

January 1973



TORCH

*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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HERMON AND THE SERMON

I can't imagine what's wrong with Hermon;

*He prays for the preacher, and sleeps thru the sermon,
Tells him firmly as he goes out the door*

"That's really good preaching, just give us more."

James P. Needham, 5-16-71

Volume VIII - January 1973 - Number 1

Editor

James P. Needham

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Editorial

James P. Needham



Looking Ahead to Volume VIII

This issue is the first of Volume VIII. Thus this editor begins his third year in this editorial chair. We are quite pleased with the type of material we have presented over the past two years. Judging from the favorable response received from the reading audience and the steady increase in subscriptions, we believe the brethren are also pleased with our efforts. We shall never, however, rest on our laurels. We shall not bow down at the altar of *status quo*. In order for TORCH to continue to be interesting to this editor, it must continually be a challenge. When it ceases thus to be, I shall cease to be its editor. Nothing is more boring to me than to be involved in some task that has no challenge.

A NEW FACE

You will notice the new appearance of TORCH beginning with this issue. The cover has been changed artistically, and we have now bought a new IBM composer. This is a very expensive item, and a very bold undertaking, but we are convinced it is needed for TORCH to stay abreast of the times. In appearance and quality of material we want to be top-notch. Printing has become such a fine art that unattractive material has very little chance of being read. In the past TORCH has been composed by IBM typewriter, but now we have the very finest cold type composer on the market. This shows our faith in the future of TORCH. We are convinced that it has been accepted and will continue to grow and render a needed service to brethren all over the world. Remember, we still need satisfied readers to help us enlarge our circulation.

THE NATURE OF TORCH

We desire that our readers understand the nature of this periodical. There is some reason to believe that it may be misconceived in the minds of some. Let us note some features of the operation:

1. *Individual effort:* TORCH would fit only loosely into any definition of the word "organization." It would sort of fit the "systematic arrangement" definition. It has no staff, and doesn't plan to have one. It is not a corporation, either profit or non-profit legally speaking. It is practically a non-intity. It is just a name. It is really a medium for individual Christians to share their knowledge and thoughts with other individuals. It is hardly a commercial enterprise. As of this issue, it sells nothing but itself, and does this only as a service to brethren who want it. In the past brother Farris sold some advertising space in the paper, but tells me that beginning with this issue, he will no longer do that. The only things that will be advertised in the paper will be publications produced by either or both of us, but even these will be purchased from the individuals, not from TORCH. This will continue as in the past, again with a service-not a profit-motive. What we produce will be done at the lowest possible price. We are interested in service -- not profit. Most periodicals engage in the book and literature business to produce revenue to defray the expenses of their publication, but not TORCH. We are determined to survive in some other way. In this way we will never be tempted to trim the sails of the paper to the trade winds of commercial advantage. The paper will not be dependent upon our pleasing the people who buy our products. We will be unincumbered, and thus free to say what we think needs to be said without feeling the commercial backlash of those who may be displeased. Our policy will be determined by what is scripturally right, not by what is commercially expedient.

"We will be unincumbered...
free to say what we think
needs to be said..."

Our ability to survive without commercial interests will be made possible through the continued generosity of the Farris Family. They produce TORCH on their personally owned printing equipment, thus avoiding today's high printing costs. Nobody derives any personal profit from TORCH. It manages to pay its own way from the subscription fees, but could not do this if it had to pay commercial printing costs. In the two years that I have edited TORCH we have not asked anyone to GIVE us one red cent. We have only asked that you subscribe for TORCH at the minimal cost of \$3 per year, or at \$2 per year for ten or more. (You will not find many periodicals still going for that price). We have urged brethren to pay for clubs, but this is not a gift to us, but to the recipients. Brother Farris and I have put some of our

personal funds into TORCH, but we have not asked others to do so. Not that we think it would be wrong, but we hope it will not be necessary.

2. *Not a party organ:* TORCH refuses to be a party organ, or a brotherhood regulator. We are not seeking anybody's devotion or personal loyalty. Someone recently said to me that some people in a given locality "*Looked up to the editor of _____ as some kind of a god.*" We will do anything that is right to avoid such a situation where TORCH is involved. We don't want to be referred to as "the TORCH brethren." We don't want to be "TORCH brethren." or any other *kind* of brethren, but just brethren.

TORCH is not a party organ to parrot a party line. I shall not erect a screen that strains out anybody's articles just because they are critical of me, or disagree with what I believe or say, but neither am I going to roll over and play dead just because someone disagrees with me or is critical of me. I shall be willing, as in the past, to defend *what I believe* against those who attack it. I have no desire to defend TORCH as such, because it is just a name, the name of a few pieces of paper containing the thoughts of those whose articles it carries. We have allowed-encouraged-those who have disagreed with us to use our pages to tell us where they think we are wrong. In the "POST MARKS" section we share our mail with the reading audience, printing criticisms of us which are not written for publication, but which we believe should be expressed to our readers as well as to us. We are determined to be fair. We have no time for or patience with "yellow journalism."

3. *Not a brotherhood news medium:* TORCH carries no news column. We do not announce meetings, lectureships, etc. generally. TORCH is a teaching medium, and we have not been asked to serve as a clearing house for "brotherhood" activities, and we certainly would not assume such a function, or accept it if requested. I have (and shall) announced from time to time certain activities in which I have participated as a matter of interest and information to our readers. I am aware that other papers have news columns and news writers, and we are not denying their right to do such, if they choose. But as for TORCH, such does not fall within its policy.

4. *Independent:* TORCH is an independent effort. It has no alliances with commitments to any body or any thing. It is not, and shall not be, the handmaiden of any human organization, promotion or arrangement (whether educational, edificational or be-

nevolent) to announce its activities, promote its personnel, or solicit funds for its financial aid. Our policy is to teach the word of God, not promote human institutions.

ISSUES AND CONTROVERSIES -- PRESENT AND FUTURE

There are always issues; there always have been, there always will be. The devil never sleeps. Men are never perfect, brethren are not always satisfied with the Lord's way of doing things. As long as this is the case, we will have issues and controversies. Present-day and future problems can be categorized as follows:

1. Doctrinal problems:

a. *Institutionalism*: This has been an issue in just about every generation since the beginning of the church. It has been hotly discussed for the past 25 years, and has resulted in another division among us. Many brethren are not satisfied to do God's work in God's way. They try to help God.

As an issue for frequent discussion, institutionalism has been cooled down a bit by a host of problems among those who have championed it. Their no-patternism has led them to problems of more serious consequences than those who oppose their social gospelisms. They are in a life and death struggle now with those who are advocating Holy Ghost baptism, speaking in unknown tongues, maraculous guidance of the Spirit, out-right modernism and classical theological liberalism, etc. They sometimes take a dig or two at "the antis," but they are far more concerned and involved with trying to stop the gushing tide of "Pentecostalism," and modernism.

Another possible reason for the declining promotion of the church-supported human institutions is that they have pretty well gotten what they were after all the time, the colleges into the church budgets. This all consuming goal of the institutional promoters has been successfully reached, and the churches are jumping on the bandwagon and budgeting to the colleges liberal amounts of church money. The colleges are constantly expanding their operations, and increasing their hierarchical control over the churches. Pepperdine college is now a university and operates a

"The colleges are...
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over the churches."

school of law.

Those who are opposed to institutionalism are in danger of making the false assumption that the fight is over; that institutionalism is now a dead issue. Some brethren are being mesmerized by the lack of aggressiveness of the liberals, and their seeming desire to create a better relationship with the conservatives, brought on by the realization that they have more in common with us than with their more liberal compeers. A bit of observation will convince the open-minded that the liberal's unity plan does not involve their ceasing to teach and promote institutionalism, or our continuing to oppose it! We could have "unity" with satan on their terms!

The present "Pentecostal" and "modernism" controversies among the institutional brethren are making them unstable, double-minded, and inconsistent. In their periodicals they strongly urge faith in the allsufficiency of the New Testament, the need for respecting its authority, but often in the same issues they speak of their "fellowship halls," have full-page ads for the Herald of Truth, orphan homes, etc., or advertise and promote certain persons who are aiding and abetting those who are practicing the error they are opposing. They want people to respect the scriptures, but not to the point of giving up their unscriptural promotions. As long as they continue to promote these unscriptural activities, they will be inconsistent, and their plea for respect of the scriptures will fall on deaf ears.

b. *Ketcherside unity movement*: Brother Karl Ketcherside is a man of great ability and charm. He is a very loveable person, and I have nothing unkind to say about him personally. Doctrinally, he and I have been and continue to be poles apart. Ever since I have known him, he has been a man who jumped from one extreme to another. This does not mean that he and his compatriots have been wrong on everything, for they haven't. They were preaching the truth on institutionalism long before it became the prominent issue it has been the last 25 years. But, along with this, he has been bitterly opposed to paid, located preachers, has advocated evangelistic oversight of churches without elders, etc. etc. At one time he drew a circle that left out just about everyone but Karl, but all of a sudden a few years ago, he enlarged his circle to include just about everybody he had previously excluded. He now advocates fellowshiping anyone who has been immersed. He is willing to overlook such things as Premillennialism, instrumental music, institutionalism, and many other doctrinal errors.

No doubt he grew weary of the many divisions, and factions a-

mong brethren (who hasn't?). For years he tried to get everyone to agree with him, but failing in this, he now is willing to "agree" with everyone. He settles all the many controversies by either pretending they don't exist, or contending they are not important. It is a very easy way to settle all the controversies, but it is too simplistic. It ignores the fact that plain scriptures are being violated and calls upon one to stifle his conscience.

Some younger preachers among us are "toying" with acceptance of this idea. They have not forthrightly accepted it, but they are saying some things that lead in that direction. They pronounce some of their older brethren too aggressive, and devisive in their approach, and sometimes accuse them of not being concerned about "divisions in the brotherhood."

It is fair to say that some of these young preachers are just plain naive. They do not realize the complexity of the problems involved, and their immaturity probably prevents them from doing so for a while yet. Others conceive of themselves as being the bright young princes of the new generation whose scholarship and advanced education give them a depth of insight into the intricacies of these problems of which the older, more "illiterate" brethren were and are incapable! One young prince is reported to have said when brethren approached him about some of his statements, "If you had studied Greek as much as I have, you would see it just like I do." The idea that some of the older brethren are "unconcerned about divisions in the brotherhood," smacks of a denominational concept of the church, and looks quite ludicrous in view of the fact that many of the older brethren have spent their lives trying to unify brethren on the only true basis upon which it can be had: scriptural truth (Jn. 17:20,21). Furthermore, had it not been for the efforts of these older brethren, many of these young princes would not be occupying their present pulpits. It is quite strange that the bright new scholars have found a very simple answer to the most complex problems.

2. Moral issues:

a. *Abortion*: TORCH has tried to provide some useful material on this grave issue. We believe it is destined to become a serious problem among professed Christians. Christians are affected by the problems of the society in which they live. So also is the church. Permissiveness in our country has led to moral decline. Moral decline created the climate that led to the acceptance of abortion. This spirit of permissiveness has found its way into the church. It is seen in the actions and attitudes of parents and young people. It has also led to moral decline among some pro-

fessed Christians, which in turn has led to the acceptance of abortion as a legitimate solution to unwanted pregnancies. (Of which there is an alarming increase in the church). Some preachers are endorsing it, others are saying, "Do what the doctor advises," and yet others are undecided.

I have been both surprised and disappointed at the lack of articles pro and con on the subject in the periodicals published by brethren. Even those which have been known to be abreast of the issues and in the front line of defense against sin and error. It is high time these papers say something on the abortion issue. If they are not against it, let them come out for it, and let us see their supporting argumentation. Maybe we are wrong. If so, let us be taught the truth. We will be glad to accept it. But we can hardly be taught the truth by silence. Are these media of expression among us going to sit idly by and let the atheists, infidels and situationists settle the abortion issue for our young people? They didn't do this on the evolution issue, why on this? Are they suffering from fear, or indcision?

b. *Sex education in the public schools:* This became a red-hot issue 3 or 4 years ago. Some writing was done on the subject by some brethren, but here again, some were too willing to allow today's ultra-liberal educational "experts," behavioral scientists, sociologists and sexologists to settle the question. Those who bothered to get involved and discover the facts about the proposed sex education programs, found that they amounted to little more than a course in how to commit fornication and not feel guilty about it. We have heard very little about this issue of late. There are two reasons for this: (1) The forced busing issue crowded it out of the spot light, and (2) the movement to install it in the public schools went underground due to the storm of public protest. They have made statements advocating this approach. An investigation into the curriculum in most public schools would show that the forces promoting it have not been idle. They have been working quietly behind the scenes.

A sensible sex education course in the public schools is a good thing. But the present movement is anything but sensible. In the literature containing the guidelines they strongly contend that the sex educator must not "moralize." They endorse premarital sex, and other acts which the Bible condemns. Before my children are taught sex education in the public schools I want to know something about the morals and philosophies of the person teaching it. I also want to examine the text books. The present moral climate in our schools and colleges causes me to be very reluctant to trust

their teaching of my children on such a delicate subject. I very definitely do not want them teaching my youngsters sex education without my knowledge and consent.

PRESENT AND FUTURE DANGERS

1. *Human centers of influence:* The church is a divine spiritual organism. Since it was designed by God, built by Christ and is to be governed by the Spirit's law, it is an all-sufficient organization; without the need of any sort or kind of human help. The church however, in every generation has been influenced by certain humanly devised centers of influence. These have always been well intentioned, but in most cases, evil. Christians and churches constantly need to be aware of such dangers and scrupulously avoid being dependent upon or swayed by them.

a. *Periodicals:* The printed page is a powerful medium. It probably influences more minds than any other one thing in the world. God evidently knew this and so chose the written word as a means of conveying His will to man. Brethren throughout the world recognize the powerful influence of the printed page, and use it extensively in teaching the word. Over the past 100 years American brethren have relied heavily on the written word as a means of conveying their thoughts to others. Today, almost every church publishes some kind of a bulletin. Many individual Christians are engaged in sending forth printed matter.

This is well and good, provided it is used properly. The periodicals sent forth by brethren contain certain dangers. When papers become centers of political influence with power to sway brethren on issues that arise, they can be very dangerous. When editors and papers become the basis of faith rather than the word

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of God, they would be better off in the trash can. When brethren cease to read papers objectively and critically, they have entered the danger zone. Nobody conversant of the past 25 years of church history can deny the tremendous influence such periodicals have had on the development of the present situation. Some

have had a good influence, and some not so good.

Some brethren have followed the leading of certain papers because of party loyalty rather than out of a strong conviction that they were teaching the truth. This is likely true of some on both sides of the present division over institutionalism. Sometimes editors have encouraged this by their obvious competitive spirit; each one seeking for the largest mailing list and the greatest influence in the "brotherhood." Such competition has frequently lowered the controversies to the level of personal vendetta, and vitriolic diatribes while the respective party loyalists cheered from the sidelines.

Some people give a certain "authority" to almost anything that appears in print. It may be illogical and untrue, but if someone has printed it in a book or paper, a good many people will swallow it whole without question. "It must be true, because it is written right here!" How many times a week do we hear someone deny some popular idea, or make some absurd contention on the specious basis that "I read an article the other day that said...." So what! Someone else can (and often does) say, "Yes, but I read an article the other day that said the direct opposite..." It is likely true that the printed media contain more fallacies and falsehoods than anything else in society, but getting people to realize this is another matter.

This very strange psychological phenomenon should put all writers on guard, and impress upon them their personal responsibility to document and prove what they write. I am of the opinion that many writers, including my own brethren, never give it a thought. Some brethren make us very suspicious that they write in the papers "to be seen of men." They want to be known as "one of the writing brethren!" They write in great profusion and in many periodicals. They want to get their articles before the brethren, and make a name for themselves. In much of what they write there is an effort to be sensational; to impress the brethren with their "literary skills." Their articles abound in silly alliterations and shallow thoughts. Such authors say nothing to and do nothing for the serious reader, so he looks at the article long enough to see who is its author, and skips it. But every writer, regardless of his ability, needs to seriously consider that what he writes will influence somebody. Each article should be taken very seriously, and should represent his best efforts on the subject. He should strive for simplicity, and, above all, accuracy.

b. *Schools:* We have tried frequently to point out the dangers that lurk in the schools and colleges owned and operated by brethren.

ren. There is abundant evidence that our warnings have not gone unheeded, and we have been very much encouraged by the large number of influential brethren who have written, spoken or called to express their feeling that the warnings are badly needed, and that they agreed with what we have been saying. At the same time, we are fully aware that some school loyalists have not agreed with what has been said, and we didn't expect them to. We have been made aware of the unsuccessful attempt to mount a whispering campaign, the behind-the-scenes surmising and prognosticating, and the abortive attempts to paste on us some prejudicial labels. If these brethren derive any pleasure or good from such activities, they are welcome to continue, but I shall not be moved. The church of the Lord is dearer to me than their good will. I shall continue to call it like I see it, and warn of dangers which come to my attention.

At the same time, I should point out that I have not mounted a bitter campaign against the schools. I am not an enemy of them or those connected with them. In this article I have warned against the bad influences of periodicals, but it doesn't follow that I am committed to a bitter campaign against them. I can warn of dangers involved in these matters without developing or harboring enmity against them or the people connected with them. If the schools and those who are so strongly committed to them cannot maintain good will toward those who question their activities or warn of the dangers involved in their operations, that is their problem. My friendship for a person does not mean that I am irrevocably committed to his defense in everything he believes and practices.

What I have said about the schools is very simple and easy to be understood. It has not been said in bitterness, or in enmity, nor has it been motivated by any personal vendetta I have with any person. What I have stated in the past, I will now state again.

1) *Some brethren feel that the church is dependent upon the schools:* Brethren frequently say, "If the school doesn't train our preachers, who will." Some brethren panic at the thought of not having such schools. Some brethren look upon the college lecture-ship as a sort of convention. Some churches use the church to promote the schools, such as having faculty members hold meetings, etc. for them to keep the church in touch with the schools.

2) *Any feeling that the church is dependent upon the schools, is just one step away from church contributions to them:* In fact, the present wave of church contributions to schools among the

liberals was preceded by a strong feeling of dependence upon them. We have stated before, and we state again that those brethren who feel the church is dependent upon the schools are right where the liberals were a few years ago. Batsell Baxter made the logical leap for his brethren from dependence to subsidy:

In reality the appeal is for churches of Christ to pay the actual cost of a service rendered--that service being the teaching of God's word to more than 3200 young people every regular school day.

- AN APPEAL TO CHURCHES OF CHRIST
The Nashville Tennessean 5/29/71

What is to keep us from making that same leap in a few years. Do we think we can stand where others have fallen? "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

Now what is there about saying this that is so upsetting to some few brethren? Do they deny these obvious truths? Then let them produce the evidence that refutes these claims and I will use these columns to apologize. The emotional response that some FEW brethren are reported to have had to these warnings confirms the need for them! Obviously, somebody is depending upon the schools, and panics at the idea that somebody would think they pose some dangers. Certainly, nobody to my knowledge would affirm that the schools are mandatory. They argue that they are permitted, not mandatory. If they are permitted, then they are expedients and are optional. If they are optional, one can go to heaven and never attend, promote, or believe in one. This is either true or false. If false, then let someone deny it and make supportive arguments. If it is true, let's accept it, and begin acting like we believe it. Let some brethren cease saying the schools are permitted, but then acting like they are mandatory.

CONCLUSION

Thus TORCH looks to 1973 with renewed hope and confidence. We are thankful for the excellent support the readers have given, and to our ever increasing family of subscribers. We solicit your prayers in our behalf as we continue to try to serve God acceptably via the printed page. We value your friendship and good will, and shall look forward to hearing from you from time to time. It is always a pleasure to hear from our readers, and to know their thoughts. We are determined to make 1973 the best year in the history of TORCH. "Stay tuned!" We have many exciting and wonderful things in store for you.

What's Your Question?

Bible Answers to Bible Questions. Send to: James P. Needham, 1600 Oneco Ave., Winter Park, Fla. 32789

Questions in General, This Column in Particular

By popular demand and beginning with this issue of TORCH, we shall endeavor to have a WHAT'S YOUR QUESTION column in every issue of the paper. We have printed only a few to this point, but there is more and more demand from the reading audience that it become a regular feature of the paper.

For several years I have written such a column for various periodicals. It originated on the pages of a weekly bulletin which I edited for Expressway church of Christ in Louisville, Ky. Then for about a year, I wrote it for Truth Magazine. For two years now, it has appeared in the bulletin of the Palm Springs Drive church of Christ for which I preach. It will continue to appear in TORCH.

USES OF QUESTIONS

The use of questions for various purposes is as old as the Bible itself. Judging from its popularity in the scriptures, God must consider it a valid teaching method. Let us review the various uses of questions in the Bible.

1. *To solicit information:* This is the most obvious and frequent use of questions. When the Jews asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37), they were seeking information which they did not have.

2. *To "stump" the one questioned:* When the Sadducees depicted a situation where seven brothers married the same woman to meet the demands of the law that required it, they asked "Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?" they were not seeking information, but trying to use a favorite trick of theirs to "stump" those who believed in the resurrection. Jesus answered that the question showed their own ignorance of the scriptures because "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Mt. 22:23-33).

Jesus used a question for this same purpose when he asked the Jews, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" (Mt. 21:25). This question placed the Jews in a dilemma: if they said from heaven, Jesus would ask them why they did not obey it? If they said, of men, they would be in trouble with the multitude because they held John as a prophet of God.

I am fairly certain that I have received a few questions through the years with this intent. Since it is impossible to know the heart of the inquirers, I never try to second guess them. Thus, I treat all questions as though they come from sincere persons, and give them the best answer of which I am capable. In this way, others may profit from my answer even when the original inquirer was insincere.

3. *To cause a pointless argument:* Some questions have no other point than to raise an argument. Such arguments usually profit nobody, but often culminate in strife. Paul warned Titus and Timothy to avoid such "foolish questions" (Tit. 3:9; 2 Tim. 2:23).

4. *To divert attention from an indefensible position:* A young lawyer asked Jesus a question to tempt (try) Him. When Jesus' answer exposed the lawyer's unwillingness to obey the law that said "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," he sought to divert attention from his indefensible attitude by asking, "Who is my neighbor?" (Lk. 10:25-29).

5. *To provoke introspection:* When God walked in the garden in the cool of the day, and realizing that Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden tree, He asked Adam, "Where art thou?" When Adam responded that they were naked, and had hidden themselves among the trees of the garden, God asked, "Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" (Gen. 3:11). God said to the woman, "What is this that thou hast done?" (Gen. 3:13). In none of these questions was God seeking information. He knew the answers before he asked the questions. They were asked to provoke introspection on the part of Adam and Eve. They were asked to provoke Adam and Eve to think of what their disobedience had done to their relationship with God.

6. *To affirm a self-evident truth:* This is known as a rhetorical question. It is asked with a negative answer in mind. Such questions as: "What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in?" (1 Cor. 11:22), "Can a leopard change his spots?" (Jer. 13:23), "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized

in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1:13), were not to solicit information. A very strong negative answer was in view when the questions were asked.

While all these uses of questions are interesting, we will largely be concerned with only two kinds in this column: (1) those that are asked to solicit information for the inquirer, and (2) those that are asked for the purpose of teaching others. In the several years of writing this column, I would say that 99% of all questions I have received would fall into these two categories.

THE EDITOR'S PREROGATIVE AND POLICY

There are several things we want you to understand about our policy and the prerogative we shall exercise in reference to questions received:

1. *To correct and/or change the wording of questions:* I do not print all questions in the same words in which they are received. I reserve the right to brief them, and make any grammatical corrections necessary. I do not reserve the right to *change the thought* of a question, and any time an inquirer thinks I have done so, we kindly ask that it be called to our attention.

2. *To answer the questions as is most convenient to me:* There are times when a question may require more research and study than I have time to give it at the moment. In such cases, I reserve the right to answer one on file which requires less time and research. We must meet our deadlines.

3. *To print past columns:* We have found that most questions are quite interesting to a large number of people who may have never thought of asking them. Thus, when we are cramped for time, we reserve the right to reprint columns we have written in other papers which we consider to be of general interest.

4. *To withhold the name of the inquirer:* I have never made it a policy to give the names or initials of the inquirer. I usually just give the state. I think there are good reasons for this policy, which I shall not discuss here.

5. *Never to invent questions:* All questions appearing in this column will be bonified questions which have been directed to me. I never make up questions, and I try to print the questions in the inquirer's own words, though this is sometimes not expedient.

INSTRUCTIONS TO QUERISTS

There are certain rules we ask all querists to observe when sending us questions. They are as follows:

1. *Send questions to the editor:* My address is: 1600 Oneco Ave., Winter Park, Fla. 32789. If you send your questions to the office of publication in Mt. Olive, Ala. there will be a delay in answering them.

2. *Sign your name:* As pointed out earlier, we do not give the name of the inquirer, but we require all questions to be signed. We usually give the state from which the question comes, but will withhold that upon request. As a rule, we will not answer unsigned questions.

3. *Be elaborate:* Don't assume that I will understand what you are wanting to know. For instance, a brother recently sent in this question, "Is it scriptural to break the bread before we partake of it?" There is no way on earth I could figure out what he is wanting to know. Obviously, we must break the bread before we partake of it, there is no other way to partake of it! I am sure the brother had something in mind that he wanted to know, but I had no way of discovering it. Be as elaborate as you need to be to make your question clear. As stated above, we reserve the right to brief the question, but not to change the thought.

4. *Be patient:* Since we are a monthly, we can only answer one question per month. If we receive a good many questions, we may have to use more than one per month, but we don't like for any one feature in the paper to consume a large portion of the space. As I have time and opportunity, I will answer questions and send the inquirer's a carbon copy of it, and print the answer in the paper as space is available, but time will not always permit this practice.

CONCLUSION

We appreciate the great interest readers have shown in this column in the past, and solicit such in the future. We believe a question and answer column can be a very interesting and beneficial feature of a periodical. They have proven to be so in the past. We have been urged to compile a book of **What's Your Question** columns, and we hope to do so in the future. We will make further announcements as time goes on.



Fayetteville, Ark. - "I have enjoyed your many articles in the past, but I must take issue with you on your editorial called, *Cut Your Hair and I Will Listen to You*. A better title would be: *What Is the Mark of a Christian in Today's World?* Your position is one of being in the middle of the road, on this subject of dress code for Christians. In the Bible we have only two roads: the wide road of the world, and the narrow road which faithful Christians strive to stay on at all costs.

"A Christian youth is guided and taught by his parents, who are to use the Bible as their guide. In 1 Cor. 11:14, we are told by God, 'Doeth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?' Is this not self-explanatory for a Christian young man to follow? It can't be spelled out any clearer than that.

"When Christians wear the mode of dress that had its origin in the revolutionary hippie movement, who are they following? Certainly not Christ! Did not Christ tell us we are in the world, but not of it?

"Many Christian parents follow this mode of dress today, and likewise their children, and many preachers are also sporting this fashion, where is the example? And you wonder why our young people are turning their elders off, the example of NOT CONFORMING TO THE WORLD has been discarded and parental permissiveness is the order of the day. When parents and preachers by-pass what the scriptures have to say on this and instead follow the dictates of the world, we have nothing to reap but bitter fruit.

"The mark of Christian parents to their children is grounded in the word and they must follow the guidelines laid down by God himself for the rearing and bringing up their children. Since the Lord delegates authority to parents over their children it's up to

the parents to exercise this authority and not be afraid to stand their ground against their own children. To spare the rod and spoil the child is sinful on the part of parents and a great injustice to the child.

"Another mark of the Christian is to shine his light; how can it be done when you can't tell the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? Did not our Lord say, 'Ye shall know them by their fruits?'

"If Christians, young or elderly think they can act and look like the world and still be acceptable to the Lord, they are deluding themselves, when the Lord has told us to keep ourselves unspotted from the world." - *Jean Cilokosz*

(Editor's Note: It seems to me that 3 or 4 readers took my *February* editorial as an excuse to speak their pieces about all that is wrong with today's youth: long hair, dress, philosophy, etc. In order to do this, they had to unfairly impute all such wrongs to my editorial, which wrongs I oppose as strongly as does anyone. My editorial: *Cut Your Hair and I Will Listen to You* has one main point, namely, we should not refuse to listen to what today's youth has to say just because we don't like the way they dress and cut their hair. Nothing the three or four objectors have said has changed my mind in the least. Prejudice cannot be defended in anyone, much less in one claiming to be a Christian. I still say that the world needs to listen to some of what today's rebellious youth is saying. "If that be treason, make the most of it."

I have very little faith, however, in the strength of the position of the people who have taken exception to what I said. When one must misrepresent a position in order to reply to it, he doesn't have much to stand on! One brother got carried away in his bulletin and made several misrepresentations of the article. I have thought it quite strange that I received his bulletin before he wrote the article, and after he wrote it, but I never did receive *from him* the issue in which he reviewed my editorial!!! I had to get that issue from someone else!!! It is also quite significant that when I sent him a review of his article and requested that he print it in his bulletin, he refused, but when he was informed that we were going to print it in TORCH, he requested that we also print his article!!! I would say kindly that fairness is not one of his redeeming virtues!

It may be surprising to the author of the above letter, but I

agree with about 99% of what she says. I would question her use of 1 Cor. 11:14, in reference to long hair on men. She, like many others, mistakenly thinks that all one has to do to condemn long hair on men is quote 1 Cor. 11:14. I have yet to have anyone tell us just how long is long? I know this question causes some brethren to lose their spiritual equilibrium, but the question is *appropos* whether they think so or not. In its context, the passage establishes the principle that hair on men long enough to blur sex identity is sinful. But, if it were the custom for all women to wear their hair down to their waists and men wear their's to their shoulders, would the men then be in violation of 1 Cor. 11:14? I know this is not the custom, and this is not a defense of today's feminine hair styles on men, but the question shows that no specific hair length (in terms of inches) for men is found in the passage. How long is long of necessity will have to be determined by the relative length of masculine and feminine hair styles. I cannot quote 1 Cor. 11:14 to condemn every man who wears his hair longer than I do. I can quote it to condemn the man whose hair style blurs sex identity. This is the point I have made on 1 Cor. 11:14, and to accuse me of encouraging youthful rebellion, endorsing feminine hair styles, and worldly dress codes won't answer the question nor cut any ice with persons who think rationally.

There is no doubt in my mind that a following of the dress regulations set in the above letter would lead to a practice similar to the Menonites. If Christians cannot wear dress styles that originate with ungodly persons, then what are we going to wear? Our respondent would like for us to accept her *ipse dixit* that those who wear styles of clothes that originated with "the revolutionary hippie movement" are following the hippies and apply it only to today's youth and "some preachers," but I will have to go further and point out that her logic applies as well to her. Who originated the style of clothes which she wears? Did Christians? If not, then her own logic convicts her of following the life-style and philosophy of the ungodly people who designed them!!! I know this is not the case with her, and I know equally that it is not true of many she has indicted with her letter. - *jpn*)

Nashville, Tenn. -- "The *February* issue was to my taste and have just finished it...The punch the articles carry is to my liking. Keep up the good writing..." - *H.E. Winkler*

Tupelo, Miss. -- "I continue to look forward to TORCH being in my mail box each month. It is a good effort in every way. May God's richest blessings be on you in this effort." - *Tommy Davis*

Weslaco, Tex. -- "A brother in Christ gave me one of your publications the other day. I have never seen one before. I was immediately interested. The issue dealt with modern and relevant problems that face all Christians today. I was very pleased with the publication, so much so that I have made up my mind to subscribe to it...Also, I would like to know if there are bound volumes of previous publications, since I might be interested in obtaining them. Could you supply? Thank you for your interest in writing about such relevant matters." - *Donald W. Mitchell*

Oklahoma City, Okla. -- "Thanks for TORCH. Though I do not always agree with the writer, I do urge you to press forward with the publication." - *Gro. H. Bittner*

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The Need for "Preachers and Preaching"

Larry L. Dickens

To everyone of us brethren who has ever had to later agonize his his part in the decision of the local congregation in hiring the wrong preacher, there is a certain knowledge of the severity of the heartache and pain that exceeds Excedrin headache number 999!

To everyone of us brethren who has ever filled the pulpit on a regular basis comes the haunting realization of the ignorance of the nature of our work as evangelists on the part of many of our beloved brethren. Some of us, if pressed on the subject, might even candidly admit that there were times in our preaching lives that we did not fully understand our duties, responsibilities and qualifications.

Once upon a time it seemed necessary that the only way that most of us learned the facts of life on this subject was the school of hard knocks. (Actually the only thing that this school guarantees is sore heads). Anyway such is not the case any longer. I recently preached a series of sermons at two congregations on the subject of "Preachers and Preaching" with my notes taken in large part from Jim Needham's book on the subject. Surely, certain subjects like "money" and "firing" are sensitive subjects, but since when have faithful preachers shied away from sensitive subjects. At both congregations, the brethren have been most enthusiastic and appreciative of the study.

It is my considered opinion that if we preaching brethren would take to heart our qualifications and responsibilities, as they are so well put by brother Needham, and would preach lessons as his book deals with them, we would save both ourselves and our brethren many problems.

Then if all the interested brethren (especially elders and deacons) would read this book and carefully consider the things contained therein, all of us brethren (including the preachers) would be greatly benefited.

Far too many problems in the local congregations concerning preachers have been caused by or contributed to by ignorance of God's will on this subject. If you have not carefully read Jim Needham's book on this subject, you have overlooked a most excellent opportunity.

*10 Conley St.
Greenville, S.C. 29605*

Legal Rights vs Moral Rights

Billy K. Farris

Magnifying legal rights to the exclusion of moral rights is the mistake of many today. Men make hobbies of their rights. There are many things that are legally right, but morally wrong. Prostitution is legal in some places, but the practice is still fornication and adultery. The alcoholic beverage is legally sold almost everywhere, but it still destroys homes, kills thousands of people each year and alcoholism is a major health problem. Gambling is now legal in many places and we sometimes read of the big winners in a lottery, but we seldom read anything about the thousands of children who are deprived of food, shelter and clothing because their father or mother lost their wager. Pornography is sold legally (?) through-out the land. We were told by its advocates that it would be isolated from the public that does not care for it, but the "X" rated movie advertising in the newspapers and the advertising on the windows and walls of the stores that sell it is shameful.

It is foolish for individuals to think that a thing becomes morally right because they have legalized it. We cannot absolve ourselves of moral responsibility by legalizing an immoral thing or practice.

The advocates of legalized prostitution, alcoholic beverages, gambling, pornography, etc. always appeal to their legal rights. They cannot defend their "pleasures" on the grounds that they have helped society. They have given us divorce, crime, alcoholism, venereal disease and poverty; not homes, schools and communities. The facts are against them.

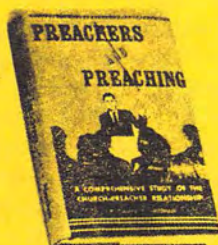
A nation can never rise higher than its morals. Our nation is facing the highest level of moral decay it has ever known. The Declaration of Independence grants us certain inalienable rights, one of which is the pursuit of happiness. But one cannot trespass upon the rights of others, or tread under foot the Word of God in order to obtain it.

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- Billy K. Farris

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*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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Correspondence

With new subscriptions and renewals, the TORCH publication office receives several thousand pieces of mail each year. Of course most of this mail does not require a reply from this office. However, this volume of mail will often prohibit our making immediate replies to some correspondence. Also, we want to remind our readers that correspondence to the editor should be sent to James P. Needham, 1600 Oneco Avenue, Winter Park, Florida 32789. Keep this in mind and your correspondence and questions will receive quicker attention. Please remember to send book orders to the address appearing in book ads; this will expedite shipment of your orders. (BKF)

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Editor

James P. Needham

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Editorial

James P. Needham



The Hobbs Street Bathing Suit Affair

In recent months we have been treated to the most spectacular religious debacle in my memory; the Becky Marshall bathing suit affair. Things really began to explode when she won a bathing suit beauty contest. We probably never would have heard about it had she not been a preacher's daughter! Her father was then preaching for the Hobbs Street church of Christ in Athens, Alabama. The debacle ended in his being fired, the splitting of that church and the beginning of another church in the same city by about 250 members who sympathized with him. The new church is known as the Central church of Christ, in Athens, and has Charles Marshall as its preacher.

Writers, both religious and secular, in the church and out of it, preachers and brethren generally, have made various uses of the event. It made the national news scene via: newspapers, radio, television and magazine. Probably the most elaborate coverage was given by *Life* (now defunct) which gave it three full pages in the September 22, 1972 issue, the most prominent feature of which was Becky in the now-famous bathing suit and a drum majorette's uniform one year earlier.

Snide remarks have been made by both brethren and others. The liberal worldly press has used the incident to try to reflect unfavorably on the "Bible belt" in general and the church of Christ in particular. They have tried (and have probably succeeded) to make us look ridiculous and out-moded in the eyes of an half-nude society. They have rightly pointed out the inconsistencies of the elders who said nothing when the same young lady wore a drum majorette's uniform the year before which was just as provocative as the bathing suit.

Brethren over a wide area have made frequent reference to the unfortunate affair. Their uses of the incident fall into several categories:

(1) **Illustrative:** Some have used the event to point up the fact that there is a growing tendency on the part of some brethren to defend immodest dress. While this is probably a legitimate use of the matter, some have gone a bit far. I heard one brother announce on his radio program that he was beginning "a six-week series of sermons where he preached on immodest dress, using Becky Marshall as an example!"

(2) **Calloused:** Some have been very harsh and intemperate in their condemnation. Their words seem to indicate an heartless callousness, a desire to put their foot on the neck of the person who is down; to grind the down-trodden under foot. This individual can understand clearly the passages which deal with immodest dress, but those that enjoin loving concern for the fallen have made no impression on him. It is most difficult to believe that he is any better off in God's sight than Becky or her father. Those guilty of such callousness very likely will accuse me of defending immodesty. I hate to think the worst of such brethren, but experience is a dear teacher!

(3) **Self-righteous:** We have heard some make reference to the Athens affair with a self-righteous, holier-than-thou air. We have heard that old "stock and trade" *cliche*, "That's the way those liberals do," as if they (the "conservatives") never violate the bounds of modesty in dress!

Such people need to "wake up and smell the bacon." One of the cleverest rationalizations in our time is to identify nearly all sins with "the liberal tendencies." Jesus once *"told a parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt"* (Luke 18:9). This practice is born of partyism, and reminds one of a ball game where one team seeks to score on the

One of the cleverest
rationalizations in our time
is to identify
nearly all sins with
"the liberal tendencies."

other. What Becky and her father did is wrong -- no doubt about it -- but he who thinks all this sort of thing takes place among the "liberals" is "blind, and cannot see afar off."

Yes, people have done about everything but inquire into the "other side" of the affair. (It has never occurred to some that there might be another side). We often say, "there are two sides to everything, the right and the wrong." Sometimes there are three sides to a story, "my" side, "yours," and the Lord's! I strongly

suspect that this is the case in the Athens affair.

There are numerous indications of this in what I have read and heard about the Hobbs Street affair.

(1) The fact that Becky had appeared in a majorette's uniform (very scanty) at all football games the year before with the apparent approval of the same elders that fired her father over the bathing suit affair.

(2) The fact that 250 people from the congregation left and started another church. I say it is very unlikely that 250 members of a church would take an action as drastic as splitting to start another church in defense of bathing suit wearing. There just about has to be more involved than what meets the eye!!

(3) The fact that the elders did nothing until Becky won the contest. (At least this is the word we have received via the press, and it has quoted Charles Marshall on the point).

All this makes me suspicious that there is much more to the whole affair than we can learn from a biased liberal press. I am not a prophet nor the son of one, but I will venture to say that "the half has never yet been told."

In an effort to be fair I wrote brother Marshall on October 6, 1972, as follows:

"My reason for writing is my interest in the recent publicity given the Hobbs Street affair involving your daughter's winning a beauty contest. My interest in it involves a suspicion that the whole story has not been told. In all this publicity I have seen, including LIFE, your views have been almost absent. I have wondered about this from the very first story...I would like to invite you to write an article about the whole matter to be published in TORCH. Would you be interested in such a thing? I believe you deserve to be heard and that injustice will be done if you are not heard. Please notify me at once whether or not you are interested. I have tried several times to reach you by phone, but without success."

Though brother Marshall never replied, I have seen too many church fusses to think we know the whole story. Many have been lavish in their praise of the elders for taking the action they did. Yes, they are to be commended for such action, IF they took it out of true scriptural conviction which is doubtful in view of the inconsistencies pointed out above. If they used this incident as a vengeful death blow in a personal vendetta against the preacher, they are not worthy of anybody's commendation, and I am sure they do not have the Lord's! It is not at all unusual for brethren to hypocritically use a doctrinal matter to score a victory in a

personal feud. Such is not commendable, but disgusting and dishonest!

Brother Marshall has sinned grievously in defending his daughter in her wrong doing. Let nobody overlook this fact in our efforts to view this whole thing objectively. He has failed miserably as a parent and preacher. This is a sad fact which he needs to face, and his weak little effort at repentance in the September 25, issue of the **Christian Chronicle** cannot hide it or relieve him of the guilt. In the "Letters to the Editor" section, he said:

"The news media throughout the nation have given wide-spread coverage of our daughter, Becky, appearing in a beauty pageant in Decatur, Alabama.

"Many of the stories presented by press and television have been grossly inaccurate and grossly distorted. However, it is not the purpose of this article to correct anything presented by the news media. I simply wish to make some statements in regard to the matter.

"I did everything within my power to keep this matter, and the aftermath of church difficulties out of the national news. However, I was entirely helpless in regard to this. After it reached the news media, I am sure that I said some things which I should not have said.

"I recognize that it was an error of judgment on my part in regard to the participation in the pageant. I manifest penitence in regard to this, or the causing of any brother to stumble because of what appeared in the news media. Please remember us in your prayers."

Charles Marshall
Athens, Alabama

Brother Marshall is penitent for an "error of judgment... in regard to participation in the pageant," "or causing of any brother to stumble because of what appeared in the news media." If this is all brother Marshall thinks he needs to repent of, his letter was hardly worth the effort. According to him, it was not sinful for his daughter to parade before the public in a scanty bathing suit, but just an error in judgment to allow her to enter a pageant. What he is saying really is that he is not sorry for the sins involved, he is sorry the sins caused such an uproar! He requests the prayers of the brethren, and I say kindly that he needs our prayers alright, but he needs some good old basic Bible teaching worse than anything else.

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NOT JUST FOR FUN

SESSIONS IN SATIRE

SPOOFS, GOOFS, AND PROOFS

Dear Mr. Noah

Larry Dickins

We, of Steal and Covet National Bank, were very happy to review your application for a loan. First, let us say that we understand how the building of such a large boat must be very costly, especially on the limited income of a preacher.

However, at this time, we find it necessary to deny your loan request for at least the following reasons:

1. The credit bureau says you have no boat building experience. Experience is very important. Any preacher ought to know that.

2. Further, on this point, I showed your designs to an engineer who says that your boat just MIGHT float, even though the design is certainly new. However, the board just did not buy the idea that your God gave you the plans. Don't you think that is a little too radical?

3. Your idea about taking in all the animals two by two is also very novel, but don't you think you are a little too concerned with ecology?

4. Actually, Noah, the real reason we cannot grant you the loan is that, if we do, folks will say we believe there is going to be a flood, and that will be bad for business. If by some slim chance, the flood about which you preach does come, you couldn't pay us back; and if the flood does not come, we're stuck "high and dry" (if you will pardon the pun) with the first mortgage on a boat miles from the nearest port.

5. One other thing, Noah; what is rain? The meteorologists tell me they never heard of water drops falling from the sky and actually the whole idea seems a bit preposterous to me. If you are

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What's Your Question?

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS. Send to: James
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QUESTION: CONCERNING THE USE OF TOBACCO

+++++
+ "Is it sinful for a Christian to smoke?" - Georgia +
+ +
+++++

REPLY:

Many people have been concerned about this problem for a long time. Concern has mounted in the past few years due to the linking of the use of tobacco with the development of several bodily diseases.

This is precisely the point at which the question must be settled for the Christian. The question then, is not "is it wrong to smoke?"

but "does smoking harm the physical body?" Thus if evidence shows that it does, the question becomes, "is it right for a Christian to indulge in that which will harm his physical body?"



I am neither a doctor nor a scientist, but I believe all of us know that there is ABUNDANT evidence that smoking has a causal relationship to diseases of the heart and lungs, as well as other diseases of the body. He who would deny this is not being realistic in the light of the

many scientists who have developed a body of evidence that is absolutely overwhelming. Brethren don't be blind!

Some brethren choose to deny that the evidence is conclusive, but this is simply a pitiful effort on their part to justify continued participation in that which has become their master. If such

brethren want to continue to practice that which will jeopardize both body and soul, that is one thing, but to deny that which is supported by so much scientific evidence is something else -- JUST PLAIN BLINDNESS!

I take it then, that it is admitted that smoking does harm to the health of the body. With this fact in mind, the next question becomes, "is it sinful for a Christian to willfully harm his physical body?" What saith the scriptures?

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service..." (Romans 12:1).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and your spirits which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

Can one present his body as an holy living sacrifice unto God and put into it that which will destory it? Can one glorify God in his body when he engages in that which would destory it? Will the Holy Spirit dwell in a defiled temple? If you can answer these questions affirmatively, then it is not a sin for a Christian to smoke. If you must answer them in the negative, then you have answered the question, "Is it sinful for a Christian to smoke?"

Dear Mr. Noah

continued from page 7

so concerned about the earth's condition, why not preach about the social problems like my preacher does and maybe somebody will do something about them.

However, we at S & C N Bank, do have money to loan to any WORTHWHILE cause. If you'd like to use all that gopher wood to build a house, or finance a new horse cart, or even try building a nice fishing boat, please resubmit your application.

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United — In Death

Donald M. Alexander

Brother Black had a memory sharper than any man around. In fact, he could remember people, places and events associated with his boyhood. He also remembered every cross word, "mean look," and misdeed of every brother in Christ in every congregation where he at some time had worshipped. And for some reason his relationship with brother Green was the subject of constant recall -- he would "... never forget what brother Green had done to him over the years."

Some twenty years ago the two men had clashed over the meaning of a verse in a Bible class taught by brother Green. Brother Green was furious that some one would disagree with his views and brother Black never forgot. Oh, he said he would "forgive" him for his poor attitude, but would never "forget." (Luke 17:3-5 and Matthew 18:21, 22 notwithstanding)! Brother Green vowed that he would forgive brother Black of his "total ignorance of the Scriptures" provided brother Black would accept everything brother Green said as "Gospel Truth." (2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1 notwithstanding)!

And so there they would sit every Sunday morning on opposite sides of the building as they both worshipped together (?), prayed together (?), and studied together (?). Brother Green was too stubborn to change and brother Black was too proud to forget. Brother Green said that having to worship every Lord's Day with an "empty-headed old goat" like brother Black would not keep him from doing what was right. Likewise, brother Black declared that he was "too big a man" to let brother Green's "arrogant bigotry" discourage him from serving the Savior. Neither would go to the other to talk of the vast gulf between them that widened and deepened Sunday to Sunday. (Matthew 18:15-20 notwithstanding)!

The current of time flowed swiftly and bitterness took its toll in "ulcers and nerves." Finally, brother Black decided he had "had enough." His interest faded, singing and praying were not nearly as important to him anymore, and he "quit the church." After all, he didn't think the Lord would expect him to keep putting up with "hypocrites" like brother Green, so he just wouldn't go anymore. Ironically, brother Green was thinking the same thing, so he quit going to services to avoid the likes of brother Black.

Death claimed them both and soon afterward the Lord came, time ceased, and the judgment arrived. And soon, for the first time in many years, the two brethren found themselves on the

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One Church For All Men

J.F. Dancer, Jr.

One of the problems since almost the beginning of man is his tendency to take a custom or tradition and make it into law. Jesus warned about this in his denunciation of the Pharisees (Mt. 15:1-9). Paul warned of the same thing in Col. 2:8. In most instances the tradition in itself is not sinful so long as it is recognized as such and is not allowed to become a "law," but in some instances we make them into rules of life and thus sin before God.

One such tradition is the separation of Christians because of racial differences. This is a matter of "tradition" in most instances. It's true that at times it has been unlawful for races to be "mixed" in their public gatherings, but this is no longer true in our country. I believe it time that each of us take a good look at himself and see if we are harboring racial prejudice within our hearts and see if we have let tradition become law. What are your feelings toward those of another race?

The gospel is for all (Mk. 16:15). When men are saved by the grace of God at their obedience to the gospel they are all added to the same body (Acts 2:47). Within this body we are to recognize all as brethren, children of the same father, and all working for the same purpose! There is no respect of persons with God (Acts 10:34,35) and there is to be none with us (Jas. 2:1-12). We are all to be "one" in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26-28).

I have known of white Christians converting those of the black race and then suggesting that they attend a congregation of blacks that is both "institutional" and "liberal." I have known of others being converted and then the white preacher would go to their house on Sunday afternoon and have a "service" for the black brother alone. This when it was only a short drive to the meeting house of those who led him to Christ. In such action is there not shown respect of persons?

Granted that at times in New Testament days, there were churches composed of one race. The church began with Jews (Acts 2:5-41) and we find mention of churches of the Gentiles (Rom. 16:4). Because there are communities that are wholly of one race it is logical that we have churches today composed of those of a single race. Thus in black communities there will be churches composed of blacks, the same in white communities and on Indian reservations or in Oriental sections of many cities. There is no question here. My point regards those communities that are racially mixed! In many cities the communities are mixed racially, the schools are mixed racially and the next logical step is

that the churches become mixed racially. How can we actually influence those of our community to obey the gospel if they find that after they are converted they will have to drive past our building to find another place to worship?

In recent months this problem has been brought to mind due to the apparent indecision of some brethren who were teaching blacks, but wondered where to send them to worship AFTER they converted them. My answer is simple: let them worship with you! Has our traditional past become so imbedded within us that after we work weeks or months to save a soul we can, almost without thought, send them off to the "black church" that we know to be dominated by "liberal and institutional" brethren? If we do thusly, what good have we actually done for the people we convert? Now I know some will say "they had rather be with their own people." Are not we "their own people" now that we are both children of God?

I'm not advocating racially mixed marriages nor integration for the sake of integration. I simply say that we have meeting houses in different communities so the people there can meet together and worship God properly (Jno. 4:23,24) and that they can work together as God ordained without their conscience being violated by having to support some human institution. Why not welcome all from that community into this meeting house who are desirous of serving God? Why force one or two people to worship alone or with the "liberals" when they could be worshipping with us? It's time we took a good look at traditions, customs, etc. and see if we have let them become law!

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Memphis, Tennessee 38118*

United In Death

continued from page 10

SAME SIDE -- THE LEFT! (Matthew 7:21 notwithstanding)! As they both were banished from the presence of the Lord they saw satan ... and his angels ... and hell ... and EACH OTHER ... FOR ETERNITY!!!

"Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is called 'Today,' lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:12,13).

*1309 Chase Street
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The Intellectual Side of Faith

Roland Worth, Jr.

Faith is like a pyramid with a line down the middle: On one side can be written the word "*Emotion*" and on the other the word "*Intellect*." A MATURE faith is in existence when both are cultivated. But if either side is emphasized to the downgrading of the other, the pyramid topples. And just like a skyscraper shaken by an earthquake, it disintegrates in the fall.

Several passages clearly imply the existence of an intellectual side of faith. For example, 2 Corinthians 5:11a points out that "Knowing the *fear* of the Lord (an emotion) we *persuade* men" (the presentation of the intellectual case for conversion).

Romans 10:17a reminds us that faith comes from what is heard. It is produced by listening, by thinking about what is said, NOT by some mystical coercion of the soul.

The intellectual part of faith GIVES US CONVICTION, the certainty of what should be done; the emotional part of faith causes us to CARRY OUT what our intellect tells us is true.

Intellectual faith, alone, is insufficient. But its appeal has always been great. There is something fascinating to otherwise intelligent people about the obscure and irrelevant. This spirit gave us the medieval debate over the number of angels who should stand on the head of a pen. In its modern form, it is found in some theological journals that are more concerned about the influence of so-and-so on such-and-such than about the practical, down-to-earth problems of ethics and conduct.

Sometime, when you have the opportunity, study James the second chapter and its teaching on the relationship of faith and works. Look at it from the standpoint that what he is discussing is INTELLECTUAL FAITH, standing alone. Because it found no expression in act, it is described as "dead" faith (verse 17).

Yet, we should never downgrade intellectual faith, when it is appropriately balanced with sincerity and conviction. We read in 1 Peter 3:15 that the Christian is to "ALWAYS be prepared to make a DEFENSE (KJV: answer) to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you." Such defenses of the Christian religion are called "apologetics" and are logical, systematic, carefully

continued on page 15

Time On My Hands

Larry R. Devore

Many people have time on their hands. Americans have shorter work weeks and more leisure time than they once had. It would seem then, that even members of the church would have more time to serve the Lord. But in most congregations the exact opposite seems to be the case. Many are too busy to serve the Lord. Someone once wrote: "Those who try to kill time will discover that time can stand the racket longer than they can."

The apostle Paul writes in Eph. 5:15-16, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

How can we best make use of our available time? Time is precious to us. It is composed of minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years. As one gets a little older he becomes surprised at how fast time seems to be fleeing away! Alas, like youth, it is soon gone forever! Time is one thing that man has yet to conquer. No one has successfully stopped the clock of time! Time marches on!

Euripides (circa 350 B.C.) wrote: "Time will reveal everything. It is a babbler, and speaks even when not asked."

These words are very true. From the earthly standpoint, history is the final judge. The decisions of heads of governments; either praised or damned at the time of decision, are years later revealed historically as to whether they were right or wrong. Sometimes time vindicates their decisions. Other times time will reveal how completely wrong they were. All of our mistakes will be exposed by time as will our virtues. Horace (5 B.C.) wrote: "Time will bring to light whatever is hidden, and it will conceal and cover up what is now shining with greatest splendor." We see then, that time is a coin with two sides. How do you use your time?

Earl Nightingale said: "And you can tell how a person has used his time in the past, by observing the manner in which he lives today. Time is the field, given each of us to sow, and each day is a part of our harvest. If you do not like the fruit of which you partake today, do not lose sight of the fact that it is times' way of revealing how you have sown in the past. Your life today, your manner of living, your way of talking, your companions -- even the lines of your face -- are the revelations of time as it pertains to your use of it. And just as your harvest is today, it can become abundant or barren in the future, depending only upon how you spend your present days. The end of every man is the vault containing the treasure of his days." (copyrighted by Earl Nightingale).

From a spiritual consideration, it is necessary to make wise use of our time that we might please God. Pleasing God is man's main purpose in life, but modern man and many "Christians" have either forgotten this, or never learned it. We are created "in God's own image" that we might serve Him and please Him.

Time is precious stuff: we cannot afford to squander it. Someday time will end and we shall stand in the judgment before God. Then shall all things be revealed. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16). Then it will be revealed whether we have used our time wisely, whether we have sown to the flesh or to the Spirit. "Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

Christians need to sow to the Spirit, using their time wisely; that they might teach their children the way of righteousness; that they might live godly lives before their fellow-men; that they might study God's word, worship with the saints, and be zealous for every good work. Remember, we must as children of God;

1. Sow bountifully that we might reap bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6).
2. Do not grow weary in well doing (Gal. 6:9).

When you study the spiritual teaching about time and the proper use of it, you realize it is, after all, nothing more than the opportunity for truth to assert and reveal itself, if not soon, then later, but always. "The end of every man is the vault containing the treasure of his days." So live as to "redeem the time."

Box 86
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The Intellectual Side of Faith

continued from page 13

reasoned presentations of the evidence for our faith in God and the

This text from Peter shows that our faith is something that *can* be rationally defended, something for which there is so much compelling evidence that it can "persuade men" to accept it! So why do we develop this dread of discussing the "hard" questions that are connected with believing? And with our particular approach to faith? Could it be that we do not know *HOW* to defend our faith "sometimes" much less "always?" If so, one man bears the ultimate responsibility. And when you look in the mirror you are looking at him.

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Are You Ashamed?

Dennis Shaver

In Psalms 25:1-5, we read:

"Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in thee: Let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day."

These verses state that one should not be ashamed of doing the work of the Lord. No one should be ashamed of being a Christian, a servant of God. The life of a Christian can be the most rewarding on earth, and it will be the most rewarding after death. It has been said, "Life is what you make it." This is especially true when we consider the life of a child of God, a Christian.

The apostle Paul understood fully the life of a Christian. In Rom. 1:16, he states:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

At the time of Paul's preaching, many thought the message he proclaimed was foolishness (1 Cor. 1:21-24). Even though those around Paul thought it was foolish to preach a crucified savior, he was not ashamed to continue to preach just such a gospel. He was not ashamed to admit that Christ had died upon a cross, even though this was a death reserved for the vilest of criminals. He considered himself fortunate to be allowed to proclaim these matchless truths (1 Tim. 1:12). He loved to tell the story of a loving, merciful, and forgiving savior.

As we look to this psalm of David, we see that he pleads for others as well as himself. He asks for God's help for all who serve Him. I believe that David here shows us some ways in which we can avoid being ashamed of serving God:

First, v. 2, "O my God, I trust in thee..." The wise man Solomon says, "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Again, hear David in 2 Sam. 22:3, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock; in him will I trust..." Look to the reproof of Jerusalem in Zeph. 3:1,2, she trusted not in the Lord. If we will put our complete trust in God, commend our

lives to His care and guidance, we will never be ashamed of being servants of God.

Second, in v. 4,5a, we find David telling us to pray for God's guidance and study His words. God will be our continual guide, but we must permit Him to guide us (Isa. 58:11). We must pray for his guidance, and our humble submission. Along with prayer, we must be studious servants of God. We must study to be approved workmen of God, that needeth not to be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15). If we will look to the word of God, we can find ALL things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). Prayer (1 Thess. 5:17), and study (Hos. 4:6) are important parts of the Christian's life. If they are used as God has intended, one will never be ashamed to own Christ, nor to preach His gospel.

Third, v. 5b, never forget: He is the God of our salvation. Sometimes we might take this for granted. Those who are married: remember when you first met your wife? Your attention and service was only for her. When you went anywhere, you always opened the car door for her, and you always waited for her. Now that you have been married for awhile, she opens her own doors, and she has to rush to catch up with you. What has happened? You have started taking her for granted! The same is true with some regarding the God of their salvation. Peter says that we can completely forget that we were once purged from our old sins (2 Pet. 1:9). If we fail to grow as Christians should, we are taking for granted the sacrifice Christ made, and the mercy God has shown. Again, look to the example of Israel (Isa. 17:10, 11). This condition usually comes about because we leave our first love (Rev. 3:4,5).

Fourth, v. 5, wait on God, serve him DAILY. David prayed for himself and all that wait on God. Paul was a completely obedient servant of God (Rom. 1:1), and he says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Our work is a work of faith and a labor of love. If we are faithful unto death, He has promised a "crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). This should be enough to make us want others, as well as ourselves, to serve God -- wait on Him daily.

CONCLUSION: Let us never be ashamed to be Christians, but rather take a lesson from David: trust in Him, pray for His guidance and study His word, never forget that He is the God of our salvation, and serve Him faithfully unto death. Are you ashamed?

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Inverness, Florida 32650*

Why Is There Such a Thing as Evil?

Jeffery Kingry

I have often heard it said that the riddle of the existence of moral evil must forever remain a shrouded mystery. God could not have created it, for at the end of his creation he looked on all that he had done and said, "It is good." Unless the devil or man created it, where could it have come from? What is its' purpose? To some this may be an insurmountable problem, but if Scripture is truly breathed of God, and profitable for all things, then there must indeed be an answer. It would be veritably a paradox for the man who was weighted down and crushed by an ambiguity to turn to his affliction and whisper, "Mystery."

The problem, then, is how came evil into the world? Why didn't God exclude it from the creation? Would it not have been a much more pleasant and reasonable universe if there were no pain, no sorrow, no sin. Haven't you ever thought with a sigh, almost a complaint, why could God not have made things this way to start with? The answer is quite simple. By the nature of the universe, being finite and physical, it would have been impossible to have excluded evil and pain.

"A being that can not err must be infinite in all his attributes. Wherever there is finiteness, there is necessarily and unavoidably the possibility and capability of wrong-thinking and wrong-doing...Here lies the potential origin of sin; the possibility of sinning being inseparable from, and inherent in, finite beings." (H. Christopher, *Remedial System*, p. 32). This idea expressed in human wisdom by the philosophy of man is substantiated and has its' origin in the Word of God. Ecclesiastes tells us that God has put the finite upon a man's outlook and vision, he is thusly not able to see all things and thereby avoid evil. "He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end... Because to every purpose there is a time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be? I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to find it out, yet he shall not find it; yes farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it" (Ecc. 3:11; 8:6, 7, 17).

Man, being limited to the scope of his senses, and mutable by the physical influences of the world that he lives in, is ultimately

moveable by those influences. It is a forgone conclusion that man has a free will and must have a free will to be "made in the image of God." It is also axiomatic that man must, ultimately, be responsible for his free will. For a man to be elevated by his will, the possibility for degradation by that same will must by necessity be present, as there must be an "up" for every "down."

Some would say, "Why free will? Could not God in his infinite wisdom have created us all perfect in all respects, without subjecting us to sin?" The question is self contradictory. There can be no perfection without conflict, as there can be no strength without effort. Shall fire cease to burn, water to freeze, gravity to operate? Shall God stop all natural law in order that we may not be injured thereby? These same people will not allow God to suspend the natural course to affirm divine revelation to man, but if indolence or stupidity brings one into trouble, God must hasten to sheld his actions from hurting, lest God be charged with inconsistency. It would be hard to imagine a more wretched scheme of existence than one in which mankind is kept in a perpetual miraculous nursery, untouched by pain or challenge, in which existence consisted in the eternal continuation of impotence and sterility. Struggle and suffering have not had a more beneficial effect on any of God's creation than upon man. The higher and more lasting attributes of character have their root in suffering. If we were to eliminate all in life or all that has accured to life through suffering, we would strike out of being all the heroic and righteous characters that have been begotten by suffering. We would destory all the literature which sorrow has inspired. Even death would be eliminated and all the solemn tenderness and dignity in human affection that it bore. Virtue would have no meaning. Strength would have no power. Righteousness would be an empty word.

These concepts are all summed up in the words of the Hebrew writer, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with Glory and Honor: that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things made, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation, perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:9,10). What is sharp that never cuts? What is deep that is never plunged? What is glory but in trial? Where is honor that is automatic? By the sin that he overcame, Jesus became the perfection of all that is in man. By his example, Jesus Christ became the author and the finisher of our faith, that if we follow in his footsteps we may partake of the same triumph in Glory. Compare this to the slug-like un-life that those that would re-create the universe would have.

Surely, "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched forth the heavens by his understanding." For, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men...but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise; and the Lord hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty. And the base things of the world, and the things that are despised hath God chosen, yea, and the things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (Jer. 51:15; 1 Cor. 1:25-29).

Kirkland, Illinois 60146

Needham - Hawk Discussion

Following some negotiation, I have signed a proposition for a written discussion with brother Ray Hawk of East Gadsden, Alabama. He will affirm the following proposition:

The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on property owned by the church when such a meal is for social and/or recreational purposes.

I shall deny this proposition. Each of us will write four articles on the proposition, and they will be published concurrently in **TORCH** and **Bible Beacon** which he edits. It will be some time before the discussion appears in print since no part is to be published until all parts are completed. We think this will be a very interesting and profitable discussion of a very timely subject. I have never met brother Hawk, but have read some of his writings. We believe he will be a most worthy opponent. Subscribe to **TORCH** now, so you will not miss this important event.

- James P. Needham



Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada -- "I have just finished reading the September issue of **TORCH** which contained your article on 'Look on the Fields -- Broadening Our Horizons.' It was excellent. Much needed. I agree wholeheartedly with your statement: *'There is really only one reason to go anywhere, and that is to preach the gospel.'* We need **MORE** men -- workers -- in foreign fields; but we need men to come with the **RIGHT MOTIVES**. We need more gospel 'harvesters' in western Canada. The general public is more receptive to the gospel here, than they were in Texas. Continue your fine writing." - *Donald Givens*.

Louisville, Kentucky -- I appreciate your article in a recent **TORCH** world evangelism...I would like to see more writing along this line not only in your paper, but others as well." - *Connie Adams*.

Athens, Alabama -- "We appreciate your **TORCH** work...and have followed with great interest your Philippine effort...we sent in 25 new subscriptions at the summer's end and are glad to send such a fine teaching aid to our brethren and friends. We hope **TORCH** has a long, long life and does much, much good. It is a worthy effort...I appreciated seeing your fine article in the **Guardian** a while back." - *Ron Halbrook*.

Iverness, Florida -- "It is men like yourself that make it easier for those of us who are younger to continue to preach. Your example is a source of great encouragement. Continue the good work in **TORCH** and expounding the truth." - *Dennis Shaver*.

Tustin, California -- "I continue to enjoy **TORCH**, you are doing an excellent job and a very needed service with the paper." - *Chas. Limburg*.

Brooksville, Florida -- "It is...always good to go to the mailbox and find another issue of **TORCH** there. I frequently read every article before putting it down. This little paper fills a need that was lacking to my way of thinking. Your article concerning the relationship of papers and colleges to individuals and to the church was a master

piece. This writer wished he had said the things you were able to present so clearly. We believe that as you were able to see that papers and schools may unduly lead some through the 'power' they can gain over men, that you will be careful in your position as editor of **TORCH** to prevent such power from being used improperly." - *Kenneth E. Thomas.*

(Editor's Note: This brother sounds a very needed admonition to this editor, and I realize it very well. Not many political power structures in the brotherhood of Christians were ever built "with malice afore thought." They sort of evolve with time and growth. For this reason, we plan to keep **TORCH** an unorganized individual effort. It is published by Billy K. Farris which means he provides space for brethren to preach the gospel. He has asked me to be responsible for providing the material for the pages. I either write this myself, or ask others to. Some brethren voluntarily send me material for consideration. We are a "low budget" paper, and we want to be a "low profile" paper. We do not aspire to become a super power in the journalistic world, nor do we have any ambitions toward brotherhood regulation. I promise the reading audience that when I see **TORCH** becoming such a monster, I shall vacate the editor's chair forthwith. **TORCH** is not to be revered, feared or commandeered by anybody at any time. I aspire to be a Christian, a gospel preacher, and a gentleman in that order; not a power happy political demigod. *JPN*).

Erwin, Tennessee -- "Brother Needham, I hold you in high esteem. I have never met you, or heard you preach, but I read every article that I can get that you have written. I take the **TORCH**, and recommend it highly to everyone...I'm closing this short note with all the thanks that I can muster, and a prayer from the very depth of my heart that you will have many, many long and successful years in the Master's kingdom." - *Fred Smith.*

Pine Bluff, Arkansas -- "We enjoy the **TORCH** very much. Especially, your presenting both sides of an issue." - *Archie C. Hamilton.*

Oceanside, California -- "I have been receiving **TORCH** now for some time, and enjoy the good reading it contains. Some unknown Christian is sending it, and that is why I have not been a subscriber to **TORCH**. I pass it on to others to read who do not take it." - *Edith M. Siler.*

Stillwater, Oklahoma -- "I enjoy receiving the **TORCH** and reading the many articles that are in it. I feel that one can gain much knowledge by studying the facts that are therein with honesty and a desire to learn the truth. Continue the good work and may God bless the efforts that are put forth in spreading the gospel throughout the land." - *Herman R. Miller.*

Dudley Ross Spears to Germany

Brother Spears' plans to move to West Germany next spring have become rather widely known. He spent last November holding meetings and investigating details of his move there, and his plans are now more definite. He plans to make his move to the Frankfort A/M -- Weisbaden area next June.

He is now in process of making the final arrangements necessary to the move, such as raising support and deciding what to do with his household goods. Living costs in Germany are some of the highest in the world, and he will need \$1500 per month to go, plus travel funds. Five hundred dollars per month of the support is now assured. We feel that the remainder will be forthcoming now that final plans have been made. If you or the congregation where you worship is in position to help, please contact Dudley at 35 West Par Avenue, Orlando, Florida 32804.

Brother Spears is determined to take the true gospel to West Germany. Many contacts have been made already with other sound preachers who are in the country, or are contemplating going. At least four conservative churches are meeting already in West Germany, and prospects look good for others. We are very optimistic about prospects for the work there.

The Spears family is to be commended for their decision to go. They are making a tremendous sacrifice. It will be necessary for their children to lose a year in school, and they will not be able to live on the same level as that to which they are accustomed. They will wrestle day and night with a tremendous language barrier, which is no easy problem to solve for his wife and children. Dudley has made tremendous progress in the language since he and I were in Germany last May. At that time he could not speak a word, but when he returned in November of the same year, he preached a sermon in it, and made his way around quite well with the German people during the thirty days he was there.

Brother Spears is an able and experienced preacher of the gospel. He is to be commended for using his talents in this way. He will be pioneering the work in Germany so far as conservatism is concerned. It is a difficult task, but we believe he is more than equal to it.

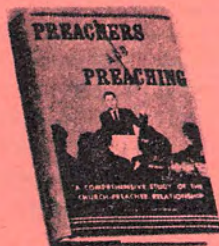
Pray that all of brother Spears' plans will be fulfilled.

- James P. Needham

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- Billy K. Farris

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TORCH

*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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MAY THE TWAIN NEVER MEET

Fashion designers come on strong;
Hemlines made not very long.
Necklines cut low and deep,
May the twain never meet!

James P. Needham
9-30-72

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Editor
James P. Needham

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Editorial

James P. Needham



Is Satire a Scriptural Method of Teaching?

As our readers know, we sometimes run a column in **TORCH** known as **SESSIONS IN SATIRE**. (Probably our most controversial column). Two or three persons have questioned whether or not this is a scriptural method of teaching. One or two have forthrightly condemned it as being contrary to the spirit of Christ, and affirmed that "*it should never be used.*" I do not for a moment question the sincerity of those readers, but I believe them to be sincerely wrong. We do not resent their questioning of this method of teaching, and are happy to make such the occasion of a study of this interesting subject. We trust the matter will be given an in depth study by all concerned.

One's personal dislike for satire as a method of teaching may be somewhat understandable (especially if he is bitten by it), but to question its scripturalness, calls for a more penetrating look into the matter. There are many methods one might employ to teach the truth. Some are more preferable to some persons than to others. Some teachers are more adept at using some methods than others. Some persons can be reached by one method who will be repulsed by others. The real criteria that should determine the use or non-use of a method of teaching are: (a) its scripturalness, and (b) its effectiveness. The fact that one doesn't personally prefer a given method, does not make it unscriptural.

Debating is an excellent illustration of this. Some persons are absolutely horrified at the very thought of a religious debate. We have all known those who affirm that they are unscriptural and sinful, but the Bible continues to endorse and exemplify them, and people are continually converted by them. This does not mean that we endorse all debates, or that we evaluate it as the best teaching method any more than this article should be construed as approval of all satire, or that we think it is the best

teaching technique. All methods of teaching can be abused, and should be used with caution and in harmony with the scriptures. Satire may come out as noble medicine, or rank poison, depending upon its nature and the attitude of its author.

DEFINITION

Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of the English Language, International Edition, says: "SATIRE: N. 1. *The use of sarcasm, irony, or keen wit in denouncing abuses or follies; ridicule.* 2. *A written composition in which vice, folly, or incapacity is held up to ridicule.* Synonyms: *derision, jeering, mockery, raillery, ridicule, sarcasm.*" Sarcasm, irony, mockery, and ridicule are synonyms of satire. Let us look at the definitions of these words:

1. **Sarcasm:** "*A keenly ironical or scornful utterance; contemptuous and taunting language. The use of biting gibes or cutting rebukes.*"¹ Sarcasm "*Is from the Greek SARKASMOS, from SARKADZEIN, to tear flesh like dogs; to bite the lips in rage; to speak bitterly; to sneer.*"²

2. **Irony:** "*The use of words to signify the opposite of what they usually express; ridicule disguised as praise or compliment; covert sarcasm or satire. The feigning of ignorance, as in the Socratic method of questions and answers; hence SOCRATIC IRONY. A condition of affairs or events exactly the reverse of what was expected; as, the irony of fate.*"³ "*From the Greek EIRONEIA, dissimulation; as a figure, it means to dissemble in speech -- to say one thing, while another is meant. Webster says of this word, 'A kind of ridicule which exposes the errors or faults of others by seeming to adopt, approve, or defend them; apparent assent to a proposition given, with such a tone, or under such circumstances, that opposite opinions or feelings are implied.'*"⁴

3. **Mockery:** "*Derisive or contemptuous mimicry. A false show; sham. A butt or ridicule.*"⁵

4. **Ridicule:** "*Language calculated to make a person or thing the object of contemptuous humorous desparagement; also, looks or acts expressing amused contempt; derision, mockery. An object of mocking merriment; butt.*"⁶

With these words and definitions before us, we now are ready to determine if satire is a scriptural method of teaching the truth. If it comports with the scripture, it certainly can be used as a teaching method. If it is contrary to the scriptures, it should

never be used, but rather condemned. It should be observed that any elements in the above definitions that are out of harmony with the scriptures, are certainly excluded from the satire used in the Bible, and therefore from that which I am here defending.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF SATIRE

1. Judges 10:13,14 -- "*Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods; therefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your distress.*" This was God's advice to Israel, but does anyone believe for a moment that it is what He really wanted them to do? Was He advising them to call upon idol gods? Did He really mean that they could deliver them? Certainly not! The whole thing is satirical, and is characterized by many terms used in its definition: ridicule, sarcasm, irony and mockery!

* 2. 1 Kings 22:15-18 -- "*When he came to the king, the king said to him, 'Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we refrain?' And he answered him, 'Go up and succeed, and the Lord will give it into the hand of the king.'*" A reading of the context will show this to be ironic satire. Going up against Ramoth-gilead was the very thing the king of Israel was not to do, and when Micaiah told him to go, he immediately recognized it as ironic satire; telling him not to go.

3. 1 Kings 18:27 -- "*And it came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, 'Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.'*" This is a splendid example of a servant of the Lord using satire in the condemnation of error. It actually says that "*Elijah mocked them.*" One may cringe a bit when he reads it, but an honest man cannot deny that it is there!

4. Job 12:1,2 -- "*Then Job responded, 'Truly then you are the people, and with you wisdom will die.'*" Job had had his fill of the long, pious would-be-wise speeches of his so-called friends, so he sarcastically says, "You fellows have all the answers; you are wisdom personified, and what will the world do for wisdom when you are dead?" That is satire, sarcasm, irony, ridicule and verbal "head knocking" all wrapped up in one short sentence!

5. Jer. 25:27 -- "*And you shall say to them, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Drink, be drunk, vomit, fall, and rise no more because of the sword which I will send among you.'*"

Does anyone seriously believe the Lord was advising Israel to get drunk, vomit, and fall? If not, then he must admit that this is satirical.

6. Acts 23:1-5 -- *"And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, 'Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.' And the high priest Ananias commanded those standing beside him to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, 'God is going to strike you, you white-washed wall! And do you sit to try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?' But the bystanders said, 'Do you revile God's high priest?' And Paul said, 'I was not aware, brethren, that he was high priest; for it is written, You shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people.'"* First, Paul's calling Ananias a white-washed wall, is quite sarcastic, as well as satirical. It might be questionable as to whether Paul's saying, *"I was not aware, brethren, that he was high priest"* is satirical since Ananias was appointed high priest by the Romans, but it is difficult for me to believe that with Paul's knowledge of the Law, both Jewish and Roman, and his acquaintance with goings on in and around Jerusalem, that he did not know that Ananias was "high priest." I am convinced that he knew he was a counterfeit high priest, and he very pointedly and sarcastically called attention to this fact. Or, Paul could have been saying satirically, "If he is high priest, one couldn't tell it from his actions!" Furthermore, Ananias was not an high priest according to the Law, and even if he were, the Law had been done away, hence the verse he quoted did not apply!

7. 1 Cor. 4:7-10 -- *"For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and would indeed that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you. For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor."* Here, as in other places, Paul gives evidence of being fed up with the brethren's being carried away with the false charges of his enemies. What he says to the Corinthians here is not nearly as complimentary as the casual reader might think! Paul is being satirical, sarcastic and ironical. Does anyone really think Paul was saying the apostles were fools, while the Corinthians in their errors were prudent?

CONCLUSIONS

We are not saying that our use of satire is always wise and just, or that it is our favorite method of teaching, but when it is affirmed that all satire is contrary to the spirit of Christ, and is opposed to the meek attitude that ought to characterize Christians, things are getting out of hand. I know satire bites, but it very well may bite because it is a very pointed way of getting at the truth of a matter. *"Arrows of satire, feathered with wit, and wielded with sense, fly home to their mark."*⁷ For instance, the satire I wrote on "Lydia's Purple" (TORCH, May 1971), was rather caustic. It received mixed response, depending upon whether or not the respondent was guilty of some of the obvious analogies produced by the piece. But, be it remembered, those who were upset by its obvious truth would have been upset regardless of the method used to point up their folly. Epictetus said of satire, *"If evil is said of thee, and if it be true, correct thyself; if it be a lie, laugh at it."*⁸ Paul became the enemy of some to whom he told the truth (Gal. 4:16). All teachers run this risk, and he who cannot stand the heat, should stay out of the kitchen! Our satire is designed to make some of our vices **laughable** as well as **detestable**! He who is unbitten by it should find it **laughable**. He whose vice or folly is thereby exposed should **correct** it, and when one is certain he has been misrepresented by it, should, by all means, call it to our attention and we will make the correction! I do not know how to be fairer.

I am not defending all satire we have used in TORCH (though I am unaware of any instance where we have abused it), I am defending it as a legitimate method of teaching. If I have missed the truth on the subject, I would be glad to learn about it. Until then, we shall continue to use it with caution and good taste.

In conclusion, I quote Dryden: *"The end of satire is the amendment of vices by correction, and he who writes honestly is no more an enemy to the offender, than the physician is to the patient when he prescribes harsh remedies."*⁹

FOOTNOTES

1. FUNK AND WAGNALLS NEW PRACTICAL STANDARD DICTIONARY.
2. D.R. Dungan, HERMENEUTICS, p. 318.
3. FUNK AND WAGNALLS NEW PRACTICAL STANDARD DICTIONARY.
4. D.R. Dungan, HERMENEUTICS, p. 316.
5. FUNK AND WAGNALLS NEW PRACTICAL STANDARD DICTIONARY.
6. Ibid.
7. Simmons, THE NEW DICTIONARY OF THOUGHTS, p. 567.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.

Introspection

Self Analysis

What Is Wrong?

"What's Wrong With Our Overseas Evangelistic Efforts?"

Martin M. Broadwell

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature . . ." (Mark 16:15). "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations . . ." (Matthew 28:19). The magnitude of these words still awe us as Christians, and should cause us to constantly search our consciences to see if we really are fulfilling the "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" portion of the commission (which includes the going into all the world). Here are some thoughts about the importance of proper preparation needed before carrying out this command today.

The nature of the title ("What's wrong with . . .") is misleading if it implies that there is nothing right about overseas work. It is wrong if it suggests that there aren't many faithful men, women and children doing pretty tremendous things under very adverse circumstances. At a later time, perhaps we can spend equal time talking about what's right with our overseas effort. There's much to be said!

In the last three years my wife and I have completely encircled the globe twice. In addition, I have worked and visited in Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Australia, Europe, Northern Ireland and England. In each place, time was taken to preach, teach, talk and/or meet with the preachers and members. Does this make me some kind of expert? Not by any standard other than having been there. Because of my interests, I have also discussed areas of work with those who have visited in places we have not been. From all of this, some conclusions have been drawn. They are presented for the reader's consideration, not as doctrine, but for what they are: **opinion.**

Here are some problems, difficulties and faults that appear to

hinder the overseas work (in no particular order):

1. Often the men -- and women -- who go are young in age and experience. While youth isn't necessarily a virtue in the U.S., it's often a severe handicap overseas, in older, more traditional countries. Prospective members and even the existing members do not seem to take the young preachers and their wives very seriously.

2. Lack of experience in personal work. This isn't limited to the young preachers, but many times there is a zeal without the knowledge of how to do successful, door-to-door, back fence, grocery store personal work.

3. Lack of knowledge of foreign doctrines. The traditional beliefs often aren't there and the preacher can't handle -- on the spot -- arguments that are most often completely new to him. (More than one has expressed a desire to meet up with a good Baptist to argue with!).

4. Lack of foreknowledge of the country to be evangelized. Preachers usually are making their first trip to that country, perhaps even their first overseas trip, without basic knowledge of the political, social and economic conditions (except as revealed by someone who has been there).

5. Lack of delegation skills. Preachers tend to "take over," doing the banking, borrowing, budgeting and building cleaning. Only when they leave to visit other cities do the local brethren have any real responsibility. Often this leaves untrained leaders, who have never had a chance to grow.

6. Inadequate support for "incidental" needs. Costs are different overseas in different areas. U.S. congregations tend to think in terms of "total" dollars, without regard to individual differences. But rent may be cheaper, while the heating is more; food cheaper, but appliances atrocious; distance less, gasoline \$1.00 per gallon; labor cheap; material high; and all of these differences are out of balance in very large ways, not just a few dollars. Where money is lump-summed, the preacher sacrifices tremendously on the things that hurt morale in order to do things that keep the work going: poor transportation (while carrying most of the members in his car), inferior housing (but being the gathering place for all the "get-togethers"), sorry appliances (or none at all), and less than adequate medical care (especially with children's teeth, etc.). There are few places abroad where preachers are now working where they can find living standards comparable to the U.S., at any price. This

isn't talking about luxuries: it's talking about keeping warm, making toast, beating eggs, etc.

7. Tendency to "Americanize." Both the preacher and his wife frequently slip with, "Well, in America we don't do it that way." In a country that probably resents the idea that someone from a relative new nation has come to do "mission work," words that imply the American way is the best way don't set well.

8. Wrong impression from American (Christian) tourists. Since most Americans who travel abroad are economically above the average member in most foreign congregations, the impression is often (unintentionally) left that all Americans are wealthy. This leads to the conviction that the local congregation has only to look toward the U.S. for endless funds -- rather than sacrifice from their own meager incomes.

9. Lack of "permanentability." The calendar of events for the overseas evangelist goes something like this: The first year and a half getting acclimated (and it often takes that), six months in productive work, the last year preparing to come home (and trying to get someone to come and take his place).

10. Unprepared wives. Its often a lonely world for wives -- especially those who won't make the effort to adjust -- because their husbands are gone frequently, and there are many personal displeasures: lack of "necessities" on the store shelf, awkward appliances (250 volts, 50 cycles), hours of loneliness (many are separated from "Momma" for the first time).

11. Lack of family support back home. Mothers and Dads write about all their problems, plead for the return of the grandchildren, even pout and suggest, "you don't love us anymore," or "we may never see you again." (Friends also fail to realize how much a letter means, especially the "newsy" kind telling about the everyday things happening in the neighborhood, in school and in the congregation.

12. Lack of encouragement from the supporting congregations. Today's overseas airfare is very cheap -- a roundtrip to anywhere is less than a month's support to most preachers -- yet congregations rarely take advantage of this by sending someone to get firsthand information. The members also fail to write encouraging letters, send presents for the kids and an occasional favorite food that's unavailable overseas.

13. Supporting congregations think about foreign places as "exotic, exciting -- extended vacations" (I'm quoting). This leaves the members unsympathetic and without empathy. Few preachers overseas are enjoying full-time, paid vacations.

14. The preacher isn't the person for the job. Often preachers who have failed to "make it" in the U.S. will seek aid to foreign fields. Congregations faced with a request for funds should: (a) check with preachers who are already in that country or who have been there, to see what kind of man is needed, and (b) investigate the individual **very thoroughly** to see what kind of success can be expected. They sholudn't be swayed by "a willingness to go" attitude.

15. **Support from a number of congregations.** When many support with small sums, interest is lost, and the preacher is at a loss as to how to get more funds, or help at solving a problem.

Finally, some quick observations: Those who believe in sponsoring churches, collective individual evangelism and veiled missionary societies are putting most of us to shame with regard to interest, energy, enthusiasm and money in overseas work. They are sending families, preachers and money. They are building hospitals, schools, preachers' schools and camps. Much of what they are doing is wrong, and the methods are, too. But they're doing it with vigor. They believe in what they're doing. The back-home congregations talk about, know about, get excited about and pray often about the overseas work. Would that we could combine this kind of enthusiasm for overseas evangelism with our enthusiasm for the truth. What an effective combination this proves to be when we go teach the Lord's way!

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Reflections of a Young Preacher's Wife

Name Withheld By Request

Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God," I wish to share with you the very personal meaning this passage has for me.

It means you watch your man break his back and his heart trying to reach and motivate unbelievers and believers alike. You see him go without help or encouragement while the preacher before him, or the one who visited for a meeting, or the one they wish would come, is lauded to the skies. Your husband knows, and you know, that he who is greatest in the kingdom is he who serves others humbly and steadily, without drawing attention to himself. But sometimes your heart aches.

It means that your children are never quite right in the sight of the brethren. They are too tall or too fat. They are either to be despised as spoiled or pitied as too harshly disciplined. Criticism of your children lances your most sensitive emotions. You know the aching, loving effort you invest in parenthood, but perhaps it does not show.

When you look at the emotional scares you have acquired, you realize that your brethren hurt you worse than any other type of hurt you have yet sustained. Since that is the case, will you "quit the church"? It never enters your mind. You understand that only those you love can hurt you. So, you carefully clip the barbed wires of mistrust, scrape away and dross of bitterness before it can harden, and thus, leave your heart open and tender for unfeigned love or fresh hurt, if it comes.

Even when you feel your heart is broken, you seek out your brethren and worship. Though it sounds like a contradiction, they are exactly the people you want to be with. There is a God in heaven who is worthy of your devotion. As that one overwhelming truth envelops you all, you understand the basic, loving fellowship you share despite the thorns that come between you from day to day.

What a desert this world would be without brethren in Christ! Our brethren, as a precious provision of God, should never be used as an excuse for "looking back."

What's Your Question?

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS. Send to: James P. Needham, 1600 Oneco Avenue, Winter Park, Florida 32789.

QUESTION:

THE NAME 'CHRISTIAN' AND ISAIAH 62.2

"Enclosed is a bulletin containing an idea which a few preachers are now teaching. What do you think of this?"

-Louisiana

REPLY:

First, let us read the article under question:

"The prophet wrote, *'And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name; which the mouth of Jehovah shall name.'* Many teach that this prophecy is fulfilled in Acts 11:26: *'And it came to pass that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church and taught much people, and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.'* I see no reason for this conclusion.

"The term 'Christian(s)' is used three times in the New Testament: Acts 11:26; 26:28; and 1 Pet. 4:16. None of these passages mention the name as a fulfillment of prophecy. I know of no inspired writing which indicates that 'Christian' is the 'new name' of Isaiah 62:2.

"A closer examination of the prophecy of Isaiah will reveal what the new name was to be. *'Thou shalt no more be termed 'Forsaken;,' neither shall thy land any more be termed 'Desolate;,' but thou shalt be called 'Hephzi-bah' (that is, My delight is in her), and thy land 'Beulah' (that is, Married), for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and the land shall be married' (Isa. 62:4).* This is certainly the primary application of the prophecy. If there is a secondary one, I don't know what it is.

"I feel that the application of Isaiah 62:2 to Acts 11:26 is a presumptuous one. Only when the application of a prophecy is revealed by inspiration can we be absolutely sure of its correctness."

WESTVIEW MESSENGER

September 28, 1972

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Steve Cawthon, Editor

I have no quarrel with the affirmation that "Hephzi-bah" is "the primary application of the prophecy." I disagree with the statement that "the application of Isaiah 62:2 to Acts 11:26 is a presumptuous one." Presumptuous means, "*Overstepping due bounds...assuming a prerogative, privilege, or permission without warrant: Taking liberties...*" (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary). That is, our brother is saying that there is **no evidence** that Isaiah 62:2 is fulfilled in Acts 11:26. I must deny this, and proceed with some very convincing evidence to the contrary.

There are many indications that Acts 11:26 is a secondary fulfillment of Isaiah 62:2. Let us look at them:

1. The new name would be given after the Gentiles saw the righteousness of God. The first ten chapters of Acts tell us of the spread of the gospel among the Jewish population. The eighth chapter tells of the scattering of the brethren from Jerusalem because of the persecution of Saul of Tarsus. Chapter nine tells of the conversion of Saul and of God's selecting him as "a chosen vessel...to bear my NAME before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Acts 9:30 tells of the Jerusalem brethren's sending Saul to Tarsus. Chapter ten tells of the conversion and acceptance of the Gentiles. Acts 11:20 tells us that some who were scattered from Jerusalem came to Antioch and "spake unto Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus." Acts 11:22-25 says that when "*Tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul...*"

Why did he go to "Tarsus, for to seek Saul" when the Jerusalem

brethren told him to "Go as far as Antioch?" Was he disobedient, or did he receive instruction from an higher source than the Jerusalem brethren? There is good evidence that he sought Saul and brought him to Antioch because he was God's "chosen vessel" to bear His name before the Gentiles. At any rate, it is very significant that Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch for *"a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were CALLED CHRISTIANS FIRST at Antioch."*

2. The new name would be given by the "mouth of the Lord." The word translated "called" in Acts 11:26, is the Greek word CHREMATIZO. According to Thayer this word means, *"To be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed; to be the mouth-piece of divine revelations, to promulge the commands of God... to receive a name or title, be called..."* (p. 671). This word is translated "warned of God" in Matt. 2:12, 22; Acts 10:22; Heb. 8:5; 11:7. Thus, there is good evidence that the calling the disciples Christians at Antioch was a divine oracle, by "the mouth of the Lord."

Let us look at Acts 11:26 in the light of Isaiah 62:2, and see if our brother is correct when he says there is no evidence that the latter is a fulfillment of the former:

ISAIAH 62:2

1. Gentiles to see God's righteousness
2. A new name to be given
3. New name to be given by mouth of the Lord

ACTS 11:26

1. Gentiles saw God's righteousness (Acts 10)
2. "Christian" a new name
3. "Called" in Acts 11:26 signifies a divine calling, and Paul, a divinely "chosen vessel," present (Acts 9:15)

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON PROPHECY

"None of these passages (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16, JPN) mention the name as a fulfillment of prophecy. I know of no inspired writing which indicates that 'Christian' is the 'new name' of Isaiah 62:2...Only when the application of a prophecy is revealed by inspiration can we be absolutely sure of its correctness," Here our brother lays down an iron-clad rule (maybe unwittingly) regarding prophecy, namely: Before we can be sure a New Testa-

ment event is a fulfillment of an Old Testament one, an inspired writer must specifically state it. Maybe he follows this rule, but I seriously doubt it. Let us see what it would do.

a. It would make "presumptuous" the idea that Christ is the fulfillment of Gen. 3:15, because no inspired writer specifically so states! This in spite of the fact that Gen. 3:15 prophesies that the seed of the woman (virgin birth) would bruise the head of the serpent, and the seed of the serpent would "bruise his (masculine) heel." According to our brother's rule, we cannot be "absolutely sure" that this is talking about Christ.

b. It would make "presumptuous" the idea that the church is the fulfillment of Isaiah 2:2-4, which says, *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem..."* This in spite of the fact that the "house of the Lord" is said to be the church (1 Tim. 3:14, 15), and "all nations" (Jews and Gentiles) did "flow unto it," and its law did "go forth from Jerusalem" (Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:4) "in the last days" (Acts 2:16-21). We cannot "be absolutely sure" of the correctness of this application because "no inspired writing...indicates" it, according to our good brother's article.

Other illustrations of the folly of this rule of prophetic interpretation could be given, but this should suffice to point out its weakness. I realize very well the need for caution in the interpretation of prophecy, but it seems unreasonable to deny the obvious. I deny that God needs to do for us what we can, by the use of proper reasoning processes, do for ourselves. No inspired writer ever said we should observe the Lord's supper on every first day of the week, but I am certain that our brother believes such is the Divine Will. How does he arrive at this conclusion? By what we call necessary inference from the evidence available (Acts 20:7). God didn't draw this conclusion for us, because we can draw it for ourselves. If we can draw such a conclusion without a Divine Oracle, why can we not conclude by the same reasoning processes that Christ is the fulfillment of Gen. 3:15, or that Acts 11:26 is a fulfillment of Isaiah 62:2? I maintain that we can; and in so doing, be just as accurate as when we contend on the basis of necessary inference that the Lord's supper is to be a weekly observance.

Why Ephesus Had No Missionary Society

Ron Halbrook

1. The church at Ephesus was established without the aid of a missionary society. Acts 18:23 marks the beginning of Paul's third major gospel-preaching journey. Chapter 19 records his coming to Ephesus. He found "certain disciples" there who had been baptized "into John's baptism." When they heard Christ Jesus proclaimed, "they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." Thus was the beginning of a New Testament church at Ephesus. "And all the men were about twelve."

Paul labored with this nucleus and continued "disputing and persuading . . . concerning the kingdom of God." After teaching in the synagogue, he went into the school of Tyrannus. Paul took advantage of the wide door open for effective service "so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord." As the Good News rang out, the name of the Lord Jesus was so magnified that more and more came to God by faith in His Son. As the church grew in numbers and spirit, the whole community felt the impact and was uplifted. Men openly renounced superstition and embraced Christ. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

This exciting story covered well over two years up to this point. How was Paul supported as he worked announcing the Good News, as at Ephesus? The New Testament records that (1) he sometimes worked with his own hands (1 Cor. 4:12); (2) at times he was blessed by the hospitality of individual believers (Acts 16:15); (3) congregations directly supported him part of the time (2 Cor. 11:8-9). There is no evidence that Ephesus ever thought of forming or working through a missionary society. No wonder, for they well knew that the church which they themselves made up was established without the aid of such human machinery!

2. The church at Ephesus was set in order without the aid of a missionary society. Every place people were added to the Lord, provision was made for their social or joint worship and other continuing responsibilities. At Jerusalem, when the time was right, the apostles arranged for deacons to serve (Acts 6). Then, when the time arrived, the apostles arranged for elders to oversee the flock (Acts 11:27-30). After churches were established in the regions of Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia, Paul returned and "appointed elders for them in every church" (Acts 14:23). Later

in life, Paul left Titus on the island of Crete to visit the maturing churches and to "set in order what remains [or, "finish what was left undone"]", and appoint elders in every city." (Tit. 1:5).

Considering the record of the apostolic practice elsewhere, the record necessarily implies that Paul gave attention to setting the church at Ephesus in order. That evidence is sufficient without any other. But more evidence is found in Acts 20, where Paul addressed the Ephesian elders. Yet more evidence is seen in the letter Paul later wrote to Ephesus, in which epistle he refers to the work of prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers as though the Ephesians fully understood what those terms signified.

Never did Paul breathe one word about conventions, societies, or associations of churches, nor about elected representatives of churches to attend such conclaves, nor self-appointed representatives, nor about the nature or qualifications or terms or work of society presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, corresponding secretaries, treasurers, board members, honorary members, life members, etc., when he set the church at Ephesus in order. Paul's silence on the matter was the reason the Ephesian church never thought a missionary society had anything to do with setting churches in order. They never dreamed of having, or needing, such an organization.

3. The church at Ephesus had Christ for its Head; the Head gave them no missionary society. Paul's conclusion to chapter 1 of his Ephesian epistle and much that he said in chapter 5 makes the following fact undeniable. The church at Ephesus understood that God had constituted Christ as the only Head of the church. The saints there understood that when God raised Christ in glory. He "gave Him to be the head over all things to the church." Just as surely as they knew (1) "the husband is the head of the wife" and (2) Christ "is the savior of the body," they also knew (3) "Christ is the head of the church" and (4) "the church is subject unto Christ."

The holy ones at Ephesus had been set apart by Paul's preaching Christ to them. The Lord had declared his word and confirmed it with signs following, through the apostle. Everything the Ephesians knew about the will of Christ, they knew through the apostle's teaching. They had been both called and set in order by this teaching of Christ through the apostle. As well as each one knew his own name, he knew that (1) Christ had spoken, (2) through his messenger, (3) NOTHING about forming or joining such centralized projects as missionary societies. Thus they never

had such.

4. The church at Ephesus glorified God, without a missionary society. The Lord works his will through his people. The Lord had his people at Ephesus and worked his will through them. God's people without Christ are nothing. But, God's people are in Christ and Christ is in them. Thus, God's people find "all spiritual blessings," "unsearchable riches," in Christ: boldness, access, strength, love, comprehension, all the fulness of God! (See Eph. 1:3; 3:12-21). God works in us, through Christ. *God is glorified through it all.* "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end."

God is glorified in the church as men are called out of the world and adden together in Christ. *God is glorified in the church* as men live daily as lights in the world, by Christ Jesus. God is glorified in the church as it edifies itself in love, upholds the truth, worships in spirit and in truth, cares for its needy, disciplines its wayward, wins victories for the right, defeats the designs of the devil, withstands triumphantly the pressures of the world and the fiery persecutions of the vicious, expectantly awaits to be delivered up to God--*all by Christ, in Christ, with Christ!*

The church at Ephesus was capable of doing all these things, by Christ, for the glory of God, *without a man-made missionary society.* Do changing times necessitate a missionary society in order that the church may glorify God? God's people at Ephesus, God's people everywhere, if constituted by the pattern divinely appointed, can glorify God by Christ Jesus "throughout all ages, world without end!" God is glorified in His people *for both all of time and all of eternity*, without any need for man's additions, substractions, or substitutions in any phase of the eternal purpose.

5. The church at Ephesus had no missionary society because the essential nature of such things is against the beneficent purpose of God. Every creation and appointment of God has been charitable, beneficent, good in its essential nature, since the very creation of the world. "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." God's organization of the local church, with no centralizing or coordinating or associating machinery, was very good in every way. Thus, every attempt to go beyond God's appointment is bad in its very nature.

About 1900, the Campbell Street Church of Louisville, Kentucky, was held up for public ridicule and pressure by society

advocates. Its only crime was that it had allotted no money for the society, but had made all its own plans and arrangements for vigorous missionary work. Brother F.D. Srygley commented in the *Gospel Advocate*, "There is no issue . . . at to whether mission work shall be done, and done by Campbell Street Church. The naked issue is as to whether that church has a right to manage its own business without dictation or interference from the State Evangelist or the State Board" (*The New Testament Church*, F.D. Srygley, p. 253). Neither saints nor sinners benefit from such interference with the function of the local church. But God's appointment is beneficent in every way.

Such interference with the beneficent purposes of God is not merely the abuse of the society. It is in the essential nature of the thing to grow in its encroachments, for its very existence is an encroachment (which in turn feeds the spirit of encroachment). When Christians look to Christ for the function and health of the local church, the beneficent purposes of God are being fulfilled. When men set up societies, appendages, institutions, committees, and boards to centralize the churches, these additional organizations claim the energies and concerns of the brethren involved. One of the brethren pressuring Campbell Street said, "My conscience will not let me rest till . . . [that] church is enlisted in the work" (*Ibid.* p. 256). Man-made organizations win the affections of men, and thus become idols! The essential nature of such things, not just the abuse of them, violates the beneficent purposes of God.

The following remarks of brother Srygley reflect the beneficent nature of God's appointment. Notice how man's attempt to help God do more (by organizing churches beyond the local level) actually stifles the Lord's work, and so is against God's beneficent purpose.

"It certainly does not require much of a philosopher to see that a church will take more interest, do more work, and pay more money, when it feels that the work is its own and that it is individually and solely responsible for it, than when it feels that the work is merely a general one in which it has only an insignificant part. Who does not know, as a business man, that the interested and responsible partners in a small partnership business take more interest in the management and labor harder for the success of the business than the insignificant stockholders in a railroad company take in the management of the great corporation business in which their little shares of stock are but as a few drops in the ocean?" (*Ibid.*, pp. 253-254).

Last under this head, notice the loss of resources when centralized machinery is set up. The machine must be oiled. After 50

years of growth, the missionary societies of 1896 raised \$425,963, "total for all Missions," which is "45 cents per member" (Concerning the Disciples of Christ, B.B. Tyler, p. 139). A sizable portion of that money was lost from God's beneficent purpose by advertising and promotional expenses for raising money, by salaries for an ever-growing host of officers and agents, and by many "hidden costs" or incidentals.

6. **The church at Ephesus had only local organization.** A missionary society, of whatever variety, is an organization beyond the local level and in addition to the local level. Thus, Ephesus had no such society.

One recognizes a local church by the peculiar characteristics found in the New Testament. The missionary society has **peculiar features which distinguish it from a local church**, thus proving it is not the mere working arrangement of a local church, but is something in addition to and beyond the local church. Here are some of those distinguishing characteristics. A missionary society is an organization with: (1) its own treasury; (2) its own name -- indicating an entity separate from the local church, as by having its own mail permit as a named entity; (3) its own offices or borrowed offices -- a local church can't borrow from itself; (4) its own payroll; (5) makes its own arrangements and contracts; (6) hires its own agents; (7) does the work of many churches; (8) requires thousands of dollars to "oil machine;" (9) is a source of power and pressure over the churches; (10) the representatives of the churches may be elected from many churches or self-appointed from one or a few churches.

The church at Ephesus was an organized, functioning "society" for doing the Lord's work. The Lord added the saints together and set them in order as a church. It never organized, joined, or gave a mite to anything that was even a 42nd cousin to a man-made missionary society.

CONCLUSION

The Lord's churches today should not have any variety of a humanly-devised missionary society **for the same reasons that Ephesus had none**. We can be all Ephesus was for good and do all Ephesus did for good without such societies.

Is this a dead issue? Just substitute the word "benevolent" for the word "missionary" in this article and see how dead it looks -- churches donating to orphanage societies, widow-care homes,

sponsoring churches, hospitals. Or, try "educational" -- churches donating to colleges, secondary and elementary schools, kindergartens, summer camps. Furthermore, compare "The Herald of Truth" organization to the distinguishing characteristics of a missionary society! It scores 100%! It is nothing short of a modern missionary society. It denies it pressures churches, but published instructions for its own hired agents to use pressure to get appointments (and thus donations) from churches. Is it a machine requiring "oil" (and thus frustrating the beneficent purposes of God)? Brother Cecil Willis revealed that it has spent approximately \$900,000 for administrative costs in its 20 year operation (Truth Magazine, May 4, 1972). That's nearly twice what the older societies were able to raise altogether in total donations for 1896 -- after 50 years hard work and pressure! But (take a deep breath), H. O. T. spent another amount well over \$1,000,000 for "Support Solicitation." This modern society is like the modern car: it is bigger, faster moving, and burns more gas quicker than the old model.

After many years, the Lord commended some things about Ephesus, but warned that the church had left its first love (Rev. 2:4). The Lord pleaded, "Remember therefore from where you have fallen and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place -- unless you repent . . . He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God."

506 Hoffman Street
Athens, Alabama 35611

WHAT'S YOUR QUESTION BOOK IN PROSPECT

For some time I have been urged to publish a book of my *What's Your Question* columns. The greatest hinderance to such a venture is a lack of funds. I have now been approached by a company of brethren who want to put such a book on the market at no charge to me. I have given the go-ahead signal. We will keep you informed as the plans materialize. We think such a book can fulfill a need, and be very useful.

TRACTS AND BOOKLETS BY THE EDITOR

From time to time we publish a list of tracts and booklets by the editor. We urge you to take note of these and order a good supply of them when you/and or the church where you worship need such items. They are reasonably priced and attractive. *jpn*

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Needham - Hawk Discussion

Following some negotiation, I have signed a proposition for a written discussion with brother Ray Hawk of East Gadsden, Alabama. He will affirm the following proposition:

The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on property owned by the church when such a meal is for social and/or recreational purposes.

I shall deny this proposition. Each of us will write four articles on the proposition, and they will be published concurrently in **TORCH** and **Bible Beacon** which he edits. We think this will be a very interesting and profitable discussion of a very timely subject. I have never met brother Hawk, but have read some of his writings. We believe he will be a most worthy opponent. Subscribe to **TORCH** now, so you will not miss this important event.

- James P. Needham

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TORCH

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but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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TORCH - Fair Journalism

TORCH is not a party organ to parrot a party line. I shall not erect a screen that strains out anybody's articles just because they are critical of me, or disagree with what I believe or say, but neither am I going to roll over and play dead just because someone disagrees with me or is critical of me. I shall be willing, as in the past, to defend *what I believe* against those who attack it. I have no desire to defend TORCH as such, because it is just a name, the name of a few pieces of paper containing the thoughts of those whose articles it carries. We have allowed--encouraged--those who have disagreed with us to use our pages to tell us where they think we are wrong. In the "POST MARKS" section we share our mail with the reading audience, printing criticisms of us which are not written for publication, but which we believe should be expressed to our readers as well as to us. We are determined to be fair. We have no time for or patience with "yellow journalism."

- James P. Needham (excerpt from Editorial, January 1973)

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Editor
James P. Needham

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Editorial

James P. Needham



America -- The Field White Unto the Harvest

We have a world-wide commission to preach the gospel to every creature on earth (Mt. 28:19,20; Mk. 16:15,16). There is a great need for us to look beyond our own horizons; to become concerned about preaching the gospel anywhere and everywhere. I thank God for the increased interest in preaching the gospel in regions beyond our own borders. Today we see able young men as well as older experienced preachers going to foreign fields. This is encouraging and brightens our prospects for evangelizing our generation.

At the same time, there is too much negative talk about America as a harvest field. A very common expression we hear is, "I am tired of preaching to these indifferent Americans, so I am going to more fruitful fields." While I realize that America is not the fruitful field it once was, I challenge anyone to name one more fruitful; not from the point of view of the number baptized, but from the standpoint of stability and quality. Those who are wont to deprecate America as a field for gospel labor would do well to remember that they could not go to foreign fields to preach with adequate support without the American churches. There is no country in the world today where the gospel is as well established as in America. A great deal of good work has been done in many countries of the world, but nowhere has it born fruit comparable to that produced in America.

I challenge any reader to make a list of countries in today's world where there are independent, self-supporting, indigenous churches. Much work and many thousands of American dollars have been expended abroad in preaching the gospel. The result largely has been the formation of small, struggling, dependent churches that can't sneeze without every church in America saying "Gesundheit." Even the few native preachers we have developed in some countries are supported with American dollars. In the

majority of cases, the meeting houses of foreign churches were built with American money. Many years, dollars and men were expended on the country of Norway, and yet, there is not a sound church meeting in that land today, and my information is that the work there has been abandoned. I am not saying there are no exceptions to this dismal picture, nor is it my purpose in this article to discuss the reasons for the situation described. (See article by Martin Broadwell **TORCH**, March 1973). It is not my intention to discourage anyone from preaching the gospel anywhere he wants to. I am just tired of hearing criticism of America and American churches used as a spring board from which to launch work in foreign fields. Especially when the critics are looking to those criticized for the financial support of their endeavors. And in most cases they already have made their plans to return to this barren land in 2 or 3 years! (I know there are some exceptions to this). If brethren want to preach the gospel in foreign fields, the American churches should support and encourage them, but they should not be insulted and deprecated in the process. This factor, plus the lack of substantial results frequently obtained in foreign work, could well account for the reluctance of some churches to respond to pleas for help in other nations.

In comparison to other fields of labor, America is one of the most fruitful. We tend to think our growth is slow, but it is much more rapid than many of us think. One will get a different view if he will take 25 church bulletins from all parts of the U.S.A. and keep tab on the number baptized in a year's time. Growth is somewhat slower than it has been in the past, but I believe it to be more solid. A slow solid growth is preferable to mushroom growth. In some nations of today's world one can baptize hundreds of people per month. This is very exciting to American brethren, and very inviting to preachers, but such results should be tested by long-term observation and evaluation. When these people cannot (or will not) provide their own meeting house or even partially support their own preacher after 10 or 15 years of existence, the results begin to look a bit different. I know there are American churches of which the same can be said, but these are exceptions and not the general rule. Almost 100 per cent dependence upon American support is the general rule in foreign work; self-support is the exception.

The church in America is a remarkable and exciting success story. Our earliest records of its existence go back into the 1700's, probably being brought to this country by immigrants from Europe. By the early 1800's, it literally had swept the American continent off its feet, and almost dominated the American relig-

ious scene. Thousands and thousands of people forsook denominationalism and obeyed the gospel. As the church and America grew, problems grew. Three or four major divisions have occurred over the years, and in spite of this, the Lord's church is still alive and well in America. She has sent and is still sending many gospel preachers and multiplied thousands of dollars to the far-flung areas of the world. Today's negative view of America as a fruitful field of gospel labor is born of recklessness or ignorance, or both.

Today America is one of the most rewarding fields in the world for gospel work. Frequently, those who hold the opposite view are not giving our own country a fair chance. A farmer doesn't reap if he doesn't sow, and this explains why we obtain meager results in many American communities. Right this moment, there are literally thousands of persons in America who would obey the gospel if we would get it to them. Many of them live within a stone's throw of nice, comfortable church buildings. We must find these people, but what are we doing to accomplish this? In many congregations we never bother to contact the people who visit our assemblies! We urge them to fill out visitors' cards which accumulate in large stacks in the church office, finally to be thrown away. Generally speaking, churches that are sowing are also reaping. Those which are sulkily saying, "there is no use to sow because there will be no harvest" have no right to reap or to complain of a lack of harvest. Churches which are more concerned about building a bigger and more expensive building than about preaching the gospel are not in position to evaluate America as a field of labor. When churches sit in comfortable meeting houses in long, drawn-out business meetings fussing about trivialities, and complain that the people in their community are not interested in the gospel are being naive, and unfair. When a congregation's center of attention is the church building rather than the people in their community, they may complain about a barren field of labor, but it is barren only because it has not been sown. The point is this: we cannot judge the fruitfulness of a field we have not sown.

I thank God for the good work now being done throughout the world. We must continue to encourage and assist it wherever and whenever we can, but we must stop thinking negatively about our own country. It has a bad effect upon the general morale of the brethren to say nothing of the fact that much of it is untrue. There is a definite need for able preachers to go to foreign fields, but let us not forget; there is also a need for some able ones to remain at home. All must serve God where they think they can do the most good. Not everyone can or should go to another country to preach the gospel. Some can serve the Cause much

more efficiently right here in the good old U.S. of A., and they should not be labled as soft, lazy or unsacrificing because they do. I have talked with some brethren who work in foreign fields who seem to have "a crow to pick" with brethren who live and work in America. I have known some to get down-right upset because more brethren don't go to foreign countries. Well, maybe more should go, but who is to say how many? And nobody should feel obligated to defend his working at home or abroad. Workers are needed everywhere.

Nobody should take this article as my defense of my own work in America. I feel no obligation to defend it, in the first place, and in the second, I have done some foreign work, and probably will do some more in the years to come. I am thankful for the faith of those brethren who are laboring overseas, but no more so than for the many good brethren who work at home. I have helped and encouraged workers in both fields, and shall continue to do so. Let us all labor ever more diligently for the Cause, whether at home or abroad, and let us cease making such a vast difference between the two. We need every one, and I thank God for them all.

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IDOLS

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Those eyes, that look, which brought Peter low,
So desolate.

That face, that light, which raised Stephen high,
So intimate.

That heart that cried for his city of peace,
Weeps for us and will not cease.

What have we to do, we who know Him,
With the flesh, the earth, some carnal Paladin?

Only he can draw from idols, self-engraven
Our hearts to joy, peace, and living;

That filled with life which rests in Him,
Our cup might soon o'er flow it's brim.

What will strip our eyes of the scales of Saul?
Rid us of blindness and all that befouls?

What will open our eyes to horizons abroad?

But "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,

That we might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19).

For some time there has been a system of thought prevalent among brethren that personal responsibility ceases when one endeavours in the name of some object, person, or institution. This is nothing but rank idolatry. Idolatry can be defined as anything that usurps or takes the place of God. To fall down and worship an idol does not require one to carve an Adonis or an Aphrodite and cover it with adoration. Any deed perpetrated in violation of truth, that is justified by "something higher" than the word of God is idolatry. Whether our idol be physical possessions, political or social prestige and power, intellectual attainment or degree, an institution or a person, if it usurps our normal, reasonable service unto God, it is idolatry.

There will be no institutions to intercede for us on the day of judgement to mitigate our conduct, or to provide us with author-

ity for neglecting or violating the word of God. There will be no home or family to stand behind, no church, no civil government, no scholastic license, no school or college, no business. Everyone will stand naked and alone and will be judged "Out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12). God will render unto every man according to his deeds (Rom. 2:6).

THE FAMILY ICON

Brethren forsake the gathering of the saints and thereby grind under foot the Son of God, count the blood of Christ unworthy, and heap contempt on the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:22-27). What idol shall they stand behind and plead their cause at the judgement? They have walked over the only propitiator they have. Can they importune, "But I had to work! I have a family to care for! Bills to pay! Have mercy on me!?" "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:26, 27). And what of those of us that let them go their way and make no effort to bring them back? Worse still, what shall be the end of those that permitted them to come and go as they pleased, asked them to lead in prayer, maybe let them teach a class when they attended, and slyly encouraged their feet to hell? "And through thy knowledge, shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ" (I Cor. 8:11,12). The idols of home, family, friendship, and etiquette can not parley for us against righteous judgement.

BUY TRUTH AND SELL IT NOT

A man can not hide behind the name "Editor" and franchise error taught through his magazine or bulletin and plead, "I do not have to agree with everything that is printed in my paper. I must print error to show "both sides" to every 'controversy.'" Do papers, magazines, and other printed material teach or no? If no, why print them? If yes, then the printed word falls under the same warning, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:11,12).

Paul made no excuse for his teaching, for he was able to say at all times, "That the gospel which was preached of me is not after man . . . but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11,12). If any of us would speak or write, let our words be from the word of God, for whatsoever is not of faith (and faith cometh by hearing

the word of God) is sin. In almost all the "brotherhood" papers, and in some books written by brethren, there has appeared manifestly solecistic dogma. No effort was made by those that printed it to refute it. The prestige of power and position, the appeal to scholastic license will not absolve these men of their part in the broadcast of tares in the Lord's church.

THE INSTITUTIONAL FETISH

Some might be offended if they were accused of thinking more of a college, a school, or the government than they do of the Lord's church or His will. Jesus drew no fine lines, but was quite specific when He said, "No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one and despise the other" (Matt. 6:24). Paul said, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey" (Matt. 7:20)? Jesus did not leave it to speculation as to whom or what a man may serve, for by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20).

Many will use the idol of government and patriotism to stand behind as they violate the word of God. "I am justified in taking an innocent man's life," they claim, "Have you not heard of War? I am not killing as an individual, but as an arm of the state. Am I not supposed to be in subjection to the state?" Why not be a prostitute for the state, to further the cause of the state? Why not lie? Why not steal? Why not commit any sin, that "good" might come: The advancement of the state? Where will the government be on the day of judgement, when we are confronted with those that we killed in it's name?

What will be the end of those who spend all their time and energy raising money for a school, while the brethren who are in difficult places preaching the gospel go without? What odd and un-natural altars we offer up our time and energy on. Years heaped upon years, and when we look back upon our mass of sacrifices, to what god were they offered? Were souls saved and put on the road to heaven, or were young recruited and sent on their way to college? Were souls rooted and grounded in love by faith in Jesus Christ, or were minds drilled in logarithms and the descendents of Noah? Was error met and destroyed by the sword of the Spirit, or were our opponents those that opposed the gods we serve? Surely our money, time, and effort, our talents if you will, must follow us to judgement. They will speak out against us, for we have squandered what was ours not for that which is eternal, but that which is earthly.

SALT ON THE SHELF, LEAVEN IN THE JAR

While the world is going to hell for lack of salt to savour and leaven to lighten, some hide away the salt on the shelf, and keep the leaven in the jar. "Our children!" they cry, the oldest of all idols . . . how many times have we bowed to it's ungrateful form? "Our Children! What will happen to our children if we do not spend our time, and energy and money to provide them with a haven from the world?" Has strength ever come through ease? We were all young once, where did our strengths come from? Even Jesus, "though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him" (Heb. 5:8,9). Strength is made through suffering, not seclusion. Our responsibility to our children is to raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and that responsibility is not transferable. We are to develop in them that which will survive into eternity. It would make no difference at all if they never learned the multiplication table, if they learned the love that is in Jesus. We wonder why young people often reject our earth bound idolatry. Any man that follows Christ knows that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and all the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (II Pet. 3:10,11).

CONCLUSION

Sin is never obvious and distinct to the sinner. It is a subtle and nefarious charmer that gently guides our feet down a most attractive path. Why should the Deceiver bind us in chains of steel and iron, when cords of flowers, and candy cages will do just as well? If our own conscience condemns our actions, how much more the God that sees all and knows all? But be *not* deceived, for beneath his calm wooley exterior the prince of the air is a greedy, hungry beast, waiting to devour all that are his.

Our goal is heaven, not earth. Our path is in Jesus, not in man or his institutions. Our weapons are not those that harm the flesh, but those that come from above which divide soul and spirit. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be given unto you."

*Route 1, Box 5-B
Kirkland, Illinois 60146*

Spiritual Creativity

(or Are You Assembling More But Enjoying It Less?)

Royce Chandler

To us "conservatives" the ideas of change and variety ring an incongruous bell; while such signals put us on guard against unscriptural alterations of teaching or practice, we sometimes let them stifle us from diversification which is both scriptural and beneficial.

It must be admitted by most of us that certain forms and procedures of performing required services (e.g., the Lord's supper), which forms and procedures are matters purely of expediency, have acquired the undeserved status of being "the" way of doing things. Consequently, we all hear the common complaint that our services are not as meaningful as they could be. While many immediately ridicule such an idea, I take exception.

It certainly is necessary to keep our eyes upon the Word, our hearts in the revealed Gospel, and our feet upon authoritative bedrock. None of this need be sacrificed, however, to free ourselves from traditional cages and to enjoy a refreshing diversity in expedient means and methods of performing required things.

One of the speakers at the Florida College lectures (1973) referred to Pat Boone's boredom with always knowing exactly what to expect in a local church's assembly (i.e., preaching, singing familiar songs, etc.) and responded with, "Does he expect to see a tight-rope walker?" Within the context of that speech, this reply was pointedly appropriate. I have no sympathy with Pat's particular type of boredom; however, I do sympathize with my brethren who are bored with our ingrained traditions.

Behavioral scientists have known for some time that individuals possess various capacities for enduring monotony. Some, by nature, are able to endure great degrees of tedium with no desire for change, while others, by nature, can endure very little of one routine but must find variation and novelty to prevent frustration; these are known as variety-seekers. Neither is supposed to be superior to the other, it is simply a matter of fact and of personality difference. I say this simply to demonstrate that a desire for change and variety is not a mark of liberal learning; while some have gone into worldly excesses in this area, others have not. There is no reason why a faithful saint should fear to find variety in our assemblies, as long as we stay within revealed bounds. *A plea for change is not synonymous with apostasy.*

It is true that a faithful saint should be able to endure anything without losing his devotion to Jesus and His Word, but it does not

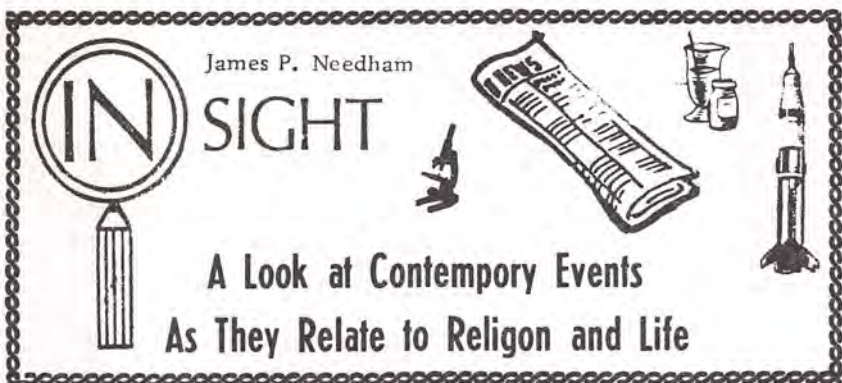
follow that if one is frustrated by the monotony of tradition that he should be tagged as "weak," "a bit liberal," or "an emotion-alist." However, because of the spiritual frustration this routine-ness has wrought in many local churches, I choose to tag it as a problem of "traditional paralysis."

We do not mean to intimate that all worship has lost its meaning or that our traditional procedures in expediences are totally incapable of producing a high degree of edification; we simply make the point that the aesthetic beauty of worship (certain amounts of which are well within scriptural bounds) is often impaired by the mechanical routines. That a certain amount of aesthetic quality is needed is most easily seen in our singing, one purpose of which is to edify each other. While God can rejoice in reading the heart of one who sings a step off-key, few of those who recognize the dissonance are edified. Beautiful singing uplifts us more than drab singing; a nice, clean place to assemble puts us in a more attentive frame of mind than does a shabby, dirty place. To say that our edification does not at all depend upon aesthetic qualities is to be unrealistic--but, I am the first to agree we should **not over-emphasize them**, but neither are we required to neglect them.

Making use of what I shall term "Scriptural creativity" could help us all to enjoy even more our assemblies together. This term refers simply to new and varied approaches which beget an atmosphere of variety--change--imagination--personableness to our worship, without relaxing the limits of revelation. For example, how many different ways are there to arrange the Lord's supper service? The elements used and day of partaking are specified by Scripture but the expedients involved are not; cannot such items as Scripture readings, exhortative remarks, position (i.e., before or after the sermon), and singing be imaginatively approached so as to flavor the assembly with a fresh change of pace? How many various methods can be found to apply to every area of our worship: the singing, teaching and preaching methods, praying, giving, gospel meetings, radio work, classes, bulletins, use of members' talents and any other area of scriptural service or work? Given due attention, there is no need for any method to become "the" method--ever!

Man is not made to be his happiest or most productive while living in a routine rut; why should it be different religiously? The abuse of church cooperation does not keep us from cooperating scripturally; neither should the abuse of imagination and variety keep us from using it, when we can enjoy it within Biblical bounds.

- 385 East Lexington Ave.
Danville, Kentucky 40422



James P. Needham

IN SIGHT

A Look at Contemporary Events
As They Relate to Religion and Life

A "Leakey" Theory!!!

Dr. Louis S. B. Leakey (now deceased) was a renowned anthropologist, and his archaeological discoveries of fossil bones in Tanzania, "revolutionized the study of prehistoric man" (National Geographic). His finds and theories have been heralded by evolutionists the world over.

His son Richard Leakey, is continuing his father's work, and recently made a discovery which he thinks punches holes in his father's theory of the age of man. The story was carried in Orlando Evening Star, Nov. 9, 1972. I quote from it:

"The discovery of a fragmented skull, believed the oldest complete skull of early man, could upset the current theory of man's evolution, a Kenyan scientist said today.

"Researcher Richard Leakey said the skull is 2.5 million years old and is 'almost certainly the oldest complete skull of early man.' He estimated it is 1.5 million years older than bones previously accepted as the earliest evidence of man . . . "

It is amazing how "cock sure" the evolutionist can be of the certainty of their theory of the origin and age of men with the flimsy, uncertain evidence upon which they base it. They teach evolution as a fact in our schools. They elaborate the theory in great detail, and present as proof the various fossil bones dis-

covered by hosts of researchers. Up until now "Australopithecus," was an important link in the theory, but look what this article says about that poor fellow:

"He (Richard Leakey, JPN) explained that current theory holds that Homo sapiens evolved, within the past 2 million years, from 'Australopithecus,' a primitive creature having the physical characteristics of both ape and man.

"But now, he said, the new East African finds provide 'clear evidence' that, rather than evolving from Australopithecus, a 'large brained, truly upright and two-legged form of the genus Homo existed contemporaneously with Australopithecus more than 2.5 million years ago.

"Throughout the time range of deposits at East Rudolf, the two hominid (man-like) lines are represented and it would seem that Australopithecus, as known, can be excluded from our line of ancestry.

"While the skull is different from our own species, Homo sapiens, it is also different from all other known forms of early man and thus does not fit into any of the presently-held theories of human evolution."

Thus, poor old Australopithecus not only has lost his place in the theory of evolution, but they have just about relegated him to ranks of a common, ordinary ape. What a revolting development this is!!! I know Australopithecus must be terribly embarrassed along with his mentor, Dr. Leakey! Give an evolutionist a bunch of bones and a few million years and he can fabricate almost anything. It is about time they decided that evolution is a "Leakey" theory, and abandon the whole thing. It won't hold water! And this becomes more and more evident as time goes on.

PLANNING TO MOVE?
PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS
CHANGE IN ADVANCE.



Worth Repeating

Articles, Excerpts and Tidbits Clipped
and Snipped from Hither, Thither and Yon

Exalted Organizations

W. C. Hinton

"Pride in organizations other than the church of our Lord will make you become a 'defector of the faith.' Orphan homes, colleges, various periodicals, youth organizations, Herald of Truth, Amazing Grace, mission movements, homes for the aged, clinics, homes for unwed mothers, and other organizations of men may or may not be useful productive groups worthy of support of individuals but most certainly NOT of the church. Yet, these organizations and loyalty for them outranks the love of brethren, honor for the Truth and fidelity to the Lord as evidenced by their determination to preserve their projects at ANY cost. Yet, the N. T. is filled with proper directives: 'Seek God's kingdom first,' 'Keep my commandments,' 'Be thou faithful unto death,' 'They wrest the scriptures to their own destruction,' 'Each count other better than himself,' and 'Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Certainly one must love God with all his heart and the proof of this is the unity attained and maintained in the body of Christ. That was never accomplished in any age yet, by the exalting of man-made decrees and/or organizations above the God-ordained, heaven-sent, predetermined, blood-bought body of Christ even the church of our Lord. Hell is much too good for such 'wreckers of the faith' and destroyers of the initiative of the outsider to obey Truth and be saved."

*Highland Street Messenger
Hammond, Indiana
February 25, 1973*



Richmond, Virginia -- "We enjoy reading **TORCH**, the articles and the printing are both excellent." --Delmer Cofield

Temple Terrace, Florida -- "I intensely enjoy reading **TORCH** and recognize it as one of the only 'papers' out and about that drives the truth home with as much vigor and strength. I appreciate the stand for truth that you so faithfully take. May God bless you in the efforts to proclaim His truth to the world." --Bruce Edwards

Nashville, Tennessee -- "Just to thank you for the **TORCH** and its informative articles. I am glad I can send in these names . . ." --Helen Hayes

Cardwell, Missouri -- "I enjoy **TORCH** very much and think that a solid printing like this is priceless in the troubles of today." --W. C. Gilmore

Yeaddiss, Kentucky -- "I appreciate the **TORCH** very much. Keep up the good work. I've been in a wheel chair over 22 years. I would be glad to get bulletins from any congregation. A small group meets in my home, and I try to preach the truth to all that will come." --Ray Pennington

(Editor's Note: Why not put bro. Pennington on your bulletin mailing list? JPN)

Taylor, South Carolina -- "I hope the sub list continues to grow, as Jim is doing a good job as editor. Of course, I must admit that I'm prejudiced as we are good friends of long standing, but still I like his writings better than anyone in the brotherhood today . . ." --Glenn Shaver

Xenia, Ohio -- "In my estimation the 'WHAT'S YOUR QUESTION' section of **TORCH** is the best feature, however the entire

paper is consistently good. Jim wanted to know what subscribers think of the subject index. In the words of the Alka Seltzer commercial, 'I like it.' " --Austin Mobley

Memphis, Tennessee -- "I don't know where I could spend \$2 and put it to any better use . . . of all the publications I get, **TORCH** is the one I look forward to every month. I do some preaching, and I hope the writers in **TORCH** don't mind my 'stealing' a thought here and there from their articles. (Editor's Note: They don't mind if the person's they 'stole' them from don't!!! JPN). May the Lord bless you and brother Farris, as well as all the others who help to make **TORCH** a fine religious paper. Keep up the good work." --Shelby Sims

Port Arthur, Texas -- "We have been receiving the **TORCH** for about 7 months now and really enjoy reading it. It is always full of timely articles that every Christian should read." --Mary Wright

Temple Terrace, Florida -- "I have enjoyed and benefit from the **TORCH**. Keep up your good work." --Buddy Payne

Athens, Alabama -- "Please renew my subscription to **TORCH**. Its articles are thought provoking and much needed in this troubled time. Keep up the good work." --Kenneth Mitchell

Parkersburg, West Virginia -- "My husband and I would like to commend you on your good work in **TORCH**. We enjoy it very much. We also highly recommend the book **PREACHERS AND PREACHING** to those who hope to be preachers and also to the saints. My husband and I have found the book most helpful." --Mr. and Mrs. James R. Caplinger

Louisville, Kentucky -- "I commend you for the fine review of your trip (to the Philippines,jpn) which you carried in **TORCH**. I believe your suggestions for American brethren about the work and proper relationship to it were very much in order. I certainly concur in what you said about the inadvisability of a different set of preachers going every year. Like you, I am not especially anxious to go again, but think it would be better for those who have had a part in raising support for preachers and corresponding with many of them about many things." --Connie Adams

Pine Mountain Valley, Georgia -- "Please renew my subscription for **TORCH**. I enjoy it very much and look forward to every issue . . ." --Dennie C. Abernathy

Athens, Alabama -- "I enjoy **TORCH** so much. It has so much in it that I am interested in. I feel that something is missing in my home without it . . ." --Sarah Sammet

Louisville, Kentucky -- "Please renew my subscription for **TORCH**. I enjoy this publication; it has many good lessons in it. It is always fair in presenting both sides of any lesson. Keep up the good work." --James E. Walker

Corrigan, Texas -- "I appreciate so very much brother Needham's statements in the editorials of the January issue." --Jack Gilliland

Henderson, Kentucky -- "I got the sample copy of **TORCH** and then the February issue that you sent in answer to my request to subscribe to this magazine. I am very pleased with it. I believe brother Needham to be one of the best men I have ever known, and he really has a gift for teaching the word of God." --Mrs. E.R. Patterson

San Antonio, Texas -- "I would like to subscribe to your paper: the **TORCH**. I was very impressed with the December issue of 1972 that I borrowed." --Alan Bonifay

Louisville, Kentucky -- "I continue to enjoy **TORCH**. Continue the good work with it. I certainly am benefited by the fine articles. I hope that you will be addressing yourself to the Ketcherside teaching in the near future . . ." --Mike Grushon

Romulus, Michigan -- "**TORCH** is stimulating and enlightening. I enjoy getting it." --L.A. Mott, Jr.

Pasadena, Texas -- "I believe your paper is the finest material now published." --Curtis J. Torno

Beaufort, S.C. -- "Just a note to say how much I enjoy **TORCH** and how much I appreciate the fine job you and your family are doing in the publishing of the magazine." --Margaret Crump

Hazel Green, Alabama -- ". . . I always look forward to receiving this fine publication." --Leonard F. Bobo

Kansas City, Missouri -- "I continue to enjoy and profit from **TORCH**. It deserves a much wider circulation." --Robert H. West

Chester, Virginia -- "I enjoy the paper very much and I hope you will keep up the good work." --Charles E. Crowder

What's Your Question?

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS. Send to: James
P. Needham, 1600 Oneco Avenue, Winter Park, Florida 32789.

QUESTION: WITHDRAWING FROM THE WITHDRAWN

+++++
+
+ "How can the church withdraw from members who have +
+ withdrawn from it?" - Kentucky +
+
+++++

REPLY:

This is an often asked question, and one that deserves a scriptural answer. Almost every church that undertakes to withdraw from those who "walk disorderly" (2 Thess. 3:6), meets the objection, "We cannot withdraw from those who have withdrawn from us." In some cases, this objection is so frustrating that it keeps churches from doing what the Bible plainly tells them to do. Let us look at this objection in the light of the scriptures. What is wrong with it?

1. **It is unscriptural:** There is no scripture that even hints at the idea of members withdrawing from the church. We can read plain instructions for the church to withdraw from ungodly members (1 Cor. 5:4,5; Rom. 16:17,18; 2 Thess. 3:6,14), but NOT ONE WORD about ungodly members withdrawing from the church. To be scriptural a thing must be taught in the scriptures. I would be happy to learn where this idea is found in the Bible. We must "*speak as the oracles of God*" (1 Pet. 4:11). I can do this and talk about withdrawing from those who walk disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6), but he who says the church cannot withdraw from those who have withdrawn from it is speaking as the wisdom of men which is foolishness to God (1 Cor. 3:19).

2. **It sanctions free-lance membership:** There are two ways by which one can remove himself from membership in a local church: (a) By transferring it from one sound church to another, or (b) By death. Until one of these events occurs, one remains a member of the congregation where he holds membership. He may be classified as a faithful or unfaithful member, but in either case, he is a member.

If this is not true, then free-lance membership is sanctioned. One could decide he no longer wants to be a member of a local church, withdraw his membership and become a free-lancer. I have not found any authority for free-lance membership in the New Testament. Christians in the New Testament were identified with some local church where this was possible.

3. It conflicts with the shepherd feature of the work of elders: Elders are called shepherds (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). Does a shepherd allow his sheep to withdraw from him? If his sheep jump the fence and get in his enemy's pasture, does he say, "They are no longer my sheep? They have withdrawn from me and taken up with my enemy, so they are his sheep now?" Certainly not! Neither should God's shepherds assume such an attitude in reference to the souls for which they are commanded to watch (Heb. 13:17).

4. It would create a loophole in God's law: If this be a scriptural concept, the church could never withdraw from the disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6), because the disorderly would always beat it to the draw. All they would have to do to avoid being withdrawn from would be to say, "You can't withdraw from me, I have already withdrawn from you." The church would then be helpless to carry out the command to withdraw from the disorderly (2 Thess. 3:6). This clearly would be a loophole in the divine law. It cannot be correct. Man cannot find loopholes in a law given by an omniscient God.

5. It would completely nullify the Bible's teaching on church discipline: If a member joined a denomination, the church could not withdraw from him because he no longer claims membership. If a member became a fornicator, murderer, or whatever, but disclaimed membership, the church could do nothing; he has withdrawn from it. The church could never withdraw from any member regardless of how sinful or disorderly, if he disclaimed membership in the church. This amounts to a nullification of Bible teaching on church discipline. The matter of church discipline would therefore be settled by who is quickest on the (with) draw! It would be like the boss who walked up to an employee and said, "You're fired!" The employee replied, "Man, you can't fire me, I quit!" I am not ready to reduce such a serious matter as church discipline to this frivolous level. It fits in the same category as the person who argues, "Baptism cannot be essential to salvation because I knew a man who got killed on his way to be baptized." If this is sound argumentation, then the Bible's teaching on baptism is thereby nullified. The same can be said for those who

(continued on page 22)

How You Can Win Souls

Glenn L. Shaver

First, by being a Christian yourself! "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16). Let your light shine, and let those around you see Christ in your life (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27). We are new creatures, created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:10).

Second, by living as God's Spirit leads you through His inspired word. Be an example to all of godliness and righteousness. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:9,14). Let the world see that you are not being led by your own motives and feelings, but by the Spirit of God. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:8).

Third, by studying the Bible, that you will be an approved worker of God and can rightly divide His divine truth (2 Tim. 2:15). Lack of Bible knowledge is one of the greatest hinderances to proclamation of the gospel (Hos. 4:6; Heb. 5:12-14). "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Fourth, by believing that the gospel of Christ is the "only" saving power of God for sinners, and by not being ashamed to share and tell it (Rom. 1:16). Tell the lost about this power that transformed the chief sinner and those that crucified Christ (Acts 2; 9; 22).

Fifth, by developing a steadfast confidence in the word of God and its promises. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish

that which I please, and it shall prosper in the things whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). It is our privilege to plant the good seed of the kingdom, and God will give the increase" (Lk. 8; 1 Cor. 3:6,7).

Sixth, by using your ability in the kingdom of the Lord, that you may bear much fruit. This is the true test of those who are converted to Christ (Matt. 20:1-16; Jno. 15:1-8; Matt. 25). You can win souls to the Savior, IF you really believe you can, and are willing to try! Walter Scott said, "Success or failure in life is more the result of mental attitude than mental capacity." Solomon declared, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he . . ." (Prov. 23:7). "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30).

No doubt but that multitudes can be contacted and led to the Lamb of God who can save souls. This can only be done IF we will take them the soul-saving message of the gospel. Beloved, unless you are working to win souls to the Savior, then you are unemployed in the Lord's vineyard. In the kingdom of God there is no "unemployment compensation." Only those who have worked for the Master have right to the tree of life. Let us work in the vocation wherein we have been called. If you are too busy to win souls for Christ, then you are TOO BUSY! Remember, we have been WON to WIN, and SAVED to SAVE.

P.O. Box 506
Taylors, South Carolina 29687

What's Your Question? (continued from page 20)

argue, "The church cannot withdraw from those who have withdrawn from it." If one is sound, so is the other.

CONCLUSION

Church discipline, like family discipline, is a very sad occasion. It is our last ditch effort to save the sinful. It is absurd to reduce it to the level of a gunslingers duel between the church and wayward members; the winner being the party who "gets the drop" on the other. It is love's effort to help that brother or sister who has been again entangled in and overcome by the world (2 Pet. 2:21). Like family discipline, it must not be done in haste with hate and harshness, but with loving concern for its object. If people would spend as much time and energy in trying to obey the law as they do in trying to find a loophole in it, everyone would be better off. Let us do God's will in God's way. It is the only way to be right.

Philippines Benevolence Report

A. A. Granke, Jr.

Numerous bulletins and journals published by conservative Christians have carried letters and articles describing the disaster which struck the Philippines last year. A severe flood inundated many lowland areas, and triggered devastating landslides in the highland areas of the northern island of Luzon. In some places rainfall exceeded 180 inches within a period of several weeks. Many late crops were destroyed. Relief which was hoped would come with the December harvest failed to materialize due to extensive crop failure from a drought which followed. Meanwhile, a long drought in the Visayas, the central islands of the archipelago, and on the southern island of Mindanao brought hardship to those islands. Recently, a Moslem insurrection perpetuated the hardship on Mindanao. The insurgents destroyed homes, crops and industry, and disrupted transportation and communications. Many families, to include saints, fled their homes to seek safety. Although hardship among those brethren still exists to some degree, it has been greatly reduced and does not appear urgent at present.

The response to the distress of the Philippine saints by American and Canadian churches, as well as by individual brethren, has been most generous. In addition to the benevolence sent to several native preachers, I have received funds totaling \$20,521.34 and approximately eight tons of foodstuffs and reusable clothing for distribution among faithful, needy saints. This benevolence has greatly relieved the needs among worthy Filipino brethren and their families, and has given them reason to rejoice with much thanksgiving toward God.

I am pleased to report the emergency conditions have been satisfied, and although poverty will long be an affliction of these brethren, the state of most has returned to normal. The need for emergency contributions of funds, clothing and foodstuffs no longer exists.

Most contributions have been acknowledged by letter, and reports have been furnished to the contributors when distribution has been completed. However, there was no way to identify some contributors. Therefore, on behalf of the Filipino saints you have aided I offer you our most hearty thanks.

I anticipate distributing the remaining portion of the bounty within the near future. If you sent a contribution but have not yet received a summary of it's distribution, you may expect a report soon.

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May 1973



TORCH

*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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James P. Needham

(Excerpt from editorial, January 1973)

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Editor
James P. Needham

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Editorial

James P. Needham



Instrumental Music and Worship

In the March, 1973, issue of *Carolina Christian*, Howard Winters, the editor, argues that singing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19) with instrumental music is right as long as it is not worship. Notice what he says:

"It is our firm judgment and often repeated conclusion that instrumental music is sinful only in the worship of God. And we do not believe that a funeral or a wedding should be classed as worship. Therefore the use of the instrument at such gatherings is not wrong. Our problem here lies in a failure to distinguish between a service rendered to God (which must be authorized by Him, whether it is rendered at home, out in the field, under a tree, or at a church building) and a service to ourselves. Instrumental music is wrong only when it is offered to God--only because it is offered to God as an unauthorized act; it is not wrong when it is used as entertainment or to beautify a wedding ceremony . . . We will have no problem with such matters if we will just see that worship is a service rendered to God, and that any service so rendered must be authorized (Cf. 1 Thess. 5:21) a wedding (and for the most part funerals) is a service rendered to man, and God has not regulated such service, except in a general way. We must therefore learn to distinguish between that which is offered to God (worship) and that which is done for our own enjoyment." (p. 9)

There are some basic assumptions in this argument that need to be proven. Let us notice them:

1. **That funeral and weddings are not worship:** It is true that they don't have to be. When the atheist, Robert Ingersol, made an oration at his brother's grave, it was not worship, and when a couple goes before a secular judge for a wedding ceremony, that is not worship. But these do not describe the weddings and funerals brother Winters refers to. He, no doubt, refers to those which he and other gospel preachers conduct in which some of the same songs are sung that are sung in the assemblies of the church along with prayers and gospel preaching. Our brother says these are not worship, but he didn't prove it. Worship is simply "homage paid." He is correct in saying that the true worship is homage paid to God in a God-appointed way. But he does not convince me that when we preach the same gospel, sing the same songs, and pray to the same God at a funeral and/or wedding that it is something other than when we do the same things at a church assembly! It would require some rather spectacular mental gymnastics to arrive at such a conclusion!

2. **That songs written for the worship of God can be sung with instrumental accompaniment out of worship for our own enjoyment and entertainment.** If this is true, then all passages in the New Testament referring to singing must refer to and regulate singing *in the assembly*. This is definitely *not* the case as can be seen from the following chart:

Passages	Assembly Mentioned	Assembly Not Mentioned
Matt. 26:30	X	
Mk. 14:26	X	
Acts 16:25		X
Rom. 15:9		X
1 Cor. 14:15		X
Eph. 5:19		X
Col. 3:16		X
Heb. 2:12	X	
Jas. 5:13		X

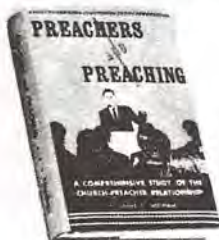
Since these passages regulate the singing of "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" both in and out of the assembly, then brother Winter's argument will not stand. The only way for his argument to stand is for him to prove that *all* these passages refer to singing in a church assembly. This he cannot do, but I would like to see him try. Thus, the regulations for singing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" are the same regardless of where it is done. It is just as scriptural to sing them with instrumental accompaniment in the assembly as *out*.

I have not yet figured out how a Christian could sing "*Our God, He is Alive*," or "*How Great Thou Art*," etc. with instrumental music for entertainment and enjoyment-not worship! Just how would one be using the name of God in this context? Would it be alright to use the name of God in other ways for our entertainment and enjoyment? If so, someone needs to explain what constitutes using the name of God in VAIN. Any time one sings a God-honoring song it had better be in a God-appointed way or it becomes sinful.

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College Bible Departments -- Products of Illegitimate Necessity

Royce Chandler

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following unsolicited article from a very able recent product of a college Bible department is a thought-provoking one. In it he says many of the same things we have been saying for some time. We note that a good many brethren, old and young, are thinking along the same line. It is sometimes charged that this thinking is a reaction to institutionalism--a swinging to the opposite extreme. I am sure this is an honest appraisal, but that doesn't make it true. It may well be the result of a determined effort to protect the church of the Lord from history's most fruitful source of apostasy. There are efforts to laugh off this observation, but the present trends in ALL such schools may soon turn the laughter into tears. This editorial note is not an endorsement of all that is said and/or implied in this good article. It doesn't need my endorsement or disclaimer--it shall stand upon its own merits and its author's ability to defend his own thinking, which we believe he is able and willing to do. JPN).

There are saints among us who will be angered by the above title, but who are some of the foremost spokesmen for the all-sufficiency of the Lord's local church. Such, to this writer at least, appears to be inconsistent.

Did the Spirit know what He was saying when He used Paul to teach that the church was perfectly equipped to build itself up into perfection by the proper working of each individual part (Eph. 4:9-16)? If that is true and we believe it, why do some of us hold so vehemently to the absolute necessity of maintaining a college Bible department for the training of young men to become preachers and elders?

While this is not an attack upon any specific school, it is a reaction to the thinking of those who believe that if college Bible departments were disbanded, the church and the faith of our children would be in jeopardy. Actually, it seems that the opposite is true; i.e., if Bible departments are seen as necessary for servicing the churches and teaching the Bible to our children, then both are indeed in jeopardy.

Why are such organizations deemed necessary? Some would

say we need them to train young preachers, to insure top quality Bible instruction, to see that the next generation of preachers teaches sound doctrine, and to help preserve the faith of our young students living in a skeptic's world. These are worthy goals, but none really depends at all upon the existence of Bible departments in "brotherhood colleges."

I would suggest that the proported justification for such departments is founded upon supposed needs, which in the light of Scripture, are illegitimate. If we, as responsible saints, are individually functioning within the church as the Spirit directs that we should, there would be no need to try to justify either the existence or the necessity of a Bible department in a school operated by saints, for such needs cited to justify such organizations would not exist. When the Lord's church and His saints are functioning Scripturally, preachers will be trained, top quality instruction will be available, our next "crop" of preachers will teach sound doctrine, and the faith of our children will be preserved--all within the framework of the local church. When these things are not being provided in such a framework, it is because of a failure in us, not because Jesus has not provided for them in His body. Thus, "need" to do something about the lack of training young saints receive is in and of itself illegitimate, for God does not give us the right to let it exist, but demands that we be thorough and complete in the teaching and training of all saints (Eph. 6:4; Acts 20:26ff; *e.g.*). Jesus arranged for this thorough spiritual development to be accomplished through the same organization which is completely equipped to do every other work assigned it; *i.e.*, the local body of Christ. When college Bible departments are created to satisfy needs resulting from the malfunction of local churches, they satisfy a need that has no right to exist, and which would not have existed had said local churches functioned as God intended. Thus, College Bible departments are products of illegitimate necessity.

We simply maintain that there is nothing needed outside the proper working of local church members to insure any of the following: (1) quality Bible instruction, (2) qualified preachers, (3) sound doctrine, (4) the future security of the church, (5) the continued faithfulness of our children in an evil world, or (6) the filing of any other spiritual need. If we affirm that Bible schools are necessary to preserve any of these, we affirm that the local church is incomplete in its heretofore supposed autonomous perfection. Three failures have yielded our tendency to look beyond the local organization to supply the missing instruction, and those are the failures of: (1) parents, (2) elders, and (3) preachers.

Parents in the Ephesian church were told to nurture their children "in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Nothing outside of the home or the local church was

**If children lose
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necessary to accomplish that. Dad and Mom have always been God's primary source of spiritual instruction of the young (see Deut. 4:9-10; 11:18-21; 32:46-47; Prov. 1:8; 4:1; 8:33; 13:1; 15:32, etc.). If children lose their faith, it probably is because their parents failed in their responsibility as spiritual teachers, and little blame can be cast elsewhere. It is not at all necessary for children to leave the home to get the needed teaching, if their parents are spending the time God requires of them

in family Bible study. The failure of parents does not justify the existence of another organization to take over their teaching.

Elders are responsible for feeding sound and complete spiritual food to every soul in their charge (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17). When a local church lacks the necessary teaching to insure sound doctrine, to secure the faith of those in attendance to the teaching, or to make its men able to teach it to others, then it is because the elders have failed in their work. This failure does not justify the existence of another organization to do the elders' teaching.

Preachers are burdened with the task of committing the gospel to "faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). By no means is it necessary to go beyond the organization of the local church to accomplish this task. Faithfully following God's directions (parents' nurturing, elders' feeding, and preachers' committing) forms God's perfect and unbeatable combination.

Upon His ascension Christ gave gifts unto men (Eph. 4:11ff). These gifts were capable of "perfecting the saints," of "building up the body of Christ," of making each of us a "fullgrown man" in the unity of faith and knowledge of Christ; that we might "grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ." Thus, "through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part," the Lord's church is perfectly equipped to provide for every spiritual need that arises in connection with its work.

If the local church truly is self-sufficient in matters of benevo-

lence, and if we must resist all extraneous organizations and systems as unnecessary additions, why do we hang onto a religiously oriented school as vital to the preservation and progress of conservative doctrine and training? And the point of how the Bible departments are supported is irrelevant; the point is that they have no need to exist if the Lord's plan is used. Since there is no legitimate need for them, why set them up to menace the churches with the ever-present threat of centralized power and massive destruction when they turn apostate?

The local church is all-sufficient in its work of evangelism, and the training and developing of preachers is a proper and necessary part of that work. Likewise, the developing of qualified elders comes under the church's work of edification; but if the local church is as complete as the Bible says it is, there is no need for any to leave it and go to a college Bible school to be properly trained either as an elder or a preacher. The local church is either complete to do all its work, or it is incomplete. By what right do we go to such lengths to secure our all-sufficiency in benevolence, but side-step our all-sufficiency in evangelism? Could it be that some are so in love with a "pet" that it blurs their vision, dulls their initiative, dilutes their energy, and institutionalizes their responsibility?

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it is incomplete.

Secular courses taught by Christians are desirable and almost universally admitted to be right. Why not concentrate on teaching these secular subjects in an atmosphere of belief, and just disband the organized Bible departments? What would it hurt? Would local churches suffer? If so, then we show our unscriptural view of the department's purpose and of the incompleteness of the church. Would young preachers-to-be suffer? If so, we admit that many elders and preachers are unfaithful to their charge in this regard. Would our children's faith be endangered greatly? Then it is obvious that the teaching from parents, elders, and preachers is insufficient to secure their faith. Would sound doctrine suffer? If so, we again admit the inefficiency of God's arrangement. Would the school suffer? If so, why? Is it because some already look to it with untaught reverence and give it undeserved importance? Is the primary function of the college Bible department (or even the school as a whole) to train preachers for local churches (a work not given to any human organization) or simply to provide a "safe" atmosphere in which Christians can get

a secular education? We get a clear indication of the real purposes and values placed on these departments when we see the violent reactions of some who respond to articles such as this.

If the main function of a school is to provide a secular education taught by believers, then what harm would be done to that function by disbanding the Bible department? If harm is to come, it indicates that the real intention of such schools is not the same as the one stated. Is the probability of division and apostasy worth the cost? If so, by whose standards?

When you and I are being faithful to our own particular work as members of the Lord's body, the church will function as perfectly as God intends and will do so without our having to set up any sort of other organization to do part of our work for us. When we each do our own work, such things as Bible departments or any other questionable organization will have no need to exist. Hence, we come back to our title: College Bible Departments Are Products of Illegitimate Necessity.

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QUESTION: 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19,20 AND SMOKING

"I have just begun subscribing to TORCH and so far, am well pleased with the articles. However, I feel the need to say something concerning your use of 1 Cor. 6:19,20 to prove that smoking is wrong since it is harmful to the body. You seem to be saying that when a person harms his body in this way, he is defiling the temple of the Holy Spirit. Yet, it's quite clear from the context of this passage that Paul is not speaking of physical harm, but of fornication--it's fornication that defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit. Notice verse 18: 'Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.' Needless to say, fornication does not harm the body and yet it DOES defile the temple of the Holy Spirit--it DOES 'take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot' (v. 15). I'm afraid my brethren have used this passage carelessly--simply because it seems to furnish a quick and easy coup de grace to smoking; but in using this passage in this way, they have actually failed to 'rightly divide (handle accurately) the word of truth.' "

Don Partain
Route 2, Box 6-A
Alto, Texas 75925

REPLY:

I am fully aware of the need to keep every passage of scripture in its context, and we appreciate this brother's comments on *What's Your Question*, TORCH, Feb. 1973, even though we do not agree with his conclusion. Our brother is guilty of that of which he has accused others, namely, not observing the context. The context is simply the text connected to or interwoven with

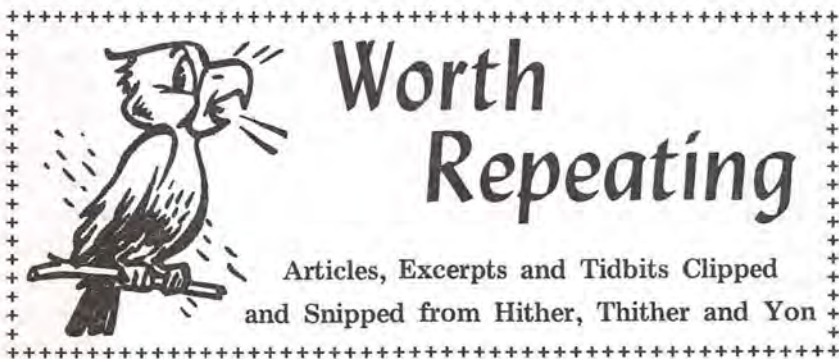
the text. When we look at the context of 1 Cor. 6:19,20, we note that Paul was discussing (1) Lawsuits among brethren (vs. 1-8). (2) General unrighteousness: fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with men, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners (vs. 9-11). (3) Meats (v. 13).

When he comes to verses 19, 20, he distinguishes between fornication and the other sins, saying that it is a sin against one's own body. He is showing that fornication is different from the others, but it does not follow (as our brother concludes) that one can glorify God in his body while committing all the other sins mentioned. This would be a monstrous conclusion! In the sins listed in verses 9-11, Paul mentions "drunkards." This involves an element one takes into the body which is harmful to it. This is exactly what happens in the use of tobacco, thus the context of 1 Cor. 6:19,20 involves the sin of doing physical harm to the fleshly body.

But if we admit that our brother's conclusion is correct, are there no other passages that make it a sin to harm the physical body? What about 1 Cor. 3:16,17, *"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye."* Romans 12:1, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service . . ."* 1 Thess. 5:23, *"And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Though our brother does not say so, his implication is that it is not sinful to engage in that which harms the physical body which medical science has proven smoking surely does. This evidence has been refined to the point that they can now predict just how much a given amount of smoking will reduce one's life expectancy. Now, if this evidence is reliable, to defend smoking is to defend suicide on the installment plan. If it be right to deliberately do that which one knows will kill him 10 years sooner, what would be wrong with doing that which will kill him instantly? (poison or a bullet). This is a question I have asked many times, but have received no satisfactory answer.

We are glad for our brother to be heard through our pages, and we will now leave it to the reading audience to decide who has failed to "handle accurately the word of truth."



Battle Weary?

Floyd Chappellear

Legion are the young preachers who have taken up the banner of Ketchersidian philosophy. Although we have no sympathy with that spirit of compromise, we will not deal with the error here but rather with the motivation of those who hold it. Some, in defense, have suggested that the young preachers who are thus led have come to their conclusions because they are weary of the long fight that has recently taken place between the faithful and those who lead the church into apostasy.

Balderdash! Hogwash! Express it as you will, but such conclusions are pure nonsense. These fledglings cannot possibly be overcome of exhaustion from the encounters because they never engaged in any of the battles. They might be "pooped out" because of their READING about the conflict, but "weary because of the conflict" (?), not very likely.

The youthful "knights in shining armor" would hardly recognize the battle scarred cloaks of the true soldiers of Christ, much less actually wear the garments into the fray. Rather, they, coming to the field of battle and feeling the nausea well up in their innards, because of their cowardice, throw down their weapons and run to embrace the enemy lest they, too, become part of the devastation.

By Ketcherside's own admission (see *Mission Messenger*, Vol. 34, p. 183) his beardless cohorts are made up of gutless wonders who compromise rather than stand upon their convictions. Thus groveling they feel some measure of pride because of their

"liberated" views and their superior intellects. Are these the ones who would stand against sin until Satan rallies sufficient strength to have them fired? Not on your life. Are these the ones who have been tempered by the fires of conflict so that they can readily oppose sectarianism within and without? Never. Instead of sympathy, such as Carl gives them, these need to feel the sharp sting of rebuke. Ketcherside may be proud of them, but they make this writer hang his head in shame that such are to be regarded as in the army of the Lord.

Let us never suggest that the "wet behind the ears" compromisers are what they are because of battle fatigue. They are what they are because of spinelessness. Furthermore, to place them in the same category as the veterans of spiritual wars is to do a disservice to the old soldiers. Let us not make that mistake.

4709 Ravensworth Rd.
Annandale, Va. 22003

An Old Giant Speaks on a Modern Issue

"Suffer me, my beloved brother, to very respectfully suggest, that we should not be for the hills of Virginia, the plains of Tennessee, for Bethany or Franklin College, but for the cause of our Master. It is not positively certain that colleges are resigned to be of service in the cause of Christ. Protestant Germany has endowed and settled upon herself a class of infidel schools infinitely worse than Roman usurpation; and I give it as my settled opinion, that it would be better for all of our colleges to be blotted out of existence than to permit them to cause serious differences amongst our great and good men.

"Finally, it is possibly a misfortune that so many of our able brethren have given themselves to the work of building up schools for youth, instead of laboring in the school of Christ, and you, my venerable brother, must give me the liberty to say, that perhaps if you and I should not live to see the day, the time may not be far distant when myriads may have cause to regret that we have given so much of our time, talent and energy to institutions, certainly inferior to the church of God, and in some respects of doubtful religious tendencies."

Tolbert Fanning, to Alexander Campbell, March 18, 1859

Needham's Notes

COVERING QUESTION CONFUSION

Some brother sent me a booklet entitled "LET HER BE COVERED" (by Emery McCallister). I was quite amazed at the first paragraph, which says:

"Let everyone that reads this know that we are not making this a test of fellowship or to cause division but that we might clear our hands of someone's blood who otherwise might be lost, through being misled" (p. 1).

I have not yet figured out how this brother can consistently say that he does not make the covering a "test of fellowship" while at the same time saying that he must clear his "hands of someone's blood who otherwise might be lost, through being misled" on the subject. How can a matter fraught with such supposed dire consequences not be a "test of fellowship"? Our brother surely believes that those who are misled on instrumental music will be lost also, but will he fellowship those who use it? If not, why not? He is willing to consign to torment those who disagree with him on the covering question, but he will not make it "a test of fellowship"!!!

A MANHATTAN-TYPE PROGRAM FOR HARLEM

The church where I preach received a form letter date 1-15-73 from the church in Flushing, N.Y. It tells of their plan to preach the 'gospel' (?) in Harlem. They claim that they are going to "change the citizenry through conversion--from criminals to Christians, from addicts to advocates, from shiftless parasites to spiritual priests, from secularistic idolatry to saintly immortality." And how do they propose to accomplish this? By soliciting the "brotherhood" for close to a half million dollars to build an imposing cathedral (an elaborate picture of which was enclosed) to seat 350, with 18 classrooms, and 3 offices. This building will also

have a "Day Care Center, Community Remedial Programs, Community Awareness and Prevention Programs." In other words, a full-fledged social gospel program. They call this part of their program, "Social."

In order that they might execute this program, they requested that we send \$500. We would be glad to do this, had they bothered to include in their letter the scriptural authority for such a program. I cannot read where the apostles and early Christians went about evangelism in this way.

L.L. BRIGANCE ON INSTITUTIONALISM AND SOCIAL GOSPELISM

I was browsing recently through BRIGANCE'S SERMON OUTLINES and ran across a lesson on "THE WORK OF THE CHURCH." I found the following part of his outline quite interesting:

"Benevolence: A duty (Eph. 4:28; Gal. 6:10; Mt. 20:28; Jas. 1:27). It must be done by the church (Acts 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25,26; 2 Cor. 8). 'Social betterment' is not the primary work of the church. This is good and necessary but not the most important (Lk. 10:38-44). The gospel is the power (Rom. 1:16). Jerusalem, Rome, et. al. had slums, but the Apostles never went 'slumming.' The chief work of the church is to preach the gospel in order to save the lost. The only institution charged with this work is the church (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 3:10). Examples of New Testament churches: Jerusalem, Antioch (Phil. 2:15,16). They evangelized the world in 30 years (Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:23)" (p. 49).

It was my privilege to sit at the feet of L. L. Brigance. He was a brilliant, and a good man. It was such teaching as the above from him, N. B. Hardeman and others that led me and many others to the truth on cooperative and institutional issues.

CONCERNING A WEEKLY COLLECTION

I have received a tract entitled: CONCERNING THE COLLECTION, written by a D. E. Holman, Houston, Texas. He goes to some length trying to show that it is "without scriptural foundation" to have weekly collections only on the Lord's day, but concludes his tract with, "Brethren, the only justification we have for a general collection and a treasury is that it is expedient." Can

a thing be expedient and not be scriptural? Not according to Paul (1 Cor. 6:12). If the weekly collection on the Lord's day is "without scriptural foundation," and yet it is "expedient" to have it, then it is alright to have something in the church that is unscriptural. Who can believe it?

DIESTELKAMP SAYS IT WELL

In the January '73 issue of THINK, brother Leslie Diestelkamp very aptly says: He does not "... oppose every human organization that functions within scriptural limitations. But there may be too many such institutions, and we know that they often function unscripturally as adjuncts of the church instead of for individual expression. So we don't want to add another one." Neither do we! We couldn't have said it better.

"AMAZING GRACE" BIBLE CLASS

The "Madison Church of Christ" now conducts a TV Bible class, which is well and good, but they name it "Amazing Grace Bible Class." If it is scriptural to name a Bible class after a Bible doctrine, why not go all the way and name the church after one like the denominations do: "Grace Bible Church," "Baptist Church," etc. According to THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE, Jan. 29, 1973, this Bible class "Is now telecast in color each week over 103 TV stations around the world." And in that same issue, a large picture is carried of Ira North, teacher of the class, presenting a "large family Bible" to "Dr. M. Norvel Young and his wife, Helen . . . in appreciation for their outstanding services to churches of Christ and Christian education." The liberal churches are so tied to the schools that they cannot do anything without mentioning the name of some school, or school personnel. This incident is obviously a commercial for Pepperdine University at church expense.

"PERMANENCE IN MISSIONARY EFFORTS A RESULT OF SCHOOL WORK"

In THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE, Jan 29, 1973, I find the following:

"Experienced missionaries in China, Japan and Africa have learned that nearly all of the permanence in their missionary efforts have come as a result of the school work . . . Those in our schools whom we get while they are young and whom we can separate them from their

home environments and who remain for several years become able to quite thoroughly overcome these (native, jpn) superstitions. In Zambia our brethren have operated grammar schools for years and the leadership for nearly all of the churches there has come from these grammar schools."

And so, the way to do "missionary work" is to establish schools and colleges. I wonder why Christ and the Apostles never did it this way! The church was established by an all-wise God who planned it from eternity (Eph. 3:10,11), but it still needs human institutions and inventions to accomplish its work! I guess the people of the first century didn't have superstitions that were obstacles to their accepting the faith! What about all the superstitions of the idol worshipers, and the ingrained traditions of the Jews?

SIX MILLION DOLLARS TO A COLLEGE, HOW MUCH TO THE CHURCH?

Recently I received a sixteen-page tabloid publication from Abilene Christian College dedicated to the glorification of brother and sister H. R. Gibson, Sr. for donating \$6,000,000 to Abilene Christian College. The gift is heralded as the largest educational grant ever made in Texas. I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but I think I will be safe to say that this brother, in all his life, will never give this much money to the church. I do not believe that all that individuals give to worthy causes must be given through the church, but when brethren give more money to some human college than to the church, we have no trouble determining where their hearts are. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." It would be quite foolish for brother Gibson to give this money to Abilene Christian College, if he were not convinced it would do more good there than in the church. He obviously thinks the college is capable of putting his money to better use than is the church. When people all over the world are dying without the gospel, individuals are giving millions of dollars to human educational institutions to teach "reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic." But then, it is not likely that a church would have put out a sixteen-page tabloid! Maybe that has something to do with it!

<p>PLANNING TO MOVE? PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE IN ADVANCE.</p>



Santa Barbara, California -- "Please renew my subscription to TORCH. I enjoy the fine articles, especially your editorials. You have been saying some things which have needed to be said."
-- Frank Thompson

Tupelo, Mississippi -- "I'm sending \$3 for TORCH. Don't want to miss a copy. We enjoy it very much." -- V.A. Davis

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(Publisher's Note: Some 120 Filipino preachers receive TORCH through the generosity of American readers. bkf)

Floral City, Florida -- "Enclosed find a check for renewal to TORCH. A most excellent publication! Thanks for an outstanding job." -- Ray Smallridge

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Newport, North Carolina -- "Please renew my subscription for another year. We look forward to reading it; we find God's truth written throughout it." -- Chas. T. Pringle

Temple Terrace, Florida -- "I have enjoyed your publication very much. Continue your efforts and do not become discouraged for your work has done much good and is greatly appreciated."
-- John Gibson

Tucson, Arizona -- "I appreciate receiving the TORCH free the past year with the right and wrong made clear and so I'm sending my renewal. Everyone who reads it should be edified."
-- Mrs. Clara Pitts

Holiday, Florida -- "In response to your answer on my letter concerning your editorial, *Cut Your Hair and I Will Listen to You*, (Feb. 1972, jpn) it was not my intention to misrepresent your position or to present a prejudice argument. My main point was to put youth where the Bible puts them, and their elders in the position where scripture intends for them to be. Since we are living in a very youth oriented age, many Christians have fallen in with the youth worship and have become content to take second to the younger generation.

"I agree, youth has a place in society and should be heard in the right channels, but since they lack the experience in living and the wisdom one gains by the experience, and that is the whole crux of this subject matter.

"As for as 1 Cor. 11:4 is concerned, I have come to realize what God has revealed in scripture is exactly what He means. There are no shades of gray in the word, they are commands and the Christian can answer 'yea' or 'nay, Lord.' We cannot compromise with truth, the pattern is set and the word is no respecter of persons.

"You have made the inference that I have followed the life-style and philosophy of the ungodly people who have designed my wearing apparel, that is true, up to the time of my REBIRTHDAY which was about three and a half years ago. Now that I am a baptized child in the Lord's church, I have since learned to make my own dress apparel, and in all conscience, try to comply with 1 Tim. 2:9,10.

"What concerns me most is that so many Christians who have been brought up in truth are following the life style of the world; and are allowing the seeds of gradualism and permissiveness to take root, not only in themselves, but their children as well. For the church to allow for this relaxing of scriptural authority is disaster. How long do you think Christians can walk the middle road and not make that left turn that leads to the wide road of destruction?" -- *Jean Ciolkosz*

(*Editor's Note:* As I said previously, I agree with much that our sister says. Since some of her comments are quite relative and indefinite, I don't know if I would agree with her or not. For instance, what she says about 1 Cor. 11:14. I think the Lord meant what He said there too, and that there are no shades of gray, but this begs the question. We still need someone to tell us in terms of inches, how long is long? This must be settled in terms

of the context. The context is *sex identity*. Men's hair must be short enough to identify them as men, and any deviation from this is sinful. I don't know how long this is in terms of inches, and I don't think anyone else does. If they do, we are still waiting to hear from them.

This good sister denies that the style of her present clothing was originated by ungodly people because she makes her own, and tries to comply with 1 Tim. 2:9,10. I have every reason to believe that her clothing complies with 1 Tim. 2:9,10, but she must prove that their style was not originated by ungodly people. In her previous letter (TORCH, Jan. 1973) her implication was that persons who wear clothing styled by ungodly people were identified with them and had taken up their life style. I denied this, and retorted that the style of her clothing was very likely originated by ungodly people, and asked if this meant she has adopted their life style. It is a matter of logic. According to her argument, Christians must wear clothing styled by Christians. How many of us do this.

Her point that some "are allowing the seeds of gradualism and permissiveness to take root" is well taken. It is very easy for us to accept gradual movements toward the line that separates right from wrong. When this happens, we are often moved across that line (from right to wrong) with little or no preception. As she well says, this will lead to the broad way of destruction. At the same time, we must scrupulously avoid the closed-minded and self-righteous attitude that says we must cling tenaciously to our traditional interpretations and norms, come what may. This attitude is well illustrated by some who arbitrarily draw the hem and hair line without producing the scriptural authority for where they draw it. It is not true that it must be drawn where we drew it in the 30's and 40's. The best evidence for this is the fact that in the 30's and 40's we did not draw it where they drew it in the teens and 20's. I dare say our good sister wears her dresses shorter than did her grandmother, but are we to say that she has allowed "the seeds of gradualism and permissiveness to take root"?

I am not trying to be sarcastic, nor am I defending mini-skirts on women and maxie-hair on men; I am just trying to be fair in judging present trends in their relationship to Bible teaching. Whenever someone draws the hem and hair line (in terms of inches) and gives the scriptural authority there for, they will find me first in the line of those who stand with them. Until then, I must demur all attempts to make tradition or human opinion into divine law. Everyone is at liberty to hold his particular opinion in these areas, as long as he does just that! As for me and my house,

we will not allow someone else's conscience to be our guide. For the present, I must draw the hair line at sex identity, and the hem, neck and sleeve line wherever it meets the demands of modesty and decency. I realize that this is relative, but this is where the Bible leaves it. I shall not legislate where God did not. jpn)

Kirkland, Illinois -- "The new format for **TORCH** is terrific. The layout is professionally done, and quite attractive . . . I wish you could put out **TORCH** as a weekly and still keep the same quality. It is the only paper I have consistently enjoyed since I started getting it." -- *Jeff Kingry*

(*Editor's Note:* Don't talk to us about a weekly **TORCH**! We do well to meet our monthly deadline! jpn)

Georgetown, Kentucky -- "I have enjoyed **TORCH** very much, and have found that it is the only periodical of this type that I really look forward to receiving. Continue to discuss the issues and controversies that exist. In short, keep up the good work!" -- *B. Joe Hill*

Weslaco, Texas -- "I have been very pleased with this year's subscription of **TORCH**. I freely recommend it when others ask me about a religious publication. I appreciate those who aren't afraid to stand for the truth and to do their best to present it to others . . . thanks for the good articles. I hope you will continue to produce much more of the same." -- *Donald W. Mitchell*

Louisville, Kentucky -- "I have enjoyed all your articles in the past, and am looking forward to the ones in the future. It is a good effort in every way. May God bless you richly in this effort." -- *Elta Brown*

Cincinnati, Ohio -- "Thought I would . . . let you know just how much I appreciate the work you and brother Farris are doing through the **TORCH**. Keep up the good work and may God grant you many more years in His service. . ." -- *David A. Stansberry*

Danville, Kentucky -- "I love your magazine; it is the only one I get which is consistently worth reading." -- *Royce Chandler*

Annandale, Virginia -- "There are too few papers with any real backbone and with a sense of the needs of the brotherhood. Judging from the few copies I've seen I think **TORCH** needs to be circulated among more concerned citizens of THE kingdom." -- *Floyd Chapplear*

Matthew 19:29 and 2 Timothy 2:2 Fulfilled

Tommy Davis

In November of 1972, I wrote an article in TORCH on the *Treatment of Preacher's Families* because I felt it was needed. Now I would like to write about the other side of the picture.

When I first obeyed the gospel back in 1963, I was almost kicked out of my family. You see, I was a young Methodist preacher, and that suited my family very well. When I obeyed the gospel I cast aside everything to serve the Lord (Mt. 16:24-26). The elders, preacher, and brethren all encouraged me and gave me an open door if I was kicked out. These brethren were patient, kind and considerate as they were teaching me to love the Lord and His truth. They were fulfilling Mt. 19:29 and 2 Tim. 2:2.

I soon started making talks. The local preacher worked and studied with me several times a week in an effort to clean out all the denominational garbage that had been placed there over the years. He, along with the elders, took a young babe and taught him all the fundamentals of truth (Rom. 1:16,17). I cannot begin to express my thanks to these brethren, along with many others, who took time and effort to help me learn to preach. Years have passed, but I have never forgotten their help because I often read Mt. 19:29 and 2 Tim. 2:2, and when I do, I think about the past for a few moments and thank God for those concerned brethren who put me on the right track.

In recent years I have had severe eye trouble. I have now had two corneal transplants and I am almost completely well, but again my brethren have come to the rescue to pray for me, call me, and write many cards of encouragement. No one can ever say the Lord's people are not aware of one in need. The faithful few will always come to the aid of one of God's saints in need (Gal. 6:10).

Thanks to brethren everywhere for fulfilling Mt. 19:29 and 2 Tim. 2:2. I will not betray your trust. I will try to turn others to Christ and fulfill these scriptures as you have (Rom. 1:16,17).

*1110 Simpson
Tupelo, Miss. 38801*

Hawk - Needham Discussion

BEGINS IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Proposition:

The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on property owned by the church when such a meal is for social and/or recreational purposes.

Ray Hawk, Affirmative

James P. Needham, Negative

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June 1973



TORCH

*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

Beginning In This Issue

Hawk – Needham Discussion

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Ray Hawk, Affirmative

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The Printed Media

Some people give a certain "authority" to almost anything that appears in print. It may be illogical and untrue, but if someone has printed it in a book or paper, a good many people will swallow it whole without question. "It must be true, because it is written right here!" How many times a week do we hear someone deny some popular idea, or make some absurd contention on the specious basis that "I read an article the other day that said. . ." So what! Someone else can (and often does) say, "Yes, but I read an article the other day that said the direct opposite..." It is likely true that the printed media contain more fallacies and falsehoods than anything else in society, but getting people to realize this is another matter.

- James P. Needham
(excerpt from Editorial, January 1973)

Volume VIII - June 1973 - Number 6

Editor
James P. Needham

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Introduction to the Hawk - Needham Discussion

In this issue we print the first installment of the **Hawk—Needham Debate**. By reading the rules, you can see that there will be four such installments, and they will be printed concurrently in **TORCH** and **Bible Beacon** which brother Hawk edits.

We believe this is one of the many important differences that have arisen among us over the past 25 years. It is part and parcel of the package deal of liberalism (the philosophy which says we don't need Bible authority for everything we do). This issue has been somewhat neglected in the discussions which have occurred between the two camps. So far as I know, this will be the only written discussion on the question. I know of only one other discussion of the matter.

As is true on other issues, certain prejudicial statements have been made on this matter. The most popular one is that "the antis think the building is holy." When this is said, many persons give a horse laugh, and think no further. I know of nobody who thinks the building is holy. As I have tried to show in this discussion, the real issue is: *what is the work of the church?* The building was bought with the Lord's money. It cannot scripturally be used for anything for which the Lord's money cannot scripturally be used. If social and/or recreational functions cannot be subsidized with the Lord's money; if they are not scriptural works of the church, then the building cannot be used for such because it was bought with the Lord's money. There is no essential difference between misappropriating the Lord's money, and misappropriating what the Lord's money buys. (The building). It is foolish to think we can use the building for something we cannot use the money for.

This principle has brought forth many quibbles, such as: "That means that brethren cannot talk about anything but spiritual matters on the property." A reasonable man will have no trouble seeing that there is no way to control what people talk about before and after the services, and that there is a difference between people's incidentally talking about politics on the property and the church's sponsoring a political rally. He who cannot discern the difference is either too shallow to be reasoned with, or else has a closed mind.

We believe brother Hawk has done as good a job of defending the position he holds as is possible. I have never met him person-

ally, but have been acquainted with him through his bulletin, and some other publications which we receive on exchange. He has gained my respect for his stand against the ultra liberalism that has crept in among those of his persuasion on institutional issues. He has also questioned several practices of his brethren which make his endorsement of "fellowship halls" and church meals for social and recreational purposes quite inconsistent. It was a letter I wrote him about this inconsistency that led to this debate. Men are inconsistent when their practice does not harmonize with their principles. An honest man will eventually see this lack of harmony and change his practice to fit his principles. Every honest man will have to do this from time to time, and there is nothing shameful about it. In fact it is commendable and indicates honesty.

Previous to this discussion, we agreed that it can be printed in book form once it is completed in the papers. There is a possibility that I will thus do. This will depend upon the demand for it. We want to keep the price low enough that it can be distributed in quantities. We would appreciate our readers letting us know what you think about this idea. If there is insufficient demand for such a booklet, then we should not want to invest the time and money essential to its production. Let us hear from you as soon as possible.

- James P. Needham

CORRESPONDENCE

November 1, 1972

Dear brother Hawk:

For some time I have been receiving your bulletin, and find it readable and interesting. I appreciate the fact that you stand for something, and are not afraid to question something you feel is unscriptural. This is a bit unusual today with many.

I note that recently you questioned the right of a church to conduct a carwash in the name of the church and use the proceeds for "mission work." I would also question this, but what about the scripturalness of a church's subsidizing an organization which engages in business such as colleges, Orphan homes, etc. or a church overseeing an orphan's home which engages in business. May I say, respectfully, that some of the things you announce and promote from time to time seem to make you look inconsistent. I am not intimating that you have promoted the above mentioned things, but you do promote certain projects which endorse and propagate that which you are obviously against.

I note also in your September 17, 1972 issue that you mention a meeting in the "Fellowship hall." I would like to know the nature of this hall, what goes on in it, and the scriptural authority for it. Our fellowship hall here is our entire building. We meet in all parts of it to engage in worship and other scripturally authorized work, but we don't call it a "fellowship hall." I wonder if yours is different from ours. I would appreciate some information on this. (Incidentally, I note that you call it a "fellowship room" instead of a hall).

...

Kindest regards to you and yours.

Brotherly,
James P. Needham

November 10, 1972

Dear brother Needham:

Thank you for your kind letter of November 1. I also have enjoyed your bulletin and keep them for references later on. In fact, I have used several of your questions and answers in lesson and sermon materials.

At this time I personally feel the church cannot aid a brotherhood college unless they were buying the services of the school to educate a boy or girl, or paying a teacher's salary to teach Bible in the school. I believe the church may help a home that is destitute, even if that home has some kind of business they are in to get the home on its feet.

The term, "Fellowship hall" indicates a place in our building where we have a particular kind of fellowship. We come together in this hall from time to time to break bread and eat our meat with gladness and singleness of heart. It is true, we have fellowship in the auditorium, but it is not the same kind of fellowship that we have in this hall. You mentioned that "our fellowship hall here is our entire building. We meet in *all parts* of it to *engage in worship and other scripturally authorized work . . .*" What kind of fellowship do you have in your restrooms? In the foyer before services, between Bible classes and worship, and after services? Around the water fountain? Would you say the kind of fellowship you had in these places was somewhat different to the fellowship you had in your classrooms or in your auditorium? Is the kind of fellowship you have in your classrooms the same as the kind of fellowship you have in the auditorium between 11:00 - 12:00?

I wonder if a written discussion on this subject would be of interest to you? It seems that it would be. Perhaps we could make arrangements for it to appear in "Torch" and "The Bible Beacon." Of course it would have to be short, sort of on the order that the present discussion is on women teachers . . .

Yours in Jesus Christ,
Ray Hawk

November 29, 1972

Dear brother Hawk:

Thanks for your response to my inquiry. I think the response clarifies your position, with which I do not completely agree.

Your reference to our restrooms, foyer, and water fountain is quite inappropriate if you are using these to justify expending the Lord's money to build a room in the church building for social fellowship, or recreation. Do you honestly think that these items have the same purpose as your "fellowship hall?"

I would be willing to enter a written discussion on the matters mentioned provided you have in mind a mutual effort to present what we honestly believe the Bible to teach. I am not interested in a "cute" exchange of personal digs, or unkind reflections on the personalities involved. I don't think such an exchange would help, but harm. I just have no interest whatsoever in that sort of thing. I take debating seriously. To me it is a method of teaching, and not necessarily the BEST METHOD, in my view. I have engaged in many, and have attended many, and I feel that some debates have been productive of much harm.

So, if you are interested in a sincere, brotherly study of the differences between us, let me know, and send me your idea of what the propositions should cover, etc.

I shall await your reply.

Kindest regards to you and yours.

Brotherly,
James P. Needham

P.S. I would be interested in an exchange only if it is to be jointly published in **TORCH** and **The Bible Beacon**. Incidentally, I don't receive that publication. We would be glad to exchange with **TORCH**. Let me know if you are interested.

December 4, 1972

Dear brother Needham:

I am not interested in any "cute" exchanges either. I take debating seriously, although I have never engaged in any public debates. I would be interested in a written debate to appear in both papers jointly.

Propositions:

The Scriptures teach that the church may come together and eat a common meal on property paid for out of the common church treasury.

Affirm: (Signed)
Ray Hawk

Deny: James P. Needham

The Scriptures teach that the church may not come together to eat a common meal on property paid for out of the common church treasury.

Affirm: James P. Needham

Deny: (Signed)
Ray Hawk

Would these propositions be suitable? If not, please send me some for consideration.

Yours in Christ,
Ray Hawk

December 8, 1972

Dear brother Hawk:

I have your letter and propositions of December 4, and will hasten to reply.

I thought you might not understand my position, and this is confirmed by your proposed propositions. There is no way I would debate these propositions. I wouldn't deny your proposition, and don't know anyone who would.

TORCH

(127) 7

I am enclosing propositions which I believe deal with the real issue. If you are not willing to debate them, I see no point in our having a discussion. Brethren who agree don't need to have debates.

If these are agreeable, you may sign both copies, and return one to me. You should also sign the terms of the discussion if you agree to them.

I trust this finds you and yours well.

Brotherly,
James P. Needham

P.S. . . .

I am enclosing a negative proposition for me to affirm since you did. I trust you understand that it is quite awkward to affirm a negative proposition. It is your practice that is under question, not mine. Should I affirm what I believe and practice on this issue, you would not deny it! This is the same position I have always been in with Christian preachers on the missionary society and instrumental music. They won't deny our practice. I am willing to do it, if you insist, but think the discussion would proceed more logically if you would write four articles affirming your practice. I won't be fussy about it however. If you are willing to debate these propositions, let the study proceed.

December 11, 1972

Dear brother Needham:

Am I to assume that you are not against what I have stated in the propositions I sent to you? Do the elders there announce that the church will partake of a common meal after services in one of the class rooms? Is this what you practice? Does the church there meet on the parking lot and build a bonfire and roast weiners and toast marshmallows on a Monday night? Is this what the church where you preach practices? If so, I would like to know. You would be the first among your brethren that practices what you say my proposition states, said proposition saying what you will not deny is wrong. Or am I assuming too much? I can't really believe that you believe and practice what my proposition states. There may be churches of Christ which build recreational buildings, but we haven't. I am sure there are brethren who do a lot of things that I would not agree with, as there are brethren on your side of the question who do things you wouldn't agree with. In

these cases we should recognize our areas of disagreement and leave these areas in the realm of human opinion as we do the covering (Needham-Hutto exchange), hair (Needham-Bragwell-Worth articles), and the war question, without splitting the body of Christ.

Yours in Christ,
Ray Hawk

December 22, 1972

Dear brother Hawk:

In your letter you say: "Am I to assume that you are not against what I have stated in the propositions sent you? Do the elders there announce that the church will partake of a common meal after services in one of the class rooms? Is this what you practice?"

Brother Hawk, is it not obvious that this is more than what you stated in the propositions? You are now defining what you meant by your proposition. I can't read your mind, so *I did not sign your ambiguous proposition. Had I done so you could have forced me to exclude a common meal on church premises that was absolutely necessary, and I don't do this.* I sometimes eat my lunch in my study. Back in the country we used to carry our dinner to church and eat it on the grounds because we could not get home and back for the evening service in a horse-drawn wagon. I believe that was necessary, and essential. It was not done for a social purpose.

I would not expect you to sign the propositions I sent you, if they do not define the difference between us. By the same token, you had might as well give up on your effort to badger me into signing a proposition that could give you an unfair advantage, and force me to deny something which I believe to be right.

I do not deny that the congregation could eat on the premises when it is essential or necessary to the work of the church. I deny that they can eat on the premises for a purely social or recreational purpose. I deny that the church can pay for facilities for recreational purposes. You say you believe I am right in this contention, or at least I gathered as much. I gathered from your bulletin that you have a "fellowship hall." I took this to be about the same thing I know other churches to have; a room built with the church's money for recreational purposes. Perhaps I was wrong, but I doubt it, if your elders announce that a common

meal will be enjoyed in it after the services.

Your comments about areas of disagreement suit me fine. Remember who suggested that we have a "debate," and you will have this whole matter in proper perspective. I told you already I am not overly anxious to have a debate with you or anyone else because I think too often they become personality clashes, and sick efforts at being clever and cute. I think opponents sometimes labor hard to misunderstand, rather than understand each other. I leave any further comment up to you.

Brotherly,
James P. Needham

January 22, 1973

PROPOSITION FOR WRITTEN DEBATE BETWEEN RAY HAWK AND JAMES P. NEEDHAM TO APPEAR IN THE BIBLE BEACON EDITED BY RAY HAWK AND IN TORCH EDITED BY JAMES P. NEEDHAM.

Proposition:

The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.

Affirm: (Signed)
Ray Hawk

Deny: (Signed)
James P. Needham

Rules for the discussion:

1. The speeches shall be printed in both papers, The Bible Beacon and Torch in consecutive monthly issues.
2. No speech shall be changed or altered once it is submitted.
3. The speeches may be printed in booklet form after the debate is finished. It shall be printed in its complete form.
4. No other paper may use the debate without the consent of both parties.
5. No one may print excerpts from either speech without first submitting the article to the man who wrote the speech, so he may check to see if he is being quoted of context.

6. The articles shall be no longer than 6 pages in length, double spaced, with the typewriter margins set at 10 - 85. Each page shall contain 26 lines of type. There shall be four affirmative and four negative speeches. One affirmative and one negative speech shall appear in each issue to each paper.
7. No part of the discussion may be printed by either party until all of its parts are completed.

(Signed)

James P. Needham

(Signed)

Ray Hawk

January 25, 1973

Dear brother Hawk:

I am returning your proposition signed. I have signed the rules after adding one which I feel is necessary. If we start printing the discussion before it is completed, illness or some other unforeseen event might prevent one or both of us from continuing, or necessitate a long interruption. I have also added a bit to your rule one. I trust these will meet with your approval. Would you sign the rules if they meet your approval, and return them and the signed proposition to me.

I promise to conclude my part of this discussion at my earliest convenience, and to conduct my part of it in a brotherly manner. I feel assured that you will do the same.

I desire that you understand that while I do not agree with your position, I entertain nothing but the kindest feelings toward you. I shall do my best to make this apparent in the articles I write in response to your affirmations.

I have already stated that I am not interested in nor will I engage in a "smart" or "cute" exchange. My only interest in the discussion is an effort to teach what I sincerely believe the Bible to teach.

I shall look forward to receiving the signed rules and proposition from you, along with your first affirmation.

I pray for a profitable discussion of this timely issue.

Brotherly,
James P. Needham

February 9, 1973

Dear brother Hawk:

I have received your first affirmative, and am returning my first negative.

I hope you understand that anything I say that seems blunt is not designed to be offensive. It is my desire to manifest kindest feelings toward you, but some things said in print can be misinterpreted due to not being able to see the expression on the face of the writer.

As you can see, I have not answered your five questions to me. I feel they are unfair, since I am not in the affirmative. The rules of good debating do not allow such questions of the negative, since his position is not on trial. I am not reluctant to answer these questions, and if you want me to answer them in excess of the regulation 6 pages, I shall be happy to do so, but it is unfair to ask me to use my negative space to defend my position when I am not in the affirmative. It would require space that should be used in dealing with your material. In my original rough draft, I answered the questions, but it ran me almost 7 pages. I want to be fair, above all. I think you do too.

If at all possible I would like to begin publication of the debate in our April issue. I already have March in the printer's hands. Do you think we can finish it this month? We try to work at least a month or 6 weeks ahead of schedule. I will do my best to get my replies to you within the week that I receive them, and hope you will do the same. I know that you, like me, are busy. I am still at my study at 9:30 p.m.

Best wishes to you and yours,

Brotherly,
James P. Needham

February 13, 1973

Dear James:

I know we did not make any rules with reference to questions, but I do not see anything unfair about an affirmative speaker asking them, especially since you do not have an affirmative speech. I seem to remember in the Highers-Grider debate, both

men asked questions regardless of affirmative or negative speeches. In the Highers-Bingham debate brother Highers asked questions when he was in the affirmative. I am sure there are other debates that have done this. I could not find anything in Hedge's rules of debate against such a procedure.

If you need an extra page to answer the questions, I see no reason you shouldn't take it. However, will you give me an extra page if I need it, to reply? If not, that is alright too. But, take the extra page and answer the questions if you will. I'll wait on them before I reply to your first negative speech.

I have February and March's issues taken care of. Perhaps, if we finish, we can begin this discussion in both papers in April . . .

Hope to hear from you soon.

Yours in Christ,
Ray

February 21, 1973

Dear brother Hawk:

I have your letter of 2-13-73 agreeing to an extra page for my answers to your questions, provided you could have an extra one to reply to my answers. While I think you are seeking some advantage, I am willing to agree to your desires that the discussion may proceed. I have neither the time nor the disposition to haggle over these matters. I have absolutely no fear of any question you want to ask me, but such negative questions hinder the affirmative's performance of his role in such exchanges.

I am completely unconcerned about what others have done in other debates. They are not my standard. You say you found nothing against it in Hedge's rules, but you obviously didn't find anything for it either. Do you interpret the Bible as you do Hedge? I can assure you that I have attended probably 25 debates in my life time, and have conducted almost that many, and have heard your practice concerning questions objected to on many occasions on the same grounds I have used. I realize there are exceptions to it. These are up to the individuals involved, and don't bind me to such illogical practice.

I hope to receive your second affirmative right away so we can get this effort completed. It crowds my already too busy schedule.

Brotherly,
James P. Needham

Hawk - Needham Discussion

Proposition: The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.

Ray Hawk's First Affirmative

DEFINITION OF PROPOSITION

A1 By the scriptures, I mean the 27 books of the New Testament. By teach, I mean to impart knowledge through command, example, or necessary inference. By elders, I mean the overseers of a local church, 1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28. By may call, I mean they may make an announcement, either personally, or through someone/something else: example: bulletin, or one who makes the announcements. By church together, I mean the local congregation assembled together. By eat a common meal, I mean to consume food which is not the Lord's supper. By church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds, I mean that property which has been borrowed, rented, or bought by the church for its use. By designed for social and/or recreational purposes, I mean, Social, "of or having to do with human beings living together," Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1960), p. 1722. By Recreation, "refreshment; food." Ibid., p. 1509.

ELDERS CALLING THE CHURCH TOGETHER

A2 I believe we all recognize the elders may call the church together for other than worship purposes. The church may be called together on a voluntary basis by the elders. That is, women called upon to sew. Men called upon to work around the building. Members called to work on the bulletin. If my brother desires passages for these things in detail, I cannot give them, but neither can he. We both accept these items as being true. If I am mistaken, my opponent may point this out.

MEMBERS MAY EAT ON CHURCH PROPERTY

A3 First, what is church property? The New Testament shows the

church may borrow, rent, or buy property to meet on/in. The church in the first century often met in the houses of members, Acts 12:12; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15 and Phil. 2. We know the church did not buy these houses, therefore they were either rented or borrowed/loaned. My opinion is they were loaned, but loaning, borrowing, or renting cannot be proved.

A4 The church ate common meals together. In Acts 2:42 we read, "And *they* continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine . . ." Who are the "they"? I'm sure my opponent would agree with me that they are the church in Jerusalem. In Acts 2:44, "And *all* that believed were together, and had all things in common." Here again we have the church in Jerusalem. Could we say that one thing they had in common were common meals? In Acts 2:46 we are told, "And *they*, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking *bread from house to house*, did *eat their meat* with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 *Praising God*, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added *to the church* daily such as should be saved." (ALL Emphasis mine, RH).

A5 Hervey says of verse 46, "This version hardly represents the true idea of the original; κατ'οἶκον represents the private Christian place of meeting, as contrasted with the temple. The meaning is not that every disciple broke bread in his own house, but that they broke bread at the house where Christian assemblies were held, whether one or more . . . The link of connection is the ἀγάπη or love-feast, which formed an important part of the κοινωνία, or common life, of the early Christians. The whole description is a beautiful picture of Christian unity, piety, love, and joy." H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, *The Pulpit Commentary*, "Acts of the Apostles," by A. C. Hervey (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., rep., 1962), Vol. 18, p. 55.

A6 Who is breaking bread and eating meat? The church. Where? In private homes. But, *the church met in private homes!* We meet in buildings today. May we do in our buildings what the church did in private homes that were loaned or borrowed for the church to meet in? Certainly we may.

A7 If buying a building means we can no longer meet and eat in the building, then I suggest we go back and restore New Testament practices!

A8 It appears from Jude 12 the church observed *love-feasts*. Vine says of Jude 12 and 2 Pet. 2:13, "These love-feasts arose

from the common meals of the early church." W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 17 rep., 1966), Vol. III, p. 22. Thayer says, "ἀγάπαι, -ῶν, *agapae*, *love-feast*, feasts expressing and fostering mutual love which used to be held by Christians before the celebration of the Lord's supper . . ." Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 4th pr., 1965), p. 4. Arndt and Gingrich state, "*a love-feast*, a common meal eaten by early Christians in connection w. their church services, for the purpose of fostering and expressing brotherly love." William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 6.

A9 When the Corinthian church met, they apparently were eating a common meal, 1 Cor. 11:20-32, although they had allowed it to get out of order and mixed it with the Lord's supper. No church to my knowledge does what Paul condemns in that passage. When Paul met with the church in Troas, he ate the Lord's supper with them, Acts 20:7, and then partook of a common meal, verse 11. H. Leo Boles says of this verse, "It seems better to conclude that this was not the Lord's supper, but that it was a common meal which Paul ate in preparation for his expected departure." H. Leo Boles, *A Commentary on Acts* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1960). p. 320. Here the church met, worshipped, and then ate together. All in a building either borrowed, rented, or bought by the church.

A10 These passages prove the church ate together. Although Acts 2 and 20 do not say the elders called the church together in the different homes, neither does it say they called the church to participate in the Lord's supper, study the apostles' doctrine, or pray. I believe this would be sufficient to prove the elders may call the church together for the purpose of eating a common meal on the church grounds or in the church building, said meal being for a social or recreational purpose.

PRACTICE OF OUR BRETHREN OVER THE YEARS AND AT PRESENT

A11 My opponent recognizes that in the past brethren have eaten a common meal on church property. There was a time when brethren thought nothing of having a "dinner on the grounds." If it was scriptural then, we wonder when and for what reason it became unscriptural? Our opponent also recognizes that a preacher may take his lunch to the church building and eat it

during the lunch hour. If this is scriptural, at what point does it become an unscriptural practice? Two saints? Three? Ten? Fifteen? Twenty? Perhaps he can tell us. Our Anti-Bible class brethren argue that a woman may teach when a teaching situation occurs "accidentally." May members eat in the church building if they "accidentally" bring their lunches and decide to remain over the lunch hour?

WHAT IS THE ISSUE BETWEEN US?

A12 What actually is the issue between us? Is it because we say the elders may call the church together? If this is the issue, perhaps it can be solved by all the members deciding among themselves, without saying anything to the elders, that they will bring their lunches and remain over to eat it rather than go home. Is the issue over members eating together? Surely this cannot be the issue, for I am sure the scriptures and my opponent both agree that saints may eat together. Is the issue over eating in the church building? Surely not, for my opponent agrees that saints may eat in the church building. At least he does so! Is it over the phrase, "said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes"? If so, then perhaps we can solve this by designating it as a κοινός meal! See Ardent-Gingrich, p. 438, 39; Thayer, 351; Vine, p. 212. Harper says of this word, "*common, belonging equally to several.*" The Analytical Greek Lexicon (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, n.d.), p. 235. Perhaps our opponent will show in his negative speech wherein the issue lies.

QUESTIONS FOR MY OPPONENT

A13 (1) If there were no church buildings owned by the church today, but the church met in borrowed houses, could the elders call the church together to worship and then call them to remain for a common meal together? (2) Would it be sinful to practice in the church today what was practiced in Acts 2:46 by the church? (3) May an announcement be made in the assembly, before worship begins, stating the church will meet at the Community Center building for a common meal after services are over? (4) May property, which is in use by the church, be used for anything other than for spiritual purposes? (5) Is Christian "fellowship" only singing, praying, preaching, giving, and the Lord's supper?

A14 It is my pleasure and honor to participate in this written discussion. I hope that it may be profitable to all who read it. Brother Needham and I are searching for the truth. I pray that truth will prevail and error will be exposed.

Hawk - Needham Discussion

Proposition: The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.

James P. Needham's First Negative

N1 I am not glad to engage in this debate with my good brother Hawk because a debate between brethren indicates rather serious disagreement, and no sincere brother could be happy for that. I am always anxious, however, to study with those with whom I disagree. I appreciate brother Hawk's attitude.

N2 It should be remembered that I am in the negative. My position is not on trial. I am not obligated to affirm anything, but to examine the proof offered by the affirmative. For reader convenience I shall follow the affirmative's headings as much as possible.

DEFINITION OF THE PROPOSITION

N3 Brother Hawk's definitions of "social" and "recreational" are incomplete, (A1). I suspicion a conscious evasion of these *key words*. He knew before writing his first article that these two words form the *basis* of our disagreement. Knowing this, he gave them a bare minimum of attention. I say kindly, that if his definitions are all he knows about these two words, he has no business affirming a proposition containing them. The first proposition brother Hawk proposed was essentially the same as this one except for the following words: "*When said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.*" I insisted that this clause be added or there would be no debate. I would not deny the proposition without it, in fact, I would affirm it! Therefore, I say he knew the words "social" and "recreational" were *key words* in this debate, and his treatment of them in his definitions is inexcusable. The rules of good debating stipulate that the proposition shall be *clearly* defined. In this our brother has failed; necessitating my using my negative space to complete his work for him.

N4 He defined "social" as follows ". . . having to do with human beings living together." This is not what I meant by social, and certainly he should know that. By "social" I mean what is involved in the noun form of the word: "*An informal gathering of people for recreation or amusement; party*" (Webster's New World Dictionary).

N5 He defined "recreation" as follows: "Refreshment; food." Who can believe this is a complete definition of this term? Let's look further: "Amusement, diversion, entertainment." Analogous words: "Relaxation, repose, ease, play, sport, frolic, rollic; mirth, jollity, hilarity" (Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms, p. 686). Why did brother Hawk evade these words?

N6 I agree that a congregation can eat on church property when such is necessary to its function. I deny that church property can be used "for social and/or recreational purposes;" not because it is holy, but because there is no divine authority for it. Brother Hawk signed a proposition that affirms that "the scriptures teach" that church property can be so used. He says in his definition of the proposition that he believes the scriptures teach "through command, example, or necessary inference." I will gladly accept either one as proof that church property can be used for "social and/or recreational purposes." Brother Hawk failed to provide this in his first affirmative, as we shall see shortly:

ELDERS CALLING THE CHURCH TOGETHER

N7 I accept what brother Hawk says in A2, but nothing he says proves his proposition, namely, that elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property "for social and/or recreational purposes." There is a vast difference between calling the church together to sew, work around the building, or on the bulletin, and calling it together for "social and/or recreational purposes." Does he really believe that sewing for the needy, or working around the building or on the bulletin are "for social and/or recreational purposes"?

N8 The elders "can call the church together" to do anything essential to the work of the church: *evangelism, edification and benevolence*. I deny, and my opponent cannot prove, that "a common meal . . . for social and/or recreational purposes" is essential to the accomplishment of these works. Elders cannot scripturally call the church together to do an unscriptural work.

N9 Thus, brother Hawk is obligated to prove, either: (1) That elders can call the church together to engage in something which is not the work of the church, (recreation), or (2) That "social and/or recreational" functions are essential to the work of the church. I prophesy that he will do neither, and thus, must surrender his proposition.

MEMBERS MAY EAT ON CHURCH PROPERTY

N10 In A3 — A10 our brother tries to find scriptural authority for his proposition, I shall take up his evidence as he gave it:

N11 (1) *Early church ate where they met:* Brother Hawk

reasons that early Christians met in private homes. They ate in these private homes, therefore they ate where they met, so we can do the same. Is he arguing that the church can do anything on church property that the members can do in a private home? So goes his logic! Members can have an hootenanny in a private home, can the elders call the church together and have one at the building? If brother Hawk proves his proposition, he will have proven such to be scriptural, along with a thousand other such activities. He has proven too much, therefore nothing!

N12 (2) *Acts 2:42,44,46*: I can admit everything he says about these passages and still he has not proven that these supposed common meals were "for social and/or recreational purposes." But notice: verse 46 says that while they assembled in the temple, they broke their bread (common meals) "AT HOME," brother Hawks quotation from Hervey to the contrary notwithstanding!

N13 He then asks, "*Can we do in our buildings what the early church did in private homes that were loaned or borrowed for the church to meet in?*" My answer is yes, but in this question he ASSUMES that they met on church property for common meals "for social and/or recreational purposes." His proposition obligates him to PROVE it, not ASSUME it. He has not proven it!

N14 (3) *Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2:13 — AGAPE — Love feasts*: Brother Hawk next seeks proof of his proposition in the AGAPAI, or "Love feasts" which he ASSUMES were feasts held on church property "for social and/or recreational purposes." That is a rather large assumption! The Lord's supper better meets the demands of these two passages (See Albert Barnes' Notes on Jude 12). All of brother Hawks information about the "Love feasts" being common meals on church property must be gained from UNINSPIRED sources, but even these do not fit his proposition. Let us call upon some witnesses:

N15 In a book entitled: *Early Christians Speak*, (A compilation of uninspired post New Testament writings with commentary), by Everett Ferguson, professor at Abilene Christian College, (and incidentally, a brother who almost certainly agrees with brother Hawk's position), comments as follows on page 133:

N16 "*It is an AGAPE because it benefits the needy; special consideration is shown for the lowly . . . The sharing of food by the wealthier with the poorer was an important means of charity. The host provided food for those chosen who sometimes did not eat at his house, but received the food at home or accepted it to take home.*" Doesn't sound like they ate it on church property, does it?

N17 International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says the

AGAPE was "a common table at which the wants of the poor were supplied out of the abundance of the rich (Acts 6:1ff)" (p. 70).

N18 Guy N. Woods says, "*They (AGAPE jpn) appear to have had their origin in the practice of wealthier members of the congregation providing food for the poorer ones, and eating with them, in token of their brotherliness,*" (Commentary on Peter, John, and Jude, p. 395).

N19 Brother Hawk quoted one short excerpt from Thayer in reference to AGAPAI; just enough to leave the impression that they were held on church property. I am disappointed in him. I hate to accuse him of manipulating quotations, and definitions, but his practice is leaning in that direction! I now give the rest of the quotation from Thayer so the reader can see what brother Hawk did to the poor fellow: "... *feasts expressing and fostering mutual love which used to be held by Christians before the celebration of the Lord's Supper,* (This is where brother Hawk stopped!!! jpn) *and at which the poorer Christians mingled with the wealthier and partook in common with the rest of food provided at the expense of the wealthy. Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2:13.*" Thus, Thayer is my witness, not his! He has perverted Thayer!

N20 Thus, brother Hawk cannot prove his proposition by AGAPE. I would endorse, promote and participate in an AGAPE feast on church property, if such be needed. In fact, I have done so many times in the Philippine Islands.

N21 (4) 1 Cor. 11:20-32: Brother Hawk says, "*When the Corinthian church met, they apparently were eating a common meal.*" Right! But Paul told them to stop it! "*What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in?*" (v. 22). "*If any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation*" (v. 24).

N22 Brother Hawk thinks they had mixed a common meal with the Lord's supper, but he cannot prove it. The context indicates that they had turned the Lord's supper into a common meal . . . for social and/or recreational purposes." Thus brother Hawk is in the awkward position of affirming that such a meal "on church property" is scriptural, when the *only* time such a meal is mentioned in the scriptures, it is *condemned*! Brother Hawk can say anything he pleases about 1 Cor. 11, but I predict that everything he says will be a boomerang to his position. This text fits his proposition about like a cow hide would fit a canary bird!

N23 (5) Acts 20:7: On this passage our brother quotes H. Leo Boles to the effect that a common meal was eaten *by Paul* (note that) "in preparation for his expected departure." But to help his

cause, brother Boles should have said, "For social and/or recreational purposes." He cannot prove that this meal was eaten by the congregation, or that it was eaten on church property.

N24 Our good brother then claims that he has proven his proposition! For shame! Imagine that! Let the reader judge. Nobody would have guessed it had he not told us!

PRACTICE OF OUR BRETHREN OVER THE YEARS AND AT PRESENT

N25 Having failed to prove his proposition by the scriptures, agape, *Pulpit Commentary*, H. Leo Boles, Thayer, and Vine, our brother now grabs for the last straw: the "practice of our brethren over the years and at present" (A11). I don't believe his proposition says anything about "the practice of our brethren." I deny that he can prove his proposition by "the practice of our brethren over the years" (Historically), and I challenge him to try it. I admit that he can prove it by them "at present," else, why this debate? But that is not what his proposition obligates him to do. He is supposed to prove it by the scriptures, but he *has not*, *will not*, and *cannot*!

N26 I shall ignore his prejudicial reference to "our Anti Bible-class brethren." It is unworthy of him, and should not be dignified with a reply.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE BETWEEN US?

N27 The issue between us is simple: He affirms that church property, and thus money, can be used for "social and/or recreation purposes" (A12), and I deny it. Eating in the church building as social fellowship (they call it Christian) is just a very common way brethren practice this error.

QUESTIONS FOR MY OPPONENT

N28 I submitted this reply to brother Hawk's first affirmative without answering his questions (A13), since it is not the prerogative of the affirmative to question the negative, especially before he has said anything in the debate, and more especially when no provisions were made for such in the rules. I wrote brother Hawk and told him this, but agreed to answer his questions if he agreed for me to do so in excess of the regulation six pages per article stipulated in the rules. He replied that I could have a seventh page for this purpose, if he could have a seventh page to reply to my answers. I agreed to this, but reluctantly because it gives him a slight advantage which I shall explain later.

N29 The reader should understand that when the affirmative resorts to such questioning, he is not satisfied to be in the affirmative, for he is trying to get into the negative. You see, it is brother Hawk's position that is on trial in this debate, not mine. But he wants me to affirm my position, so he can examine (negate) it, and thus I will then spend my time defending my position, rather than examining his. My opponent is willing to grant me an extra page to reply to his questions, and would not send me his second affirmative until he learned if I would reply to his questions. He wants to go back and re-write the rules before we proceed! I don't know his heart, and I shall not attempt to judge it, but I am very suspicious of such maneuverings. Could it be that he is aware that in his first affirmative he has failed to sustain his proposition, and now hopes to find something in my position that will SEEM to justify his?

N30 I shall refer to his questions by number, and ask the reader to refer to his first affirmative for their content: (1) No, if you mean a common meal sponsored by the church "for social and/or recreational purposes," and as a work of elders. (2) No. It says they ate their meals "at home." (3) Yes. Because "hospitality one to another" is enjoined in the scriptures (1 Pet. 4:9), but this does not justify "social and/or recreational" events on church property as church work, any more than announcing that brother Jones is in room 204 at Memorial Hospital justifies a church hospital on church property as church work. Will brother Hawk affirm that the church may have anything on church property as church work that can be announced on church property? If not, why this question? (4) Yes, but not as a work of the church. Brethren sometimes discuss golf games, fishing trips and political elections, etc. on church property, but not as a work of the church. Does brother Hawk believe such events can be church sponsored? If not, why this question? (5) I believe Christians can have fellowship in everything in which the Bible says they can have it. Brother Hawk, where does the New Testament use the word fellowship to mean common meals, to say nothing "for social and/or recreational purposes"? Until you produce such a passage, your question is meaningless. Most of your questions are based upon false assumptions.

CONCLUSION

N31 I have two questions for the affirmative: (1) Beside "common meals," what other "social and/or recreational" activities can the elders call the church together to perform? (2) Can elders spend church money to provide a special place for "social and/or recreational" activities? (Commonly called a fellowship hall).

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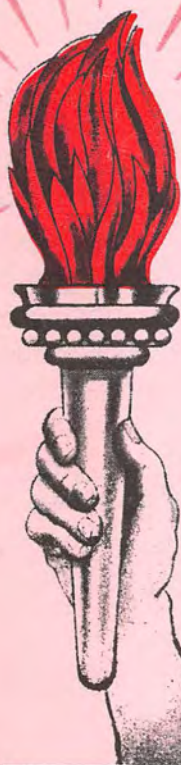
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but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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Periodicals and Political Influence

The periodicals sent forth by brethren contain certain dangers. When papers become centers of political influence with power to sway brethren on issues that arise, they can be very dangerous. When editors and papers become the basis of faith rather than the word of God, they would be better off in the trash can. When brethren cease to read papers objectively and critically, they have entered the danger zone. Nobody conversant of the past 25 years of church history can deny the tremendous influence such periodicals have had on the development of the present situation. Some have had a good influence, and some not so good.

James P. Needham (Excerpt from Editorial, January 1973).

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Editorial

James P. Needham



The Authority of Elders

INTRODUCTION

The eldership has always been an area of controversy in the church of Christ. Controversy surrounds such areas as: their qualifications, work, and authority. Some few have questioned whether there is scriptural authority for their existence beyond the period of miraculous endowment. In this article, I want to deal somewhat with the authority of elders. This area of church organization and government has been, and continues to be, the subject of much discussion, and an area from which springs great danger to the peace and safety of the body of Christ.

TWO EXTREMES

Most areas of study have three categories: (1) The left, (2) The right, and (3) The middle, or the truth. I realize that such categorizing is quite relative, and is influenced by one's point of view. There are those who contend that elders have no authority whatsoever; that they are mere figureheads who do very little "figuring." On the other hand, there are those who want to make an ironfisted dictatorship of them. We believe the truth lies somewhere in between. It is obvious that elders have the authority to rule, and oversee the flock of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2; Heb. 13:17, etc.), but there is nothing in the scriptures to indicate that the elders form a separate body apart from the church with no accountability to the flock for the rulings made.

ELDERS ARE NOT "OVERLORDS"

Regardless of how one views the authority of elders, it must be tempered by the fact that they are forbidden to lord it over God's heritage (1 Pet. 5:3). This limitation is basic to whatever authority God has given the elders, and it must be scrupulously observed. It forbids elders' being the iron-fisted tyrants some elderships become. Many congregational problems spring from elders who

act like, if they do not declare, their voice is the voice of God, regardless of how their decisions are made.

I verily believe that when elders advise with those they oversee, taking into consideration the wise and "otherwise" views of the governed, giving due consideration to all concerned and make a judgment which they sincerely believe is the best for the cause of Christ, God expects the flock to support it. (It may be either the minority or majority view) But there are many cases where elders do not reach decisions in this manner. Instead of consulting and advising *with* the church, they make their rulings in private meetings *apart from* the church. In many cases they seldom if ever have a general business meeting with the church, and when they do, it is only to inform the brethren of the arbitrary eldership decisions which everyone is "duty bound" to support and all who do not are "rebelling against the elders." If this is not being "lords over God's heritage," pray tell me how they might be such. Such authoritarian rule may be tolerated for a while, but it contains the seeds of rebellion, revolution and its own destruction.

We will do well to consider carefully the prohibition that elders are not to be "lords over God's heritage" (1 Pet. 5:3). The expression "lords over" translates the Greek word "KATA-KURIEUO" which is used four times in the New Testament:

(1) Mt. 20:25, where it is translated by "dominion." This is in connection with Salome's request that James and John be given exalted positions of authority in the kingdom. Jesus said, "*Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise DOMINION over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant.*"

(2) Mk. 10:42, a parallel to the above passage, but the word is translated "exercise lordship" here.

(3) Acts 19:16, where it is translated "overcame." This is where the seven sons of Sceva tried to cast out devils by the name of Jesus and the demons "leaped on them, and OVERCAME them."

(4) 1 Pet. 5:3, where it is used to describe what elders are not to be; "*Lords over God's heritage.*"

Concerning this word, (KATAKURIEUO) the scholars say:

"The word means the exercise of dominion against one, i.e. to one's own advantage . . . The elders . . . are not to exercise their power for themselves against those entrusted to them" (Kittel).

"Become master, gain dominion over, subdue" (Arndt and Gingrich).

"This carries the idea of high-handed rule" (Vincent).

"By implication, to get the mastery of, to overpower, to subdue . . . To domineer over" (Green).

"The KATA in the verb KATAKURIEUO is not only intensive, it implies something of scorn and tyranny or even of hostility" (Pulpit Commentary).

"It refers properly to that kind of jurisdiction which civil rulers or magistrates exercise. This is an exercise of AUTHORITY, as contradistinguished from the influence of reason, persuasion, and example . . . Their dominion is not to be that of temporal lordship; it is to be that of love and truth . . . This is a strong word, denoting that tyranny which men of this world often exercise, when they have obtained offices of power" (McKnight).

While KATAKURIEUO describes the kind of rule the elders are not allowed, there are two words which describe the kind they are to have:

(1) PROISTEMI (Rom. 12:8; 1 Tim. 5:12). The scholars say this word means:

"To stand over, to superintend, preside over. To be a protector or guardian; to give aid" (Thayer).

"To stand before, hence to lead, to attend to" (Vine).

"According to the context the task of the PROISTAMENOI is in large measure that of pastoral care, and the emphasis is not on their rank or authority but on their efforts for the eternal salvation of believers . . . 'If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?' (1 Tim. 3:5). Here, then, 'to rule' is the same as 'to take care of' . . . the verb has in the New Testament the primary senses of both 'to lead' and 'to care for,' and this agrees with the distinctive nature of office in the New Testament, since according to Lk. 22:26 the one who is chief is to be as he who serves" (Kittel).

(2) HEGEOMAI (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24): This word is defined as to be "guides" (Vine). "Leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel among any" (Thayer). Of the prefix "heg" Thayer says it denotes *"a belief resting not on one's inner feelings or sentiment, but on the due consideration of external grounds, the weighing and comparing of facts"* (Thayer, p. 276).

We see then, that while the Bible says the elders rule, they are not to have dominion, lordship, be master of, subdue, overpower, domineer, be tyrannical, scornful, hostile or high-handed in that rule. In contrast to this, they are to use their good influence, example, reason, persuasion, love and truth to lead, guide, and take care of those under their charge. None of this is to be dictated by their "inner feeling or sentiment, but on the due consideration of external grounds, the weighing and comparing of facts." They are to govern for the good of the governed, and not feel that they are in a position of authority over the governed with a "might makes right" philosophy.

There is nothing in the New Testament to sanction authoritarian elderships, but there are some of this kind around, and he who would deny it has either not been around, or else he is not observant. Jesus said there would be no authoritarian rule in the kingdom (Mt. 20:25), and in defining the word KATAKURIEUO, which elders are forbidden to do, McKnight says it describes "that kind of jurisdiction which civil rulers or magistrates exercise" and further states that "Their dominion is not to be that of temporal lordship."

All this is against the rather common condition where the elders and the brethren look upon the eldership as a separate body from the church. There is little, if any, contact between the two in decision making. The church looks upon the eldership about as we look upon a political machine, regime or administration. The church is left guessing what the administration will do next. The elders sit upon their papal thrones and hand down their "infallible" decrees at which all their subjects are to bow in humble submission and constantly contribute liberally of their means so the regime won't run out of something to do. (Taxation without representation).

ELDERS AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

The thought is often expressed that a church should be run by a general business meeting until elders are appointed. The idea is that business meetings should be stopped once elders are

appointed. In fact, they sometimes are stopped at this point. Business meetings certainly would not have the same character after elders are appointed, to be sure, but that they should be stopped at that point is a serious error. They should be held by elders to encourage the brethren to give the elders the benefit of their advice and judgment. The qualifications of elders presuppose that they have developed a degree of judgment and maturity that is above the average, but there is nothing to indicate that it is infallible. One's judgment doesn't automatically become superior because he is appointed an elder. There is a very great possibility that some in the congregation may be more mature in judgment than some of the elders. For instance, a brother who has had years of experience in decision making and Bible study may not be qualified for the eldership due to his domestic status. Another brother who just barely makes a passing grade in wisdom and knowledge might be appointed because he has the domestic qualifications. It is absurd to think that such an elder should lord his judgment over older and abler men in the congregation without so much as advising with them just because he is an elder. A general business meeting without "elders" is a more scriptural method of "running" a congregation than such a situation. It goes without saying that a good judgment cannot be made until we have something from which to make it. The elders should obtain this "something" from the advice and help available to them in the flock of God that is among them. To ignore it is pure lunacy, to say nothing of being unscriptural.

ELDERS ARE ACCOUNTABLE

Some elderships feel they are accountable to nobody, least of all to the congregation. It is quite illogical and absurd to think that God trusted the congregation's judgment in determining who is qualified to serve as its elders, but once appointed, said elders rule *separate and apart* from the people who selected them. The congregation has sufficient judgment to decide who meets the qualifications for elders, but beyond this their judgment is defunct! It is a gross absurdity to think the elders must have the advice and help of the congregation to become its elders, but not to rule it. One would certainly think that if the Lord uses the congregation's judgment to select its elders, He would plan to use it to help them function once they are selected. Strange the Lord uses the congregation's judgment, but the elders don't need it!

WHY AUTHORITARIAN ELDERS?

I fear that the problem of authoritarian elders is the result of

appointing men who don't possess the scriptural qualifications. In many congregations there is very little to pick from in the selection of elders. It is most difficult to find men who can make even a passing grade in all the qualifications. This often results in picking *little men* to fill a *big office*. It is a fact of life that a big job ruins a little man. The Lord knew this when he said an elder is not to be "a novice lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6). Men of small caliber in the eldership have to make up with thunder what they don't have in lightning. They wear their "badge" in plain view and make sure everyone knows "they are the elders." They jealously guard their "office," making sure that nobody infringes upon their "jurisdiction." Such men consider the preacher to be their greatest threat. He is expected to play a major role in congregational development and function, but they make sure that he is not consulted in decision making, and that he is the last to know it is once they have made it in a corner, but then, he is supposed to threaten the congregation with the damnation of hell unless they "support the elders' decision."

ELDERS — PREACHER RELATIONSHIP

It is a scriptural fact that the congregation should not be run by the preacher, and I know very few preachers who have any inclination along that line. Most of them want to preach the gospel — do their work, and let the elders do theirs. But ordinary common sense teaches that elders cannot expect the preacher to do what they generally expect of him when they treat him as a *threat* rather than as a *helper*. A preacher can hardly do his best for a church when the elders seem to think their main duty is to protect the congregation from his influence, and when it is obvious that they are childishy jealous of his standing with the church.

CHECKBOOK ELDERS

It is a sad fact that many of today's elderships think their primary responsibility is physical. It is quite strange that so many elders want to be known as elders, but want to do the work of deacons! Elders occupy themselves almost wholly with physical matters, but especially the treasury! They become little more than a glorified finance committee — checkbook elders. They spend hours deciding how late the lights should burn on the parking lot, with little or no concern as to whether the spiritual lights of their charges shine at all! They are more concerned with the state of repair of the physical stones in the meeting house, than with the condition of the living stones that make up the

spiritual house of God (1 Pet. 2:5). They are occupied with closing the building rather than with opening their hearts to the spiritually weak and discouraged. It is sad but true, but the preacher often does the work of elders, the elders do the work of deacons, and the deacons do nothing! The elders are concerned with checkbooks, church buildings, and seeing that the *preacher* visits all the sick (spiritual and physical) and shut-ins, even though James says, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the ELDERS of the church; and let them pray over him . . ." (Jas. 5:13). Many elders and members would have this read, "Let him call for the PREACHER . . ." If there is "a lull in the work," it is always the preacher's fault, never the elders, so it is time for him to move on "for the good of the cause."

In some congregations the elders keep the financial status a deep, dark secret. It is next to impossible for the congregation to find out how the money they contribute is spent, or how much is kept on hand. Some elderships feel such information is "none of the congregation's business." They feel that it is the church's responsibility to give, the elders' to spend. In some churches the members don't even know whom the church is supporting, or how much. Elders sometimes spend large sums of money to make *major* changes on the building without even consulting anyone.

CONCLUSION

It has been said that a stream cannot rise above its source. By the same token, a church can be no stronger than its leadership. One of our great failings is the lack of properly qualified elderships. We need much teaching along this line. It is sad, but true, that elderships often hinder the progress and spiritual growth of the congregation. Too many think of occupying an OFFICE, rather than doing a work (1 Tim. 3:1). Many elderships try to defend their arbitrary dictatorship by saying the Bible doesn't teach majority rule, thus, if they ruled by the consensus of the church, this would be majority rule, therefore, they consult nobody. Are they not thus defending minority rule? When two or three men make all the decisions without so much as consulting anyone else, this is minority rule of the worst kind, and is contrary to 1 Pet. 5:3. I don't believe the Bible teaches either minority or majority rule. As stated earlier, the decision the elders finally make may be the minority view, if they think it is best, but it should not be made arbitrarily.

In many cases we are in need of integration in the church; we need to intergrate the eldership with the congregation. As long as

elderships constitute a *body politic* separate and apart from the congregation, an unscriptural condition will exist. The church should be able to look *to* the elders, not *at* them. Brethren should love and respect the elders, not dread and fear them.

The sentiments expressed in this editorial describe a rather wide-spread situation in the church today. Arbitrary, dictatorial elderships is about the most common complaint I hear from brethren in the churches I visit, but it is about like the weather; "Everybody talks about it, but nobody does anything about it." Until the complainers get ready to do something about it, they deserve the kind of elderships they have. After all, the churches put the men in, so they will have to live with the condition until they do something about it. Much of the trouble could be prevented by a more thorough knowledge of the qualifications and the men we so often hastily appoint. There is a mistaken idea that any kind of elders is better than none at all, when in reality, the reverse is true: it is better to have none, than to have men who are not qualified.

We do not mean to leave the impression that there are no qualified elders among us; indeed there are. There are many good and sincere elders who are doing great works as elders, but there are far too many who fit the pattern laid out in this editorial. We need elders in every church (Tit. 1:5; Acts 14:23), but we need qualified men who will do the work rather than occupy an office. We need men with compassion, knowledge and understanding; men who can lead by influence rather than whip people into line by authoritarianism, or behind-the-scenes political maneuverings.

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NOT JUST FOR FUN

SESSIONS IN SATIRE

SPOOFS, GOOFS, AND PROOFS

Brother's Keepers for Christ

(A Brotherhood Project)

Mike Grushon

BROTHER'S KEEPERS FOR CHRIST

c/o South Jerusalem Church of Christ

Jerusalem, Judea

October 1, 52

Dear brethren:

We are writing to you about an urgent need. For several years now it has been evident that a problem was developing in the churches of Christ. Since the time that the persecution has scattered many of the brethren from our midst, it has been increasingly more difficult for churches to keep up with their sojourning members. An additional problem has developed in that it is extremely difficult for churches to follow up on those who visit their services. With the mobility of today's society, the convenience of our modern roads and the comforts of the latest chariots, people are travelling more and more. If we are to be successful in evangelizing the world we must adjust our programs to meet the needs.

In times past, it was not uncommon for a local evangelist to travel from Samaria to Gaza in search of an honest soul, but times have changed! How many of our brethren are getting lost in the shuffle and never contact a faithful church when they move? How many possible converts have been lost because someone visited your assemblies on their way through, but could not find the church in the city of their destination? It is obvious that the old-fashioned methods of public advertizing and local work will not work.

However, the solution is at hand! The elders of this church have instigated our "Brother's Keepers For Christ Program." "Brother's Keepers For Christ" is a plan that will work. As the entire brotherhood of churches works together to keep each other informed concerning the movement of members and prospects throughout the empire, souls will be won and churches strengthened. The elders of the South Jerusalem church have graciously consented to oversee this project on behalf of all the churches.

This is the way the program works: We have set up communication centers at key churches in the empire. The regional centers are Rome, Athens, Ephesus, Alexandria, Antioch, and Samaria. When you have a visitor or if a member moves, send his name and the essential details of his destination to your regional center. They will forward it to us at Jerusalem and we in turn will forward it to the proper regional center and they will make sure it gets in the hands of the faithful church in the city of the prospects destination. That church will then in turn be responsible for contacting the prospect and informing him of the activities of the church in that community.

We enlist your support for this worthy brotherhood project. No longer is there any reason why any member of the Lord's church should be lost in the shuffle.

Yours for the elders,

Ima N. Ovator, minister

If this letter had actually been circulated in New Testament times, wonder what reaction it would have gotten from some of the old-fashioned teachers and apostles? First century Christians were noted for taking the gospel with them every where they went, not for having to be tracked down like big game. The apostles seemed to prefer sending commendations or warnings directly to those involved. Someone, like Paul, might have even been bold enough to suggest that it would be much more efficient to send the letter directly to the church involved (as he did with his epistles) than to fuss with all the red tape inherent in projects of the scope of "Brother's Keepers For Christ." One of the inspired writers might have suggested to the originator of the program that the autonomy of the local church was being threatened. I wonder if such criticisms would have been heeded or would they have been dismissed as the anguished cry of a bunch of backward "antis"?

Hawk - Needham Discussion

Proposition: The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.

Ray Hawk's Second Affirmative

DEFINITION OF PROPOSITION

A15 My brother is disappointed over my definitions of *social* and *recreation*. Actually it all boils down to him being disappointed because I did not say what he wanted me to say. Since the words are not found in the Bible, I used Webster's Dictionary. I selected the meaning from Webster's that fitted what *we do* when *we eat*. In re-typing my first affirmative I did not type all the definition for *social*, but accidentally left out several words. The complete quote is, "of or having to do with human beings living together as a group in a situation requiring that they have dealings with one another." Webster, p. 1722.

A16 My opponent admits: *The scriptures teach* (a) the elders, (b) may call, (c) the church, (d) to eat a common meal, (e) on church property, (f) namely in the church building or on church grounds! *He will affirm that!*

A17 Now, back to Webster's definition of social. Was the church in Jerusalem, Acts 2:46, eating "together as a group in a situation requiring that they have dealings with one another"? Was this recreation (refreshments or food)?

A18 My brother states, "This is not what I meant by social . . ." Yet, I am not affirming what he believes the word means. The anti-Sunday school man defines Bible class as "a Sunday school organization separate and apart from the church," but does it because he so defines it? He said in his INTRODUCTION, "I am not obligated to affirm anything," yet here he is affirming for me what social and recreation mean!

A19 Our brother says he agrees the church may eat on church

property "when such is necessary to its function." He will probably evade this question by saying his position is not on trial, but we would all be interested in seeing a passage which has the church eating in the building when it is necessary to its function and said meal *not be* "a situation requiring that they have dealings with one another" or not be "food" eaten!

ELDERS CALLING THE CHURCH TOGETHER

A20 My opponent agrees the elders may call the church together in the church building to eat a common meal "when such is necessary to its function." He wants the words *social* and *recreation* to mean "fun and games." I do not read of the church having fun and games, using restrooms, drinking fountains or smoking on church property, but I do find it eating together, Acts 2:46.

A21 My brother says, "Elders cannot scripturally call the church together to do an unscriptural work." AMEN! The elders are not calling the church into an unscriptural practice when they call it together to eat. *My opponent agrees to this.* I suppose he wants to make our eating together into an orgy?

A22 My opponent said I would have to prove two things. I have already shown, and my opponent has agreed, that the church may practice eating food together. It is as simple as that!

MEMBERS MAY EAT ON CHURCH PROPERTY

A23 My esteemed brother tries to water down the force of my argument here by saying, "Is he arguing that the church can do anything on church property that the members can do in a private home? So goes his logic! Members can have a hootenanny in a private home, can the elders call the church together and have one at the building?"

A24 My brother, the elders may call the church together for a common meal on church property. You agree! They may call the church together in a private home too. I am not arguing nor does my proposition cover a hootenanny. Do you actually believe the elders may call the church together in a private home borrowed from a member so the church can throw a hootenanny under the oversight of the elders in that loaned to the church building? We would like to hear more on that!

A25 The brother's answer in the affirmative to my question,

"Can we do in our building what the early church did in private homes that were loaned or borrowed for the church to meet in?" Good. The church in Acts 2:46 met in private homes to eat. The elders may call the church together today in the church building to do what the church did in private homes in Acts 2:46. Thank you, my brother, That is exactly what we do today!

A26 My brother says I assume *agape feasts* were in the building, then he argues that *they were in the building* because they were the Lord's supper. I can't tell which way to meet my brother because he flies off in two different directions! He cites Barnes' Notes on Jude 12 to prove it's the Lord's supper and then in the next four paragraphs uses Ferguson, The I.S.B.E. and Guy N. Woods to prove it wasn't! He says the *agape feasts* were celebrated in the building but not in the building; it was the Lord's supper, but it wasn't the Lord's supper! WOW! While we are on these quotations from these sources he introduced, when is the last time you, my brother, knew of a congregation on your side of this issue feeding the poor *in the church building*?

A27 Thank you brother for quoting the rest of Thayer. I left it as quoted in my first affirmative hoping you would quote the rest. We practice in our buildings what my opponent refuses to practice but says he would. We practice these passages: Acts 2:46, 20:11; Jude 12 and 2 Pet. 2:13. Some saints who are poor partake with the rich. Yes, this quote sustains and proves my proposition, for this is what we practice. Thank you brother. My brother says he would "endorse, promote and participate in an AGAPE feast on church property, if such was needed." He said in one place it was the Lord's supper. If so, is that needed? He practiced common meals in the Philippines, will he do so in the U.S.A.?

A28 On 1 Cor. 11 my opponent argues the practice here was condemned only because it was a common meal. Not so, but the practice of (1) drunkenness, (2) making the Lord's supper into a common meal, v. 20,21, (3) not sharing in what was suppose to be the Lord's supper which they were perverting, and (4) eating and drinking damnation to themselves. I know of no church today which practices what Paul was condemning in this passage.

A29 Paul ate a common meal in Acts 20:11. My opponent thinks the church did not eat. Yet he admits that it is not wrong. If one (Paul) could eat, all could eat. Would it be right, after services, for my brother to continue to talk to the brethren while he sat and ate and they sat around and listened to him talk in

between bites? Alright for him to eat, but sinful for them? Consistency, thou art a jewel!

PRACTICE OF OUR BRETHREN OVER THE YEARS AND AT PRESENT

A30 Did you notice how my brother evaded the practice of by-gone years where brethren once ate "dinner on the grounds" and my opponent eating in the church building? Surely he can do better than that!

WHAT IS THE ISSUE BETWEEN US?

A31 My brother misses it again. Members bring the food to the building just as he brings his sack lunch to the building to eat. He makes much ado over "social fellowship." What do you brethren call it when you stand around in the foyer fifteen minutes before services, between Bible classes and worship services, and fifteen to twenty minutes after services "visiting"?

ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS

A32 1. My brother answers "no" if said meals are "sponsored by the church 'for social and/or recreational purposes' and as a work of elders." My brother would no doubt have objected to the meals in Acts 2:46; 20:11 and other places and hidden behind the phrases, "sponsored" and "work of the elders" as smoke screens. 2. My brother agrees here to that which he replies against in No.1. 3. My brother says the elders may call the church together in the Community building for a common meal. He quotes 1 Pet. 4:9 and says "hospitality" is enjoined upon the church/saint. Is hospitality a work of the church under the oversight of the elders? 4. The game of golf may not be sponsored by my brother, but it seems he will allow money to be paid out of the church treasury for the lights and heat-air conditioning while brethren stand around talking about their golf game. That's scriptural according to my opponent's logic. But, let one or two of those brethren bring along a drumstick to practice Acts 2:46 and eat it while they are showing "hospitality" and it becomes "social and/or recreational per my opponent's definition and therefore sinful! 5. My brother believes "fellowship" is everything the Bible says it is. The church ate a common meal together, Acts 2:46; 20:11; Jude 12. Therefore, the Bible shows this is a way of having fellowship — all things common.

QUESTIONS FOR OPPONENT

A33 My brother will not answer my questions unless I give him an extra page or seven pages. I have so done! However, where, in any of the rules on debate does it say the affirmative speaker cannot ask his opponent questions? I suppose if I had not put them under a heading but simply asked them within the body of a paragraph, he would not have objected! My worthy opponent agreed to six pages per speech, margins set at 75 characters and *only 26 lines to each page*. Yet, my opponent had 28 lines on page 1, 30 lines on page 2, 29 lines on page 3, 30 lines on page 4, 30 lines on page 5 and now he takes not only a 7th page to answer my questions, but uses an extra 8 lines over the regulation 26 to do that! *And he talks about me wanting an advantage!* Shame on you brother! He used 25 extra lines, plus one extra page to answer my first affirmative speech which contained 21 lines *less than six pages!* I have answered his seven pages + 25 extra lines (that's almost 8 pages) in less than 6 full pages! He no doubt will be hard pressed to answer my 5 pages + 20 lines in 6 pages.

CONCLUSION

A34 (1) My proposition only calls for common meals per my definition from Webster.

A35 (2) We use rooms already available.

A36 I also share my brother's feelings on debate. However, it becomes necessary to ferret out error and this is our purpose. Find truth and renounce error.

PLANNING TO MOVE?

PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS

CHANGE IN ADVANCE.

Hawk - Needham Discussion

Proposition: The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.

James P. Needham's Second Negative

N32 WHAT IS THE ISSUE? Brother Hawk still is confused about what is the issue between us. IT IS NOT: (1) *Eating in the church building*. I believe such is scriptural if it is: (a) To feed needy saints, and/or (b) essential to scriptural church function. I have practiced it, and would do so again anywhere, even in U.S.A. (2) *Whether the early church ate where they met*. Just as a matter of fact, he has not proven that it did, (except 1 Cor. 11) but even if he could, he must then prove that it was for "social and/or recreational purposes." But, the only time he can find the church doing that, Paul told them to stop it (1 Cor. 11). THE ISSUE IS: *What is the work of the church?* The scripture teach it is: (a) *Evangelism*, (b) *Edification*, and (c) *Benevolence to needy saints* (Eph. 4:12). Brother Hawk will agree with this, but then he wants to add another, namely, SOCIAL and RECREATIONAL functions. He has not produced scriptural authority for such, and will not.

N33 BROTHER HAWK IS RIGHT IN THEORY—WRONG IN PRACTICE: He rightly says Bible authority is established by: (1) "Command," (2) "Example," and (3) "Necessary inference" (Def. of Prop.). I said I would take either for his practice. He has given neither.

N34 BROTHER HAWK'S "PROOF": (1) *Incomplete and inadequate definitions of words*. He knew before the debate that I believed it is right to eat in the church building under scriptural circumstances (Letter to him 12-22-72). For that reason I refused to sign his proposition without the phrase: "*For social and/or recreational purposes*." I said I would affirm it without this. He was willing to add this, obviously thinking he could get by with perverting definitions. He shall not succeed. He says I am disappointed because he didn't define the words to suit me. I am

disappointed because he didn't define them in their accepted senses. He is afraid of these words, and he knows it. Where he preaches they have common meals on church property for social and/or recreational purposes in the accepted sense, but Ray is reluctant to admit it in this debate. He has almost abandoned these two words, but the readers know full-well what they mean in the context of the proposition and Ray cannot conceal it by sophistry. Ray, what is the purpose of the meals in your building?

N35 (2) *Elders can call the church together:* But he agrees they cannot do so for unscriptural purposes, but he has not proven common meals on church property for social and/or recreational purposes is a scriptural work.

N36 (3) *Scriptures which don't say what he cites them to prove.* (a) Acts 2:42,44,46. These verses say the Jerusalem church met in the temple and ate "AT HOME." Ray uses them to prove they ate where they met. He is unable to see that "in the temple" and "at home" are two different localities. (b) Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2:13—AGAPE. In his second affirmative, he tries to show that I contradicted myself on AGAPE. I did not. I distinguished between New Testament AGAPE (which could well have been the Lord's supper and which certainly would have been on church property), and the AGAPE described in post-New Testament literature (Which may or may not have been on church property). He did not and cannot prove that New Testament AGAPE was not the Lord's supper, so he made no effort! He cannot prove that New Testament AGAPE was a common meal on church property "for social and/or recreational purposes." He cannot even prove that about post-New Testament AGAPE!!! Early writers say it was for *benevolence*. Ray is confusing New Testament AGAPE with post-New Testament AGAPE. I suspicioned that he deliberately failed to quote all of Thayer, now he admits it! He claims he did it to play a little game with these serious matters, but I will let the reader judge why he did it. (c) 1 Cor. 11:20-32. He says the Corinthians "were eating a common meal" where they assembled, but overlooks the plain fact that Paul told them to STOP it. The only passage in the New Testament that mentions a church dinner "for social and/or recreational purposes" commands it to be STOPPED! I warned Ray to let this passage alone, but he didn't heed it. He must bear the consequences of his folly! He is like a Baptist preacher affirming salvation by faith only, when the only time he finds the words mentioned together in the scriptures, it is condemned (Jas. 2:24)! His charge that I argued that "the practice here was condemned only because it was a common meal" is false and I challenge him to prove it or retract it. I did

not argue it, imply it, nor do I believe it. But the fact still remains that it was a common meal on church property "for social and/or recreational purposes," and Paul told them to stop it and "eat at home" (v. 22,23). (d) Acts 20:11. He used this to prove a church dinner, but the text says only that PAUL ATE. So says brother H. Leo Boles, whom Ray quoted. I would warn him not to try to put brother Boles on his side of the proposition. He said, "*Neither is it the mission of the church to furnish entertainment for its members or for the world*" (Gospel Advocate, May 31, 1945).

N37 Practice of brethren over the years: He accuses me of avoiding his "argument" here. I did not. I challenged him to prove his proposition historically, but he left it alone! The challenge still stands. Church social and recreational functions are a recent thing as can be seen from the above quotation from H. Leo Boles, and this one from B. C. Goodpasture: "*. . . it is not the responsibility of the church as such to furnish recreation (note that word, jpn) for its members. . . for the church to turn aside from its divine work to furnish amusement and recreation is to pervert her mission. It is to degrade its mission. Amusement and recreation should stem from the home rather than the church*" (Gospel Advocate, May 20, 1958, p. 484).

N38 I know we used to have "all day preaching and dinner on the grounds," but Ray can't prove it was for "social and/or recreational purposes," and I dare him to try! When we travelled 10 miles in a horse-drawn wagon it was not possible to go home, eat lunch and return for an evening service; so we took our lunch, ate it with others, had a mid-afternoon service then returned home. Is that "for social and/or recreational purposes"? Even if it were, it wouldn't prove his proposition for it says, "The SCRIPTURES teach," and not "The brethren have practiced."

N39 Tried to get me into the affirmative by questions. Did he think he could get me to say something that would seem to justify his unscriptural position? Refusing to be taken by such tactics, I agreed to answer his questions only in excess of our regulation six pages per article. He was so anxious for me to answer his questions that he granted me an extra page provided he could have one to reply to my answers, if he wanted it (which he didn't!) Now that he has my answers, he doesn't know what to do with them! Let us notice: (See his A13 for the content).

N40 #1. All he said in reply to my answer is that I "would no doubt have objected to the meals in Acts 2:46; 20:11 and other places and hidden behind the phrases, "sponsored and 'work of

elders' as smoke screens." That is amusing! Acts 2:46 says the Jerusalem church MET in the temple and ATE at home, and 20:11 says Paul ate a meal before he went on a journey. Now, why would I object to these, or hide behind a smoke screen? I would agree to both. These are my passages, not his! By the way, Ray, where are those "other places" where the church ate meals? Come on, tell us!

N41 #2. He claims that what I said here contradicts what I said in answer to #1, but he didn't bother to show how. He wants you to take his word for it. #2 concerns Acts 2:46, which says the Jerusalem church met in the temple, and ate at home. Ray says they ate "at church," but Luke says "at home," and we are not going to let him forget it.

N42 #3. He misrepresented what I said. I did not say the elders could call the church together for a common meal in a community building. I said we could announce a common-meal gathering in a community building, but that this would not justify a common meal on church property as church work any more than announcing that a member is in the hospital would justify a church hospital. What did Ray say about it? He was as silent as a tomb! He wanted to know, "Is hospitality a work of the church under the oversight of the elders?" No, if you mean "social and/or recreational" functions. Yes, if you mean benevolence to needy saints.

N43 #4. He wanted to know if the building could be used for other than spiritual purposes? I said, "Yes, but not as a work of the church." I explained that brethren and sisters use the building to discuss fishing, golfing and sewing, etc. at almost every service. These are not spiritual activities, but this does not justify having a golf, fishing or sewing clinic in the building as church work. Ray thinks I would object if "brethren brought along a drumstick to practice Acts 2:46 . . ." How could they do this when Acts 2:46 says they ate "AT HOME"? Won't he ever learn?

N44 #5. Concerned which acts can Christian's have fellowship in? I challenged him to produce the passage that uses fellowship to mean eating common meals. He gave Acts 2:46; 20:11; Jude 12. These passages have nothing to do with eating common meals in the church building, and the word "fellowship" is not one time mentioned! He did not answer the question, but we will continue to ask it. Where Ray preaches they announce common meals in the "fellowship room." Ray, where do the scriptures use the word "fellowship" to describe common meals? Come on, tell us?

N45 Ray got all exercised about my refusing to answer his questions unless he granted me an extra page to do it. He asks: *"Where, in any of the rules of debate does it say the affirmative speaker cannot ask his opponent questions?"* Ray, where do the rules say he can? I will gladly answer any question you ask about something I say in this debate, but you asked your questions before I had said one word! Ray says this is his first debate, so we will try to be tolerant with him and charge it to his inexperience.

N46 I asked him what other social and/or recreational activities can the elders call the church together to perform? He said his proposition calls only for meals per Webster's definition (A34). But Ray accuses me of evading! I asked him if elders could expend church funds to build special facilities for social and recreational activities? He says they (where he preaches) use rooms already available (A35). But he accuses me of evading! In his bulletin he sometimes mentions a "fellowship room." But he says it is a room already available, but it was obviously built with church funds. Ray, are you saying common meals are a work of the church but the church cannot use church funds to build a place to have them? Can't use church funds for church work?

N47 HIS COMPLAINTS ABOUT EXCESS SPACE: Ray used an arbitrary interpretation of the rules to try to prove that I have taken advantage of him by using more space than they allow. He used 10 lines of his space to try to build this case, but failed. Rule six allows one hundred fifty-six-seventy-five-character lines per article. To arrive at his conclusion, Ray counted part of a line as a whole one. Several such lines had only one word on them. Several lines in the body of my copy did not have 75 characters in them. These partial lines don't constitute "a line of time" as per the rules. He might have a case, if we let him interpret the rules for us, but I don't plan to do that. I can interpret also. Ray is suffering the agony of an unproven and unprovable proposition, and he is whimpering and whining for reader sympathy. To prop up his weakness, he boasts about how he has not taken the regulation six pages in either of his first two affirmatives. I wouldn't need six pages either, if I did no better in the negative than he is doing in the affirmative: deliberately leaving off part of Thayer, half-defining key words, making ambiguous references to my articles, and asking questions of the negative, etc. He is quite fond of comparing me with "the anti-sunday-school brethren," so he should not mind a dose of his own medicine: I have met several denominational preachers in debate, and they nearly always have trouble taking all their allotted time!

Eternal Man

There was never a time when God was not
And He will always be;
For "God is not a man,"
But eternal Deity.

There was a time when I was not,
But that will never be again;
For I am not a mortal beast,
But eternal man:

For since I started I'll never cease,
Though it be strange or odd;
For in my "inner man"
I'm in the image of God.

When the sin no longer shines,
And the stars shall take a bow;
I'll be as conscious then
As I am right now.

Through eternity's ceaseless ages
I shall know and live and see;
Whether this life is lived for Jesus,
Shall determine where I'll be.

James P. Needham
6-11-73

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August 1973



TORCH

*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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TORCH - Not a Party Organ

TORCH refuses to be a party organ, or a brotherhood regulator. We are not seeking anybody's devotion or personal loyalty. Someone recently said to me that some people in a given locality "Looked up to the editor of _____ as some kind of god." We will do anything that is right to avoid such a situation where TORCH is involved. We don't want to be referred to as "the TORCH brethren." We don't want to be "TORCH brethren," or any other *kind* of brethren, but just brethren.

James P. Needham (Excerpt from Editorial, January 1973).

Volume VIII - August 1973 - Number 8

Editor

James P. Needham

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Editorial

James P. Needham



Dead Churches Have No Problems

We realize that this statement could be misleading. One might get the idea that all live churches have problems. Or, the way to settle problems in a church is to let it die. Or, that a dead church is better off than a live one. None of these conclusions actually follows. The fact is, some live churches have no problems because they have worked and solved them. It is certain, however, that dead churches have no problems. Here are some problems not found in dead churches:

1. **No working problems:** Dead churches have no problem getting people to work because nobody works, therefore nobody cares whether others work.

2. **No discipline problems:** Dead churches have no disciplinary problems because nobody is concerned about the matter of right and wrong. Members are free to live and do as they please because nobody in a dead church is concerned about his own life, much less the other fellow's.

3. **No preaching problems:** A dead church has no problem with preaching to the heathen or helping gospel preachers in hard places because it is too concerned with worldly pleasure and its own selfish interests to get excited about the fact that the majority of the world is lost.

4. **No study problems:** People in dead churches have no problem finding time to study and improve themselves because they are not looking for it.

5. **No attendance problems:** Dead churches have no problems with attendance. The members just attend the services and classes when they get ready and feel no pangs of conscience when they miss, so there is no problem there.

That's right! Dead churches have no problems so far as they are concerned, but they are a problem. All problems demand a solution. The Lord's solution to the dead church problem is clearly revealed, "Repent or I will come and move thy candlestick out of its place" (Rev. 2:5).



Worth Repeating

Articles, Excerpts and Tidbits Clipped
and Snipped from Hither, Thither and Yon

Guilt By Association?

Floyd D. Chappelle

That long hair is a shame to a man is admitted by this editor (see 1 Cor. 11:14). Few would deny that long hair on a man is a sign of effeminacy which is likewise condemned in the pages of Holy Writ (see 1 Cor. 6:9). Nevertheless, it is here contended that some of the strong opposition to boys with long hair is born more of prejudice than of what the word of the Lord has to say on the subject. Furthermore, some of the harsh rebukes are unfair and should be regarded as such.

As an item of unfairness let us consider the following:

Some preachers take great delight in pointing out what Jerry Rubin (an ungodly perverted soul) had to say on the subject; calling special attention to the fact that he (Rubin) had long hair as a sign of rebellion against parental authority (as do some of his followers). Then, brethren conclude, all young men with long hair must be doing so to show their utter contempt for their parents.

That the above is guilt by association is obvious to all fair-minded people. The same type of reasoning was employed by the Jews when they contended that Paul had taken Gentiles into the temple. After all, they reasoned, hadn't we seen him in the company of Gentiles and then did we not also see him in the temple? We condemn the Jews and then take up their tactics. Something is rotten in Denmark.

If we are to employ guilt by association then let us conclude

Continued on page 12

Churches in Business

Herschel E. Patton

(Editor's Note: The following article is a copy of a radio sermon I heard brother Patton preach recently while in a meeting in the Huntsville area. I requested permission to print it in TORCH. We believe it to be very timely and to the point. This question deserves serious consideration. jpn).

CHURCHES IN BUSINESS

Church business enterprises have become an enormous thing in our day. Various religious bodies today own and operate parking lots, restaurants, apartment houses, bakeries, breweries, etc. Concern has been expressed by many over this "burgeoning wealth of the churches." The fact they pay no taxes, having an advantage over commercial competitors, bothers some. Others fear that the U.S. may one day find itself dominated by the wealth of a church or churches. While these, and other matters, may present causes for concern, the question of AUTHORITY — the right or wrong of churches in business for gain — should be the chief concern of people who want to follow the Scriptures.

These practices have appealed to some in the church of Christ who do not want to "be left behind by the sects." There are congregations among us today that prepare and sell dinners in their "Fellowship Halls," operate farms, own and operate housing projects, conduct kindergardens, etc. Such "on the march" brethren, espousing the false doctrine of "whatever the Christian can do a church can do," have not bothered themselves with finding Scriptural authority for their practices. Call for such authority and they quickly reply "It's no worse than some other things we do," making some flimsy comparison which completely misses the point. A few years ago, I suggested to the president of David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tennessee that his position that a church could do whatever the Christian could, would allow a church to operate a super market, filling station, etc. His reply — "Well, don't you have your building fund in the bank drawing interest?" He could see no difference in a church receiving interest on money in the bank and operating a super-market for profit. The right or wrong of churches in business for gain can not be established by comparisons. "What saith the Scripture?" is the chief concern of all real devotees of the Lord.

EXAMPLES OF RAISING FUNDS FOR THE LORD'S WORK

In Old Testament times when there was a need for raising funds for the Lord's work, it was always by a "willing," "from the heart" offering. Read the instructions given concerning the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:2; 35:5,22). The Temple — (1 Chron. 29:6,9).

New Testament Giving: When money was being raised for the relief of poor saints in Jerusalem, the Macedonian churches gave very liberally and Paul wrote that they were "willing of themselves"; the result of having "first given themselves to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8:3-5). Paul said to the Corinthian church, "*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver*" (2 Cor. 9:7). These references show that "from the heart" giving pleases God. The motive behind the gift is important — from a heart filled with love and devotion for the Lord and His work. This is not only true for material gifts, but the spiritual sacrifices that Christians offer must have this characteristic. We "obey from the heart," (Rom. 6:17) worship "in spirit and in truth" (Jno. 4:24), sing and pray "with the spirit and understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15).

SOME OFFERINGS ARE UNACCEPTABLE

When David sinned in numbering Israel, God sent a pestilence upon Israel. To remove the plague, David was instructed to "rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jehusite." Araunah offered to give the threshing floor and sacrifices unto David, but "*The king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So, David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver*" (2 Sam. 24:18-24). David knew it would not be appropriate to offer to God that which did not cost the offerer. The matter of sacrifice is therefore essential to acceptable giving.

Offerings acquired through disobedience to God's command are not acceptable. Samuel made this plain to Saul after he had disobeyed God in sparing the best of the sheep and oxen of the Amalakites and offered the excuse, "*the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God . . .*" (1 Sam. 15:15-22). This one example shows that the good done with offerings unlawfully acquired does not make it right.

The law of Moses declared *"Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the Lord thy God"* (Deut. 23:18). This is another example of an offering being rejected because of its origin. It came from impure and unlawful actions. It is doubtful that "dog" in this reference has reference to the animal-dog, but to the male prostitute. (See Rev. 22:15).

After Judas returned the silver pieces he had received for betraying the Christ, the chief priests said *"It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury because it is the price of blood."* Perhaps this conviction was the outgrowth of the law quoted from Deut. 23:18. At least, they considered money from such a disgraceful source as unfit for the Lord's treasury. These Bible examples indicate that the Lord is not pleased with offerings that come from impure sources or through disobedience.

MOTIVES IN GIVING

One motive for giving is to obey God. That God commands giving or sacrifice on the part of each can not be denied. "None shall appear before me empty" (Ex. 34:20). "Every man shall give as he is able . . ." Deut. 16:17). "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself . . ." (Mk. 8:34). "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give . . ." (2 Cor. 9:7). Personal sacrifice is not only required, the sacrifice must be the best. "... it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein" (Lev. 22:21). Jesus taught this same principle concerning the citizens of the kingdom, saying "Seek ye first the kingdom of God . . ." (Mt. 6:33). When our service is the best we can do, it is perfect with God, even though it may not be as much as that from another. The two talent man was as acceptable as the five talent man (Mt. 25). It is also interesting to note that God's requiring the best from each individual forbids offering that which was not one's own. "Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye offer the bread of your God . . ." (Lev. 22:25). Paul wrote, "it is accepted according to that which a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12). Obeying God in the matter of giving, therefore, requires each one give what is valuable, not worthless; what is one's own, not another's.

God's position and grace are also motives in giving. He is the owner of all. "... for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (1 Chron. 29:14). Besides "prospering" us so that we can give "of thine own," His grace has provided for our

soul's eternal welfare through the gift of His son (Jno. 3:16). Only those who recognize God as the rightful owner of all and who are grateful for His mercies can and will properly give.

A desire to express our feelings toward God will also enter into our giving. If "self" be our primary concern, we will travel the easiest and most economic way in our work and worship. On the other hand, if God be our chief concern, we will reject all thoughts of cheapness and convenience.

WHAT ABOUT CHURCH BUSINESS ENTERPRISES?

These many efforts, from rummage sales and suppers to the operation of a million dollar per year business concern, are generally sanctioned on the ground — "The ends justify the means." It is argued that the money raised through these enterprises is used for a good cause, therefore it is right. Of course, this could have been said of the sacrifices Saul and David proposed to offer, but "how they got the sacrifices" was important.

What is the motive behind church business enterprises? The chief aim, of course, is to raise money — for a good cause. If the righteousness of the cause is sufficient to justify the means used in obtaining the funds, why did the Lord require that the funds for building the tabernacle and temple come only from people with a "willing heart"? Why would David not make an offering of that which came to him without cost? And, why did the apostle Paul write, "every man as he purposeth in his heart"? Church business enterprises to raise money for buildings and works envisioned by churches simply provide convenient ways, without personal cost, of obtaining their desires. Members are thus excused from the personal sacrifice (precious in the eyes of the Lord) which would be necessary where it not for the mercenary endeavor.

WORK OF ELDERS

Another matter that should be considered in connection with churches in business is the work of elders. The elders, or bishops, in each local church (Acts 14:23; 20:17) are responsible for feeding (tending) the flock "among them" and "over which the Holy Spirit made them overseers" (1 Pet. 5:3; Acts 20:28). Their work is to feed (tend) the flock, watch for souls, rule well, convict the gainsayer with sound words, and be examples (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Heb. 13:17; Tit. 1:9). As overseers, naturally, the work done by a congregation would be their concern. They have not the authority to direct any activity of the church that is not

within it's mission. The mission, or work, of the church has been given by Christ, the head.

Elders may oversee the construction of a meeting house since the church is authorized to assemble. This command necessitates a place and facilities. But, before elders could oversee a construction business or enterprise (a building corp.) for the purpose of making money to be used in their work, there would have to be authority for this kind of thing. Elders may oversee a work of relief for needy charges of the church, but before they can oversee a farm, livestock or poultry enterprise to raise funds for providing said relief, there must be authority for this means of financing the Lord's work.

IS ALL INCOME, NOT A FROM THE HEART GIFT, UNACCEPTABLE?

Here is a realm in which many difficult questions arise. The questions are the outgrowth of churches acquiring, owning, and disposing of property. There is no record in the New Testament of a church owning a meeting house or a preacher's home. Nevertheless, the command to assemble necessitates a place and facilities. In New Testament times, the saints did meet in a place. It may have been some brother's home, or place rented for the purpose. 1 Cor. 11:22 seems to make a distinction between a house to eat and drink in and one in which to worship. Jas. 2:2 mentions "your synagogue" with the reference being to a place for seating arrangement discussed. Scholars tell us that the meaning of synagogue moved from an assembly to a place or building. But, regardless of this, the command to assemble gives authority for a place to assemble with necessary facilities. Also, the command to give a preacher "wages" could include a place to live as a part of said wages.

SOME QUESTIONS

A congregation purchases some property for the purpose of erecting a meeting house. In process of time another place is found that would seem to serve their purpose better. The first property is sold, but property having increased in value, it brings more than that given for it. Is the profit, applied to the later purchase, acceptable?

A fire badly damages the school building in a certain place. Just across the street is the house where the saints meet for worship. The school board arranges for the use of the church building

during week days while the school building is being restored, agreeing to pay rental into the church treasury to cover utilities and depreciation on the building. Would such be wrong?

A church builds and uses a house as part of the "wages" of a preacher. In time, a preacher working with them has his own house, or perhaps, being unmarried needs only a small apartment. Rather than let the house stand vacant, could it be rented and the rent money be used in the work of the church?

A new meeting house being needed, a congregation starts a building fund to which is added certain amounts over a period of time until enough is on hand to begin the building. The bank where the fund is on deposit adds interest to the amount deposited over the period of time it is there. Is this a business enterprise? Is there a difference in this and the church establishing a small loan company or association where transactions over a period of time brings in a considerable amount of interest? These are not imaginary cases, but actual experiences of certain congregations. They show how money does sometimes come into the treasury of the church that is not a "from the heart" offering. Great problems have arisen, even strife and division, over such circumstances and actions.

I do not claim to have the answer to all such problems. Congregations have met these problems in different ways. Rather than have the church appear in business one congregation refused to accept interest on a building fund. Another with a preacher's home, whose preacher had his own, let it stand vacant. Another, in the same situation, turns the preacher's home over to the preacher to either live in, or rent. He rents the house and the money is part of his wages.

Surely, there are Scriptural principles to guide us in facing problems of this kind and that will keep churches from becoming commercial "big business" bodies.

MOTIVES AND PURPOSE

All who have seriously studied the Scriptures know the emphasis the Lord places upon motives and purposes in connection with action. If our motive is to devise a scheme whereby we may serve God without, or with less, personal sacrifice, the scheme is wrong. It would be something of human origin, prompted by an impure motive. But, one says, 'My motive is not to get by with less personal sacrifice, but to simply gain means for doing good be-

yond personal sacrifice." It is recognized, then, that one's motive may be noble, but what about such a purpose?

If the purpose is to gain funds beyond sacrifice and "from the heart" giving, to be right, there would have to be Scriptural authority for thus securing funds, and there is none. The motive must be holy and the purpose must be authorized. The one purpose of sales, banquets, etc., even if the motive is good, is not sacrifice, but to get money. And, efforts to acquire money for the Lord's work beyond "from the heart" giving are not Scriptural.

NATURAL AND UNSOLICITED INCOME

In some cases there is income to certain churches through the increase of property values or special circumstances. In these cases, no evil motives can be attributed and there was no purposing to raise money contrary to Scriptural procedure.

Sometimes, to obtain desirable property — a good location — more property must be purchased than is actually needed, since certain legalities demand that said property be sold as a unit. If the property is bought and the not needed portion sold and the money derived from said sales used to decrease the over-all price of the needed property, there has been no commercializing in order to make money — no evil motive or purpose — but a manifestation of prudence and business judgment in securing what is needed without needless extravagance and waste.

PERPETUAL VERSES EXTINCTION

There is a difference in situations that are perpetual and those that naturally work themselves out or become extinct. A church may find itself with a source of income because of one or more of the situations already mentioned, but where the desire and aim is the cessation — bringing to an end — as quickly as prudence, legalities, etc. will allow, the motives and purposes are very different from those actions that result in a perpetual source of income. If a thing is not deliberately undertaken to be a source of income and efforts are made to eliminate the existence of such, there will be no danger of churches entering the "big business" field.

SOME TESTS

To assist us in deciding what is right and wrong concerning the matter under consideration, a few "test" questions in the light of matters studied, are in order.

1. Does this thing interfere with personal sacrifice?
2. Does this thing involve any disobedience to revealed law?
3. Is there moral wrong — impurity — connected with thus obtaining funds?
4. Are elders put in the position of overseeing something that does not pertain to their scope of work?
5. Is the motive behind the thing the gaining of funds more conveniently than God's prescribed way? To make possible a "big" work to satisfy pride?
6. Is the purpose to raise funds other than through "from the heart" giving?
7. Will this thing be a perpetual source of income rather than terminate itself?

If either one of these seven questions must be answered in the affirmative, then the thing can not meet with God's approval. I believe a strict adherence to the principles suggested by the test questions asked, while allowing for special circumstances and conditions, will certainly keep churches from having banquets, bazzars, and operating business enterprises for gain. All forms of business on the part of churches from pie suppers to breweries, and certainly all "pressure tactics" used on business men to obtain "gifts" (?) would be eliminated by observing the scriptural principles studied.

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WORTH REPEATING - Continued from page 4

that young men with long hair are really to be regarded as kindly, sympathetic souls. Furthermore, let us conclude that they are more concerned about the happiness of others than they are of their own. Let us suggest that they are outgoing individuals whose long hair and beards serve as a constant reminder of their gentle nature. Why should we reach such conclusions: Because long-haired, bearded boys remind us of the image that many have enjoyed over the years of a portly gentleman known as - - - - - SANTA CLAUS. Since guilt by association proves too much perhaps we can assume that it proves NOTHING AT ALL.

- STAND, 2-15-73

PLANNING TO MOVE?
PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS
CHANGE IN ADVANCE.

Hawk - Needham Discussion

Proposition: The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.

Ray Hawk's Third Affirmative

WHAT IS THE ISSUE

A37 My esteemed brother complained over my questions, saying that I wanted him in the affirmative so I could be in the negative. Then he *affirmed* for me what "social" and "recreation" meant. He is so shook up over Webster's definition, *which I gave on these words*, that he continues to *affirm* what he believes these words are, using another definition of Webster. My friend, you may continue to affirm what you think I should be saying or practicing all you want, but the reader is intelligent enough to see that you are not answering my arguments and that you are binding a human, man-made law upon your brethren!

A38 My worthy opponent keeps saying the church *can eat on church property when such is necessary to its functions*. He has affirmed a number of things already; I wonder what he would affirm on that statement? I doubt if he will tell us what those functions are, but you can put it down that what he will allow himself to do, saying it is a "function of the church," he will not allow us to do, saying it is social and/or recreational per his definition! I am amazed at how brethren can make themselves into gods on such things. Making (binding) things/laws which God has not bound. I wonder if our brother would *affirm a proposition to be printed in our papers which stated: THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT THE ELDERS MAY CALL THE CHURCH TOGETHER TO EAT A COMMON MEAL ON CHURCH PROPERTY, NAMELY, IN THE CHURCH BUILDING OR ON CHURCH GROUNDS, AND THIS IS NOT WHAT MY OPPONENT PRACTICES?*

A39 My good brother states, "I am disappointed because he didn't define them in their accepted sense." My brother, I defined the words "social" and "recreation" according to definitions given in Webster. Argue with him if you will; not me. Make your gripe with Webster, not Hawk. My friend says I have abandoned the words "social" and "recreation" but I have not. The reader

may go back over my affirmative speeches and count the number of times I have used the words and see I have not abandoned them. He keeps trying to make the reader *think* I have forsaken them, but I haven't. He's hurting and knows it. He asks, "What is the purpose of the meals in your buildings?" For the same purpose THE CHURCH met and ate in the homes, Acts 2:46. By the way, James, you never did answer my question. *Was the church in Jerusalem, Acts 2:46, eating "together as a group in a situation requiring that they have dealings with one another?" Was this recreation (refreshment; food)?* Again, we would all be interested in seeing a passage which has the church eating in the building when it is necessary to its function and said meal not be "a situation requiring that they have dealings with one another" or not be "food" eaten!

A40 My opponent said in his first negative (N8), "The elders can call the church together to do anything *essential* to the work of the church: evangelism, edification and benevolence." My friend, we would like to know, if the church can eat on church property when such is necessary to its function, *would the act of eating be evangelism, edification, or benevolence?* When the elders call the church together to eat on church property, when such is necessary to its function, is the act of eating a "work" of the church?" My opponent has already admitted that he would affirm "The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds." I dare say he would use the same passages and line of argumentation we have advanced and he knows it. The very *way* he argues against me in this discussion would be the *way* some brother who disagreed with his proposition would argue against him. Is it not hard to kick against the pricks?

A41 On the AGAPE FEAST, my brother quoted one authority to show it was the Lord's supper. He quoted others to show that it was a common meal. He now says he was showing what some said about the word in the first century and then later. Well, which position do you take? Does the word AGAPE refer only to the Lord's supper or does it refer to common meals? Apparently my opponent did not appreciate Thayer's quote for he did not say too much about it in his last negative speech except to complain against me.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-32

A42 My friend informs us the brethren were eating a common meal for social and/or recreational purposes and this is why Paul

condemned it and put a stop to it. Not so. They were making the Lord's supper into a common meal. Paul condemned the abuse. I have said over and over again that I know of no church today that does what Paul condemns in this passage. Let my opponent find such a church and I will stand with him and Paul in condemning it. Of course, my opponent is still using *his definition* of my proposition rather than mine!

A43 I admit that a common meal was being eaten here, but during the Lord's supper. This is what Paul condemns. If Paul is here condemning all common meals, then he would condemn himself, Acts 20:11 and my opponent's proposition which he says he will defend: "The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to *eat a common meal on church property*, namely, in the church building or on church grounds." James, if Paul's statements tell me to go home, he would also tell you and himself to go home! What proves too much, my friend, proves nothing at all. Is that not what you told me? By the way, would your proposition be an AGAPE meal or a HATE meal? In your first negative, you stated in N27, "The issue between us is simple: He affirms that church property, and thus money, can be used for 'social and/or recreational purposes, (A12), and I deny it.'" Is that really the issue? When the church eats on church property, per your proposition, when such is necessary to its function, may the church pay for that meal from the treasury of the church? According to your logic, the church cannot if it is social and/or recreation per your definition of these terms. But, the implication is that the church may if the meal is not social and/or recreational per your definition! Now, if you will show what these functions are, I can show whether we are or are not doing what you oppose. You've already shown that the preacher may eat a meal in the building. You need to show your passage for that, and then give us other times and occasions when the building may be used to eat in, giving book, chapter, and verse showing that this is the case. Now, the reader will see some mighty powerful debate dodges from my opponent, but I doubt if he will ever answer that point!

A44 My opponent quotes H. Leo Boles and B. C. Goodpasture to prove I am not with my brethren in the past on this issue. My opponent knows that these men no more condemned what we are doing today than they were condemning this same practice in their day. My opponent admits brethren ate dinners on the church ground. Yet, he uses quotes from men who practiced eating dinner on church property as though their quotes were condemning that practice! Whatever they were condemning was not what they were doing when they ate dinner on the church property. Now, my opponent says that it was alright to eat dinner on church

grounds several years ago, but sinful today. Who made it sinful? God or James P. Needham? *THERE IS YOUR ISSUE!* Friend, that is the true issue. He says, "I know we used to have 'all day preaching and dinner on the grounds,' but Ray can't prove it was for 'social and/or recreational purposes,' and I dare him to try!" James, was the all day preaching and *dinner on the grounds* "having to do with human beings living together as a group in a situation requiring that they have dealings with one another" and was the dinner they ate "refreshment; food"? My opponent will side step Webster's definition as I have used it in my proposition until this debate is over. My opponent will continue to side step the real issue and plow in his own self-made field, setting up his own straw man and pretending that this straw man is Ray Hawk and that the straw man's proposition is the issue. This may fool the prejudiced reader, but not the honest truth seeker! What is the real issue? The real issue is that my opponent says it is alright for brethren to eat a dinner on the church grounds several years ago, but sinful now. Well, who made it sinful to do so today? God or James P. Needham? There is the real issue. Needham binds where God has loosed!

HIS REPLY TO MY FIVE QUESTIONS

A45 (1) I asked: If there were no church buildings owned by the church today, but the church met in borrowed houses, could the elders call the church together to worship and then call them to remain for a common meal together? He said, "No, if you mean a common meal sponsored by the church 'for social/and or recreational purposes,' and as a work of elders." You see, he's still plowing in his own field with his own definition of these words; not mine. I suppose if the meal in the church building was necessary to its function, it could be sponsored by the church and be under the oversight of the elders. Right? My opponent says "The Jerusalem church MET in the temple and ATE at home." That is suppose to prove, I assume, that the church cannot eat in the building? Yet he will affirm that the church may do so! So why the smoke screen? The same ones who ATE are the same ones who MET. The temple did not belong to the church, so they could not do there what they could do in the homes. But the church MET in the temple, ATE in the homes. Now, unless my brother is saying the church building is equal to the temple of Acts 2:46, he loses the force (?) of his quibble.

A46 (2) Would it be sinful to practice in the church today what was practiced in Acts 2:46 by the church? Answer; "No. It says they ate their meals 'at home.'" James admits the church

may eat in the building. He admits the church met in homes. The church met in homes in Acts 2:46 and ate. My opponent says, "Ray says they ate 'at church,' but Luke says 'at home,' and we are not going to let him forget it." My brother wants Acts 2:46 to say, "And they, continued daily with one accord *in the church building*, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat. . ." I didn't say they ate *at church*, I said *the church* ate together, Acts 2:46, and you know it!

A47 (3) My opponent's comments here are: "I said we could announce a common-meal gathering in a community building, but that this would not justify a common meal on church property as church work. . ." Oh, but my opponent says that the church may eat a common meal on church property when such is necessary to its function. Brother, wouldn't that be a common meal on church property as church work? I don't believe I've ever said anything about eating being a "church work." You are the one that implies this, so you answer your statements. By the way, who is showing *hospitality* to whom when you (JPN) eat your lunch at the building? Do you live so far from the building that you cannot go home? Do you drive a horse and buggy?

A48 (4) His answer: "Yes, but not as a work of the church." Therefore, as long as the elders announce the meals are not a work of the church, we may eat in our church buildings. THANK YOU BROTHER! We never announce our meals together as a work of the church!

A49 (5) He chides me on the word "fellowship room or hall." Yet, in a letter 11/1/72 he said, "Our fellowship hall is our *entire building*. We meet in *all parts of it* to engage in worship and other *scripturally authorized work*, but we don't call it a 'fellowship hall.' " (All emphasis mine, RH). According to this, he could put up a sign outside saying, "Fellowship hall of the Church of Christ." I asked him what kind of fellowship he had in the restrooms! Our "fellowship hall" is just as scriptural as your "fellowship restrooms." In fact, I am sure we have what would be considered a more scriptural fellowship in our fellowship hall than you do in your fellowship restrooms.

EXTRA SPACE FOR ME

A50 I have used several extra lines using my brother's interpretation of the rules on space. He should not mind since he used so much extra space himself and I have used so little compared to him.

Hawk - Needham Discussion

Proposition: The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.

James P. Needham's Third Negative

N48 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL AND/OR RECREATIONAL: Ray is still running scared where these two words are concerned. He quibbles that I am "affirming" the meaning of these words, when anyone knowledgeable about debating knows I am only preforming the prerogative of the negative; questioning the affirmative's definition of words. Ray denies his abandonment of these words, but the fact is obvious. He wanted to try his debating wings so badly that he was willing to include these key words in the proposition hoping he could get by with misleading definitions. When I insist that they be defined in the context of our differences, he accuses me of "plowing in my own field." (At least I am plowing, Ray has neither a field nor a plow!) His definitions are inadequate and absurd. In the first part of the proposition he affirms that common meals may be eaten in the church building. (This I will also affirm). But this includes everything he says in defining "social and/or recreational, namely, people being together eating food for refreshment. So these words are redundant, if he has properly defined them! The church could hardly have a common meal together without eating food for refreshment! Yet, Ray comes right along and defines "social and/or recreational" to what everyone knows a common meal to be! Now, figure that one out! You see, Ray continues to try to make you think I oppose all eating in the church building. When he sees I don't, he gets frustrated and makes false accusations.

N49 CHURCH FUNCTIONS: Ray prophesies (falsely) that I won't tell what are church functions (even though I already have!), and that I will condemn him for what I allow. Church functions are: Evangelism, edification, and benevolence to needy saints. In any situation where the church's eating together in the building would expedite any one of these works, it is included in the command to perform them, and the church could pay for the meals! If Ray would take the time to read my negatives, he could save himself some embarrassment! He's too busy trying to plow without a field or a plow!

N50 WHO IS PLAYING GOD AND MAKING LAWS? Ray repeats that old cliché of his brethren that we are “making laws where God made none.” I shall leave it to the reader to decide who is guilty of this when Ray has made a law that allows the church to do what he cannot authorize by command, example or inference, tries to prophesy what I will do before I do it, and knows that I am hurting, and knows that I know it!!! Then he has the temerity to accuse ME of playing God! (If I am hurting, I don’t know it, so how could he?) He also “knows” that if I were affirming the church can eat in the church building I would use his arguments. God forbid!

N51 ACTS 2:46: Ray just cannot get this passage right, can he? He now says, “**THE CHURCH** met and ate in the homes, Acts 2:46.” Honestly! When I read this statement from him again, I opened my Bible, and it still reads just like it has for almost 2000 years, “*And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home . . .*” Talk about “kicking against the pricks”! I will go over it again for Ray’s sake (surely everyone else sees it by now), This verse says the Jerusalem church **MET IN THE TEMPLE**, and **ATE AT HOME**! I challenge Ray to prove his assertion.

N52 Ray wants to know why I didn’t answer his question: “*Was the church in Jerusalem, Acts 2:46, eating ‘together as a group in a situation requiring that they have dealings with one another?’*” Every question he asks is based upon a **FALSE ASSUMPTION**. I didn’t answer the question because it is not relevant. Acts 2:46 says nothing about the Jerusalem church’s “eating together as a group.” It says they **MET IN THE TEMPLE** and **ATE AT HOME**. It is up to Ray to prove that they all “ate together in a group” in the *same* home, which he cannot do. Ray thinks that in this answer I am denying that the church can eat together in the building. Good grief!!! I am doing no such a thing! I am only showing that this passage does not prove his proposition. This is the duty of the negative. You see, Ray, you still don’t have me in the affirmative! It was a good try, but it didn’t, and won’t, work! You say “*the same ones who MET are the same ones who ATE*,” and right you are, now prove they “ate together as a group.” But if you could prove this, you still couldn’t prove it was a church-sponsored meal “for social and/or recreational purposes.”

N53 AGAPE: Ray has really taken a beating on AGAPE! All he can do now is try to pick at what I have said. He has quit

affirming! He tries to make a big deal out of my distinction between AGAPE in the New Testament and AGAPE described in post-New Testament literature. Ray wants you to think they are the same, but cannot document his assumption. But even if he could, it wouldn't help his proposition because post-New Testament literature AGAPE FEASTS were for benevolence, not for "social and/or recreational purposes." I dare him to take the New Testament ALONE and try to show the nature of the AGAPE feast. He has tried to manipulate Thayer and others to prove his assumption, but he got caught "red handed," and pleaded guilty to deliberately omitting part of Thayer's statements! He has the audacity to say that I "*Did not appreciate Thayer's quote*" because I "*Did not say much about it.*" The drunk man always thinks the other person is intoxicated! I didn't need to say anything more about Thayer. I took him away from you (the function of the negative), accused you of deliberately misquoting him, which you admitted, so what else did I need to say about it?

N54 Ray wants to know if the common meals I would allow on church property would be "*An AGAPE meal or a HATE meal.*" Ray, they would be AGAPE meals, but that doesn't help your proposition because you are affirming a church meal "for social and/or recreational purposes" and the common meals on church property I am defending would be for benevolence or essential to scriptural church function. You just cannot get your kite off the ground, Ray!

N55 1 CORINTHIANS 11: Ray has met his "Waterloo" on 1 Cor. 11. In spite of the fact that the Corinthians were bringing their "own supper" (v. 21), and eating it with their little parties (v. 33), and some were "drunken" (v. 21), Ray still denies that they were eating a common meal for "social and/or recreational purposes." But then, that is not too surprising since Ray doesn't know what "social and/or recreational" mean!

N56 Ray says, "*They were making the Lord's supper into a common meal,*" and "*I admit that a common meal was being eaten here, during the Lord's supper.*" Which way was it, Ray? It is obvious that they could not make "*The Lord's supper INTO a common meal*" (Emp. mine), and also eat a common meal "*DURING the Lord's supper.*" (Emp. mine). You had better get your "marbles together"! The fact is, Paul said, "*When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO EAT THE LORD'S SUPPER; for in your eating each one taketh before other HIS OWN SUPPER . . .*" (v. 20,21). Another boomerang for Ray!

N57 Ray says if Paul were condemning *"all common meals, then he would condemn himself, Acts 20:11, and my opponent's proposition which he says he would defend."* You see, reader, every argument Ray makes is based upon a false assumption. Who said Paul was condemning "all common meals"? It is a fact that the 1 Cor. 11 meal has a "social and/or recreational" purpose, and Paul told them to stop it. Ray can say what he pleases, but this fact remains.

N58 You will note that Ray didn't retract his FALSE CHARGE that I said the only reason Paul condemned the Corinthians was that they ate a common meal at the assembly. He only has one more opportunity to straighten this up. I hope he will take advantage of it, lest he stand condemned as a false accuser.

N59 I predicted that anything Ray would say about 1 Cor. 11 would prove to be a boomerang to his position, and so it has. It condemns his proposition at every turn, but he comes back and tries to patch it up. When Paul punches holes in his patches, he then patches the patch!

N60 CAN THE CHURCH PAY FOR THE MEALS I WOULD AFFIRM? The church can pay for a meal that is eaten on church property, (1) If it expedites the work of the church. The church could pay for such a meal on the same basis it can pay for the building. It cannot pay for a building "for social and/or recreational purposes." The same is true of a common meal. (2) If it is for benevolence to needy saints (2 Cor. 8,9; Rom. 15:26,27; 1 Cor. 16:1,2, etc.).

N61 PREACHER'S LUNCH: Ray wants the scriptural authority for the preacher's eating his lunch in the building, and wants to know who is showing hospitality when this is done, and do I live so far from the building that I can't go home for lunch? Ray drags many "red herrings" across the path, hoping to get me off his track, but he shall not succeed. I repeat, my position is not on trial, HE is in the AFFIRMATIVE. Suppose I can't justify eating my lunch in the building, does that prove his proposition? The fact is, when I eat my lunch in the building, it is not the congregation eating a common meal on church property for social and/or recreational purposes, as per your proposition. Can't you see that, Ray?

N62 BOLES AND GOODPASTURE: Ray says, *"Whatever they were condemning was not what they were doing when they ate dinner on the church property."* Ray is right, but Goodpasture

condemned the church's furnishing "recreation" (see N36 and N37), so obviously he knew that the old practice of eating dinner on the ground was not "recreation." Try again, Ray. Since Ray defines "recreation" as food eaten, then Goodpasture would condemn all church-sponsored meals! Talk about somebody being "shook up"!

N63 MISREPRESENTATION: Three times now, Ray has charged that I say it was alright to eat dinner on the ground several years ago, but sinful now. I have corrected him already, and asked him to retract this falsehood. He now has only one more opportunity in this debate. I never said this, or implied it. I have offered to defend the right of a church to have a common meal on church property under scriptural circumstances and specified the circumstances. This puts Ray in a dither! This is why Ray can't "plow." He has neither plow nor field!

N64 HIS COMMENTS ON MY ANSWERS TO HIS QUESTIONS: Ray was so dumbfounded by my answers to his questions in his first affirmative that he didn't know what to do with them. He treats my answers like he treated Thayer: he omitted part of what I said and replied to his misquotations, but nothing he says is of any consequence, and most of it has been answered in the course of this negative, but let us note a thing or two:

N65 On Q-2, Ray denies that he has been saying they ate "at church" in Acts 2:46, but that "the church ate together as a group." Surely, every reader knows he has been arguing that the elders could call the church together to eat a common meal on church property for social and/or recreational purposes!!! That is what his proposition says, in case you have forgotten, Ray! He has mistakenly used Acts 2:46 as an example of his proposition, and yet denies that he is saying they "ate at church." Ray is so confused that he doesn't even know what his own proposition says, or means! Who is "all shook up"?

N66 On Q-3, Ray jumped the gun and took what I said out of context. If the reader will go back to my first negative he will see that when I said announcing a meal at the Community Center would not justify a meal on church property as church work, I said "for social and/or recreational purposes." In replying to my answer in my second negative, Ray conveniently left out this phrase and tried to make me contradict my contention that common meals may be eaten on church property when essential to church function. Would that classify as "a powerful debate dodge," Ray?

N67 On Q-4, which was, "*May property, which is in use by the church, be used for anything other than for spiritual purposes?*" my answer was yes, that brethren discuss all kinds of activities on church property at every service, but these are unavoidable, and are not church sponsored. I asked him if the church could sponsor all the activities thus discussed? What did he say? He grabbed at a straw and said, "*Therefore as long as the elders announce the meals are not a work of the church, we may eat in our church buildings.*" Now, that's profound! Ray, may the elders also call the church together for a golf clinic, if they announce it is not a work of the church? Come on, now, answer it! And furthermore, since Ray says they can have social and/or recreational meals on church property as long as they announce it is not a work of the church, he is defending the using of church property for something which he admits is not church work! Ray, let me ask you again; what other non-church works can we have on church property? That's twice I have asked that, and you have been as silent as an oyster both times! I hope you won't forget it in your last effort.

N68 Q-5, Ray thinks he has me in a "tight" when he says that "*According to this, he could put up a sign outside saying, 'Fellowship hall of the church of Christ.'*" The church can put anything true on the "sign outside," and this would be true. Ray still has not shown an instance where the scriptures use "fellowship" to mean the eating of common meals. We are still waiting! We haven't forgotten, Ray!

N69 Ray thinks he has justified his "fellowship room" by our restrooms!! He is really desperate, isn't he? Restrooms are authorized in the same scripture that authorizes the building. They expedite church work. I ask again, Ray, what scriptural church work do your church meals expedite? Can we expect an answer?

N70 EXTRA SPACE: Ray is still whimpering and whinning for reader sympathy. I challenge him to prove that I have "used so much extra space." When he does, I will apologize, and I now invite him to use an equal amount in his final affirmative which still would be insufficient to prove his proposition. (Rejection of this invitation shall be accepted as admission that his charge is false). He justifies taking "several extra lines" in his third affirmative (?) by using "*My brother's (jpn's) interpretation of the rules on space.*" Well, now that I have converted him to a proper interpretation of *our* rules, maybe I can convert him to a proper interpretation of the *Lord's*! I surely hope so. I love him, and would delight to see him renounce his error and take a stand for the truth.

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TORCH

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TORCH - Not A Brotherhood News Medium

TORCH carries no news column. We do not announce meetings, lectureships, etc. generally. TORCH is a teaching medium, and we have not been asked to serve as a clearing house for "brotherhood" activities, and we certainly would not assume such a function, or accept it if requested. I have (and shall) announced from time to time certain activities in which I have participated as a matter of interest and information to our readers. I am aware that other papers have news columns and news writers, and we are not denying their right to do such, if they choose. But as for TORCH, such does not fall within its policy.

- James P. Needham

(Excerpt from Editorial, January 1973)

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James P. Needham

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Editorial

James P. Needham



TORCH TALK

From time to time we think it is good to keep our readers informed and/or reminded of the basic philosophy and practice of **TORCH**. There are several features that make it unique as a periodical. We want you to be aware of these.

1. **TORCH is not in the book or literature business:** The only thing it sells is **TORCH**, by yearly subscriptions (at \$3.00) and/or in bound volumes (at \$5.00). It has no book store, and neither produces or sells class literature. This means that its survival is *wholly dependent upon subscriptions*, and the sale of bound volumes. This has sometimes made its sailing rather rough. It could not have survived had the Farris family not sacrificed that it might do so. Three years ago it arrived at its lowest point, and the death rattle could be heard. Brother Farris asked me to take the editor's chair and see if we could revive the paper. Through much hard work on the part of the Farris family and the present editor, **TORCH** has regained its strength, and is now very much alive and well! Our solid, paying subscription list is now at an all-time high, and the percentage of renewals is phenomenal! There is wide-spread acceptance of our efforts and we continue to experience a solid growth.

We believe there are many advantages in this arrangement. We are never influenced by commercial interests, since we have none. We are not burdened with bookstore business involving the headaches of promotion, book work and store keeping. This gives us more time to pursue our main interest; discharging our personal responsibilities to preach the word. Our paper is not cluttered with book ads, and promotional material. The only book ads we run are fillers, and are of books written by the editor, and are to be ordered from him, not from **TORCH**. It might surprise most readers to know that even though **TORCH** looks small, the absence of ads allows an issue of **TORCH** to carry as much teaching material as most of the larger periodicals.

2. **TORCH sells no advertising space to anybody:** Up until the present volume, we did sell a small amount of advertising space, but we do that no more. We sell no ads of any kind to anybody.

This is not our interest whatsoever. Most other periodicals published by brethren carry several hundred dollars worth of church ads. I am safe in saying that without these some of the papers would have to cease publication. They are dependent upon these ads for survival, but we are not. We have not solicited such ads, and will not accept them. In this way we can never be accused of being supported by the churches through the back door, or of acting as an unwitting censorship board to pass on the soundness or lack of soundness of churches in cases where it would be impossible for us to know all the facts and problems involved. In this way we will not alienate one group by accepting an ad from the other, or anger both by accepting an ad from each. Neither will we become a political tool in the hands of some groups who seek to obtain "*the good housekeeping seal of approval*" of a publication which some brethren take as *prime facie* evidence of scriptural soundness.

3. TORCH has no profit motive, thus is moderately priced: Since the paper is produced by the Farris family as their contribution to Bible teaching, we have very low overhead. For this reason we are able to keep the price at a moderate level, even in this time of inflation. Already, the decision has been made to keep our subscription price at \$3 per year in singles, or \$2 in clubs of 10 or more for the next volume. It is our constant aim to improve the paper in every possible way consistent with our financial ability, and to make it worth many times more than what you actually pay for it.

4. TORCH is the work of individuals, not an organization: Billy K. Farris is the publisher of TORCH. He makes all the financial arrangements, produces it on his own equipment, and mails it. He asked me to be responsible for the material that goes into it, which I have done now for almost three years. TORCH seeks no organizational influence in or over churches or individuals. It has no commercial influence; no political advantage, and would fold up rather than develop any. We will not use TORCH in this way, and will not knowingly allow it to be so used by others. Our first and only interest is teaching the word of God. We have no ambition to be a big paper with the status of a brotherhood regulator.

We have not been and will not become a one issue party organ. We do not see spiritual problems today in terms of *one issue*. We have no desire to rally the support of brethren because we share their convictions on a single issue. This is partyism, and if this is what brethren are looking for in TORCH, they will be disappointed. Neither will we have a "me too" psychology where issues are involved. We feel no obligation to sound off on any issue

simply because some other periodical is doing so. We will not allow any editor or board of editors to determine for us which issues are to be discussed. We may agree or disagree with what other editors say on pertinent issues, but they shall not edit **TORCH**, either directly, or by remote control, or by stampeding tactics.

At this point our subscription list is much larger than we had any reason to expect, but that is not because we have put on high-pressure subscription campaigns. As readers know, almost nothing is said in the paper by way of soliciting subscriptions. That is about how much we do otherwise. The subscription list has grown to its present size largely from the efforts of its readers. We have never asked any church to subscribe for its membership, or tried to get any church to buy regular bundles of the paper. We know that a great many papers distributed in this way go unread. Such efforts greatly enlarge the circulation lists, but not the reading audience. We are interested in a solid reading audience, not a large circulation list. If that makes us "big" by somebody's standard, that is alright, but if it makes us "small" by somebody else's, that is alright too. We can afford to have this attitude and philosophy because we have no political or commercial ambitions. If you think you can profit from our material, we invite you to subscribe to **TORCH**. If you want to subscribe to **TORCH** out of loyalty to **TORCH**, its editor, or its publisher, or because you think it speaks for a certain "segment of the brotherhood," we had much rather you send your subscription money somewhere else. We will fold our tents and steal away before we will knowingly become that kind of a paper.

5. **TORCH** has no staff or writers: I took the paper on the condition that I receive it without staff. I never intended to get brethren of influence to let me list them as staff writers to increase the political power of the paper. **TORCH** started as a one-man operation, and we think it best that it remain something very similar to that. We think some of the dangers attendant upon periodicals are thus minimized. We do print articles from others from time to time, but most of these are unsolicited. We are glad to have them, and will print them as we judge them to be worthy, but we are not interested in an article from any person who thinks that having his article in **TORCH** will get his name before the "brotherhood" and increase his chances of being called upon for gospel meetings or other engagements. As stated earlier, we will not knowingly be used as a political tool for anyone or anything. Whether this makes us wise or "otherwise"; popular or unpopular, is of little consequence to us. We know best what we want to do with our opportunity. We couldn't care less whether other editor's

(continued on bottom of page 6)

Apostasy

James P. Needham

During the last 25 years we have witnessed a full-fledged apostasy in the church. It all started "innocently" enough, as apostasy always does. And we might also add, with GOOD INTENTIONS. There were those who wanted to preach the gospel nationally by radio. Then there were some others who wanted to care for the needy through church subsidized benevolent societies. Still others wanted the churches to contribute to schools to provide "Christian education." It was all WELL INTENTIONED, and promoted by ZEALOUS people, but that did not and does not change the fact that vital scriptural principles are being violated.

This, my friend, is the real danger in these promotions, and has been the main object of our attack. I do not question the good intentions of the promoters, nor do I oppose THE WORK being done. I have attacked the *attitude* that would trample under foot vital principles of Holy Writ (1 Pet. 4:11).

We have warned that the above mentioned promotions were only the symptoms of a deep-seated disease, and that they were only the beginning of a wide scale apostasy. This has brought forth the charge of "alarmists" and "radicals," but the prediction is now coming true. And it is coming true with a vengeance! The harvest is plenteous! Some of the front runners in the early promotions are trying to put on the brakes now, only to discover that the bandwagon of apostasy has none!

TORCH TALK continued from page 5

like the way we edit TORCH. We have no interest in the political "in fighting," or the behind-the-scenes power struggles that characterize human organizations from time to time. We don't even have any preference as to which one wins! We are only interested in the triumph of truth, and in fairness to one and all alike, whether we agree with his position or not. Victory won for truth by power politics is indeed a shallow victory, and nothing in which to glory. At best it is only temporary, and at worst deceitful.

We take this means to express our appreciation for every reader. We trust our efforts shall continue to merit your support because you profit from the service we are rendering through the pages of TORCH.

"Sophisticated Sin - Why?"

Don Alexander

"Sin" is against God (Rom. 1:18f) and violation of Divine law (1 Jn. 3:4). "Sin" separates the "sinner" from God (Isa. 59:1-2; Eph. 2:1-2) and God considers the "sinner" — in that condition — to be "lost" (Matt. 18:11), "alienated" (Col. 1:21), "in darkness" (Eph. 5:8), "hopeless" (Eph. 2:12), "unclean" (Rom. 6:19, "condemned" (Jn. 3:18). Obedience to the gospel of Christ can "save" man (Rom. 1:16) and he then can be considered "washed . . . sanctified . . . justified" (1 Cor. 6:11). He can come out of "darkness and into the kingdom" of Christ (Col. 1:13). However, "sin" is always "sin" to God and the results of "sin" never change (Rom. 6:23).

However, there seem to exist "sophisticated sins" in the minds of many people in our intelligent age. A "sophisticated sin" is still just a "sin" — still "unclean," "darkening," "condemning," etc. — yet with a stroke of "it matters *who* does it" and a dab of "it matters *why* he does it," a plain old-fashioned damning "sin" is "dressed up" so that it does not look so bad at all! Furthermore, the person who commits "sophisticated sins" becomes, of course, a "sophisticated sinner," and not nearly so "bad" as one who commits the same "sin" before God, but under "unsophisticated circumstances"! Perhaps a spelling change is in order — changing "Sin" to "Psyn"!

Notice now some of these "sophisticated sins" and ask "WHY?" do these exist and "WHY?" is one labeled "right" and the other "wrong"?

"GUTTER DRUNK" vs. "SUBURBAN INEBRIATE"

The "Gutter Drunk" is seen in every major city, usually in the "slum" part of town; and is often literally found in the "gutter." His clothes are filthy, torn, wrinkled; his body is well-spent beyond his years; his appearance is anything but "nice." He is friendless, penniless, and often sells his own blood for enough money to sustain his vile habit. Men scorn him. But five miles out of town in a \$40,000 house, in the "better sector" is the "civic leader," "member of the country club," "man-about-town" who happens to be a "heavy drinker." He wears \$200 suits, drives a \$7,000 car, makes \$20,000 a year, and is active in all the "right"

organizations. When he gets drunk, he is always at a "function," always surrounded by the "right" people, always becomes intoxicated from the "best drinks," and has no worry about the cost. Men say he is the "life of the party." They do not scorn him for his *drunkenness*; he just "had one too many." It is a "sophisticated sin." Both the "gutter drunk" and the "suburban inebriate" are guilty of "sin" before God (Gal. 5:21). Why do men consider one "right" and the other "wrong" — praise one, scorn the other? Both are in need of repentance (Acts 17:30).

"DIRTY MOVIES" vs. "ADULT CINEMA"

Some "decent" folks would not consider going to one of those little "cheap" "hole-in-the-wall" movie houses on Skid Row. They say that the "filth of the world" attend those "dirty movies" and they would not "be caught dead" — or alive — in one. Soon the "dirty movie" moves to the suburb to a nice shopping center theater — "plush," "air-conditioned," and "respectable." Now what was a "dirty movie" has become an "adult cinemagraphic experience," which "portrays accurately a *slice of life*" (whatever that is!) and before you know it — "Two adult tickets, please!" One is left to wonder wherein the "adult-ness" lies in these "adult" films, since other films appealing to adult aged viewers are not labeled "adult." It must be that these "adult" films are specifically designed to appeal to that which only "adults" are aware of, experienced in, and capable of committing — the "lust of the flesh" and its child, "sin." Why is it "wrong" to feed the "inner man" on that which is base, "lascivious" (Gal. 5:21), and which has the potential to nourish every "reprobate" desire (Rom. 1:18-32) on "Skid Row," but "right" to do the same in red velvet swivel seats in "Suburb Plaza"? Are not BOTH actions "wrong" by God's standard? "Sin" is no more "right" in one instance than the other.

"DRESS OF THE PROSTITUTE" vs. "FASHIONABLE SEDUCTION"

Why is it thought that a woman is a "sinner" if she dresses so as to call attention to her body, to bring out lust in man, and is known to be a woman "for hire," "hardened by the world," but she can be a "well-respected lady" — young or old — in the latest fashions of "undress" designed to attract a man's interest and no one seems to think a thing about it? Even "Christian" woman dress at times so immodestly that a man would have a difficult time distinguishing them from the "woman of the street." Whether consciously or not, these "ladies" produce the same effect as the prostitute

they readily scorn, as they direct a man's eye of desire toward their bodies. The only difference between the sin thus encouraged by both on the part of the man is a matter of form: "physical" fornication is the goal of the former, while "mental" fornication is the result of the latter (Matt. 5:27-28). Whether we like it or not, men often "judge the book by its cover"! The Christian woman is to be appreciated and judged by the "inward" part (1 Pet. 3:1-8; 1 Tim. 2). But the "harlot" is considered "wrong" while the Christian who only DRESSES like a "harlot" is "right" — "immodesty" with all of its attendant consequences for both woman and man is the "sin" of BOTH! Who will deny it?

"DIRTY STORIES" vs. "OFF-COLOR HUMORISMS"

To some people — even Christians — "dirty stories" are "obscene, smutty, offensive" if told by someone who is "obscene, smutty, offensive" and "beneath them." But told "among friends" — even among brethren — these otherwise UN-sophisticated "dirty stories" become "sophisticated," "off-color humorisms," and are "just clean fun." In both cases "sin" is committed in God's eyes and the Christian should know better (Col. 3:8). It is amazing that some who profess Christ as Lord of their lives are able to pour forth polluted speech, sometimes to the embarrassment of even the most ungodly! Such speech indicates a lack of direction by ". . . Him who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22).

May the Lord help us all to avoid both "sin" and "psyn" for there is no difference between the two! "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).

*1309 Chase Street
Novato, California 94947*

MOVING?
PLEASE NOTIFY US
OF ADDRESS CHANGE
IN ADVANCE.

HYMN FOR THE HEDONIST

My hope is built on nothing more
Than Sunday's rest from the night before.
I dare not place my faith in God;
The boys at work might think I'm odd.

When darkness comes I rest my head
As dollar signs surround my bed.
The bills are paid, the house is mine,
And, furthermore, my credit's fine.

My car, my boat, and camper, too,
Sustain me when my work is through.
When others go to church and pray
I'm on the road to fun and play.

CHORUS: May all my trust in pleasure be.
Religion's fine, but not for me.
Religion's fine, but not for me.

If he shall come with "trumpet sound"
I guess He'll know where I'll be found:
On couch of gold and bed of ease,
Or golfing greens and sailing seas.

CHORUS: May all my trust in pleasure be.
Religion's fine, but not for me.
Religion's fine, but not for me.

Don Alexander

New Meeting Place in Bad Kreuznach

Dudley R. Spears

To all brethren everywhere who are concerned about the cause of Christ in Germany, we send the following information concerning our new location. For the past few years the brethren here have been meeting in the chapel of the U. S. Army Hospital. In order to be more available to German people we hope to reach, we have rented an empty grocery store in an excellent location. It needs lots of work and is a bit expensive, but we all feel that this is a move forward for the Lord's church in this city.

We have translated into German a series of correspondence lessons that are being used by the Expressway church in Louisville,

Ky. We also have translated brother James Cope's tract on "The One True Church" and L.A. Mott's tract on "What is the Church of Christ." We will advertise our services and meeting place in the local papers and offer the free correspondence course and tracts.



**Dudley R. Spears, 6554 Meisenheim/Glan
Bürgermeister-Kircher str 9, W. Germany**

There are probably a number of Christians in this area who do not

know of our meeting place who are looking for a sound congregation. Please contact either Dudley R. Spears, telephone 06753 2026 or Charles Nieto, telephone 0671 33228. The address of the meeting place is 137a Rudesheimer Strasse. It is highway 48 in the direction of Rudesheim and Saarbrücken. It is very easy to find. Bible Study begins at 9:30 a. m. and morning worship is at 10:30 each Lord's Day. We meet Lord's Day evenings at 6:00 p. m. and Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m.

Our work is showing progress already and we anticipate much good from the effort here. It is the first time the brethren here have made an effort to preach to the German community. Please remember us in your prayers.

Hawk - Needham Discussion

Proposition: The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.

Ray Hawk's Fourth Affirmative

DEFINITION OF PROPOSITION

A51 My opponent is still bothered by my definition of *social* and *recreation*. He will not allow me to define the words in harmony with what we are practicing! He wants them defined as "an informal gathering of people for recreation or amusement; party" and "amusement, diversion, entertainment," or "relaxation, repose, ease, play, sport, frolic, rollic; mirth, jollity, hilarity." (N4 and N5). In fact, he makes a pretty good pun when he said, "He wanted to try his debating *wings* so badly that he was willing to include these key words in the proposition hoping he could get by with misleading definitions." Misleading? I originally submitted the proposition: THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT THE ELDERS MAY CALL THE CHURCH TOGETHER TO EAT A COMMON MEAL ON CHURCH PROPERTY, NAMELY, IN THE CHURCH BUILDING OR ON CHURCH GROUNDS. My worthy opponent would not sign this until I had agreed to accept the additional wording, WHEN SAID MEAL IS DESIGNED FOR SOCIAL AND/OR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES. He thought I would be put at the disadvantage of affirming a position that I did not believe in and do not practice. If he does not think I practice the original position or proposition, let him sign the following and affirm it: THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT THE ELDERS MAY CALL THE CHURCH TOGETHER TO EAT A COMMON MEAL ON CHURCH PROPERTY, NAMELY, IN THE CHURCH BUILDING OR ON CHURCH GROUNDS AND THIS IS NOT WHAT MY OPPONENT PRACTICES. Lest he make something of my above statement, I do not believe in nor do we practice social and/or recreation as defined by my opponent, but we do as defined by me and Webster!

A52 My opponent says he would debate my original proposition himself and affirm it! But, I really wonder if he would???? He states in N49, "In any situation where the church's eating

together in the building would expedite any one of these works (evangelism, edification, benevolence), it is included in the command to perform them, and the church could pay for the meals!" Again, he says, "The church can pay for a meal that is eaten on church property . . . (2) If it is for benevolence to needy saints . . ." (N60). That would make it a work, wouldn't it James?

A53 If feeding needy saints is a work of benevolence, or expedites this work, could the church (1) build a cafeteria to feed these needy saints in if the eldership felt, in its judgment, that this was expedient? Now don't tell us it isn't expedient, or it is not relevant to this issue, or it is ridiculous. The readers will see your failure if you do. Just tell me and our readers if a cafeteria in the church building would be sinful or scriptural? *Remember, is it scriptural or sinful? That shouldn't be too hard to answer!* Do you really believe in the original proposition I advanced, James? Also remember, you said, "If it expedites the work of the church. The church could pay for such a meal on the same basis it can pay for the building." Then it could build the facilities to feed the needy saint!!!

A54 1. You said, "Church functions are: Evangelism, edification, and benevolence to needy saints. If any situation where the church's eating together in the building would expedite any one of these works, it is included in the command to perform them, and the church could pay for the meals!" *"In any situation"*! Whose judgment is relied upon to figure out when a situation fits one of these works the church may function in? James P. Needham or the elders that oversee that local church? Now don't accuse me of taking the above statement out of context. I am not, I am only amplifying it! Again, who determines when a situation is one of these works and the church may eat a meal in its building? James P. Needham or the local eldership? The Bible says the local overseers.

A55 If eating food (a common meal) can expedite evangelism, and my worthy opponent said it could, then could the church (1) feed alien sinners in the church building in situations that according to the judgment of the elders were areas of evangelism, but which the New Testament did not specifically spell out in every detail? My opponent may refuse to answer, or quibble, but he is the man who said the church could foot the bill in areas where it was a work of the church or when it expedited the work of the church! Now he may answer (1) that the church has never faced nor is it faced with these situations, or (2) this is a hypothetical case. I deny it thoroughly. The reader will see his failure here.

Now, James, do you really believe you would affirm my original proposition????

A56 If eating food (a common meal) may expedite edification, could the church feed members in situations that according to the eldership's judgment were areas of edification, but which the Bible did not go into a great amount of detail on: See Acts 2:46; 20:11; 1 Cor. 11:22-33; Jude 12.

1 CORINTHIANS 11

A57 My opponent wants to make it appear that our eating together is some kind of drunken, lascivious orgy! If he thinks our eating is as he defines social and/or recreational and not as I have so defined it, then let him sign to affirm: **THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT THE ELDERS MAY CALL THE CHURCH TOGETHER TO EAT A COMMON MEAL ON CHURCH PROPERTY, NAMELY, IN THE CHURCH BUILDING OR ON CHURCH GROUNDS AND THIS IS NOT WHAT MY OPPONENT PRACTICES.** Will he do it??????

A58 My opponent gives 1 Cor. 11:27-29 as a definition of what he thinks is the proper definition of social and/or recreational. I have tried to show over and over again that this perversion of the common meal and the Lord's supper is not what we do. If the Corinthians had not perverted the common meal and the supper, Paul would not have condemned them. My worthy opponent already agrees that Paul does not condemn all common meals. He states that Paul condemned this kind of common meal here and told them to eat at home. Surely, he did not mean eat all meals at home, for if so, he would have condemned himself, Acts 20:11, James P. Needham for eating his lunch in the building, and the brethren several years ago who ate their dinners on the grounds. What kind of common meal was it that Paul condemned? Certainly it is not the common meal of my proposition!!! It may be of my opponent's definition, but not mine! What kind of meal is this social and/or recreational per my opponent's definition? (1) V. 21 Some eating while others go hungry, (2) V. 21 Drinking alcoholic beverages and getting drunk, (3) V. 22 Despising the church of God, (4) V. 22 Shaming them that have not, and (5) Eating and drinking unworthily, therefore bringing damnation on themselves. Now, I've asked my good opponent *if he knows of any church of Christ that practices this?* Over and over I have asked him. No doubt he will give some kind of quibble in his last speech since I can no longer reply. Is that why he has waited to answer it in his last speech? If he thinks our common meals in

the church building are on a par to what Paul condemned, then all I can say is "SHAME ON YOU, JAMES P. NEEDHAM." Our meals are the same as theirs would have been without this perversion Paul corrected them on! Needham says "It is a fact that the 1 Cor. 11 meal has a 'social and/or recreational' purpose, and Paul told them to stop it." The meals of my proposition are not the meals condemned by Paul, for this was a perversion of what they should have been doing! My opponent has lost the force of his argument from 1 Cor. 11!

MY OPPONENT'S LUNCH, ETC.

A59 My opponent is now trying to back out on himself and eating in the church building on his lunch break! He now says, "Suppose I can't justify eating my lunch in the building, does that prove his proposition?" When you use an anti-located preacher's practice against him, he usually will end up denying that his practice is scriptural! You show them that what they practice in a two week meeting with an evangelist is what we practice in principle with an evangelist over a period of two years, five years, or twenty years, and they will then reply, "Suppose I can't justify using an evangelist for two weeks in a meeting, does that prove your proposition?" It seems my opponent jumped in the same boat!

A60 My opponent's lunch must be evangelism, benevolence, or edification. If it isn't, it must be an expedient of one of these, or expedite one of them. If not, then his lunch must be equal to what Paul condemned in 1 Cor. 11! Let my opponent grapple with himself on that one! He wants to practice things he will not let others practice!!! Consistency, thou art a jewel, indeed! Now, if he really wants to back out on his lunch in the building, the pages of **TORCH** and **The Bible Beacon** are open here and now for him to *repent* and make a *public confession*! *What will he do? Make his lunch evangelism, benevolence, edification, or repent?*

A61 If he says his lunch expedites one of the works of the church, then the elders where he works could cater his meal and pay for it out of church funds. If not, why not? Or, they could buy a refrigerator to preserve his lunch until he got ready to eat it. The refrigerator would be equal and parallel to "Willie the water cooler." They could also buy a stove to heat his meal. Also a dishwasher to clean the church plates, forks, knives, spoons, cups or glasses that he uses. My good opponent may cry, "All this is not expedient." But, keep in mind that his human opinion or judgment is not the law of the churches of Christ. Other elder-

ships might find these things to be as expedient as the water fountain, wash basins, and etc. are.

A62 My opponent keeps saying I misrepresented him about eating meals on the grounds several years ago being alright, but he says they are sin now. Well, if we ate a dinner on the grounds, wouldn't my illustrious brother say we were sinning? If not, then why this discussion? If not, then I apologize.

A63 If the church may eat a dinner on the grounds when it has all day meetings, as practiced several years ago, then this must be scriptural. If not, then I have nothing to apologize to my worthy opponent over. If these meals were scriptural, then the church could pay for them, according to my esteemed opponent! We would be interested in knowing which work it expedited: evangelism, benevolence, or edification? Since this is scriptural, then the elders could have catered the meal and paid for them out of church funds. If not, why not? James, would that have been *sinful or scriptural*???? Since these brethren practiced this quite often, I suppose, if they thought it expedient, they could have built a kitchen onto the building and served the brethren in their "fellowship kitchen and dinning hall!" Now, if my brother may have *fellowship* in all *parts* of their building, surely these brethren could have had fellowship in this hall! If not, then the activity they participated in was not scriptural. Right? Which shall it be, James?

ACTS 2:46

A64 My opponent wants this passage to read, "And day by day, the church continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple (church building), and then individual members eating a common meal in their own houses." I have shown from the **Pulpit Commentary** what a scholar has said. My opponent did not really reply. He may ask if I agree with all the **Pulpit Commentary** says. My answer is of course, no. However, he must show that the scholarship of this Commentary and others, such as F. F. Bruce on ACTS is in error. He cannot do so from the Greek, from other Commentaries, or from the Bible itself. James why would the Holy Spirit find it necessary to mention individuals eating at home? None at all. People have done that since time began with man. But, he uses this space in divine history to show what the church was doing collectively!

A65 James I did not say I deliberately misquoted Thayer, and

(continued on page 22)

Hawk - Needham Discussion

Proposition: The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.

James P. Needham's Fourth Negative

N71 This is the final article in this exchange. While I am always glad to engage in Bible study, Ray's part in this discussion has been both disappointing and absurd. Ray first suggested that we debate this matter, but he has refused to affirm his practice, hiding it behind inadequate and incomplete definitions of two key words in the proposition ("Social and/or recreational") which words contain the sum total of our differences on this issue when properly defined. His refusal to define them in their *accepted senses* and in the *context of our differences* has made me appear to be trying to force a position on him which he disavows. This has not been my intention, and he knows it. Before the debate started, I told Ray that I would AFFIRM that the church could eat in the building under scriptural circumstances, and that all I would deny is that such can be for "social and/or recreational purposes." He signed the proposition with this knowledge in hand, and yet has defined it to mean that the church can eat food in the building for refreshment. That is the very thing I said I would affirm, if said meals were essential to the work of the church. If Ray has properly defined "social and/or recreational," these words are *redundant* in the proposition because his definitions involve ONLY (no more or less) what EVERYBODY understands a common meal to be, namely, food eaten for refreshment.

N72 I maintain that most of the meals eaten in the "fellowship rooms" (such as the one at E. Gadsden where Ray preaches) are more than meals eaten for refreshment, which is proven by Ray's statement that the fellowship they have in their "fellowship room" IS DIFFERENT from the fellowship they have in their auditorium. His failure to produce the passage that authorizes this "different kind of fellowship," proves that it is also different from anything described in the New Testament. The only time Ray can find the church having this "different kind of fellowship," Paul told them to stop it (1 Cor. 11:34). Said "fellowship" is different because it is "social and/or recreational." It belongs *in* and *to* the home, and that is where Paul told them to take it.

N73 Furthermore, even after Ray gets through hiding his "social and/or recreational" church meals behind half-baked definitions, he still comes up with something that is unscriptural, namely, the church furnishing a place for the members to simply eat food for refreshment! This is the purpose of a restaurant, so Ray makes of the church a "sanctified" restaurant!

N74 I have quoted Ray's own brethren to show that his definition of the word "recreation" is inadequate. I now call one more witness on this matter, namely, Franklin Camp in **Words Of Truth**, Dec. 20, 1963. He said,

N75 "It is reported that at least one congregation has already employed a recreation director in the field of *SPORT and PLAY* . . . (showing what he understood recreation to be, jpn). *Recreation* (food eaten for refreshment, Hawk) is not the business of the church, but belongs to the home and in the physical realm. It is no part of the mission of the church. Those who would put the church in the field of recreation (food eaten for refreshment, Hawk) show a plain disregard for the scriptures. Their claim for the liberty to do it is nothing but making for themselves license to do something **NOT AUTHORIZED OF GOD**, either by specific or generic authority . . . *Recreation* (food eaten for refreshment, Hawk) is no method of doing anything which God has commanded his church to do. There is no authority of any kind for it. . ." (Amen, and all emphasis mine, jpn). Brother Hawk has been running from his practice and the demands of his proposition and I think he knows it. He cannot scripturally defend them, so he tries to hide them.

N76 **HIS SCRIPTURAL "PROOF"**: Ray signed a proposition that says "The scriptures teach. . ." To his credit, he started out trying to prove his proposition by the scriptures, but the effort was short lived, as we shall see. Here I want to review his weak effort at scriptural proof.

N77 1. Acts 2:46: Ray quoted Hervy on this passage in a vain effort to prove that the Jerusalem church ate where they met. Ray repeatedly said, ". . . *The church met and ate in the homes, Acts 2:46*" (A39). When I insisted that the text says they **MET IN THE TEMPLE** and **ATE AT HOME**, Ray finally admitted it, thus contradicting both himself and Hervy. He chided me for *repudiating* Hervy's scholarship, but it is alright for Ray to *contradict* it!

N78 Ray's basic fallacy on Acts 2:46 is his **ASSUMPTION** that the Jerusalem church ate in the **SAME** home, but he did not, and

cannot prove this. Nothing in the language demands this. The church where I preach meets in the church building and eats at home, but that doesn't prove that we all eat in the same home. If this language does not demand his conclusion in my case, how could it demand it in Acts 2:46? But, even if it did, Ray must prove it was "social and/or recreational."

N79 In A55, Ray says, "*If eating food (a common meal) may expedite edification. . .*" Here he cites: Acts 2:46; 20:11; 1 Cor. 11:22-33; Jude 12. Thus he is saying that in Acts 2:46 the members ate where they met for edification! But the text says they MET IN THE TEMPLE (one place), and ATE AT HOME (another place), yet this is Ray's authority for the church to furnish a kitchen and dining room where the saints meet so the members can bring their food from their homes to the meeting place and eat it for edification! In the first place, in Acts 2:46 they didn't eat where they met but this is what Ray uses the verse to prove. In the second, Ray has now gone back on his definition of his proposition. He has been saying that the church can eat a common meal on church property for social and/or recreational purposes which according to him simply means eating food for refreshment. Now he says this expedites edification, a new thought altogether in this debate. I specifically asked him what church work his recreational church meals expedited, and he has been observing the passover. Now, if he can prove that the E. Gadsden church meals or the ones mentioned in Acts 2:46 expedited edification, we will shake hands. If he had defined the common meals of his proposition as those which expedited edification, I would have quit the debate, because I will affirm such meals.

N80 The fact that it has taken me this long to get Ray to commit himself to this position is evidence that he has given up his proposition and is grabbing at straws in a vain attempt to keep from drowning on this issue. I say the fact that he has finally gotten around to defining his church meals in terms he has always known I would agree to, is *prima facie* evidence that he has known all along, and still knows, that the church meals in the E. Gadsden "fellowship room" do not expedite edification, but are precisely what the proposition says they are, "Social and/or recreational" in the accepted sense. I defy Ray or anyone else to prove that meals of this nature can expedite edification, or that they constitute scriptural activity in a church building.

N81 2. Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2:13: The "love feasts" (AGAPE) mentioned in these two verses have been the "sugar stick" of Ray's brethren ever since this issue arose among us. They all,

like Ray, rely upon assumption rather than proof. They assume that the AGAPE feasts mentioned in the New Testament were recreational church meals, but they can't prove it. When they are run off this, they quote uninspired literature to prove that churches in the early centuries sometimes ate together, but they will not quote that part of these early writings that shows these meals were for *benevolent* purposes, and not necessarily held where the saints met. Furthermore, while I think such meals would be scriptural, there is no way to prove that they are under consideration in Jude 12 and 2 Pet. 2:13. There is pretty good evidence that they developed after the closing of the New Testament, but even if before, they were not for "social and/or recreational purposes." I do not deny all church meals, but I deny that AGAPE is the scriptural authorization even for those I would endorse.

N82 Again we note that Ray cited Jude 12 in support of his statement that "... *a common meal may expedite edification* . . ." Here again Ray slipped up because he knew all along that I would agree to a common meal on church property that expedited edification. The fact that he did not contend this in the definition of the proposition, and the fact that he didn't introduce it until his last article, proves that he knows it is not what he had in mind in the proposition, and therefore it does not describe the nature of E. Gadsden's church meals in the "fellowship room."

N83 3. Acts 20:11: Ray quoted this passage to prove "social and/or recreational" church meals when all it says is that *Paul* ate in preparation for his departure. It very well could have been a church meal, but to support Ray's proposition, he must PROVE it, and the language doesn't demand that. Furthermore, if I should concede it to have been a church meal, Ray would still have to prove it to have been "for social and/or recreational purposes," which he cannot do. Furthermore, he cited this passage also in connection with his statement that "... *a common meal may expedite edification* . . ." So, I can admit his assumption that Acts 20:11 was a church meal, and accept his contention that it expedited edification, and still deny his proposition. Ray, I never saw anyone get himself into so much trouble!!!

N84 4. 1 Cor. 11: Like a heroic captain, Ray has determined to go down with the ship on this passage! Everything he has said has boomeranged on him as I prophesied it would. He keeps coming back and tries to patch up the leaks! In the course of his voyage his ship got so full of holes that to abandon ship would have been wise, but Ray was determined to be a dead "hero"!!!

N85 He started out by affirming that 1 Cor. 11 was an example of his proposition, of all things! I pointed out that the Corinthians were eating a "social and/or recreational" meal in connection with church work, and Paul told them to stop it. Thus, I have contended that the only time Ray can find a New Testament church engaging in what he is defending, Paul told them to stop it! He has not been able to overcome this devastating defeat. He tried to salvage his boat by saying Paul was only condemning the abuses, not the mere fact that they were eating on church property. I have tried to get Ray to tell us why Paul didn't just tell them to stop the abuses, rather than telling them to "eat at home" (v. 34). Would Paul burn down the barn to get rid of the rats? I have maintained that part of the abuse was eating a "social and/or recreational" meal in connection with spiritual work. Paul's telling them to "eat at home" is my proof. But Ray came back and said that if Paul were condemning all meals on church property, he would condemn my eating my lunch in the building, and the meals I would defend as being essential to scriptural church function. But who said Paul is condemning all meals on church property? I contend that he condemns the kind of meals my opponent is trying to defend. Ray also cited this passage in connection with his statement that ". . . a common meal may expedite edification . . ." Can you believe it? 1 Cor. 11 is an example of a church meal expediting edification, but Paul told them to stop it!!! For pity's sake, Ray! Don't you wish now you had listened to me when I warned you to let 1 Cor. alone? I really hate to see a brother get himself in such an absurd position. To think, this discussion is going to be published!

N86 5. The elders' judgment: This defense of Ray's proposition is typical of him and his brethren. If they can't prove a thing is "scriptural" in some other way, they will try to slip it in the back door by contending that it is a matter of judgment, and God has given the elders the right to decide such matters. So Ray says that if the elders judge that spending thousands of dollars of the Lord's money to build and equip a fellowship room will "expedite edification," that makes it scriptural. Ray, I know some elders who have decided that a ball team will expedite edification and some others who decided that a car wash in the name of the church of Christ would expedite evangelism. I also know of some elders who once decided that instrumental music would expedite the singing, and missionary societies would expedite the Great Commission. Some elders are now deciding that darkening the auditorium lights and speaking in tongues expedite spirituality. So, Ray, don't oppose any of these things or you will be arraying your judgment against God's elders, and making your opinion

"the law in the churches of Christ." To be perfectly frank, Ray was grandstanding when he tried to put me in the position of arraying my judgment against the elders, and making my opinion "the law in the churches of Christ." But I doubt that the applause will be very loud when the readers remember that this melodrama was played by one who has affirmed a proposition that allows the church to practice that which he has miserably failed to scripturally authorize. Was not Haman hanged on his own gallows?

N87 Thus Ray has gone down in defeat. He has not sustained his proposition by the scriptures. I have negated every argument he has based upon scripture. In this final article I am not replying to any of his absurd quibbles about the preacher's lunch, the cafeteria, the old dinners on the ground, what the members happen to discuss at the assemblies, his efforts to confuse the issue, etc., etc. His proposition obligates him to prove his practice by the scriptures. The duty of the negative is to defeat his effort along that line, which I have done, so I have not wasted time and space on his quibbles.

N88 In conclusion I love and respect brother Hawk. I have sometimes pressed my points rather hardly, but this has not been a manifestation of any animosity toward him as a person. I love him as a brother in Christ, but I do not love the error he espouses nor the division and strife it has wrought in a once united brotherhood. I ask only that the reader study these matters with an open mind, and be swayed only by the truth. I pray that only good will be accomplished through this effort.

Ray Hawk's Fourth Affirmative -- continued from page 16

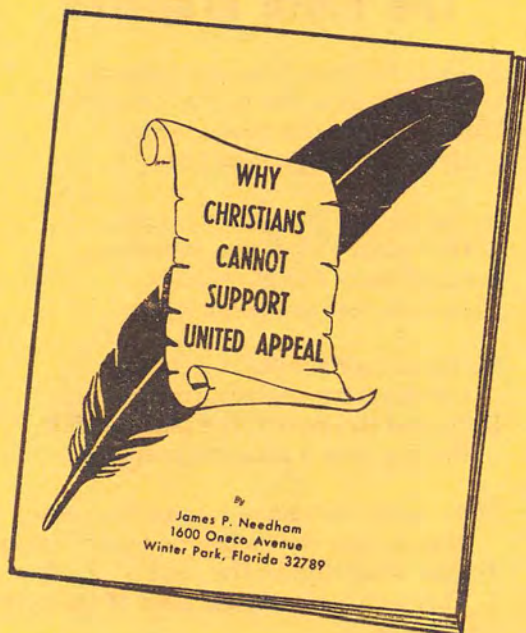
I certainly did not admit such a thing! You do some correcting, please!

A66 My friend says the meals of his proposition which he would affirm would be *agape feasts or meals*! Would you go to Woods and company to prove that, or would you run to Albert Barnes for proof?????

A67 By "at church" I simply meant "at worship."

A68 I've already used up my allotted space and then some. But, my good opponent has given me permission to so do.

A69 I have enjoyed this discussion and pray that it will do much good. May it help bring us closer rather than drive us further apart. I love my opponent and appreciate his willingness to discuss this issue.



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TORCH

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but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Editorial

James P. Needham



When a friendly warning against the danger that brethren and churches are depending upon human institutions brings charges that somebody is denying such institutions the right to exist, we are in deeper trouble than we ever imagined.

The College Issue and Reading Between the Lines

In this issue we carry quite a bit of material on the college issue. We ask that you read the articles in this order: (1) Royce Chandler's article in the May issue, (2) J. T. Smith's reply to Royce Chandler, (3) Royce's reply to J. T., (4) Larry Bunch's letter to this editor, (5) Earnest A. Finley's article entitled **Fuzzy Thinking**, (6) This editorial. This is necessary to getting the continuity of this matter.

TORCH, SMITH AND CHANDLER

TORCH makes no apology for having focused attention on the college issue. There is more evidence than I had suspected that the matter needs some airing. When a *friendly* warning against the danger that brethren and churches are depending upon human institutions brings charges that somebody is denying such institutions the right to exist, we are in deeper trouble than we ever imagined. This is the response we have gotten from liberals who thought more of human institutions than of the church of the living God. Not a sign or a syllable has been written in TORCH that can reasonably be construed as a denial of the right of a college Bible department to exist. Royce Chandler's article comes closer to doing this than any we have published, and he denies that this is what he was arguing.

In the first place, we have voiced our warnings in the kindest manner of which we are capable. We have not named any person or school in order to avoid the possibility that anyone would take our warnings as a personal attack upon any person or school. I have expressed and feel a warm friendship for some of the brethren

who are involved in the school business, and nothing has happened to change this. I continue to feel what I expressed in the January 1973 editorial:

"... I should point out that I have not mounted a bitter campaign against the schools. I am not an enemy of them or those connected with them. In this article I have warned against the bad influences of periodicals, but it doesn't follow that I am committed to a bitter campaign against them. I can warn of dangers involved in these matters without developing or harboring enmity against them or the people connected with them. If the schools and those who are strongly committed to them cannot maintain good will toward those who question their activities or warn of the dangers involved in their operations, that is their problem. My friendship for a person does not mean that I am irrevocably committed to his defense in everything he believes and practices."

The negative reaction some few have given to these warnings only confirms the need for them. And I mean literally "some few" because both the verbal and written responses to what we have published on this matter have been practically unanimously favorable. Some brethren have told me they had some misgivings at first, but time has confirmed the need for these warnings.

Oh, I have heard a little whisper that supposedly emanated from certain school personnel, but I never get excited about such mutterings because one cannot confirm their accuracy, and beside, something is indicated by their being circulated by way of the "grapevine." It was reported that one school official was asked what the school planned to do about what was being said, and he reportedly replied, "Ignore it." I don't know if it happened or not, but if it did, it does not concern me very deeply since it is evident that a good many other brethren have given a more scriptural response to what we have said.

In brother Smith's article published in this issue he says:

"For the most part the articles that I have read that were directed at Florida College are nothing more than taking 'pot-shots' at the college; or setting forth some personal grudge that they have against the school."

I have no way of knowing whether my good friend and brother is referring to something I have said (though I cannot see how he could avoid it), but I stated in the January 1973 editorial:

"What I have said about the schools is very simple and easy to be understood. It has not been said in bitterness, or in enmity, nor has it been motivated by any personal vendetta I have with any person."

If my brother directed his remarks at me, he must know more about my motivation than I do, and *"it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment"* (1 Cor. 4:3). If he aims such an accusation at me and will prove my guilt, I will repent in bitter tears. Our brother speaks as though he knows those who have warned of the dangers of the schools are motivated by *"Some personal grudge that they have against the school,"* or some *"pet peeves."* If our good friend is as sure of his charge as his language indicates, and he has reference to this writer, we believe a brotherly attitude would dictate that he either prove his assertion, or retract it.

I emphatically deny that I have any *"personal grudge"* or *"pet peeves"* against Florida College, or anybody connected with it, or that I have taken *"pot-shots"* at it. As stated earlier, neither I nor any TORCH writer has ever mentioned Florida College or any of its personnal by name. *Only brother Smith has done that.* He not only called the name of Florida College, he even said that *"it is far, far"* from perfect. That sounds like a very serious charge! I have never made it that strong! Does J. T. know something I don't? A person who is willing to go that far should not be accusing others of taking *"pot-shots"* at the school! One wonders if J. T.'s article which certainly is *"directed at Florida College"* and charges that it is *"far, far from"* perfect is *"setting forth some personal grudge . . . against the school,"* and also, one wonders if it deserves the profound expression, *"fiddlesticks."*

As editor of TORCH it has been contrary to my policy to mention Florida College by name. I have no interest in pursuing a *"gut fight"* with anybody on anything. We have sought to kindly warn against the danger of brethren's making the church dependent upon human institutions as guardians of its faith and educators of its personnel. This is a great danger as any thinking brother with even a smattering of knowledge in church history knows. It led to the present liberalism and church support of colleges. What makes us think we can stand where so many have fallen?

While I see no evidence of it (which doesn't really bother me), but those of us who have uttered such warnings should be considered the best friends the college has. The only indication I have

of the reaction of the college personnel is the little whisper mentioned earlier in this editorial, namely, that they were going to "ignore" what has been said. But, as I stated, I got this *second* or *third* handed, so don't know if it really happened. I hope it didn't. If it did, it is disappointing, and demonstrates the *great need for such warnings*. It is my understanding through long and intimate association with many of the personnel of Florida College that they are in total agreement with such warnings. In fact, I have heard them utter them in days gone by. Have they changed? Do they now consider that such warnings constitute "*pot-shots*" at the school, an attack upon it? If so, there must be some substance to the charges we have made, namely, that some brethren are having trouble making a distinction between the church and the school.

Do some brethren feel that we have exaggerated the degree of dependence on the school? I freely admit the possibility of this, but, if it is true, it is not intentional. But I must affirm that any degree of dependence of the church on a human institution is sufficient grounds for warnings. I have evaluated matters on the basis of what I have heard brethren say, and over the past 25 years I have had occasion to hear quite a few in all parts of the world. Brother Smith says he has heard no brethren indicate church dependence on the school, but does that mean I haven't, or that such doesn't exist—just because he is not personally aware of it? I have not even charged that brethren are aware of the implications of some of the things they are saying and doing, but that does not mitigate the need for the warnings we have tried to give. This would make them even more necessary.

To be sure, I have some strong disagreements with some of the policies, practices and personnel at Florida College. Who doesn't? I dare any brother including FC personnel and board members to say they are in 100% agreement with everything done at the College. Brother Smith has committed himself to the proposition that the college is "*far, far from*" perfect, so he won't have to take this "*dare!*" Is brother Smith taking "*pot-shots*" at the college? Is he denying FC the right to exist? Why is it "*taking pot-shots at the college,*" "*setting forth personal grudge(s),*" airing "*pet peeves*" and "*fret(ing) and stew(ing) about their opinions*" for others to question the school's perfection, but something else for brother Smith to do so? Brother Smith wants to debate an issue we haven't raised (the right of FC to exist), and there is no reason for us to debate with him the one we have raised (the imperfection of FC) for he *agrees* with us on that; in fact, he has *gone beyond* us on that!

I think a debate on his proposition (or one similar to it) might be a good thing under the proper circumstances, and I will here commit TORCH to the publication of it. However, this editor will not affirm it; not because I deny it, but because I don't want to be thought of as defending the source of the very dangers against which I have warned, and because I am just not interested in defending any human institution's right to exist. From here on I shall devote all my time to defending the divine institution, the church. If everyone will do this, the future will be much brighter.

BROTHER BUNCH'S QUESTION

Now, to brother Bunch's letter and request. I am glad to print fully brother Finley's article, but brother Bunch makes the **same assumption** that brother Smith made, namely that someone in TORCH has tried to convince others "*that teaching the Bible in colleges is error.*" Who has affirmed this in TORCH?

As to the article in question, brother Finley succeeded in what he started out to prove, namely, that there is some "**fuzzy thinking**" by those who deny the right of the Bible department to exist, but I am afraid there has been too much of this kind of argumentation (with all due respect to brother Finley and his well-written article). To prove that *those who deny* the Bible department the right to exist are *inconsistent*, does not prove **Bible departments** to be *scriptural*. Surely, we all know this. It seems that brother Finley was not trying to prove them scriptural, since he made no allusion to a single scripture. He started out to convict some brethren of "**fuzzy thinking**," and he succeeded in this, in my judgment. Brother Bunch requested that I "*reply to what you believe to be wrong with the article.*" I don't see anything **wrong** with it from the point of view that it succeeds in what it started out to do, namely, prove that some brethren are guilty of "**fuzzy thinking**," on the college issue. If brother Finley started out to prove that such brethren hold an unscriptural position, then I would say the thing wrong with his article is that he **failed**. He did not prove *Bible departments* to be *scriptural*, he proved their detractors to be *inconsistent*, which I have heard *some of them* freely admit.

If brother Bunch thinks brother Finley proved these brethren's view to be unscriptural, then he believes one can be proven to be unscriptural by proving him to be inconsistent. If he really believes this, then he must surely believe both himself and brother Finley to be unscriptural in some things, for surely he must admit that they are inconsistent in some matters. (Aren't we all?)

CONCLUSION

In all of this we see an old and familiar pattern, namely, one cannot oppose *human promotions* without being misrepresented, and all these brethren have protested the same treatment from the liberals. When we opposed benevolent societies, the liberals accused us of being against taking care of orphans and old folks. When we opposed the Herald of Truth, they accused us of not believing in preaching the gospel by radio and television. In the last century those who opposed the missionary society were accused of not believing in preaching the gospel and establishing new churches, and those who opposed instrumental music were accused of not believing in music in worship. Now, it is quite discouraging to have some of our own brethren to make the same "leap of faith" and conclude that because we have warned against church dependence upon a human institution, we are opposed to "teaching the Bible in colleges." Will wonders never cease? Brethren need to stop reading between the lines!

There is a rather wide-spread disenchantment with the distrust of all human institutions among us. I have observed its development over the past several years. This strikes terror in the hearts of some few who are dependent upon such institutions, and/or are seemingly irrevocably committed to their defense. Some brethren have difficulty thinking of the church with *no papers or schools* to train church personnel, define church issues, and save it from false teachers. Such thinking contains a tacit reflection upon the all-sufficiency of the word of the Living God and the church of Christ. The church fared pretty well in the first century without any of these, and it can do so in the twentieth century, and let's not forget it.

There is little doubt that some brethren are depending upon the papers and schools as power bases. They want to be **brotherhood figures**, rather than simple gospel preachers. They want to be figures in the church universal, rather than workers in a local church. They know that simply working within the framework of a local church, the divine institution, will not fulfill their ambitions to be **brotherhood figures**. They are looking to a school or a paper to keep their names before the church universal by way of using them as speakers on lectureships and/or as writers in the papers. This is not the same brand of institutionalism that is practiced by the "liberals," but it is institutionalism nevertheless. The blood-bought church of Jesus Christ is just not enough for some ambitious brethren. They must have some human institution as a brotherhood forum, or point of contact in the church universal. One brother said to me that he would feel like he had attained some prominence or had sort of "arrived," if he should be

asked to speak on the FC lectureship or be a regular contributor to one of the papers. Now that he has been asked to do both, his ability to be objective on these matters is highly suspect. You see, the road to "prominence" is not sincerely working through *God's organization*, but through some *human promotion*!

As I stated earlier, I am not ready to deny the right of such organizations to exist, but I certainly have some serious reservations about their expediency; especially in view of the parties which they often foster and the potential harm to the church that lurks within them. It is trite to say it, but as go the *papers* and *colleges*, so go the churches. To deny this is to be ignorant of church history.

There is great danger even in such arrangements as **TORCH** which are not legal entities, but individual efforts to discharge personal responsibility in evangelism and edification and which have inter-congregational circulation. Parties can form around individual efforts to preach and teach. (Look at Martin Luther). When we give such individual efforts a name such as **TORCH**, it is liable to attract loyalties, breed the party spirit, and become an "institution" in the sense that it develops identity separate and apart from the person or persons involved in its production. When it does so, it would best die a hasty death.

One symptom of this undesirable condition is when we begin to hear such expressions as "The **TORCH** brethren." (Brethren over 40 can remember the derogatory epithet "Guardian boys" of the '50's and '60's). This danger lurks in giving individual effort a distinctive or attractive name. When that name begins to identify a group of brethren of a given persuasion, the implications are dangerous at best and partyistic at worst. I am aware that such labels are often falsely applied in bitter strife, but once I am convinced that **TORCH** can be accurately so used, it will be looking for a new editor, and I hope it will die. It is possible for such papers to live too long and become too well established in the minds of the brethren as the *center of soundness*.

If this seems to be pointing out a danger in our own efforts, never mind it. Brother Farris and I have discussed and recognize it fully. Neither he nor I would be reluctant to write "*finis*" on any given issue once we are convinced its influence is too great, it is thought of as a *center of soundness*, or brethren rally to it as a *party organ*. Neither of us has any real strong sentimental attachment to the half-dozen pieces of 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper called **TORCH**, and we do not ask for anybody's loyalty or devotion to it

or us. We are not interested in making it either a "big" or a "little" paper. "*It am what it am, and that's all it am!*" If brethren think our feeble efforts will edify them and want to send us enough (?) money (\$3) to produce them 12 issues of it, we will gladly do so. If brethren don't want to do so, fine! We probably won't sleep more than 8 or 10 hours per night worrying about it!

Both of us find it awkward asking brethren to subscribe for **TORCH**, and we almost never do so. We pass out sample copies from time to time, but never mention it publicly. Sometimes the local preacher where I hold meetings will mention the paper publicly, but never at my request. I figure that is up to him and the brethren. We feel that if we produce a quality product, brethren will hear of it and decide for themselves if they want us to produce them a copy of our little effort each month. Some readers get upset when we are not on time each month. We can understand this, and we try to keep the paper on schedule, but we are not a large operation. What we do for **TORCH** is done gratis, and often other duties take precedence over it. If readers are not willing to "put up" with this, there is very little that we can do about it. All can be sure that you will receive 12 issues for the \$3 you send us. Just remember this is not a business, but a labor of love.

This does not mean that we are not enthusiastic about our effort, far from it. It only means that we are willing for our efforts to speak for themselves and we have no interest in gaining control of, or unduly influencing brethren to support our effort.

Finally, as we discuss these matters, let us do so in a proper atmosphere. I appreciate the fact that brethren are thinking along these lines, and no doubt others will express themselves from time to time. We should put away all evil speaking, surmising and love as brethren, be courteous, be pitiful. Why can't we eliminate loaded words, emotional expressions, ill feelings, the tendency to read between the lines, and the practice of carefully scrutinizing each other's writings for something with which to "lobber" someone?

We don't need any bombastic belligerence to convince anyone. We be brethren. Let's turn on the *light*, not the *heat*. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. I plan to take the lead in trying to arrange a written debate on Bible departments between two brethren of good will and excellent talents. I think the discussion is needed at this time. We will keep you informed of developments.

REVIEW **of** **College Bible Departments -- Products of Illegitimate Necessity**

J. T. Smith

In the May 1973 issue of **TORCH**, the above titled article was written by brother Royce Chandler. I want to give "my opinion" of his article. I think the word I would use to describe it is "fiddlesticks."

In the first place I (maybe because I have not been around as many brethren as brother Chandler) know of no one that thinks or expresses brother Chandler's theory that if "Bible departments were disbanded, the church and the faith of our children would be in jeopardy."

Now I don't know about brother Chandler, but I personally received a greater insight into some Bible questions at Florida College. I am not saying that I would not have someday gleaned those truths from the Bible. However, in my estimation I had given to me in the proverbial "nutshell" things that it would have taken me months to have studied and dug out for myself.

Secondly, the reason I would like to see a college like Florida College continue to exist is because I want my children to have an opportunity to have proper instructions under men and women who possess, not only good moral character, but are in fact Christians. I want them to be able to go away from home for at least two years, which I consider critical years, where they will be taught that pre-marital sex is sinful. "Oh," you say, "let's teach them at home to be the right kind of people—then when they are away from home this will be enough." Well it may be for your children and mine—and it may not.

For the most part the articles that I have read that were directed at Florida College are nothing more than taking "pot-shots" at the college; or setting forth some personal grudge that they may have against the school.

I am not attempting to say that Florida College is perfect. It is far, far, from that. But I still believe it is the best place in the country to send my children if they should desire to continue their education.

I often wonder why people get these "pet peeves" and fret and stew about their *opinions*. Now if you are not saying that it is an

opinion, but a sin, then get your name on the dotted line, and let us try to settle once and for all if we are sinning and going to hell because we support and send our children to Florida College.

"It is sinful for a college like Florida College (that teaches the Bible as a part of it's curriculum) to exist; and I am sinning if I send one of my children to Florida College.

Affirm _____

Deny _____

1433 N. E. 16th Ave.
Gainesville, Florida 32601

Larry Bunch's Letter

August 6, 1973
P.O. Box 311
Alta Loma, Tx. 77510

Dear brother Needham,

In view of the fact that several articles have appeared in **TORCH** regarding *Colleges* and *teaching Bible* in these colleges, could you print the enclosed article and/or (if unable to print the article in its entirety) reply to what you believe to be wrong with the article?

I thoroughly enjoy **TORCH** and profit greatly from the articles contained therein. However, I remain unconvinced that teaching Bible in Colleges is error.

Please keep up the good work and fine selection of articles.

Sincerely,

Larry A. Bunch

F u z z y T h i n k i n g

Ernest A. Finley

It is fuzzy thinking that says it is right for a human organization to disseminate *written* comments on the scriptures (as per the publishing company), but wrong for a human organization to disseminate *oral* comments in a Bible class (as per the Bible department in a college). What is the difference between receiving instruction through the eye and receiving instruction through the ear if the instruction in either case be disseminated by a human organization?

It is fuzzy thinking that says that there is a difference, on the one hand between purchasing a correspondence course from a college Bible department, studying this literature to acquire Biblical knowledge (for which "credit" is given), and, on the other hand, purchasing a commentary from a publishing company (a human organization), written by the same instructor that prepared the material for the correspondence course sold by the college, and studying this literature to acquire Biblical knowledge.

It is fuzzy thinking that says it is right for a man to teach the Bible in a department of a human educational organization (the Bible record of creation in a Science class) if his doing it is incidental to the major purpose of that department but wrong for a man to teach the Bible in another department of a human organization if his doing it is the major purpose of that department. Are we being asked to believe that it is right to pay a public education institution to teach one's child science, knowing that the instructor will likely teach him evolution, a false belief concerning the origin of the universe or at least the creatures on the earth, but wrong for one to pay a human institution to teach his child, in a Bible department, the truth concerning the origin of the universe and all things therein as revealed in the Bible?

It is imperative that I provide for the needs of my child both physically and spiritually. But it is fuzzy thinking which says that when I purchase hospital care for my child I am providing for him but when I purchase Bible instruction for my child from a college it is not I who am providing for him but the college. If I am providing the hospital care (and relieving myself of my responsi-

bility) in purchasing the care, why am I not providing the Bible instruction (and relieving myself of my responsibility, in part, at least) in purchasing the Bible instruction?

It is fuzzy thinking that denies that a human organization may disseminate Bible instruction or teaching and then allows one to fill his library with books and periodicals containing Biblical instruction disseminated by publishing companies which are in every sense of the word human organizations. Indeed, are they not, for all practical purposes, educational institutions?

Fuzzy thinking is also seen on the question of fellowship related to this issue. Some brethren contend that the college Bible department is parallel to the missionary society. They contend that we may have no fellowship with those who participate in or defend the missionary society. They then proceed to insist that they may have fellowship with those who participate in or defend the college Bible department.

Fuzzy thinking is seen in another area also. It is argued that publishing companies which disseminate Bible instruction have a right to exist because they are prompted by a profit-making motive. On the other hand, college Bible departments are not so motivated. Thus, the former is right and the latter is wrong, they say. But would a group of men have the right to form a publishing company which is devoted to the dissemination of Bible teaching (in the form of encyclopedias, commentaries, dictionaries etc.) if there were not a profit-making motive — rather, simply a recognition of a need for less expensive Bible literature and a desire to make such available at lower cost? Would a non-profit publishing company devoted to the dissemination of Bible teaching have a right to exist? If a college Bible department were to arrange its finances so that it could make a profit from its labors (as one college I know of does), would it be right for such a department to exist?

Face up to it brethren! If you are ready to affirm that no human organization has a right to disseminate Bible instruction, then on what ground do you defend the publishing company by which your libraries are filled with Bible instruction? If you are ready to affirm the proposition, then make the application of the proposition to your own conduct — clean out your library! There has been too much fuzzy thinking in this area of controversy.

1333 Judiway
Houston, Texas 77018

A Reply to Brother Smith's Review

Royce Chandler

In view of the reactions of some of my brethren to my article, I'd like to clear up a misunderstanding. Brother Smith and some others could see nothing in my article but an attack on the Scriptural right of Florida College to have a Bible department; these brethren thought I was saying that college Bible departments are inherently sinful. *I said no such thing.* In the article I explicitly stated that I was not attacking any school, but rather the idea that the college Bible department is *indispensable* to the continued welfare of the church or of our children's faith. In fact, the two primary points were: (1) *college Bible departments are not necessary to insure the preservation of our children's faith, sound gospel preaching, proper training of preachers and elders, or the future of the church; and (2) reproving the tendency of elders, preachers, and parents to turn over to college Bible departments what they themselves are obligated to do — i.e., to teach, train, and develop young saints for service in the Kingdom.*

If a parent decides a day care center can more efficiently raise his child than he, and I reprove his irresponsibility, have I maintained that a day care center is sinful? If elders turn over their decision-making responsibility to a business meeting of other male members, and I reprove them, have I proclaimed that business meetings are unscriptural? Then, if I decry the irresponsibility of certain saints in turning their obligations over to a college Bible department, have I argued the sinfulness of the Bible department? There is a great difference between saying something is *abused* and saying that it is *inherently sinful*. I am happy to say that some brethren rightly, and without any difficulty, understood the point of my article.

Let me further clarify. At this point, I do not believe that a Bible department is sinful, inherently. Some have become so, but I have not been persuaded that the Florida College Bible Department is an unscriptural arrangement. I may someday accept that view, but, right now, do not. I, along with many other faithful brethren, understand the extreme danger of such an organization and the historical evidence that all such Bible departments have apostatized and have done great damage to the Lord's body — and someday the Florida College Bible Department will probably follow suit. But this apprehension of what lies ahead is not, by any means, synonymous with believing that the organization is inherently unscriptural.

Some brethren have misunderstood the article, but many have also correctly grasped its purpose. I accept a good part of the blame for the misunderstanding. Were I to re-write the article, I would try not to use such provoking phrases as "illegitimate," "violent reactions of my brethren," etc. It is easy to understand how such language can imply what I did not mean to imply. Thus, I am acknowledging that it is partly my fault that some misunderstanding developed, and for my lack of judgment and my immaturity, I sincerely apologize. I neither regret nor apologize for the article itself, for I firmly believe what I said; I do regret that all could not see the point.

If I were fully persuaded that the Florida College Bible Department is a sinful organization, I, for two reasons, would not have even considered writing, for publication, an article on the subject: (1) In my lowly judgment, the issue is a matter of individual opinion. I place it in the same category as the questions of the woman's covering, an individual or a multiplicity of communion containers, going to war, etc.; (2) As long as it is a matter of personal conviction, I have no right to make it a "brotherhood issue," and thus contribute to more division. Hence, I would never publicly attack the Bible department nor engage in public debate, for such would only foster brotherhood division over a matter of individual persuasion. If the day comes that the departments need "brotherhood attention" then I will give them such.

Let me quickly reply to brother Smith. As he did not get the point of the article, it's rather difficult to defend myself, for I was not really involved in what he had to say. But some points are worth noting.

(1) He states that he knows of no one who thinks that if Bible departments were disbanded, the church and faith of our children would be in jeopardy; but in his fourth paragraph he expresses this sentiment himself.

(2) This same paragraph expresses a confusion that many brethren seem to have; *i.e.*, that to question a Bible department is to question the school itself. The school is not synonymous with the Bible department, is it? If the department were disbanded, would that take away all the teachers who are Christians? Would it mean that our children could not be taught that premarital sex is wrong? As far as that argument of his goes, is it necessary for me to send my children to Florida College to make sure they learn this important lesson on premarital sex? If they don't know it by the time they are college age, it is the parents' fault, and no one's else. Can't I send my children to a state school

and write them letters informing them of the sin of this activity, or can't the elders and preacher where they attend teach them? If such is not enough to convince them, sending them to Florida College won't do any good. Can a college Bible department teach them a truth that preachers, elders, and parents can't teach them?

(3) That I can get "a greater insight into some Bible questions" and have my children taught against premarital sex is not justification for anything, is it? Does the end justify the means? Brother Smith does not believe that it does, neither am I implying that Florida College should not exist. I make this point simply because we have no right to reason this way when we condemn it in others.

(4) I have no "pet peeves" against the school. Few students have given more of themselves to the school than I; I am greatly indebted to the school for many good things in my life, and I continue to work to send students there. Thus, my article was not motivated by either a peeve or by a desire to condemn the school.

(5) Brother Smith wonders why people "fret and stew about their opinions," but he expresses throughout his reply that he is writing concerning his opinion on the matter. The reasons he wrote about his opinion are probably why others do likewise, though I will not accuse him of fretting and stewing.

(6) We could not, even if I believed what he thought I believed, "settle once and for all if we are sinning and going to hell because we support and send our children to Florida College." Brethren have been trying to settle this for over a hundred years. Certainly I do not possess the wisdom or insight necessary to find all the answers.

(7) "I am not attempting to say that Florida College is perfect. It is far, far, from that." That much, at least, was implied in my article. What makes it so offensive for me to *imply* it, but alright for him to *state* it? It is true that any such college is imperfect, but it is also true that the Lord's church is perfect and adequate to do the Lord's work if all saints will carry their own weight.

I believe firmly that my article expressed the truth and that it needs serious attention in all the Lord's churches. If those who misunderstood the thrust of it will re-read it in light of the fact that I was not questioning the inherent right of the Bible department to exist, I believe they will agree with what was said. I sincerely hope that brother Smith has not taken anything in this reply personally, for I mean no offense and desire no ill-will.

305 E. Lexington Ave.
Danville, Kentucky 40422

Report on Work in Nigeria

Robert H. West

During the dates of January 27th through March 11th, 1973, brother Billy W. Moore and I were in the West Africa country of Nigeria working with faithful brethren there. I shall endeavor to briefly set forth a summary of our work along with our impressions of the problems, potentials and needs of the Nigerian brethren.

Our work was limited almost entirely to lesson series with preachers and other brethren on the subject of "authority." Special application was made to some of the problems arising over church-supported institutions and sponsoring churches. Lengthy question and answer periods followed each lesson. We held this series of lessons in the following locations: Ntan Ekere, Uyo, Aba, Enugu, Benin City, Ibadan, and Lagos. We also had opportunities to preach on the streets and to churches in surrounding villages. We met and studied with approximately 200 preachers during the six weeks we were there. We spoke to crowds ranging from only a few individuals, to as many as 900 at once.



NIGERIA

FACTS IN BRIEF

Capital: Lagos
Official Language: English
Area: 356,669 Square Miles
Population: 70, 500, 000

The results of our labors are, of course, difficult to assess. However, we have been assured by the Nigerian brethren that much good has resulted in the way of edification and encouragement of the brethren. Since our return, we have learned that three liberal preachers who attended our lectures have taken their stand for the all-sufficiency of the church and God's plan for man.

While in Uyo a most notable incident occurred, brother Moore was preaching one evening on a busy street. Two young men

joined the crowd and participated actively in the question and answer period. We studied with them until early the next morning, at which time they both confessed Christ and were baptized in the nearest river. These men were both preachers in a denominational group known as "God's Church." One of them, Etim Abidiak, had been a leading evangelist for this group, having established over 20 churches and trained many preachers. Through their efforts, we were allowed to preach to many of these denominational people. They have since succeeded in converting their wives and also two other denominational preachers. They are now

engaged in a special training class with faithful preachers in Uyo. We anticipate that they will be extremely influential in leading many others to Christ.



The Nigerian preachers impressed us greatly for their zeal, knowledge, and ability. Their willingness to sacrifice is almost unbelievable. The economy and most of the brethren are desperately poor. We met only a few dozen preachers who are receiving

adequate support. The Nigerian churches find it very difficult to gather sufficient funds to support their preachers. Yet, these men work with their hands, clearing land, or some other difficult job, and still preach for several different congregations. Few of them have means of transportation other than a bicycle (and some do not even enjoy this luxury). Yet they are converting many to Christ, and effectively holding back the tide of liberalism in many areas.

At the present time there are no conservative American preachers in Nigeria. This is because of the current position being taken by the Nigerian Immigration Department. They demand that any "expatriot missionaries" be sponsored and approved by a national board of representatives which are empowered to speak in behalf of all the churches of Christ in Nigeria. Our liberal brethren have readily agreed to these demands, formed such a board, and summarily turned down the applications of brethren Leslie Diestelkamp and Wayne Payne for issuance of resident visas. When faithful brethren learned of this, they protested that this national board was not only unscriptural, but that it in no sense was representative of hundreds of churches throughout the nation. Under this pressure, the immigration officials have agreed to with-

draw recognition of the present board. But they still insist that a national organization be formed before they will allow any American preachers to enter the country on a resident basis. The upshot of this is that even the liberals are now unable to get their men into the country as preachers. They can, however, get their men in as hospital workers, trade school teachers, and college administrators. These men then go all over the country preaching. Of course, faithful Nigerian brethren are adamant in their opposition to the formation of this national organization which speaks for all the churches. The liberals, on the other hand, are just as determined to retain this board because of the powerful advantage it gives them. In the past, for example, they instigated a lawsuit against faithful brethren in Owerri to try to take the building from them. The faithful brethren managed to retain their property. The situation with the board now appears to be at a stalemate.

The most pressing need in Nigeria right now is support for preachers. Relatively small amounts of money can support a Nigerian preacher adequately. The liberals seem to have little difficulty in getting support for their men and hold out money and bicycles as an enticement for men to fall in line with their doctrine. In spite of the fact that the liberals are in a majority in many areas (especially in the East Central and South East States), conservative brethren are making rapid progress. It is our opinion that now, more than any other time, we need to have more full-time men on the job to take advantage of the abundant opportunities to reach the lost and reclaim brethren who have been caught up in digression. We therefore make an urgent appeal to churches and brethren to give consideration to supporting one or more Nigerian preachers. Brother Moore and I have the names and addresses of many faithful men who have been tried and found faithful who need support. We would be most happy to furnish the names to interested brethren. Also, "one-time" contributions for the purchase of bicycles or motorcycles is greatly needed. A number of individuals have already shown interest in doing this. There is a great need for tracts, old song books, reference books, and literature of all kinds (even bundles of old bulletins and papers would be a great treasure to most Nigerians).

I am thankful to God that I was able to go to Nigeria. It is my opinion that this is one of the most fruitful areas in the entire world for the spread of the gospel.

3737 - 14th Ave. N.
St. Petersburg, Florida 33703

What's Your Question?

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS. Send to: James
P. Needham, 1600 Oneco Avenue, Winter Park, Florida 32789.

1 Corinthians 6:19,20 Again

Don Partain

I just read your reply to my comments on the abuse of 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. Before I respond to your discussion of the context of this passage, I must straighten something out — as well as reprimand you for making this necessary.

You said, "Though our brother does not say so, his implication is that it is not sinful to engage in that which harms the physical body . . ." Now, brother Needham, I implied no such thing. That's almost like saying, because I don't believe Matt. 16:18 should be used to condemn fornication, therefore, I believe that fornication is all right. The truth of the matter is, I do NOT defend smoking and have never made ANY attempt whatsoever to justify it; so please retract your statement. I simply do not condone going to any lengths — even to the abuse of scripture — to condemn smoking; sin must always be combated with TRUTH — not the misuse of it.

Again, you misrepresented me when you said that my conclusion was "that one can glorify God in his body while committing all the other sins mentioned." I drew NO SUCH CONCLUSION; nor did I imply it. My conclusion was simply that Paul is not discussing physical harm to the body when he speaks of the sin "against the body"; and in view of this, brethren abuse this passage when they apply it to physical harm.

Your reasoning is faulty as you go about proving that "the context of 1 Cor. 6:19, 20 involves the sin of doing physical harm to the fleshy body:" 1. "Paul mentions 'drunkards.'" (vs. 10) 2. "This involves an element one takes into the body that is harmful to it." 3. "This is exactly what happens in the use of tobacco." CONCLUSION: "Thus the context . . . involves the sin of doing physical harm . . ."

True enough, drunkenness involves an element harmful to the body (as does smoking) — but is it THIS fact that Paul has in mind as he classes it as unrighteousness? Is the matter of physical harm what he is condemning as he speaks of stealing, covetousness,

homosexuality, idolatry, reviling, effeminacy — and fornication? Brother Needham, I find absolutely NO element of physical harm in ANY of these other forms of unrighteousness (unless it is incidental; e.g., physical harm in conjunction with stealing or venereal disease as a result of fornication. And of course, we're not talking about incidental physical harm when discussing drunkenness.) So, you are taking a characteristic that is isolated to ONE of these forms of unrighteousness and you're making this NOT ONLY determine the thought of vss. 9, 10, but you're even going to make this characteristic pervade the thought of vss. 13b-18, which undeniably deal exclusively with fornication (which, I'm sure you'll agree, is not physically harmful). And though you refuse to admit it, vss. 19, 20 are tied right in with vss. 13b-18 by the coordinating conjunction "or"; in other words, Paul has in mind FORNICATION even as he says what he does in these verses. But WAIT, brother Needham. Don't go jumping to unfounded conclusions as you have already done with me before. DON'T PANIC. Because simply saying that Paul has in mind fornication in vss. 19, 20 does NOT mean that THEREFORE Paul would be saying that a person can glorify God in his body while committing all the other sins mentioned in vss. 9, 10. To conclude such is invalid and evidences careless study.

Furthermore, before closing, let me suggest that you take a closer look at 1 Cor. 3:16, 17. By what stretch of the context do you make "temple of God" here refer to an individual's body? When Paul said (vs. 9), "You are God's field, God's building," was he referring to each individual as a "field" and a "building?"

Again, we must "be diligent to present ourselves approved to God . . . handling accurately the word of truth."

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Editor's Reply

Part of the TORCH policy is to furnish our critics space to disagree with what we say; all within reason and good taste, of course. The present controversy with brother Partain (whom I have never met to my knowledge), started when he objected to my use of 1 Cor. 6:19, 20 in answering a question on the use of tobacco. (See TORCH, February 1973, and May 1973).

I feel no need to defend my former article on this subject, so will confine these brief remarks to brother Partain's latest effort.

1. Did he implicitly defend harming the body? He firmly denies that he did, and I just as firmly believe he did. Those disposed to defend or use tobacco would find it hard to believe that brother Partain is against it. I am not responsible for this logical

consequence of his argumentation. He tells us at this late date that he does "NOT defend smoking." I am glad to receive this information, but the trend of his logic in his previous article leaned in the other direction. Most of our readers will agree, I am sure, that he should have pointed this out in his first article. He says he does not "condone going to any lengths — even to the abuse of scripture — to condemn smoking." Neither do I, and I plead innocent if he is charging me with so doing. I haven't abused the scriptures just because brother Partain thinks I have.

2. **Is my reasoning faulty?** I don't claim to be a professor of logic, but I believe I can sometimes pick out a fallacy or two in someone else's. Our brother denies that I proved physical harm to the body is in the context of 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. He accuses me of making "the thought of verses 9, 10 . . . pervade the thought of verses 13b-18." But notice that our brother uses the thoughts of verses 13b-18 to *exclude* the thoughts of verse 10! He denies that physical harm to the body is in the context of verses 19, 20, and he can make good his claim if we let *him* define the context. I have no plan to accomodate him.

Furthermore, he argues that since harm to the body is not involved in ALL of the sins Paul mentions, it is not involved in ANY of them, even though brother Partain admits that drunkenness is harmful to the body, and that it is mentioned in the context. Whether harm to the body is Paul's main thought is beside the point, and I never argued such. The fact is that brother Partain denied that this idea is in the context of 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. I have proved him dead wrong! I am sorry for any embarrassment to his scholarship and careful study, but that is one of the hazards of this business.

But note further: He also lectures me on the use of 1 Cor. 3:16, 17! He jumps back up to verse 9 and picks out the expressions, "You are God's field, God's building" and identifies the temple of verses 16, 17 as being synonymous with these, thus the church is the temple in these verses, not the individual. But notice, our brother denied me the right to jump back 9 verses to determine a context in 1 Cor. 6, but he jumps back 7 verses to determine it in 1 Cor. 3. Consistency is a rare jewel! And it is absolutely amazing and alarming how much faulty reasoning and "careless study" can be characteristic of those who claim to "be diligent to present themselves approved to God . . . handling accurately the word of truth."

Since our brother denies that 1 Cor. 3:16, 17 and 6:19, 20 condemn doing physical harm to the body, it would be interesting to have him tell us what verse condemns this sin, if he believes it is a sin. Let him produce the passage and we will be glad to give attention to it.

LIFT UP OUR EYES

Don Alexander

"Go ye into all the world."
Souls in darkness need the Light.
Some may send, while others go,
But souls in sin the Way must know.

Lift our eyes that we may see
Beyond ourselves and out ahead
Fields of souls so long and wide
Who've never heard that Jesus died.

Sting our hearts that we may feel
The need of all to know Thy Truth.
May we hear their cries above the strife
For one to teach them Words of Life.

Strengthen our hands that we may do
What our hearts have felt and eyes have seen.
May our deeds abound in the work ahead;
And our hands perform what our lips have said.

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TORCH

*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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Dangerous Influences —

Human Institutions

Brethren must constantly be reminded of the dangerous influences of all human institutions to the church, both authorized and unauthorized. There is always the danger that unauthorized human institutions will creep in unawares and usurp the function of the church. This has happened so many times in history that it would be very foolish to deny such a danger. While the present generation may be well taught on this point, this may be the source of greatest danger. We may assume that there is no need to teach on it, and such monsters will creep up on our blind side. This happened in past generations when some of the greatest minds of all time led the church.

- James P. Needham

(Excerpt from Editorial, January 1972)

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Editor

James P. Needham

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Instrumental Music and Worship —

A Response

Howard Winters

(Editor's Note: In the March 1973 issue of The Carolina Christian, Howard Winters, its editor, defended the singing of sacred songs to instrumental accompaniment. In the May 1973 issue of TORCH, I responded to this. Brother Winters then sent me his response to my remarks, and requested that I print it along with my reply in TORCH. I replied that I would be glad to do so, if he would print the entire exchange in The Carolina Christian. He answered that the board of directors of The Carolina Christian would not allow this type of exchange in that paper. Naturally, I am somewhat reluctant to allow one to examine my position before my audience whose board of directors refuses to allow me to examine his position before his audience, but, since we have nothing to hide, and have absolutely no fear of open investigation, we herewith print brother Winters' reply along with our own. One reason we consented to proceed in spite of Carolina Christian's refusal to reciprocate is that brother Winters' stated in our correspondence that he disagrees with their policy, but is without power to change it. I can find many things in the back issues of Carolina Christian that are inconsistent with its unfair, one-sided policy, but this is not the time or place to present such evidence. We trust you will read the exchange carefully, and be persuaded by truth. TORCH will be fair, regardless of what others do. jpn)

In the May 1973 TORCH, the editor (James P. Needham) took me to task on a statement made in the March 1973 issue of Carolina Christian concerning the use of instrumental music as entertainment. His specific objection centered around (although it was not limited to) the use of instrumental music when used by Christians with hymns and spiritual song as entertainment. We maintain that the use of instrumental music is sinful only when it is used in connection with worship to God (either as an aid to singing or as an act of worship within itself). If one can sing a

hymn as entertainment without worship, or if one can listen to a hymn being sung as entertainment without worshiping, then we say that he can add the instrument in such cases without sinning. As we understand it, Loretta Lynn is a member of the Lord's church. Is it a sin for her to sing a religious song with the aid of an instrument purely as entertainment? If yes, then it is a sin for Christians to listen to her and enjoy it as entertainment; if no, then it is not a sin for a Christian to sing a religious song with an instrument as entertainment. Our problem here is a failure to distinguish between entertainment and worship. One is done to please God; the other is done for our own recreation.

I have the highest respect for brother Needham. I have read his writings with great profit. He is usually clear and concise in his presentation. He has a tremendous respect for Bible authority. And most of the time he reasons well. But in this case he has thrown his reason to the wind and missed the truth in a whirlwind. He commingles two subjects (worship and entertainment) as though they cannot be separated. He makes his observations under two points, both of which he seems to deny. We will note them in order:

1. **That funerals and weddings are not worship.** Although in general he denies this, he concedes that "It is true that they don't have to be." Well, it is only when they are not that we have said instrumental music is admissable. There is no question about it: instrumental music is sinful in worship.

It is agreed then that a wedding might be "secular," not "religious." But brother Needham adds, "These do not describe the weddings and funerals brother Winters refers to." This is his conclusion, not mine. Brother Needham believes, as I do, that every act of true worship must be authorized by God. Now let him tell us when, where, or how God has authorized the wedding ceremony. It is either authorized as an act of worship or it is not; if it is not authorized as worship, then it is sinful to engage in it as such. Now we are not saying that it is sinful to engage in a wedding ceremony, we are simply saying that it is sinful to make a wedding ceremony an act of worship unless it has been authorized as such. But if it is not an act of worship, and if instrumental music is sinful only in connection with worship, then it is not sinful to use instrumental music in connection with a wedding ceremony. Now if brother Needham says that he is worshiping God when he performs a wedding ceremony, we call upon him to give us the command, example, or necessary inference that authorizes the wedding ceremony as worship. The problem here

is to determine whether it is done to God or done for man, and not to confuse the two.

In our original article we made a distinction between funerals and weddings, although the question had combined them both. At funerals, Christians often worship or honor God by the preaching of His word, praying, and singing. And when such is done to God, it would be sinful to use an instrument. Anytime (or anywhere) we worship God we must do so by the means He has authorized. Our only point was that Christians could under conceivable circumstance participate in funerals (which are not meant to be worship) without worshipping. And if such should be the case (and granted that such would usually be unwise), since it is not worship to God, instrumental music under such circumstance would not be wrong.

2. That songs written for the worship of God can be sung with instrumental accompaniment out of worship for our own enjoyment and entertainment. Keep in mind that brother Needham is denying this statement. He says, "If this is true, then all passages in the New Testament referring to singing must refer to and regulate singing *in the assembly*." (Emphasis his--HW.) Then he gives a chart showing that verses of scripture mentioning singing do not limit them to the assembly. Here a cog must have slipped in his thinking processes. The verses certainly *do not* limit singing to the assembly, but they *do* limit it to worship (they have nothing to say about entertainment whatsoever). He thus overlooks the fact that we are not concerned with the assembly, except as it incidentally relates to worship; what we are concerned with is worship. And all these verses do refer to singing as worship. And they regulate the singing of "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" in worship, regardless of where that worship may be. They do not regulate entertainment. And so he has proven our point rather than disproving it. Instrumental music is wrong only when it is used as worship to God, not when it is used as entertainment. And entertainment is not worship, nor is worship primarily entertainment. The two should be kept distinct.

Brother Needham concludes by saying, "I have not yet figured out how a Christian could sing 'Our God, He is Alive,' or 'How Great Thou Art,' etc. with instrumental music for entertainment and enjoyment — not worship!" Perhaps here we come to the root of his whole problem. He sees singing religious songs as worship *per se*. But this makes worship totally consisting in an overt act — the act of singing a religious song *is* worship in or of itself, regardless of the purpose for which the act is performed.

This is totally and absolutely false. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). A footnote in the American Standard Version defines worship as "reverence paid" (see Matt. 2:2). In our own words, it is the sincere devotion of the heart expressed to God by means of divinely appointed acts. The reverence or devotion (purpose and attitude) is what Jesus meant by "spirit" and "paid" or expressed by divinely appointed acts is what He meant by "truth." There can be no worship without purpose just as there can be no worship without acts. The right act with the wrong purpose (entertainment) is not worship, just as the right purpose with the wrong act would not be worship. What we are saying here is that the heart must purpose to worship or else it is not worship. Thus when one has the purpose of entertaining, his actions cannot be classed as worship.

But even more serious: if the act within itself is worship, it makes singing a sacrament (in the Roman Catholic sense). Conway defines a sacrament as ". . . a visible sign instituted by Christ, signifying and producing sanctifying grace in the soul . . . It is of faith that the Sacraments contain the grace they signify, and confer that grace on those who do not place an obstacle thereupon, and that grace is conferred on the Sacraments of themselves *ex opere operato*." (The Question Box, pp. 228, 230). All this jargon simply means that the power (grace) is in the act itself. From this idea came the seven traditional sacraments, acts which, according to the theory, carry with them the merit of grace (which is the concept of meritorious works). For example, Catholics believe that baptism saves regardless of the status of the one being baptized, just so long as he places no obstacle in the way. Now if the act of singing religious songs, irregardless of the attitude or purpose of the one singing, is worship in and of itself, it falls into the same category and we then have a sacrament of singing. I do not believe that brother Needham believes this, but it is the only conclusion we can reach from his method of reasoning. Either singing a religious song is worship *per se* or else it is not worship in and of itself. If it is worship *per se*, it is a sacrament; if it is not worship *per se*, then it may be used for some purpose other than worship. But if one can sing a religious song for entertainment (for a reason other than for worship), there is no Scriptural reason for not singing it accompanied by an instrument for the same purpose. Instrumental music is wrong only when it is used in the worship of God. The whole subject is as simple as that.

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A Reply to Brother Winters' Response

James P. Needham

It shall be my purpose to make this reply as brief as possible. Brother Winters' position rests upon certain false premises. When these are exposed his whole super-structure comes tumbling down. Let us notice:

1. He assumes that SINGING spiritual songs with instrumental accompaniment and LISTENING to others do so are the same issue. They are not the same issue, and we deny his assumption. The Bible regulates singing as an act of worship, not listening. I sometimes listen to false teachers, is that the same as being one? I could, like brother Winters, say, "Is it a sin to be a false teacher? If yes, then it is a sin for a Christian to listen to a false teacher." Howard argues that listening to someone sing spiritual songs for entertainment is equal to doing it oneself. That is like saying listening to a false teacher is the same as being one. I don't think he, or any other reasonable person, will buy this conclusion.

I don't buy and listen to religious songs with instrumental accompaniment. If I own a single record of this type, I don't know it. Thus brother Winters' point here does not really concern me. Each individual will have to settle this issue for himself, but God settles the question of whether Christians can sing religious songs with instrumental accompaniment. Brother Winters is confusing the issue.

2. He claims that I fail to distinguish between worship and entertainment. I do no such thing. I make a clearer distinction here than does he. He affirms one can entertain himself and others with that which God designed as an act of worship, but then charges that I don't distinguish between entertainment and worship. Thou are the man, brother Winters.

3. He presumes upon God's silence: He freely admits that all

New Testament passages dealing with singing regulate worship, thus admitting that none of them have any thing to do with singing religious songs as entertainment. But since he contends that such can be done, he does that for which he tacitly admits is without authority.

He challenged me *"to give . . . the command, example or necessary inference that authorizes the wedding ceremony as worship."* I conclude that he knows how to establish scriptural authority, and I call upon him *"to give us the command, example or necessary inference that authorizes"* the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs for entertainment, to say nothing of accompanying them with instrumental music! When he proves that one divinely ordained item can be used for entertainment, he will have proved that all such items can be so used.

Since he admits that the nine passages I mentioned in my first article regulate spiritual songs both in and out of the assembly, then is it not logical to conclude that since he admits that they also have in mind the matter of singing in worship that wherever they are used they should be used in worship? Brother Winters' contention that they can be used as entertainment is pure presumption.

4. He falsely concludes that I am affirming that singing religious songs is worship per se. There is nothing in my argumentation that warrants such a conclusion. I fully agree that one cannot worship without purposing to do so. I have not affirmed that any time one sings a religious song he worships, but rather that he *should*. I have not said that one cannot sing religious songs as entertainment, but rather that he *should not*. There is a difference! It is clear who *"has thrown his reason to the wind and missed the truth in a whirlwind."* Thus brother Winters wasted his time and space with all that business about singing being a sacrament!

The fact that all singing of spiritual songs is not worship does not mean that it is innocent. Would Howard affirm that everything that is not worship is innocent? The Corinthians had appropriated the Lord's supper to their own entertainment (1 Cor. 11), therefore, it was not worship, but, brother Winters, was it innocent? No, it was sacreligious and sinful. The same can be said for profaning any other divinely ordained item of worship or divine service. I am not saying that all singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is worship, I am saying that if it is not worship, it is *sacreligious*.

According to brother Winters' logic, one could use God's name profusely in everyday matters and not be guilty of profanity as long as he did it for his own *entertainment*. I hear people doing this every day. Some people use the name of God in almost every sentence. It makes them feel big. Feeling big brings them joy, therefore it entertains them. Therefore, such use of God's name is innocent according to brother Winters' logic. If brother Winters denies this conclusion, then all we have to do to get him to affirm it is to set these profainer's conversations to music. I know this reduces brother Winters' position to an absurdity, but so be it. He countenances the use of God's name for entertainment if it is in a song, why not when it is in a conversation? How can he endorse one and condemn the other?

AUTHORITY FOR WEDDING CEREMONY

Brother Winters requested that I give the "command, example or necessary inference that authorizes the wedding ceremony as worship." In paragraph # 4, he says, "*At funerals, Christians often worship or honor God by the preaching of His Word, praying, and singing.*" When brother Winters finds the divine authority for worshipping at a funeral, he will have found it for worshipping at a wedding. Howard defines worship as homage paid in a divinely appoint act. According to his definition of worship, I have proven that a wedding ceremony is worship because he must admit that it is divinely appointed since it is required by civil law which God tells us to obey (Rom. 13). When I preform a wedding ceremony I preach the word of God, pray and seek to honor God, therefore it is worship, according to Howard.

When I said in my former article that weddings and funerals don't have to be worship, I simply meant that one could have both without any reference to God. In such cases they would be strictly *civil* ceremonies. When understood, there is nothing in my statement that is inconsistent with the position I hold. Brother Winters missed the point.

BROTHER WINTERS ADVOCATES PROFANITY

Profanity is showing disrespect or irreverence for that which is holy or sanctified. A sanctified thing is that which God has made holy. For us to use such a thing for our own pleasure or entertainment is profanity, purely and simply, whether or not we intend it to be. Under the Old Testament everything used in worship was to have been cleansed by blood (Heb. 9:19-22). Using those

things thus sanctified for one's own purpose and pleasure was a serious offense (Exo. 30:31-33; 37,38; cf. Amos 6:6; Dan. 5:2). The Hebrew writer continues, *"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us"* (Heb. 9:23, 24). The writer is here arguing that profanity under the new law is a greater crime than under the old because the divinely appointed acts of worship are "heavenly things" purified "with better sacrifices" than under the Old Testament. Yet, brother Winters argues that those things which have been sanctified for worship by the blood of Christ can be taken and used for our own entertainment and pleasure. According to him, we can play around with the name of God as long as we don't intend to worship because he allows that we can sing "Our God Is Alive," and "How Great Thou Art" not only without intending to worship, but also with instrumental accompaniment.

One wonders what other sacred things brother Winters would be willing to profane. What about prayer? the Lord's money? preaching and teaching? the Lord's supper? Could we employ these for our own entertainment? Would he invite a group of brethren to his home for prayer accompanied by the sliding of beads down a string (the rosary), but inform everyone that this is not for worship, but for our own entertainment, therefore it is innocent? If not, how can he invite the same group to his home to sing sacred songs accompanied by instrumental music? If one, why not the other? Why is it alright to accompany one divinely ordained act with a human invention and not another? According to brother Winters' logic, a Christian could visit denominational services and participate in singing, prayer, communion and giving as long as he did not intend it to worship! I once raised a big controversy in a church because I opposed some of our best singers' singing in denominational funerals. Brother Winters would say this is fine as long as they don't intend to worship.

When Nadab and Abihu profaned God's holy worship God warned that they must "put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean" (Lev. 10:10). There is still a great need for such a distinction. We must not appropriate holy things to our own purposes, for such is profanity.

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Does God Answer "Yes" When He Hears Our Prayers?

Keith Sharp

Often a distraught soul will, in the face of some tragedy, such as the death of a loved one, inquire earnestly, "But I prayed that this might not happen. Why did God not answer me?" Often, some well-meaning comforter will reply, "God did hear your prayer, but He had to answer 'No.' " Although we should comfort those who are bereaved, that comfort should be based on truth. Is it true that sometimes God hears and answers "No" to our prayers, or does He always answer "Yes" when He hears our prayers?

John affirms in 1 John 5:14-15:

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

The inspired apostle plainly promised in verse 15 that, if God hears our prayers, He grants our petitions. This is as plain a statement as could be called for. When God hears our prayers, He always answers "Yes."

But there is a New Testament example which seems to contradict this promise. In 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, Paul observed:

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

I have no conviction whatsoever as to what was Paul's "thorn in the flesh." However, some things are abundantly clear from this passage. Paul prayed to God to have it removed. God answered

Paul's prayer, but He answered negatively. He refused to grant Paul's petition. God answered "No."

How can the promise of John and the example of Paul be reconciled? According to Joseph Henry Thayer in his Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament the word "hear," when used of God hearing prayer, means "to listen to, have regard to" (pg. 23). Think of it this way. If you asked your boss for a raise, and he granted that request, he would have "heard" you. If you asked him for a raise, and he turned you down, he would have refused to "hear" you. In both cases he would be aware of the request. In both cases he would supply an answer. But only when the request is granted would he have heard your petition. When a faithful child of God petitions His Father, "his ears are open unto their prayers" (1 Pet. 3:12). But in the Biblical sense, only when He answers "Yes" has the prayer been heard.

The key to harmonizing these two passages is found in 1 John 5:14. Our prayers must be "according to his will." Paul's prayers although he did not know it when the prayer was offered, was not in harmony with God's will. Thus, the Father answered,"

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Paul, faithful disciple that he was, readily bent his will to God's. Thus he testified:

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:9b-10).

I believe there is a great lesson here. I must pray in faith (Jas. 1:5-8). I pray with all confidence that God will hear my petition and, hearing, grant it (1 Jn. 5:14-15). But I must pray according to His will. Sometimes the petition may fall into that realm where either I do not know His will, or I am tempted to disobey it. Then I must pray, "Thy will be done." When I so pray, I am not resigning myself to a terrible fate. I am asking God for the strength that I might be His instrument in the accomplishment of His will. This is what Jesus begged on Calvary (Matt. 26:39,42). Here Jesus is so strikingly portrayed as "the Son of Man." All the temptation of facing the cruel death of the cross hung crushingly upon His

shoulders. In agony He implored,

"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39).

Having exhorted His disciples to watch, He returned to prayer and, in agony in which "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground" (Lk. 22:44), He besought His Father,

"O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Matt. 26:42).

Some people deny that Jesus' prayer in the garden was heard. I emphatically affirm that God heard Jesus' prayer in the same sense John uses the word "hear" in 1 John 5:14-15. God granted His petition. He answered "Yes." The inspired writer of the Hebrew letter declares:

"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared: Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 5:7-10).

Yes, Jesus was heard. God granted His petition. He prayed, "thy will be done." God granted Him the strength to perform His will. Because He did, Jesus became both the captain of our salvation and our high priest. If we will follow our captain in obedience, we can through His priestly mediation,

"come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:14-16).

When God hears our prayers, He answers "Yes." Therefore, pray with confidence. But pray according to His will. And always pray, "Thy will be done." "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers" (1 Pet. 3:12).

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Looking Forward and "Reaching Forth"

(Philippians 3:13)

Ron Halbrook

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and REACHING FORTH unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Before his conversion, Paul had been many things and done many things which were no longer important to him. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (vs. 7). Paul obtained "the righteousness which is of God by faith" (vs. 9); that is, when Paul obeyed the gospel, God imputed righteousness to him by grace. But, Paul wasn't like some today who think they can be "dipped, dried, and done." Paul looked forward, reached forth, and pressed on! — lest he fall into "the snare of the devil," "lest there be . . . an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (2 Tim. 2:26; Heb. 3:12).

All must do as Paul did if we are to obtain "the prize." It is good if we have left off sins of the past; it is good if we have obeyed the gospel, having our sins washed away. The point is that we cannot rest on the past, but must continue to walk by faith in God, look forward, reach forth, and press on.

What lies ahead? Both dangers and help from God.

DANGERS AHEAD

Recent Liberalism. In the last 25 years, the mission of the Lord's church has been socialized and the organization of the church both centralized and institutionalized by man's wisdom. The Lord said, "Ask for the old paths," but many have said, "We will not walk therein" (Jer. 6:16). Many readers know of these matters because they have pled for the old paths; others know because they have accepted a little liberalism, thinking it would end there and making such comments as, "If they ever build social and recreational halls, I will leave." The halls have been built and most who vowed to leave when this or that was done have stayed and swallowed more.

This danger is not over for anybody. A movement of Pentecostalism and emotionalism has swept the church in many areas as the drift has continued. Even those who withstood earlier stages have been influenced by the modern confusion over the Holy Spirit.

Not only have the worship services been sensationalized by misguided emotionalism, but there is more to come. Instruments of music cannot fail to come in where a fleshly spirit reigns and where Bible authority is overturned.

The New Liberalism. Yes, already a newer form of liberalism is popping up, even among brethren who have not been attending churches caught up in the liberal practices of the last 25 years. Not *only* young preachers and brethren, but *quite a number of* young have been attracted to a so-called "unity movement."

This movement is spearheaded by men like Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett. Noted in the past for their narrow extremism, now they have swung to an extreme broadness. Their influence has been somewhat quietly spreading, but we may expect to hear more from it due to a consolidation of efforts in this so-called "unity" or "fellowship movement"; a number of these promoters are going to publish a new magazine devoted to spreading their views even further.

This movement could make the one of the last 25 years look like an innocent picnic! This "unity" movement advocates opening fellowship not only with institutional brethren, but also with those who use instruments of music and premillennial groups. There will even be room for "the pious unimmersed" — those in denominations who have not been baptized for remission of sins!!

No informed Christian can read that last paragraph without realizing we are headed for a major fight if this doctrine continues to spread. It will not just "go away" if we ignore it.

Other Challenges to Christ's Authority. Catholicism and denominationalism do not recognize Christ as the absolute, exclusive, final authority in religious matters. Philosophy, rationalism, and modernism continue to attack the Bible in every possible way. The occult or psychic movement, with claims of witchcraft, astrology, and such like, is gaining popularity each day. We must guard constantly against human pride, negligence, or just plain tiring of the fight.

Worldly Life Style. A lot is involved here and we must all stay constantly on guard. Worldliness is first of all an attitude, and then action. A heart must be covetous before a man will grab for money dishonestly. Such a spirit is involved in gambling. Such a spirit is involved in those who spend so much time making money that they have no time for the Lord. Truly, "covetousness . . . is idolatry" (Col. 3:5).

More and more we see among God's people social drinking, immodesty, and dancing. Worshipping the God of Entertainment causes some to forsake the assembly or to not give as prospered.

We must be in this world as shining lights, not of this world in its darkness and sin.

HELP AHEAD

We would grow weary and faint before all these dangers were it not for God's help. *"I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies"* (Psalm 18:1-4).

The Bible. Let Satan throw all he will at us, we may still say with Paul, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). Christ has been "Made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). Men will scoff at this power of God in Christ through the gospel, "for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (vs. 18). In the face of every "ism" or "movement" of men, let us be determined "not to know any thing . . . save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

The seed of the kingdom "is the word of God" (Lk. 8:11). That word is indestructible according to the promise of Isa. 40:8, repeated in 1 Pet. 2:23-25. Let us fearlessly hold up the banner of truth — "the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 2:23).

The Privilege of Prayer. When we face the deceptive designs of the devil we are made aware of our need of wisdom lest we be snared. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Let us pray for one another "if any . . . do err from the truth" (Js. 5:16). Lest Satan take advantage, let us pray together when we wound each other — Christ will be with us (Matt. 18:15-20).

Fellow Soldiers. A fellow is one who shares; "bear ye one

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A Preacher Gap?

Dick Blackford

(Editor's Note: *The following article was written some time ago and sent to another journal which delayed its printing due to lack of space. Brother Blackford told me that he had written the article and that it quoted something I had said. I suggested that TORCH would have room for it, if he wanted to send it. He did so, and we are glad. It is a good article. It presents the other side of this "coin," that is, the matter from a younger preachers' point of view. This is the kind of balance TORCH tries to maintain. The statement quoted from this editor obviously does not indict all young preachers, and it was not my intention to leave the impression that older preachers are not guilty of the same thing. Nor did I mean to intimate that it is wrong for a young preacher to want to preach for a large church. I only meant what I said, namely, it is wrong for a young preacher to what "to sit down in a tub of butter and bask in the sunlight of brotherhood reverence and glory." That does not mean it is right for older preachers to do such.*

I can't sit still for anyone to intimate that I have disparaged young preachers. They are some of my favorite people, and I have always tried to be a friend to them. What I said was meant as a friendly caution to them, not a blanket condemnation of them. Brother Blackford is a very able young preacher that is a credit to the Cause of Christ and all who know him. I was the local preacher in his home congregation when he was a "teenager." I love and appreciate him exceedingly. We appreciate having this fine article from him. jpn)

We live in an age of gaps. There are generation gaps, credibility gaps, and racial gaps. All of these result from a communication gap. When I mention a "preacher gap" I do not mean that one exists. However, in some regards the seed that could grow into such a gap has been seen rather frequently of late.

I have much respect and admiration for the older men who have sacrificed so much for Christ. It is a sad fact though, that all preachers (regardless of age) have their faults. It seems that one of the traits of young preachers is that they make quite a few mistakes (the Lord knows I have made my share — and so do the

brethren. Writing this article could be one of them, but conscience demands it). This attribute of many young men is frequently the butt of jokes. Whenever some wish to ridicule, it is often convenient to preface their remarks with "One young preacher said . . ." Derogatory phrases are frequently applied to men who are young in the profession. When the furor over the Arlington meeting was at its peak, brother Cogdill branded some of the opposers as "wet behind the ears." (*Gospel Guardian*, Vol. 20, No. 18, p. 8). At the time I knew several men who had prejudged before the facts were known. All of them had been preaching a long time! I did not know any young preachers who opposed the Arlington meeting and in private discussions with older preachers I had defended it. But this presents another thought. If the mistakes of men who are young in the profession can be blamed on the characteristic that they are "wet behind the ears," then on what can the mistakes of older preachers be blamed? Think about this older men, before dismissing what a young man has to say. And young preachers "Let no man despise thy youth" (1 Tim. 4:12). That is, do not misuse your youth so as to cause others to dislike you. Conversely, if you are teaching the truth, *do not allow it to be dismissed because of the source — your youth*. Make some noise.

In the past several months I have heard criticism from young preachers of others. I am not in a position to know how valid the criticism is, however, both older and younger men would do well to examine themselves to see if they are participating in things that could harm their influence for good. Some of the criticisms have been: too many "big" preachers have no time for youngsters; holding meetings for large churches that pay well and claiming they are "booked up" when a small congregation invites them; making merchandise of others by charging outrageous prices for religious materials; preacher cliques; preacher "fan clubs" (some would drive 60 miles, not to encourage a struggling group of brethren, but to sing the praises of a big name evangelist); gossiping — backbiting, etc. Preachers are not immune (1 Cor. 10:12).

In the September, 1972, issue of *TORCH*, Jim Needham said: "We must eradicate *the common ambition of many young preachers* to develop to the point that they will be accepted by a large church in a well-known city where they can sit down in a tub of butter and bask in the sunlight of brotherhood reverence and glory," (emphasis mine, DB). This is true, but must we not also eradicate the ambition of many older preachers to do the same thing? Why single out the young preacher? It is highly possible that some young preachers are guilty of this, but it may be that they are following the examples set before them. From this

writer's honest and candid viewpoint (which may be limited), it has been observed that more young men are raising support and going to the smaller works and are more interested in personal evangelism while many others are so busy in meeting work and pushing a pen that they have no time for the audience of *one* (John 3:4). (This is not said in condemnation of gospel meetings or of religious journalism, but of an abuse).

The motives of some young men to want to go to large congregations may not always be impure. There is another viewpoint. Many feel that, being inexperienced, they need the guidance of elders (a thing which most small works don't have) and that older men who are better established could more easily handle the problems in the field and get better results. This is a matter of judgment and no one can say who should do what, however, the motive is valid. We do know that the apostle Paul spent much time in difficult areas establishing and building up churches (Acts 13:28). No preacher, young or old, should desire to "be at ease in Zion" (Amos. 6:1). When Paul said "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course" (1 Tim. 4:7), he did not mean he was looking for a large secure church where he could "bask in the sunlight," but that he was near his "hour of departure," (vs. 6). No Christian should attempt to "rest from his labors" until he is six feet under (Rev. 14:13). (Incidentally, there are many large churches in which much work needs to be done — if brethren will do it).

Seven years ago an acquaintance of mine rejected the truth on current issues because I "had only been preaching a short time." She thought I was "young and irrational." Her preacher was much older and had been preaching a long time. He had "even moderated for brother _____" (one of their leading debaters). But eighteen months later he was arrested and convicted for counterfeiting. If I had reasoned as some do, I could have drawn some *real* conclusions about liberal brethren and older preachers!

CONCLUSION

Brethren of all ages, we must get away from the idea of "guilt by association." It is not right to categorize. It may become easy at times for an older man to "whip" a younger one with his gray hairs, but this is not an attitude characteristic of older preachers in general. Notice some of the attempts at stereo-typing:

1. Young preachers are "wet behind the ears"
2. Older preachers tend to "get soft with age"

(continued on page 23)



Kirkland, Illinois -- "I was going to reply to your July Editorial, but decided to prove that "love thinks no evil . . . is always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best" (1 Cor. 13:5,7, Knox). Your writing on "Authoritarian Elders" would not have struck such a negative responsive chord if I had not witnessed in times past the destruction of the eldership's scriptural authority by rebellious and presumptive brethren. I want to encourage you to give "both sides." Attack just as strongly the rebellious attitude of unsubmitive brethren: The murmurers and complainers "These persons are grumblers, ever dissatisfied with their life — guided only by their own desires . . . They openly profess and claim to know God, but in their actions they disown him — their practice contradicts their words, for they are detestably obstinate — self willed — rottenly self centered, and as unto any good work they are found to be worthless — when it comes to doing any real good, they are obvious frauds" (Jude 16; Tit. 1:16., N. T. 26 Trans.).

Some of your points I disagree with. (We may not disagree — just use different words.) I believe that elders are *wise* to talk to the brethren when a decision is to be made that requires joint action and full approval of the brethren: "Only by pride cometh contention: But with the well advised there is wisdom" (Prov. 13:10). But where is *law* for church "business meetings?" There are many ways that brethren can communicate with one another apart from a business meeting. Why is it that all the responsibility for communication is put on the shoulders of the elders? Do not the brethren have mouths, or telephones, or the hospitality of their homes (1 Pet. 4:9-11)? There are several ways brethren can communicate with one another, and business meetings are often the least fruitful. And usually the business meeting permits "men only." Are not the women part of the church too? The point is an open and sincere communication between brethren to encourage, edify, and support one another. As long as this is being done, God is pleased.

You must know from your experience that the contentious will always grumble when money is spent because they "were not consulted" or "no one listens to me." Preachers of all people should recognize that when an unpopular, but necessary action is taken, it will most certainly be against the wishes of the carnally minded. This is why the *law* is "obey them that have the rule over you" (Heb. 13:17). The eldership is to use the same things they learned in raising children in leading the church (1 Tim. 3:4,5). This gives us an idea of *how* and with what *kind* of authority they are to "rule" the church. We are to obey our parents in the Lord (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20). God's *law* of submission to authority is quite precise: As the wife to the husband, the child to the parent, the citizen to government, so the saint to the eldership: Obedience "in the Lord." We can talk about a wise husband, a wise father, or a wise leader, but the *law* is obedience "in the Lord." If the eldership uses this authority to be "authoritarian" (by definition), then they have ceased to be qualified. But to exercise their authority as it was given to them by God does not make an eldership "authoritarian."

I know you will do a good job, because you are one of those few rare men with both wisdom and balance. - Jeff Kingry

(Editor's Note: I appreciate brother Kingry's remarks about the July editorial. I would have welcomed (and still would) an article from him on the subject he mentions. But since I have not had the time to comply with his request, I am taking the liberty to print his rather lengthy letter. It presents "the other side" very well. I find nothing in his suggestions with which I disagree. I was writing about "Authoritarian Elderships," not those who rule as the Bible directs. But being authoritarian is not ruling as the Bible directs.

Certainly, I know that elders will nearly always have detractors. There will be some from time to time who will complain, murmur and misrepresent the elders, but, at the same time, let's be wise and balanced and recognize that elders are about as likely to get out of hand as are those they oversee. Some are prone to view this matter wholly from the point of view of the elders. Others look at it predominantly from the view point of the members. Either view will result in an unbalanced view. My article was designed to correct the abuse of power that characterizes some elderships, while, at the same time, recognizing that members are sometimes rebellious and impossible to satisfy, regardless of how conscientious and righteous the elders are. While my article did not discuss the latter, it does not leave the impression that such a condition does not exist.

I am no stickler for the "business meeting." Communication and consultation with the brethren was the point I was after. The best way to accomplish this will meet with my approval. I do believe, however, that discussing important matters in an orderly meeting has been proven to be the most expedient method of communication and consultation. House to house consultation, telephone, and behind the scenes diplomacy on the part of elders has often proven to be dangerous and devastating, and often leads to strife and confusion. Certainly the women are part of the church, and their thoughts should be considered. I find nothing objectionable or unscriptural about having them in business meetings, but I know of no church which practices it.

Thanks to brother Kingry for a thoughtful response. jpn)

Oglethorpe, Georgia -- "I continue to enjoy TORCH very much. I believe you are doing an excellent job." --*Arthur W. Adams*

Buford, Georgia -- "I continue to enjoy the magazine. Of particular help was the Spears — Bolton discussion. I look forward to the discussion on 'fellowship meals.'" --*Steve Bobbitt*

Nashville, Tennessee -- "We continue to find good material in TORCH and appreciate the effort that goes into it. Brother Patton's article on 'Churches in Business' is really fine. We've also benefitted from the presentation between brother Hawk and yourself. One thing I've appreciated about your handling of TORCH has been the open-door to the other viewpoint." --*Ron Halbrook*

Annandale, Virginia -- "I just received the June issue of TORCH and read it without delay. I liked the tone of the debate as well as the content. Too many debates are mere exercises in 'cutsiness' which is deplorable to me. As for printing and binding in book form, I think it is a good idea. My suggestion is that you consider doing so in paperback form so as to keep the costs as low as possible. Some brethren don't like paperback books, but I think more will buy if the cost is low, than will if the books cost four or five dollars. Whatever route you go, put me down for a copy." --*Floyd Chappelear*

Central City, Kentucky -- ". . . TORCH . . . is still THE bargain. I . . . read the second and third installments of the Hawk — Needham discussion. I appreciate the way you are preventing brother Hawk from evading the issue." --*Dick Blackford*

another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb. 10:24). We are to strive "together for the faith of the gospel" — a figure taken from the gladiators who sometimes stood side by side and back to back in joint effort against their adversaries (Phil. 1:27).

Promises of God. God will not allow us "to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape" (1 Cor. 10:13). We have Christ in us, "the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). "Life and immortality," "an inheritance incorruptible," "a crown of righteousness" — all is ours in Christ (2 Tim. 1:10; 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:4).

Conclusion: Let us be set to defend the gospel and abound in the Lord's work; it "is not in vain"! (1 Cor. 15).

*3536 Dickerson Rd.
Nashville, Tennessee 37207*

A Preacher Gap? - continued from page 19

3. Young preachers are radical, hasty, and impatient
4. Older preachers are always the leaders when digression occurs

None of these inferences is valid, though each may seem true at times. Each man is an individual. Let him be judged on his own worth. It is an injustice to do otherwise.

A FINAL NOTE FOR CLARIFICATION

There are only kind feelings for those who I have quoted and I am persuaded the feeling is mutual. I can think of no men living from whose writings I have benefitted more. This writer is convinced that no one is trying to create a gap and the efforts of these men to encourage young preachers has not gone unappreciated. We do need to be careful of unguarded statements lest we tend toward alienation.

With the exception of this paragraph this article was written over a year ago. Thus it is not intended to excuse or endorse any young or older men who may be embracing the current "loose-fellowship" views.

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TORCH

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LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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Dangerous Influences — Papers and Schools

Another ever present danger is that authorized human institutions which have the right to exist as private enterprises will forget that they are private enterprises and will assume a church-related stance. Such non-profit organizations as papers and schools are the most frequent offenders. Papers often cease to be media through which individuals discharge a private obligation to preach the gospel, and become political power structures to plaster the church with propaganda and set policies for the churches along party lines. Schools are frequently spoiled by the attention they get from the "brotherhood," and tend to become quasi-headquarters in the minds of far too many.

- James P. Needham
(Excerpt from Editorial, January 1972)

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James P. Needham

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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Editorial

James P. Needham



Being a Little Sentimental, or . . . Sounds I Would Like to Hear Again

This is the time of year when families sit around the fireside and reminisce days that are past and gone. Being an old country boy, and somewhat sentimental, I enjoy such as few do. The other day I was recalling many of the fond memories of my childhood, much of which was spent at the business end of a gooseneck hoe, plow, tractor, cotton sack, and "gladhanding" 10 or 12 dairy cattle twice a day. There were also days for fishing, hunting, playing with home-made toys, pickin' and singin' and going to worship on foot or in a two-horse wagon.

One ancient writer said, "*I am a part of all that I have met.*" Is not this true of all of us? Whatever good I may have been or will be to my fellowman and the Cause of Christ must have its foundation in those childhood years, most of which were spent during the big depression, though I don't recall it's being called that at the time. What I do remember vividly is that my father had a hard time keeping his rather large family fed and clothed, and from the time I was old enough to go to school, I was expected to do my part of the chores around the house and farm, like: Making up beds, washing and drying dishes, scrubbing floors, milking cows, feeding chickens, bringing in stove wood, chopping and picking cotton, drawing wash water, (often with a frozen rope), building a fire under the old wash kettle, (sometimes with wet wood) taking a jug of water, drawn fresh from the well, to a thirsty father laboring on the back forty. (All of this would make modern youth think it was being terribly exploited!)

There were some things I liked about school (mainly *girls, recess and being on the ball team*, in that order!), but generally speaking, education was not greatly emphasized. My parents did not have a great deal of formal education, thus were unaware of the advantages it affords. (This is not to say, however, that they were not educated. As a boy, I can remember my father's learning to read well — he could read, but not well. He became a prodigious reader, mainly of the Bible. He earned the reputation of being "a good Bible student," and was eventually appointed an

elder in the local church. (He must have had the equivalent of a Ph. D. in common sense). This lack of acquaintance with the advantages of formal education led to a failure to encourage ambition along that line. So, I dropped out of school at the Junior High level because the Second World War had created a labor shortage, and we had an abundant harvest that year with no help to gather it. By the time harvest was completed, I was so far behind in school that I had no heart to try to catch up. So, I quit school. Eventually, I was drafted into the Army, and wound up in the European Theater Of Operations.

After my army experience, I had seen enough of the world to realize that it was much larger than a hundred-and-forty-acre farm in West Tennessee, and that life was much more complex and serious than I had previously realized. I had decided in early life that I was unsuited to being a farmer. (Too much work; too little pay; too much dependence on the uncontrollables: weather, insects, etc. etc.) I early decided that I wanted to do something else, but I didn't know what. Like most other young people, I had to find myself. Religion became much more important to me after the war than it had been before, even though I had always been much favorably inclined toward it than many of my peer group. After some meandering around after the war, a young bride, along with others, began to encourage me to preach the gospel. The thought of this had often entered my mind, even in earlier life, but the question was, "*Can a country boy do it?*" I decided to try. I also decided to get some more education, so I returned to school and eventually graduated from college.

My college years and early preaching were during the period of wild-fire growth of the church following the Second World War, and before the development of the issues that have divided the church over the past twenty-five years. This was also in the closing years of some of the great teachers and preachers of a glorious era in American church history. I studied at the feet of such men as: N. B. Hardeman, L. L. Briggance, W. Claude Hall, and others. As a young man, and later as a young preacher, "I cut my teeth" on the preaching of these stalwarts, along with others like: C. P. Roland, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., G. K. Wallace, E. R. Harper, C. R. Nichol, Guy N. Woods, G. C. Brewer, Boone and Cecil Douthitt, Ross O. Spears, Fred Chunn, etc. From these great men I learned to respect God's word and to demand its authority for every word and deed. Sadly, I have lived to see some of these men depart from many of the principles they instilled in me.

All of these persons and activities constitute the stuff of which my memories are made, and from time to time, (especially at this

season) I have a nostalgic desire to hear some of the sounds and see some of the sights that are associated with them. I guess I would not want to go back and live life over, but there are many things from the past that cause sentiment and emotion to well up within me.

For instance, I would like to hear my father say on Sunday morning, *"Children, get up. Today is church, and we must finish the chores before we go."* *"Boys, feed the mules first so they will have time to eat before we go to church."* *"Jim, sweep out the wagon so we won't get our Sunday clothes dirty."*

I would like to hear my mother singing hymns from the kitchen as she prepared Sunday dinner for her large family before riding 5 miles in a horse-drawn wagon to worship. I would like to hear my father pray again, teach a Bible class, and sing bass. I would like to hear him argue the scriptures with unbelievers and ask them questions they could not answer. I would like to see the gratitude in his expression when I tried to preach the first time. I would also like to hear again the many words of wisdom and encouragement he spoke to me in the early years of my preaching.

I would also like to see the gas lights glow from the windows of the little country church building (they were so much brighter than the kerosene lamps we used at home!), and hear them being pumped up during the worship. I would like to hear the large crowd singing *"Why not Tonight?"* which they were doing the night I obeyed the gospel. I would like to hear the fiery preachers call upon sinners to repent and obey God. I would like to hear those "old war horses" denounce the errors of denominationalism and call upon men to be open-minded, give up error, and be content to *"speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent."* I would like to see the church yard jammed with "T" models, "A" models, horse-drawn wagons and old black buggies. I would like to see the affectionate hugging and kissing that characterized the warm greetings of people who loved God and each other, and who had come together to worship and not to fuss. I would like to ride home from the big meetin' in a two-horse wagon with the hay frame on it. I think I could even enjoy the ordeal of seeing my dad lead the team across the bridges because it had been blinded by the lightning. Oh, it was fearsome then, but somehow, I think I would like to have again that warm feeling that everything is alright *"because daddy can do anything."* I would like to hear my mother's beautiful alto voice blending with so many others in the praise of God. I would like to see the red-hot pot-bellied stove on a cold winter day. I would like again to eat the left-over bread from the Lord's table which sister Midgett always made. I would like to hear the "fruit of the vine"

gurgle from the decanter as one of the brethren poured equal parts of it into the two stemmed glasses from which we all drank. I would like to see several persons obey the gospel at almost every service during the "big meetin'."

I would like to hear G. K. Wallace say again, "*For congregations to cooperate, it is not necessary to take a member from each congregation to set up a board separate and apart from the church through which to operate. There is no parallel between the college and the orphan home. The college is purely a human enterprise on the same basis as a hardware store or a printing press like the Firm Foundation or the Gospel Advocate publishing house. These are works carried on by brethren and are in no sense a part of the work of the church. Caring for orphans is a work of the church and since it is a work of the church it should be done by the church. There is no parallel between colleges and orphan homes. There is a parallel between an orphan home, that has a board of trustees other than the elders of the church to do the work of the church, and the United Christian Missionary Society. The United Christian Missionary Society is an organization to take over the work of preaching the gospel. An organization other than the church, to take over the work of caring for orphan children, is a parallel with the United Christian Missionary Society.*" (Gospel Guardian, Vol. 1, No. 28, pp. 1,3, 1949).

I would like to hear G. C. Brewer say again, "*. . . there is no organization in the church of God except the local church or congregation . . . there can be no corporation of congregations; but . . . each congregation is strictly autonomous — an independent body. Each congregation is a complete mechanism . . . and is fully equipped to do all the work the Lord has ordained*" (The Model Church, p. 155).

I would like to hear N. B. Hardeman say again, "*If you want to know what I believe on any Bible question, just write and ask me. I can answer on a penny post-card (Boy! those were the days!!! jpn) and have enough room left to ask you about your wife and kids.*" I would like to hear him again give a clear exegesis of a passage of scripture and top it off with, "*Boys, that's not just about it, that's IT!*" I would like to hear him say again, "*Boy, the N. T. pattern in evangelism is very simple: here it is: (1) The LOCAL CHURCH selected its own preacher (Acts 11:22). (2) The LOCAL CHURCH sent him out (Acts 13:3). (3) The LOCAL CHURCH defined the territory of his labor (Acts 11:22). (4) The LOCAL CHURCH paid him (Phil. 1:5). (5) The LOCAL CHURCH sent the pay directly to the preacher (2 Cor. 11:8; Phil.*

4:15,16). (6) *The preacher reported directly to the LOCAL CHURCH that sent him out and paid him (Acts 14:27). That leaves no room for a HUMAN ORGANIZATION called a MISSIONARY SOCIETY.*" (This was copied from an old notebook which I kept in N. B. Hardeman's Bible class at Freed Hardeman College in 1948). I would like to hear him say again, "A man who cannot understand that, need not worry, he'll get through the fool hole!"

A few years later I used the above pattern to expose the fact that the sponsoring church violates the pattern that N. B. Hardeman had taught me, and on the basis of his format, I constructed the N. T. pattern in benevolence as follows: (1) The work was done by, through and within the LOCAL CHURCH (Acts 6:1-6; 11:27-30). (2) When the LOCAL CHURCH was unable to care for its needy, OTHER LOCAL CHURCHES supplied that which was lacking (Acts 11:27-30; 2 Cor. 8:18-21). (3) In emergencies one LOCAL CHURCH sent to another to help meet that emergency, not on a permanent basis (Acts 11:27-30). (4) When one LOCAL CHURCH assisted another in meeting an emergency, such assistance was sent to the elders of a LOCAL CHURCH. (See Willis-Inman Debate, p. 160, where this chart was used).

I would also like to hear brother Hardeman say again, "... it is not the work of the church to furnish entertainment for the members. And yet many churches have drifted into such effort. They enlarge their basements, put in all kinds of gymnastic apparatus, and make every sort of an appeal to the young people of the congregation. I have never read anything in the Bible that indicated to me that such was a part of the work of the church. I am wholly ignorant of any Scripture that even points in that direction I submit to you preachers that we should be exceeding careful lest in our enthusiasm to make a big show, we turn apart from the straight and narrow path and have within our midst something that the Lord does not want" (Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons, 1942).

I would like to hear B. C. Goodpasture say again, "It is not the mission of the church to furnish amusement for the world or even for its own members as the church becomes worldly, as it pillows its head on the lap of Delilah, will it want to turn from its wonted course to relatively unimportant matters" (Gospel Advocate, May 20, 1948, p. 484).

I would like to hear W. Claude Hall say again, "This money (2 Cor. 8:9 jpn) then was sent to the elders of the church at Jerusalem, and thus distributed to the ones who were in need. There

was not another organization formed to take care of this work, they did the work through the means that the Lord had determined, hence, it was done without any extra cost, and every cent the people of Corinth and Philippi contributed went into the hands of the distressed. It didn't take one-third or one-half of it to 'grease the machinery' for the organization which handled it" (*Gospel Advocate*, Nov. 10, 1932, p. 1210).

I would like to hear Foy E. Wallace, Jr. (founder of TORCH in 1950) say again, "Whatever the church, as such, is commanded to do can be done only through the church. And the only way to do anything through the church is to do it through the local church, which is the only organization known in the New Testament . . ." (*Gospel Advocate*, July 2, 1931, p. 804). "... the church cannot Scripturally transfer the work of benevolence to any agency or institution that takes the work out of the hands of the elders and deacons of the church — the local church. Such organizations would supplant the church in benevolence work exactly as the society does in mission work . . . anything that one church has a right to do, another church has the right to help it do, provided that in so doing the elders of one church do not become agents for all the churches in certain undertakings that extend beyond the limits of the local church" (*Gospel Advocate*, Aug. 6, 1931, p. 964). "The church is about to become the unwitting and unwilling victim of institutionalism, and institutionalism is about to become a racket. Where is the scriptural precept or precedent for scouring the country for orphans, transporting them from sections far and wide to an institution that was not created by reason of orphans in that particular community, but which a promoter created by searching for orphans?" (*The Certified Gospel*, p. 155). "History is repeating on ecclesiastical organization. It comes now in the form of the little church working through the big church — which is centralization. It amounts to little elders turning the responsibility of their work over to big elders — which is diocesan in principle . . . With one eldership of one church taking over the work of many elders of many churches, and with this centralized eldership overseeing workers by the dozens who are not even members of the church where these elders are supposed to elder, what will be left of the local autonomous organization of the New Testament church?" (*Gospel Guardian*, May 5, 1949, p. 3). "For one church to help another church by relieving an emergency there, where the elders elder, is one thing; but making the elders of one church a 'board of elders' through which all the other churches can operate in doing their missionary and benevolent work is another thing — a cocky thing at that. This idea of a 'centralized eldership' is more than 'half-cocked,' it is a mis-fire.

Any church able to build a half-million dollar cathedral does not need the kind of help mentioned in Acts 11:29,30. This scripture does not apply." (Gospel Guardian, March 16, 1950, p. 5).

I would like to hear Bill Humble say, "Problems and issues are sometimes unpleasant, but they are not wrong; their only alternative is the 'it makes no difference' attitude. Be not deceived; for **WHEN THIS ATTITUDE ARISES, OUR CAUSE IS LOST**" (Preceptor, Oct. 1953, p. 11).

I would like to hear Guy N. Woods say again, "The ship of Zion has floundered more than once on the sandbar of institutionalism. The tendency to organize is a characteristic of the age. On the theory that the end justifies the means, brethren have not scrupled to form organizations in the church to do the work the church itself was designed to do. All such organizations usurp the work of the church, and are unnecessary and sinful" (Abilene Christian College Lectures, 1939). "This writer has ever been, unable to appreciate the logic of those who affect to see grave danger in Missionary Societies, but scruple not to form a similar organization for the purpose of caring for orphans and teaching young men to be gospel preachers" (Ibid.).

I would like to hear A. C. Pullias repeat these words, "It is not the province of any school, paper, or preacher to supervise, direct, or meddle in the affairs of a local congregation of God's people. The New Testament does not make provision for any brotherhood regulators, or spiritual umpires, to oversee the congregations. Any group attempting to exercise such control is in essence a denominational board — whatever you want to call it and whatever it calls itself. Therefore, when any school, paper, or preacher announces the intention to fasten itself on the churches, or to direct and control the brotherhood, that act is sinful and should be opposed as unscriptural and wrong by every faithful Christian. Each school, paper and preacher does have a right to teach the word of God, and that is all. Therefore, let no man bind upon you anything as a matter of faith for which he cannot give a 'thus saith the Lord.' The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is not determined on the campus of any school, nor in the editorial rooms of any paper, nor in the private study of any preacher or group of preachers. The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is determined only by what is taught in the New Testament" (Gospel Advocate, Feb. 23, 1950, p. 121).

I would like to hear C. R. Nichol say again, "On what ground am I to oppose such organizations (missionary societies jpn) and then defend the organization of the _____ Orphan Home?" (Gospel Advocate, June 15, 1933). "Where would the

church be today if we did not have Christian schools turning out preachers the past 50 years?" Answer, "I recall when there were no Christian colleges. It is my conviction, my faith, that the church of Christ does not depend on any Christian college on earth for its existence and never has . . . Let not churches depend on the Christian colleges for preachers, but may we not pray the Lord of the Harvest to send laborers into the field . . . It's my conviction that the 'Christian college' can become a menace to the Cause of Christ . . ." (C. R. Nichol, *A Preacher of Righteousness*, pp, 241, 42).

I would like to hear E. R. Harper say again, "loud and clear," "A congregation has no right to build anything larger than it is able to support. It has no right whatever to bid any other congregation to any program to work of its own selection. Each congregation must retain its autonomy. Any effort that destroys the independence of the local congregation runs straight toward sectarianism, if not Romanism" (Tulsa Lectures, 1938).

There are some things about my earlier life I never want to see, hear or do again. For instance, I never again want to walk 2 miles to school in the rain, snow, mud, and biting cold. By the same token, I hope I never again hear E. R. Harper, Guy N. Woods, etc. whose present positions flatly contradict what they previously preached say, "I haven't changed." That really grates on me because I know that they must know that we all know that they know better. I can respect a person who changes, even without good reasons, if he will frankly confess that he has changed his view. But for a person who claims to be a Christian, to say nothing of a gospel preacher, to change so obviously and then deny it, is a very unpleasant thing to experience. I might say it is down-right disgusting.

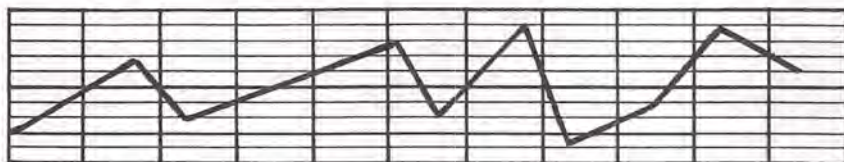
There are only two alternatives for those brethren who have done an about face: (1) Say they were *wrong* when they made these statements but *right* now, or (2) Say they were *right* then and *wrong* now. They must say one or the other. Contradictory statements can't both be right. But if they say they were wrong then, they must take the scriptures and refute all the arguments they made. I don't plan to hold my breath until they do it!

I fear, however, that I shall never hear these brethren make these statements again. But while they will likely remain just fond memories to me, they must be like ghosts from the past which come back to haunt those who made them and today take a contradictory position, all the while proclaiming, "I haven't changed." But, if these statements haunt these brethren now, what will they do to them at the judgment?

How I yearn for those days of peace and harmony among brethren that I knew as a young preacher; when one would be called upon to preach or otherwise participate in the services of almost every church of Christ in the land. (Those were the days, my friend!). Today they wouldn't even let me make announcements, muchless preach, in my "home congregation" where I preached my very first sermon, and where my beloved father was an elder, even though I am preaching today the same things the preachers they glorified taught me. For instance, I can remember when the Presbyterians in my home town remodeled a room and called it their "fellowship hall." Even though the church of Christ in town was known as a "society church," it really criticized the Presbyterians for bringing worldliness into their building. It became *the* item of conversation all over the country, "*the Presbyterians had lost their religion and had turned aside to play.*" But a few years ago, that same church of Christ built an expensive, separate building adjacent to the church building for a "fellowship hall." They now out shine the Presbyterians! When I began preaching, the name of N. B. Hardeman was synonymous with soundness and an household word all over West Tennessee. To say, "*I studied under N. B. Hardeman at Freed-Hardeman College*" was the magic word, and a badge of distinction. When I decided to preach, brethren throughout that part of the country encouraged me to "*go down and study under Hardeman.*" Well, I did, and I learned the lessons he taught me well, and I am still preaching them, but I can't preach them in these churches. What they called "soundness" then they call "anti-ism" now!

The issues of that day were: Catholicism, Denominationalism, indifference and worldliness. One occasionally would hear a sermon on the missionary society, instrumental music and the errors of premillennialism. There were no paper rivalries, political movements, self-appointed brotherhood regulators, or church saviours that I was aware of, or heard anyone discuss. Christ, not some highly publicized preacher or movement, was the center of gospel meetings and what periodicals were published. Extending the borders of the kingdom was the aim of brethren, not the promotion of some innovation or newfangled doctrine that some so-called "Intellectual" had concocted.

As I sit here at this typewriter, alone with my memories, I realize that what I write will mean little, if anything, to those who are much under forty, but perhaps my recitation of my memories of an era they never knew will cause them to take heart and renew their determination to hold fast to the faith once for all delivered to the saints. But regardless of that, it has been a source of great pleasure to pluck a few sweet morsels from the garden of my memory, a paradise from which no man can expel me.



On Being Consistent

David Smitherman

In listening to and reading debates and in reading the reviews that brethren often make of one another's material, we have noticed that a big issue is invariably made when an inconsistency is spotted in an "opponents" position. When the inconsistency is noticed, it is jumped upon with much glee and an attitude is assumed akin to "you're inconsistent, therefore you are wrong!" Then, after the inconsistency is rubbed in quite well, we proceed to say "since you are inconsistent on this point you are obligated to . . . in order to be consistent with your position."

Why is such a big point made out of inconsistency? The only kind of inconsistency that I can think of that is *wrong* is that which manifests itself in hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-14). Brethren, do some thinking. Do you know what you have proven when you have proven a man to be inconsistent? You have proven him to be inconsistent *and that is all that you have proven!* Admittedly, driving home an inconsistency can make a man and his position look bad. But what are we out to do? make a man look bad, or find out what is truth and error? One can make a man look hypocritical and dishonest by rubbing in inconsistencies and emphasizing his unwillingness to "be consistent and . . ." but it will not prove his position wrong. Why brethren want to jump on something that could cast reflection upon another's integrity and that will just make him look bad is beyond me.

Truth and error are not to be discovered in consistencies and inconsistencies. Consistency should not be equated with truth and inconsistency with error. Consistency is not necessarily a virtue and inconsistency a vice. Let us strive to be right and in discussing our differences with brethren (or anyone else), let us strive for truth on the basis of how a man's position stands the test of Divine Truth — not on how it stands the test of his own consistencies and inconsistencies.

Bryan, Texas 77801

Belong to the Lord

Bruce Edwards, Jr.

In today's society, emphasis is placed upon "group participation" and fulfilling one's "psychological needs" by "belonging" to some kind of organization, ranging from the "YWCA" to the PTA. As a consequence, "responsibility" also becomes a "group concern" so that no *individual* member must bear any *personal* liability. In essence, the individual shifts his personal responsibility or obligation to the group "as a whole" and thereby escapes seemingly any *personal* blame.

This phenomenon in society has also affected the Lord's church. Notice, if you will, the emphasis we sometimes place upon congregational activity in our preaching and teaching to the neglect of *personal* responsibility. To be sure, the assembly of God's people in each location has a definite work set forth in the Scriptures which it is obliged to accomplish; however, there is also a great *personal, individual* obligation that we must not overlook.

Take a quick look at the issues that have divided brethren over the past twenty years; what is the nature of these issues? Are they not intrinsically a problem of *individuals* not living up to their obligations to the Lord? What "need" would there ever have been to splinter the body over such organizations as "orphan homes" or "widow's homes," and the other benevolent "societies" if each of us had cared for *his own*? What "need" would there have been to have divided brethren over such institutions as the "Herald of Truth," had each of us fulfilled his *personal* evangelism?

Our "liberal" brethren have said that "it is better to do something wrong than to do nothing at all." This is false; two wrongs cannot make a right. But their criticism regarding "our" lack of industry is often *well-taken*. Some have hidden behind a guise of "soundness" by rejecting these human innovations, but in turn do nothing to fulfill *their true obligation*. We are only too well aware of what we *oppose*, but pray tell what do we *advocate*?

As long as we are content to let "the congregation" get things done and refuse to look to *ourselves, at our own morality, our own integrity, our own efforts*, then we will be forever saddled with the "institutional hierarchy" we now face. We have let the organizational problems concerning the *church as a whole* so dominate our thinking that we have nearly dismissed any personal liability in our minds. We must turn back to the Scriptures and

(continued on page 15)

What's Your Question?

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS. Send to: James P. Needham, 1600 Oneco Avenue, Winter Park, Florida 32789.

QUESTION: What About Cremation?

+
+ "Does the practice of cremation violate any scriptural +
+ principle?" - Colorado +
+

REPLY:

The word "cremate" is defined as *"To reduce (a dead body) to ashes by the action of fire either directly or in an oven or retort"* (Websters Unabridged Dictionary). Disposing of dead bodies by cremation is an ancient practice. A passage from Sophocles, a Greek tragic dramatist of the fifth century B. C., says, *"Woe is me! These loving hands have not washed or decked thy corpse, nor taken, as was meet, their sad burden from the flaming pyre (a funeral fire JPN). At the hands of strangers, hapless one, thou hast had those rites, and so art come to us, a little dust in a narrow urn,"* (Quoted in I.S.B.E. p. 530).

Cremation seems to have been predominately, but not exclusively, a Greek practice. *"Tacitus (A Roman historian, 55 (?) - 117 A.D. JPN) expressly says, in noting the contrast with Roman custom, that it was a matter of piety with the Jews 'to bury rather than to burn dead bodies.'"* (I.S.B.E. p. 530).

The ancient Egyptians are widely known for their ability to embalm the dead for long-term preservation (cf. Gen. 50:2,26).

The fact remains, however, that the Jews in Old Testament times did sometimes burn (cremate) the dead, and that by the direction of God. In some cases, God commanded burning as punishment for sinners (Lev. 21:9; Gen. 38:24; Josh. 7:25). When Saul and his sons were killed the valiant men of Israel took their bodies and burned them (1 Sam. 31:11-13). This case is quite unusual, and difficult to explain in light of the fact that it is quite contrary to ordinary Jewish practice. The Talmud (the body of Jewish traditional interpretation of Old Testament law) condemns cremation as an heathen practice.

When one considers cremation in light of what the Bible actually says, there is nothing about it that is sinful. It is not mentioned in the New Testament, and that book contains no principle which it violates.

The Bible declares that the body shall return to dust from whence it came (Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 3:20). Whether one is buried in the usual manner, or cremated, the body returns to dust. Cremation simply speeds up the process; it does in a short time what it would take the grave a long time to accomplish, but the result is the same in both cases.

Some are concerned about destroying the body by fire in view of the fact that the body will be raised from the dead. No matter, the God who made the body in the first place can solve any problems along this line. Besides, cremation only speeds up what will eventually happen anyway.

If the destruction of the body by fire in any way would affect the resurrection, then it would affect it whether it happened by accident or intent; thus it would affect the resurrection of those who are accidentally cremated. I once heard of a person who fell into a furnace at a steel mill. No trace of his body was ever found, but be assured, he will be resurrected and judged just like the person who receives the best embalming job available and the dryest grave possible. *"With God all things are possible"* (Mt. 19:26).

Belong to the Lord - continued from page 13

realize that the *personal admonitions* directed by the Lord to the *individual* are to be fulfilled by *each of us*, not by "the congregation," in some vague corporate way. When we think of our responsibility that way, we belong *not to the Lord*, but to an "institution." We must *belong to the Lord!*

James summarizes our obligation in this way: *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing."* Did I say obligation? I should have said privilege . . .

241-A Cartall St.
St. James, Missouri 65559

SESSIONS IN SATIRE

SPOOFS, GOOFS, AND PROOFS

Once Upon a Time

Arthur W. Adams

Once upon a time Jesus said "Go and teach," and then left the means of travel up to His followers. The disciples had a short discussion about how to go. All of the possible ways were discussed and one by one were eliminated. Paul did not believe walking would be scriptural because it would waste time by being so slow (Lk. 16:1), their feet would get sore thus harming their bodies (1 Cor. 6:19), and they would have to go into dangerous areas and might get robbed or killed (1 Thess. 4:4).

Peter was opposed to riding an animal because this would cause saddle soreness which would do damage to body tissues (1 Cor. 6:19). Besides that, animals cost money (1 Tim. 6:8) and require care. This would mean that some of their teaching time would have to be spent tending animals (Acts 6:2).

Andrew was opposed to taking a vessel (boat, etc.) because they might get seasick which would cause bodily discomforts (1 Cor. 6:19), and also because of so many shipwrecks lately (Phil. 1:24). Not only that but they could not travel in winter because the ports were frozen over (2 Tim. 4:21).

Since each held his conviction on the basis of scripture (twisted scripture, that is) and it is a sin to "cause one to stumble" (1 Cor. 8), they decided that instead of causing problems they would just not do what Jesus commanded.

While this story is fictional it sounds very familiar when we look at its twentieth century counterpart. Today we have commands to be obeyed in expedient ways, but there is always some objection to almost every means that is chosen. Usually the church gives in to the objectors and is thus backed little by little into a corner where there is either no way left to obey Jesus or else the means chosen is so crippled and has such little support from discouraged members that the work becomes a failure. Then those who objected declare in a concerned voice, "The church has not grown." They are right — the church has not grown. HMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM — I wonder why????

*P. O. Box 181
Oglethorpe, Georgia 31068*



Tupelo, Mississippi -- "I want to drop you a note and thank you for your fine article in the January issue of **TORCH**. It was needed. I have run into several others that have also been speaking along the same line. This preacher politics is no good at all."
--Tommy Davis

Novato, California -- "I appreciated reading your editorial in the April, 1973 issue of **TORCH**, 'America — The Field White Unto the Harvest.' The article presented a good balance between the 'All the world' means foreign field only' thinking and the 'The heathen are at home beyond we have no call' concept of brethren. It should cause us to lift up our eyes to the souls next door and across the street as well as those abroad. Keep up the good balanced scriptural thinking and writing. Thanks for the encouragement and attitude toward 'under 40' preachers."
Don Alexander

Memphis, Tennessee -- "As you said in the January **TORCH**, the written word has made it possible for more people to hear the good news of Christ than any other medium. Even though you cause me to do a great deal of studying sometimes (that's good), I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and brother Farris for the work you are doing. The cause of Christ is fortunate, indeed, to have people who are not too limber-legged to speak out on ANY subject. Keep it up, and may God bless you. Brother Farris' article, 'Legal Rights vs. Moral Rights,' hit the cow on the horns. People today wonder why should we speak out against something when the laws of the land have made it legal. The thing people must remember is that God's ways are not man's ways, and as an inspired writer said a long time ago, whether it be right (legal) or not, we must obey God . . . God willing, I'm looking forward to another year of **TORCH**."
--Shelby Sims

Central City, Kentucky -- "I continue to appreciate your dealing with relevant subjects. There appears to be little danger that the

TORCH will be blown out while you are holding it forth."
--Dick Blackford

Houston, Texas -- "Appreciated the sample copy of the January issue of TORCH. I observe in it (since I do not subscribe to TORCH) that you must have written an article dealing with the 'long hair on men' issue. While I obviously cannot accept your view on 1 Cor. 11:14, yet I can appreciate your comments concerning the need for being willing to 'listen' to the fellows regardless of the length of their hair. I do not know why people would have such difficulty understanding what you mean by that. Your comments concerning the potential dangers which the colleges pose are also matters of great concern to me. For a long time, I have been reluctant to get into fund raising campaigns . . . and run down membership directories of churches for such matters . . . I love you for the truth's sake, I like your style of writing, and your new front on TORCH is attractive." --Truman Smith

Oxford, Mississippi -- "I think you brethren are doing a fine job. James has a good insight on the dangers that face us. Seemingly no sooner than we overcome our meager beginnings we tend to think of how great we are: our school, our papers, our preachers. Maybe with such efforts as yours we may avoid being caught up with more big things. --Johnny Richardson

(Publisher's Note: *We don't have any plans for TORCH to become "big" or for TORCH to live longer than its present editor or publisher. BKF).*

Bryan, Texas -- "I thought your editorial in the October edition of TORCH was just excellent. You are saying some things that I have been wanting someone to say for a long time. Please keep up your work and please keep saying the kind of things you said in that editorial. Hopefully it will help brethren have the proper attitude toward one another and the positions they take on various matters." --David Smitherman

St. James, Missouri -- "I continue to enjoy TORCH as a teaching medium; I respect your courage to discuss 'hot' issues within her pages. I would certainly encourage you in your pursuit of a written discussion of the college question . . . I appreciate the manner in which you handled Royce's reply and also the discussion of 1 Cor. 6:19,21. Keep up the excellent work! Being a young preacher and recently having moved to my first 'local work,' I appreciate the edification TORCH provides without trying to be a 'regulator' of consciences." --Bruce Edwards

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