

HOUSE TO HOUSE

Heart to Heart



“... from house to house... with gladness and singleness of heart...” (Acts 2:46).

Volume 9, Number 2

A publication of the... churches of CHRIST

Founder: Christ – Mt. 16:18

Place: Jerusalem – Isa. 2:1-3, Acts 2:5

Time: A.D. 33 – Dan. 2:44, Acts 2

Head: Christ – Eph. 1:22

Organization:

Christ as head – Eph. 5:23

Elders oversee local church –

Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:5

Deacons as servants –

Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13

Members compose body –

Col. 1:2

Name (group):

Church of God – Eph. 3:15

Body of Christ – Eph. 1:22-23

Churches of Christ – Rm. 16:16

Bride of Christ – Rm. 7:4

Name (individuals):

Disciples – John 15:8

Saints – Rm. 1:7

Brethren – Lk. 8:21

Children of God – Gal. 4:26

Christian – Acts 11:25-26

Creed: Jesus/Bible – Acts 8:37

Rule of Faith & Practice:

Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Worship: Jn. 4:24

Sing – Eph. 5:19

Pray – Acts 2:42; 1 Thes. 5:17

Teach – Acts 5:42

Communion – 1 Cor. 1:23-26

Contribute – 1 Cor. 16:1-2

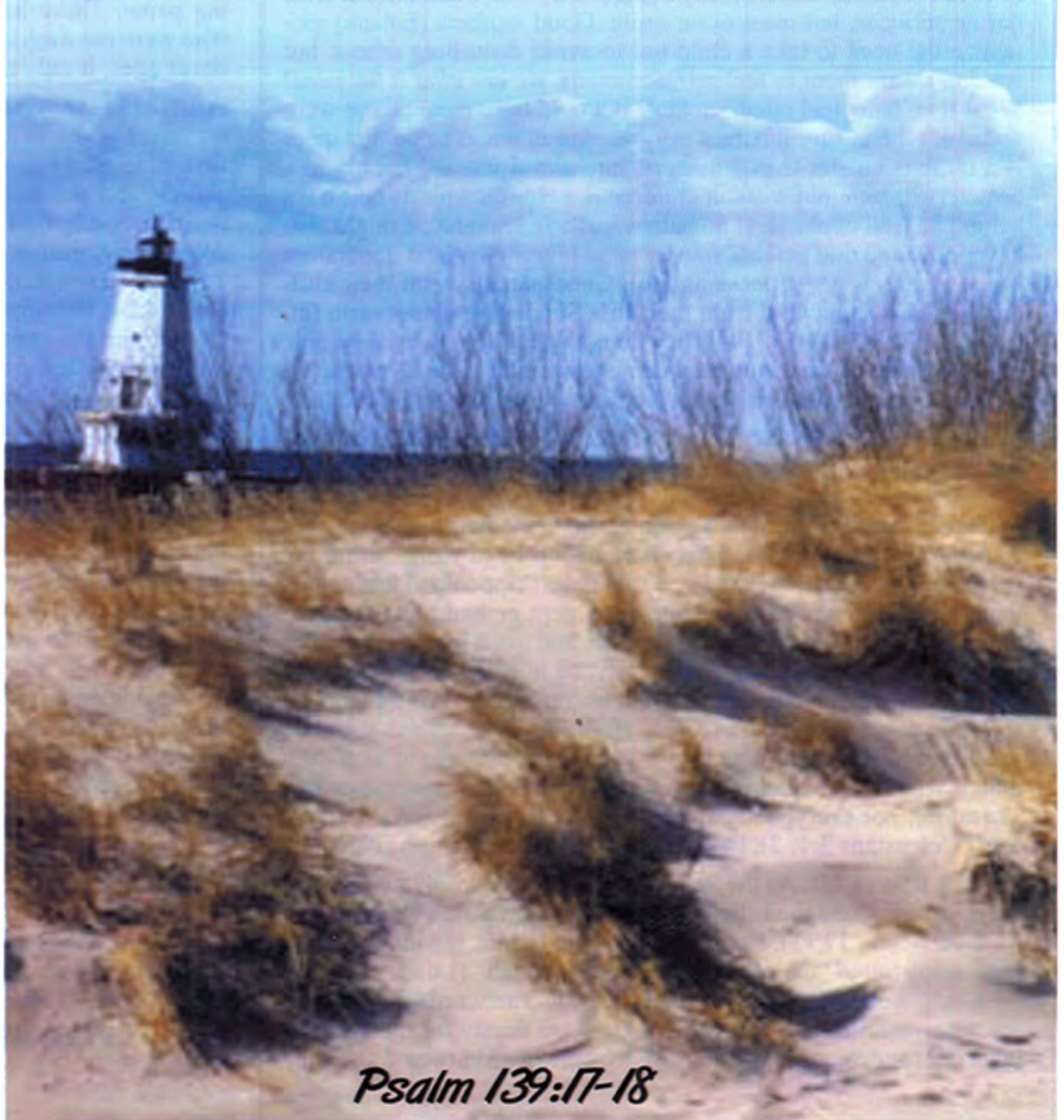
Mission: Save Souls – 1 Tim. 4:16

Warning: Be Faithful – 2 John 9

If you have questions or comments please contact
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*How precious also are thy
thoughts unto me, O God!
how great is the sum of them!
If I should count them, they are
more in number than the sand...*



Psalm 139:17-18

Did You See What Happened Sunday?

Allen Webster

The view from the pulpit is often interesting. People are so used to watching unresponsive TV and computer screens that they forget preachers can see them! After a while, the unexpected becomes commonplace and they are able to keep composure though "the walls come tumbling down."

When Christians gather for worship on the Lord's Day, something special happens. Their common bond is strengthened as in concert they pour out their hearts' gratitude to their Savior. It is a time of worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2), rejoicing (Psalm 118:24), examination (2 Corinthians 13:5) and fellowship (Acts 2:42-47). It is the week's beginning and the week's highlight—nothing else done in the next hundred and fifty or sixty hours equals it. We understand why Paul once delayed a journey for seven days so he could worship the Lord on the Lord's day with the Lord's people (cf. Acts 20:6-7).

People of all ages are usually present: babies, children, teens, young adults, families, singles, empty-nest couples, senior saints, and widows/widowers. Each comes to express a common love for an uncommon God; each feels a universal thirst for eternal Truth. While worship is formal and congregational, it is neither cold nor impersonal (in "spirit," John 4:24). Personalities are involved, and that can make it interesting. This past Lord's Day we had an uncommon service. You should have seen what happened...

A BABY CRIED. Occasionally someone frowns when a child cries during services, but most of us smile. Good mothers (fathers) recognize the need to take a child out to avoid disturbing others, but we don't want them to feel self-conscious. *We are glad it happens!* What if no baby had cried Sunday? It would have meant there were no babies there, for all babies cry. No church wants to be that quiet—a tomb is quieter than a nursery, but who wants to worship in a cemetery?! A church without children is a church with its best days behind instead of ahead. If no babies had cried Sunday, it might also have indicated that parents saw no need to train the next generation in the Lord's ways (Ephesians 6:4). Good parents want their children to learn about God from their first Sunday on planet earth (cf. Matthew 18:1-3; 19:13, 14). They do not want them to even be able to remember the first time they came to worship. We know they'll eventually learn to be quiet, but for now we're glad to hear them.

A SISTER LEFT EARLY FOR WORK. In a perfect world, all businesses would close so that every person could exalt the name of God in worship each Lord's Day (Psalm 34:3). It will be that way in heaven, but it is not that way on earth. Christians are sometimes forced to make decisions. This sister had to be at work before the service ended...what to do? She could have skipped and told others that she "had to work." She could have slept in, had plenty of time to get ready, left in time to avoid traffic, and got a bite to eat before her shift. But she chose to get up early, be in Bible class, sing God some songs, open her heart to Him in prayer, thank Him for Christ's sacrifice during communion, give Him part of last week's check, and listen to His Word. She sat toward the back so as not to disturb others when she exited a few minutes before the sermon ended. Therefore, not everyone saw her "sermon on priorities" (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:1, 2), but it did not go unnoticed in heaven.

PAGES RUSTLED. As the herald "preached the word" (2 Timothy 4:2), hearers "searched the scriptures to see whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Far from offending him, it was music to his ears. Jesus found "the place where it was written" (Luke 4:17), and so should we. Some may joke that their favorite words in a sermon are "in conclusion," but most Christians are thirsty for the Word (1 Peter 2:2) and "hungering after righteousness" (Matthew 5:8). They

bring their Bibles, read their Bibles, mark their Bibles, memorize their Bibles, and live by their Bibles.

A SISTER NODDED. No one except the evangelist probably noticed, but a faithful sister nodded in agreement with a sermon point. She would not speak out to say "amen" like her husband (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:11), but she encouraged the preacher just as much without saying a word. "Nods" also help others in the audience to know that the sermon is expressing both the preacher's convictions and those of other Christians.

A CHILD TOOK NOTES. Any parent knows that "out of the mouths of babes" come profound statements. Often "a little child has led" God's people (cf. Isaiah 11:6). Most churches can point to some young people whose example is worth imitating by those much older (1 Timothy 4:12). Last Sunday a child was interested enough to take notes (cf. 1 Timothy 3:15). There is nothing so unusual about that—when a visual aid is used (old time sheet charts or modern power point presentations), little eyes are always paying attention, and little hands are often copying those words down. They may not yet fully comprehend these concepts, but the seed is planted, the foundation is laid, the base color is on the canvas. One day fruit will ripen, the structure will stand, and the painting will be perfected. And, these very notes may become fresh classes and sermons for another generation of children. Some in pulpits now still occasionally use notes written with childish letters on yellowing paper. These have been "born again" into lessons for those who were not even born when the notes were first taken. The Truth never ages; it only needs recycling.

A CHRISTIAN WORSHIPED FOR THE FIRST TIME. Baptized on Tuesday, a young man offered God acceptable worship for the first time Sunday. God cleansed him from sin, set him in the church, and watched with interest as he bowed his soul in adoration (Acts 22:16; 1 Corinthians 12:28; John 4:24). If the Lord delays His return, and his days are prolonged, that is probably only 1 out of 10,000 times he will offer public worship to his Creator (John 4:24; Hebrews 10:25), but it will likely never mean more to God or him than this first service. It was a beautiful first step on a long journey ... the opening note in a grand symphony.

THOSE FROM "EIGHT TO EIGHTY" COMMITTED TO READ THE BIBLE. About this time each year we encourage each member to commit to read the whole Bible in 365 days. On Sunday, more than a hundred agreed to do so. The youngest is just under eight years old and will read the Bible for the first time. Perhaps this is the first of fifty or more times this mind will have the cleansing Water of Life purify its recesses. The oldest is past eighty and may be reading it for the last time. Of course, we hope that each on the list will live to read it many more times, but for each there will come a "last time" (Hebrews 9:27; James 4:14). This aging saint may be reading the Bible for the one hundredth time. Its words are familiar ... its cover is worn ... its pages creased. It has fed, warmed, guided, encouraged, emboldened, and edified through all the steeps, roughs, mountains, and valleys of life. Yet the Bread of Life has never grown stale.

TEARS FLOWED. Christian love often finds itself expressed in both laughter and tears, as it did with Jesus and the early Christians (Luke 19:41; Acts 20:37). God's Word touched good and honest hearts and souls responded Sunday to the Lord's invitation. Joyful tears flowed over "one sinner that repenteth" (cf. James 5:16, 19, 20).

That's what happened Sunday! Insignificant? You be the judge.

THINK ON GOOD THINGS

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Seven Ages of Man

R.M. Cornelius identifies "Seven Ages of Man:"

- 6 weeks—all systems go
- 6 years—all systems "No!"
- 16 years—all systems know
- 26 years—all systems glow
- 36 years—all systems owe
- 56 years—all systems status quo
- 76 years—all systems slow



I don't know about you, but it shocks me to see that I am already firmly entrenched in the fifth age—all systems *owe*. Where has the time gone? Surely Job knew

what he was talking about when he said, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle" (Job 7:6). It seems that "the hurrier I go, the behinder I get."

The most precious commodity we have today is not silver or gold, but time. John Randolph reminds us, "Time is at once the most valuable and the most perishable of all possessions." When we squander it on things that don't matter, we are so foolish. Paul warns us, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). When we look around us, we can see that the days we are living in are truly evil, with sin rampant in our world. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, however, that "this time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it." What we need to deal with our time is a heavenly perspective: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3).

What will you do with time? I find Henry Thoreau's observation thoughtful: "As if you could kill time without injuring eternity" (Walden I: Economy). Will we "injure eternity?" We are each given twenty-four precious hours daily. How will we use them? Whatever age we find ourselves in, whether 6 or 76, we must serve faithfully.

—Bob Prichard

"Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not"
—Proverbs 8:33

That's the Spirit!



A little leaguer was playing outfield in the first game of the season. After chasing a long hit and hustling the ball back into the infield, someone asked him how his team was doing and what the score was. The boy said his team was doing OK, but they were trailing seven-

to zero. The person asked if he was discouraged about being so far behind, and if he was ready to admit defeat. He came back immediately with this retort, "We aren't beaten...we haven't even been up to bat yet!"

"...this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 Jn. 5:4).

How to Live a Happy Life



1. Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight, and height. Let the doctor worry about them. That is why you pay him/her.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." The devil's name is Alzheimer's.
4. Enjoy the simple things. When the children are young, that is all you can afford. When they are in college, that is all you can afford. When you are on retirement, that is all you can afford!
5. Laugh often, long, and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. Laugh so much that you can be tracked in a store by the noise.
6. Tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life is ourselves. Be alive while you are alive—don't put out a mailbox on the highway of death and just wait in residence for your mail.
7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it is family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health. If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't take guilt trips. Go to the mall, the next county, a foreign country, but not to "guilt country."
10. Tell the people you love that you love them at every opportunity. Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" —John 15:11



Sin Taxes!

An 89-year-old friend told me, "You can't win sinning." Since Adam and Eve got themselves into a jam eating forbidden fruit, billions have learned first-hand that in the end sin, far from satisfying, brings suffering and loss that often cannot be completely repaired. Sin is hard on humans, no matter how fun and appealing the devil and marketing experts can make it look.

A reporter was interviewing a grizzled old man, sitting with his hands folded in his lap, behind his farm house. "Sir, I'd like to know the secret of your long life," said the reporter. "Well, I drink whiskey every day, smoke cigarettes all the time, dance wildly every night, and I've lived with many different women." The reporter was astonished and exclaimed, "That's remarkable. And exactly how old are you?" The man replied, "Twenty-seven."

Recently Tennessee state lawmakers debated whether to raise "sin taxes" on such things as alcoholic beverages and tobacco products. The debate was over whether or not we should "tax sin." But there can be no debate that "sin taxes." Sin taxes our homes, our marriages, and our very lives by subjecting them to excessive stress. From sexual immorality to murder to materialism to profanity to prejudice—sin has saturated our society. Prisons bulge with those who discovered too late that "sin taxes." Adultery at first allures an individual but in the end it assassinates a marriage. Pornography promises pleasure but soon overwhelms with pain and guilt. All of us are paying sin's taxes—or know someone who is.

The world says sin will thrill you, but God says sin will terminate you. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Sin may at first feel good to you, but sin is never good for you. Someone observed that sin always takes us further than we want to go, costs us more than we want to pay, and keeps us longer than we want to stay. Sin always taxes—whether we tax sin or not. —Dan Guley

The



HOME PAGE

The Best Sermon

Many years ago a farmer had an unusually fine crop of grain. Just a few days before it was ready to harvest, a terrible hail and wind storm destroyed it. The farmer and his little son went out on the porch after the storm. The little boy looked at what was formerly the beautiful field of wheat, and with tears in his eyes looked up at his dad, expecting to hear words of despair. All at once his father started to sing softly, "Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee." Years after, the little boy, grown to manhood, said, "That was the greatest sermon I ever heard." The farmer lost a grain crop, but gained a faithful son.

"Ye are the light of the world. ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" —Matthew 5:14-16

Right—But Wrong

J. Paul Getty was at one time the richest man in the world. But J. Paul Getty, Jr., rarely saw his father. In fact, he saw him only on rare occasions. When he was in high school, Getty Jr. wrote a special letter to his father. He had wanted to say some very important things to his dad. The letter came back to him from his father with all of the grammatical and spelling errors marked in red pencil. But there was no personal response from his father. Not one word. Getty Jr. summed up that experience by saying, "I never got over that." A father sets an atmosphere for his children even when he isn't present.

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" —Ephesians 6:4

Words to the Wise

Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them. —James Baldwin

Remember, your basic assignment as a parent is to work yourself out of a job. —Paul Lewis

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" —3 John 4

The Parable of the Lawn

When Mike was three he wanted a sandbox. His father said, "There goes the yard. We'll have kids here day and night, and they'll throw sand into the flower beds, and the cats will make a mess in it. It'll kill the grass for sure." His mother said, "It'll come back."

When Mike was five he wanted a jungle gym set with swings and bars to take his breath away. His father said, "I've seen those things in back yards and do you know what they look like? Mud holes in a pasture. Kids digging in their gym shoes in the ground. It'll kill the grass." Mike's mother said, "It'll come back."

Between breaths, as Dad was blowing up the swimming pool, he warned, "You know what they're going to do to this place? They're going to condemn it and use it for a missile site. I hope you know what you're doing. They'll track water everywhere, and you'll have a million water fights, and you won't be able to take out the garbage without stepping in mud up to your neck, and when we take this swimming pool down we'll have the only brown lawn on the block." "It'll come back," smiled Mike's mother.

When Mike was twelve, he volunteered his yard for a campout. As they hoisted the tents and drove in the spikes, his father stood at the window and observed, "Why don't I just put the seed out in cereal bowls for the birds and save myself the trouble of spreading it around. You know for a fact that those tents and all those big feet are going to trample down every single blade of grass, don't you? Don't bother to answer," he said. "I know what you are going to say—It'll come back."

The basketball hoop on the side of the garage attracted more crowds than the Winter Olympics, and a small patch of lawn that started out with a barren spot the size of a garbage can lid soon grew to encompass the entire side yard. Just when it looked like the new seed might take root, the winter came and sled runners beat it into ridges. Mike's father shook his head and said, "I never asked for much in this life—only a patch of grass." And his wife smiled and said, "It'll come back."

The lawn this year was beautiful. It was green and alive and rolled out like a sponge carpet all along the drive where gym shoes had trod, along the garage where bicycles used to fall and around the flower beds where little boys use to dig with tea spoons. But Mike's father never saw it. He anxiously looked beyond the yard and asked with a catch in this voice, "He will come back, won't he?"

"...his life is bound up in the lad's life" —Genesis 44:30

Put a Sock in It...

A young couple decided to marry. As the big day approached, they grew apprehensive. Each had a problem they had never shared with anyone, not even each other. The groom-to-be, overcoming his fear, decided to ask his father for advice. "Dad, I am deeply concerned about the success of my marriage." His father replied, "Don't you love this girl?" "Oh yes, very much," he said, "but you see, I have very smelly feet, and I'm afraid that my fiancé will be put off by them." "No problem," said dad, "all you have to do is wash your feet as often as possible, and always wear socks, even to bed." This seemed a workable solution to him.

The bride-to-be, overcoming her fear, decided to talk with her mom. "Mom," she said, "when I wake up in the morning my breath is truly awful." "Honey," her mother consoled, "everyone has bad breath in the morning." "No, you don't understand. Mine is so bad, I'm afraid my fiancé will not want to sleep in the same room with me." Her mother said, "Try this. Get straight out of bed, and head for the kitchen and make breakfast. While the family is busy eating, move on to the bathroom and brush your teeth. The key is not to say a word until you've brushed your teeth."

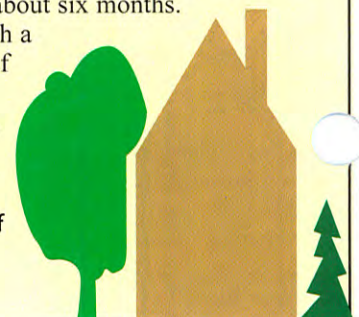
"I shouldn't say good morning or anything?" she asked. "Not a word," her mother affirmed. "Well, it's worth a try," she said.

The loving couple was finally married. He with his perpetual socks and she with her morning silence, they managed quite well. For about six months.

Shortly before dawn one morning, the husband woke with a start to find that one of his socks had come off. Fearful of the consequences, he frantically searched the bed. This, of course, woke his bride and without thinking, she asks, "What on earth are you doing?"

"Oh, no," he replied, "you've swallowed my sock!"

"Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth" —Proverbs 5:18





Are There Ethical Concerns with Human Cloning?



The word “clone” comes from a Greek word meaning “sprout,” or “twig,” and as used today it refers to the reproduction of another creature by scientific procedures apart from normal reproductive processes. Milestones in animal cloning include the cloning of frogs in 1952, and the sheep “Dolly” in 1997. Human cloning would involve the removal of the nucleus of an unfertilized human egg, and replacement of that nucleus with the nucleus of another human being, thus giving the new fertilized egg the DNA of the person contributing the nucleus.

The hoped for result would be a new person who would be an exact genetic copy of the original. In theory, this could then be repeated numerous times, producing unlimited genetic copies.

Human cloning, along with embryonic stem cell harvesting, is offered as a potential life saving opportunity. A cloned human being could produce exact genetic “spare parts” for a dying or injured person, or could replace a dead loved one. Having a number of genetically identical human beings to use in experiments could also advance medical research.

There are many practical ethical problems with human cloning. Early testing of the technology will no doubt have many failures, as happened in early animal experiments. There would certainly be many children thus produced who would have significant physical problems and deformities, as well as significant psychological problems. Many questions about ultimate responsibility for the care, training, and health of cloned humans would arise. Children produced outside the normal family would face many risks. The creation of clones according to some predetermined plan is much like what Hitler attempted. He sought to produce a “master race” through what his scientists called “eugenics.” Even though a cloned human would be an exact genetic copy, the clone would not be the same person, due to having different environmental factors, training, and life experiences, as well as being much younger than the “original.”

Genesis 1:26-27 describes the creation of the first humans: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” The man and woman were created in the image of God, and are not the result of animal evolution. Human life must be respected much more than animal life.

Cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and similar scientific studies may offer some potential benefit to mankind, but they of necessity involve the sacrifice of human life and the experimentation on human beings without their consent. It is God that “giveth to all life, and breath” (Acts 17:25). Man, no matter what his motivation, does not have the right to take the life of one person for the benefit of another. Among the things that God hates is “hands that shed innocent blood” (Proverbs 6:17).

—Bob Prichard, P. O. Box 3071, Oxford, AL 36203



Send your answers to the address on the front. We'll grade and return all entries and randomly select one to receive a Bible, New Testament cassettes, or Bible Dictionary.

Name: _____

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Questions Taken from the King James Version

Seven Habits of Highly Effective Christians:

Find answers in 2 Peter 1:5-7. [Note: These are NOT in order!]

1. _____ leads the list of diligently pursued virtues.
2. Add to your faith _____
3. Add to brotherly kindness _____
4. Add to knowledge _____
5. Add to godliness _____
6. Add to patience _____
7. Add to temperance _____

Seven Names Jesus Called the Pharisees

1. “Ye blind _____...” (Matthew 23:16).
2. “Ye _____ and blind, for which is greater...” (23:17).
3. “Woe unto you... for you are like whited _____ full of dead men’s bones...” (Matthew 23:33).
4. “Ye _____, ye generation of _____” (22:33).
5. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, _____” (Luke 11:44).
6. “Ye are _____ which appear not” (Luke 11:44).

Who Dared Ask God This?

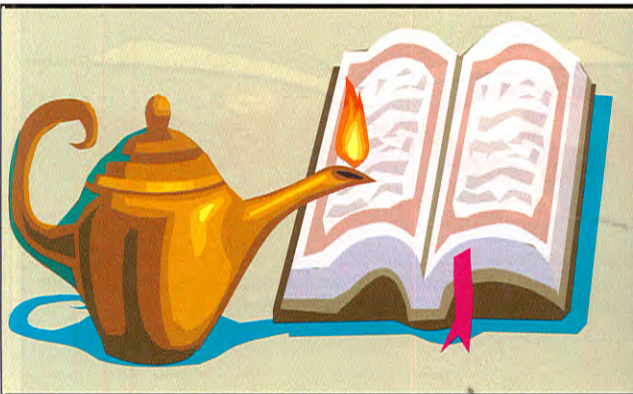
Exodus 5:22; 1 Kings 17:20; Genesis 15:2; Numbers 16:22; 1 Kings 3:5-9; Exodus 3:13; 1 Samuel 30:3-8; Judges 21:2-3; Exodus 17:3-4; Joshua 7:7.

1. “Why is it that thou hast sent me?” _____
2. “Hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?” _____
3. “What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?” _____
4. “Shall one man sin and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?” _____
5. “Who is able to judge this thy so great a people?” _____
6. “When I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say to them?” _____
7. “Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them?” _____
8. “Why is this come to pass, that there should today be one tribe lacking in Israel?” _____
9. “What shall I do unto this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” _____
10. “Wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us?” _____

—J. Stephen Lang, *The Complete Book of Bible Trivia* (Tyndale House Pub.)

Answers to Last Issue: **Six Things Missing in Heaven:** 1. Married; 2. die; 3. tears; 4. pain; 5. curse; 6. night; **Bible Curses:** 1. Those who attempt to remain under the Law of Moses (Gal. 3:10); 2. Paul (Gal. 1:8); 3. Christ (Gal. 3:13); 4. The blind and the deaf (Lev. 19:14); 5. Job (2:9); 6. Malachi (4:6); 7. James (3:10); 8. Paul (Acts 23:12); 9. Satan (Job 1:11; 2:5); 10. Ecclesiastes (10:20); **The Adulteress and the Naughty Person:** 1. wormwood (Prov. 5:4); 2. Lord (5:21); 3. discord (6:12-14); 4. feet (6:18); 5. bread (6:26); 6. innocent (6:29); 7. jealousy (6:34); 8. loud (7:11); 9. flattery (7:21); 10. strong (7:26).





Have You Oiled Your Bible?

“Study to show thyself approved unto God...” —2 Timothy 2:15

Fred W. Cropp, President of the American Bible Society, once received a letter asking: “What do you recommend for keeping the leather of Bibles from getting stiff, cracking, and peeling?” The reply was, “There is one oil that is especially good for treatment of leather on Bibles. It will insure your Bible stays in good condition. It is not sold, but may be found in the palm of the human hand.” Have you been “oiling your Bible much lately?” Just four chapters a day will complete the entire Bible in a year; one chapter a day will complete the New Testament in two-hundred and sixty days; three chapters a day finishes the NT four times a year; nine chapters completes it once a month.



Free Study Materials!

Contact church listed on the front



Free Tape!

James Watkins is one of the most trusted preachers of this generation. His TV program (*Preaching the Gospel*) is seen weekly in cities across the country. We made arrangement for our readers to receive a FREE cassette featuring four of his most popular sermons: Marriage, Assurance of Salvation, How to Become a Christian, and Parenting. Simply contact us and request “free tape offer.”

Free Magazine!



HTH has made arrangement for our readers to receive a sample copy of *The Voice of Truth International*. It is a Reader's Digest style quarterly book with a religious emphasis. Each issue has over 100 pages of great material—in easy-to-read lengths. Usually \$4 each, the publishers have agreed to give HTH readers a free trial copy! To receive yours contact: choate@worldevangelism.org | 1-417-823-4918 (for all other materials call church listed on front).

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- I want the pamphlet “What to Expect When you Visit the Church of Christ.”

Personal Help:

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Free Tracts!



- Send me this month's packet!
- NEW! Hands That Shed Innocent Blood.** This 16-page booklet is the second in a series examining “Seven Things a Loving God Hates” from Proverbs 6:19. It looks at what God says about murder, capital punishment, murder in the heart, and killing in self-defense.
- NEW! In Pursuit of Enthusiasm.**

Has life lost its zest for you? Are you just going through the motions spiritually? It might be time to pursue enthusiasm again.

- How to Be the Best Giver in Your Congregation.**
How the poorest person in a congregation can be its best giver.
- A Baptism in New Testament Times.**
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In the Interest of Christian UNITY

First Century Christianity



Is it possible for people living today to simply be New Testament Christians? Can we be first century Christians in the twenty-first century? So much is said today about “change”—and much change is evident. Computers, communications, and candidates are constantly changing. Must the Gospel be changed to fit a changing world or is the message of Christ’s sacrifice still sufficient for today (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)?

MAN HAS NOT CHANGED. In what is thought to be the oldest book in the Bible

(Job), Job’s friend said that man “drinketh iniquity like water...” (Job 15:16). That could have been a description of people today. Man now struggles with the same greed, lust, and bitterness as those of previous generations. Human nature today is as it was yesterday. Man has always been given the choice of good or evil (Deuteronomy 11:26), and has always—to some degree—chosen evil (Romans 3:23).

MAN’S PROBLEM HAS NOT CHANGED. In Noah’s days people were wicked: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). In our day sin is all our problem. Man is sinful—un-God-like. “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Ecclesiastes 7:20). There is not even one among accountable people who has not sinned (Romans 3:10, 23). Our problem is a common problem—SIN.

MAN’S HOPE HAS NOT CHANGED. Jesus is our only hope. Paul spoke of “...Christ...the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24). Without this death man would be without hope. “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18). Man’s hope is in the fact that Jesus suffered sin’s penalty in man’s place.

Man is the same; sin is the same; man’s hope is the same. First century Christianity *is* possible today. Through a return to the New Testament teaching in loving obedience to the Gospel we can be Christians only (Acts 2:36-47; Romans 6:1-6). God requires: learning of Christ (Romans 10:17), belief in Christ (John 3:16), repentance of sin (Acts 2:38), confession of faith (Romans 10:9, 10), and baptism (Mark 16:16). Have you obeyed the Gospel? If not, now is the time!

—adapted from Charles Box, Greenville, AL



Things About the Church of Christ that Surprise People

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST HAS NO “CREED BOOK.”

Often someone says, “You mean you follow only the Bible!,” or “The church of Christ does not have a creed book for its members!?” Why is this surprising? Because most religious people have been under the influence of prayer books, creed books, manuals, disciplines, and articles of faith since youth. However, the Bible states that the Scriptures supply all we need spiritually (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). Jesus said His Word will judge us in the last day, not man’s (John 12:48). “Come and see” (John 1:39).



Tell Me More About JESUS

On a Hill Far Away...



Few songs have words of such intensity as these written by George Bennard: “On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame...” As our mind’s eye catches a glimpse of Calvary we see the great cost at which our salvation came.

I want to share with you a story that brought tears to my eyes. The author is Tim Miller from Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania (related in *Leadership* magazine).

My nine-year-old daughter Jennifer was looking forward to our family’s mini-vacation. But when our vacation arrived, she became ill, and a long anticipated day at Sea World was replaced by an all-night series of CAT scans, X-rays, and blood work at a hospital.

As morning approached, the doctors told my exhausted little girl that she needed to have one more test, a spinal tap. The procedure would be painful, they said. The doctor then asked me if I planned to stay in the room. I nodded my head, knowing I couldn’t leave Jennifer alone during the ordeal.

The doctors gently asked Jennifer to remove all her clothing. She looked at me with childlike modesty as if to ask if that were all right. Then they had her curl into a tiny ball. I buried my face in hers and hugged her.

When the needle went in, Jennifer cried. As the searing pain increased, she sobbingly repeated, “Daddy, Daddy, Daddy,” her voice becoming more earnest with each word. It was as if she was saying, “Oh Daddy, this hurts soooo bad. Please can’t you do something?”

My tears mingled with hers. My heart was broken. I felt nauseous. Because I loved her, I was allowing her to go through the most agonizing experience of her life, and I could hardly stand it. (We later learned that Jennifer’s illness was not serious.)

In the middle of the spinal tap, my thoughts went to the cross of Christ. What unspeakable pain both the Son—and the Father—went through at the cross for our sakes (2 Corinthians 9:15).

We owe a debt that can never be fully paid—the best we can do is give ourselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1, 2). —Garvis Semore

The Colors of Calvary



GREEN—The Color of Envy: “For he knew that for envy they had delivered him” (Matthew 27:18).

YELLOW—The Color of Cowardice: “He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude” (Matthew 27:24).

GREY—The Color of Unbelief: “What is truth?” (John 18:38).

PURPLE—The Color of Royalty (mockery): “Hail, King of the Jews” (John 19:2-3).

WHITE—The Color of Innocence: “a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:19).

BLACK—The Color of Sin: “There was darkness over all the land” (Matthew 27:45).

CRIMSON—The Color of Forgiveness: “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28).