

## THE CHURCH'S PRIMARY MESSAGE

To some brethren (evidently more than a few) unity among and between men is the fundamental and primary design of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To the contrary, the fundamental design of the Gospel is to bring men into unity with God. One is not ready to preach the Gospel if that one is going into all the world to unify men.

*We go into all the world to get men to walk with God.*

Having stated what the primary purpose of the church via the preaching and defense of the Gospel of Christ is to accomplish, we hasten to add that we are not unmindful of our Lord's prayer for the unity of believers in Christ as the Son of God and their Savior (John 17:20-21). Any Christian desires to see our Lord's prayer for unity of all believers answered.

However, it is useless to seek unity among men simply for the sake of unity. Such an idea is foreign to the Bible. The Gospel is God's power to save men—men who are in need of salvation because they are separated from God by their sins (1 John 3:4; Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:16; 3:23; 6:23; 10:17; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; 2 Thess. 1:8). Thus, the unity that should first, foremost, and always concern every Christian is the reconciliation of men to God through the preaching and defense of the pure unadulterated Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 4:1-3; John 12:48; Col. 3:17). It is vain to seek unity among men apart from "walking in the light" of God's Truth (1 John 1:7; John 8:31, 32; 17:17; Jude 3).

Therefore whatever causes any member of the church to deviate from the doctrine of Christ, no matter how slight the departure may seem to fallible man, such a departure ruins the ultimate, final, and logical end of the Divine Scheme of Redemption—the salvation of the souls of men.

If, therefore, the unity prayed for by the Christ and commanded by the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 1:10), the planks of which are listed in Ephesians chapter four is to be realized, we must learn to put "first things first" or we will get the proverbial "cart before the horse" in the matter of unity and thereby corrupt the whole Divine system of unity (Matt. 6:33).

Without the doctrine of Jesus Christ believed and obeyed, no person can be saved and remain in a saved state with God. Only by a pure Gospel can men find and possess salvation from sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. And, only those who are saved from sin have authority from God to unite with one another—and then unite only on His terms. To seek a "unity" among men apart from the doctrine of Christ is foreign to and against God's Scheme of Redemption.

Thus, the Holy Spirit inspired John instructs us to: "*Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds*" (2 John 8-11).

We, therefore, must teach, believe, practice, and contend for unity with God *first*, which unity comes only through compliance with Christ's doctrine. *Only* by such compliance with the doctrine of Christ is the unity for which Christ prayed and Paul commanded obtained and perpetuated.

—David P. Brown,

*Editorial, Contending for the Faith—September/2006*

## BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

Volume 8

Number 27

July 8, 2007

A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST

535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574

(Greater Augusta, GA area)

## Is Christ For Sale In Your Home?

It is happening everywhere. It matters not whether a congregation is located in the city or the country – the plague of worldliness is crippling many members of the Lord's church! The Word of God no longer has the impact it once had upon the minds of many who profess to be Christians. God's warning is clear that man is not to "*follow a multitude to do evil*" (Exo. 23:2). Neither is the way of man within himself; "*it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*" (Jer. 10:23). Yet, as righteousness becomes even less popular than it once was, countless members of the Lord's church become more and more infatuated with denominationalism, gimmicks, and numbers.

What has happened to the characteristics of loyalty, dedication, steadfastness, and commitment that marked God's people 50 or 60 years ago? The church of Christ was set forth as being unique and distinctive, and her members were not ashamed or embarrassed by such a fact. Does it not matter anymore that the Bible still says "*thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*" (Matt. 22:37)? How can men and women convince themselves they are going to Heaven when they love **others** or **things** more than they love God?

An increasing number of Christians turn their backs upon the Lord because of children or grandchildren who no longer (or never did) have any desire to faithfully serve in the Lord's army. It is now commonplace to see parents and grandparents following their loved ones into apostasy. Has the Word of God changed? Hardly! But these who choose to forsake the cause of Christ label those who faithfully proclaim the "*whole counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27) as being unloving, uncaring, legalistic and negative.

Is it the children or the parents who are ruling the home? One does not have to wonder when parents acquiesce to their children's demands for **less** Bible study and **more** entertainment! It was Joshua who rightfully said, "*And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah*" (Josh. 24:15). Joshua made it clear that his household would not be given the option of serving false gods. The wise man, Solomon, admonished, "*Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it*" (Prov. 22:6). Parents are obligated to train their children in the way that is godly and right. The Holy Bible declares, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right...And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord*" (Eph. 6:1,4). In so many cases today it is the children who are doing the training of parents! The children pout, fuss, holler and scream until they get their way. The parents eventually give in to the children's demands so that there will be some semblance of peace in the home.

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### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.  
Morning Worship 11.00 am.  
Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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**IS TEN COMMANDMENT LAW STILL BINDING? - PART ONE**

A few days ago, I received (unrequested) in the mail, a book entitled, "Ten Commandments Twice Removed" co-authored by Danny Shelton and Shelley Quinn, published by Remnant Publications of Coldwater, MI. I am sure that I was not the only one to receive since it had a non profit US Post Permit, where a stamp would go, on the label. Seemingly the publishers were doing a mass mailing to preachers in various churches.

I thought that maybe the authors had come up with some new arguments in an effort to bind the Ten Commandments upon Christians. However, having browsed the book, it appears to be the same old, tired, arguments that have been offered by those who have sought to bind the keeping of the 4th Commandment -- the Sabbath, commandment, upon Christians. I plan to examine the book more closely and then comment on some of their arguments in detail. In this article, I want to note just a couple of points that stood out as I casually looked through the book.

Upon opening the book, the first inside page, before the title page is a quotation of the The Commandment Law from Exodus 20:2-17 (NKJV). Note, carefully, what verse two states. "*I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me.*" Who was this law given to? It was given to those whom the Lord God had brought out of the land of Egypt. Who was it that God had brought out of the land of Egypt? Was it all of those who have obeyed the Gospel of Christ since the day of Pentecost that followed His death, burial, resurrection and ascension? Or did it have reference to those whom God had brought out of Egyptian bondage under the leadership of Moses through whom He had given this law to the people? The verse clearly answers this question. So the very premise of their book is overthrown by the first verse of scripture that is quoted, before they authors have even to begun to argue their case!

It is also interesting to note, in this regard, that -- unless in browsing the book, I have missed it -- they do not make reference to the second passage in the Old Testament that lists this Ten Commandment Law. Could it be that they realized that the passage in Deuteronomy chapter 5 is more devastating to their argument and so just simply ignored it? Note what is stated by Moses in the preamble to reciting that Law: "*And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;)"* (Deuteronomy 5:1-4). Moses clearly states that God made a "covenant with us in Horeb." Who was he talking with, "*Hear, O Israel*" -- the children of Israel. He goes on to state that it was *not made with our fathers*" -- that is preceding generations. Moses says he is to recite in their ears what follows, that is the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:6-21). The covenant that was made with the children of Israel, not their predecessors, was that which, at least, included the Ten Commandments thus it was given to the children of Israel -- not others. Deuteronomy 5:6 states: "*I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*" This shows very clearly and specifically those to who the law was given.

The second point is with respect to what they write concerning Acts 20:7 (where the first day of the week is mentioned and the brethren at Troas had met to break bread). Note what the writers state: "

In the second reference (the second reference to the "first day of the week" K.J.C.), Acts 20:7, the disciples were gathered together to break bread with Paul for his final farewell meeting before he departed on his journey. Luke records this was on the "first day of the week," beginning at sunset on Saturday. It appears Paul had a lot to say in his farewell message. He prolonged his sermon until midnight.

Poor Eutychus nodded off during the sermon and fell from the third floor to his death. Many believe the only reason Luke recorded this incident was because God performed a miracle through Paul and brought the young man back to life. Then Paul continued talking until Sunday morning, daylight of the first day of the week."

Such is the totality of their comments regarding the passage. They cavalierly dismiss it as being simply the recording of a miracle. They assume, without evidence, that they must have been following Jewish time but such does not negate the fact they were meeting on the first day of the week, not the Sabbath. Further, they give no proof of the statement that "Many believe the only reason Luke recorded this incident was because God performed a miracle..." The writers take no account of context where we see that Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem before Pentecost (Acts 20:16) but had stayed seven days in Troas in order to "break bread" with the disciples. If "breaking of bread" meant a common meal rather than the Lord's Supper, why did he not have them meet at another time? Nor do they take into account the meaning of the phrase "when the disciples came together," indicating that this was a regular matter.

More to come.

*Ken Chumbley*

**NEWS AND NOTES**

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett's mother, Kathy Treadway's mother and Bronwen Gibson's mother (Lavonne McClish) -- who has continued health -- related issues and is undergoing pain management therapy. Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer.

Jack Peebles had surgery Thursday for a by-pass in his leg in an effort to improve circulation and healing. The doctors are encouraged as they are seeing improved circulation and were able to hear his heartbeat in the soles of his feet and his legs have regained normal coloring. The family asks for continued prayers. He is at the University Hospital in Augusta.

The Arnolds were away in Myrtle Beach, SC during the week for a few days of vacation.

Cynthia Wilson was flying in Saturday to be with her family. The Wilsons will all be gone during the week for a short vacation.

Our next pot luck will be on July 29 following the evening services. We will have barbeque and trimmings with ice cream desert. Plan to spend this time together.

**Is Christ For Sale In Your Home? Continued from page 1.**

It is obvious that the Christ is for sale today just as He was when Judas sold Him for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15). Have you ever wondered why congregations with the largest recreational facilities and youth ministers who excel in scheduling fun activities attract the majority of the young people? Young folks, by and large, are more interested in fun and games than in the serious study of God's Word. Fun and games, however, will not save one's soul!

Spontaneity in worship (?) is in vogue today as perhaps never before. Most people do not desire to be **bound** by a pattern (Heb. 8:5; 2 Tim. 1:13). They prefer not to be restricted so that can rock and sway, shout and scream, and hold up their hands and testify instead of striving to see that "*all things be done decently and in order*" (1 Cor. 14:40). This must be remembered: "*the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He that taketh the wise in their craftiness: and again, The Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise that they are vain. Wherefore let no one glory in men ...*" (1 Cor. 3:19-21).

We plead with all who are members of the Lord's church to not turn their backs on the cause of Christ. "*For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life*" (Matt. 16:26)? The choices we make in this life will determine our eternal destiny.

Is the Christ for sale in your home? The Lord either has first place in our lives or no place at all. Parents contribute toward their children's souls being eternally lost when they refuse to stand firm and say as did Joshua -- "*but as for me*

*and my house, we will serve Jehovah*" (Josh. 24:15). There is the narrow and right way that leads to eternal life (Matt. 7:14). May Heaven's epitaph not read of you and me -- "*forsaking the right way, [he] went astray*" (2 Pet. 2:15).

*Marvin L. Weir  
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