

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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IS THE CHURCH LOSING HER IDENTITY?

Marlin Kilpatrick

Identify-theft is a growing problem in today's society. When one becomes a victim of this form of theft, he experiences a sense of worthlessness. Identity-theft costs American taxpayers millions of dollars, to say nothing of the personal cost incurred by the victim. Once one is a victim of this kind of theft, he inevitably finds it difficult to reestablish his financial credibility. However, there is a far more serious problem which the Lord's church is having to face.

Brethren, are we losing our identity as a people who are unique in our approach to the Bible and our efforts to restore New Testament Christianity? A review of our past and an honest inquiry into our present condition as the Lord's church will answer our question of study.

OUR PREACHING

In a bygone era, the Texas preacher, J. D. Tant often said, "Brethren, we are drifting." The "drifting" to which brother Tant referred is now in full bloom. Brother Tant was concerned about what he perceived as "soft-pedaling" the truth when it came to exposing sin and in particular the sin of denominationalism.

Brethren, time was when we could turn on the radio and hear a preacher and almost immediately one could tell if he was a Gospel preacher. Today, in far too many places this is no longer true. Lest we be misunderstood, we are not advo-

cating an approach in our preaching that is crude and sarcastic. We are advocating a return to simple Gospel preaching that convicts the sinner of his sin (cf. Acts 2:36-41). We are advocating a return to preaching that exposes all kinds of sin and tells the people what they "need to hear," rather than what they may "like to hear." Instead of our preaching being an entertainment show, or that which is based almost solely on emotionalism, we need a return to "...sound speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2:8).

In far too many places our preaching has become a watered-down, don't offend anyone, make everyone feel good type of preaching. As a result, our membership is no longer known as "a people of the book." Change-agents in the church, whether in the pulpit or college classroom, are having a field day, and meanwhile we are losing our identity as the church of our Lord.

OUR WORSHIP

In the past, when one visited the church of Christ, he knew what to expect in the worship assembly, but this is no longer true. Today, in many of our assemblies, it is out with the "traditional" and in with the "contemporary" worship that has become the status quo. Those individuals that would restructure the church and make it into a denomination, know very well how to change our worship so it is more

"seeker friendly." Brethren, do not be deceived by such nonsense!

There's nothing wrong with following the traditional order in our worship, provided of course, the tradition is not itself sinful. In fact, an argument can be made for following the traditional form of our worship. First, it is Scriptural. Each part of our worship is based upon the New Testament pattern for worship. Second, since we are to worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), those of us who worship accordingly know what to expect and when to expect it. Our traditional way of worshiping tends to eliminate confusion in our minds; thus our hearts are attuned to what we are doing.

The idea of being more "seeker friendly" in our worship is but another effort to make the church appear like the denominations around us. The so-called contemporary worship is unscriptural in its nature, with everything from the use of instrumental music, to the lifting up of hands and hand clapping in the assembly. Brethren, we are losing our identity when it comes to our form of worship.

THE INVITATION

At the conclusion of the sermon we normally extend an invitation to those present who need to obey the Gospel, or who, having repented, need to publicly confess they have

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Church Identity...



Editorial...

PRO-CHOICE IS PRO-DEATH

Pro-Life defends the unborn. Pro-Life says that an unborn child has every right to live. An unborn child is a human being, an individual and is protected by the law of God and the constitution of the United States.

Pro-Choice, on the other hand, supports and defends a mother's right to kill her unborn children. The term "pro-choice" sugar-coats the reality of murder. Pro-Death sounds too gruesome, too hard-hitting, too much "to the point." So the term "pro-choice" is an attempt to soften the blow — soften the impact of the innocent unborn being put to death.

Have you noticed that for many years now you never hear about going to a "grave yard?" That terminology is not politically correct. It sounds bad. Grave yards are now called "memorial gardens." But, they are still the same thing. They're just called by a different name.

Pro-Choice is a disguise, a deception, a pretense to cover up what is really under consideration. Many who claim they are "pro-choice" say they would not kill their own children. But, by being "pro-choice," they defend the right for others to do so. By supporting the "politically correct" view of being "pro-choice", they stand beside millions of expecting mothers and willingly and deliberately watch them kill their unborn children. Such a view is defending, supporting, upholding, and exonerating the slaughter of millions of Americans yet unborn. Yet, on the other hand, some of these innocent little babies have been born alive (in a botched abortion attempt) and are left to die of neglect.

What kind of sin-sick society do we live in when a *mother* is charged with murder if she puts her baby in a dumpster and yet a *doctor* is defended and even paid for his services when he does the same thing? Someone please explain to me the difference. Such rancor, inhumane, ruthless, merciless behavior has no defense!

No matter how you look at it, **Pro-choice is Pro-abortion — Pro-death!** It is everyone's God-given responsibility to oppose those who kill their unborn children. It is everyone's God-given

responsibility to oppose those who support and endorse a mother's right to kill her unborn baby. Pro-Choice says "I believe that every mother has the right to kill her unborn baby if she wants to." Is this what you believe? Didn't God give people a brain that is capable of reason, logic and making sound moral decisions? How in the world can people support and endorse the killing of innocent unborn babies? Should we not get on our knees and pray to God for forgiveness of this holocaust?

Some will fuss and whine about abortion being a political issue. The subject of abortion has nothing to do with politics. It is not even a 32nd cousin to politics. It is a MORAL issue. I don't care about men's politics, but I do care about the Bible issue of morality. Calling abortion politics does not make it politics any more than calling a dog's tail a leg makes it a leg. Is murder, stealing or sodomy (gay) political issues or moral issues? They are moral issues just like abortion is a moral issue. It is a Bible subject and every Christian is duty-bound to support and defend what the Bible teaches (cf. Jude 3).

The Lord's church has no place (Bible authority) being involved in politics and therefore neither supports or opposes candidates based on the grounds of their political views. It has no position on the economy, national security, immigration, illegal aliens, foreign affairs, etc. because all of these are social issues — they have no connection with the Bible (which is God's law). As a Christian, I can have convictions on each of these issues and you can have opposite convictions. I can support one position while you support another. And, we both can be faithful and go to heaven because these positions have nothing to do with righteousness. However, moral issues such as murder (which includes abortion), sodomy (homosexuality, gay) and stealing have to do with right and wrong, righteousness and sinfulness, heaven and hell. We cannot hold opposite positions on what God legislates and both of us be right and faithful in God's eyes. No one can oppose God and His

righteousness and expect to go to heaven. Some say "you can't legislate morality." Of course you can. Every society from the beginning of time has recognized that murder and stealing are wrong, illegal and demands punishment.

The Declaration of Independence stated in part: "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*" This is a noble statement upon which the United States was founded. Every person, every human being, has the right to LIFE! However..

Since January 22, 1973 (bloody Monday, the darkest day in American history), when the supreme court "legalized" abortion (killing unborn babies), there have been more than 48,589,993. That is forty eight million, five hundred eighty nine thousand, nine hundred ninety three babies slaughtered (in America alone) on the altars of greed, convenience and selfishness. As a matter of fact, since 1973, the average number of American lives lost (destroyed, killed, murdered) in one year by abortion (1,388,285) is greater than the total number of lives lost in all of the wars fought by America in its 230+ year history! Can you believe it? Look at the figures: Revolutionary War 25,324, Civil War 498,332, World War I 116,708, World War II 407,316, Korea 54,246, Vietnam 58,655. These figures come to a total of 1,160,581 (one million, one hundred sixty thousand, five hundred eighty one).

More than 20 million babies were ripped from their mothers' wombs between 1973 and 1987! These helpless little babies were murdered. Yes, murdered! Some have been literally "torn-apart" limb from limb by a very strong "suction." Others have been "burned alive" in a salt-bath that eats away their tender skin and poisons their lungs and bodies. How would you like to have salt poured in an open wound? Still, others are cut-to-pieces by a very sharp knife. Is abortion evil? YES!!

In the year 2000, there were 306 children killed by abortion for every 1,000 who were born alive! Pharaoh's extermination of the infant Hebrews was but a ripple compared to modern day abortion statistics. Herod's massacre of the babes of Bethlehem would not equal one modern abortion clinic's



Where Do the Candidates Stand on Abortion?



John McCain

Barack Obama

Abortion on Demand

- Voted to oppose *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that allows abortion for any reason.
- "I have stated time after time after time that *Roe v. Wade* was a bad decision, that I support... the rights of the unborn. I have fought for human rights and human dignity throughout my entire political career. To me it is an issue of human rights and human dignity."

- Co-sponsor of the "Freedom of Choice Act," (S.1173) which would make partial-birth abortion legal again, require taxpayer funding of abortion, and invalidate virtually all state and federal limitations on abortion, such as parental notification laws.
- "I have consistently advocated for reproductive choice and will make preserving women's rights under *Roe v. Wade* a priority as President."

Partial-Birth Abortion Ban

The partial-birth abortion procedure — used from the fifth month on — involves pulling a living baby feet-first out of the womb, except for the head, puncturing the skull and suctioning out the brain. The great majority of partial-birth abortions are performed on healthy babies of healthy mothers.

- Voted for the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

- Did not vote for the Illinois Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act when it came before the Illinois State Senate.

Protecting Abortion Survivors

- Voted for legislation that provides care and protection for babies who are born alive after an abortion.

- Voted four times against legislation in the Illinois State Senate that would have provided care and protection for babies who are born alive after an abortion.

Taxpayer Funding of Abortion

- Voted in favor of the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits taxpayer funding of abortion through Medicaid.
- Voted consistently against federal funding of abortion.

- Voted against legislation in the Illinois State Senate that prohibited taxpayer dollars from being used to pay for abortion.
- His campaign has stated that he "does not support" the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits taxpayer funding of abortion through Medicaid.

Parental Notification Law

- Voted to support a bill that would have required an abortionist to notify at least one parent before performing an abortion on a minor girl from another state.

- Voted to block a bill that would have required an abortionist to notify at least one parent before performing an abortion on a minor girl from another state.



Sarah Palin

- Opposes abortion and believes unborn children should be protected. As Governor of Alaska, supported pro-life legislation.
- "...I am pro-life and have never wavered in my belief in the sanctity of every human life."

Joseph Biden

- Voted to endorse *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that allows abortion for any reason.
- "I strongly support *Roe v. Wade*.... That's why I led the fight to defeat Bork. Thank God he is not in the Court or *Roe v. Wade* would be gone by now."



daily quota. Hitler's slaughter of nearly six million Jews in the 30s and 40s was but a "drop in the bucket." I certainly do not wish to minimize any of these historic atrocities, but at the same time, I wish to magnify what our country and many of its elected and appointed officials are doing in comparison.

There's an outrageous inconsistency in our land when campaigns have been raised to save the spotted owl, the snail darter and animals and birds of all kinds (even while they are yet unborn or not yet hatched) while the human species are being systematically exterminated! What about the baby humans? Who will champion their cause? Who will rise up and protect them? If it's not God-fearing people across this land, then who will?

Are unborn babies people? The Dred Scott decision in 1857 ruled that black people were not "persons" in the eyes of the constitution. Therefore, slave owners could do-as-they-pleased with their "property." Slaves could be bought, sold, abused and even killed. In 1868, the Dred Scott decision was overturned by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

In 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States decreed that unborn babies are not "persons" and may be legally aborted (slaughtered) all the way through the ninth month of pregnancy. It is argued by some that the unborn child does not have the "right to life" as declared at the founding of this nation. That is, they are not "persons." Let us ask a few questions.

Is an unborn child an animal or human? Obviously, it is human. Is the child alive or dead? It certainly is alive. Is the child innocent or guilty? All have to conclude innocent. Well, if the child is human, alive and innocent — is it not an innocent human life? Is it wrong (sinful) to take an innocent human life? Both nature and the Bible tell us it is!

Both science and reason tell us that life begins at conception. This new life is totally different from either the father or mother. It has a different genetic make-up. This new beginning of life only needs time to grow and mature to be able to take care of him/her self. Everyone of us continues the growing process throughout life. When our body ceases to grow and produce new cells to replace the dead and worn-out cells, death occurs.

When the babe in the womb is **three weeks** old, he/she is only one-tenth of an inch long. He already has

eyes, spinal cord, nervous system, lungs and intestines. The heart began beating on the 18th day which supplies blood totally separate from the mother's and often of a different blood-type. At **six weeks**, movement begins and brain activity can be recorded on the electroencephalogram. Mouth, lips and fingernails are present and movement can be detected. By the end of **seven weeks** he/she has fingers, knees, ankles and toes. In **eight weeks** the infant will grab an instrument placed in his palm. An electrocardiogram can be done. The baby begins to hear. In just **eleven weeks** all organs are present and functioning. By **eighteen weeks** the baby, still not much larger than your hand, "is active and energetic, flexing muscles, punching and kicking." At **twenty weeks** the baby can recognize the mother's voice. He/she only needs time to grow and develop. All these facts prove that life begins at conception. The infant, though yet unborn, can feel pain and experience horror. A video known as "The Silent Scream" shows clearly the atrocity and terror of an abortion.

Some abortions are performed by *cesarean section*, especially later in the pregnancy. Just think, the only difference between a premature baby taken by c-section and one aborted by the same method, is that after the cord is cut, one is taken to the newborn intensive care nursery where *everything* is done to care for him and the other is dropped in a canister or left on a table to die of neglect. At this age, babies move, breathe, feel pain and even cry! It has been reported at times that doctors have held their hand over the child's mouth and nose to stop their breathing and hasten death.

Perhaps the most heinous and horrifying methods of abortion is called *partial birth abortion*. It's performed in later months where the doctor actually pulls the baby out feet first while still alive. The entire body of the baby is exposed outside the womb with the exception of the head which is deliberately kept inside. Scissors are then shoved into the back of the baby's skull and its brains are sucked out through a tube. The child's head can now be delivered and its entire body thrown in the trash. If this sounds gruesome to you, then won't you try to do something about it?

These methods, and many others, are all in a day's work for multitudes of doctors, nurses and clinics all across

America and around the world. From an economic standpoint, it's big business. It fuels the economy. It provides jobs. But on the moral and spiritual platform, it's sick, sin sick, morally despicable and eternally damning to the soul!

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

What does the Bible say concerning the unborn? Note these scriptures well. In Psalm 139:13-16, David speaks of the time when he was in his mother's womb. *"For thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst cover me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Wonderful are thy works; And that my soul knoweth right well. My frame was not hidden from thee, When I was made in secret, And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my unformed substance: And in thy book they were written. Even the days that were ordained for me when as yet there was none of them"* (ASV). David was not just a growth in his mother's body, he was alive, he had a soul, his name was David!

Job, Isaiah and Paul give witness that God forms the babe in the womb. *"Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews"* (Job 10:11). *"Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb.... And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb..."* (Isa. 44:2; 49:5). *"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace..."* (Gal. 1:15).

It is said that Mary *"was found with child of the Holy Ghost"* (Matt. 1:18). What if Mary had gotten an abortion? When she went to visit her cousin Elisabeth to reveal unto her the good news, *"...it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb"* (Luke 1:41). It was not just a growth or tumor that leaped in her womb. It was a living, vibrant, human being!

God uses the same Greek word to describe a child whether in the womb or out of the womb. The word *brephos* is found eight times in the New Testament. Thayer defines it as: "as unborn child, embryo, fetus: a new-born child, an infant, a babe." In Luke 1:41,44, *"...the babe leaped in her womb..."* In the next chapter of Luke (2:12,16) we read, *"Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."* In Luke 18:15 it is translated "infants," in Acts

7:19 “young children,” in II Timothy 3:15 “child,” and in I Peter 2:2 “babes.”

“Thou shalt not kill” has been a principle of every age. It has never been right for any people in any age to murder. We are told in Proverbs 6:17 that God hates “hands that shed innocent

blood.” Certainly, the unborn are innocent blood!

What are we doing about this insidious evil? Many, it seems, are unconcerned. Are you? Pray and work that laws may be enacted to protect the unborn and stop murdering innocent lit-

tle babies.

Be aware that millions of “Americans” support and endorse a mother’s right to kill her unborn children. Are YOU among that number? Will you endorse and support those who kill their children? THINK brethren!

PRIDE, THE ORIGINAL SIN

Douglas Hoff

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). Clearly, pride is a very bad thing to possess even in a small quantity. The problem with pride is that it often grows into a full grown monster that consumes one in its evil grip.

The expression “original sin” is usually associated with the Calvinistic doctrine of inherited sin. Mankind does not inherit sin, even Adam’s, because sin is the transgression of God’s law. Sin is something one commits (John 8:34). The word *original* means “belonging or pertaining to the origin or beginning of something, or to a thing at its beginning.” What was the original (i.e., first) sin and who committed it? Many would probably answer it was when Eve and/or Adam ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6). However, there was a sin that must have preceded this one. First John 3:8 tells us, “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning...” Satan is known as the tempter (Matt. 4:3,10). For the devil to tempt mankind he must have already experienced sin himself (James 1:14,15). No holy creature would entice another to commit sin (James 1:13). So, the devil was guilty of sin when he first approached Eve in the garden.

The devil was guilty of pride. This is implied in 1 Timothy 3:6 which says an elder must not be “...a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

What is pride? There are only three verses in the New Testament that use it. Each verse uses a different Greek word. The word in Mark 7:22 means “haughtiness.” First Timothy 3:6 uses a word meaning “high-minded” or inflated with self-conceit. First John 2:16 employs one that means “self-confidence” or boasting. The related word, *proud*, appears in only six New Testament verses. In Luke 1:51 it conveys the idea of “appearing above others.” Clearly, the proud soul thinks he

is better than others.

Men and angels are subject to this temptation. Romans 12:3 says, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Man showed this vice when tempted in the Garden of Eden. Satan cunningly used the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life to entice them to sin (Gen. 3:1-6; cf. I John 2:16). Man has often thought he knew better than God.

Some angels fared no better. Jude 6 tells how “the angels...kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” When God says “this far” and “no farther,” He means it. Pride causes one to commit presumptuous sins.

Jesus’ attitude is the polar opposite of pride. He showed humility (Phil. 2:5-8). His is the perfect example for mankind to imitate even though ours will always fall short of the divine ideal. First John 2:6 reminds us that “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.”

Failing to conquer pride leads to terrible consequences. The book of Proverbs has much to say about the sin of pride. Proverbs 11:2 states, “When pride cometh, then cometh shame.” Proverbs 13:10 declares “by pride cometh contention.” Among the things God hates is a “proud look” (Prov. 6:17). That is joined by “a lying tongue” and “hands that shed innocent blood.” While man may think pride is not that bad, God considers it an evil that compares with things man also views as “really bad.” One guilty of pride can be forgiven. It takes repentance and a desire for the reformation of one’s life. It can and must be done if one wishes to enter heaven one day.

The way to overcome pride is found

(at least in part) in James 4:6-8. This passage informs man that “...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. ... Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”

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WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUNG GOSPEL PREACHERS?

Roger D. Campbell

The Psalmist wrote, “*I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread*” (Psalm 37:25). I can nod my head and say, “Yes, I used to be young, too, but not any more.” There was a time when I was one of the young evangelists on the receiving end of advice. I still get and appreciate good advice from my fellow preachers who have been at it just as long or longer than I have, but I am also at a stage in life where I have so much gray hair that I am often asked questions by young preachers.

When it comes to a young man who is already preaching, or a young brother who is contemplating becoming a Gospel preacher, any advice that I might offer is surely in the category of “you get what you pay for.” My free advice may not be worth much, but here goes.

Young preacher, **know what your work is.** The “work of an evangelist” is to preach the word of God (II Tim. 4:5,2). Like all Christians, you will want to serve others and be involved in a number of aspects of the church’s activities, but these are not inherent in the role of a Gospel preacher. If you wish for other members of the church to understand the role of an evangelist, then you yourself must make certain that your own concepts of the work of a Gospel preacher are based on the teaching of the Bible. Like Timothy, you are to “command and teach” the message of the Lord (I Tim. 4:11).

Young brother, **take heed to your Outlook/Attitude.** Many young preachers that are skilled communicators have made a mess of things by showing a bad disposition. You need to stay humble and teachable. Regardless of what abilities you might have, you are not God’s greatest gift or an irreplaceable brotherhood brain. The church did well before you came along, and it

will do just fine after your passing, so do not think too highly of yourself (Rom. 12:3). If you have not yet realized it, Lord willing, you soon will: there is no perfect congregation on the earth. If you could ever find one, you would not fit in well there, because you are not perfect. There is a time to offer constructive suggestions to others about how they and the local work can make strides in the right direction, but preachers of all ages need to avoid becoming sour, incessantly negative, always complaining, and constantly with an unhappy, disgusted look on their face.

Young preacher, **take heed to your own Personal Conduct.** “*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee*” (I Tim. 4:16). The Pharisees said some good things, but they did not back it up with the right action so the Master rebuked them for their hypocrisy (Matt. 23:2ff). Your effectiveness ends when your behavior goes amiss. By all means, be considerate of others (Matt. 7:12). Such is so fundamental and “goes without saying,” but more than a few preachers have never really matured in this area.

By all means, *watch yourself in how you deal with women* (I Tim. 5:2). “But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding; he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul” (Prov. 6:32). We have many fallen soldiers who crossed the line long before any physical relations developed. Make it a rule never to visit a non-relative female without taking another person along. Thinking and planning ahead can help you avoid disaster.

In an unrelated matter, try to *avoid becoming cliquish with the local saints.* Because you are a human, it is only natural that you (or you and your wife together) will become closer to some members than others. Still, try to stay away

from being “in” only with certain elements of the congregation.

Young brother, **take heed to your Own Spiritual Growth.** Like the Lord, you want each person to be saved (I Tim. 2:4). But, in the process of trying to teach and help others be where they need to be in their spiritual lives, you must not fall into the trap of neglecting your own spiritual development. Like all other saints, you need to grow (II Peter 3:18). You need to make time for your own prayer life, personal Bible study, association with faithful brethren, and opportunities to hear the word preached and be edified. Your spiritual growth is a blessing to others because the benefits of your development trickle down to them through your teaching, exhortation, and example.

Young brother, **take heed to your Work Ethic.** You, as an evangelist, do not work for men, but rather you work for the Master. Such an endeavor deserves the very best that you have (Col. 3:23). In your teaching, you will surely admonish others to work diligently for the Lord (I Cor. 15:58). Guess who needs to be a pacesetter in that regard? That is correct, you do. Lazy preachers are a disgrace and are no better in the sight of the Lord than the lazy gluttons on Crete whom Titus was told to rebuke (Titus 1:12,13). The church has no need for do-as-little-as-possible preachers that “clock out” after they have “put in their time.” The work of an evangelist, if it is to be done well, requires time and much diligent effort. If you do not have the necessary self-discipline to control your activities and how you use your time, then you either need to (1) begin immediately to develop self-discipline or (2) pursue some other line of work. By the way, a real Gospel preacher does not preach in order to live; rather, he lives in order to preach!

Young preacher, **take heed to your actual Preaching and Teaching.** Experience will be as big a help to you as anything, but because you are still young, experience is not your strong suit. One of the major keys to effectively presenting a lesson is to be well prepared. From time to time things happen, totally out of your control,

that limit your preparation time. For the most part, though, if you are not well prepared for a lesson, you are at fault, and not being well prepared is a sin against the Lord for Whom you preach and the people to whom you deliver a lesson. You will have umpteen things to do in a “normal” week, but you must (and here comes the need for self-discipline again) make time to study and prepare adequately. The following suggestion may not work for everyone, but I recommend that you have a specific day of the week that you set as a deadline when your lessons for the coming Sunday must be finished on paper. For me, Tuesday at bedtime is the hour/deadline for which I shoot. Preparation early in the week helps you avoid last-minute panic when unforeseen things come up later in the week. Working late on Saturday night “to come up with something to preach” is a sorry, pitiful approach to your work. The Lord and His people deserve better.

I have two small pieces of advice for you in your lesson delivery. First, do not try to imitate other preachers. Have your own style. Believe me, natural is better than imitation. Second, in your lessons you would do well not to constantly refer to or quote from your former teachers or those preachers whom you respect. Most people will not know those men, or if they do, they do not really care what they had to say. Preach the Book. Quote its message.

Young brother, **take heed to your Family.** Do you have a wife? If so, she needs you to be a husband to her, just like every other married sister in the church needs her husband to do the same. Do you have kids? Do not neglect them. They will grow up so quickly that your head will swim. See to your own family’s spiritual training, but not only that, see to it that their educational, material, health, and social needs are met. It is wonderful when preachers put forth a strong effort to help people get ready for the Day of Judgment. It is great when preachers can help others obey the Gospel or be restored. It is a tragedy, though, when an evangelist spends so much time and energy out of his home that he has little left to give to those who ought to be the dearest ones on earth to him. By all means,

require that your family members walk the line and be a good example. After all, the brethren are watching, and one slip up by a child or your wife could make it necessary for you to call or make a trip to U-Haul. Yet, you must not be overly demanding on your family. They are not some type of Supermen or Superwomen, and it is not fair for you to expect them to be.

Young brother, **take heed to your Finances.** Pay your bills, live within your means, set some money aside for retirement, and, when you need it, ask for a raise. Learn all you can about taxes. Learn your obligations as well as your opportunities under the law to save money.

Young preacher, **take heed to your Commitment.** People will disappoint us from time to time, just as we, for sure, will disappoint them. You may become frustrated by the lack of numerical and spiritual growth, and you may wonder if what you are trying to do is really worth it. It is! Remember the power of the Gospel and Who it is that gives the increase. You must not become weary in well doing (Gal. 6:9). You enlisted as a life-time soldier in the Lord’s army, so remember your commitment to Him (Luke 9:23; 14:33).

Young preacher, **take heed to your Evangelistic Spirit.** Oh, how we need a revival of preachers’ love for teaching the lost. Yes, we need Gospel preachers throwing it down in the pulpit and in the classroom, but few churches make strides in numerical growth without their evangelists being active on the front lines of the warfare of personal evangelism.

My ramblings must cease with three final appeals. First, visit in the homes of the members — not to be a pastor, but to get to know people. This will pay huge benefits for you and help you know people’s thoughts, desires and needs. Second, do not compare yourselves with other preachers. It is an unhealthy practice. Finally, keep studying. Study, study, study. We need a generation of preachers who know the Book. Without men of knowledge instructing us, we will not go far.

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Church Identity...

(Continued from page 65)

sinned and desire to be restored to fellowship. In extending the invitation, it is not uncommon to hear the plea that we “accept Jesus as our personal savior.” I realize there is a sense in which Christ is our personal savior, in that he saves us personally, but this is not what the denominational preacher means when he makes the same plea.

Christ saves everyone in the same manner — by obedience to the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). Why must we use denominational terminology? Why can’t we simply tell the sinner what he must do to be saved and invite him to respond? Telling the sinner to “accept Jesus as his personal savior” is as unscriptural as the doctrine of salvation by “faith alone.” There is no record of any apostle of Christ every telling anyone to “accept Jesus as his personal savior.” Here, again, we are losing our identity as the church Christ promised to build (cf. Matt. 16:18,19).

CONCLUSION

There are other areas that are of concern, but space will not allow an in-depth discussion. Why can’t we refer to the communion as the Lord’s supper as the apostle Paul did (1 Cor. 11:20)? Today, it is often called the “memorial feast.” While the Supper is a memorial to the death of Christ, it is no where in the Scriptures referred to as a “memorial feast.”

Our Gospel meetings are now, in many places, being called revivals. After all, the denominations have had their revivals for many years. Advocates of such practice claim we don’t want to offend our denominational friends. Offensive or not (I highly doubt that anyone is offended by our using the term Gospel meeting), I see nothing wrong with calling a thing what it is.

Brethren, are we losing our identity as the Lord’s church? Think about it.

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church of Christ. I found out they do not get your STOP. I would like you to put me on your mailing list if you please so I can get them. And, if you still have any July & August 2008, I need these too" ...**Linda Whitehurst, Cassville, MO.** "We appreciate the work that goes into the paper. One of the men in our congregation gives me his when he gets through with it. Very good. Thank you" ...**Carolyn Coleman, Whitewater, KS.** "Did not request. Do not want. Please stop" ...**Tricky McGuire, Beattyville, KY.** "Look at God's *Creative Engineers*: Genesis 1:25 reads, 'And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.' We all like to live at a comfortable temperature. Excavations from the most ancient human sites show that homes and entire cities were often positioned to catch the prevailing winds in the summer or to avoid cold blasts in the winter. In a similar way, honeybees like to keep their hives at a constant 95 degrees and their way of doing it is quite ingenious. When the weather is cold, bees collect at the centre of the hive where they generate extra heat by increasing their metabolisms through rapid breathing. Other bees position themselves around the sides of the hive to serve as insulation. If it remains cool outside, the bees at the warm centre of the hive rotate with the bees at the cooler walls of the hive. If the weather gets too warm, some of the bees act as fans, circulating outside air into the hive. If this does not provide enough cooling, other bees leave the hive to bring water back that will be spread on the hive walls by other bees. Now the fanning of the other bees will actually cause the walls of the hive to cool by evaporation of the water. The intelligence we see at every level of the creation offers strong evidence against the claim that intelligence is a product of evolution. Intelligence is a gift of the Creator to His creatures! ...References: *Joanne E. DeJonge. Bats and Bugs and Snakes and Slugs. Baker Book House. pp.61-63.*" ...**Mark McWhorter, Pell City, AL.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East End Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed **FREE** upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

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