

Voice of Baptists

"The Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."
Isaiah 40:3

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DISPLACED EVANGELISM DIMS VIEW OF BAPTIST CHURCHES

by Kenneth W. Massey

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"
Song of Solomon 6:10

"If the doctrines, ordinances, and organizations of the Baptists are from the Lord, then no other church or churches can have these unless the Lord instituted two churches. If other churches do not have these characteristics then they are not churches of Christ, and are without his authority to administer these services. If other churches have received these characteristics from the Lord, then Baptists are without authority to administer them, and our churches are not the churches of Christ.

In view of these evident facts there can be no consistent interchange of membership, ordinances, organization or ecclesiastical fellowship between Baptists and others. There may be genuine Christians in all of them, but that is no reason why any of them should be recognized as being fully equipped as churches of Christ. There are Christians in the Democratic party, but it is not a church of Christ." - J. N. Hall

Glory seeking, free wheeling twentieth century evangelists are doing more to dim the view of God's true churches than perhaps any other one thing. The sad thing is that this preaching has rubbed off on the pastor and his congregation. Church members have had evangelism so long and loud that many of them are weakened to the point that they are not able to sit up and take doctrinal nourishment. Should the pastor venture such a sermon on such a congregation

they might say to one another as they leave following the service, "who cares about doctrine?" Some churches may vote out a good pastor while looking for a man to fit the television evangelist image.

Dear pastor, don't be afraid to give your people sound, square Baptist doctrine. They need it, and even if they don't like it, the best thing for them is plenty of it. They will learn to love the taste of it and cry for it. Bland preaching is like bland diets; easy on the digestive system but lacking in strength.

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SOWING AND REAPING

by Barry Witcher
Lafayette, TN

In Ecclesiastes 11:4, we find this not so widely used quotation, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." As it is with the Scriptures, there are possibly more than one "truth" that can be discerned from any given scripture, and I'm sure many different good thoughts can be derived from this verse. But what strikes me about this verse is a spiritual lesson from this natural example. I am not a farmer, but I am sure an experienced farmer can tell you that in doing his work, he cannot wait until the wind is blowing just right, the clouds are

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A SCRIPTURAL INVITATION

by J. A. Reynolds
Davisville, WV

Christ's commission of the gospel to his church to be preached among all nations implies that there is an invitation of some kind to be given in that gospel to those who hear it. In the past some men have understood that the offer of salvation was only for a certain few and that the remaining vast numbers of the human race could not be saved. This hyper-Calvinistic view of theology caused some of them to take it upon themselves to limit the gospel invitation. In some cases this effect of men taking upon themselves what should have been left in the hands of God resulted in a great hindrance to the gospel and the power of God among men.

Today we are affected by the opposite extreme. Many are giving out an invitation that exceeds the offer that God has given. This extreme of freewill theology is more harmful than the other extreme, for it is bringing about the deception of millions of souls. The gospel should not offer more than God has offered. When it does, it is a perversion of the gospel message. It is "another gospel." As for the one that preaches such a gospel, let him be corrected or "let him be accursed."

Long ago God gave a universal invitation, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 45:22) If therefore, a man can obey this command he will be saved; but in order for the fleshly and sinful man to look unto the invisible and Holy God he must have God revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit. If at the moment of such revelation he will look unto God and trust Him he will be saved. Many a person has heeded that

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THIRD QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT

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NOTICE

There has been a change in the host church for the 1982 Southwestern District Association.

In the 1981 Minutes, Calvary Baptist of Lexington was announced as the host church. The association will meet with Calvary at a later date, but this year will meet with Pleasant Hill Baptist Church near Bruceton, Tenn. The church is located on Rowland Mill Road seven miles south of Bruceton. Rowland Mill intersects Highway 70.

BULLETIN

The September issue announced the resignation of Bro. Vernon Roark from the pastorate of Hauser Baptist Church in North Bend, Oregon for the purpose of trying to organize an Association of Baptist Churches in that area.

Actually, Bro. Roark is going to do more missionary work while making himself available to several different churches which have no pastor.

The work there is great and large, and the preachers are few. Our brother is simply trying to help the most churches he can help until reinforcements arrive from somewhere.

Please remember to pray for all the Roark family. They have just concluded

three years of labor on the West Coast. Our financial assistance will certainly enable him to spend more time with God's Work. Thank you.

- Editor

DISPLACED EVANGELISM

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The best known American preachers are saying, "join the church of your choice." They immediately dim the view of God's Church with such a remark and throw her into the same category as the Devil's Churches. "There are three-score queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one" (Song of Solomon 6:8).

Every minister in making full proof of his ministry is under divine obligation to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5). All pastors should be evangelists though the great majority of their preaching will be feeding the flock of God. Real, God endorsing evangelism will be done by or through the local Baptist churches.

The National Council of Churches has provoked the idea of a national church composed of all denominations. That would be fine if all would surrender their counterfeit charters and submit to God's ordained nation (the church by Jesus Christ). Most evangelism is feeding this one church concept, nationally and universally. Hear Solomon, "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach" (Is. 4:1). "Seven women" represents all of those claiming churchship and Christ (the one man) as their authority. All of these would love to have their sinful conceptions covered up and reproach removed forever by merging with the true church. The only one undefiled is that one Jesus established, charged with his own laws, and commanded to go into all the world, saying, "I'll go with you, if you keep my laws."

If you are a Baptist, be one every day. Don't you be a Baptist in your church services and then a nothing when some slick talking false teacher feeds you his line. Be glad you are a Baptist. Know why you are a Baptist. Be ready to give any man an answer of those things most surely believed among us. If someone asks you preacher friend, "what do you do?" Be happy to tell him, "I'm a Baptist preacher."

THIS PAPER STANDS FOR THE BAPTIST DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE, PURE AND SIMPLE, AND IF WE FAIL AT ANY POINT IT IS BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW.

SOWING & REAPING

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just where they need to be, etc., or he will most likely wait too long. Likewise, in the Lord's work, we must not wait for a more "convenient season" to render the Lord service, for "Now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2) and the "fields are white to harvest" (John 4:35). It is needful that we be about the Master's business now.

While waiting in an office recently, I read a portion of a magazine article on physical exercise. The writer recommended 30 minutes of vigorous exercise daily, and noted that many of her counselees said they needed to wait until their busy lives "slowed down" a little before starting. Her reply to them was that "circumstances will never work out" for them to have the time, they must simply begin their program, and circumstances would work themselves around. The winds of life will never calm down enough for us to be sowing for the Lord; conditions will almost always be adverse. We must walk against the winds and the adversities of life.

When a church activity involving young people was proposed once, one individual suggested we wait until summer when the children would not be so busy with homework, sports, and other school activities. Summer finally came, and the same activity was mentioned. The same person had forgotten what was earlier said and remarked, "Perhaps we should wait until school starts when things slow down a little and the children will have more time." With all due respect to this good Christian, this is very typical of the way most of us do; we "observe the wind" and "regard the clouds." As with myself, one of my greatest weaknesses is a lack of regular Bible Study. It seems I can never "find" the time. It is my experience that I have to "make" time, and somehow even though I have much to do, it is never time lost, almost as if the Lord helps me to make up for it.

I enjoy spending money, but usually, the work necessary to earn it brings me a little less joy. This is the way that most of us are in the Lord's work. We love to see people saved, the church grow and prosper, and see rejoicing among the saints, but we fail to observe a simple lesson from nature; **there must be some sowing before there is some reaping!** The sinner who got saved may have been at church that day because a good friend or neighbor persuaded him to come hear the Gospel. The person who received a blessing in the services may have been the one who prayed earnestly for the

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message and has obtained salvation without heeding any manner of altar call given by an evangelist. That was possible because the true invitation was given by the Holy Spirit who also must enable the soul to look and believe in order that it might live. There is life in a hopeful glimpse of Jesus, the Son of God, for the sin-weary and penitent seeker.

During his personal ministry Jesus extended a call to all people in a certain condition. "Come unto me" he said "all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) Through the Holy Spirit, sent back to fulfill the redemptive work provided for by the death and resurrection of Jesus, men in that condition can still answer the call Jesus made and obtain rest for their troubled souls. They may be told by the preacher to surrender to the troubling Spirit presently afflicting their sinful souls, and by him be drawn unto Jesus for cleansing, forgiveness, peace, and rest. Many have taken that spiritual journey to the cross, moved there by the Holy Spirit, and have found rest and salvation without ever responding to an "altar call" of any kind given by a preacher.

While many have come to Christ sitting under the sound of the gospel on a pew, or afterward on the way home, at home, or going about their business the day following, etc., many have felt the need and impulse to humble themselves and cry out to God for mercy, desiring Him to "help thou mine unbelief" that they might believe and be saved. For very many it is an ordinary reaction to the gospel to feel need to literally "call upon the name of the Lord." (Romans 10:13) In order to satisfy this spiritual need arising in many of those who are trying to respond to the scriptural invitations already given to them in the gospel, but who have not yet found grace to repent and believe with all their hearts, many sound churches have designated a place of prayer where sorrowing sinners may call upon God in the presence of his praying saints. An altar thus used, whatever it may be called and however it may be in physical appearance, is of value in helping the seeker of salvation to respond to the spiritual invitation he has already heard. So was the "altar call" in its origin a useful method of winning souls who could not attain unto repentance and faith while sitting on the pew.

Whenever the physical invitation to sinners becomes more than an invitation to prayer for grace to respond to the true and spiritual invitation being held out by the Spirit of God, it becomes a vehicle for the deception of souls. Any time a lost

man is made to believe that there is virtue in the act of going forward, shaking the preacher's hand, making a public commitment, making a public confession, kneeling at an altar, etc., that will somehow please God enough that He will save him, an idol has been set before that man that is likely to deceive him. He must be made to know that it is the Spirit working upon his soul who only can lead him to repentance and faith, and that salvation will not come as a result of his decided actions.

It has often been said in this age in which we now live that there are many preachers who after preaching the truth subsequently interfere with the Holy Spirit's dealings with the souls of those who respond to their various physical invitations. Such interferences are certainly quite common, but such a contradiction existing in one man between his message and his demonstration is illogical. It may be that he is copying the message of another but acting out what he really believes. If this be the case, it is difficult to convict him with his own words. However, it is usually possible to detect subtle perversions of scriptural teachings which are the basis of his warped doctrine and are seen in the demonstration of his practice. The following perversions of the gospel are commonly heard among present day evangelists. This is not to say that every person heard using them are deceivers in practice; good sounding words are often picked up by those who really do not believe the words they are using. It is safe to say that all who cannot see the error in the following concepts are very susceptible to being misled by a deceiver:

- 1) That one may be saved by "accepting Christ as his personal Saviour."
- 2) That in order to be saved one must "receive Christ into his heart."
- 3) That faith unto righteousness is a "childlike faith."
- 4) That Jesus is constantly "knocking at the heart's door" of a sinner.
- 5) That the "water of life" is offered to "whosoever will" without any other conditions.

The erring concept of "accepting Christ as your personal Saviour" is the doctrinal expression behind all manner of deceptive altar calls. A man must surely accept Jesus Christ as the only hope of salvation, but he cannot accept him as his "personal saviour." Christ becomes our personal saviour only by his ACCEPTANCE OF US on the conditions of repentance toward God and trust in

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BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS CONVENE

SILOAM

The thirtieth annual session of the Siloam Baptist Association will meet with Maple Grove #2 Baptist Church, Friday morning 10:00 A.M., October 1, 1982. This church is located two and one half miles north of Lafayette, Tennessee on Highway 10.

Annual sermons will be preached by Elders D. C. Barton, L. W. Smith and F. W. Lambert. Officers serving last year were: Moderator - W. T. Russell; Clerk - Don Curtis; Treasurer - G. W. Hauskins.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT

Southwestern District Baptist Association will convene for the one hundred and thirty-fourth annual session, Friday morning 10:00 A.M., October 8, 1982. This year's sitting will be held at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church. The church is located seven miles south of Bruceton off Hwy. 70 on the Rowland Mill Rd.

Officers for last year were: Moderator - Harold D. Carver; Clerk - Ray Smith; Treasurer - Larry Johnson.

Those to preach this year are: Harold D. Carver, Introductory; Clarence Carter, Doctrinal; Kenneth Massey, Missionary. EVERYONE IS EXTENDED A WARM WELCOME TO COME AND BE WITH US IN THESE SERVICES.

WISEMAN

Longview Baptist Church will host this year's ninety-second annual session of the Wiseman Baptist Association. This body convenes Friday morning 10:00 A.M., October 22, 1982. Longview is located on the corner of Elleta and Spencer Streets in Gallatin, Tenn.

Sermons will be presented by Elders Bobby Pitt, C. L. Russell and Harold D. Linville.

Officers for 1981 were: Moderator - H. G. Taylor; Clerk - H. C. Vanderpool; Treasurer - A. G. Gregory.

SOWING & REAPING

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Lord to bless the services the night before. The member who is held in such high esteem may be known because of his efforts to help others, and so on.

We hear of revivals of "Days Gone By" where large numbers were saved and the spirituality of churches was greater than what it is today, and we wonder "What has happened?" Could it be that our spiritual forefathers were faithful to work for the Lord (not just on Sunday, but every day) and the Lord was faithful to give them an abundant increase? Even now, we are enjoying the benefits of the labors of past generations, but our "reserves" are getting a little low. Solomon well admonished us in his inspired writing to: "**Be diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. For riches are not forever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?**" (Proverbs 27:23,24)

If our gardens produce an abundant crop one year after careful toil, we surely don't expect that garden to raise itself the next year. It seems, however, that in spiritual matters, we expect "perpetual crops." Sometimes, a church will begin to pray well in advance for their revival, seeking the Lord's help and guidance, and inviting the Lost to the House of God. They then experience a good revival with many saved. They will then become "at ease in Zion" and for the next revival or two will see fewer results, and wonder "What happened?" They become concerned and begin to work and pray, and what do you know - another good revival. Of course, our efforts should not be limited to revival time, but it serves as a good example to illustrate that our prayerfully guided **labors in the Lord are not in vain.**

Once, I heard of an individual who expressed a desire to help in a particular, beginning work, but said they would wait to see if it was going to do well before they helped, so they would not be wasting their time. In a garden, do you wait to see what kind of season it will be before you plant? No! You prepare the ground, plant the seed in hope of harvest, and if adverse conditions arise, you do your best to counteract them. You must begin and conduct your work in faith.

REVIVAL

Kokomo Missionary Baptist Church of 1723 N. Lindsay St., Kokomo, Indiana begins revival services Sunday, Oct. 10, 1982. Services begin at 7 P.M. each evening, except Sundays which begin at 6 P.M.

Bro. Del Compton will be bringing the messages.

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himself. We, in effect, surrender unconditionally to Him and He, in turn, accepts us and makes us by his imputed righteousness acceptable to the Father. No such expression as "accept Christ as your personal saviour" is either stated or implied in the Bible.

Neither do we obtain salvation by "receiving Christ into our hearts," but rather by submitting our broken hearts to him for cleansing and renewing. John said, "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even as many as believed on his name, who were born . . . of God." (John 1:11-13) This passage of scripture referred to "his own," the Jews. "His own received him not" as a nation, that is, they did not accept him as the promised Saviour and only hope of salvation. Some of the Jews, and many Gentiles did not receive him, NOT INTO THEIR HEARTS, but as the only hope of their salvation. To these he gave power to become the Sons of God. By this power they "believed on his name" and were "born of God." Only after they were cleansed and regenerated within did Christ come into their hearts to dwell in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Apostles were sent out to preach and were told by Jesus, "whosoever receiveth you receiveth me. . . ." (Matthew 10:40) Here we see the meaning of "receiving" Jesus clarified.

Men could not receive the apostles into their hearts and be saved thereby. Instead, they believed that the apostles were the true messengers of God and received them accordingly. In so doing they received Jesus also, whom the apostles preached as the Messiah of God. Having done this they were given power or authority to become the sons of God through faith and regeneration.

The faith of an innocent child, because of his gullibility, does not well represent faith unto righteousness, which is, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) "Childlike faith" is an expression used to deceptively sell "blind presumptuous trust" to men as saving faith. Saving faith requires divine enablement by revelation of the Son of God to the convicted sinner. This revelation is the Spirit's work, and without it faith unto righteousness is impossible. The childlike quality Jesus intended to enjoin upon his hearers was HUMBLENESS. This is evident in the account in Matthew's gospel where he said, "Whosoever therefore shall HUMBLE HIMSELF AS THIS LITTLE CHILD, the same is greatest in the

kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:4) Childlike faith is not taught in the scriptures as a means to salvation.

The "knocking" which is taught in the context of God's gifts and grace is to be done by man, not God. Jesus said, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you." (Matthew 7:7) So man asks, seeks, and knocks. God opens the door to him and accepts or receives him into his place of blessing. Misuse of the words Jesus spoke to his church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:20) who had left him out of their lives and were proceeding onward without realizing that he stood outside knocking, "I stand at the door and knock," by applying them to the lost sinner, has resulted in a deceptive teaching. While it is true that the Holy Spirit strives with the hearts of lost men, He does so to induce them to repent and believe unto salvation, not to simply open the door and let Christ in.

It is strange that those who notoriously view the Bible as everywhere literal, would go to the last chapter of the prophetic book of Revelation and apply the invitation, "And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17) as if the water of life was a present day commodity unrestrained and free to every taker as it will be to those who have their final portion with Christ. The way to the water of life is the same as the way to the tree of life mentioned three verses earlier in the same chapter. (Rev. 22:14) That way is Jesus and his plan of salvation made by his blood. He requires repentance, faith, and regeneration in the making of new creatures by his saving power. The Cherubims with "a flaming sword turned every way" will "keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24) through Jesus Christ alone as long as this world lasts. There is no reason to believe that the water of life is any more accessible than the tree of life. This scripture is often used applying it to the present in a deliberate attempt to make the way of salvation sound easy, as are also the others already mentioned.

From many such misapplied and misinterpreted scriptures comes the theory which seems to justify deceptive "Invitations" to the lost sinners. Far better it would be to give no physical invitation at all and to leave the sinner to himself to pray and struggle with God's spiritual invitation, than to distract him from the invitation of God with a misleading one of man's devisings. The altar call should be an aid and an instrument of the Holy Spirit's work. Those who come should come because they are drawn of the Spirit to humbly seek for the grace of God unto salvation.