

Banner of Truth

"The truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

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The Winds of Compromise with the Christian Church, Which Began to Blow Decades Ago, Have Now Reached Gale Force

The U.S. Census Bureau listed the churches of Christ and the Christian Churches as separate religious groups in the Census of 1906, one hundred years ago.

Relative to the above information a rather lengthy article was run on the front page of the Religious Section of *The Paducah Sun*, a Paducah, Kentucky newspaper, on March 31, 2006. The title of the article was **"The healing of a century-old split."** The sub-title was: "Church of Christ leaders push reconciliation as possibility." The author of the article was Murray Evans of Associated Press. Since it is an AP article I would think it had a large circulation.

The article had a large picture above it, of "Chuck Booher, senior pastor at Christ's Church of the Valley in San Dimas, Calif., and Jeff Walling, minister at Providence Road Church of Christ in Charlotte, N.C.," as they turn to embrace near the pulpit, which they shared at the Tulsa International Soul Winning Workshop in Tulsa, Okla.

We shall give some detailed attention to the article described above later, but for now we want to discuss some background material, which we trust

will be helpful to some to better understand what is involved in this matter of strong efforts to bring about a sate of fellowship.

What Is The Church Of Christ? A great many people do not understand the nature and purpose of the church mentioned in the Bible. Though mentioned scores of times in the New Testament, it was in the mind of God from eternity. Though the church is not mentioned there, the first allusion to it was in Genesis 3:15, where the "seed" of woman is mentioned. God, in carrying out His plan for the church, which Paul describes as an example of the "manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11).

Few people seem to realize that God had the church in His mind even before man sinned. This is borne out by Paul's statement to the Ephesians, as noted above. Another point many seem not to know about was that the Old Testament prophets played a very important part in revealing God's plan for the church. Isaiah 2:2-3 speaks →

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Published by the
Hickory Grove
church of Christ

1131 Hickory Grove Rd., Almo KY 42020

Elders:

Jimmy Lockhart (270) 753-4460

Mike Smith (270) 437-4616

Preacher:

Virgil Hale (270) 767-0625

Editor

Walter W. Pigg (270) 753-3675

164 Coles Campground Rd., Murray, KY 42071

Assistant Editor:

Alan Adams (850) 937-2460

1653 Pine Lane Dr., Cantonment, FL 32533

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Continued from Page 1

of the duration of it. It was through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that Christ came to earth in a human form to establish His church at the cost of his blood (Acts 20:28). This was God's plan from the beginning.

Christ, born of the virgin Mary, said He would build His church (Matt. 16:18). This was carried out in its fullness on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, when people were added to His church (v. 47). From that point onward in the New Testament, the church is no longer in the future, but a reality, it is in existence.

Christ built or purchased no other church save His own. Hundreds, even thousands, of religious groups have come to be in our time, which do not go back to the first century when Christ built His church. Few people today seem to understand that which is so clearly set forth in the New Testament relative to the church which Christ built.

The "church" is described as "the body" (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Therefore, when Paul said "There is one body" (Eph. 4:4), we know he was saying there is "one church." There is today still only one true church,

and that is so because Christ built only one. Since it served God's eternal purpose, there was no need to build another one. There are today hundreds of religious groups claiming to belong to Christ, but they have absolutely no evidence to prove that this is true. They are man-made, not God-made or blood-purchased Christ.

The great importance, even the essentiality, of the church which Christ built is seen in the fact that "Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23). Above we noted that the church is called the "body." If one would be saved, then it is necessary to be in that one body [church] of which Christ is the savior.

What About The Church Of Christ In America?

Numerous people have the erroneous idea that the church of Christ had its beginning in America. That simply is not so. It might, we trust, help some to understand more fully the nature of the church, by noting the parable of the sower, in Luke 8. Christ said, "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God" (v. 11). Where the "seed" was planted in the first century in the proper soil the church existed. The seed [word] produced only after its own kind. God's word did not produce any religion other than the church. Peter says of the Christian that he is born again of "incorruptible seed," which is "the word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23). The only way one can become a true Christian today is to be born again by "the word of God." Those who are born by the word of God, come together or assemble as a congregation of Christians for worship, as God intended.

How did the church commence in America? Just like it did in England and many other places. In America, the seed "the word of God" began to be planted by a number of religious folk. This was in the midst of much religious confusion among the people, where a number of religious groups, wearing different names and teaching and practicing different doctrines, existed.

As the seed, the pure word of God, began to be planted, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, some of it fell into "good and honest hearts" and brought forth fruit in America. Some people said, "Let us just take the Bible as our guide, let us speak where it speaks and be silent where it is silent." This made good sense to many people, since God's word is our only

only true guide, and it is all-sufficient. It was decided by some that all denominational names be given up, and that they would wear the name Christian, and that alone. This was the result of the true seed, “the word of God,” being planted in the hearts of people. There were many who became a part of this return to the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice.

Several people were involved in what is called “The Restoration Movement.” This movement was not about reforming the denominations, but rather, about restoring in America true Christianity, as it had been in the first century in Palestine. That is, plant the pure seed, the word of God, and let it produce true Christians, servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. God’s word will accomplish the same today.

Those who obeyed the word of God, becoming Christians, began meeting together as congregations as did people in the first century. The same thing has happened in our time. I have had the opportunity of preaching the gospel in several countries, especially in India and in Ukraine. I have seen congregations form, and they did it just as it was done in the first century. This can happen in any country where the true seed of God’s word is planted in good hearts.

Why The Two Groups In The Census Of 1906?

Around the mid-1800s, serious discussions arose among those who had obeyed the gospel, relative to the authority of God’s word. Some took the position that where the Bible is silent, permission is granted to act on the basis of that silence. A great many of the people, in fact, a majority, eventually fell in line with those who used silence as permission to act.

One of the major questions involved the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. Since the New Testament does not say specifically, “You shall not use mechanical instruments of music in worship,” some took the position that it was an optional matter. Therefore, the instrument was brought in various places, and over the objections of many in numbers of places. Some other efforts were made to justify the practice, but they were not valid.

One effort to justify the use of instrumental music in worship, shows how the instrumental people grabbed at a straw, to the degree of absurdity. That example, made by the late Don DeWelt and others goes this way: It is argued that congregational singing is

not authorized in the New Testament, though we do sing in spite of that fact. Therefore, the argument (if it can be called such) is that since we engage in congregational singing without biblical authority, we can “play” as well. Such weak efforts as this may well help to account for the Christian Church doing a number of things without biblical authority, other than using mechanical instruments.

Another matter of serious discussion was that of a “Missionary Society.” Some felt that more evangelism could be done if there was an organized institution to be in control of mission efforts. Again, the authority of God’s word was a matter of concern. Some did not believe that God’s word authorized the forming of an organization outside the church to do the work the church should do, that is, to preach the gospel of Christ. Therefore, they opposed the Missionary Society, because it supplanted the work of the church, as it still does.

It might be noted that both the above issues came down to the matter of authority. Did God’s word authorize these two things; instrumental music in worship and the forming of the Missionary Society?

Although the die had virtually been cast, there was still some fellowship between the two groups. But by 1906, it was evident that for the most part there were two groups, one maintaining that God’s objective word was the only source of authority as to faith and practice, and the other maintaining that silence of the scripture gave permission to act, and that a “thus saith the Lord” was not necessary.

After the Census in 1906, it was generally the case that those who did not veer from their conviction that God’s objective word was the sole authority for faith and practice, and did not support or approve of the use of instrumental music in worship and the Missionary Society, used the term “church of Christ.” In several instances, as is true today, especially in some northern states, this is the designation used by the Christian Church. Though one may see “Church of Christ” on their church buildings, they use instrumental music and approve of the Missionary Society, and other unauthorized things.

The Christian Church, which adopted the two above things, without scriptural authority, would go even farther away from accepting God’s word as →

the only basis for faith and practice. Some from the Christian Church adopted teachings and practices which included much more than instrumental music in worship and the Missionary Society.

Within a couple of decades of the 1906 Census, some from the Christian Church would become even more liberal, and would be called "The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)." They became even more like the denominations round about, practicing many things without any scriptural authority whatsoever. They now have women preachers, celebrate religious holidays, and a host of other things. In fact, several decades ago they declared themselves a full-fledged denomination. At this point their liberalism had come to full-seed. They were right in one thing, however, and that was that they no longer claimed to be the true church, which Christ built, but just another denomination among the hundreds.

The Beginning Of Fellowship Efforts. Due to all that is involved, it will be possible to only hit a few of the high points of a growing influence. It might be noted that within the church of Christ, liberalism began to rear its evil head and sweep over the ranks a few decades ago, captivating more than just a few. It was from within, among those captivated by liberalism, that various moves began to form, advocating fellowship with the Christian Church, some times called The Independent Christian Church. But one person seems to have had a large influence in giving impetus to those moves. That individual was Rubel Shelly.

Rubel Shelly's Influence. Rubel, whom I knew personally, having been in Freed-Hardeman with him as a student, was for several years a very effective proclaimer of the truth, standing solidly for the distinctiveness of the New Testament church. He was esteemed highly for his stand for the truth without compromise. I still have much of his material in my files from those years. But a good start does not guarantee a good end. Paul said the Spirit said some would "depart from the faith" (1 Tim. 4:1), and that some would "turn away their ears from the truth" (2 Tim. 4:4). There were other warnings as well.

At a Preacher's Forum in Centerville, TN, in 1983, Rubel Shelly sort of dropped a bombshell when he made it known that he no longer believed what he had been preaching so forcefully in years past. To put it in

a nut shell, Rubel took the position that there were Christians in practically all the denominations and that we, of the church, whom he criticized, were wrong if we did not agree. He was now critical of the church rather than upholding it.

Many brethren disagreed with Shelly, but many were influenced by his liberalism. In fact, as Rubel went farther into liberalism he probably came to have more who were in agreement with him than when he still preached the truth. The brotherhood had become more liberal in general, and with the liberals he would have a much larger audience.

As Rubel Shelly completely denied the faith and went into apostasy, destroying the faith he once preached, he still had his followers. Even when he promoted the Billy Graham campaign in Nashville a few years ago, he had a great many supporters.

THE JOPLIN SUMMIT MEETING. It seems that 1983 was the year that the spirit of compromise begin to pick up new strength. The years of 1984 and 1985 saw a multiplicity of efforts in several places. There was much in common in these efforts. Almost every one had members of the church who were in sympathy with the effort to fellowship the Christian Church.

The Joplin Summit Meeting, an example of the above, was hosted by Ozark Bible College at Joplin, Missouri, Aug. 7-9, 1984. About fifty men from each, the church of Christ and the Christian Church, were involved. A number of our brethren evidenced a compromising spirit toward the Christian Church. One example was seen in an exchange between Furman Kearly and Wayne Kilpatrick. A part of that exchange follows:

Kearly: This is an aspect of the isolation, is, a lack of knowledge of our histories. If we could start in our congregations, doing some more study of the Restoration history outside of our own branch and looking at the distinctions between the conservative, instrumental and the Christian Church.

Kilpatrick: I wonder too, in bringing Christian Church preachers into our class like this might not be a good thing. Let them come in and tell their history in a class situation.

Kearly: Yes, that's right.

Kilpatrick: I think you can ease from the class to the pulpit. †

From the above it can be seen that a move toward unity and fellowship with the Christian Church was alive in the minds of these two brethren. They were not the only ones in that meeting which felt the same way, a willingness to compromise, to give in.

TULSA RESTORATION FORUM. This meeting took place March 18-20, 1985, at the Garnett Church of Christ in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Marvin Phillips was the preacher. For several years he has been known for his liberalism. Frank Morgan, who was present at the meeting said there appeared to be about eighty participants, with a number of auditors. The auditors were not to speak in the sessions, but in groups.

Brother Frank Morgan had this to say in his "Concluding Observations" about the Tulsa Forum:

Prior to and following the Joplin meeting, I had stated my own conviction that many brethren were moving toward a posture of fellowship with the Independent Christian Church, letting their use of instrumental music in worship be optional. I went to the Tulsa meeting hoping that I might see or hear something to dissuade me from thus thinking. I regret to say I came away more firmly convinced that my conviction is based on fact, not fantasy.

THE RAYTOWN "UNITY" MEETING. In late 1984 a "Unity" meeting was held at the Raytown church of Christ. There were two speakers, Larry Frew of the Wyandotte Christian Church and Chris Bullard of the Overland Park church of Christ. Twenty preachers from the church of Christ and fourteen from the Independent Christian Church participated. After the speakers there were discussion groups. Like the Joplin meeting in August, there was much emphasis upon the church of Christ going along with the Christian Church and their unscriptural practices.

There were many "unity" meetings of one sort or another in 1984, and in years since. Some have been called "Restoration Forums," but with fellowship as the main objective. But we have not the space to discuss them. We want to move on to a rather powerful effort by the Christian Church to bring about a state of fellowship on their terms, with the church of Christ. Such an effort involved the printed page, and mass mailing of a publication called "*One Body*."

"ONE BODY" What is *One Body*? This tabloid was first published by well-known author, preacher, and publisher of the Independent Christian Church, Don DeWelt, of Joplin, Missouri. The Editor was Victor Knowles. The first issue was published Feb., 1984. It was mailed quarterly, and in the beginning contained 16, 24, 24 and 32 pages in that order. There were intentions, if funds could be raised, to send this publication to hundreds of thousands, including "350,000 protestant preachers."

The *SPRING / 88 issue of One Body* says: *A publication of Ozark Christian College.* This is the latest issue of the tabloid that I have. It did not give a volume number. The purpose of this publication by the Christian Church people is stated on the masthead as: "A NATIONAL BIBLICAL TABLOID TO PROMOTE UNITY." Needless to say, the "Unity" under consideration here is to just accept in fellowship the Christian Church with its unauthorized practices. Of the hundreds of pages of *One Body* that I have read, this is the goal set forth.

Some time ago I received a copy of *ONE BODY*. It was listed as "volume 23, Number 1, Winter 2006." I have not been acquainted with this publication in the years between 1988 and this recent issue. I will have more to say about this latest *ONE BODY* later, but for now I will be going back a few years.

The *ONE BODY* tabloid was characterized by writings from Christian Church men and by some of the most liberal brethren from the church of Christ. The bias for fellowship with the Christian Church was so very evident. In fact, many of the writers from within the church were ready then to join hands with the Christian Church, and have been pursuing that course ever since.

What is the source of my knowledge of *ONE BODY*, some may ask? I did a forty-page review of it and published it in the bulletin of the Pine Street church of Christ in Heber Springs, Arkansas in 1986. Make no mistake about it, anyone who reads this material of *ONE BODY*, and are honest about it, will have to admit that the main purpose is to bring about a state of fellowship with the Christian Church, and that is on their own terms, giving up nothing.

"ONE BODY" OF TODAY. The objective of this publication has not changed in twenty years. →

This latest edition has articles by members of the church of Christ, including the ultra liberal Marvin Phillips. Douglas A. Foster, "Director of the Center for Restoration Studies at Abilene Christian University," also has an article. A number of men from the Christian Church have articles in that issue.

This latest edition of One Body has a notice of the "31st Annual International Soul Winning Workshop, in Tulsa, OK. Would you believe the following speakers from the church of Christ would speak? Well, you should, knowing what that workshop stands for. They were: Jeff Walling, Max Lucado, Marvin Phillips. Three men from the Christian Church were slated to speak. The very idea of talking with three of the most liberal brethren among us. There's not much to talk about, other than setting forth their similar view about fellowship and welcoming each other. This is so typical of many meetings of today. It is not a case of some of our most knowledgeable and faithful brethren speaking with members of the Christian Church, about unity and fellowship. No. It is usually a case of our most fellowship-minded brethren talking, and not talking about unity only on the basis of God's word, the only acceptable unity in God's sight.

The paper carried an article entitled: "23RD RESTORATION FORUM MEETS IN 'CRADLE' OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT." "About 350 people...assembled in the sanctuary of the historic Broadway Christian Church to break bread together and hear noted historian Leroy Garrett speak...." This shows that Leroy Garrett is already in fellowship with the Christian Church, as are a number of others who no longer hold the teaching of God's word with respect to the distinctiveness of the New Testament church. That Leroy Garrett would be accepted with open arms tells us something.

ABILENE'S 88TH LECTURESHIP. We shall discuss this subject in greater detail when we consider *The Christian Chronicle* and its influence toward fellowship with the Christian Church. But for now we shall note a few things from the fifty-eight page mail-out from Abilene Christian University.

One of the things which got my attention right off about the lectures was the list of about 140 speakers. Although I have been a member of the church well over fifty years, and have preached more than fifty-

two years, there are many, many members of the church which I do not know, even though they may be quite prominent within the brotherhood. But over the years I have come to know several brethren, some of whom have been great and uncompromising supporters of the truth. I have also come to know several brethren who have left the faith and no longer stand in the "old paths." Some have even brought shame and disgrace upon the Lord's church by compromising with error.

In that list of about 140 speakers, I recognized at least seven brethren who are known for their error by much of our brotherhood. But what surprised me so much, and yet, knowing what ACU now stands for it shouldn't have, was the fact that I could not recognize even ONE speaker whom I know as a stalwart supporter of the Truth. And this includes Royce Money, President of ACU, who has been known for his rank liberalism for a great many years. That should tell us something of great importance.

In that list of speakers I did note some, whom I know not personally, but know that they are members of the Christian Church, who look favorably upon our joining them in fellowship. At the top of that list is none other than Don Jeanes, President of Milligan College. He was invited by Royce Money to be a joint "Keynote Speaker" at 7:00 p.m., Feb. 17, 2006. Brethren, if this is not sufficient evidence of what these presidents of two schools are working for, would any amount of evidence make a difference? Respect for scriptural authority is involved here in a most important way. The lack of this respect is seen in those who are no longer walking in harmony with God's will. That same lack of respect for God's will is having the same results today.

Another notable name from within the Christian Church is Victor Knowles, editor of One Body. Bob Russell of the 18,000-member Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, KY. Add Chris DeWelt, Publisher of College Press Publishing Company & Director of Missions at Ozark Christian College. There may have been others from the Christian Church but it should be noted those listed above are men of considerable influence within the Christian Church.

When the 140 speakers of the ACU Lectures are considered, several of them from the Christian Church and several of our brethren, known liberals, †

it sort of reminds me of an octopus with 140 tentacles, reaching out for the food of comprising fellowship with the Christian Church. This tells us something as to the extent of this fellowship effort which is underway with great force.

THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE ENCOURAGES COMPROMISE. This paper, “with offices on the campus and support from Oklahoma Christian University,” has been known for its liberal stance for a great many years. Though they claim the paper is just a “newspaper,” the “news” carried is often so biased that anyone can clearly see it.

The first page of The Chronicles carries an article by Bobby Ross, Jr., entitled: “*ACU lectures promote ‘spirit of fellowship.’*” A subheading reads: “**AFTER CENTURY OF DIVISION, reconciliation urged between ‘estranged brothers and sisters,’ despite differences on instrumental music in worship.**”

The above article says several things about the ACU lectures, including several statements from various individuals. We shall note only a few. Then we shall note some other things said by Bobby Ross, Jr., in “A Conversation With Royce Money.”

In the above article by Ross, he says, “Several speakers urged church members to put instrumental music in the category of disputable matters, likening it to disagreement over Sunday School and individual communion cups.”

The point of comprise is clear: view the instrument as a trivial matter of indifference. This would open the gate to an array of matters as we have seen in the Christian Church, in things done without biblical authority.

Cecil May, “dean of the Bible college at Faulkner University is quoted as saying, “There is, of course, no question that many in churches of Christ no longer believe that instrumental music is in any real sense wrong.”

Royce Money is quoted as suggesting that “those of us who claim to be heirs of the glory of God...begin by asking God and asking each other for forgiveness for the messes we have made.” Though I cannot know what Money had in his mind, from the gist of nearly all that is said by those who favor fellowship with the Christian Church, suggests that those of us who will not use instrumental music are the cause of lack of fellowship. I want to be in that group, not that of those who are looking for it.

Howard Norton, in spite of liberal stances with regard to a number of matters, did get one thing right, when he said:” I think there is a very strong movement within our fellowship — the a cappella church of Christ — to completely join up with the Christian Church and say that what they are doing by introducing instrumental music, that there’s nothing wrong with that.” He hit the nail smack on the head in that statement. If we, too, cannot see that, we had better open our eyes very wide, if we care.

A CONVERSATION WITH ROYCE MONEY. Asked why ACU thought it was important to focus on unity at the Lectureship, Money says,

And we wanted to do whatever we could as an institution to help that along.” Money then suggests that “though everybody has to speak for themselves and as congregations, we speak for no one. . . .But I do speak for this institution. And I have deep convictions along these lines.

Speaking for the institution, ACU, means a great influence. Just think how many students and faculty are involved. In one sense, Money is speaking for a lot of people. That influence will be felt far and wide. It is a matter of fact that what “our schools” stand for, a great many will be influenced in that same direction. That could be for good or evil.

When Money was asked about criticism of his position on unity, he said, “There has been surprisingly little up to this point. I’ve received solid support from my board of trustees. . . .I received nothing but encouragement.” Money also says, “What I think is changing is that more of us in the a cappella tradition are not willing to make the use of instrumental music a test of fellowship, and certainly not a test of salvation.”

Asked to elaborate on the following statement in his speech: “After all, we could be wrong or off a little bit on a thing or two,” his reply was as follows:

I think somewhere along the way, some of us have picked up the idea that the concept of truth, or the concept of sound doctrine, means adherence to a defined set of prepositional truths. For one thing, when Paul uses the term sound doctrine, it’s healthy teaching, it’s not a litmus test, it’s not an orthodoxy test. And the Gospel of John basically says that Jesus is the truth. So it’s not proposition to be adhered to; it is in whom you believe rather than what you believe. . . . →

To me, this may be one of the most far-out statements made by Royce Money. This is not the first time I have heard such a statement. It has been made by many liberal-minded brethren. Does this idea not suggest subjectivism? How can it be determined “what you believe,” other than by the objective truth set forth by our Savior? Subjectivism has become the rule of the day with many people in religion. But, friends, we will be judged by what Christ says (John 12:48) and not by what we “feel” subjectively.

Asked, “Does it matter to you if a church uses the instruments in worship?” Money says, “I am firmly within the a cappella tradition. But I have a tolerance for those make other choices, and I don’t see that it needs to constitute a complete severing of fellowship or alienation. I just don’t see the need for that.”

Friends, there you have it, as to what Royce Money, President of ACU believes about a number of things, including fellowship with the Christian church. There is one thing, however, which is of importance to me, and that is, whatever Money says and believes, as well as all the other liberal-minded brethren believe and say, they are not speaking for me. No one who loves the truth, should allow these people to speak for them. It is to God’s word that we must be loyal, and not some man or men.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING. In the very beginning of this discussion I referred to an article in the Paducah newspaper. We will now go back, as intended, and discuss that article. The article as a whole points out a number of things which are factual. But we wish to zero in on the first two paragraphs of that article, as shown below.

TULSA, Okla. — The turning point for Jeff Walling came two decades ago at a church youth conference. Sitting with arms folded, he listened to 3,000 teenagers singing and praising God with a guitar accompaniment — and felt ashamed.

Walling, the son of a Churches of Christ preacher, had adamantly held to his group’s teaching that using instrumental music was wrong. But as he heard the youths worship, he began having doubts.

What many people may not know is that Jeff Walling departed from the truth many years ago. Faithful members of the church have known him as a preacher of error, not basing his teaching upon a “thus saith the Lord,” of

the Bible. Because of his appeal, especially to young people, he has influenced many in the way of error.

Now, in the two short paragraphs, he sets forth a fact that should not be taken lightly. According to the report, he changed his beliefs, not because he learned from God’s word that he should do so, but because of his feelings. As in the case with brother Royce Money, it is subjectivism that brings about the change, not what God’s word teaches, which does not change.

For what reason was it that Jeff Walling “felt ashamed”? Was it because he did not turn away from what God’s word teaches sooner? Was it because he had heretofore based his belief upon God’s word, the source of faith (Rom. 10:17), rather than upon what made him feel good? It is tragic, yet it happens to many as it did with Walling, that they leave their faith, based on God’s word, because of something they feel or hear, other than God’s word.

Walling goes on to say “I have struggled with this. Not this moment, as much as getting to this moment over the last 20-plus years.”

Why the struggle? Was it not that his conscience was still alive, and caused him to struggle in departing from the truth? Evidently his “struggle” is now over. Why is that so? Is it not due to the fact that his conscience has now been “seared with a hot iron” (I Tim. 4:2). When our conscience has been “seared,” that is, has become insensitive, we can do whatever we want to do without it bothering us.

A Few Observations: In view of the things we have covered, which represent just a portion of what reality makes clear, we should take stock of ourselves, and come to realize just how powerful the winds of compromise are blowing. They have reached Gale Force. Many are already engaging in fellowship with the Christian Church and even other denominations. Anyone who wants to see the fact may do so. It is not just a matter of what we are facing now, but what will our children and grandchildren face? Will they be able to find a congregation which has continued to stand for the truth?

Liberal thinking which has been growing by leaps and bounds among us, portends an affinity for fellowship with those who do not follow God’s word. As we look back, the casualties are already many, but the future will be horrifying if we continue in the same path that many are following.

—Editor

AN ADDENDUM TO THE FOREGOING

From several years ago I can recall an article that was seen in church bulletins and other writings quite often. The article was about “Drawing a Circle,” and it got down to the point that only the individual was left in the circle. Back of this idea were those who frowned upon establishing lines of fellowship, which we could not cross without disobeying God’s law on fellowship. There are more and more who are thinking that way in our day, as we have seen in the previous discussion.

In response to the “circle drawing” article as noted above, I just decided that I would use that same figure, but rather in respect for God’s law on fellowship rather than disrespect for it. I thought this article of mine, published by the late Noel J. Merideth in *Christian Light*, Mar.-Apr. 1985, would be timely now, in view of the fellowship matter.

He Drew His Circle Again And Again

When he first became a member of the church *his circle* wasn’t all that big, comparatively speaking...it only included those who had truly believed in Christ and had been baptized “for the remission of sins,” being then added to the church by the Lord. He was sure that to have the Lord’s approval it was necessary to “abide in the doctrine of Christ,” “walking in the light as he is in the light.” He was happy to be in the circle of fellowship of members of that blood-bought body of Christ. But as he observed, some were not “abiding in the doctrine of Christ.” He was sorely distressed and decided that his philosophy of “love” would not allow all them to be shut out, even though they “had not the Father and the Son.” So *he drew his circle* of fellowship big enough to include those brethren who were: “fornicators, covetous, idolaters, railers, drunkards and extortioners,” of whom Paul said, “with such an one no not to eat.” Now, *his circle* had grown larger, but not large enough to take in those who view “silence as consent” for the use of the instrument. So, *he drew his circle again*, this time taking the instrumental folk in. Now it was wonderful to see *his circle* of fellowship increase, but couldn’t it be greater still? How about those “sincere, knowledge-

able, devout Christians scattered among all the denominations” and upon those “sectarian hills”? Since they, too, are Christians without a doubt, *his circle* would have to reach still farther out. So *he drew his circle again*, large enough to take those “sectarian” Christians in. Now, in view of the ever widening circle of “unity” which he chose to pursue, there was still something left to do. You see, he had friends who were Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterians, and they were Christians (“God’s children”) too. What would he do? That’s right! This time when *he drew his circle again*, it was so *large* that took nearly everybody in. Oh! It would be hard to convince him that he might now be wrong; he contends that he is a man of “love” and very devout. It makes no difference to him that he has included in *his circle* many whom the Lord has said He will *cast out*. Now if he would truly love the Lord, with that highest form from above, he would in his own mind His truth instill. Then, he would respect the *Lord’s circle of fellowship* which He has drawn in harmony with *his own will*. “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7).

Pickin’ Churches

Below is a note that appeared in *Union City Messenger*, Apr., 6, 2006. We shall begin with the title of the note in the NOTES section.

Pickin’ event slated

“The Tuesday celebration of Music on the Square in Troy will begin at 5:30 p.m. at Troy Church of Christ, located on Highway 51 a half mile northeast of Troy across from the Homestead 2000 Mobile Home Sales. The popular program which attracts those who love to play and listen to ‘acoustic only’ tunes in the old timey, country, bluegrass and gospel venues, has been moved from its outdoor summer setting around the Troy square to the cooler weather indoor location at area churches, a spokesman said. As the weather warms again, the sessions will be moved back to Troy Square. These changes will be announced in News Notes.

“Organizers invite those who are just learning →

to play stringed acoustic instruments to come and learn with more experienced ‘pickers.’

“For more information, call Mike Daniel at 796-0301, Charles Callis at 536-5679 or Judy Underwood at 885-8883.

“All acoustic performers and fans are invited to enjoy these performances, the spokesman added.”

The above note, in its entirety, sets forth notice of a secular event at “Troy Church of Christ.” The time was that such an event sponsored by the church of Christ would have been highly unusual, if at all. It is now quite different. I believe it was a couple of years ago that the University Church of Christ here in Murray, Kentucky sponsored a program called “Pickin’ and Grinnin’.” This was during the 4th of July celebration.

I can well remember the time when such activities of entertainment would have been somewhat unusual with a greater portion of the denominational churches. But with them this has changed. Some of the churches of Christ have followed suit in providing things which are not works of the church at all, but rather things which people want, and are going to have. A “thus saith the Lord,” which used to be of great importance to many, has now become a thing of the past with far too many.

There are two things which I wish to point out about the above activity, which should serve as an important lesson to those who truly want to serve God in accordance with His will, the only way to actually worship and serve Him.

Number One — Transgressing The Doctrine Of Christ. The church at Troy has gone beyond the “doctrine of Christ,” and therefore, does not have the approval of the Father and the Son (2 John 9). It is engaging in something which is not the work God has given the church to do. If it had been the Lord’s will for the church to provide entertainment, He would have made that known. When a congregation goes beyond the doctrine of Christ in one thing, it is often just a prelude to more of the same. For example, when **pickin’** is sponsored, how long will it be until we hear “Do-Ci-Do,” “Swing your partner...” etc. ? Why not engage in such, some might ask, it is a matter of fact that some who enjoy pickin’ also enjoy “square dancing.” So, if it is a matter of providing people what they

want, why not have square dancing to go along with it? Do you get the point in this matter? Sin is progressive.

Number Two — A Cause For Such Unscriptural Practices. The person who sent me the note from the newspaper, asked to remain anonymous, “Since this is an area where everyone knows everyone else.” This person, who does not attend the Troy congregation, expressed great concern as to what is happening within the Lord’s church, and rightly so. It is certainly enough to disturb greatly those who love the Lord and His truth. I am thankful when people let me know about matters in the brotherhood which should be of concern to us. This includes not only negative things, but things of a positive nature. It is refreshing and encouraging to know when the Lord’s people are serving as shining lights to this dark world of worldly people.

One Great Cause for things such as the Troy activity happening and being on the increase, is because faithful brethren **Will Not Speak Out.** Yes, if we do speak out, we may receive some criticism. But so what? We should much rather have the Lord as our friend than anyone I know as a friend. I have lost friends because I stood up against things which were wrong. But isn’t this what our Lord expects of us? To say nothing when we know things are contrary to God’s will is to help encourage such. Those brethren who are liberal-minded are so very pleased when no one calls their hand on what they are doing that is wrong. Silence is what they wish for.

Jude says we are to “contend for the faith...” (Jude 3), which actually means to fight for the faith, in a spiritual way, of course. Paul told the Corinthians to, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (I Cor. 16:13).

[NOTE] Let me say to the anonymous individual, please take courage and speak up against that which you know is contrary to God’s will. You must not allow anyone you know to keep you silent when souls are involved. Peter says not to be ashamed if we suffer as a Christian, but to glorify God (I Pet. 4:16). By standing for the truth and speaking out against those who violate it, could result in the saving of souls, of turning people from the error of their way. We must not fear what men may say.

—Editor

SOLDIERS OF CHRIST — ARISE!

Alton W. Fonville

In Ephesians 6, Paul is encouraging brethren to prepare themselves for battle with the devil. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (v. 11). In the verses following he describes that armour and speaks to you and me — “Stand therefore...Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

Paul, in speaking from experience, describes the behavior and duties of a good soldier of the Lord. He spoke of himself as a “fellow soldier” to the Philippians. From just a brief look at the life of Paul, it is evident that a soldier of the cross of Christ has some difficult work to do. It is not a “passive job.” Being active against the wiles of the devil requires us to be active, not sitting down on the job after induction into God’s army. We must have convictions and stand for something.

First, we must realize that we have an enemy, the devil, and that he is alive and well today, working with all his forces to overtake us. He is sly and subtle, a deceiver. He catches us in our weak moments when we are not on guard and we end up following him. We think that we are doing God’s will because he has deceived us. Do you recall Paul’s former life? He had been deceived, even though he was very zealous in persecuting Christians.

In order to withstand the devil, we must know the scriptures. This requires much study of God’s word, so that we may know the truth from fiction. This enables us to be unashamed in handling aright God’s word (2 Tim. 2:15). Since there are false teachers all around us, even within the church, we must be ready and able to confront them that their mouths may be stopped.

When disunity occurs within God’s family, the church, God’s word must be allowed to prevail, even if physical families are involved. Jesus addresses this matter when he said: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a

man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:34-37).

A good soldier of the Lord will be ready, and when necessary, stand against members of his own household when false teachings are being promoted, no matter how much it hurts. Likewise, a good soldier who is a leader in the church, must take the necessary action against false teachings at all costs in order to maintain the unity of the faith. Withdrawal of fellowship from every brother that walketh disorderly, is a command of God to be obeyed by every Christian. Partiality dare not be considered because of advantage – whether or not it means a loss of financial resources or a loss of members. And, certainly, politics should not enter into the decision to obey the command to use church discipline when necessary. Becoming entangled in the affairs of the world is a sign of a poor soldier (2 Tim. 2:4).

It is past time for soldiers of Christ to arise and stand for something. It has been aptly stated that “when we stand for nothing – we will fall for anything.” We cannot afford to let the “blood-bought church of Christ” be dragged through the muck and mire of the world. We must dare to be different in the face of a world which is crying out “to conform and be politically correct.” Soldiers of Christ, ARISE, put on the armor which has become rusty from disuse. “Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate. saith the Lord...” (2 Cor. 6:17). Help present the church without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing (Eph. 5:27). — 337 Madison 4605, St. Paul, AR 72760

Islam Shows True Colors

The Paducah Sun, March 24, 2006, had an article entitled: **Afghans trying to avert convert’s execution.** Abdul Rahman, 42, was arrested “for converting to Christianity.” The penalty for his religious conversion — DEATH! This is a sample of true Islam. It was only due to outside pressure that the death penalty was not carried out, on the basis that the man was “mad,” or “mentally ill.”

Evolution (3)

Evolution, I think it fair to say, is a conclusion in search of evidence and an argument to support it. Were it not so, it would have been discarded as a theory a long time ago. It is a theory replete with and beset by countless problems, each within itself an insuperable problem; yet, that does not in the least daunt evolution's proponents and defenders. The problems of evolution are so many that we have found it helpful to categorize them under the headings: Internal, Scientific, Philosophical, and Ethical Problems.

When pressed scientists who believe in evolution will pass off the theory's problems by simply asserting that no reputable scientist questions the fact of evolution. That is supposed to settle it. I am not a scientist, but I can think. A theory that holds that all of man's past holds the record to his present, yet which cannot offer up one shred of historical evidence to prove it: that is an assumption, not a theory, and certainly not a fact.

Not only does history offer no proof of something that is supposed to permeate history, evolution also stumbles over the stone of mechanism. How did, and do, things change from one distinct kind into another? We have considered the claim that mutation is the mechanism, and why that is impossible.

There is also the claimed mechanism of "natural selection." It is averred that mutations bring into existence new "raw material" with which to work. Nature acts upon this organism and selects, over millions of years, the most fit. Given time, a now-refined new organism awaits another mutation in order that the process might be put into motion again.

The one great problem with "natural selection" is that it operates in exactly the opposite direction from that demanded by evolution. Robert Camp notes,

Genetically, organic evolution and selective breeding are virtual opposites. Organic evolution would have had to begin with no forms and have the end result as the great variety we see today. Selective breeding (natural selection, AA) does begin with certain existing forms and eliminates some of them. Organic evolution is up from nothing, natural selection is down from something. One might just as well argue that he can prove that people grow young by observing them as they grow old, as to say that natural selection proves organic evolution.

Actually, this concept that would hopefully ac-

count for the origin and variation of life, is anything but natural. Nature does not contain the evolutionist's mechanism; rather, he must look beyond nature, but of course, when he does that, he must give up evolution altogether.

In addition to the problems of *Proof*, and *Mechanism*, another inherent problem of evolution is: The Instability Problem.

One would naturally assume that any theory that is as factual as digestion, as evolution is purported to be, would be clear-cut, concise and uniformly agreed to in specific detail. Unfortunately, such is not the case with evolution. Though all are convinced that evolution is a fact, they are terribly divided over the question of the fossil record and the mechanism.

Due to inability to account for the abrupt "gaps" in the fossil record, some have abandoned the "missing link" claim and are now postulating that "...the changes were not by transition but by *sudden leaps* in evolution." Thus, the house becomes divided. For, to advocate "sudden leaps", one is forced to abandon uniformitarian doctrine, and yet this doctrine "spawned" the whole idea to begin with.

Further, there has been and continues to be ↴

great controversy over the question of mechanism. Though, as previously noted, “mutation” and “natural selection” are most widely adhered to, this has not always been the case and is not, in the fullest sense, now. Dr. George Parker of Harvard states, “At the same time that...biologists accept descent with modification (that is, evolution) as an actual occurrence in nature, they are most skeptical and reserved about what may be called the driving force behind descent.” However, Parker is quick to continue by saying, “Because biologists have not as yet discovered how evolution taken place is no reason for denying evolution itself.”

No one knows why the “gaps” are in the fossil record; no one knows what the mechanism of evolution is; yet, many tenaciously cling to this “flimsy” theory as though it were the Rock of Gibraltar. Certainly, evolution suffers from an instability problem.

Evolution is also internally plagued by the Assumption Problem. Assumptions are only of value on the front end when formulating hypotheses; but, then said hypotheses are to be subjected to scrutiny. Evolutionists toss this process out the window.

With evolution so confidently affirmed as fact, one would not expect anything about it to be assumed; rather, one would expect it to be factually based. Such, however, is not the case.

A tremendous example of “assumption,” where evolution is concerned is Darwin himself. In his *Origin of Species*, he insisted that the following propositions must be admitted:

...gradations in the perfection of any organ or instinct, which we may consider, either do now exist or could have (emphasis, AA) existed, each good of its kind—that all organs and instincts are, in ever so slight a degree, variable—and, lastly, that there is a struggle for existence leading to the preservation of each profitable deviation of structure or instinct.

To put it plainly, Darwin simply says, “Allow me to assume certain processes and evolution is undoubtedly true. Such irrationality was also expressed by famed philosopher, Antony Flew, in the

Warren-Flew Debate on the Existence God. Pressed by Warren to deal with evolution, which was essential to his case, Flew responded by saying, “...I appreciate that Dr. Warren will not agree with me that the theory of evolution by natural selection constitutes a true account of the origin of species. I do not at this moment ask him to believe that it does. But it does seem to me that, if once you allow that it is a true account...” Again, the plea is made, allow me to “assume.”

In a particular scientific journal, G.A. Kerkut’s book, *Implications of Evolution*, is reviewed. In the review, it is pointed out that Kerkut, an avowed evolutionist, honestly and forthrightly lists some seven *assumptions* of evolution, each of which he states are “not capable of experimental verification.” These are—

1. Non-living things gave rise to living (spontaneous generation).
2. Spontaneous generation occurred only once.
3. Viruses, bacteria, plants and animals are all inter related.
4. The Protozoa gave rise to the Metazoa.
5. The various invertebrate phyla are interrelated.
6. The invertebrates gave rise to the vertebrates.
7. Within the vertebrates the fish gave rise to the amphibia, the amphibia to the reptiles, and the reptiles to the birds and mammals.

Amazingly, Kerkut places both the “prime cause” and the mechanism of evolution into the realm of assumption; and that certainly is where it belongs!

Finally, we consider a revealing statement made by a once champion of the evolutionary cause, George Wald (Harvard). Admitting the necessity of spontaneous generation to his case, he said, “One has only to contemplate the magnitude of this task to concede that the spontaneous generation of living organisms is impossible. Yet, here we are—as a result, I believe, of spontaneous generation.”

Even such a staunch advocate is forced to “assume” that what he knows to be impossible did in fact take place. It seems that, rather than asking, Do evolutionists assume? the more appropriate question is, What do they *not* assume? —AA

Sixth Annual Banner of Truth Lectures

Murray, KY, June 5-8, 2006

Warring A Good Warfare

Location: *Curris Center, M.S.U. Campus, Third Floor Theater*

MONDAY, JUNE 5

10:00 a.m.	Alan Adams	– <i>Warring A Good Warfare</i>
11:00 a.m.	David Lemmons	– <i>Winning The Enemy In Foreign Lands</i>
1:30 p.m.	Michael Willy	– <i>The Army's Rules Of Conduct</i>
2:30 p.m.	Gilbert Gough	– <i>Food For The Effective Soldier Of Christ</i>
3:30 p.m.	Paul Curless	– <i>Fraternizing With The Enemy</i>
7:00 p.m.	Freddie Clayton	– <i>Poor Schools Of Training Makes Ineffective Soldiers</i>
8:00 p.m.	Ken Burleson	– <i>Effective Training For Soldiers Of Christ</i>

TUESDAY, JUNE 6

10:00 a.m.	Garland Robinson	– <i>The Captain Of Our Salvation</i>
11:00 a.m.	Freddie Clayton	– <i>The Shield Of Faith</i>
1:30 p.m.	Jeff Bates	– <i>Unrest And Turmoil In The Ranks</i>
2:30 p.m.	Ken Burleson	– <i>Fearless Soldiers Conquer The Enemy</i>
3:30 p.m.	Richard Guill	– <i>Entanglements To Avoid</i>
7:00 p.m.	Garland Robinson	– <i>Soldiers And Effective Communication</i>
8:00 p.m.	Leon Cole	– <i>Replacing The Sword Of The Spirit</i>

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7

10:00 a.m.	David Lemmons	– <i>Recruiting Soldiers For Foreign Duty</i>
11:00 a.m.	Richard Adams	– <i>Pressing Toward The Mark</i>
1:30 p.m.	Leon Cole	– <i>Soldiers Who Will Not Fight</i>
2:30 p.m.	Rick Knoll	– <i>The Bond That Binds True Soldiers Of Christ</i>
3:30 p.m.	Walter W. Pigg	– <i>Defying The Army Of The Living God</i>
7:00 p.m.	Virgil Hale	– <i>Terms Of Entrance Into The Lord's Army</i>
8:00 p.m.	Alan Adams	– <i>Duty, Honor And Country</i>

THURSDAY, JUNE 7

10.00 a.m.	Lindon Ferguson	– <i>Standing Against The Wiles Of The Devil</i>
10.00 a.m.	Lloyd Gale	– <i>Qualified Officers In The Lord's Army</i>
1:30 p.m.	Robert Alexander	– <i>Sin In The Camp Spells Defeat</i>
2:30 p.m.	Jimmy Bates	– <i>Unity If Loyalty And Purpose</i>
3:30 p.m.	Guyton Montgomery	– <i>Old Faithful Soldiers</i>
7:00 p.m.	Richard Guill	– <i>The Lake Of Fire</i>
8:00 p.m.	Steve Yeatts	– <i>The Crown Of Life</i>

We are happy to announce that the motel is again giving us the \$37 rate. We will be making reservations for those who need a room, and it would greatly help if you would inform us of your needs soon. For more information, please contact brother Richard Guill: Res: (270) 489-6219, Office: 489-2219; or me at (270) 753-3679. If any changes need to be made we will make this known in the next issue of B.O.T. Encourage others to Come and enjoy the feast.

Special Personal Request

It is with considerable reluctance that I make the following request for help. But by using this means rather than appealing to a great many sources I trust that I may save much valuable time.

Since I am no longer working with the Dexter congregation, our income from work with Banner of Truth and preaching has been reduced by well over half. I was not receiving support for full-time work with Dexter, and support from work with BOT was only about three fourths of Dexter's support.

My work with Banner of Truth is indeed a full-time work. But I do have more time to devote to that work now.

If there are congregations or individuals who would like to have a part in our work we would be glad to furnish detailed information as to the extent of our income. We receive no side benefits, such as housing, insurance, travel allowance, or such like.

I may be contacted by phone at: (270) 753-3675; by mail at 164 Coles Campground Rd., Murray, KY 42071; or you can e-mail at: wpiggbot@myshadetree.com

My intentions are to continue with the publishing of Banner of Truth as long as I am mentally and physically able. The paper goes out to hundreds of people in a number of other countries, as well as more than seven thousand people in our own country.

We ask for your prayers that we may be able to continue our work, which is now in its 15th year.

—Walter and Naomi Pigg

READERS' RESPONSE

"It was good to talk with you on Friday and I am looking forward to receiving the back issues of Banner of Truth. I have enclosed a small donation for your work. Your publication is very informative and I value the service it provides to the faithful body of Christ. Thank you for your efforts and dedication – **Rick Huffman.**" – **KY.** (*We are happy to send back issues to those who ask. We have about 100 that we can send. That represents several years of work for me and the discussion of many subjects, which we have found to be of interest to many.— Editor.*)

"Thank you for faithfully sending this publication to me and, please continue to send it...**Keith Cagle.**"

"Your publication, Banner of Truth, is one that I want to read cover to cover when it is received. Especially was this so with your article on 'God's Plans For Elders In The Church.' Thank you so much for your efforts. I wrote you after your last article some time back on leadership in the church and have been waiting to receive this article. You said in the paragraph on The Solution To Elder Problems, 'These mentioned problems could be solved by submitting completely to God's word in the matter.' And that is exactly the heart of the matter. My observation is that even when congregations attempt to appoint men meeting to some degree the qualifications required by God, they are often failing to prove/test these men before their appointment as required by 1 Tim. 3:10. The majority of churches do not have elders, and preachers are not being taught that it is their responsibility to develop leadership in such churches as indicated in Eph. 4:11-12....But in many congregations when it is decided that elders and deacons are needed, after a sermon or two, the congregation is asked to select elders, who then select deacons, with little or no teaching and training beforehand for either... — **Ed Allard.**" (*Thanks for your observations on a very important subject. I firmly believe that one of the greatest weaknesses we have in the Lord's church today is the lack of qualified leadership. Qualified leadership is the exception and not the rule. From my own experience of more than 52 years of preaching, I have seen many examples of poor leadership, and in some cases where men are serving as elders. I have in mind doing an article on leadership in congregations where there are no elders. I know that business matters can be carried on in a sensible manner →*)

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Almo, KY 42020-9332

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Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

if the brethren are willing to abide by some sensible rules. I firmly believe there is great need for more teaching on leadership. Thanks for writing. – Editor).

“Please don’t send any more bulletins to this address. Thanks.– **VA.**

“Please remove us from your mailing list. Thank you – **AR.**

“Refused: Return to Sender –**TN.**

“Return to sender – **FL.**

“I would appreciate being added to your mailing list. We need more good papers that are sound as Banner of Truth – **Richard Jones.**” – **TN.**

“Please add us to your mailing list, Banner of Truth. I read a friend’s paper and would like to have our own to read. Am enclosing a check to help. Thank you – **Judy Blackman.**” – **CA.** (*We are thankful that you read from a friend’s Banner of Truth. Thanks for the check. If you know of others who would like to receive BOT, just let us know and we’ll add them to our mailing list – Editor).*

“Thank you so much for the 1996 articles I asked for about Christian Schools. Please accept this small amount of money to help cover the cost and trouble – **Martha Feltman.**” (*Thanks. Happy to send them. – Editor).*

“I used to get a booklet named Banner of Truth, but I moved and I don’t get them. Here is my new address. I would like to get it started back because I love to read them – **Peggy Sue Harper.**” – **AL.**

“Greetings from the Hopkins Rd. church of Christ, in Richmond, VA. I just finished reading the January issue concerning God’s Plan For Elders in the church. This is the best explanation I have seen and should wake a lot of folks up when they apply it to their own congregations. Please subscribe me. Thank you very much – **Robert E. Lysen, Sr.**”- **VA.** (*It is most encouraging when brethren show their interest in the need for qualified elders within the Lord’s church. Godly elders can be the greatest deterrent to error when they do their duty. – Editor).*

FOR YOUR ADDRESS BOOK

EDITOR’S EMAIL: wpiggbot@myshadetree.com

ELECTRONIC BOT: *Via David Lemmons’ website*

BOT.LemmonsAid.net

DAVID’S LEMMONSAID E-MAIL:

LemmonsAid-Subscribe@YahooGroups.com

EMAIL: dlemmons@netscape.com