

The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word." (II Timothy 4:2)

•

"Feed the Flock." (I Peter 5:2)

"GOD'S PLAN FOR CHURCH GROWTH"-*Acts 2:37-42*



• By ARCHIE WORD, Box 192, Gering, Nebr. 69341

(ARCHIE WORD, who is now approaching 79 years of his so-journ here on this earth, is a brother God has used extensively and effectively in His work. Not only does he speak as one who knows God and His Word, he speaks from the vantage-point of experience and years. There is much we can learn from such a man of God for whom we hold much respect. Therefore, we have asked him to write two articles for THE SWORD AND STAFF, the first of which you are now reading. The second, "Advice I Would Give Young Preachers, If Asked," will follow in a forthcoming issue, the Lord willing. We specifically requested that he write these two articles.—EDITOR).

IN OUR DAY CHURCH LEADERS are often confused on this church growth subject. I have seen an endless array of "man-made hurry up" methods for getting new members, larger crowds and baptisms. Then comes the big "Brotherhood Reports" to the denominational news reporter.

This has been used with great success as a crowd getter, the special nights appeal. They have Pioneer night, with bonnets and whiskers dress ups; BPOE night, and call it brotherhood night; Eagles night and they all fly high; IOOF night, to get the Odd Balls out; Masons night, the grand

daddy of all lodges; Overall and Maxies night; and then there is the Informal night, when you come as you are. This special nights program always reminds me "Judas went out, and it was night."

I have seen the special attractions nights and programs of breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, games (even bridge), teas, coffee breaks, bowling contests and skating parties, plus church basketball teams to mingle with the inter-denominational crowd; and if that does not get the crowd, they try contests and prizes for the over-grown baby members who must be entertained. They charge a penny for each inch of the waist line and a prize for the best "Baby Imitator." Then there is the gift method: a 10-Speed bicycle for the young people's winner, who got the most kids out to the church free hamburger feed, and a New Testament with "Olive wood backs from the holy land." We must not overlook the "Beans and Onion" clubs put on for the men of the church in a WEAKLY effort to get the backsliders out to church. They advertize "there is power in them beans." (That was actually in their bulletin). Then there is the "Meet the Celebrities" night when Hollywood's so-called Christians, famous on the screen, are brought in to wow off. Or they may invite the Mayor, Governor, or some big Judge to be present for an attraction. Anything goes!

If these traps do not get them, there are a lot more tricks in the funny bag, such as father's and son's banquet; mother's and daughter's banquet, barbeque, fish fry banquets. The Senior citizens must have their horse shoe contests and picnic, with a bus trip, that gives free ice cream, free coffee, and anything else that will arouse the fleshly appetite in the jaded sensualist's mind.

There is an appeal to the high school night, the grade school night and the kindergarten night, plus the food sales and church dinners for the Firemen, Kiwanis, and Lion's Club—and don't forget the Rotarians, too. They invite the Boy Scout Troops out, Cubs and full grown Bears on a field trip. Then they must not forget the Ladies' pink teas, and small talk and gossip fest, plus the Men's smokers, travel lectures and tall tales.

What is the result of all this junk? One illustration will

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THE SWORD AND STAFF

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Proverbially SPEAKING...

LIFE STYLE is a new expression usually used to describe a way of life that doesn't have much style to it.

"Make the most of yourself, for that is all there is of you."

The command for the wife to be under submission to her husband (Eph. 5:22) is to be understood and conditioned by the larger context of all of us being commanded to be under submission to one another (Eph. 5:21).

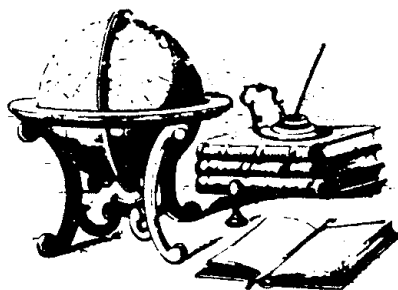
"If a man's knowledge is not in order, the more of it he has, the greater will be his confusion."

What you stand for has a bearing on the people you stand with, and who you stand with reflects what you stand for.

"We need life in our hopes to put hope in our lives."

It is a sign of maturity when we can talk about our weakness without feeling insecure (on the defensive).

"God often encourages the weak in faith by giving speedy answers to prayer; but the strong in faith will be tested by God's delays."



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

IN A WORLD FULL OF TURMOIL, PERPLEXITY & UNCERTAINTY

WE ARE LIVING in a world that is full of turmoil, perplexity and uncertainty. So it is, so it always has been, and so it always will be for the world is made up of unregenerate and degenerate humanity. Selfishness largely rules in human relationships (and many times unbridled selfishness)—yes, personally, nationally and internationally. This spills over into blatant disregard, abuse and even oppression of others. James wrote centuries ago, "From which comes wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts (selfish desires) that war in your members?" (James 4:1). Whether on a person to person basis or an international basis, it is still the same. This is the primary factor and agitating influence behind all wars.

That is why Christians should stand aloof (among other reasons) from entanglements in human warfare. Our allegiance and hope involves a higher realm. We are citizens of a heavenly kingdom which supersedes anything on this earth. And our warfare is of a spiritual nature. Paul penned these words to the Ephesians: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12; II Corinthians 10:3-5). In this warfare we are not motivated by selfishness and hate, but love the antithesis of these.

So in a world full of turmoil, perplexity and uncertainty keep your spiritual sanity and perspective. Otherwise we are in for trouble. Jesus spoke of "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth..." (Luke 21:26). And so it shall ever be if we are wed to this present age, and our thoughts are not oriented toward the "world to come." Paul wrote, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:18). Let us always remember that we are "strangers (aliens) and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13). And as such may we press on. □

TARGET DATE FOR BIBLE LANDS TOUR: NOV. 24- DEC. 4, 1980

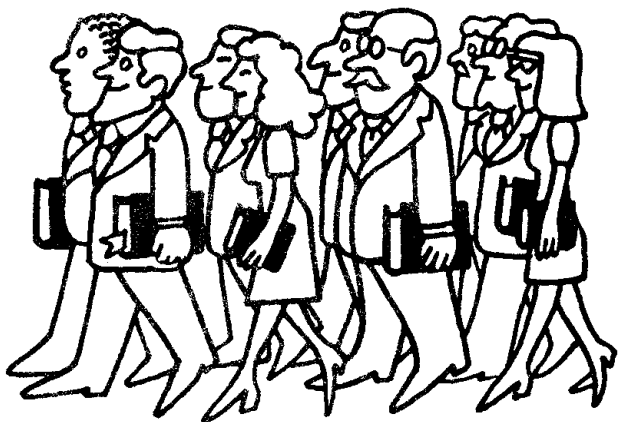
THE WAY things are shaping up the dates for our planned Bible lands tour of this year will be November 24–December 4. The tour will include EGYPT, ISRAEL with MT. SINAI as an optional feature. It should prove to be another great tour—a tour of a lifetime! Why don't you make plans to go with us? Write for more exact details. You will be glad that you went. □

THE "RE" NEXT TO YOUR DATE ON ADDRESS

WE ARE putting the date you subscribed to this paper next to your address on the address plate (which appears impressed on your paper). Use this as a key in knowing when to renew each year. However, with some of you (older subscriptions) we don't know the original date. So we are RE-ENTERING your name with the date we made the new address plate ("RE") as a reference point. Use this date as a key in renewing. □

"GOD'S PLAN FOR CHURCH GROWTH"

(Continued from Page 1)



suffice. I visited in a congregation that boasts of over 3,000 members. It was on a Sunday evening and they had less than 500 present. They were in a big Sunday school contest with a neighboring city church and out of the 3,000 they managed to get 1,100 out. Their prayer meeting, when they had one, ran less than one hundred average attendance.

That is mighty poor showing for the Lord, in finality.

God has given us a program for growth, both numerically and spiritually. It is endorsed by God Himself. It has demonstrated its effectiveness. Under God's method they multiplied, preached, witnessed, became martyrs, overcame Rome's idolatry and out-numbered them in 300 years. God's method accomplished more in numbers than any church attendance booster in the 20th Century Specialist's group, and they developed Christians who would not only live for Christ, but they willingly died for Him: literally hundreds of thousands of them. Now church members have to be urged, enticed, cajoled and promised coffee and doughnuts to get them to the Lord's supper once a week.

WHAT WAS GOD'S PLAN FROM THE BEGINNING FOR CHURCH GROWTH?

I.

They started out correctly by preaching "THE GOSPEL" and pointing out the audience's and individual's sins. Consider Acts 2:36-37, which is based on Acts 2:22-35 (where he speaks of the life, death, burial and resurrection of Christ). Members had been convinced, convicted and converted, which caused them to repent of their sins. Then they were baptized, their sins were taken away and they were filled with the Holy Spirit of God. That sort of conversion produced Acts 2:40-47.

Converted people were saved and added to the church according to God's plan for church growth.

II.

What did they begin doing then? The members went to work on the outsider, witnessing to them about their own salvation and the power of Christ to save any sinner. Acts 8:4 and Ephesians 4:11-13.

Now, as the church follows men's program, not 2% of the church membership make any effort at all to reach anybody else for Christ. In God's plan every member who was saved by the GRACE of God became a personal worker to reach others. Nowadays, sometimes, yes, many times the "hireling preacher" does not even try to reach the lost. Often-times they are busy trying to tear up the work of a faithful brother who is out there working for His Lord.

Those early Christians, church members, were out there personally trying to make Christ's salvation known to those

who were ignorant. When they went out to work for Christ, it forced them to KNOW the Word of God and the Lord Jesus Whom we must obey. Those personal workers became very personal in their approach and in their dealing with sin. They were interested in seeing souls saved, washed in the blood and becoming new creatures who were interested in turn in others' souls.

These born-again followers were made stronger each day as they studied for themselves what they had to teach others about salvation. God's method is to have every Christian familiar with the Scripture, so each one of them can readily answer any man who asks them what they believe and why.

These Bible believing followers, causing the church to grow as God intended, learned to never compromise with evil. They respected the Word of God. They knew it well enough so they could help the lost to find salvation and help the other Christians to grow up in Christ.

This working personally by every member soon developed leaders who were considered able to go out and preach to others publicly. They were strong so they could strengthen others. Usually the problems that one person has are to be found in other people's lives. God's teaching that helps one can help others too. When a person is properly and Scripturally instructed, he immediately wants to reach some one else; and that is the way the Lord planned for the church to grow numerically and spiritually.

These people in the first century that were taught personally had a high ratio of stability and productivity. They made the church grow with God's method of each one trying to win one. They were not guided by some strong emotion that some high-powered and high-paid evangelist put on for a "Campaign."

This program of God stops any "busybodies" because they are so busy for the Lord they have no time to work for the devil, tearing up the body of Christ by gossip and slander. It is high time for preachers and elders to get to work themselves in winning the lost and setting an example before every other member to do the same.

God's plan works ONLY when the church is made up of CONVERTED people. They willingly turn away from anything they know is wrong and have a spirit within them that says I will give up anything I learn to be wrong. They may have cried over their sins, but they did not stop there. They had a change of mind, renewed mind, that works a change in their conduct. This the world sees and takes note of.

III.

According to God's plan, people were to be disciplined (disciplined), then baptized and added to His church by the Lord. Then they became an active part in carrying out the Great Commission to others on the outside. Then they all became a part of an organization God ordained for the purpose of making known the whole counsel of God. Paul spent his life winning people to the Lord and then reaffirming and buttressing their faith in God, as he contributed heavily to the volume we know as the New Testament. He is the author of Romans 1:16-19, and then he followed this with Romans 1:21-32, showing the ungodly hellishness of turning from the true God. This was New Testament Christianity in action, building the church as God had given the plan. They knew and we can see what happens to people who have no TRUE God. We have a lot of "re-runs" on that line today, and often it is because they never were genuinely converted to Christ. They just joined the club to be entertained.

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“GOD’S PLAN FOR CHURCH GROWTH”
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Paul, the great preacher in God’s church, practicing God’s method of church growth, often reminded the disciples of how they had found peace with the Almighty God (Romans 5:1 and 8:1). He knew and he often reminded the church members that idolatry, world and things could not bring peace, but Jesus Christ could. This was God’s method, and it worked. They did not have to have “head shrinkers, supplementaries.”

The church continued to grow as Paul INSTRUCTED these early “CONVERTS” on how they were to look upon sin. Romans 6:12-14. He followed conversions with a program of conservation and even then they lost some.

Paul, the God-inspired apostle and proclaimer, made known the “scope” of God’s salvation in Romans 10:11-13. He was not, here, teaching on what one must do to be saved; in this place he was teaching WHO could be saved. All could come to Christ if they chose to. There was no distinction. All were saved alike, and all added to the same church, which made growth of the church in God’s plan. He was constantly driving home to these early converts how completely they were to yield themselves to the Lord’s will: the Lordship of Christ in their lives. Jesus had taught in Matthew 10:34-39 this, and Paul emphasizes it again in Romans 12:1-2. As far as we know they did not have a rash of church members singing the old song of “I don’t think it is necessary to come to church every service.”

God’s truly converted Christians, members of His church in His plan, were dying for the privilege of attending church. No wonder their testimony was believed and the church grew. And as far as we know, they had no fancy buildings.

Whole sections of God’s instruction book were given over to teaching Christian standards not practiced by heathen, such as Romans 12:9-21, Romans 13:8-10 and I Timothy 2:8-12. They were a “peculiar” people that grew faster than the Roman Empire.

In God’s program for church growth new Christians and old alike were taught concerning their relationship to each other. Romans 14:13-21. They loved one another and were mindful of each other’s welfare. They did not want to do anything that might cause a soul for whom Christ died to stumble. They believed in hell and that it was worse than losing an eye, hand or foot.

A church with that kind of doctrine and that variety of church members soon becomes widely known in a community, and it’s representatives are welcomed wherever people want to do what is right.

With God’s program they grew in numbers and in spiritual lives. They believed the Word and built their lives on II Timothy 3:16 to 4:6. They followed in God’s plan the program of “preaching the Word” every where and to every person. They made more converts under God’s guidance; and they produced more spiritual converts, far beyond any comparison with our programs of men today.

Let us imitate them. It may seem slower, but it is for sure more sure! It is God’s panacea for every ill, and His PRE-scription for the churches growth both numerically and spiritually. Let us speak where the Book speaks and shut up on these PHONEYS that men compile and promulgate. □

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EXPOSURE IS NOT ENOUGH

WHEN a piece of photographic film is exposed to light it takes on a latent image. The image is there but it can’t be seen. Through the process of developing this image

gradually becomes visible until finally it is clear. When we are first taught from God’s Word concerning Christ, we are exposed to Him. Upon this exposure, we take on a latent image of Christ. It cannot yet be seen, for exposure is not enough. This image too must be developed.

For hours, and even years, we study, come in contact with other Christians and practice the principles set forth in the Bible. This continued effort to become like Christ is our developing process. After we have entered this process, the image of Christ becomes faintly visible to others as they observe us in our day-to-day activities.

It is up to us to continue our process of development so that finally only Christ-like attributes are all that can be seen as others look at our lives. It is only at this point that we will be able to say with Paul, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me...” (Galatians 2:20).

—Selected

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IS THINKING THAT YOU ARE RIGHT ALL THAT REALLY MATTERS?

CONDUCTOR: “I’m sorry, sir, but you are on the wrong train. You want to go to Chicago, but this train does not go there. It goes to St. Louis.”

PASSENGER: “Don’t bother me with that stuff! I thought I was getting on the Chicago train, so what difference does it make? If a person thinks he is going right, that is all that really matters.”

Switching this conversation to a religious parallel, doesn’t it sound familiar? Read Proverbs 14:12. Thinking you are right religiously does not necessarily mean you are. It does matter which way you are going. —Adapted.

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AN AMAZING EXAMPLE FOR US!

WILLIAM McPHERSON lost his hands and eyes in an accident. He was suddenly plunged into a world of darkness, and the Bible became all important to him. With his artificial hands he could not read Braille. He tried touching the Braille with his tongue and found that he could learn to distinguish between the dots with his tongue!

It took him many hours to learn to read one letter. His tongue would become very sore and bleed, but still he kept at his task. Well, 65 years passed and during this time, he read the entire Bible four times with his tongue.

—FOUR STATE GOSPEL NEWS

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WARN THEM

I HAVE some dear friends who are admirable people but they seem to be so kind and loving that they would rather allow other friends to die and go to hell than to tell them their faults here and now, and perhaps so help to save them eternally...He may be going headlong to hell and we are afraid to speak for fear we may “hurt his feelings.”

It is a wonderful blessing that God does not have that sort of concern for us. He wants whether we like it or not.

—Adapted

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Study your Bible daily



The Disappointing JESUS

By JAMES E. GIBBONS

Read Matthew 19:16-22 to find an account of the disappointing Jesus.

What was disappointing about Jesus any way? It certainly was not his character—it was spotless! It was truly not his miracles—they were matchless! It surely was not his promises—they were eternal!

Spies and special agents from the high priest sought to find Christ's weakness in his everyday activities. They observed that he spoke as one having authority—not as the scribes and Pharisees. Soldiers sent out to seize him came back empty-handed. Their reply was, "Never a man spake like this man" (Jn. 7:45, 46.) Finally, they had to bring false witnesses to testify in order to bring any charges against him. Finally, because of his teachings and their mounting hatred in being unable to find just fault, they crucify him.

I. People Greedy of Material Gain Are Disappointed in Jesus.

However, Jesus did prove a disappointment to many people during his stay on earth, and it is still the same today. Matthew 19:16-22 clearly reveals the account of the rich young ruler. Here was a man who under the Law of Moses had kept it from his youth up. But one thing in particular separated him from Christ and his kingdom, his material possessions. "He went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." Judas, perhaps disappointed in not seeing an earthly kingdom materialize, sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. When Jesus fed the 5,000, they were drawn to him over much con-

cern for material things. But when he got down to "business" speaking about spiritual things, the record reads, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). Simon the Christian reverted back to Simon the sorcerer and tried to buy apostolic power from Peter and John only to receive the pointed reply, "Thy money perish with thee . . ." (Acts 8:20). The numbers are legion in the Bible who were disappointed because they endeavored to put the kingdom of heaven on a material basis to fit into their picture of covetousness.

Many, many will be disappointed in Jesus who profess religion today. People who go to church to promote their business will be disappointed. People who go to church just for the big "feeds" that many religious groups have today will be terribly disappointed, for the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink. Those who are so stingy and selfish that they will not give the Lord at least a tithe of their income will be disappointed. Then there are those so wrapped up in their greedy pursuit of materialism that they have no time for Christ and his church. Oh, woe be to these men in the day of judgment!

The teaching of Jesus is that we seek his kingdom first and his righteousness, then other things of a material nature will take their right perspective—and they will follow (Matthew 6:33). The church is a spiritual kingdom and should be spiritually used and considered. Covetousness is idol worship, worshipping a god other than the true and living God (Colossians 3:5). Furthermore, material gain is not the goal in life, but a means to an end, and not the end in itself. Jesus plainly said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

II. People Seeking Places of Great Honor Are Disappointed in Jesus.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were up for a disappointment, but perhaps they didn't know it. They approached Jesus, saying, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory" (Mark 10:35-45). Jesus soon put them in their place and got the matter straight. At another time the disciples inquired, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matthew 18:1-4). A little child called into their midst served to answer the question. It is likely that there was an empty feeling of disappointment in both cases.

It is hard to conceive a relationship between the lowly Christ of Nazareth and the pomp and ecclesiasticism found in modern religious realms today. In fact there is none. The man of God called Peter, who worked with his hands and chose to call himself a bond-servant of Christ, would not fit into the pattern of the clergy. Why man wishes to parade his vanity and pride in the area of religion is beyond me, but go to "church" on Sunday mornings and see the robed minister and choir. Hear the high sounding phrases which are as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. See men label themselves as "The Right Reverend," "Father,"

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THE DISAPPOINTING JESUS
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etc. Learn of men competing with the authority of Christ. These men shall receive a disappointment some day.

The Bible plainly tells us that pride is of the world (I John 2:15-17). But Paul's description of the falling away included those who were, "lovers of their own selves, boasters, proud, blasphemers . . ." (II Timothy 3:1-17). There is no place for the clergy in New Testament Christianity. All are brothers and we are servants one of another. Christ's charge to call no man "Father" is final (Matthew 23:12). God alone is "reverend" (Psalms 111:9).

III. People Trying to Justify Themselves in Sin Are Disappointed in Jesus.

Bible history is full of people who tried to cover their sins only to receive disappointment at the hand of God. Those of Isaiah's day were given this warning. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20). Jesus rebuked the apostate condition of the heart in the hypocritical Pharisees, who made great pretense of being religious (Matthew 12:31-37). Ananias and Sapphira lied to God, thinking all would be well (Acts 5).

Multitudes upon multitudes hide behind the name of the church, but still live by the standards of the world. It is hard to say just exactly what their aim is. They cannot pull the wool over God's eyes. They have deceived themselves, and are in for a great disappointment in Jesus. Some think they can run with the worldly crowd, drink, dance, and what have you, then still retain their religion. Others think that they are good enough, that there is no need to become a Christian. Jesus will some day be very disappointing to them.

The writer of Hebrews admonishes. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). John in his first epistle makes it obvious that if we live after the world, we are of the world and abide in death. If we live after God, we are of God. There is no middle ground. It behooves us to be more than Christians in name, but in living everyday for Jesus. Someone has said that character is what you are when no one is looking.

Jesus is the most wonderful personality to have appeared on the pages of history. He is the only begotten Son of the living God and the Saviour of fallen humanity. He is not disappointing in what he is and promises, but time will prove him disappointing to sinners who continually resist. We hope this doesn't happen to you.

Grace...

SOMEONE USED the word "grace" to form an acrostic sermon, using the "G" to represent the gift (the principle of grace), the "R" stood for redemption (the purpose and action of grace), the "A" was for the access we have into this grace (the privilege of grace), the "C" was for character (the product of grace), and the "E" was for eter-

nal life (the prospect of grace). However, there is far more to the great principle of grace than this.

Unfortunately, there are many today who think nothing of "salvation" nor do they care about being "saved by grace." Perhaps this is because sin is loosing its "blackness," and immorality is becoming more "respectable." Ours is a day of moral fogs, where truth is obsolete, instead of being absolute.


Many are loosing the "desire" to be saved. Edith Bunker said, "Better take the child to church now when he is young, because people have too much 'fun' when they are older, to be 'religious'."

The fact is that sin is still black, and hell is still there, and people need Jesus, they need to be saved. People need to see the greatness of salvation, the depths of God's grace, unmerited, unearned favor and acceptance. Thus by grace, which involves the sacrifice of Jesus, the shedding of blood, we are saved from "wrath." Romans 5:9. The fact is that EVERYTHING God has ever done for sinful man has been BY HIS GRACE and EVERYTHING sinful man has done in RESPONSE (obedience) to that grace has been by FAITH. "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8, 9. Thus we are SAVED not SALVAGED, we are MADE ANEW, REDEEMED and not just REFURBISHED.

Notice another aspect of the grace of God found in Romans 5:1-2 where Paul says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Not only are we saved from past sins, we are saved right now. We stand as children of God, as heirs of a great inheritance (Colossians 3:24), as joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17), as "accepted" in Jesus (Romans 14:3). Moreover, by grace we are enabled to stand fast in faith (I Corinthians 16:13). We stand in "Liberty" (Galatians 5:1, 13), in one Spirit, one hope (Ephesians 4:4f), but above all we stand in Christ with the "armour" of God (Ephesians 6:13-17).

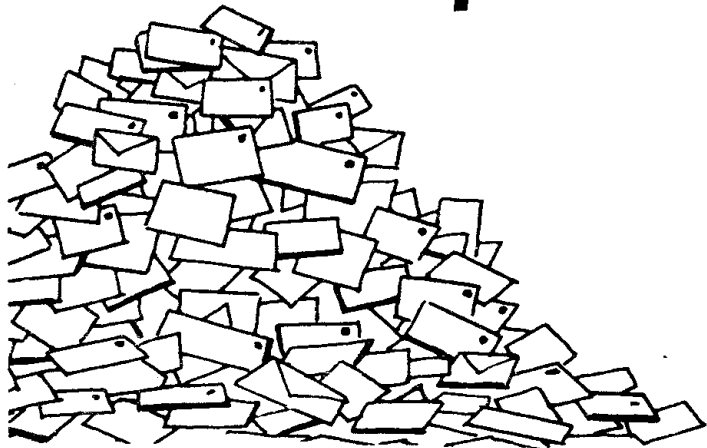
In this day when so many fall for anything and everything that comes along, when the big word is "conform," let us stand for truth and let us be known as people that love and hold up the truth. Paul said, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." I Corinthians 15:58. —By Jack Exum, Jr.



The best vitamin for developing friends is B¹.

READERS'

... Response



GEORGIA:

■ "I am a teacher of a Christian High School in Georgia and appreciate so much your Biblical stand on so many issues. My small, but hopefully helpful, donation is enclosed. Please keep your publication coming to me."

NORTH CAROLINA:

■ "In your recent **SWORD AND STAFF** on page 10 you had an article 'Following a Thief.' I'm sorry but I do not agree with you. You missed part of your reading. You do not need to be baptized to get to heaven, but I think it should be done to show your death, burial and resurrection. The thief did go to heaven in St. Luke 23 chapter 39 through the 43 verse it does say this. "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." I do not know who asked you to send us **THE SWORD AND STAFF**, but please do not send more, you are wasting your time and money. We do not read false doctrine."

(**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The candor of this correspondent is appreciated. But the correspondent, who happens to be a Baptist preacher, gives an answer which is typically Baptist. The whole point of the little article, "Following a Thief," is missed. To use the thief who was crucified with Jesus (the one who apparently repented) as proof against New Testament baptism is to have a very basic and elementary misunderstanding in the A B C's of Christianity. The New Testament had not started yet for according to Hebrews 9:15-17 a testament (or will) is not in force until men die. A person as long as he is alive can do what he wants with what he has to give, but once he is dead his testament must be carried out the way he has set it up to be legally executed. And, it would have been impossible, even if the thief had not been on the cross, for the thief to have been baptized into Christ. According to the New Testament we are buried with Christ in baptism whereupon we are raised with him (Romans 6). Christ was not yet dead, had not been buried, nor raised from the dead. So, you see New Testament baptism could not be carried out because the cardinal truth behind baptism had not taken place yet, as well as the New Testament not being in force.

All this humble writer knows is that we are baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), to get our sins washed away (Acts 22:16; Colossians 2:11,12), and to get into Christ and to put on Christ (Romans 6; Galatians 3:27), among other Scriptural reasons. Jesus said the person who believes and is baptized would be saved (Mark 16:16). Con-

sider I Peter 3:21. Who are we to believe? God or man (such as this Baptist preacher)? One thing for sure, God does not nor CANNOT lie (Titus 1:2). We choose to believe God and leave the day of judgment up to HIM.

■ "Please refer to the current issue of the **SWORD & STAFF**, 'Timely Questions Answered' question number four, 'should a woman teach a mixed adult class?'

"Please harmonize Paul's opinion in 2 Timothy 2:12-14 and I Corinthians 14:34 with the doctrine in Galatians 3:28.

"In my opinion, Paul's statements concerning women's silence in the assemblies were based on expediency. Paul guarded against having non-Christians speak evil of the Church. Romans 14:16. Even today, there are cultures in which women are not permitted to speak in the presence of men. Surely in such cases, it would not be expedient for Christians to violate the respected customs of the community. Women in our culture are respected voices. It is our custom to elect the most qualified leader. To have women teach men concerning the Scriptures should not only be accepted, but encouraged.

"There are many champions of the movement to shut women's mouths, but Christ and Paul are not numbered with them. We of the restoration movement must be careful not to rule on matters of opinion such as 'No, a woman should not teach a mixed adult class in Church.' The movements which make matters of 'opinion' to be matters of 'faith' or 'tests of fellowship' are the very institutions which we are trying to silence, I think!

"Surely God does not look with displeasure on a man's faith because he heard it only from a woman! Let's not be blinded in the mechanics of delivering the message so that we miss the message itself. Absorbing the message from 'Is Modern Religion Using God,' same issue, page 4, should help to bring home my **OPINIONS**.

"I appreciate your work with **THE SWORD AND STAFF**. It is one of the three fine works that I read regularly, the other two being **LOOKOUT** and **CHRISTIAN STANDARD**. I receive all three by subscription, not grace!"

(**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Fault is found with us taking Paul at his inspired Word in I Timothy 2:12-14 and I Corinthians 14:34. It is suggested that we must harmonize these verses with Galatians 3:28, as if they were at variance with one another. The apostle Paul's Word is spoken of as "Paul's opinion" on this subject. Our correspondent speaks of "my opinion," which he pretty strongly asserts. We are aghast at the idea of putting the Words of the apostle Paul in the realm of human opinion. Paul charged that men are to "acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:37). Who are we (frail creatures far removed from the days of Divine inspiration) to stand in judgment of the writings of such God-inspired men?

The apostle Paul makes it clear in I Timothy 2 why women are not to teach NOR to usurp authority over man in the public church relationship, and it has nothing to do with the customs and times of the first century. He answers the WHY. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (verses 13 and 14). In other words, because of the order of creation (man was created as the head and leader) and because sin entered the world first through woman, God has ordained that man take the leadership in the church. To try to nullify this with Galatians 3:28 is to naively miss the point. When he says in Galatians 3:28 that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," it has nothing to do with public preaching and teaching. It has to do with privilege as far as salva-

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS' RESPONSE...

(Continued from Last Page)

tion is concerned. All are sinners before God and all become Christians alike (Galatians 3:27). All are joint-heirs according to the promise (verse 29). Obviously people are still male and female, and each have their respective and distinctive roles in life as such. A man can't be a woman and a woman can't be a man.

There is plenty of teaching and work for the woman to do without violating the principle laid down by an inspired apostle. Insecure women and unsure men may have psychological problems in accepting what Paul says, but those who are simply wanting to follow the Bible are not out to "shut women's mouths." Their motivation is simply to please their Lord and to humbly follow His teaching. All of us submit to God and to one another in love (Ephesians 5:21). No one is regarded as inferior or superior. It is a matter of different roles that God has ordained to be filled.)

VIRGINIA:

■ "Please find enclosed a check to continue our subscription. We really appreciate receiving your truthful publications.

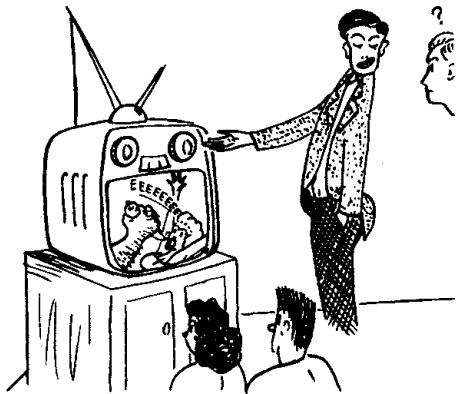
"We say AMEN to your paragraph 'Like A Deadly Snake.' We feel many of the problems in the world today could have been prevented if more televisions had been turned off. We do not have a TV and certainly have no intentions of purchasing one.

"How much better we all would be in this present time if families would gather around their Bibles at night to study instead of gathering around a TV.

"Again, thanks for keeping us on your mailing list—just wish we were able to help more."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This spiritual letter from a reader in Galax, Virginia, is appreciated. We are not saying the ownership of a TV set will automatically keep a person out of heaven, but it can easily send a person's soul to hell and obviously its evil impact is being felt more and more today. A constant diet of the garbage on it is spiritually deadening.

This writer does not own a TV set, nor has he ever owned one. However, we have been in people's homes when they just happened to have their's on. And it is worse than we thought. Cursing is a very common thing. Dirty off-color jokes involving sex are common. Once we saw several young couples talking about how many times they had sexual relations the first week of their marriage (and we understand this is a regular weekly program). We have seen women in the barest of underwear (and less). A constant diet of sex, violence and gore is to be seen. And we didn't stay to watch. We just happened to be in and out of these people's homes (and some of these people were professing Christians and didn't even attempt to turn the dial off!).



"See--they all have control knobs, preacher!"

You may say that TV is not a spiritual problem with you, but we are convinced that with most people it is. It would be interesting to know how our Christian readers handle the problem of "keeping a deadly snake in a cage in your living room." This writer does not own a TV set. It is not a matter of thinking we are holier than anyone else; it is a matter of recognizing human weakness. It is like Jeremiah said, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Human nature takes the low road, not the high road. That's a fact. It is hard enough being a Christian without making room for the devil.

Again, beware!!! Consider again Romans 8:6. Are we taking heed to Philipians 4:8? If we keep our hearts right our lives will be right.)



NEW YORK CITY:

■ "Two weeks ago I found among some garbage outside, a booklet written by you titled 'The Subject of the Holy Spirit Made Simple.' The booklet has been a great blessing to me. For sometime I had wanted to do a study on this topic.

"It was about 5 or 6 months ago that I was baptized into Christ and thus added to His church. Before that I was a Presbyterian wanting to get out because I saw some of the falsehood taught there. Praise be to God! I prayed to be led in truth and now I have been added to His glorious church...

"Again I want to thank you for having written that book on the Holy Spirit, and I thank God for the wisdom He gives to those who follow Him..."

MASSACHUSETTS:

■ "Brother, once again I need to write to you and commend you for another fine issue of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I pray often for you and the work that you have been doing and for an increase in funds that you might continue. Enclosed is a gift to that end. I wish that I could increase it 100 fold and then some to help relieve the financial burden.

"The issue received today has so many timely articles in it and so much good teaching. Would to God that it was going out more frequently. There are signs that many of the churches we have fellowshiped over the years are weakening their stand for God but at the same time I see many encouraging signs of renewal on the part of some and a willingness to speak out! We pray for their increase (the latter mentioned, that is!). Above all we need the printed page to alert the soldiers in the ranks and change the thinking of the leaders at the forefront..."

INDIANA:

■ "Am well pleased with your publication—and pray for your continuance in Restoration message—May God bless. Satan does not quit, nor can we."

■ "Sorry I am so late with my renewal. I am sending a little extra for my self-imposed penalty. I love your straight forward approach. I pray for you and THE SWORD AND STAFF. Keep up the good work."

WASHINGTON:

■ "I know the much work that goes into your publication. I know the frustration of having very few persons sympathetic with the effort (and even some who openly question the value of it), but I also know that many are receiving good and I want you to hang in there for the Lord. He's pleased with your labor of love and I believe your work in publishing will outlive both of us and accomplish much more good that we will ever know of in this life. God bless you, brother."

OREGON:

■ "Am enclosing check for renewal of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I notice it ran out in March, and I appreciate you sending it to me anyway. What with the hustle and bustle of moving, one is apt to forget a lot of things. But I just can't get along without THE SWORD AND STAFF. I like its truthfulness in all phases of the Bible. I know if more preachers had the backbone to preach the Word as it is, we would have more dedicated Christians. God bless you."

■ "I received a sample copy of your magazine and I am writing to say that this congregation has no intentions of subscribing to it. After having read the question and answer section I personally would not want to subscribe."

"First of all, I do not see that there is anything wrong with a Sunday School Supt. or a Minister of Christian Education. If the church is adhering to the Word, those who lead the Sunday School will submit to the guidance and authority of the Elders. I think it is time for Christians to come out of the dark ages and realize that the church today needs more than just Elders, Deacons, and Preachers..."

"In response to your thoughts on church bake sales, etc. You should not have said, 'Never do we find the church involved in 'selling' to 'raise money'.' What did the early church do with their possessions? (Acts 2:45). To whom did they sell them to? Weren't their possessions sold to the world for money? Wasn't the money used by the church to help others? I do not find much difference in selling a cake or even some clothes (which the early Christians may have sold) and selling some property. The desired outcome is the same—money for the church. I think the name of religion is cheapened more by preachers who demand the tithe (which is NEVER mentioned in the New Testament as the amount we are to give.) If Jesus came to fulfill the Law (Matt. 5:17) and we as Christians are not under the Law but under grace, why are we so legalistic about giving? Jesus praised the widow, for giving all that she had, not because she had tithed! I encourage this congregation to give all that they can. If that means ten-percent, great! If it means five percent, great! Five percent is better than no percent! Hopefully their giving will grow as they grow but let's not be so legalistic and demand ten percent. It is my hope that someday Christians will move out of the Old Testament frame of mind and into a New Testament frame of mind in regards to giving..."

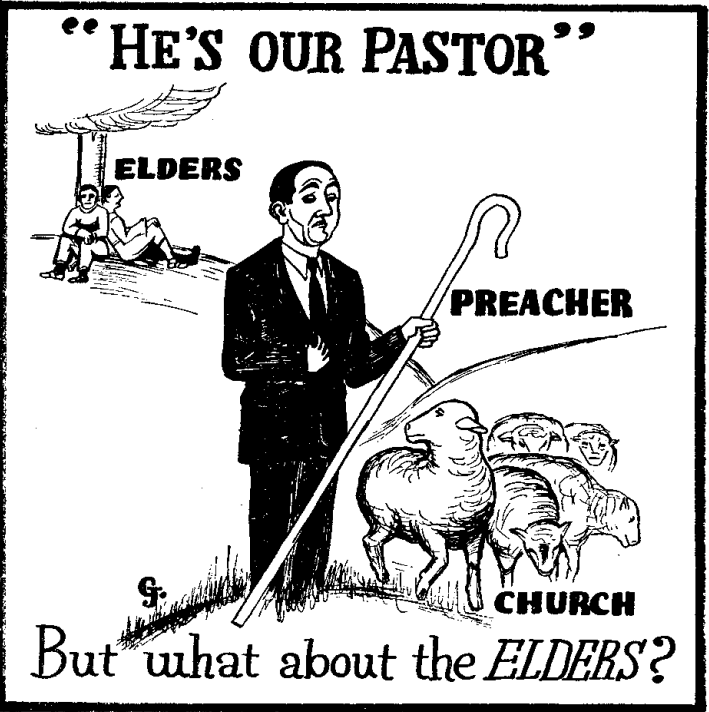
"Thank you for allowing me to respond to your magazine."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We appreciate hearing from all "schools of thought," but we are made to wonder if people don't make themselves believe just about what they want to believe sometimes—especially from what our correspondent says trying to justify the church selling to raise money to pay it's bills. The selling of houses and land in the early days of the church was not a church function. Individuals did this and then gave the money to the church. Peter told Ananias that while he had his property it was still his, and

even after he sold the property the money was still his money (Acts 5:4). As we said, the cross of Christ is our example and motivation to give all to God today. And if the Jews under the bondage of the Law gave a tithe, and we are under grace today, it is a shame and a disgrace to give less than a tithe (10%). When people have been really converted to Christ (who gave His all), stingy "church members" will not have to be out peddling their wares in the name of Christ's church to pay the bills of the church. Giving becomes a very important act of Divine worship, coming from liberal hearts that have first been given to the Lord.

Then, in reference to the critical comments regarding the function of the church with it's God-ordained offices, the words of our correspondent are immediately suspect (even without thinking further). He concludes his letter by signing his name "PASTOR" of such and such a Christian Church. The serious student of God's Word knows that the word "PASTOR" refers to the elders of the church and not to the preacher. Too many times, from the preacher (who is called an "EVANGELIST" in the New Testament) on down the God-ordained arrangement is disregarded. In essence the preacher is the only functioning elder (pastor) that the church has. The elders and deacons sit on a "BOARD" (and that's about all in many cases) and that in a non-distinctive way. The Scriptural qualification/work is not defined, distinguished, nor implemented. Too many times they are just "yes" and "no" men for what is brought up (rubber stamps for traditional preachers and traditional programs).

Yes, we believe that others besides elders, deacons, and preachers are to work in the Lord's church. Jobs may be assigned, committees of a temporary nature may be called into being, etc., but God no where allows us to form other offices which compete/usurp from His Divinely appointed arrangement. To have a Sunday School organization separate and removed (many times independent) from the church organization is to set the organization God called into being aside. Then to create an office called "Superintendent"



and to set someone over it as executive over-seer is to rob the elders of one of their titles (BISHOP, i.e. over-seer, superintendent) and to relieve the elders of their Holy Spirit

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS' RESPONSE...

(Continued from Last Page)

appointed work (Acts 20:28). Yes, as we said, others besides the elders obviously may preside over the assembly when the "Bible school" gathers, but they cannot become BISHOPS (Superintendents) to execute the teaching program without usurping the work of the elders. The elders cannot be bishops by proxy.

We may call the time when the early church had only the offices of elder, deacon, and preacher the "Dark Ages" (as our correspondent seems to have done), but they exceeded anything that is being accomplished today. Others worked besides the elders, deacons, and preachers—but not by new offices. The church made increase of itself to the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:15,16)—as every member did his/her exciting part! "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4). The great commission was fulfilled in one generation without the "help" of man-made missionary societies, evangelizing boards, etc. (Mark 16:15; Colossians 1:23). Christ was real and Christianity was intensely personal. The course of the Roman Empire and the world was changed.)

■ "I recently read your last issue of THE SWORD AND STAFF. I read from page 19 (46) the paragraph entitled 'If A Church...' In it there is a statement, 'If a church... does not maintain the exact organization as revealed for His congregation in the New Testament... Then it is not a church of Christ no matter what name it wears.' Then I turned back to the previous page, 9 (45), and in the article, 'Timely Questions Answered,' the second question was on organized Bible School. When the question was answered in the second paragraph, is the statement, 'Yes, under God's plan we will still have our classes.'

"I have but one question: 'Where under God's plan do we have Bible school?'

"I also read on the next column where Bible School was invented in 1780 by Robert Raikes and many years later introduced into Christ's holy church; 1780 was a long time after A. D. 33, and England is a long, long way from Jerusalem!..."

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Another station heard from in Oregon!—And at the other end of the spectrum of "thought."

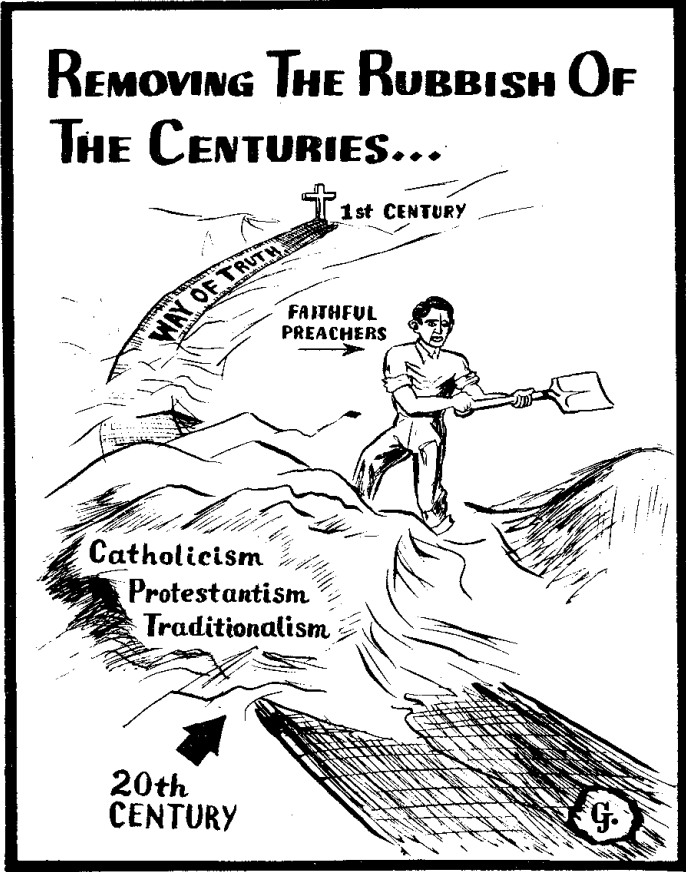
Our correspondent says he has one question: "Where under God's plan do we have Bible School?" He said that we said "Bible School" was invented in 1780. He criticizes us for saying "under God's plan we will still have our classes."

Perhaps we should say: Hold on there! You jumped the track! We didn't say Bible "classes" or "school" was started in 1780. We said that organized Sunday School separate from the church was started in 1780. Any relationship where one teaches and others listen to learn is a school. That is what the church of Jesus Christ is all about. Our bone of contention was in making this a separate function from the church and in not using the God-ordained organization or agency to get this done. Our criticism was the policy of removing it from the hands of the eldership (Acts 20:28). The expediency of teaching classes of different age groups does not justify making a separate organization removed from the control and oversight of the eldership (yes, others may teach besides the elders, but the elders are in control). The early church met to learn. Paul instructed the older women to teach the younger women (Titus 2:3,4). If such a learning process is not a school, what is it? One of the definitions of SCHOOL is "any situation, set of circumstances, or experiences through which one gains knowledge, training, or discipline." But in the Bible we are talking about a planned relationship to a teacher where this takes place.)

NIGERIA:

■ "Greetings in the name of our wonderful Lord. I just received my copy of THE SWORD AND STAFF a few weeks ago. And have sat down to read it as had been my habit through the years. I appreciate your paper. I really believe it is needed more. Don't ever get discouraged. Due to your kindness your name (THE SWORD AND STAFF) has spread all over the world, in America especially, Africa in general. . . . The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." □

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OUR EARNEST DESIRE

It is our earnest desire to see the undenominational church of our Lord emerge victorious from the unhappy state of affairs that exists in the divided, confused, ignorant, and watered down religious world. The only solution is for sincere religious people to recognize and realize the folly of promoting traditionalism, then, turning their backs on it, merge into the one church established centuries ago before Roman Catholicism or present day Protestantism ever was heard of; yes, merge into the church of which the Lord said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). You cannot join this church. You may have joined yourself to a human denomination on human terms of admission. But this is not so with the Lord's church. The Scriptures indicate that the Lord adds you when you obey the gospel (Acts 2:38, 47; I Corinthians 12:13). In other words the same thing that makes you a Christian makes you a member of the church of God. Why be more? Why be less? The Bible alone makes Christians. It does not make Catholics or

Protestants. It does not make Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Holiness, or what have you. These names represent human parties, human systems, and human personalities. To have denominational pride or the party spirit is to be carnal, which is a work of the flesh. Paul sharply rebukes the Corinthians for wearing party labels and causing division (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:4). Why cannot people see the folly of denominationalism?!

It is not enough to cast off denominationalism alone. It is not enough to give up human creed books, professing to have the Bible only as our rule of faith. One must manifest the spirit of lowliness and meekness, in love forbearing one another (Ephesians 4:1-6). Too many times men have denounced sectarianism only to become within themselves sectarian in their religious approach and outlook. A zeal to return to apostolic grounds coupled with humility will make great gains for the cause of truth. Without humility of mind, division will again raise its ugly head.

We are not necessarily presenting a "come-join-us" attitude toward the denominational world. It is not a matter **who** is right (this is the sectarian approach), but a matter of **what** is right. Denominational friend, we will gladly unite with you in the **name of Christ** (not Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, etc.) and on the basis of the **Word of God** as we in an unbiased and humble manner study it together. No one will have to give up any present truth that they hold. Ministerial associations and inter-denominational work are poor excuses for Christian unity, being neither Christian nor presenting unity in Christ. We have surrendered all party names and traditionalism, and are sincerely devoting our attention to being just the church of the New Testament. Perhaps there are many independent groups in our country moving in that direction. Many are tired of the God-denying tendencies in the present crop of clergymen, who would rob the Bible of its supernatural element. We would be happy to study with you from the Word of God. We do not have a sectarian party line to adhere to—just the Bible.

It is our sincere desire to see men united in the one body of Christ. It is our Lord's desire because he worded such in his prayer, which goes, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that **they all may be one**, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that **they also may be one in us**: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20, 21). The position we have stated is simple, Scriptural and plain. On what other basis could sincere religious people be united? This is the true way, but traditionalists shun it like a rattlesnake. J.E.G. —The Sword and Staff, December, 1959

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WEAK "CHURCH MEMBERS"

WHAT IS a weak church member? Somewhere between the age of accountability and the local mortuary there exists a peculiar bundle of excuses encased in skin—called by kindly ministers, "a weak church member."

A weak member likes the "Easter" service, a short sermon, sermons on love, new cars, sleeping on Sunday, beau-

tiful church buildings, all religions, golf, a friendly church, the church back home, and other weak church members.

He dislikes old ministers, young ministers, religious fanatics, stewardship sermons (giving), evangelism, pressure, Bible school invitations, cold churches, empty churches, small churches, ministers who check on his whereabouts, crowded churches, Sunday evening services, prayer meetings and the contribution. Also, any idea of his doing any personal work for Christ.

A weak member is an excuse in clothing, an alibi with golf clubs or fishing tackle in the back seat, piety with drink in hand, indifference begging off, laxness with a bad bad cold, sin flirting with the world, falsehood promising to be in church Sunday, critic advisor, expert on homiletics (preaching), and in his own opinion, a real Christian.

Mothers lie for them, wives stay home with them, and preachers pray for them. . . husbands agree with them, mothers-in-law gossip about them, elders get a little older because of them. They are found almost everywhere, in about all churches, in bed, in front of a TV set, on the highway, in superficial religious discussions, doing Sunday chores and planning what to do next Sunday.

Hm-m-m-m-m-m. Have you ever seen one of them?

—Adapted

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DIFFICULTIES DISSOLVED

THE STORY is told of two Christians who had a disagreement. One heard that the other was talking about him derogatorily. Whereupon he went to him saying, "Will you be kind enough to tell me my faults, that I may profit by your Christian candor and strive to better myself?"

"Yes," replied the other, "I will do it." They went aside, and the former said, "Before you commence telling me what you believe is wrong with me, let us kneel together and pray that my eyes may be opened to see my faults as you reveal them to me. Will you lead us in the prayer?"

When the prayer was over, the man who had sought the interview said, "Now proceed with what you have noted is improper in my conduct." But the other answered, "After praying over it, it looks so small that it is not worth talking about. I realize now that by going around and talking about you, I have been serving the devil myself, and have need that you pray for me and that you forgive me the wrong I have done you." The disagreement was dissolved from that very hour. —M. Harbison

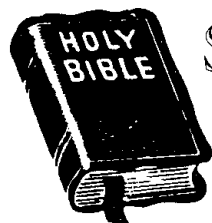
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"MY DAD KNOWS GOD"

WHEN MY SON was a small boy playing with his buddies in the back yard, I overheard them talking one day—and the conversation was, amusingly, one of those "My dad can whip your dad" routines. I heard one boy proudly say, "My dad knows the mayor of our town!" Then I heard another say, "That's nothing—my dad knows the governor of our state!" Wondering what was coming next in the "program of bragging," I presently heard a wonderfully familiar voice (that of my own little son), saying, "That's nothing—my dad knows God!" I swiftly slipped away from my place of eavesdropping with tears running down my cheeks. I dropped on my knees in my room and prayed earnestly and gratefully, "Oh, God, I pray that my boy will always be able to say 'My dad knows God'." —Hilding Halverson

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"PRAY WITHOUT CEASING"



SOLID

BIBLE-RELATED MATERIAL:

BELOW IS a listing of booklets, tracts, and materials published by and currently available from THE SWORD and STAFF. If something is not listed, that means it is now out of print. This literature has been widely used. We believe that you will be pleased with the Scriptural soundness and helpfulness of each item. Place an order today. And while you are at it, order the bound volumes of THE SWORD AND STAFF. You have the timeless material of back issues in more of a permanent form this way. More and more people are seeing the value of doing this.

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(NOTE: Since postage is so high, any help along that line will be appreciated).



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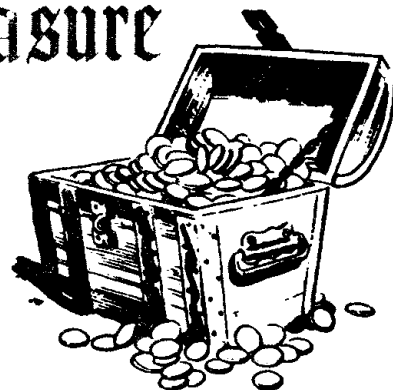
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