

Morals in America at All-Time Low, as Powerful Forces Go All-Out to Completely Secularize Our Society! (No. 1)

There are three evil bothers: Atheism, Humanism, and Materialism, who are working in concert completely to secularize our country and its society. These bothers are children of the devil, the "father of lies," and the enemy of God, and of all things which are truly good.

Fifty years ago I had no inkling whatsoever that I would be seeing in our society what I see clearly now. However, had I then been more familiar with the teaching of the New Testament and the several warnings plainly set forth, I would have been painfully aware that this tragic condition was a very real possibility. Had I been more versed in the teaching of the New Testament, it would have been evident to me that the Lord's church could be adversely affected from within, as we are now seeing.

As this discussion is commenced, it appears that the subject will have to be addressed further in a second article. Never has there been, during the lives of any of us, changes happening so quickly and to such an extensive degree. If ever there was [and there was] a time for the "Soldiers of Christ" to arise and "put your [their] armour on," it is NOW! "Tomorrow" will be too late for multiplied thousands, including our children, grandchildren, other relatives and loved ones, including those yet unborn.

We shall approach our subject from two closely related standpoints. 1. The lowest moral condition in our society in our lives. 2. The concerted effort on the part of a growing number of people, to get God out of our society and our lives, and fill the same with outright secularism. There is a growing dislike for virtually every vestige of Godly influence. We shall present some of the fast growing evidence which clearly confirms our conclusion. We believe any honest person, upon reviewing this evidence, and much more which is easily available, will reach the same solid conclusions that we have.

The condition into which our society has degenerated should be seriously considered by those who would be believers in and followers of the truth which God has made available to mankind. The condition of our present society is influencing those who are members of the Lord's church in a very pronounced way. It is having a greater evil influence upon those churches of men, in that they are moving farther and farther away from the shores of truth, even to the point that God is being put down and immorality encouraged by those who claim to believe in God. To use the name of religion to go against God's will is the very epitome of evil.

It is very likely that some who read this discussion will declare that it is just "too negative." But if such be the case, it serves as additional evidence of the bad influence our society is having upon people, even upon those within our Lord's body.

It is our plan in the following discussion to reflect on the beginning of the breakdown of moral standards in our country, and by "moral standards" we mean much more than just in the area of sexual matters. We are using "moral" in the sense of what is right and what is wrong in a much wider area, though sexual morality is of great importance and will be given considerable attention. We begin by a discussion of:

A SPEED-UP OF MORAL BREAKDOWN

Growing up in southern middle-Tennessee, I finished high school at age sixteen, and went off to seek my fortune, as World War II raged. Having been born in 1925, I was able to see what our part of the country was like for several years before the war. We have never seen a time when immorality did not exist, but that period before the war was so different, when compared with conditions to come. Generally, people were honest, wouldn't lie or steal. Sexually immorality was looked down upon by most citizens, and its occurrence was not a drop in the bucket compared with our present time.

A great change occurred during World War II. Due to the war our country was in turmoil. Young men mostly, and some women, went off to war to be involved in some phase of it. This involved the separating of many married couples. More than a few "Dear John" letters went out in the mail as marriage vows were broken. Some men away from their spouse were unfaithful as well.

In addition to the breakup of homes due to the separation brought about by the military, a great portion of homes were affected by family members going to work in the war factories. This, in many cases, affected the stability of homes. Spouses being put into situations in the workplace, where men and women were thrown together, often encouraged infidelity that would not have occurred otherwise.

The war brought financial prosperity to many people. A great portion of our society had more money than ever before. Material prosperity tends to lessen the importance of the spiritual in the minds of so many. The church of the Laodiceans serves as an excellent example. They were "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17). "Nothing" must have included the Lord. It has been my experience with people in other countries where poverty is so common, that they seem to show more interest in the spiritual realm than do those who are better off financially.

After World War II, things were just not the same as before, and would not be in years to come. The role of women in the home changed drastically. In so many instances women were no longer "keepers at home" as God intended (Tit. 2:5). Children were often brought up with more time with the baby sitter than with their moms. An element in society began to put down women who chose to fill the role which God intended, and which had worked well in the past. Many wives, with their own incomes, sensed a greater degree of independence, and chose more often to "do their own thing."

A strong result of the above was the bringing up of children with a lack of respect for their parents, and for authority in general. These children have grown up to have a great influence in our society, much of which has been detrimental. It is rather easy to see how that the present condition came to be, when the various steps toward greater immorality are viewed and considered.

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRESENT MORAL BREAKDOWN

Some of these examples are overlapping, but all in some way were contributing factors. We have no intention of trying to be exhaustive about this matter, but we do plan to point out some things, which to many are quite obvious, and should be to others.

The increased use of drugs, including alcohol. Before World War II, the only drug used extensively in many areas was alcohol. Alcohol flowed freely during the war and continued after the war. The bringing on of several other drugs only added to the problems which result from drug use.

When people are hooked on drugs, all sorts of immoral actions may be expected. In the area of sexual morality, under the influence of drugs people are likely to lose their inhibitions. Women hooked on drugs some times turn to prostitution to finance their habits. Drug use may result in robbery, lying, stealing, and even murder and suicide. This is not to mention all the mistreatment of innocent children, spouses and others, which cannot be measured. For sure, all these evils are condemned by God's word, and that we shall discuss later.

A most tragic thing about drug use is that the same is being encouraged in many circles. Alcohol is the most widely used drug and in more and more places it is being legalized. Right here in our own

area [City of Murray] booze was recently legalized. A case in point was the death of a young woman due to the use of alcohol the very first night it was legal. In time there will be many others. There are advocates in our society of making the use of other drugs legal, especially that of marijuana.

Since World War II, the use of drugs has become one of the greatest problems in our society, contributing greatly to a catalogue of immoral activities. The part that drugs has played in the breakdown of our once respected moral standard is unmistakable.

Immorality in high places. The time was that a great many people expected those in high places to have at least some kind of moral standard. It is different now. While it is unwarranted to say that all politicians are dishonest and immoral, it remains that many are. A sad example, a real disgrace to our country, is that of former President, Bill Clinton. Here is a man, the top man in our country, who engaged in sexual perversion in the White House and lied under oath.

We have politicians who use as a main plank in their platform to be elected, such as: In favor of the murder of millions of innocent human beings by abortion. The courting and encouraging of homosexuality. Just think what a terrible situation it would be if we all followed some of these immoral politicians as role models!

Perhaps the thing which bothers me most about the immoral politicians, is the indifference shown by so many people with regard to them. In the case of former President Clinton, in spite of the facts of his immoral actions, a majority didn't care! It's no wonder that moral standards are crashing, since people no longer care. It is now actually to the point that people, like in the days of the prophet Isaiah, are calling "evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness..." (Isa. 5:20).

When immorality is at the top, what can be expected all the way down to the bottom? If we were as concerned as we should be, we would demand a better moral standard for those in high places.

The influence of movies. A few decades ago a movie entitled *Love Story* hit the screens. Reaction to the movie was mixed. The movie contained a scene of the unmarried couple in bed together. Of course this implied sex before marriage, something which is firmly condemned in God's word (Heb. 13:4). Many teenagers thought the movie was grand, while the older adults often frowned on it. This was not what they were accustomed to seeing. This free sex before marriage had not yet gained the approval that it has today. It is now such a common thing that relatively few pay much attention to this sin.

A great portion of today's movies are so raunchy that people of high moral standards would blush at the display of such moral filth. Illicit sexual activities are emphasized, and infidelity is a common feature, along with out of wedlock pregnancy. Lying is often set forth as a privilege. People in the movies almost always drink something containing alcohol, and the result is often evident. The use of profanity, such as would not have been allowed forty years ago, is now a common thing. Instead of marriage being exalted, it is often devalued. It used to be a shameful thing for people to live together unmarried. Not any longer, in many movies and in society in general. It is reported that there are now more than four million unmarried couples living together.

That the influence of movies such, as mentioned above, certainly encourage people, and especially the younger ones, to act out the life styles they see on the screen, cannot in honesty be denied.

Television and its Evil Influence. Some have rated television as one of the most destructive influences of moral standards in our time. That may be true, but there is no doubt that it has played a great part in bringing the moral breakdown of our society to the shameful point which now exists. When we speak of television, movies are certainly included. TV offers a wide range of programs, many of which are at variance with the moral standards which many of us saw and respected a few decades ago.

We are carrying a lengthy excerpt from an article by *Bob Henson*, entitled "...God gave them up to vile affections..." (From Rom. 1:23). Note below:

"Every imaginable form of wickedness is truly being manifest in our world. We are all aware that evil has always been present. But, I know in my life-time, there has never been a time when wickedness was so open, flaunted, and show-cased as it is today. I'm going to deal principally with Television

and its role in this all-out assault upon the moral senses of our society. More specifically, I want to mention our local NBC affiliate, WPSD-TV. They certainly do not stand alone in promoting and showcasing immorality but they are nearest our community.

“You may have noticed that WPSD/NBC has a little promotional gimmick that states: ‘Working to Make A Difference.’ Well now, in light of that Channel 6 Motto, let’s make some of our own observations. 1. On a daily basis, during the daytime hours, one can view what is commonly called “soap operas.” It is interesting to note that the producers of this daytime sleaze jokingly referred to it as *daytime pornography*! If you’ve seen even the promos for these, or have by chance viewed more than a few seconds of this trash, you know that the producers have named it right. These (mostly live) productions are showcases for fornication, adultery, drunkenness, homosexuality and other sordid sin, all presented to the viewer as if to portray the normal, acceptable way to live.

“2. Now, comes the so-called Prime Time evening offerings. It would be very difficult to describe the outright morally degrading ‘programs’ that are presented to the viewer by WPSD/NBC during this time. Have you ever seen the advertisements and promos talking about the so-called ‘Reality’ shows? It isn’t necessary to see the actual program (and who would want to?) to know that the central theme of EVERY ONE of these (and I am referring to all the network ‘Reality’ programs) is FORNICATION! That’s right. The purpose for these programs seeing the light of day was to promote and showcase immorality among young adults and excite lust in those who watch them.

“In addition, their evening offerings include a variety of what is commonly called ‘Situation Comedies.’ Among this group, the viewer is treated to heavy doses of homosexual activity, both male and female. But, they are not content with this — they also include episodes portraying ‘cross-dressers,’ ‘transsexuals,’ and any other deviate behavior that can be imagined, as well as their usual obsession — fornication in general.

“But showcasing immorality is not enough. In most of these productions, you may witness attacks against God, the Bible, Jesus Christ, Christianity, the home, and a conservative America.

“3. A part of all commercial television is — the commercial, their source of revenue source. You would need to be living in a vacuum not to know that the advertisers and sponsors of TV shows have the same mind-set as the producers of the show, namely, that Sex Sells! Decent people would not want to watch and listen to many ads seen on commercial television. Many times, the ads aren’t even relevant to the product, but that doesn’t matter, just as long as the ad is lascivious, sexually explicit and morally degrading. Nakedness and promiscuity are present as if they were virtues.”

A great many people spend several hours daily watching TV, and this includes impressionable children. The impressions made upon viewers, and especially children, are much greater than many realize. Sadly, many role models are of an ungodly sort. People are quiet naïve to contend that children and young people are not adversely influence by the degrading activities shown on television. It is no wonder that children are growing up thinking that all manner of sin is acceptable.

The influence of immodest dress. Many of our younger people have never lived in a time when there was a great concern for modesty in dress. The apostle Paul said, “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety...” (I Tim. 2:9). This admonition has been almost completely lost in the world around us, and in too many cases within the church. It is in a great many cases difficult to distinguish Christians from the world by their dress. Though Paul directs the above to women, it is in order for men to dress properly as well.

Near nudity took a big leap when the bikini, a two-piece bathing suit, became so popular. The time was that near nudity was seen primarily at the beaches or swimming pools. That has changed! This immodesty in dress can be seen almost anywhere and in nearly any season. It is very evident that this type of near undressing is not done for comfort, unless it be that that comfort is in encouraging lust in the opposite sex. Note the words of Christ: “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:28). The lack of dress by women which is flaunted so freely today is a most effective way to cause lust, that is, in the mind of

a normal man. It used to be the most normal thing for men to pursue women, but times are different now. The way some women expose their bodies, who would have any doubt but that they are pursuing a male? Few think anything about it

A relatively new fashion has come into vogue in recent times, that of baring the midriff. With the navel showing and considerable space above and below, the parade is on. Would this be so popular in situations where there were no men present? Some times people wonder why young women are assaulted, when they go all out to encourage it.

It's hard for me to understand why parents would allow their daughter to parade themselves in such immodest attire. One would think, if thinking clearly, that parents would want to bring their daughters up in a way of respect. Their sons should be brought up in the same way. It is not unusual to see children dressed in a very immodest way as they grow up in years. Once the pattern is set, children wonder why it should be otherwise, and often it doesn't.

There are some indications that mothers want their daughters to dress immodestly, and to engage in other things which create problems. Several months ago there was quite a stir in a high school in this general area. School officials wanted to regulate extracurricular activities at the school facility, such as dances. Problems of drinking, improper dress, language, etc. were occurring in the activities. Were the parents in favor of bringing about a more decent atmosphere for the activities which involved their teenage children? No! Not at all! Some mothers pitched a fit! If this is not a good example of abdicating parental responsibility, where would one be found? Many young people grow up being what their parents allowed them to be, and that is too often following the status quo of drug use, free sex and immorality of other types.

With regard to immodesty in dress, what is being shown on TV now should not be overlooked. It is hard to go from channel to channel without being exposed to some of the most morally degrading scenes imaginable. With very little in the way of clothing to cover their bodies, there are some of the most vulgar bodily movements that can be imagined. Movements simulating sexual acts are quite common. There must be a growing number of people feeding upon such trash and indecency as this.

More could be said on the subjects we have discussed, but we want to address a subject at some length which depicts a state of morality which is as low as a state can be. We say this because of the emphasis in God's word on this immorality. This sinful activity is growing like a moral cancer in our present society. We speak of **Homosexuality**.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH, THE DEPTHS OF MORAL DEGRADATION

We have chosen to discuss the above subject in the concluding part of our discussion because it is the epitome of a complete moral breakdown. From all the references made to Sodom and Gomorrah, and often as an example of God's wrath on immorality, it seems that people have reached the bottom of ungodliness when they engage in homosexuality.

In the beginning of the discussion of the sin of homosexuality we want to examine what God's word has to say on the matter. We shall see that God condemns this sin as strongly as any, and from all the references to it, it appears that it ranks as high as any sin, if not higher. God does hate sin. He has hated "putting away" (Mal. 2:16). He hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6). There are many examples of His hating sin. Is it, therefore, unreasonable to say that He hates the sin of homosexuality? There is no sin which He has condemned more severely and punished likewise physically.

We shall not be able to deal with all the references to Sodom and Gomorrah, since there are so many. References are made in at least a dozen of the books of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, and some books have a number of references. God doesn't have to condemn something more than once for it to be wrong, but when something is mentioned so often it indicates God's great concern.

In Genesis 13:13 Moses said, "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." "And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their

sin is very grievous: I will go down and see..." (Gen. 18:20). God's displeasure with the sin of those cities was such that His physical punishment was described in the following manner: "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven" (Gen. 19:24).

God's concern with the sin of homosexuality is not a closed record with the end of Genesis. There are more than two dozen references made to Sodom in twelve other books of the Bible. The general message in these references is that Sodom and Gomorrah stand as examples of wickedness, and God's displeasure with the same. How could anyone have the audacity to say that homosexuality is just an "alternate life-style"? But fools have said in their heart that there is no God (Ps. 14:1).

It is said of Sodom and Gomorrah, "...the Lord overthrew in his wrath: Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done this unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger" (Deut. 29:23-24). The prophet Isaiah said that if the Lord had not left a small remnant, "we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Isa. 1:9). Again Isaiah speaks, saying of Babylon that it "shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" (Isa. 13:19). The "weeping prophet," Jeremiah, said of the evil prophets in Jerusalem, "they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah" (Jer. 23:14). The prophet speaks of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah in 49:18 and 50:40. The overthrow and sin of Sodom is mentioned in Lamentations 4:6. Amos said he had overthrown some of Israel, "as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" (Amos 4:11).

The example of Sodom and Gomorrah is not limited to the Old Testament, there are several references in the New Testament. Christ said, "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all" (Lk. 17:29). Paul quotes from Isaiah 1:9 in Romans 9:29). Peter speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah as an "example" when he said, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly" (2 Peter 2:6). In this case Peter is referring to God's physical judgment against the sin of homosexuality.

We conclude our references to Sodom and Gomorrah in the New Testament with the example in Jude 7: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are **set forth for an example**, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (emphasis mine, wwp)."

Homosexuality condemned. We have seen God's disapproval of this sin in the many examples considered. We now want to deal with a few specific instances where this practice is condemned.

A sin punished by death. To Moses the Lord said, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is abomination" (Lev. 18:22). Again the Lord said, "If a man also lieth with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely **be put to death**; their blood shall be upon them (emphasis mine wwp)." What if God dealt with homosexuals today in a physical was he did then, just think how many would die! The parades of the homosexuals would be cut short before their desired end.

We are not under the old law, that is true, but in the New Testament, homosexuality is still a sin! Note the words of Paul as he addresses the subject:

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Rom. 1:26-27).

Paul goes on to name a number of other sins of those of a "reprobate mind," who did not like to "retain God in their knowledge." His conclusion was that "they which do such things are worthy of death..." (vs. 32). Any sin which makes a person worthy of death is most serious.

Paul again addresses the subject of homosexuality in his first letter to the Corinthians. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind...shall inherit the

kingdom of God” (I Cor. 6:9-10). Those who think the sin of homosexuality will not keep them out of heaven are deceived.

The word “effeminate,” the Greek word *Malakos*, is defined as follows by *Thayer*: “effeminate, of a catamite, a man who submits his body to unnatural lewdness, I Cor. 6:9.” The phrase “abusers of themselves with mankind” is defined by *Thayer*, as “one who lies with a male as with a female, a sodomite” (p. 75). Those who contend that homosexuality is not condemned outright in the New Testament just do not accept God’s truth. But many reject God’s truth relative to many sins, not just this one.

That whether or not God condemns homosexuality is not even a question to anyone who actually believes the Bible to be God’s word. With the example of God’s dealing with Sodom and Gomorrah, and that being referred to in so many instances, who could believe that God has changed his mind and condones that sin? Not only Sodom and Gomorrah are to be considered, there is the clear teaching in the New Testament. One who would not accept the proof set forth above would not accept any amount of proof. Therefore, we shall turn our attention to some attempts to uphold this sin.

EFFORTS TO UPHOLD HOMOSEXUALITY

Just name any sin and there are those who will try to uphold it. While some just go ahead and do what they want to do; whether God approves or disapproves makes no difference, yet some others may try to twist or pervert God’s word in an effort to say that a sin is approved. To me, this is simply a matter of adding sin to sin, by disrespect for God’s word.

“**God made us this way,**” or, “**We were born this way,**” is a cry heard from these sinning people. In response to this effort to uphold this abomination, there is no valid medical evidence that I have heard of that gives proof to this. God has made people with the ability to become homosexuals, just as he had made people with the ability to be murderers, drunkards, or whatever. Homosexuals can quit the practice, as some have done.

In an article in *Pulpit Helps* several years ago, it is said that Dr. Charles Socarides, M.D., writing in the *Journal of American Medicine* said, “Homosexuality is not innate or inborn, but is rather a learned process.” The article quoted *Time* magazine as saying, “About the only thing that most experts (in the field of homosexual behavior) agree on is that homosexuality is not the result of some kinky gene or hormone disposition. Biologically homosexuals do not constitute a third sex, they are all full men and women.” People choose to be homosexuals.

It is rather absurd for a person who claims to believe God’s word to say that God made him a condemned person, who can’t go to heaven. I would be afraid to charge God with such.

“**We just want our rights,**” say the homosexuals. The matter of fact is that they have their rights, but they demonstrate that they want special rights. And, some of our politicians bend over backward in an effort to give them special rights. If God condemns this practice, rather than give them special rights, why should man do otherwise? “Hate crime,” legislation came about in large part because of homosexuals. Paul says, “that they which commit such things are worthy of death...” (Rom. 1:32).

“**A person can be a Christian and a homosexual.**” It is no less than amazing how that people can simply make a pronouncement and expect people to believe it. It’s no less than tragic that some do. One can no more be a practicing homosexual and a Christian than one can be a practicing murderer and a Christian. Christ will save people from their sins but not in their sins. The quitting of sin is necessary.

“**Once a gay always a gay.**” That a person cannot quit the practice of homosexuality is flatly denied by the apostle Paul. To the Corinthian Christians he says that the “effeminate” and “abusers of themselves with mankind” cannot “inherit the kingdom of God” (I Cor. 6:9-10). In verse 11, he says, “and such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

“**The Bible’s overwhelming overall message is loving acceptance and justice for all people.**”

This is a quote from an article by Richard N. Ostling, AP Religion Writer, in the August 16th, 2003 issue of the Murray Ledger & Times.

It is tragic when people completely reject God's revelation to man, but when people who claim to believe in God's word come out in outright opposition to what God's word says, that is the height of ungodliness! This is a classic example of outright hypocrisy. How can such people even claim to believe in God? Their conscience must be "seared."

The above article says that, "Until very recently, all Christian branches agreed that same-sex activity was immoral because of their age-old understanding of God's will taught in the Scriptures." Who has the audacity to contend that the "age-old" understanding of God's word is wrong? Well, and increasing number of so-called believers in the Bible have that audacity. How can such people claim to believe in God when they deny what He says in His word?

"The Rev. Walter Wink of New York's Auburn Theological Seminary, a United Methodist Clergyman," is quoted as saying, 'The Bible has no sex ethic,' ... 'It only knows a communal love ethic' exemplified by Jesus' command to love your neighbor as your self, which requires Christians to understand gays' experiences."

"Robert A.J. Gagnon of Pittsburg Theological Seminary argues in detail that all same-sex variants were well known in the ancient world – so it's obvious the Bible opposed same-sex activity across the board, not just certain types." Gagnon goes on to say that the traditional view "is not popular in universities or the media. But he insists that the Bible's entire authority is under threat. If people can deny such a clear and scriptural teaching, he says, it raises questions about the point of adhering to the faith in the first place...When we reach the point where it is no longer the word of God for us in any meaningful sense, there is no reason to be part of organized Christianity."

Gagnon hits the nail square on the head! People such as "Wink," referred to above, obviously do not believe in God. Why they make such a pretense, I do not profess to know. I do know that Paul speaks of "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13). He also says "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (vs. 14). Then he concludes that it "is no great thing if his ministers [Satan's] also be transformed as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works" (vs. 15). Paul speaks of those who are "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18).

An effective way for Satan's ministers to make progress for their cause is to pretend to be believers in God's word. We are seeing many examples of this today as efforts are increasing to do away with God in our society. These efforts are much more effective than most realize, and this only contributes to their great success.

More could be said on the above subject but space does not allow. We need to give attention other aspects of our subject of discussion.

There is one other matter of discussion before our last one, and that relates to the efforts to promote homosexuality in our society.

THE UNGODLY PROMOTION OF THE SIN OF HOMOSEXUALITY

There is so much to cover in this area that we can only mention a small portion of it. This promotion is taking place in so many areas of our society, and it is a matter of great concern that it is happening at such a rapid rate. It is a grim reminder that our nation is coming nearer to a state which is ripe for destruction. Whereas "righteousness exalteth a nation," we are under the "reproach" of "sin" (Prov. 14:34). We are undoubtedly approaching a state of being "turned into hell" as a nation that has come to "forget God" (Ps. 9:17). When will we be awakened to reality?

The political promotion. The time was that any politician who stood for promotion of homosexuality would have been defeated before he started. Today, more and more politicians are playing to the ungodliness of our society by having pro-homosexual planks in their political platforms. This is a thing

of rather recent origin. A good case in point is a statement in *Newsweek*, June 21, 1993: “As conservatives are quick to note, the election of Bill Clinton contributed to this open atmosphere. Though many homosexuals feel let down by his waffling on the military ban (page 60), they give him credit for being the first president to acknowledge gays and lesbians, let alone promote them.” The above quote is from the *Newsweek* article: “Lesbians Coming Out Strong,” carried on the front page.

There is plenty of proof of Clinton’s pro-homosexual stance. About two dozen homosexuals had a part in his administration. Roberta Achtenberg became assistant secretary of housing and urban development, the “first open homosexual ever confirmed by the U.S. Senate for political office.” Another example of Clinton’s pro-homosexual stance was the proclaiming of Gay and Lesbian Pride Month, which follows below:

“Now, therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2000 as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month. I encourage all Americans to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, and activities that celebrate our diversity and recognize the gay and lesbian Americans whose many and varied contributions have enriched our national life.”

More could be said about Clinton’s stance.

There are more pro-homosexuals in the liberal Democratic Party than in the Republican Party, but it has its “Log Cabin” homos.

Homosexual schools. Way back in 1985, *The Nation’s Newspaper* had an article entitled, “Gay School Gets A Tryout.” The school was described as having 20 homosexual teen-agers, meeting in a one-room Harvey Milk School in Greenwich Village Methodist Church. New York mayor, Edward Koch, was quoted as saying the school is “educationally correct,” and an unnamed Harvard psychiatrist called it a “very good experiment.”

Just recently we have been hearing about the school for homosexuals being established in New York. It is said this school is for those who have been discriminated against because they are homosexuals. It is my understanding that this is a tax supported school, paid for by taxpayers.

The headline in an article by Joseph Cassidy is as follows: ***In San Francisco Public Schools...Gays Teach Children That Homosexuality Is Normal***

Just stop and think how far things have gone. The matter is described this way: **In an outrageous program that could poison young minds, San Francisco’s school board has lesbians and male homosexuals going into classrooms – where they lecture youngsters and tell them that homosexuality is perfectly normal.** The article goes farther in describing the sordid details of what is happening. The students (high school) are even asked to act out gay roles, as what the “gays do in the privacy of their own bedrooms” has been described to them.

We shall now consider a few self explanatory headlines and/or bits of information which relate to the promotion of homosexuality. Space limits us in all that we would like to say, which is pertinent.

“The American Academy of Pediatrics has endorsed homosexual adoption, saying that gay couples can provide the loving, stable and emotionally healthy family life that children need.”

“Disney/ABC pushes gay sex on ‘Ellen’” There was no little controversy about the above.

“Three automakers agree with the UAW to offer health care coverage to same-sex partners of U.S. employees” The big three: **GM, Ford, Chrysler.**

“Lesbigay colors will be flying over Orlando, despite a national anti-abortion group’s efforts to ‘evangelize’ them out of town.” This pertained to the flying of “rainbow flags” on 363 light poles in Orlando. A poll of more than 17,000 showed 91.8% in favor of the activity and only 8.2% opposed.

“Gays, lesbians receive apology from Dr. Laura”

“Dodgers apologize for throwing out lesbians”

“Wal-Mart won’t allow anti-gay bias in policy”

Homosexuals and ACU. In an article by Wayne Jackson, it is pointed out that Arlie J. Hoover, professor of history at ACU, posted an article on the internet of a local newspaper, in which he pointed out

that homosexuality had been viewed as “sexual perversion” for centuries. In response to the article, Darryl Tippens, a professor at ACU, wrote the following, which was part of his response:

“It is important that readers of this newspaper [*Reporter News*] know that Dr. Arlie J. Hoover spoke only for himself in his Nov. 12 guest column concerning homosexuality. He did not speak for Abilene Christian University, and most certainly he did not speak for Wayne Barnard, Angela Brenton, Thom Lemmons and myself, his colleagues and co-workers. . .”

With all that has gone on in recent years and that is now going on, it need not come as a surprise when more and more brethren fall in line with homosexuality, as they have with many other popular sins.

We now turn our attention to the last part of our discussion. We have reserved this for the last, not because it is not important, but to the contrary.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE — THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL OF MORALITY

The increased discussion of homosexuality began several years ago. As the tide has turned more and more in favor of this sin, same-sex marriage is receiving an unbelievable amount of attention, with an unimagined display of favor toward this deviant behavior. During a great portion of my 77 years, the practice of homosexuality was looked upon with moral disgust by an overwhelming majority of people. It is only during the past few decades that the favor of that practice has grown in favor with a great many people. This favor has now grown to the point of acceptance of same-sex marriages. This is a good example of how progressive the disease of sin is.

Any Bible believer who will be honest, knows that God’s plan for marriage involved a man and a woman (Gen. 2:24). God made woman, not man, as a help meet for man. It was through the family that God intended for procreation to take place. It couldn’t be made clearer that children need a father and a mother. It is only within the husband and wife relationship that God-approved sex is to take place (Heb. 13:4). God’s will in this matter is being completely cast aside. That more than a third of the children born in our country are being born outside the marriage relationship is having a telling effect in our society. God’s plan for marriage works, man’s plan for same-sex marriages will never work. The institution of marriage is already in deep trouble in our country. Now, a great many in our society are bent on increasing that trouble a great deal more!

Same-sex marriages now a reality. Last year the state legislature of Vermont passed a bill legalizing “same sex unions.” At one point 62% of the people were in favor signing the bill into law.

June 10, 2003, the highest court in Ontario ordered gay marriage. They endorsed a new vision of marriage. That is explained below:

“Marriage is, without dispute, one of the most significant relationships. . . . Through the institution of marriage, individuals can publicly express their love and commitment to each other. Through this institution, society publicly recognizes expressions of love and commitment between individuals, granting them respect and legitimacy as a couple.”

Needless to say, the above definition of marriage has been formulated by men, not God. Two men or two women are legitimate as a couple only in the eyes of men who disrespect God’s will. If the above definition of marriage is widely accepted, then marriage as God intended is on its last leg.

Legalizing sodomy. Our Supreme Court, whose work is supposed to be the interpreting of our constitution, has become a legislating body. In June this court struck down the law against sodomy, which they once upheld. Several states are affected. It is generally admitted that this opens the way for same-sex marriages, and other unscriptural relationships. That the question of same-sex marriage is even considered shows just how far we’ve gone morally

Justice Antonin Scalia said of the majority opinion that it “effectively decrees the end of all morals legislation” and that it threatens “a massive disruption of the current social order.” Justice Scalia also said of the ruling that it could “pave the way for same-sex marriages and undercut laws banning bigamy, adult incest, prostitution and other sexual acts.”

EPISCOPAL CHURCH REACHES NEW LOW IN RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND PRACTICE

For several years now the Episcopal Church, a 2.3 million member U.S. branch of the 77 million member global Anglican Communion had an increasing affinity for homosexuals. They have had “gay clergy” for some time. Not only have they become more liberal in this area, they have changed their view with regard to the role of women in the church. It is obvious that they are generally going farther away from the authority of the Scriptures.

The bishop of San Diego, Gethin B. Hughes, said, “Maybe...God is leading us to a new understanding that is more compassionate. I am open to that.” This is a timber in their building for the full acceptance of homosexuals, even marriage of same-sex couples.

“Episcopal leaders approve blessings of same-sex couples.” In an article by Rachel Zoll of AP, the following is said: “Episcopal leaders gave final approval Thursday to a measure on blessing the same-sex couples that its drafters said affirmed the ceremonies as ‘an acceptable practice in the church.’”

Episcopal Church Approves Gay Bishop. “Rev. V. Gene Robinson” and his male partner for 13 years, Mark Andrew, were pictured in the Murray Ledger & Times, Aug. 6, 003. Robinson was confirmed as bishop of the New Hampshire Diocese. A sizable majority approved the action.

The bishops voted 62-45 in favor. The House of Deputies, comprised of “clergy and lay” people approved the homosexual bishop by a 2 to 1 margin. This is nothing short of an abandonment of the Scriptures as the source of authority for belief and practice in this denomination. If this principle is followed, and it most likely will be, then there is no telling what these so-called believes in God will do in the future, as a result of their rebellion.

A relatively small number of Episcopalians are presently letting their opposition to this evil action be known, but due to the way things have worked in the past when some members objected, it is believed that most will eventually go along with the majority.

With regard to homosexuality, the statement made by my friend, John Mitchell, in a letter to *Time* magazine, Nov. 16, 1998, is very appropriate:

“POLITICS OR NOT, HATE CRIMES OR NOT, the practice of homosexuality anywhere outrages right-thinking people everywhere. The sooner homosexuals come to terms with the unchangeable fact that God unequivocally disapproves of their sexual conduct and those who applaud such behavior, the sooner they will turn away from their vile degeneracy.”

There is so much more which it would be timely to discuss relative to the subject under consideration, but we must turn our attention to other matters.

SOME THOUGHTS IN CONCLUSION

To just what degree are we, as Christians, facing the reality of the terrible moral condition which has over come our society? Homosexuality is just one of the areas in which moral standards have been virtually abandoned. How is this going to affect our children, grandchildren, and others?

One area which we have barely touched upon is that of the political. We, as citizens, do have some power to change things in the political arena. Of the nine contenders for the presidency on the Democrat side, is there even one who is clearly opposed to the practice of homosexuality? A majority favor a “civil union” and others the providing of benefits as for married couples. We can at least be thankful that our President has made it known that he believes marriage is only to be between a man and a woman, and he wants to “codify that, one way or the other.”

We’ve given little attention to the relationship between the current effort to completely secularize our society with the current breakdown in morality. It is my intention to deal with this important sub-

ject in the September 2003, issue of *Banner of Truth*.
 - - - Walter W. Pigg, Editor

ET Phone Home (VII)

Alan Adams, Assistant Editor

We've got to quit allowing ourselves to be intimidated into quietness; made to feel like aliens in our own land. As long as we speak the same (Bible) language as our First Century brethren, then why should we feel odd or out of place? Like they say, "You can't improve on perfection," and our pattern, faith, or law is perfect.

Some of the art, refers to something, perhaps a product, at its highest level of development. Of course, with the advancement of technology, the standards of measurement are in flux. With the Bible, with Christianity, this is not so. Jude speaks of "contending," or fighting for something. It is "the faith." The Greeks used adjectives like the Chinese do: all in front of the thing described. A literal rendering of Jude's charge would be, "[you are] to contend earnestly for the once and for all having been delivered unto the saints faith." "The Faith" is a "once and for all" thing with no room nor need for change or improvement. The French would call it a *fait accompli* which means a thing already done, so that opposition or argument is useless. God's Word is the ultimate state of the art, a *fait accompli*, it does not need nor allow for improvement; it cannot be added to or taken from (Rev. 22:18-19). It is the "perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). Whence have we so many who feel spiritually superior and deign to show us a better way than the "better covenant" (Heb. 8:6) we already have?

An integral part of The Once And for All Faith is: The Assembly, which we refer to scripturally as the Worship or Church service. This part of our perfect pattern is not only being tampered with, but in some cases, brethren are trying to refashion it, as it were, with a meat cleaver. Please reread the first six installments of this series.

Passages such as I Cor. 11:18, 20; 14:23, 25; Acts 20:7, and Heb. 10:24-25 set for the **fact** of The Assembly; that is, a local congregation, especially on the First Day of the Week, gathering together in one place, and by implication, at a set time, for the purpose of worship and mutual edification of those in attendance. As to the people of this assembly, the nature of this assembly, the activities of this assembly, the rules or limitations of this assembly, the nature of this assembly, the activities of this assembly, the rules or limitations of this assembly, one of the best places to go in the Bible to see it all is that section of Scripture from I Cor. 11:17 through 16:9.

First, consider *the people of The Assembly*: "The whole church" (I Cor. 14:23). There should be no need to further define "whole." Each member of the church is to be there; both men and women (33-35). And, let me add, by implication, the children of these men and women are also to be in The Assembly. If those children were Christians (Cf. Tit. 1:6), then obviously they were part of the "whole church come together in one place." But even if the children were not Christians (perhaps too young), where do you suppose they might be while all the men and women ("whole church") were meeting together? Right there alongside the adults learning about the meaning and dignity of The Assembly.

Even "unbelievers" were welcome to attend The Assembly (I Cor. 14:24-25). I know: In I Cor. 14, the preachers were Prophets and others would use "tongues" (foreign languages) to speak to The Assembly about the "wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11). Of course, they had to use an "interpreter" (I Cor. 14:28). There are no Prophets or people with miraculous Tongue-Gift today; nevertheless, the principles still hold true. Our preaching today had **better** be based on the New testament which came to us by way of those brethren in the First Century who had the "gift of prophecy," or "revelation."

And, we may have preachers preach in a foreign language (which I have done) to The Assembly, with the use of an interpreter (which I have done). But, you know, we hope that our preaching today will have the same effect on the “unbelievers” that the preaching then had: “...he is reproved by all, judged by all. The secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so, he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed” (I Cor. 14:24-25). Isn’t this what we call people “responding to the invitation”?

Think about *the nature of The Assembly*: Here, even the unbeliever “falls down on his face to worship God.” Yes; the same thing can be done outside The Assembly, but the Assembly is a situation where people are uniquely gathered together “in the sight of God” (Cf. Ac. 10:33). These people were not all “gathered together” just for the fun of it. They were **doing** certain things, activities. These activities were “God-ward” in nature (2 Cor. 3:4); they were “to the Lord” (Col. 3:16), “to God” (v. 17). In other words, these activities of The Assembly were: “Acts of reverence paid to God,” which is precisely the definition of word “worship.” Relative to these Acts of Worship in The Assembly, the careful student will count **F-I-V-E**.

There would be a brother to stand (I Cor. 14:30) and lead The Assembly by “speaking” (2, 3, 6), “instructing” (19), or “discoursing” (Ac. 20:7). The purpose of this was so that The Assembly might be “edified, exhorted, consoled” (I Cor. 14:3, 12); “judged, reproved” (24); and might “learn” (31). Given that the Assembly, by its very nature, is “before God, to God, etc.” it’s clear that this **act** is “paid to God,” it’s worship. A good example this can be seen in Nehemiah 8:1-6. First, consider the assembly: “The people gathered themselves together as one man” (v.1); “congregation both of men and women (v. 2)...all the people.” **Note:** Because the record speaks of those in attendance as “those that could understand,” (v. 3) some of our brethren have suggested that since small children cannot “understand,” then it would be permissible to take them out of The Assembly into a so-called “Bible Hour,” or “Children’s Church.” This won’t pass muster: If “all the people...men and women,” were gathered in the assembly in Nehemiah, just as they were gathered in The Assembly in I Cor. 14; and if “those that could understand,” excludes small children; who, do you suppose, was looking after the children? No: This is a classic case of “reading something into” the text.

Anyway, “Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women [and, by implication, children; AA]” (v. 2). He “stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose” (v. 4), and he “read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday” (v. 3). Apparently, nobody was in a rush to “beat the Baptists” to Shoneys or wherever. Verses 5-6 are particularly beautiful: “Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people); and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.” There were some other men there who “read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading” (v. 8).

Brethren, when God’s Word is preached in The Assembly today, this is God speaking to us; we listen reverently and we should say “Amen (let it be so).” Verily, preaching or teaching the Word in The Assembly is an “**act** of reverence paid to God”; it’s an act of worship. I believe that a reasonable person would have a heap of trouble explaining otherwise.

Another **act** of worship in The Assembly is that of “eat[ing] the Lord’s supper (I Cor. 11:20). No doubt that this is an act that it is “paid to God.” The emphasis given the word “together” again emphasizes why we should not divide the Assembly. This act is to take place **when** the saints assemble and **in** that assembly (I Cor. 11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34). There is no authority for separating the Lord’s Supper

from The Assembly. If it is to be done “according to the pattern,” it must be “in the assembly” (I Cor. 11:18). Remember also, that the Lord’s Supper in The Assembly helps us identify the day of that As-

sembly: “the first day of the week” (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2). To be continued.

Never Underestimate Children’s Savvy

“I always tell my grandchild to be quite and mind her manners, for we are at Jesus’ house. She was looking at everyone. After a while she said, ‘Grandma, Jesus not here. I’ve been looking for a long time.’

“I got her a helium balloon. She let go of it. She said, ‘Is it gone to heaven where Jesus lives?’ I said, yes. A while later my granddaughter said, ‘Come on Grandma, let’s go.’ I said, ‘where?’ She said ‘To Jesus’ house.’ I told her no one was there. ‘But Grandma, I know my balloon will be there, for Jesus is good. He will bring it to me.’”

A little girl was really pitching a fit during worship services, and causing a great deal of disturbance. A lovely little boy of about four, said, “If she was mine I would whip her....” Good advice?

People who say of children, even very young ones, “You can’t teach them anything,” are so very wrong! Children begin learning when born. - Editor

The Lord’s House

Steve Baisden

Wouldn’t it be a great blessing to be a member of the **Lord’s House**? I have seen many households that are very pleasant, characterized by a great amount of love. I have seen many that contain beautiful items that are pleasing to the eye, and to the touch. I have seen households that were neat and clean, like everything is always in perfect order. But in all these things I know there awaits a glorious house of far greater love, beauty and sanctity, that our Lord has prepared for us, **The Lord’s House**, What an all inspiring thought!

This house (The Lord’s church) is available to man at this very moment. It is a house that was purchased with something of far greater value than that of gold or silver. It is a house that is set apart for the elect of God. It is a house that requires a certain quality for membership. Not just anyone will be a part of this house, although the door is open for those who possess the proper attributes. How could one not want to be a member of this house?

The question arises though, “What is required for one to be a member of this house?” Some would say, “Just walk up to the door and announce, ‘I’m here, let me in.’” Some would say nothing, alleging that one “does not need to do anything to enter in.” Yet, still others would say, “Beg and plead with the owner of the house to let you in.” On and on we could go, since we have hundreds of varied beliefs on this issue. Isn’t it far more logical to ask the owner of the house (Jesus Christ) what he requires? What a breakthrough! This would surely be the right thing to do!

Picture this: your family is sleeping peacefully when someone comes to your house in the middle of the night; he wants in, but you don’t know that person. The person is a stranger to you, but he is telling you that he is coming in regardless of what you say. But during your conversation you realize this man has a way of twisting things to make it sound as if he could be trusted. But all the while the truth is apparent, this man is not being honest. I, for one, could not allow this man in my house under these conditions. This person hasn’t met my conditions of entrance, and will not be allowed to enter.

The Lord's House is His church (I Tim. 3:15) Before one can enter His house He has to allow it. Just because one may think he will be allowed in doesn't mean that he will. Entrance into His house is set by His authority. He is the one who has set the guidelines by which one may or may not enter. One cannot tell Him, "I'm coming in, regardless of what you say." It doesn't work that way with our houses, nor will it work that way with God's house.

The Lord said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments (Jno. 14:15). This involves faith in God (Heb. 11:6), as well as in Christ (Jno. 8:32). The Lord said, "I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3). Salvation requires a confession of Christ. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). Finally, entrance involves obeying the words of Christ: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16).

"And the Lord added to the church (or, 'house of God,' I Tim. 3:15) daily such as should be saved" (Ac. 2:47). The Lord "...is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). He is waiting for you to become a member of His house, of which He is the head and savior (Eph. 5:23). Will you let Him add you to His house?

- - - 5897 Wayne Ave., Pentwater, MI 49449

A Note of Clarification

In the July 2003, issue of BOT, page 7, I began a response to material sent to "Banner of Truth" with a return address of: "Roger Jackson, 35 Gloucester Ave., Pensacola, FL 32505.

I have received information by way of e-mail, from a "Roger Jackson," stating that he did not send any material to me. It now appears that there are two "Roger Jacksons." Since I did not know this, I did not specify to which Roger Jackson I had reference.

Be known, therefore, that the "Roger Jackson" referred to in *Banner of Truth* is the one whose address is in Pensacola, FL, as noted above.

Years ago I knew a Roger Jackson, but the one in Pensacola didn't sound like the one I knew. I trust this will set the matter straight. - - *Editor*

Bob Spurlin's New Book

The title of brother Spurlin's new book is *Don't Ever Give Up!* I don't personally know of anyone who would be more qualified to address this subject. Brother Spurling preached about 30 years before coming down with MS more than five years ago. He's now able to write, only with the help of a computer which changes spoken words into printed words. He hasn't given up!

The proceeds from this book (above its cost) will be used to help with Bob's medical expense. The book sells for \$11.50 postpaid. It may be ordered from: Bob Spurlin, 210 Greenwood Dr., Hartselle, AL 35640. Phone: 256 773-0295. E-mail: prechteach@aol.com

Video & Audio Tapes
Of the 3rd Annual *Banner of Truth* Lectures Available

The above may be ordered from: James E. Green, 2711 Spring Meade Blvd., Columbia, TN 38401. His e-mail: <jamesegreen@charter.net> Phone: (931) 486-1364. Twenty-eight lessons video \$35.00. Audio is \$30.00.

**Fourth Annual
Banner of Truth Lectures
June 14-17, 2004**

The theme for the lectures has not been determined, but we are considering one which will allow the addressing of a wide variety of timely subjects.

We shall appreciate every effort put forth to make the lectures very worthwhile. If activities are scheduled with an opening for the lectures, that would be very helpful in increasing our attendance. -
- *Editor*

TODAY'S ALTERNATIVE

Ed Allard, Jr.

The church we read of in the New Testament is not what people usually think of when they think of "Church." The thought is usually of a denomination. The church Jesus promised to establish (Mt. 16:18), was not a denomination. He did not establish any denomination. He established His church. There is not a denomination in the world that is the same as the church we read of in the Bible. If it were, it wouldn't be a denomination; it would be the Lord's church. Daniel prophesied that the kingdom (church) would never be destroyed but that it would stand forever (2.44). God's word is true. Christ's church established in the first century is still on earth in this 21st century. It has been reproduced by the seed of the kingdom (Lk. 8:11), as Jesus illustrates in the parable of the sower. Seed always reproduce after their own kind. Whenever the *same* gospel seed has been sown, it has produced a church that belongs to Christ.

What has produced the denominations? Gospel seed mixed with the tares of men (man's teaching). The gospel seed that saves, mixed with tares of men cannot save. Read Acts 2. The seed of the kingdom, the word of God, was received in the hearts of those who received the word preached by Peter (Acts 2:41). What was the word they received that day? That Jesus had been crucified, was raised from the grave, ascended into heaven, to sit on the throne of David, and made both Lord and Christ (Ac. 2:22-36). When those who heard this message believed it they were told to repent and be baptized (immersed) for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). Those who gladly received that word were baptized, and the Lord added them to His church (Ac. 2:47).

Those who hear, believe and obey the same message, in the same way and for the same purpose today, receive the same blessings and are added to the same church by the Lord. One can in this way do as those who were saved in the first century and be added to the same church. How great it would be if all churches were united as were the churches we read of in the New Testament. Of course, there

were no churches of men then. How great it would be if all churches would follow what God's word says about the church in the New Testament. There could be unity on that basis alone.

God has given us His revelation of Christ's church in the New Testament. He wants us to understand His word that tells us how to be saved and to be a member of His church. We have the alternative of listening to what men say, or listening to God's word. Which alternative will you choose?

- - - P.O. Box 564, Monticello, GA 31064

AN ODD REQUEST. Received in the mail with no name attached was the following: "In 'Banner of Truth,' please elaborate on 'little boy and his lunch of 5 loaves and 2 'sardines.'"

I don't know why people will not sign their name to something they write, but it happens. I usually pay little attention to one who chooses to remain anonymous. I stand behind what I write, and I do receive some criticism, but I'm willing to deal with that. In fact, I expect some criticism.

As for "elaborating" on the statement above, I don't find any such thing in my Bible. It does seem to me that I've heard of some such foolishness, but I can't remember where. - - *Editor*

Is your address changing? If so, you can help us save \$\$\$ and not miss an issue of BOT!

Editor's E-mail: wpiggbot@earthlink.net

Visit BOT at David Lemmons' web at:

<http://www.hcis.net/users/dlemmons/BOTlist.htm>

Readers may get on David's LemmonsAid e-mail:

LemmonsAid-subscribe@YahooGroups.com

Welcome New Readers! We like to hear from our readers, and appreciate their suggestions to help us improve *Banner of Truth* – Editor