

The Issues Of Life

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DO WE HAVE AN INSPIRED BIBLE TODAY?

By

Darrell Debo

In the last number of years, a rash of books called translations of the Bible have come out in which very little has been added to truth, faith, and stability. Consequently, many people are confused. When it is asked, "What saith the scriptures?" in many a Bible class nowadays, one may get dozen answers, many only the theological view of the so-called translator or translators. It is difficult to maintain unity when the thinking of the people is guided by such a source of division. We see it so evident in churches of Christ today, for when we were all reading the same Bible, speaking the same things, and being guided by the same scriptures there was far greater unity among us than there is today with its spate of so-called translations.

So far as I know, no one opposes a new translation that is true to the original text. Opposition comes around those loaded with errors that pervert the gospel and damage the church even destroying the faith of many. The purity of the Bible text should not be violated. The recklessness with which the Bible is being made merchandise of in untold outrageous abuses heaps on mankind an insufferable wrong. Our first concern in

Bible study is to be sure we have the pure Word of God unmixed with human errors — as nearly pure as translators can render it. Sometimes now, simple expressions are given priority over correctness. What good is a Bible easily understood if one doesn't know whether it is true or not? And if the truth means nothing, why read it in the first place?

The inspiration of the Bible resides not merely in the Hebrew and Greek words of the original text, but in the truth itself. Any *correct* translation is inspired, for to the extent it is correctly translated it is the Word of God. Jesus and the apostles quoted from the Septuagint, a human translation of the Old Testament, and called it the Word of God. If Christ and the apostles could hold up a human translation of the Old Testament and call it the "Word of God," there is no good reason why we should not hold up any *correct* translation of the Bible and call it the Word of God. The infidel notion that no inspired Bible is available in the world today is just so much human tripe.

Many of the so-called "new" Bibles being pawned off on gullible, uninformed people today are being

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Editorial:

THE ISSUES OF LIFE

You hold in your hands the first issue of a new paper, *The Issues of Life*. As the reader can tell, the name of the paper is taken from Prov. 4:23: "*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*" Some periodicals publish each issue with random articles, some select a theme. The basic design for, *The Issues of Life* is a semi-departmental paper. Our usual goal each month will be to publish articles discussing various issues the Christian faces on a daily basis. Of equal importance, are those issues which challenge individual congregations and the entirety of the brotherhood.

Some areas where issues arise are: morality, persecution, temptation, error, fellowship, and the present wars being waged against the Almighty God and the very existence Christianity. Because of the abandonment of our nation's constitution by each branch of the United States government, and the permissiveness of an increasing number of Americans, issues such as homosexuality and abortion will never go away.

In the church, increasing liberal views of the Bible and fellowship point to myriad issues faithful brethren must address and meet every error with God's truth. For example, where once we were united on the truth that a faithful child of God could fellowship neither a false teacher nor one who fellowshipped a false teacher, some seem to be modifying that view.

The *Issues of Life* will always endeavor to have the facts before reporting on specific cases, and seek to search the scriptures thoroughly in order to meet the whims of man with the mind of God.

brought out by men who do not believe the fundamental facts of the gospel. This makes them at once suspect. Some of these books being called Bibles have been translated by men who were competent scholars, but these scholars are actually agnostic or even atheistic. They have not given the true and literal meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words, but have put into the translation what they would have said had they been God and been writing a Bible. It must have taken a great amount of gall to know Greek and read where the divine writer said, "The first day of the week" and change it to "Saturday night."

Many people have suspected the prolific output of the "new" Bibles is brought about for two reasons (1) the skeptics have been unable to destroy the Word of God from the outside, so they busy themselves trying to get uninformed and gullible Christians to do for them what they have never been able to do on their own; and (2) others think it is not the love for the Almighty God but for the almighty dollar that is the real reason for so many perversions of the truth. Certainly, in some instances money has entered into the picture and has been a large factor in the case.

It was a history-making event when the King James Version was made with forty seven of the world's finest scholars engaged in the translation with fear and trembling. These men believed in God, the Bible to be His word, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He was born of

the virgin Mary, that He arose from the dead, that He is coming again, and that there is a heaven and a hell. One who did not believe these fundamental truths would have great difficulty in keeping his atheistic prejudice and bias from influencing what he put into his translation.

The King James Version has stood the test of time and helped civilize the world. Even the plowboy of old learned to read its sacred pages and was influenced by its divine principles. That version brought the church to us as we have it today, and was the translation that gave impetus to the movement to restore New Testament Christianity. The few inaccuracies in translation and obsolete words are not of any great importance and were well taken care of in the American Standard Version of 1901. This version is an accurate word for word translation that has been dubbed "slavishly accurate" by some. This can never be said about the so-called "new" Bibles we are now flooded with for accuracy is surely not one of their faults.

Anything that cannot be proved by the King James and American Standard versions is not the truth. All the "new" Bibles have not brought us one new thing that is the truth. We must object, therefore, to rewriting the Bible to suit the whims of uninspired men and I repeat: Anything which cannot be proved by the King James and American standard versions is not the truth.

If any competent scholar wants to make a correct and accurate

translation of any, or all, of the Bible, no Christian will object. We rejoice that God's word is translated, read, and circulated. We do object to efforts to change God's word. Thank God for the King James Version of the Bible and the men who gave it to us. Thank God for the American Standard Version and the men who gave it to us. These men believed in God and His word and the results speak for itself. It is inconceivable that God should guide the men who wrote the original text and not providentially protect His word through the ages. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

Paul the apostle, declared that the Holy Spirit gave them the very words that the apostles spoke (1 Cor. 2:13), and that is inspiration with a vengeance. There can be no doubt about what the Bible teaches about inspiration. The only question is: Will we believe it? The late George W. Dehoff said in an address at the annual lectureship at Abilene Christian College some years ago that "If God had wanted an "I" dotted or another "T" crossed, He would have had it done." Some wiseacres then promptly branded this "an extreme viewpoint." Wonder what they say now, now that the school has become a "university?" Would anyone have the sagacity to say that God wanted something done and did not have the knowledge nor power to do it?

Men in every age and in every generation have raised up to defend

God's word. Origen of Egypt in olden days wrote a steady stream of books in defense of the faith. Such pioneer preachers as T.B. Larimore, Joe S., Warlick, A.J. McCarthy, C.R. Nichols, R. L. Whiteside, G.H.P. Showalter, and Foy E. Wallace, Sr., were men whom Foy E. Wallace, Jr., heard from childhood, and until his death brother Wallace faithfully and energetically defended the "old" Bibles that made us the people we are. The so-called scholars of the day made light of him and vilified him, but the books he wrote illustrate the unbounded faith he had in the veracity of the word of God, and many of us knew from personal cognizance that brother Wallace had forgotten more Bible than many of the modern "experts" ever knew.

Yes, brethren, we have an inspired Bible and we can depend upon it.

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Burnet, TX.

Editor's note: *The Issues of Life* wishes to thank brother Debo both for the preceding article and for his tremendous support for us as we began to undertake the work of publishing this paper. Brother Debo has preached for many years in the Central Texas area. The editor and his family have known and loved him for his works sake for more than fifty years. Brother Darrell has written many articles through the years, others of which will frequently appear in the pages of *The Issues of Life*.

NAOMI AND RUTH: THE MODEL RELATIONSHIP

By

Linda Pogue

When Naomi's sons died, she released her daughters-in-law to return their own countries and families. She would return to Judah and to her family. When Orpah and Ruth wanted to go with Naomi she told them she could not provide them with husbands, and it would be best to return to their mothers. Orpah, after tears, left. Ruth decided to go with Naomi. It required a strong bond built on kindness and love for Ruth to go with Naomi.

Unfortunately, mothers- and daughters-in-law do not always love each other as they should. Naomi must have loved her daughters-in law very much for her to be willing to give them up and return to her family alone. While Orpah cared much for Naomi, she returned to her own people. Ruth, however, was so attached to Naomi she refused to leave her. How many of us care that much for our daughter(s)-in-law?

One thing that is often lacking in the mother- and daughter-in-law relationship is real love. Mothers sometimes resent the woman their son decides to marry. The daughter-in-law sometimes resents what she perceives as the hold her husband's mother has over him. The man in question is caught between the two women he loves most in his life, not wanting to hurt either, not knowing how to resolve issues that arise.

Mother-in-law, you need to know that if you have raised your son correctly, he will put his wife and her well-being over yours. She is his flesh (Eph. 5:28, 29), and as such she will become the center of his life, second only to Christ. Daughter-in-law you need to know that the man you have married is buried deep in his mother's heart. If you are the reason he stays away from his mother, you are guilty of breaking her heart. A man caught in the perpetual crossfire between mother and wife may come to resent both.

I have been both a daughter-in-law and a mother-in-law, and have found the book of Ruth provides an excellent example for both. Get to know each other. Acknowledge the importance of the other in the man's life. Learn to love each other as deeply as Naomi and Ruth loved each other. In the great love chapter Paul wrote to the Corinthian, "*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*" (1 Cor. 13:4,5).

Basing the mother and daughter-in-law relationship on these words will go a long way in bringing peace to our homes and families.

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IT IS NOT YOUR HOUSE!

By
Charles Pogue

After years of sacrifice and savings, you finally have the money for the down payment on your dream home. Then you spend years working hard to make the mortgage payments. Suddenly, one day, you arrive home to find a strange man on your lawn with hammer, saw, nails, and lumber. When you approach him to ask what all these things mean, can you imagine him having the audacity to say, "I think this house needs another room, and I'm here to build it." Your immediate response would be, "Oh no, you're not! It is not your house!" To put it mildly, you would be just a mite upset.

The Lord Jesus built His house (Matt. 16:18; Heb. 3:1-6). Jesus poured more than hard work and sweat into building His house; He paid for it with the shedding of His blood (Acts 20:28). He gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25). Having paid such a price for His house, it doesn't take a lot of thought for us to realize how the Lord must feel when all types of would-be spiritual carpenters show up with their hammers and nails and attempt to add additional rooms to His house.

We know how Jesus felt about men altering his Father's house (the temple), He cleansed it at the beginning of his personal ministry (John 2:14-17), and again at the end of it (Matt. 21:12,13). How much

more angry He must be when men attempt to alter His house by adding rooms for instrumental music, denominational creeds, missionary and benevolent societies, and all manner of false doctrine.

Regarding your house, what if the self-appointed carpenter used the excuse, "No one told me not to build another room onto this house?" You would reply, "No one said you could, and it's my house!"

Men attempt to find authority for things the Lord has not revealed in the blueprint for His house, and although men may claim they have the right to bring in their musical instruments, infant baptism and a host of other human "improvements" Jesus has warned that nothing be added to or taken away from the design of His plan (Rev. 22:18, 19).

The would-be carpenter might make one more appeal to defend his proposed alteration to your house: "I didn't think you would mind." Who can know the mind of a man unless he reveals it? Who can know the mind of the Lord unless He reveals it (1 Cor. 2:11). If Jesus had wanted additional rooms in His house, He would have placed them there. How dare anyone usurp the Lord's rights to His own house and alter the plans!

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HOW MUCH MORE WILL IT TAKE?

By
Charles Pogue

According to a report of Sveriges television, (the Swedish public broadcasting system) Swedish health officials have ruled that gender based abortions are not illegal, and cannot be stopped. Radio personality Glenn Beck, reports callers who admit that abortion is murder, but defend it anyway. The person who continues to doubt that abortion on demand, including partial-birth abortion is not a prelude to the eventual infanticide of new born infants is in an obvious condition of denial.

When we hear the radical advocates of abortion on the news channels defend without any qualms of conscience whatsoever that abortions should remain legal, even unto the third trimester, we can't help but wonder how long it will take, and what extreme cases will be required to soften the stone-cold heart of even one of these savages? We fear that the answer is, nothing will.

Evil was so widespread in the days of Noah that only eight souls were saved from the flood (1 Pet. 3:20). God would not destroy Sodom if ten righteous men could be found there. (Gen. 18:32), He would spare it. They could not be found, thus God rained down fire and brimstone upon it and the cities of the plains. We know there are more than the plains. There are more than 8 or 10 just persons in the world today. There

are more than that in America, so one cannot successfully argue that evil is more widespread today than it was in the days of Noah or Abraham. One thing this writer wonders, though, is if the sinners of Noah's and Abraham's day might blush at how far present day sinners will go in their pursuit of sins so horrible they are unmentionable in polite company. On the one hand, we know there is no new sin under the sun including homosexuality and bestiality (Lev. 18:22, 23). Paul wrote that in his day there were sins committed in secret of which it was a shame to even speak (Eph. 5:12).

On the other hand, those who practice the scourges of homosexuality and abortion today are seeking and receiving lawful protection, especially from the wicked leftwing of the Democratic Party. The question then, is not only asked of the sinners themselves, but of the wicked men and women who protect them: How much more will it take? How far does sin have to go? What kind of price will civilization have to pay before men recognize these great wrongs and repent? The answer may well be, not until Christians have spent some time behind bars for standing up for truth and righteousness.

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PARENTS GUARDIANS OF THEIR CHILDREN'S SOULS

By
Linda Pogue

Sermon after sermon and presentation after presentation at lectureships have tried to notify parents that their children are more influenced by the school system and television than by parental wishes or the church. This is primarily due to the fact that the school system and television have much more of our children's time than do parents or Bible classes. It has amazed me to watch the metamorphosis of many of the churches of Christ with which I am familiar. At a time when children need the influence of every Christian in the church, they are separated into their own worship services, and even into age related groups such as tweeners and teenagers. Segregating our children from the worship is not scriptural, and therefore wrong. That said, it should also be noted that at a time when children need Christian fellowship and influence the most, it is being taken from them by well-meaning Christian adults. Mind you, there is nothing wrong for a group of Christian teenagers to participate in an activity, but when this is the only Christian interaction teenagers get, it can have disastrous consequences. Public school was designed not by educators with concern for children's education, but by corporate moguls such as John D.

Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J. P. Morgan (all famous men) who were more interested in training a workforce than education.¹ School was designed to teach individuals to answer to the factory bell, working when told to, stopping for breaks only when allowed to, and not leaving until the final bell of the day, based on the Prussian school model.² It took decades for the individualistic American people to bow to these plans, but generations of training have taken their toll. The dumbing down of education has created an easily controlled populace that is indifferent, emotionally dependent, intellectually dependent, and confused about the relationships of context in almost any topic.³ Today, many American people accept that God is a myth, that Christians are trying to take freedoms away, and that homosexuality is a normal lifestyle--all this is directly attributable to the influence of the public school. In many schools, parents, unfortunately, are seldom allowed in the classroom anymore. Only on specific days or times are parents welcome--otherwise they would begin to see the indoctrination public school teachers are expected to provide. This smacks of the brainwashing of children Hitler required of schools.⁴ Hitler knew

that capturing the minds and hearts of the young was the way to power.⁵ He did not care that adults were against him. Children were trained, beginning in kindergarten, to believe in his doctrine. Parents were aghast at the things their children did and participated in, but by the time they realized the danger, they were unable to stop what was going on. Children were being controlled by Hitler and his ideals, believing their parents were a threat to them through Hitler's teaching. Today, public school is again being used to subvert the home. Even some denominational bodies better understand this problem than many of us in the Lord's Church.⁶ If Christian parents do not wake up and take their children back, their children could be lost eternally. Parents, guardians of their children's souls, may also be lost over this, since children are to be raised in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6: 4). Home school is not an anachronistic idea, it is the best way, maybe even the only way, to salvage our families, and teach our children the values of Christian life, and the eternal consequences of failure to obey God. Home school is an effective way to "train up a child in the way he should go..." (Proverbs 22:6), thereby guarding the souls of our precious children.

¹Gatto, J. T. (2003). Against School: How public education cripples our kids and why. Harper's. Retrieved April 13, 2009, from

<http://www.spinningglobe.net/againstschool.htm>

² *ibid.*

³ Gatto, J. T. (2003). Dumbing us down – Reviews. The Odysseus Group. Retrieved April 13, 2009, from

⁴ K. B. (1998). Hitler's Children. Southern Illinois University. Retrieved April 13, 2009, from

<http://www.johntaylorgatto.com/bookstore/dumbdnblum1.htm> <http://colanmc.siu.edu/clockwork/papers/p1.html>

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶Fundamentalist Baptist Church. (unknown). How did Hitler control his youth? Retrieved April 13, 2009, from <http://www.hitlercontrol.com/>

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WHAT KIND OF PREACHING IS NEEDED IN THE CHURCH OF THE 21ST CENTURY?

By
Darrell Debo

To give a simple answer to the above question, the 21st century (or any other century, for that matter) church needs the same kind of preaching in which Jesus and the apostles engaged in the first century. Immediately, we hear some of the "change agents" among our liberal brethren declare that this is too simplistic an answer and that the preaching that issues from our pulpits today should be adapted to the cultural innovations of our time. We do not believe that for a minute, for the proof of such a premise is in the pudding! These elitist, super-irenic brethren, who advocate fellowshipping everybody and everything, are not interested in proclaiming the ancient gospel that brought the church to us as we know it today. Rather, their proven designs are to infiltrate and capture established congregations by their fair speeches and feel good platitudes, congregations that were established by blood, sweat, and tears of faithful brethren in the past who worked, sacrificed, and suffered criticism and persecution by the world and the denominations to plant the cause of truth throughout the land. Where are the efforts of these liberal brethren to announce to a community their determination to plant a "modern"

congregation whose foundation would be established upon a message adapted to the cultural diversities of our day? The proof is in the pudding, but the pudding appears to be an illusion.

Churches of Christ were established and guided in their work and worship in the first century by the preaching we have recorded in the New Testament. Congregations were established by this same kind of preaching in cities, towns, and countrysides by the pioneers who planted the cause in this country in years gone by. The congregations thus established were successful in fulfilling their divinely mandated mission on earth, and congregations today can be successful in like manner when following the same divine guidance. What is needed for churches today may be found in what was needed for the churches then.

Public proclamation and teaching today must be first of all scriptural, then plain, positive, direct, and pointed with humility and reverence for the truth of God. Mere generalities do not meet the requirements of gospel preaching. The history of all successful gospel preachers bears witness that they were earnest heralds, clothed in humility and love for the truth; men

dedicated to proclaiming the ancient gospel to the lost and edifying the saints of God. In these times the churches of Christ should demand that only the simple truths and principles of the New Testament be preached from their pulpits and taught in their classes. Neither the world nor the churches need rhetorical sentimentalities, deathbed yarns, nor oratorical sermonettes. As brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr., used to say, "Sermonettes are preached by preacherettes who smoke cigarettes!" New Testament churches cannot thrive on sanctified dullness, learned dissertations, scientific blathering, discourses of apology for truth, nor elocutionary gems; rather, the gospel preacher should "hide behind the cross of Christ" and preach Jesus and Him crucified.

Gospel preaching should instruct, "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine" that the child of God may be completely furnished to every good work (2 Tim. 4:2). The faithful herald of the truth cannot preach the gospel as it was done in the first century without rebuking sin. The public proclaimer of the truth must therefore rebuke sin in love and gentleness, yet with firmness and positiveness. Much of modern preaching is so general in nature and so pointless and timid that it has little power in it. There should never be timid apologies offered in rebuking sin in the world or in the

church. When preaching is not antagonistic to sin, and is popular with the world, it will accomplish little good, we may rest assured. The power and majesty of God's truth demands that it be proclaimed in such a manner as to rebuke the proclaimer himself, elders, deacons, the wealthy, the poor, and every other class of people who may be guilty of sin.

Preaching in the church today should encourage the saints of God to cultivate personal holy living and consecration to God. It should encourage every member of the church to be an earnest, prayerful student of the Bible, and willing to sacrifice, suffer, and serve in the name of Christ as opportunity is afforded. Christians should be taught to present their bodies as living sacrifices unto God (Rom. 12:1, 2) and to keep themselves unspotted from the world (Jam. 1:27). The church of our Lord as well as the world in general needs to hear once again, as of yore, the ancient Jerusalem gospel of God's grace and love proclaimed from every pulpit across hill and dale until the kingdoms of this world quake at the presentation of that power which sets mankind free from sin, error, and ignorance. Preach the Word!

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"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" Eph. 4:15

SIN THE GREAT SEPERATOR

By
Charles Pogue

Because not even one sin will be present in heaven to mar its perfection and righteousness (Rev. 21:27), the necessary inference is that sin is the great separator. It is! Sin separates man from God. *“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear”* (Isa. 59:2). To be separated from God means to be separated from God's blessings as all good things come from him (Jam. 1:17; Eph. 1:3).

Sin separates man from peace. Because of Judah's denial of their sin (Jer. 2:23), they were saying, *“peace, peace when there is no peace”* (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). Jesus, the prince of peace (Isa. 9:6), came to make peace between man and God, but the very medium that produces peace, the gospel, is a sword that not only divides between those who will not accept it and God, but also between those who accept it and those who do not and remain in their sin. Those who will not accept it are disobedient and will suffer everlasting destruction, separated from God and His rest (2 Thess. 1:9). How tragic to suffer a process of destruction that never ends! On the other hand, the peace of God passes our finite understanding (Phil. 4:7).

Sin separates one from joy. In the great penitential Psalm (Psa. 51:12), David prays, *“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.”* The joy of salvation departed David, because he knew that without repentance, the salvation itself had departed from him. Men who obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, having their sins washed away by the blood of Christ when they obey Him in baptism (Acts 22:16), may go on their way rejoicing as the Ethiopian nobleman did (Acts 8:39).

Sin is the great separator, and its wages is death (Rom. 6:23). God loves the man that He created, and where sin did abound, the grace of God abounded more exceedingly (Rom. 5:20). Because of His great love God sent His only begotten Son into the world (John 3:16) in order to provide man an avenue of reconciliation. We know of no more encouraging words in the Bible than these: *“To wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation;”* (2 Cor. 5:19). That reconciliation is through the cross (Eph. 2:16), and produces peace with God (Col. 1:20). The reconciliation is not automatic just because Jesus died; one must purify himself by obeying the gospel (1 Pet. 1:22).

What a tragedy that in the day of judgment many will not have obeyed God and thus endure the worst separation from God that is possible; eternal separation (Matt. 25:41).

Obey the gospel, be reconciled to God and be saved!



A SOUND CHURCH IS HARD TO FIND

By

Charles Pogue

More and more brethren find themselves travelling farther and farther to find a congregation with which they can work and worship. Having to drive 20-50 miles in order to find a sound church is no longer out of the ordinary. In many small, midsize, and large cities, even in the previously labeled, Bible Belt, there is not one faithful congregation present. Because of apostasy our nation is rapidly become a mission field.

A reality that complicates this issue even more is that many brethren worship in congregations that are unsound, but they are so ignorant of the scriptures, and so untaught in the fact that authority must be found in the scriptures for all we do in word or deed (Col. 3:17), that they do not even know their membership is with at least a backsliding, if not completely

apostate, congregation.

There is an assumption on the part of some that if a congregation has not abandoned the biblical steps to salvation, the prescribed worship, and divinely ordained organization, it is necessarily a sound congregation. Nay, verily! Here are some things that preclude soundness in many of those congregations.

- Endorsing unsound works and liberal brethren. WBS for instance.
- In any way supporting efforts that are unfaithful.
- The “children’s church” and small groups in lieu of Sunday evening services.
- Lads to Leaders and Leaderettes.
- Official offices that include women in leadership roles.
- Fellowshiping those who have sinned, but refuse to repent.
- Endorsing those who endorse false teachers.
- Dismissing Sunday night worship for the Superbowl.
- Delivery of scripture starved sermons.
- Agnostic presentations of the facts of the faith.

The above list is in no way complete, and despite the accusations of some these are not legalistically determined issues.

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THE CLAM-UP TACTIC

By

Charles Pogue

A clam is usually opened by inserting a strong metal blade between the two halves of the shell and prying with the necessary force. For one, I have never eaten clams, so I have no idea how much force is required, but my guess is it is easier to open a clam than it is to get brethren who are accused of a wrong doing to defend themselves. It is not always true that the guilty dog barks first; sometimes he won't bark at all. Husbands and wives both know the frustration and even anger that is incited by "the silent treatment." It does not take a genius to realize that when there is a breach between two parties there will never be reconciliation without communication, either face to face or through a third party mediator.

Despite the truths in the above paragraph, when there are divisions between brethren, one party or the other or both, may clam up and refuse to communicate. Often, this is indicative of one of those occasions when the guilty dog does not bark at all. Why did God communicate His word with a sinful world? Because it was through communication that that sinful man might know what he had to do in order to be reconciled to God.

A few years ago, a certain eldership in a congregation that was financially supporting a nationwide television program wrote to the

speaker expressing their concerns over his defense of a known false teacher. The brother wrote back basically saying that he did not feel that he owed the eldership an explanation. The congregation appropriately cut off their support of the program.

Today, there is a division between brethren over whether brother Dave Miller, head of Apologetics Press, taught error on the subject of reevaluation and reaffirmation of elders, or if he did, did he repent of it? Without commenting on the facts, it is unconscionable that those who defend him are entirely unwilling to discuss the case with the other side. They haven't entirely clammed up though, they have found their tongues enough to resort to name calling.

A statement in the April, 2009 *Harvester*, a publication of the Florida School of preaching said among other things: "It has been a principle of the school to avoid, as much as possible, controversies that may arise from those whom the board considers to be sowing discord among brethren." In other words, at their discretion they will clam up! See the article by David B. Watson in the May, *Defender* for a full discussion of this situation.

Recent years have revealed what may be a serious, if not fatal, inherent

flaw in the schools of preaching; when the directors of such schools take the silent approach, follow the money trail and the extensive speaking engagement schedules enjoyed by them and other faculty members. The cash and prestige cannot be compromised by taking a stand against some error and false teachers.

The purpose here is not to single out or condemn schools of preaching, but to illustrate how the refusal to sit down and reason together about controversies is an absolute non-starter and a complete hindrance to healing divisions between brethren. It seems to me that those who refuse to discuss issues will have as much to answer for in the day of judgment as those they accuse, whether justly or not, as those they arbitrarily and unilaterally brand as discord. What arrogance! How could a greater lack of concern for both the truth and the souls of brethren be manifested?

Paul did not admonish the Corinthians to speak nothing and allow divisions to continue among you. Instead, his instructions were: "No I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

When one is charged with a crime in our country, he has the right, if he so chooses, and is encouraged by his counsel so to do, to testify in his own behalf in court. In some

cases, it is considered better for the accused not to give testimony in his own behalf, but even when that is the case, a competent attorney will produce other witnesses to speak in behalf of his client and to the facts of the case. A lawyer who failed to present an adequate defense could be replaced, reprimanded, or even disbarred. But those things would make little impression upon the accused, all he is concerned with is having his reputation, freedom, or even his life thoroughly defended.

Brethren, if I were accused of wrong doing, and one or more of you knew it was a false allegation, yet you did not come to my defense, I would conclude you did not care. That is reminiscent of Paul's situation when at his first defense no man stood with him (2 Tim. 4:16).

What is the conclusion, then? Just that when there is a controversy between brethren, it is as easy as shooting ducks off a fence to see who is really concerned with both his brethren and the Lord's truth: Those who are willing to talk about it. The only thing that can be said regarding those who clam-up, take the silent approach, and the only talking they do is to ridicule, condemn, and criticize those with whom they disagree, is there is no evidence that they have any interest at all at getting to the bottom of a problem and resolving it so we can get on to the business of teaching the lost.

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ERROR ON THE BACK BURNER?

By

Charles Pogue

I once had a brother in Christ suggest to me that we should put error on the back burner and just get on about the business of saving the lost. Such a proposition has a number of fallacies with it, and shows a serious misunderstanding about the nature and extent of the present apostasy.

For anyone who shares the brother's idea, a question is in order: Are people who are led into error, thus erring from the truth, still saved or are they lost? The New Testament answers that they are lost (Jam. 5:19,20). James says there is an obligation to convert those who wander away from the truth. Paul admonishes the spiritually mature to restore those who are overtaken in a fault (Gal. 6:1, 2). One who suggests error be put on the back burner may as well be advocating that erring brethren be left in their error.

One who suggests error be put on the back burner probably fails to grasp that the consequence will be that additional members of the church who have not at this point been carried away with false teaching, will be. It would be like announcing to the devil that the door is wide open for him to come on in and without hindrance or opposition, wreak his havoc on the Lord's kingdom.

The New Testament is full of references describing the proper reaction to error. Elders are

encouraged to rebuke deceivers and vain talkers (Tit. 1:9-13). In preaching the word, Timothy was told to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, because some would not endure sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul warned the Ephesian brethren night and day with tears (Acts 20:31). He did that, because grievous wolves would enter in and not spare the flock, and of the elders some would speak perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves (vv. 29,30).

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to charge some to teach no other doctrine than the doctrine of Christ (1 Tim. 1:3). When Paul became aware of errors in Corinth, Colossae, and the churches of Galatia, he did not wait for a possible visit to those places to address the errors, he wrote them letters to warn the faithful and to correct any led away by false teaching.

If the Lord wanted error put on the back burner, why did He, through the apostle John deal with the errors in the churches of Asia? And why did He, even in His personal ministry, warn about false prophets and inspecting fruit to distinguish truth from error? (Matt. 7:15-20). There is a spirit that says put error on the back burner for now, but it is not the Spirit of the Lord!

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CALVINISM AND ROMANS 5:12

By

Charles Pogue

Every tenet of the sad system of Calvinism is 100% in conflict with the natures of God, man, sin, salvation, and with the gospel of Jesus Christ. God is no respecter of Person (Acts 10:34,35). Thus, unconditional election is false. Anyone can come to salvation (Rev. 22:17). Therefore, the doctrine of the limited atonement is error. Man choose to obey God or rebel against Him (2Thess. 1:8,9). Consequently, irresistible grace is against the truth of God. Sin is the transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4), so, since an infant cannot transgress the law of God, they are not born in a depraved condition.

Over the past thirty or forty years much error, including Calvinistic error has crept into the churches of Christ. Some, for instance, claim that once a person has obeyed Christ, that he no longer has free will, but no will at all! Unless we miss our guess, sprinkling them with rose petals and calling it a baby dedication is a mere half step from sprinkling them with water and calling it infant baptism.

Calvinism is having success without any help from those who know it is a false system. We must make sure that our interpretation of scripture does not assist the proponents of Calvinism or even imply that Calvinism may be true. The devil has enslaved enough people in that error without any help from us.

Consider, for instance, Romans

5:12. Brethren have debated over whether the “death” in this Romans passage refers to physical death or spiritual death. Those who insist that Adam and Eve died spiritually when they sinned in the garden, hold that Romans 5:12 refers to spiritual death. Rom. 5:12 states: *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”* Notice that the death that entered into the world and passes unto all men was the consequence of the sin of one man, Adam. If the death that passes to all men as the result of Adam’s sin is spiritual death, then all are born spiritually dead, the Calvinist is right, and we should accept infant baptism. But the death, Paul refers to is physical, not spiritual death. Verses 13 and 14 bolster this interpretation.

Some one asks, why did Adam and Eve not die the day they ate the forbidden fruit? Gen. 2:17 says, “in the day” they ate they would die, not on the day. In other words, in the day Adam ate of the fruit, the consequences came into effect, not that he would die in that twenty-four hour period. Calvinism is a deadly doctrine with widespread acceptance without incorrect interpretations giving them support.

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PARENTS WHO TRIED, BUT TO NO AVAIL

By
Charles Pogue

Just as there are very few families that have been unaffected by the sin of unscriptural divorces and remarriages, so also are there few that have not been impacted by the general apostasy that has swept, and continues to sweep, so many into the errors of the progressive movement that is changing the very identity of the church away from what the Master built, into a poor counterfeit of it.

Like this writer, you may have relatives both in your immediate and extended family who have placed their membership in congregations that have a reputation as liberal or progressive. Some of those churches may still pay lip service to the plan of salvation, the authorized pattern of worship, and organization of the church, but are nevertheless either apologetic for truth, in danger, through compromise or agnosticism, of abandoning the fundamentals of the faith. They are supportive of known false teachers, or are buying into a pattern of organization that makes the church look more like General Motors Corporation than one of the Great Master's congregation's!

Like this writer, you may have family members in churches that have or are abandoning the basics, extend fellowship toward, rather than disciplining, those who persist in sin, have a "children's church," or engage in some other unscriptural practice. If

anyone out there has a "children's church," can you tell me how they got into it? Did you baptize little kiddies who are neither old enough or mature enough to grasp the reality of sin and what it means to repent of it. Are the adults who supervise the "children's church" members of the "children's church"? Children's church indeed!

This writer personally has a relative in an unscriptural marriage who was recently received as a member in good standing along with a "spouse" who has been married as many times as some Hollywood film stars. That's not surprising, though, as the same congregation believes in a direct leading of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians, and whose bulletin of April 12th, 2009 announced the sermon title for the morning to be, "*Easter Does Make A Difference.*" Throw into the hopper that one of the elders is a relative of mine by marriage, and the disappointment grows. How he endorses the statement that appears in their bulletin every week that the church accepts as members every believer who has been baptized, is a mystery to me.

The few of my family members who remain faithful to the old paths are in complete amazement that another relative was appointed as a deacon in another congregation. The astonishment centers around the fact that the man doesn't know enough

Bible to be in any kind of leadership position. The surprise at the appointment should not be too great though, because the long time “senior minister” (whatever that means) has long taught salvation by grace alone, and one of the fellow deacons of the relative once advocated substituting Big Red Soda-water in the communion would be okay if grape juice was unavailable! On top of that, one of the elders in that congregation made the statement to this writer and his father that he was moving his membership to a congregation where in his opinion, the church had some life even if it did have doctrinal issues. There is no surprise that the doctrinal issues increased after he was installed as one of the elders!

Looking at the website of the above congregation I saw among their ministries list, this heading:

Spiritual Formation Ministry

The explanation of that was: “Through mentoring and a variety of different spiritual exercises, retreats, and classes, this ministry seeks to provide our members with valuable insights into their spiritual makeup so that they can discover their full potential as Christians.” If someone can tell me what that means, two of us will know. It certainly sounds like some kind of mystic better felt than told idea that one would have to be on the inside and have it all explained to him before he could grasp its significance. One thing is for sure, modern man doesn’t seem to run

short of ideas, even ones that are so clever it makes a Bible believing child of God who loves the simplicity of the New Testament pattern for the church, scratch his head and wonder if he’s missing out on something momentous.

They are gone now. I mean a couple of parents who raised their children to honor and obey the teaching of the Bible. They instructed their children that people must follow the teachings revealed in God’s word and do nothing in the realm of religion unless there is authority to be found for it in the New Testament.

They taught their children right from wrong, but some of the children forgot it, rejected it, or never even got it at all. The saddest part is that the mom and dad lived long enough to witness those children abandoning congregations that were at least trying to stay with the simplicity of New Testament Christianity for progressive churches that share a greater resemblance to the denominational world in doctrine or practice or both, than with the church of Christ. That means the parents were thrown into the world of eternity already bearing the grief that accompanied the knowledge of their children’s actions. If I understand Luke 16, they will bear it until the judgment, when at last in the heavenly realm they will be relieved of the pain of tragic memories. Please will you answer: Were they parents who tried, but to no avail?

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