would have been encouraged if it had been greater. But we did have people who were not speakers attending from hundreds of miles away. This speaks well of brethren who truly love the truth and are willing to give of their time and effort to hear the truth proclaimed.

The fellowship of those in attendance is something that will be long remembered. That is another great benefit derived from the lectures, which is greatly needed by those of like faith. From what I've heard, the food places did a pretty good business with our brethren.

One person commented that it was a shame that more local brethren did not attend. That is the way we feel, but at least it reminds of reality: that reality being people here in our area who once seemed to have love and appreciation for the truth, the whole counsel of God, have changed. Their hearts are no longer like they used to be. This should come as no surprise since the New Testa-

ment warns us of times like this. Seeing God's predictive word being fulfilled should embolden our faith.

We thank God that the lectures proceeded as they did. We thank brother Richard Guill for taking over in my place, and others who helped in various ways. Finally, last but not least, we appreciate the Dexter and Hickory Grove congregations serving as the sponsors of the lectures. We trust that all things will work together so that we can see the 6th Annual BOT lectures in 2006.

—Editor

Videos and Audios of Banner of Truth Lectures Available

The following contains the needed information for ordering. Orders should be addressed to: Rampart Productions, 15973 Little Buck Blvd., Boonville, MO 65233. Phone: (920) 569-6504. www.rampartproductions.org. Checks should be made to: Kendal Rasnake.

The entire 28 lessons will be included in all the audios or videos. Prices are as follows:

Audio/Video DVD	\$25.00
Audio/Video VHS	\$30.00
Audio Only CDs	\$25.00
Cassette	\$25.00
MP3	\$15.00

Please print all information clearly. Allow 4-8 weeks for delivery. Payment is to be made with order. Payment does include shipping and handling. Only cash or checks will be accepted.

Editor's Note: We appreciate bro. Kendal Rasnake doing the lectures. We believe the prices are affordable. We would encourage our readers to obtain these videos/audios. You can be sure that the truth is presented in a clear and forceful way by the various speakers. Some brethren make use of these in class situations where a lesson on some particular subject is desired. If you find these audios/videos profitable, do encourage others to purchase them.

church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:22-26).

When a husband and wife enter marriage without a recognition of their respective roles as God intended, the resulting family is likely to be fraught with serious problems. The husband, who is to love his wife as Christ love the church, is to be the head of the house in God's plan. The wife is to submit to him as the head. In each case, both husband and wife, must take these roles most seriously. In the past few decades there roles have not been respected as they used to be. Many family breakups could be attributed to this very thing. As more and more women have left their place as "keepers at home" (Tit. 2:5), and become more independent many families have become what we might call "two headed" families. A family doesn't have the stability that is needed when there are two heads. There is a greater tendency for the two heads to go their separate ways and leave a broken family. It is the God-given responsibility of the husband to provide for his family (I Tim. 5:8), but the desire for "more things" has over ridden this plan in many instances.

It is a matter of fact, as has been so often evidenced in recent years, that baby sitters, day care centers, and even grandparents, cannot take the place of a loving and responsible mother in the home. The mother's absence may provide a few more "things," or keep the children "out of her hair," but this is a bad tradeoff in the rearing of well disciplined and stable children.

Dishonesty In The Home. In Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" he said, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:24-25). Though Paul here speaks of truth with one's neighbor, that principle of speaking the truth applies to all who would obey God, including family members. All liars are condemned (Rev. 21:8).

Truth is not valued as highly as it used to be in our society and it has had a telling effect upon the family as well as other areas of society. Whereas a majority of people used to be "men of their word," that certainly isn't the case now. Who can think of a more influential example of this than our President? To make it even worse, multitudes don't care.

Honesty is a pressing need in a family if it is to be successful. The breakup of many homes can be traced, at least in part, to a lack of honesty on the part of parents. The parents relationship with each other is in jeopardy when they cannot trust each other. When parents are dishonest, what can be expected of their children? It is understandable that many children think nothing of lying since they have an example of their parents to follow.

Over the years I've heard parents speak to their children that which wasn't the truth. How often have you heard parents tell their children to lie for them when someone called for them on the phone? How often have you heard parents threaten their children over and over with some kind of punishment (discipline), knowing all the time they were not going to do one thing to that unruly child? What is that being dishonest? or lying? Children are often much smarter than we think. They catch on real quickly. It is a good rule to follow when tell our children we are going to do so and so, to think about what we are telling them in the first place. Then, when we tell them something, we have a responsibility to be truthful about it. A good friend of ours related how that she on one occasion told her daughter, who was several years old, to open her bedroom door. the daughter refused, whereupon the mother said, "If you don't open that door I'm going to chop it down." What would you, as a parent, if you had made a statement like that? Well, our friend said she felt compelled to keep her word to her daughter. With a hatchet, she chopped open the bedroom door in the face of a rather frightened daughter. The mother kept her word to her daughter rather than lie.

Alcohol And Other Drugs. Though the drinking of alcohol and the accompanying drunkenness has been a strong factor in the breakup of families for a long time, the use of a number of other drugs, in such proportion as they are now being used, are also contributing to the same. In recent times there has been a huge in the use of these other drugs by young people, especially teenagers and in some instances those who are not yet teens. Yet, in spite of the evil results from the use of drugs, there are strong forces pushing them. Alcohol is legal in most places and government interests encourage its use in order to bring in →

more revenue. The efforts to curb the use of other drugs has been far less than successful. Penalties for the unlawful use and sale of these dangerous drugs are often less severe than they should be. In some countries, where drug use is much less than in our own country, those dealing in drugs are shot. Of course, there are those in our society who would argue that such stiff penalties have nothing to do with curbing the use of such drugs. One evil philosophy is that some of the drugs should be made legal in order to have fewer violations of our current drug laws. Sensible? Hardly.

There is valid evidence that many young people begin drinking, and using other drugs, at home where they find them available. When parents use illegal drugs, there is a strong likelihood that their children will follow the same evil course.

I have known a number of families where drinking brought about many serious family problems. Children are often neglected and not provided with sufficient food and clothing. Children are some times mistreated by their drinking parents in a physical way. Drunken husbands are much more likely to be “wife beaters.” Crimes are often committed due to drunkenness, some of which may result in the breakup of a family.

The Influence Of TV, Entertainment Industry, The News Media, Etc. There is a deluge of evil influence weighing heavily upon the disintegration of the home and breakup of families. One report said that many children are exposed to TV as much as seven hours a day. It is not only children who are adversely influenced; many adults are influenced as well.

There is very little available on Television which contributes to the well-being of the home and family, but there is very much which contributes to the influences which are a factor in the ruin of families. This includes much of which is billed as “entertainment.” Various forms of ungodliness are often upheld and some times glorified. Sexual infidelity is as common as the days that come and go. There actually seems to be an emphasis upon that which is morally degrading and a putting down of that which is morally upright.

It is appalling to those who have a sense of moral uprightness that the most explicit gutter language is often used in many programs which are related to the entertainment industry. Explicit sexual activities are

there for those who want to see such. Unwed couples living together is a very common scene with no sense of shame exhibited. Homosexuals and other sexual perverts are vaunting their ungodly practices as never before. Even our President and other politicians are courting all sorts of sexual perversion. One wonders just how far we are from Sodom and Gomorrah.. There is no reason to believe that God does not look with disdain upon such ungodliness as He did when He destroyed those cities. Could some of our cities suffer the same fate? One thing we know, God will never be pleased with such immorality even if the whole human race goes that way.

The news media is more often inclined to be on the side of evil rather than good.

Rejection Of Individual Responsibility. The time was that most people felt some sense of responsibility for their actions. In recent years that has changed. It is amazing that in so many instances when some wrong has been committed, some excuse is found to try to blame it upon someone or something other than the individual who was clearly to blame. There is a tendency to come up with everything to blame, short of placing the blame where it surely belongs.

Those of us in the church know better than to blame someone else for our misdeeds, but whatever the status quo in society, members of the church are going to follow to some degree, whether it is right or whether it is wrong.

Humanism, Atheism And Evolution. These ungodly influences are having a pronounced effect upon an increasing number of people. Most young people are exposed to the strong influence of these God-denying beliefs, as we see more and more of the Godly influence which used to help mold the lives of people vanishing from our society. There is no question but that anything which weakens belief in God has a harmful effect upon God’s plan for the family. The results of such beliefs as those above are being encouraged by a sizeable part of the political forces in our society. There is no question but that anything which weakens belief in God has a harmful effect upon God’s plan for the family.

A Lack Of Teaching On The Family Within The Church. Within the past forty or fifty years I have seen a decrease within the church relative to basic and

fundamental teachings concerning the family

as God planned it. How often do we hear clear teaching on God’s role for woman as a “keeper at home”? Since so many women are now pursuing some secular work outside the home, that subject might not go over too well with some. How often do we hear clear teaching on the responsibility of the husband to provide for those of his family? There is a tendency in much of the preaching and teaching of today not to deal forthrightly with some of the need basic and fundamental subjects.

A teaching within the church which directly affects the family is that of divorce and remarriage is allowed for other reasons that that which Christ specifically states in Matthew 19:9. In fact, by shopping around a little, one can find a preacher who will agree with just about anything one wants to hear, whether it be right or wrong.

In the home and church, we must teach our children the need to respect God’s law on the family. With all they face which is contrary to God’s plan, we cannot afford to put forth anything less than our greatest effort to guide them in the way that God wants.

III. THE ONLY TRUE GUIDE FOR BUILDING A FAMILY ACCORDING TO GOD’S PLAN

Countless books have been written concerning the family. There are specialists who know (?) how the family should be built and operated. Numbers of people make their living as “counselors,” some of whom advocate that which is pleasing to the parties involved rather than what is right in God’s sight.

Not until people turn to God’s plan for the family, as outlined in His word, will we see much improvement in the state of the family in our nation. From Genesis we learn that God’s original plan for the family was that “a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife” (Gen. 2:24). A man was not to cleave unto another man nor a woman to another woman. God’s plan was for the man and his wife to live together until separated by death. The New Testament deals at length with the duties of both husband and wife. God’s plan will work. It is the only plan which we know will work if carried out as God intended. At the root of the family problems today is a lack of faith in God. When people have the kind of faith which pleases God, they will listen to Him and His instructions on the family and all other matters.

— Editor

Editor’s Note: The above article was carried in Banner of Truth in June 1999. I have reprinted it because I think it is needed, as families continue to fall apart, and due to my sickness which has prevented me from doing a couple of articles which I have had in mind for some time. A great many of our present readers were not our readers in 1999.

Other changes have been taking place in the past six years which affect the family. Powerful forces have been hard at work to make of our country a country of homosexuals. Numbers of politicians are displaying an affinity for homosexuals for political purposes. That people in our country would legalize so-called “homosexual marriages,” is proof that God is being ignored and set aside.

For a long time Europe has not been known for high moral standards. Now Belgium, Holland and Spain have approved homosexual marriages. Canada is in the process of doing the same.

Congregation Seeks Faithful Preacher

The church at Hickory Grove, sponsor of *Banner of Truth*, is looking for a preacher who loves the truth and who stands up for it.

Hickory Grove is a rural congregation of about 60 members, located about 9 miles from Murray, Kentucky. The church has a preacher’s house.

Interested preachers should contact the elders: James Lockhart, (270) 753-4460, or Mike Smith, (270) 437-4616.

How Our Readers Can Help Us

If you know of someone whom you believe would read Banner of Truth, send us their name and address to be added to our mailing list. Every month several people move and do not give us a forwarding address. We delete them from our mailing list. Much of our mailing list is made up by our readers who send us people to be added. Few ask to be cancelled.

If you are moving, please take time to send us your new address. This way you will not miss a single issue of B.O.T., and you will help us save on our expenses. Every piece that is returned to us costs 37 cents, plus the mailing expense in the first place and the cost of producing the paper. Thanks for helping.