



UNMASKING SOPHISTRY

A Journal of Christian Evidences and Comparative Religions

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"See to it that there is no one who takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception in accordance with human tradition, in accordance with the elementary principles of the world, rather than in accordance with Christ."

(Colossians 2:8, NASB)

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From The Editor's Desk

We are happy to publish the sixteenth edition of *Unmasking Sophistry Magazine*. It is the fourth and last issue in the year 2024. We thank God for the grace He has given us for this journal's regular publication. As usual, this journal is designed to teach the truth of God's word and expose the various arguments prepared in defense of false religion and arguments designed to oppose the Christian faith. Various sections have been created in this journal to cover a wide range of areas, and topics relating to each section will be discussed in every edition.

In the last issue of this journal, we examined various subjects under each of the sections including *Jesus Christ, the Chief Cornerstone; Is Bible Doctrine important?; The proper recipient of church benevolence; The rise of denominationalism; The history of the institutional controversy; Denominationalism: Churches of Christ and unholy alliances; What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?; Jesus Christ – God or Man?; Did God elect people by name before the foundation of the world? Quibbles that Backfired; Should a polygamist be baptized?;* and other interesting topics. We appreciate all the encouraging feedback received from our dear readers.

Meanwhile, this edition shall focus on topics such as; *Is Progressive Repentance Scriptural?; Why are there so many churches?; Instrumental music in Worship; The Restoration Movement; Reaching Today's Generation; Pricilla and Aquilla – The Couple Who Worked Together In God's Kingdom;* and other good topics.

You are warmly reminded that *Unmasking Sophistry Magazine* is available online and all editions (past and present) can be accessed and downloaded online at www.unmaskingsophistry.com/downloads

The open door policy of the magazine is still very much intact – if anyone disagrees with an article in any edition of the magazine, such could write a rebuttal to it and we would be willing to publish it in the same issue to which the article he is replying appeared. Alternatively, a proposition will be set for the writer of the article and whoever dissents to affirm and deny respectively as the case may be – with the aim of knowing the truth on the subject matter.

We wish you all a Happy New Month of October and pray that we all become more steadfast in the work of God. We would continue to hold fast to the pattern of sound words that we have heard from the apostles, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 1:13; Acts 2:42).

God's Love and Blessings.

Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba
Editor

Is Progressive Repentance Scriptural?

By Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba | Lagos, Nigeria

During my preaching work in Ghana in July and August 2024, I heard the term “Progressive Repentance” for the first time. This is the idea that an alien sinner may not repent of his sins *by ending the sins* before he gets baptized. In particular, if you preach to a polygamist or someone cohabiting, and such believes the gospel and is willing to be baptized, some teach that you may go ahead and baptize him while he keeps living with all of his wives pending when he can completely separate from them. Some others argue that while repentance is necessary before baptism, repentance does not require one to end the sins. They see repentance as a commitment to end sins and not necessarily putting an end to the sin itself. And so, they argue that as long as one has made the promise or the commitment to change, then such may be baptized even if such is still in the sin. However, the Bible teaches that repentance is necessary before baptism (Acts 2:38) and clearly, there is no true repentance when your action contradicts what God has commanded. One must bear fruits worthy of repentance to be pleasing to God (Matthew 3:8).

What is Repentance?

Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of action – Matthew 21:29 (KJV). Godly sorrow is NOT repentance (II Corinthians 7:9-10). Repentance means to reverse, to change your mind so you think and act differently. In Matthew 21:28-30, we read: *“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.”* Who truly repented? The one

that **said** or the one that **went**? Jesus said the son who said he would not go was the one who **repented** and **went**. It shows that the one who did what was necessary was the one who truly repented. The other son who said he would go is a clear indication that he did not repent since he did not do what he needed to do. So, if a man has not done what he ought to do, he has not displayed true repentance.

It is not true repentance if someone does not show the fruits of repentance or does things that are contrary to the change he should be having. A drunkard who said “I repent” but reduced his consumption from one carton of beer to half a carton has not repented. The man who stole your phone and said “I repent” but wishes to keep the phone for 6 months before he returns it has not repented. The polygamous or cohabiting man who says “I repent” but still living with a woman who is not his wife has not repented.

Some say that we are delaying the salvation of a polygamist if we ask them to end the sin of adultery they are committing before they get baptized. But would baptism wash away sins that one has not repented of? When Jesus noticed that the rich young ruler had a problem with possession, He told him to go and do something first before coming to follow Him. Matthew 19:21 *“Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”*

Jesus required that something be done FIRST before the ruler would come to Him. Was Jesus delaying his salvation when He asked him to go and do something first before coming to follow Him? (Please read verse 16 to see that the rich young ruler was asking Jesus what to do to have eternal life).

Continued on pg. 9

WORLD RELIGIONS

Why So Many Churches?

By Doug Tellinghuisen | Florida, USA

The first century

In the Bible the word church is derived from the Greek word *EKKLESIA* which variously means “assembly, congregation, or a calling out”. Jesus used this word when He said, “I will build My church”, **Mt. 16:18**. The Biblical name “church of Christ” thus means the “called out of Christ”. His church is referred to as: “The church, the church of God, the church of Christ, the church of the first born”, **Col. 1:18, 1 Cor. 1:2, Rom. 16:16, Heb. 12:23**.

His church is also referred to as a “*body*”, **Col. 1:18**, and there is “*one body*”, **Eph. 4:4**.

As one looks around a town or city, he will note that there are more than one churches, bodies, or faiths in existence. Some have said that there are 1300 to 4700 church types in America alone. So, getting back to our subject we ask, “why so many churches”? “*God is not a God of confusion,*” **1 Cor. 14:33**.

The obvious answer is that a departure from one body has taken place. Jesus and His apostles predicted that this would happen. (See: **Mt. 7:15-20, 2 Tim. 4:1,2, 3:1-5, 2 Pet. 2:1,2, Jude 4, Titus 1:16, 1 John 2:18, 3 John 9,10**).

The second century

One early departure came in the second century when men decided to change the organization of Jesus' church. His church is made up of elders, deacons, and saints (Christians), **Phil. 1:1**. Other terms for elder are: presbyter, shepherd, bishop, pastor, overseer. There was a plurality of elders in every church, **Acts 14:23**. It is normal when you have a plurality of men in any meeting for one to be more dominant or the spokesman. So, it seemed natural to separate that person from the others with a different title. They

decided to call the head elder a bishop and the others under him remained elders. Still, in this century there was only one church, one body and one faith.

As time went on it seemed right and proper to share ideas concerning worship and the work of the church. So, eventually ecumenical councils and synods were formed to make rules and solve doctrinal disputes. Bishops and elders came from many countries to participate.

The third through fifth centuries

During this three-hundred-year period several innovations were introduced such as infant baptism and confessionals, which are not found in the scriptures.

The Bible clearly teaches that men are not to add to or take away from what is in the scriptures: **Duet 4:2, 12:32, Rev. 22:18,19**

Baptism by affusion (sprinkling) was first practiced in 251 A.D.

The seventh century

Prior to the seventh century, we had only one church or body; but in this century, we find a second church and another title with the Catholic church naming its first Pope, Boniface III, in 606 A.D. Until this time, there were as many as five Patriarchs, or Popes, located in the cities of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.

The eleventh century

In 1054, there was a great schism between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. Now, we have three churches: the Lord's church, the Roman Catholic church, and the Greek Orthodox church.

Indulgencies were first practiced in the Catholic church in 1095.



The sixteenth century: Reformation Movement

In 1517, Martin Luther, a Catholic monk had a problem with the Catholic church over the topic of indulgencies where the church would deceive their followers into thinking they could pay money for loved ones who died that their sins would be removed in Purgatory. This false doctrine paid for the current massive cathedral in Rome. It was a fraud and Martin Luther called the Roman church out when he nailed his ninety-five points to a door in Wittenberg, Germany. Other Roman Catholics such as John Calvin resisted some of the church's teachings as well. He did not use the instrument of music. John Wesley called out the church of England (Episcopalian) for some of their errors too.

The thought was to reform some of the abuses and man-made doctrines in the churches. Here are a few of the churches they started in three centuries:

Lutheran	Martin Luther	1520	Germany
Episcopalian	Henry VIII	1534	England
Presbyterian	John Calvin	1536	Switzerland
Congregational	Robert Browne	1550	England
Baptist	John Smythe	1607	Holland
Methodist	John Wesley	1739	England

Note: All the above denominations have been divided into many other sub-denominations. For example, the Methodists have some forty different varieties, the Presbyterians seventeen, and the Baptists twenty or more.

The invention of the printing press accelerated the expansion of denominations.

The eighteenth century: Restoration Movement in America

Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, former Presbyterians and Baptists, along with John

Smith, Walter Scott and others said that the need was to go all the way back to the first century and restore the church Jesus and His apostles established. These men said it was not enough to reform the Catholic or Protestant churches in existence then. Thus, these churches were established:

Christian church	Barton W. Stone	1804	America
Disciples of Christ	Alexander Campbell	1832	America

In addition to these two churches wanting to restore the original church of the first century, others decided to start denominations in this century not aligned with apostolic traditions.

Mormon L.D.S.	Joseph Smith	1830	America
Adventists	William Miller	1830	America
Christian Scientist	Mary Baker Eddy	1866	America
Jehovah's Witnesses	Charles T. Russell	1872	America

The twentieth century

Church of Christ	Various men	1906	America
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Note: The Disciples of Christ split into two groups forming the church of Christ officially even though the church is a biblical name and probably was in existence without the formal recognition. Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overpower it", **Mt. 16:18**. The main reason for the split was over the use of an instrument in worship.

But note that the "church of Christ" did not originate in the early 1900s, as it was established in the first century by the preaching of the apostles in keeping with Christ's promise that He would build His church on the "rock," the fact that He was the Son of God (**Mt. 16:18**). We then see evidence of the church's existence in various passages such as **Romans 16:16**: "The churches of Christ salute you." The aim of various men was just to restore the original church rather than



establish some denomination which followed doctrines of men in addition to the Bible. This church is living and active in many nations today.

The twenty-first century forward

A favorite admonition you hear is “choose the church of your choice”. It assumes that every church that points to the cross is alright with Jesus. Instead, we need to choose the church that He built. Every plant that men build will be rooted up, **Mt. 15:13**

Faith alone which is a popular doctrine of the Reformation Movement forward is not taught in the Bible. It takes faith plus obedience to please Jesus who is Lord, **Jas. 2:24, Mt. 7:21,26**. The same book of **Romans** where Martin Luther added the word “alone” in **Rom. 3:28** also has the “obedience of *faith*” in the first chapter and the last, **1:5, 16:26**.

On the Judgment Day we will be judged by the Scriptures, **John 12:48**. No catechism or creed book of any denomination will save you. In Scriptures alone, we have everything that we need to build for every good work, **2 Tim 3:16**.

If we, like Martin Luther, John Calvin, Barton W. Stone, Thomas, and Alexander Campbell see that the church we are in does not follow the pattern laid out by Jesus and His apostles, we must have the courage to change. It is an individual decision. Our parents can't make it for us. If our ancestors going back centuries committed to the wrong church, it makes no sense for you and me or our children to repeat their mistake. Hell is not a pleasant destination.

“*Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith*”, **2 Cor. 13:5**.

The faith was once delivered in the time of the apostles, and we must contend for it, **Jude 3**.

Reasons why so many churches

The reasons are many but consider the following list:

1. Men do not love Jesus and follow His commands. **John 14:15**

2. Men do not follow the apostles as they follow Jesus, **1 Cor. 11:1**
3. Men prefer to think of men above that which is written, **1 Cor. 4:6**
4. Men do not speak as the oracles of God, **1 Pet. 4:11**
5. Men would rather please men rather than God, **Gal. 1:9,10**.
6. Men follow men rather than Christ, **1 Cor. 1:12**
7. Division is sin and men do sin, **1 Cor. 1 :10, Rom. 3:23**
8. Men speak perverse things, **Acts 20:28-30**
9. Men exalt themselves above all that is called God, **2 Thess. 2:3,4**
10. False apostles, deceitful workers, **2 Cor. 11:12,14**
11. Men giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, **2 Tim. 4:1,2**
12. Men lovers of self, lovers of money etc. **2 Tim 3:1-5**
13. False teachers bringing in destructive heresies, **2 Pet. 2:1,2**
14. Men turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, **Jude 4**
15. Men profess to know God, but their works deny Him, **Titus 1:6**
16. Many false prophets are gone out into the world, **1 John 4:1**
17. Men prating against the apostles with wicked words, **3 John: 9,10**
18. Lack of knowledge, **Hos. 4:6**

Thus, eighteen reasons from Jesus and His apostles why division and splitting of churches exists. Jesus prayed for unity, **John 17:17. Division is a sin, 1 Cor. 1:10.**

These reasons above should be a call to action for each



of us to “test ourselves to see if we are in the faith”, 2 Cor. 13:5; and “test the spirits to see whether they are from God”, 1 John 4:1.

Does Jesus approve of hundreds of churches? No, Jesus said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up”, Mt. 15:13.

Characteristics of the One church Jesus built:

1. Each local church had elders, deacons and saints, Phil. 1:1... Nothing more.
2. Each local church worshipped God with singing, Col. 3:16, Eph. 5:19... No instruments.
3. Each local church takes the Lord's Supper every week, Acts 20:7... Not monthly, quarterly.
4. The Lord adds to His church those who are saved, Acts 2:7... No voting in members.
5. Those that believe and are baptized are saved, Mk. 16:16... No sinner's prayer. No infants.
6. He that confesses Jesus as Lord and believes God raised Him is saved, Rom. 10:9.
7. He that repents and is baptized in the name of Jesus has sins removed. Acts 2:38
8. Each local church gave as they were prospered, 1 Cor. 1:2... Tithing discontinued in N.T.

My plea is this:

The one church, one faith, one body can be departed from. The road to eternal life is narrow. The road to destruction is broad, Mt. 7: “Choose this day who you will serve,” Joshua 24:15.

If the church that one belongs to does not practice or teach these commands, he/she is not in His church. Paul said, “therefore, come out from their midst and be separate, says the Lord, and do not touch what is unclean”, 2 Cor. 6:17.

Let us pray for unity as Jesus did, John 17 --

Is Progressive Repentance Scriptural?

Continued from pg. 5

Would saying “I would sell them and give to the poor” suffice for actually selling them and giving to the poor?

Many people I know that advocate the *baptism first and repentance later doctrine* would not restore a brother who was disfellowshipped for cohabiting if he is still living with the girl but says “I repent”? They would not restore a man who was disfellowshipped for marrying a second wife if he's still living with the woman but says “I repent”? But why would a polygamist be baptized if he says “I repent” but still living with the woman?

If repentance does not mean quitting sin as some said, then it means **one may not quit sins** before baptism, and so, **one may still continue sinning** at the point of baptism and some time afterward. If repentance is **the decision or commitment** to quit sin, then one can **decide** to quit a sin before baptism and then actually quit the sin some 6 months afterward. So, one can continue sinning some 6 months after baptism. Apparently, let's just baptize as many people as possible and then we can teach them to change later. That is exactly what some are teaching and that's unscriptural.

What is the point of baptizing polygamists who are still in that sin in the first place? If after baptism, they perpetually keep living with the multiple wives, what will one do? Leave them alone? Or disfellowship them? What image are we trying to bring to the church when people see us baptizing polygamists and those cohabiting without them ending the sins?

Brethren, let us be careful to follow only what God has said so that we can be pleasing to Him.

DISCOURSE

Instrumental Music In Worship

The topic for discussion in this section is on whether instrumental music is authorized by God in Christian worship. David Abire, a Nigerian brother in the USA argues that it is scriptural for Christians to use instrumental music in worship unto God. Thomas Thrasher, an American preacher, responds to the article, emphasizing that the use of instrumental music in Christian worship is without God's approval and sinful.

Rethinking the Use of Instruments in Christian Worship

By David Abire | Church of Christ

The church has always been an ardent advocate for non-instrumental music in worship and has found ways to prove this was commanded to Christians using the New Testament. The non-use of instruments in the Churches of Christ (CoC) has been used as an identifying factor of the one true church. However, a cursory look at these passages used to prove non-instrumental worship is the only acceptable form of worship shows that these passages have almost no bearing on the music model or do not in any way or form condemn the use of instruments in worship.

Before we examine these passages, I'd like to address an inherent issue that I believe has influenced our interpretative problems, based on my experience growing up in a traditional Church of Christ family. The issue, as I see it, is that many Christians do not engage deeply enough with the Bible. During sermons or teachings, for instance, only specific verses are highlighted, and we often do not take the time to read the entire book. This leads to us comfortably basing our lifelong beliefs on a few select verses. I admit that I was guilty of this until I began questioning many of my beliefs and re-examining the passages that had shaped them. I probably still am.

A CoC member may be able to recite 2 John 9, but if you ask them about verse 8, they probably have no idea what it says. If you inquire about verse 10, they might

not even be sure if there is a verse 10 in that book, yet they frequently use verse 9 to make a point. This is an issue that needs addressing, as the key context of a passage is lost when the focus is solely on a single verse or a small group of verses that possibly align with one's preconceived belief system.

On the issue of non-instrumental worship, I will try to address the core passages the church has always used in support of this belief:

Ephesians 5:19

Ephesians 5:19, often cited in discussions about instrumental worship, Paul's context is about defining what it means for Christians to walk in love. He urges them to avoid any hint of sexual immorality, greed, or impurity, and to instead be filled with the Spirit. Paul encourages them to admonish one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord, giving thanks to the Father.

The phrase "making melody in your heart to the Lord" emphasizes sincere, heartfelt worship, focusing on the internal state rather than external forms or practices. It's important to note that Paul's advice aims to guide believers away from immoral behaviors and toward spiritual devotion through uplifting and God-glorifying practices. He wasn't establishing a law or prescribing a specific style of worship music. Instead, he was encouraging them to be spiritual and to avoid wasting their lives in drunkenness, immorality, or greed.

The argument has always come from the fact that singing was mentioned here and it is a specific instruction, so a

Christian can only give thanks to God by singing without any other accompanying tool. But even if we want to use this technical argument method, I'll direct you to the time of King David in 1 Samuel 29:4-7. There they talked about how they sang the praises of David and danced to it. If you read this passage alone, you might be forced to say it was only vocal singing they did and not accompanied by an instrument because they used the same word "sing" (sang) as Ephesians did. However, when you look at chapter 18 of 1 Samuel, verse 6 shows the singing was actually accompanied by timbrels and lyres. This means when singing is used, it doesn't mean it can't be accompanied by instruments, and the fact that instruments are used doesn't mean singing cannot be accomplished as well. So basically, the "sing" as a specific instruction concept doesn't hold any logical value.

Colossians 3:16

If you followed the explanation for Ephesians, it's the exact same thing happening here again in this chapter. Paul was still admonishing them on how to set their minds on things above and be more spiritual. He wasn't making a law still, and the same singing concept applies too.

Hebrews 13:15

This is an interesting one as it really doesn't have any bearing on singing whatsoever, but we figured out a way to make it about singing in worship. Reading the whole chapter from the start will help in giving you some context to what Paul was inching at. Verses 12 and 13 talks about the suffering of Christ and the shame he bore and why verse 15 talks about how we Christians should openly profess his name with the fruit of our lips which is a sacrifice of praise to God. This could be an admonition to people who do not believe, a poem read out openly about the suffering of Christ and the salvation it offers us. It could be anything coming off our lips to profess the goodness of Christ to the world. In other words, this is talking about our outreach to the world. You can call it your evangelism. Verse 16 also talks about doing good to others as this pleases God. The chapter has no bearing on

how we sing in worship to God but how we profess Christ to the world in our words and our deeds.

Amos 6:5

Many preachers and members of the Church I talk to now tend to avoid using Amos 6:5 as an argument against musical instruments, recognizing its irrelevance to the conversation. However, if you, like me, grew up in the church, you'll remember this passage being used to suggest that God Almighty did not approve of instruments and only tolerated their use. You might still find some old tracts pointing to this passage. The verse says, woe to *"you who strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments,"* which was quickly interpreted to mean that God disliked the use of instruments.

However, the chapter mentions many other issues. If God condemned people for using instruments, the same passage would also condemn us for dining on healthy, fat cattle or lounging on our couches at home after a long day's work. The key point is that without reading this passage in the context of what the prophet was addressing, we misinterpret the message by focusing solely on a single verse.

The prophet Amos was addressing the complacency of the people and warning that, because of their complacency, they would be the first to go into exile. God didn't have a problem with people who lay on a couch, eat healthy cattle, or play instruments, but when they stopped caring about the things of God, it becomes an issue. In essence, God has no issue with instruments. In fact, when the Israelites returned from exile, they resumed the use of instruments in the temple once it was rebuilt (Ezra 3).

Early Christian Worship

The only thing I believe to be true about instruments is that the early Christians in the New Testament probably didn't use them in their worship, as we never read about them in the books of the New Testament. However, neither the New Testament nor the Old Testament condemns the use of instruments. In fact, God revealed to

John in Revelation how praises were rendered with harps in the hands of the 24 elders. Even though the book is symbolic, if instruments were something God detested, He would have chosen a different symbol to illustrate worship to John. Maybe a hymn book scroll of some sort in the hands of the elders.

So why did the early Christians not use instruments in their worship? I think it's important to delve into a bit of Jewish history for some context.

A Quick History

Destruction of the Temple:

- The destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE by the Babylonians was a significant event that disrupted traditional worship practices, including the use of instruments.
- During the Babylonian exile, Jews were separated from the temple and its associated rituals, including instrumental music used in temple worship.

Development of the Synagogue:

- In exile, Jews developed the synagogue as a place for communal worship, prayer, and study. This setting focused more on reading and interpreting the Torah rather than the ritualistic and sacrificial practices of the temple.
- Synagogue worship was more austere and did not include the elaborate musical performances associated with temple rituals.

Return from Exile and Rebuilding the Temple:

- After the return from Babylonian exile and the rebuilding of the Second Temple (completed in 516 BCE), there was an attempt to restore some of the former temple practices, including instrumental music.
- Ezra and Nehemiah describe the use of instruments in post-exilic temple worship (Ezra 3:10, Nehemiah 12:27).

Influence of Rabbinic Judaism:

- Over time, especially after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE by the Romans, Rabbinic

Judaism became the dominant form of Jewish practice.

- Rabbinic Judaism placed greater emphasis on study, prayer, and ethical living over temple sacrifices and rituals. This shift further moved Jewish worship away from instrumental music, which was closely associated with the temple.
- **The Mishnah and Talmud:** These central texts of Rabbinic Judaism contain discussions and rulings about synagogue practices, including the shift from temple-centered worship to synagogue-centered worship.

Given the historical context where non-instrumental worship became ingrained in Jewish synagogue practices, it makes sense that when Christ came, the worship style He encountered was also non-instrumental and we know he spent a lot of time at the Synagogue too (Luke 4). This tradition carried over into the early church and was even further strengthened after the destruction of the Temple. The absence of instruments was not because God opposed them, but because it had become a cultural-religious norm for the Jews.

Christ was deeply rooted in Jewish traditions. For example, while observing the Passover, a Jewish cultural-religious tradition, He instituted a feast to remember His death. The Gospels mention that they sang a hymn afterward, reflecting the Jewish practices of the time. This demonstrates the significant influence of Jewish culture and traditions on Christ and the early Church. Additionally, Paul spent a considerable amount of time in synagogues, teaching and studying the Torah Acts 13. This further illustrates how much Jewish practices influenced the early Christians.

The point of this history is to show that God never had an issue with the use of instruments in worship.

The Jews chose not to use them long before Christianity, and because God did not disapprove of their choice, He did not punish them for omitting instruments from their worship because it didn't make a difference to God. Today, there is no Old Testament law that condemns the use of instruments, nor is there a New Testament principle that forbids it. Therefore, it is a matter of personal choice, and no one can scripturally condemn those who choose to accompany their singing to God with instruments.

David committed many sins in the sight of God, and God promptly punished him for these transgressions. For instance, his affair with Bathsheba was swiftly addressed (2 Samuel 11). Similarly, when David conducted a census of Israel, 70,000 men died as a consequence (2 Samuel 24). However, introducing instruments into worship was not one of David's sins. If God had been displeased with this addition, He would have likely acted swiftly to punish David, as He did for his other sins.

What About the Apostolic Example?

The concepts of Direct Command, Apostolic Example, and Necessary Inference are entirely man-made, credited to Alexander and Thomas Campbell. Because these concepts are man-made, they are inherently subjective. Who decides what constitutes a direct command or an approved apostolic example? These interpretations can be applied in various ways depending on personal preference. This hermeneutic approach has been the foundation of the teachings of the Church of Christ, given that its pioneers initiated the earliest movement labeled "The Church of Christ" in the 1800s. Consequently, it can be challenging to consider a different hermeneutical approach. Perhaps someday, I will share my thoughts on why I believe no Christian congregation should continue teaching these concepts in their gatherings.

What Is Important to God?

1 Corinthians 14 emphasizes the importance of worship being intelligible. Paul advocates for common sense in worship practices, stressing that speaking in tongues without interpretation is unproductive because it does not benefit others. Verse 9 states that speaking unintelligible words is like speaking into the air. Therefore, Paul's advice is rooted in practicality. In verse 15, Paul explains that when he sings, he sings with both his spirit and understanding. Singing with one's spirit means fully engaging in the act of singing. This is often easy because people can be very passionate when they sing. However, to be genuinely passionate about the words you are singing, you need to understand them. This is an area that needs attention.

I've attended congregations where less than half of the members can speak and understand English, yet they feel compelled to sing from English hymn books. They sing songs like "Night with Ebon Pinion," even though most do not know what "ebon pinion" means. Even native English speakers might not understand these words. I would rather sing a simple native song that I understand than a melodious song that makes no sense to me. Why sing a song composed by an American farmer or sailor, referencing unfamiliar cultural elements, to praise God?

What is truly important to God in our singing is our passion for Him, devoting our whole being to worship, and having a clear understanding of what we are offering to Him in praise.

Growing up in the Church, distinguishing ourselves as true Christians from others was a common practice, and we often took pride in saying we didn't use instruments in our worship, unlike other denominations.

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DISCOURSE

Instrumental Music In Worship

Response to David Abire's "Rethinking the Use of Instruments in Christian Worship"

By Thomas N. Thrasher | Church of Christ

The Bible issues a solemn warning: "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son" (2 *John* 9, NKJV). Far too often, unfortunately, men who once believed the truth that God has clearly revealed in His Holy Word, have chosen to depart from that truth. For that reason, I believe, as I have believed since I began studying the Holy Scriptures as a child, that the Bible teaches that the use of mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship is without Divine authority. Nothing in brother David Abire's article "Rethinking the Use of Instruments in Christian Worship" persuades me to change that conviction. The standard for evaluating the positions espoused by brother Abire and me is the Bible, God's inspired truth—especially the New Testament of Jesus Christ (*Matthew* 26:28; *Hebrews* 9:15; 12:24). The Old Testament Law has been "nailed ... to the cross" (*Colossians* 2:14); it "is taken away in Christ" (2 *Corinthians* 3:14); those "who attempt to be justified by" it "have fallen from grace" (*Galatians* 5:4). There has been a "change of the law" by God's design (*Hebrews* 7:12).

In the first paragraph of his article, brother Abire asserts, "A cursory look at these passages [some of which I will cite in this article, TNT] used to prove non-instrumental worship is the only acceptable form of worship shows that these passages have almost no bearing on the music model or do not in any way or form condemn the use of instruments in worship." According to the online *Oxford Languages* dictionary,

"cursory" is an adjective meaning "hasty and therefore not thorough or detailed." A further definition is "going rapidly over something, without noticing details; hasty; superficial." Synonyms listed are "quick, brief, passing, haphazard." Is that the kind of study of God's word recommended by brother Abire? He proceeds to say, "Many Christians do not engage deeply enough with the Bible." I think David is criticizing one's taking a "cursory look" at understanding Bible statements on "singing" in NT worship that he himself mentioned in his first paragraph! Brother Abire seems to be classed among those "many Christians [who] do not engage deeply enough with the Bible"!

David claims that the passages to which he referred, most of which I will address in this article, "do not in any way or form *condemn the use of instruments in worship*." Note carefully the principles established in the Bible passages I cite in the following discussion. Do they "in any way or form *condemn the use of instruments in worship*"? I ask the reader to use sound judgment.

The New Testament teaches God's people to **sing** praises to Him (e.g., *Ephesians* 5:19; *Colossians* 3:16; *Acts* 16:25), and **nowhere** does the New Testament authorize anyone today to use **mechanical instruments of music** in worship! To clarify, "mechanical instruments" include such things as piano, organ, guitar, trumpet, violin, harp, or other devices that produce music. "Music" is defined as "the art and science of combining vocal or instrumental sounds or tones in varying melody, harmony, rhythm, and timbre, especially so as to form structurally

complete and emotionally expressive compositions” (*Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language*, 1976, p. 1184).

The New Testament establishes the principle that we should practice only those things that are **authorized** by God. *1 Peter 4:11*, “If anyone speaks, let him **speak as the oracles of God...**” *Colossians 3:17*, “And whatever you do in word or deed, **do all** in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

New Testament authority is complete! We have **all truth** (*John 16:13; 14:26*). We have **all** that pertains to life and godliness (*2 Peter 1:3*). We are to contend for the faith that was once **delivered** to the saints (*Jude 3*). Furthermore, **we are limited to what has been revealed!** We must **not accept** the preaching of a so-called apostle or angel in place of it (*Galatians 1:6-9*). We must **not exalt any man** above it (*1 Corinthians 4:6*). We must **not transgress** it (*2 John 9*). We must **not add** to or take away from it (*Revelation 22:18-19; Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6*).

To *illustrate* this idea let us examine New Testament authority as it relates to the elements to be used in the Lord’s Supper.

Where Is N.T. Authority?	
<u>Bread & Fruit of the Vine</u>	<u>Roast Lamb</u>
Matthew 26:26-29	Where Is The Scripture ???
Mark 14:22-25	
Luke 22:17-20	
1 Corinthians 10:16	
1 Corinthians 11:23-28	
For The Elements In The Lord’s Supper	

Remembering the Lord’s death **in the manner He commanded** REQUIRES eating the **bread** and drinking the **fruit of the vine**: “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord

Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took **bread**; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same manner He also took the **cup** after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me’” (*1 Corinthians 11:23-25*). **Every passage** mentioning the elements of the Lord’s Supper specifies the **bread** and the **cup** (that is, the fruit of the vine). Does David think it would be permissible to use Roast Lamb in the Lord’s Supper? Does he think we would be right if we **added** jam or jelly or peanut butter to the bread in the Lord’s Supper? I believe doing that would violate the Lord’s instructions! What does David think, now that he has committed himself to “rethinking” so-called Church of Christ *traditions*? Has he “rethought” what he has previously believed about the elements in the Lord’s Supper?

I contend, therefore, that we are limited to these elements specified by the Lord. We would **not be authorized to add** or substitute roast lamb or some other element. I suspect that David accepts this principle. However, when we apply the **SAME PRINCIPLE** to music in worship, what do we find? **SINGING** is the **only** kind of music God has authorized in NT worship!

Where Is N.T. Authority?	
<u>Singing</u>	<u>Mechanical Instruments</u>
Acts 16:25	Where Is The Scripture ???
Romans 15:9	
1 Corinthians 14:15	
Ephesians 5:19	
Colossians 3:16	
Hebrews 2:12	
James 5:13	
Music In New Testament Worship	

Acts 16:25, “Paul and Silas were praying and **singing** hymns to God.” *Romans 15:9*, “I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and **sing** to Your name.” *1*

Corinthians 14:15, “I will **sing** with the spirit, and I will also **sing** with the understanding.” *Ephesians 5:19*, “**Speaking** to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and **making melody in your heart** to the Lord.” *Colossians 3:16*, “Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” *Hebrews 2:12*, “In the midst of the assembly [church] I will **sing praise** to You.” *James 5:13*, “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him **sing** psalms.” In each case, we find the first century Christians **sang**, but we **never** read that they *played on mechanical instruments in worship*. To play upon mechanical instruments in New Testament worship is to ADD something God has not authorized!

David refers to *Ephesians 5:19* and *Colossians 3:16*. After making his comments, those verses in David's Bible still tell God's people to **SING!** They say **nothing** about God's approving the use of musical instruments such as pianos, guitars, etc. in New Testament worship. Please read what *God's revealed word says!* Using such instruments ADDS to what God's word says about scriptural New Testament worship!

Brother Abire evidently thinks he has found something useful to his “rethinking” the use of instruments of music in NT worship. In his discussion of *Ephesians 5:19*, brother Abire makes an appeal to what is recorded in *1 Samuel* (in case you are unaware of its location in the Bible, that is an **Old Testament** reference)! It is NOT instruction found in the New Testament relating to OUR WORSHIP in spirit and in **truth** (*John 4:23-24*).

1 Samuel 18:6 tells us **they used** “musical

instruments”! How does my brother KNOW that those women used “musical instruments”? Simple. The *text tells us they did* by saying “*with musical instruments*” (*1 Samuel 18:6*, NKJV). Now, why didn't brother Abire produce a similar text in connection with *Ephesians 5:19* or ANY passage referring to NT worship? Is there **ANY NT statement** comparable to what *1 Samuel 18:6* states: “*with musical instruments*”? **NO, NOT ONE!** If he had discovered one in the NT, I'm confident he would have quoted it instead of *1 Samuel 18:6* (from the OT)!

One important distinction that people often fail to make is between **generic** and **specific** authority. This chart illustrates the distinction.

Generic or Specific?		
<u>Command</u>	<u>Generic</u>	<u>Specific</u>
Build Ark Genesis 6:14	Wood	Gopher
Wash 2 Kings 5:10-14	Water	Jordan
Go Wash John 9:7	Water	Siloam
Sing Colossians 3:16 Ephesians 5:19	Music	Sing

When God commanded Noah to build the ark, He did **not** give him a **general** command to make the ark out of **wood**. If He had done that, then Noah would have been authorized to use **any kind of wood** he might choose (e.g., oak, cedar, redwood, gopher, etc.). However, what God commanded was “make yourself an ark of **gopher wood**” (*Genesis 6:14*). God's command was **specific** as to the kind of wood to be used. Therefore, Noah was **not authorized** to use oak, cedar, redwood, or any other kind of wood besides “**gopher wood**”! A generic (or general) command authorizes any kind within the category (“wood”), but

a specific command authorizes **only** the particular kind indicated (“gopher wood”). When Noah followed God's directions (including using *gopher wood* as opposed to some other kind of wood), the Bible states: “Thus Noah did; according to **all that God commanded him**, so he did” (*Genesis 6:22*; cf. *7:5*).

Similarly, when the prophet Elisha told the leper Naaman, “Go and **wash in the Jordan** seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean” (*2 Kings 5:10*), the place he was to wash was **specific** (the Jordan River), not generic (water). This is readily seen when Naaman proposed washing in some other water (the Abanah or the Pharpar, rivers of Damascus). These were not authorized in Elisha's command from God. If the command had been simply “go wash in water” (*a generic command: “water”*), the Abanah or Pharpar would have been authorized. However, the command specified “Jordan,” so no other water was authorized for this washing. It was not until Naaman “went down and dipped seven times *in the Jordan*, according to the saying of the man of God” (*5:14*) that his leprosy was cleansed. Naaman had no right to **generalize** what God's messenger had **specified!**

Likewise, with regard to **New Testament worship**, God has authorized us to “**sing**” (*Ephesians 5:19*; *Colossians 3:16*; etc.), as we have already observed. Singing is **specific** with respect to the kind of music; playing upon a mechanical instrument (piano, guitar, etc.) is **another kind** of music. If God had only said, “**Make music** [generic] in NT worship,” then, for example, a piano, an organ, a guitar, or other instruments would have been permitted by the generic command. However, when God specified **singing** in NT worship, then *playing upon mechanical*

instruments was **excluded** as *an addition to God's word* (*2 John 9*; *Revelation 22:18*).

The Lord observed concerning the worship that some people offer, “And in **vain** they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the **commandments of men**” (*Matthew 15:9*). The Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, has repeatedly condemned the practice of **adding** to God's law. *Deuteronomy 4:2*, “You shall **not add** to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.” *Numbers 22:18*, “Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, ‘Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less **or more**.’” *Proverbs 30:5-6*, “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. **Do not add to His words**, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.” *Revelation 22:18-19*, “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone **adds** to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” Consequently, *we must not add* pianos, organs, guitars, trumpets, and other mechanical instruments of music to the **singing** authorized in New Testament worship (*Ephesians 5:19*; *Colossians 3:16*; *Acts 16:25*)! To transgress the doctrine of Christ is sin! *2 John 9*, “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God.” *1 John 3:4*, “Sin is the transgression of the law.”

Lest some think that adding mechanical instruments (without NT authority!) is a very *minor* matter, let me remind us of a few Bible events that overthrow this

notion. “Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, **which He had not commanded them**. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and **they died** before the LORD” (*Leviticus 10:1-2*). Violating God's command was punished severely! Disobedience was not a little matter! Furthermore, when the ark of the covenant was being transported on a new cart instead of the manner that God had commanded, the Bible records, “When they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and **took hold of it** [contrary to God's instructions!], for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and **he died** there by the ark of God” (*2 Samuel 6:6-7*). God's response demonstrates Uzzah's *violation* was a *serious* matter! Even King David was displeased with what God did (*2 Samuel 6:8*), as many people today are when confronted with God's instructions.

My brother ridicules the idea that we need to accept the authority of God's word, saying, “The concepts of Direct Command, Apostolic Example, and Necessary Inference are entirely man-made.” While I use a little different terminology (Command, Statement, Approved Example, Necessary Implication), these terms describe how we establish God's will for us. Brother Abire further states: “No Christian congregation should continue teaching these concepts in their gatherings.” How does he **know** what God wants us to do without using such *means of knowing*? I am sure that my brother uses these means to decide what to believe, although perhaps he is unaware he's using them! Does he believe that people must be baptized to be saved? How does he **KNOW** that? In fact, he uses these very means of knowing!

When brother Abire asks the question “What is important to God?” he betrays an all-too-common misconception that God grants us the liberty to determine what is *really* important! My well-intentioned brother proposes that LOVE is what really matters, saying, “It is through love, not distinctions like the issue of instruments ... Our true identity should be demonstrated by how we show love to one another.” But Jesus taught, “If you love Me, **you will keep My commandments**” (*John 14:15*). In verse 23 the Lord said, “If anyone loves Me, **he will keep My word ...**” Yes, love is important, as many Bible passages demonstrate, but those who *truly love the Lord will KEEP HIS WORD*, including heeding His warnings not to add to His words (*Revelation 22:18-19*; cf. *Deuteronomy 4:2*; *Proverbs 30:5-6*)!

**Singing is the Only Kind of Music
God Has Authorized in N.T. Worship!**

Acts 16:25	Singing
Romans 15:9	Sing
1 Corinthians 14:15	Sing
Ephesians 5:19	Singing
Colossians 3:16	Singing
Hebrews 2:12	Sing
James 5:13	Sing

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”—Hebrews 13:15

Consequently, if we are conscientious about serving the Lord acceptably and worshipping Him **in spirit and in truth** (*John 4:24*), we should **sing** in our worship to God and **not play** upon mechanical instruments of music that have been added without His authority.

Since brother Abire cited an objection to our using *Hebrews 13:15* relating to our topic, I wish to make some observations. David comments, “This is an interesting one as it doesn't have any bearing on singing whatsoever ... It could be anything coming off

our lips to profess the goodness of Christ to the world.” Consider these two statements he makes regarding the applications of the idea expressed in *Hebrews 13:15*. He contends that the verse “doesn't have any bearing on singing whatsoever,” yet he admits that “it could be anything coming off our lips to profess the goodness of Christ to the world.” Can we “profess the goodness of Christ to the world” through singing praise to God? Please read what Paul and Silas did while prisoners in Philippi: “But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **SINGING HYMNS OF PRAISE** to God and **THE PRISONERS WERE LISTENING TO THEM**” (*Acts 16:25*, NASB 1995). Could those Christians (Paul and Silas) “profess the goodness of Christ to the world” (certainly those other prisoners were part of *the world*), yet they “were listening” as Paul and Silas were SINGING hymns of praise to God. “The fruit of our lips” can indeed be produced as we **sing praise to God!** Brother Abire contends that this idea “doesn't have **any bearing** on singing **WHATSOEVER!**” Remember, our brother admitted *Hebrews 13:15* “could be **ANYTHING** coming off our lips to profess the goodness of Christ to the world”! Is it possible to do that by *singing*? Brother Abire's contention is clearly wrong, as *Acts 16:25* demonstrates.

My brother also cites an argument some have made on *Amos 6:5*. I am inclined to agree with his view that the argument some have made when they misuse *Amos 6:5* is not a sound argument. This is one of the few points he presented that I believe is valid. However, I don't make that argument, and it is totally unnecessary to argue that the use of instruments in addition to singing in NT worship is unauthorized by God based upon *Amos 6:5*. However, this verse most certainly does not support his rethinking the use of

mechanical instruments of music in NT worship! So, it doesn't prove his position!

Brother Abire devoted some attention in his article to the idea that “early Christians” DID NOT “use instruments in their worship.” He includes “A Quick History” that mentions several points; however, he writes, “Given the historical context where non-instrumental worship became ingrained in Jewish synagogue practices, it makes sense that when Christ came, the worship style He encountered was also non-instrumental ... This tradition carried over into the early church ...” While the use or non-use of instrumental music during this time period is an interesting study, the conclusions about non-use do not justify the conclusion that *God authorizes* things such as pianos, organs, guitars, etc. in NT worship!

**Why Not Use Mechanical Instruments
Of Music in New Testament Worship?**

Jesus never authorized it!

The Holy Spirit never revealed it!

The apostles never commanded it!

No inspired person ever taught it!

1st Century Christians did not practice it!

***“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him
must worship in spirit and truth”
(John 4:24).***

Thank you for your fair consideration of what I have presented from clear passages in *the inspired revelation of Almighty God*, despite my beloved brother's *opinions* to the contrary. If any reader disagrees with my contention and desires to participate in a formal written debate on this topic, I would welcome the opportunity to participate in a gentlemanly discussion. “**THE TRUTH WILL MAKE YOU FREE**” (*John 8:32*)

QUIBBLES THAT BACKFIRED

This section tagged "Quibbles that Backfired" deals with interesting statements and arguments that have been made by people during discussions by way of defense in attempts to justify and sustain their position regarding the subject involved. Some of these quibbles backfired in that the termination of it showed the complete incongruity of the statement made. Others backfired because they reverted upon the person who made them and put him in the very same predicament in which he intended to put the other fellow.

In 1951, there was a debate between W. Curtis Porter (church of Christ) and Mr. John L. Causey (Baptist). At the beginning of that debate, Mr. Causey threatened Porter with some fun when he came to the word "Christian." Porter was curious to know what it would be, so he introduced the matter early in order to find out what it was. Porter showed the statement made in the Bible regarding Christian, that Agrippa said to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. "If any man suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." Porter waited for Causey's reaction. Causey finally came to it in his closing speech that night, and said, "Now for the word Christian. If you want to insist on calling yourselves Christians, then here it is." He said that the word Christian comes from the Greek word Christianos, which comes from the Greek word Christos, which means Christ, which comes from the Greek word Creo which means to anoint with oil. And the word Christian therefore means those who are anointed with oil. "And if you insist on calling yourselves Christians, I am going to call you 'oilers' instead of Christians." Porter came to it right at the close of his final speech that night. He said, "Before I close, I come to that statement Causey made regarding the meaning of the word Christian from the Greek words and the significance that they had, that the word Christian means one anointed with oil," and Porter turned to him and said, "John, I want to ask you a question. John, are you a Christian?" (long pause) And Porter waited, and John turned red. Porter said,

"John, are you a Christian? I think this audience ought to know. I want to know. John, are you a Christian?" Mr. Causey said, "I'll tell you tomorrow night." Porter said, "Fine, I'll not let you forget about it." And so the next night Porter reminded him of it, and insisted that he tell the audience whether or not he was a Christian. And he finally got to it. Causey said, "Well, I have not been anointed with oil." Porter said, "Now you good Baptist people out there, don't you ever fall out with me and my brethren if we say you are not a Christian; John L. Causey says YOU ARE not. He says he has not been anointed with oil, so he is not a Christian. That is what the word means. At that time, Causey was the editor of a paper published by his brethren. Porter had some copies of it, and he picked it up and read some statements from it. There was an obituary telling of the death of Mrs. Bogard, Ben M. Bogard's mother. And telling about her funeral service, the paper said that she was a consecrated Christian. That means that she was consecrated by being anointed with oil. And in the same paper, there was an article based upon Christian education. That meant, of course, telling people how to take a bath in oil.

CHURCH HISTORY

The Restoration Movement

Andy Sochor | Kentucky, USA

Earlier in this series, we discussed the *Reformation* Movement. This movement set out to *reform* the Roman Catholic Church in order to correct the errors and abuses that had developed over the centuries. While the intention of the reformers may have been good, the unintended result of their efforts was the formation of countless Protestant denominations, each with its own name, creed, practices, and organization that made it distinct from the others.

In this article, we will discuss another movement that began in the early nineteenth century – the *Restoration* Movement. In some ways, it was similar to the *Reformation* Movement that began in the sixteenth century in that it was a response to various problems that were seen in the churches of that time.

However, there was a fundamental difference between these two movements. The first sought to *reform* the churches of men. When that failed, the reformers would start their own church, which led to the creation of all the Protestant denominations that came about [*we discussed these in the previous article in this series*]. The second movement sought to *restore* the New Testament church. The goal was not to start a new church but to leave the churches of men and unite together in the Lord's church, following nothing but the Bible as their rule of faith and practice.

Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) was one of the leading figures in the early days of the Restoration Movement. In a meeting with others of similar mind, he set forth an idea that became a motto for the movement: “Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.”

Conditions That Led to the Start of This Movement

When we discussed the Reformation Movement, we

noticed various factors that made conditions favorable for the efforts of the reformers to gain acceptance and for their message to spread throughout the religious world. In the same way, certain conditions existed in the early nineteenth century that contributed to the success of the Restoration Movement.


The invention of the printing press aided the Reformation Movement by making the Bible accessible to the common man. As time went on, the Scriptures became even more widely available. This allowed people to learn the Bible for themselves instead of relying on some human creed to outline what they were to believe.

This greater knowledge of the word of God led them to recognize the problem with religious division. The Reformation Movement was a response to a *real* problem (the errors, false practices, and abuses of the Catholic Church). However, as we discussed in the previous article in this series, the movement led to the formation of countless Protestant denominations. Eventually, people began to realize that this also was not what the Lord intended.

Not only were people becoming dissatisfied with religious division in general, but they were also not happy with some common religious errors – particularly the Calvinistic doctrine of hereditary total depravity (that man is born in sin and, therefore, is unable to choose to come to God) and the practice of waiting for salvation at the mourners' bench, helplessly hoping to receive a sign that God had chosen to save them.

The Basic Principles of the Restoration Movement

The Restoration Movement differed from the



Reformation Movement in that it was not an attempt to fix a particular church. Instead, it was an effort to leave the churches of men and return to the doctrine and practices of the church of the first century. There were certain core principles of the Restoration Movement:

1. A rejection of man-made creeds – Each time a new Protestant denomination formed, they would come up with their own creed to distinguish themselves from the denomination they left and all other churches around them. The early restorers recognized that Jesus has “*all authority*” (Matthew 28:18); therefore, they had no authority to create a creed that was different from or in addition to what He has instructed in His word.
2. A recognition of a New Testament pattern – Rather than creating their own creed, the restorers endeavored to follow the New Testament as their only rule of faith and practice. This agrees with Paul's admonition to Timothy to “*hold fast the pattern of sound words*” (2 Timothy 1:13).
3. An appeal for the unity of all Christians – They knew that the division in the religious world was contrary to Jesus' prayer that His followers would be one (John 17:21). Of course, the unity they promoted was that which comes when all believers follow the same rule that is found in the word of God.

Early Leaders of the Movement

James O'Kelly (1738-1826) was a Methodist preacher in North Carolina who withdrew from that denomination, rejecting their episcopal form of church government in favor of local church autonomy as is described in the New Testament. At first, he and the ones who joined him referred to themselves as

Republican Methodists. A few years later, Rice Haggard (1767-1819) persuaded them to drop the denominational name and be known simply as Christians.


Abner Jones (1772-1841) was a doctor in New England who eventually abandoned his medical practice to preach the gospel. This journey began when he started questioning the Baptists (with whom he had previously been associated) for having a name, articles of faith, and church covenants that were foreign to the New Testament.

Barton W. Stone (1772-1844) agonized over the condition of his soul, waiting for an “experience” which, he was taught, would indicate that he was one of the “elect.” He eventually learned that the gospel offered salvation to all who would accept it, and he became licensed to preach by the Presbyterian church [*we will discuss his departure from the Presbyterians in a moment*]. He preached in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, which was the site of a great revival in 1801, attended by about 20,000 people, helping to launch the movement.

Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) is often considered the one who started the Restoration Movement or is depicted as the “founder” of the church of Christ. Neither of these ideas are accurate. O'Kelly, Jones, Stone, and others had already begun their “restoration” efforts before Campbell ever arrived in America. Yet through his preaching, debating, and writing, Campbell became the most influential voice in the nineteenth century among those who advocated for a return to the ancient order.

The Springfield Presbytery

As we discuss the Restoration Movement, let us consider the Springfield Presbytery. What happened with this group serves as a microcosm of the overall movement.



The Springfield Presbytery was formed when Barton W. Stone and five other men (Robert Marshal, John Dunlavy, Richard M'Nemar, John Thompson, and David Purviance) withdrew from the Presbyterian church in 1804. They saw the problems in that denomination and, in response, formed their own denomination. They soon realized this was not the proper course and dissolved this new body. They wrote *The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* to explain their decision and to call upon all believers to leave the churches of men and unite upon the Bible alone.

Here are some of the highlights from this document:

“We *will*, that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one Body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.”

“We *will*, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better to enter into life having one book, than having many to be cast into hell.”

“Finally, we *will* that all our *sister bodies* read their Bibles carefully, that they may see their fate there determined, and prepare for death before it is too late.”

In the excerpts above, these men affirmed that Jesus had just *one* church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23), and they wanted to be part of it, not any church that had been built by men. They called upon others to follow the Bible alone and to reject every human creed. They also expressed their desire for the dissolution of every denominational body. This was the spirit of the Restoration Movement, which made it fundamentally different from the Reformation Movement, which embraced human creeds and

accepted the division inherent in denominationalism.

Summary

The principles of the Restoration Movement are the principles we need to follow today *because they are rooted in the Scriptures* – a rejection of man-made creeds (Matthew 28:18), a recognition of the New Testament pattern (2 Timothy 1:13), and an appeal for the unity of all Christians (John 17:21). Of course, the men who proclaimed the restoration plea did not always follow these principles perfectly. After all, they were mere men who were fallible just as anyone else. This would lead to trouble later as division arose among those who were part of this movement. We will discuss this in our next article.

Rethinking the Use of Instruments in Christian Worship

Continued from pg. 13

However, I believe we should focus more on being like Christ. In John 13, Christ emphasized that people would know we are His followers by our love for one another. It is through love, not distinctions like the issue of instruments—something the Bible never condemns—that the world will recognize us as followers of Christ. Our true identity should be demonstrated by how we show love to one another.

PS: As much as possible, I tried not to include specific verses to encourage the readers to read the whole chapter or the entire book and not get fixated on a verse I pointed at.

Cheers

David

BARBS WITH A POINT

The Seven Churches of Asia

By Rowland Femi Gbamis |Tennessee, USA

Revelation 1:10–11 (NKJV): ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹ saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

Overview

- I. **Message:** The messages of Revelation 2-3 are significant for their uniqueness to the Seven Churches of Asia.
- II. **Location:** These churches were located in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).
- III. **Purpose:** Jesus addressed each Church to commend, rebuke, and instruct them based on their spiritual state.

Individual Churches and Their Messages

1. **Ephesus** (Revelation 2:1-7).
 - I. Commendation: Stood for the truth.
 - II. Rebuke: Left their first love.
 - III. Lesson: Importance of maintaining love and zeal for Christ.
2. **Smyrna** (2:8-11).
 - I. Commendation: Held firm despite severe persecution.
 - II. Rebuke: None.
 - III. Lesson: Encouragement to remain faithful under trials.
3. **Pergamos** (2:12-17).
 - I. Commendation: Held fast to Jesus' name.
 - II. Rebuke: Compromised with error and allowed false teachers.
 - III. Lesson: Need for doctrinal purity.
4. **Thyatira** (2:18-29).
 - I. Commendation: Known for love, service, faith, and patience.
 - II. Rebuke: Tolerated false teachings

(Jezebel).

- III. Lesson: Importance of rejecting false doctrines.
5. **Sardis** (3:1-6).
 - I. Commendation: Few faithful members.
 - II. Rebuke: Appeared alive but was spiritually dead.
 - III. Lesson: Call to spiritual vigilance and renewal.
6. **Philadelphia** (3:7-13).
 - I. Commendation: Persevered through trials.
 - II. Rebuke: None.
 - III. Lesson: Encouragement to continue in faithfulness.
7. **Laodicea** (3:14-22).
 - I. Commendation: None.
 - II. Rebuke: Lukewarm and complacent.
 - III. Lesson: Urgent call to repentance and zeal.

Some things that are common to all the seven Churches

- I. Jesus recognized all of them as "the Church."
- II. Jesus stood amid them, signifying that He knew them personally (1:13).
- III. Jesus told them, "I know your works" (2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15).
- IV. Each church was to hear the message to all the Churches (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).



Lesson learned

- I. Jesus knows us in the same way He knew all the seven churches.
- II. There is nothing wrong with knowing what is going on in other Churches, either good or bad.
- III. We can wear the right name (Church of Christ) and still go in the wrong direction.
- IV. The question is, what direction are we going as a congregation?

Some things Jesus knew

A. Jesus knew the Churches

- I. Ephesus stood for the truth but had left their first love.
- II. Smyrna was severely persecuted but held firm to the Lord without compromise.
- III. Pergamos had compromised with error and allowed false teachers to dwell in their midst.
- IV. Thyatira allowed Jezebel to teach her false doctrine and cause some to fall.
- V. Sardis appeared alive but was dead spiritually.
- VI. Philadelphia persevered through trials and remained steadfast.
- VII. Laodicea was lukewarm-wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

B. Jesus knew the individual Christians in each of the Churches.

- I. Some members were faithful.
- II. Others were not faithful.
- III. Some have gone so far that Jesus called them "dead."
- IV. Some in the midst of the "dead" had not defiled their garments.
- V. Some lukewarm.

Lessons for Today: What does Jesus know about Us?

A critical examination requires churches and

individuals to reflect on their spiritual state. All seven churches were individual churches, as signified by the seven lampstands (Revelation 1:20). Each could have its lampstand removed if they refused to repent (Revelation 2:5). Therefore,

As a Church:

- Are we zealously doing His will?
- Enduring affliction standing for doing the Lord's will?
- Have we left our first love?
- Are we lukewarm or dead?
- Do we remain faithful and true to Christ's teaching or drift with the world in their erroneous beliefs?

As an Individual:

- Do we have unstained garments, or living a life of sin?
- Has Jezebel seduced us? Who are our friends?

Are we willing to die for Christ like Antipas, a martyr? A faithful witness of Jesus Christ who dwelled and ministered where satan had his seat in Pergamos-Revelation 2:13).

Conclusion

Indeed, Jesus knows the works and conditions of each church. Hence, Jesus urges each church to listen to the messages given to all. The Spirit commended two churches for their steadfastness (Smyrna and Philadelphia), but the remaining five also had the chance to repent and renew their first love for God. This opportunity for repentance and renewal is equally available today, both for individuals and as a church. It is never too late to repent and renew our steadfastness with Jesus!

INSTITUTIONALISM

Reaching Today's Generation

By Chris Reeves | Tennessee, USA

Christians today who were not grown during the time of the institutional battles among brethren in the 1950's and 1960's would do well to learn the issues that divide us to this day. Having learned these issues they can then teach others the truth concerning the work and organization of the local church.

Today's Generation Can Know the Issues

When you pass through your town you may see more than one church building with “Church of Christ” on the sign and you may wonder why there are different churches. Maybe you have been told that the brethren across town are “liberal” or “anti” and you don't know what that means. It is good to know why brethren are divided and what the issues are that divide them. It is also good for you to know what and why you believe on these same issues. Most importantly, you should know what is authorized in God's word. Just like Paul did not want brethren to be “ignorant” of various issues and principles (Romans 1:13; 11:25; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13), so we today should not be ignorant of the issues that divide us.

The following are some of the major issues that have divided brethren and that still need to be studied today: [Note #1]

1. The all-sufficiency of the local church. The local church should do its own work without building and maintaining human institutions to do the work for it. They may not build benevolent institutions (orphan homes, etc.), evangelistic institutions (Bible colleges), or edification institutions (secular education schools).
2. Cooperation among local churches. Local churches should cooperate together in matters of benevolence and supporting gospel preaching without working through a “sponsoring church” to do it.
3. The work and mission of the local church. Local

churches should limit their work to evangelism, benevolence, and edification and refuse to engage in any other work. The work of the local church is not social reform, recreation, business, secular education, politics, medicine/hospitals, day care centers, ball teams, etc.

4. Limited benevolence. Local churches should limit their benevolence to needy saints as is the pattern in the New Testament and allow individuals to help needy saints and non-saints.
5. Individual action and local church action. Individual Christians may do some things that local churches may not do.
6. The autonomy and organization of the local church. Elders in a local church should watch over their own flock only and not try to do a “brotherhood work” larger than what they can do themselves.
7. The use of the word “fellowship” in the New Testament. The word “fellowship” (Gr. *koinonia*) found in the New Testament is used of matters pertaining to evangelism, edification, and benevolence. It is not used of eating together in a “fellowship hall”. Christians in the first century indeed ate together at home, but not as a part of work of the local church.
8. The use of the church building. Brethren may assemble in a building for worship and do its authorized work, but the church building should not be used for other purposes.
9. The church universal and the local church. The church universal is made up of all Christians

everywhere and has no organizational structure. The local church is organized with elders leading the congregation and there is no organization other than the local church. Our institutional brethren attempt to activate two or more local churches and band them together to do a “brotherhood” work, but this they should not do.

10. Bible authority. Local churches should find their authority in the New Testament from commands and direct statements, approved examples, and necessary inferences. They should find their authority in a generic statement which allows expediencies and in specific statements. They should respect the silence of the scriptures and refuse to act when the New Testament is silent.

For anyone looking for resources to help learn and understand these issues, let me suggest the following good books that can be ordered from CEI Bookstore: *Workbooks – Walking by Faith* by Roy E. Cogdill; *Passing the Torch* by Mike Willis; *Following God's Pattern: A Study of the Institutional Issues* by Roger Hillis; and, *Institutionalism* by Jeff Archer.

Sermons and Lectures – Congregational Cooperation of the Churches of Christ: A Discussion of Centralization and Sponsoring Church Arrangement by Herbert E. Winkler; *Restudying the Issues of the 50's and 60's: A Historical Perspective* by Bill Hall; *The Simple Pattern: A Straight-Forward Explanation of Institutionalism & Related Issues* edited by Jim Deason; *Pursuing the Pattern* edited by Jim Deason; *The Arlington Meeting* edited by Cecil Willis; and, *The 1990 Dallas Meeting* edited by Wayne Seaton.

Debates – The Porter-Dunn Debate on congregational benevolence; the *Porter-Woods Debate* on church support of orphan homes; the *Cogdill-Woods Debate* on congregational cooperation; and,

the *Willis-Inman Debate* on church support of institutions and the sponsoring church arrangement.

Today's Generation Can Teach Their Brethren

Christians today can reach out to their friends in various churches of Christ and study these issues. Yes, we are to “hold fast the pattern of sound word” (2 Timothy 1:13). But we are also to commit these sound words to faithful men who will be “able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). We don't keep the pattern of sound words to ourselves. We teach the pattern of sound words to others so they can learn them also.

Many brethren who attend institutional churches of Christ, especially the younger ones, do not know the issues. They may have heard that they are supposed to stay away from the “anti” brethren across town but they don't know why. These brethren need to be taught and it's not that difficult to do. Back around the year 2015, a preacher from an institutional congregation in the city where we lived came to one of our gospel meetings. After the service, I asked him if he would like to get together and study the issues that divided us. He agreed and we studied once a week for about six weeks. Our studies were cordial and even though neither one of us was changed, it was still good for me to try to convince him of the truth. He kept saying that he wished his congregation (who at that time was going “liberal” according to him) would “return to the way things were decades ago”. I encouraged him to go back farther and return to the way things were before the divisions and even go all the way back to the pattern of the New Testament church.

Today's Generation Can Return to the Bible Pattern

Faithful brethren today who hold to the New Testament pattern for the work and organization of the local church are studying with others here and

abroad about these issues. Some Christians who are practicing unscriptural things are willing to study and some are not. Many brethren here in America who are still supporting institutional practices are not willing to study these things. They are “tired” of the issues and they don't want to discuss them anymore. However, there are brethren in other countries who are willing to examine these issues. They are eager to learn and they soak up the truth like a sponge. As men continue to go and carry out the great commission here and abroad, it is good for them to continue teaching on these issues where needed.

In the past few years, sound brethren have been travelling to Ghana, Africa and teaching on these issues. Wayne Seaton has been doing this for years and Steve Walker and myself have gone the last two years. Wayne and Steve went in July and August of this year. In addition to regular preaching and personal evangelism, these men have been addressing institutionalism. In particular, our brethren in Ghana have never been taught about the unscriptural arrangements of institutionalism, the sponsoring church, and general benevolence. There are preaching schools in Ghana that are not a part of any local church. There are Church of Christ hospitals and orphanages and local churches will often give money from the Lord's treasury to non-saints. However, some of our Ghanaian preaching brethren who are humble and open to the truth have changed and have come to the truth on these matters and other issues. The congregations where they labor have also changed as well. Let us continue to pray that “the word of the Lord may run and be glorified” in that country and in other countries (2 Thessalonians 3:1). And, when we study with our erring brethren, let us pray that “God may give them a repentance unto a knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 2:25). [Note #2]

Conclusion

Brethren, institutionalism is not a “dead issue” as some would say. It is very much alive and it needs to be addressed with God's word. It was wrong when it was first introduced and it is still wrong today. Today's generation can know what the issues are, can be willing to study with others about them, and can return to the New Testament pattern when necessary. May the good Lord bless us all to that end.

Notes

[Note #1] A scriptural defense for each of these points will not be given here. See the rest of this special issue for a discussion of the Bible passages related to these points.

[Note #2] Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba is a fine young man who preaches in Lagos, Nigeria. He is addressing these issues in his preaching and teaching. He regularly addresses the errors of institutionalism in an electronic magazine he edits called, “Unmasking Sophistry”. You can find his magazine here: www.unmaskingsophistry.com

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MYTH BUSTER

Do All Religions Lead to the Same God?

By Emmanuel Oluwatoba | Niger, Nigeria

Introduction

It is not uncommon to hear phrases like “All religions lead to the same God”, “we all serve God in different ways” and the like. It is not entirely uncommon for Christians to share this sentiment. This idea suggests that despite the various beliefs and practices, we all ultimately worship the same God. While this might sound convenient and inclusive to some. It is a myth that does not align with biblical teachings.

There is only one way

From a Christian perspective, the Bible makes it clear that there is only one true God and the only path to Him is through Jesus Christ. In John 14:6, Jesus declares, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* This verse explicitly refutes the idea that multiple religions can provide access to God. Furthermore, the Bible says in John 3:16 *“For God so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* From this, we can see that the Bible teaches that salvation comes exclusively through faith in Christ, and it is this relationship with Him that leads to eternal life with God.

Differences in core beliefs

The core beliefs of many religions differ significantly. Christianity teaches the death and resurrection of Jesus for the salvation of humanity. However, Islam denies that Jesus was crucified. Hinduism embraces a large number of gods and believes in reincarnation, whereas Christianity affirms monotheism (I Corinthians 8:6) as well as living once and then

judgment after death (Hebrews 9:27). African Traditional Religion has a wide range of gods and requires that sacrifices be made to these gods. These fundamental differences reveal that religions do not point to the same God or ultimate truth. Moreover, the scriptures warn strictly that those who do not abide by the doctrine of Christ do not have God (2 John 9).

Lesson from the Corinthians

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians addressed a very important issue that had to do with their relations with unbelievers. 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 reads *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch not the unclean thing; And I will receive you.”* This passage is a clear indication that God does not endorse or accept the practices of other religions.

Conclusion

The claim that all religions lead to the same God is incompatible with the doctrine of Christ. Christians are called to stand firm in the truth of the gospel, acknowledging that salvation is found in Christ alone.

IDEAL HOME



Priscilla And Aquila—The Couple Who Worked Together In The Lord's Kingdom

By Chris Reeves | Tennessee, USA

In some ways, marriage is like a team sport—it is best played when everyone works together. When you open your Bible looking for married couples who were teammates, Priscilla and Aquila fit that description perfectly, and they are an outstanding model for all marriages today.

Introduction

You may have heard someone say when they are looking for a person to marry that they are looking for their “soulmate.” We know what that means. It means that someone is looking for a person to marry with whom they have a deep and close connection. They want to marry one who will be their close friend. While closeness in marriage is indeed important, I would suggest another quality to look for in a marriage partner. You should marry someone who will be your spiritual teammate.

Each time Priscilla and Aquila are mentioned in the New Testament, they are mentioned together, never apart, and they are described as working together to advance the Lord's kingdom. They are mentioned six times in the New Testament and you can read about them in Acts 18:2; 18:18; 18:26; Romans 16:19; 1 Corinthians 16:19; and, 2 Timothy 4:19 [Note #1]. When you survey the inspired record of their marriage, you find that they were tentmakers, travelers, teachers, and teammates [Note #2]. This married couple really “had their act together” [Note #3].

They Were Tentmakers Together

Luke introduces us to Priscilla and Aquila in Acts 18:1-3. Here, we learn that Priscilla and Aquila had been expelled from Rome (c. AD 49/50) by Emperor Claudius because they were Jews [Note #4]. They came to Corinth, where they labored together as tentmakers. Think about what it would have taken for them to work together as a couple all day long. For one

thing, it would have required patience and maturity. Then, when Paul came to Corinth, they allowed him to make tents with them as well.

You may be thinking at this point, “There's no way I could work with my spouse all day long. He (or she) would drive me nuts!” However, it can be done. Whether or not a couple actually has the same job is not the point. Priscilla and Aquila complimented each other and supported each other in their work together. Husbands and wives can and should do the same whether they are working inside the home (like more people are doing today) or outside of it.

They Were Travelers Together

When it came time for Paul to leave Corinth and go to Ephesus, he took Priscilla and Aquila with him. Luke records this in Acts 18:18-19. They both were willing to move and make the sacrifices necessary to travel together with Paul to do the Lord's work. They were not travelling to do sight-seeing or vacationing. They left their home in Corinth, just like they had left Rome, and all for the cause of Christ [Note #5].

This is a great example for married couples today. Can we do things together with our spouse for the cause of Christ? Can we travel together to a gospel meeting? Can we go together to visit the sick, the shut-ins, or to encourage someone who needs our help? Can we make time in our busy lives to stop and do the Lord's work together?

They Were Teachers Together

After a short time in Ephesus, Paul returned to



Antioch and left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus to work with the newly formed church. We read in Acts 18:24-28 that Priscilla and Aquila were not only tent-makers, but were also teachers. They took the time and initiative to teach a fellow-Jew and preacher named Apollos. This man needed some correction and more accurate information concerning the way of God, so Priscilla and Aquila built a relationship with him.

Luke records that Priscilla and Aquila “expounded unto him the way of God more accurately” [Note #6]. The English word “expound” comes from the Greek verb *ektithemi* and it means “to expose or explain.” They brought out or set out (Greek: *ex*) the meaning of the truth so that Apollos could understand it better [Note #7]. This couple cared enough for Apollos to hear him and then work with him to bring him to a fuller knowledge of the truth. What sacrifice and love for others and the truth. No doubt they were patient, understanding, gentle, and tactful with Apollos. As a result, he was able to take his newfound knowledge of the truth and go to Achaia, where he would help the brethren and debate with the Jews using the Scriptures.

Today, married couples can do the same with the word of God. They can invite others into their home for a Bible study, or they can teach a Bible class of young people together. They can read their Bible together, discuss it together, and work on their class lessons together. They can talk to engaged couples about the importance of marriage or do marriage counselling with couples who are struggling. They can work together and with their children to make sure the husband/father is qualified to be an elder or deacon. The wife of the preacher can support him on his preaching travels and trips. One way a married couple can increase their usefulness and influence among brethren, and in the world, is to help another person

be better like Priscilla and Aquila did with Apollos.

They Were Teammates Together

There are three other places in the New Testament where Priscilla (Prisca) and Aquila are mentioned [Note #8]. When Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus (c. AD 56), he included greetings from Aquila and Prisca “with the church that is in their house” (1 Cor. 16:19). They were warm and welcoming—opening their home so that the church at Ephesus could meet there. What commitment, sacrifice, and hospitality.

Later, Paul wrote to the saints in Rome (c. AD 57) and wanted to send his greetings to Prisca and Aquila who were among the Christians there. First, Paul described them as “my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus.” Second, he noted their dedication in saying that they “laid down their own necks” for him. Third, he thanked them along with “all the churches of the Gentiles.” Finally, he greeted “the church that is in their house” (Rom. 16:3-5). They allowed the church to meet in their home just like they had done in Ephesus. Not only did this couple work well together, but they also worked well with Paul and other brethren. At the close of his life, Paul mentioned his dear friends in one last greeting (2 Tim. 4:19). Clearly, they were active, Christian workers and teammates for the Lord.

Today, couples can, and should, work together to advance the Lord's cause. They can serve others together and they can take risks together for the Lord's work. They can be couples for whom many would say, “I'm so thankful that Bro. and Sis. So-and-So were a part of my life.” As for opening up one's home to the brethren, I have personally witnessed this recently in Ghana, Africa, where Francis and Gladys Brown open their home each week to the Sun City church which has an attendance of about 100 in the community of Buduburam outside of Accra.



Conclusion

Unfortunately, some married couples are more like roommates than teammates. However, this should not be—togetherness is the key. Priscilla and Aquila did many things together. This is what marriage is all about. I would encourage all married couples to be teammates. Join your hands and your hearts together in serving the Lord. Don't allow the things of this life like work, hobbies, troubles, illnesses, friends, financial problems, old age, etc., to pull you apart. Solomon had it right: “Two are better than one. . .” (Eccl. 4:9) [Note #9].

Married couples, God is looking for you to be on the same team, not to be in competition with each other. So why not talk more together, do more things together, work together, serve the Lord together, help others together, make sacrifices together, open your home together, read and study your Bible together, pray together, and attend the worship services together? Remember, God made you “one” (Mal. 2:15) and joined you “together” (Matt. 19:6), and you are “joint-heirs of the grace of life” (1 Pet. 3:7). Now, go out and live that life for the Lord—standing side by side and remaining together all the way to the end!

Applications for Today

For Newlyweds

For those of you who have been married just a short time, it is easy right now for you to function as a team. Keep it up, but know that your teamwork will be tested eventually down the road.

For Mid-Lifers

The challenges of life mount for those who have been married several years. Life has a way of tearing marriages apart, but you have to keep working together as a team and not let anyone, or anything, break it up.

For Golden-Agers

Elderly married couples often have special health challenges and they will eventually need to let others into their life to help them with those issues. Be willing to let others join your lifelong team so they can give you the care you need as you face the sunset of life.

Notes

[Note #1] Many commentators make the point that Priscilla is mentioned first in four of the six references, so there must be something to this. They suggest that Priscilla was mentioned first because she was more prominent due to her education, social status, character, faithfulness, talent, etc. However, we simply do not know this to be the case. What we do know is that she and her husband were important enough to be mentioned in sacred history and every time they are mentioned, they are mentioned together and in a positive way.

[Note #2] The main headings of this article follow that of Leslie B. Flynn in his book, *The Other Twelve*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1988), pages 119-131.

[Note #3] Other Bible couples who worked well together as teammates were Noah and his wife, Moses and Zipporah, Zechariah and Elizabeth, along with Joseph and Mary.

[Note #4] Confirmation of this historical event can be found in the writings of the Roman historian, Seutonius, in his *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* (Divus Claudius, 25).

[Note #5] The life and travels of Priscilla and Aquila can be traced over a period of about seventeen years, from AD 50 to 67. They left Rome (c. AD 50) and went to Corinth for about two years. After that, they went to Ephesus (c. AD 52) where they stayed about three years. They left Ephesus and went to Rome for some time, and then they returned to Ephesus (c. AD 67) by the time of Paul's second imprisonment.

[Note #6] All Scripture quotations are taken from the American Standard Version, 1901.

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SALVATION

Is Love Required For Initial Salvation?

By Pat Donahue | Alabama, USA

Gal 5:6 reads “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” So once we have the proper kind of faith, that faith must begin to work “by love” (Gal 5:6) to complete (James 2:22) our initial salvation (unless you think one is saved via an incomplete faith), and should continue the rest of our life toward the goal of eternal salvation. When the book of Galatians and Acts chapter 15 talk about circumcision, the issue is whether or not one has to be circumcised to “be saved” (Acts 15:1), so when Gal 5:6 is talking about how circumcision does not avail but faith working by love does, it is talking about the necessity of faith working by love to salvation. All three attributes must be there for one to be saved. Love has to be the motivation for saving obedience – so say both Gal 5:6 and John 14:15 (“If ye love me, keep my commandments”).

James 1:12b shows the necessary link between love and receiving the crown of life when it says “he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” I am pretty sure we would all agree the “crown of life” and going to heaven are synonymous, and so the teaching of the verse would be – a sinner cannot go to heaven without loving the Lord. Am I right?

John 14:21 reads “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” In one sense God loves everybody unconditionally (John 3:16), that is, He wants what’s best for them and sent His son so they could be saved eternally. But in another sense, God only loves those that love Him, meaning He only gives salvation to those who love Jesus by keeping His

commandments. This is clearly taught by John 14:21 and 23 (“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”). So God is not going to love anybody in the sense of giving them salvation from sin if they don’t love Jesus. Doesn’t John 14 make that abundantly clear?

I Cor 16:22 reads “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.” The word “anathema” means “a person or thing accursed or consigned to condemnation ...” (dictionary.com). So if a sinner can believe and be baptized and be saved without loving Jesus, that would mean a person who dies “consigned to condemnation” (because he doesn’t love the Lord yet) is going to be saved. Does that even make sense?

For your further consideration: the following article is my attempt at an exhaustive list of what a sinner must do to be saved initially:

<https://bibledebates.wordpress.com/2012/11/09/what-must-i-do-to-be-saved/>

Priscilla And Aquila—The Couple Who Worked Together In The Lord's Kingdom

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[Note #7] See also Acts 11:4 and Acts 28:23, where this word is found.

[Note #8] “Prisca” was her formal name and “Priscilla” was her familiar name. This is similar to “Silvanus” and “Silas,” and “Sosipater” and “Sopater.”

[Note #9] The power of two can also be seen in Jesus's wisdom to send the twelve apostles out “two by two” (Mark. 6:7).

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

If a country permits polygamy, is there a biblical reason not to have multiple wives?

By Jeffery Hamilton | Nebraska, USA

Question

When I read the Old Testament, I find many passages glorifying men who had multiple wives, and, in fact, glorifying the possession of multiple wives. When I read the New Testament, I find nothing telling me, a man who doesn't seek to become an elder or a deacon, from having multiple wives. I live in a country where polygamy is legal and culturally accepted. Is there a biblical reason that I shouldn't take another woman to be my wife?

Answer

The Old Testament does record the fact that having multiple wives was a prevalent practice, but you are incorrect in stating that it glorifies the practice. Actually, the examples given show that the practice created many problems. Abraham's wife, Sarah, and his concubine, Hagar, constantly fought ([Genesis 16:4-6](#); [21:9-10](#)). Jacob had to deal with jealousy and rivalry between two of his wives who were sisters ([Genesis 29:32](#); [30:16-18](#)). In addition, Jacob did not treat his wives equally ([Genesis 29:30-31](#)). Solomon's wives led him away from serving God ([1 Kings 11:1-6](#)).

Mankind often practices things of which God disapproves. God regulates the practices, but it would be a mistake to say that God approves of them. For example, Malachi states, "For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence" ([Malachi 2:16](#)). Still, God permitted it despite His hatred of it. "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" ([Matthew 19:8](#)).

From the beginning of time, marriage has been described as a union between a man and a woman. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and

be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" ([Genesis 2:24](#)). The use of singular terms for both the husband and the wife implies that marriage was intended for one man and one woman. Our Lord confirms this: "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" ([Matthew 19:4-6](#)). Notice that Jesus not only uses the singular for the husband and wife, but he specifically states that the two become one -- two, and not three, four, or five. The implication of one man for one woman is continued in the apostle's writings ([Ephesians 5:31](#)). The one-to-one relationship is clearly seen in Paul's instruction: "Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband" ([1 Corinthians 7:2](#)).

The qualifications for elders and deacons found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are not requirements unique to these men alone. Each quality is something that every Christian ought to display. The only difference is that if a man is going to serve as an elder or a deacon, he *must* possess the quality. For example, an elder is not to be violent ([1 Timothy 3:3](#)). By your argument, if a society allows violence then a Christian can be violent so long as he doesn't plan to be an elder or deacon -- of course, such an argument is absurd. In formal logic terms, your argument turned an implication into an equivalence; something that formal logic declares leads to a falsehood.

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ADDENDUM

My Preaching Work in Ghana in 2024

By Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba | Lagos, Nigeria

This is a report of my preaching work in Ghana. Due to space, this report is published here without pictures accompanying it. If you wish to read this same report with the pictures, you can view it online at <https://www.unmaskingsophistry.com/2024/09/12/my-preaching-work-in-ghana-in-2024/>

Preamble

On Friday, 19th July 2024, I had the opportunity to travel to Ghana, West Africa, with some American preachers for a six-week preaching trip. The evangelistic team includes Wayne Seaton (Tennessee), Stephen Walker (Tennessee), Nathan Peeler (Florida), and Justin Atkins (Indiana). The preaching effort lasted from 19th July 2024 to 29th August 2024. During this period, we had the opportunity to visit and preach in over 30 churches of Christ in Ghana. Souls were converted and churches were strengthened. This report is a summary of the trip.

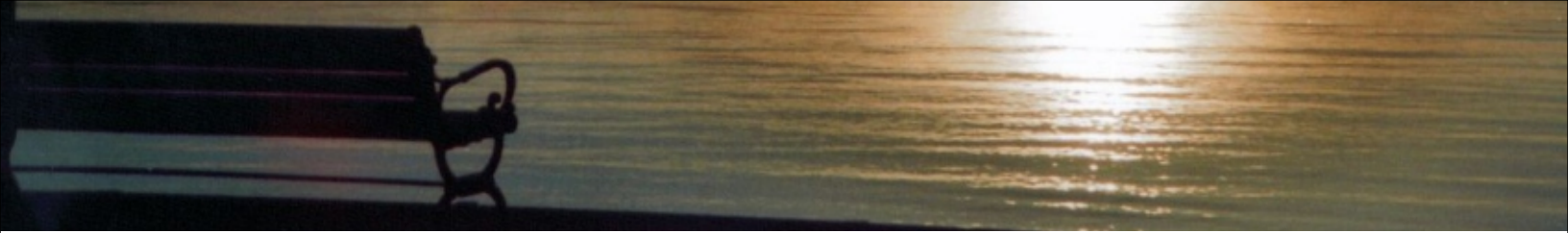
My First Contact With The American Brethren

I began the publication of Unmasking Sophistry Magazine in April 2021 to defend the Christian faith (Philippians 1:17) and refute religious errors propagated by men (Colossians 2:8). I initially started by sharing the magazine via email and WhatsApp with people I have their contacts. A year later, in April 2022, I created a website for wider circulation of the journal (www.unmaskingsophistry.com). The creation of this website made it possible for many more people to access the magazine while others stumbled upon it by serendipity.

On the 3rd of October 2023, I received an email from a brother (Chris Reeves) in the United States of America for the first time. In the email, Chris mentioned that he had got a link to my website and magazine from Wayne Seaton. Chris expressed his appreciation for my work and mentioned that he had

previously visited Ghana on preaching trips with Wayne Seaton and Stephen Walker. Before the 3rd of October 2023, I did not know about Chris Reeves or Stephen Walker, and I knew very little about Wayne Seaton since I had read in the past about his work in Ghana, but I had never corresponded with him. I only corresponded with Timothy Seaton who is the son of Wayne Seaton. When I received the email from Chris, little did I know that an opportunity was about to be opened for a great preaching experience and to meet these men in person. Although I have not met Chris Reeves in person yet, I hope to meet him next year (2025), God willing.

After I received Chris' email, I thanked him. I also wrote to Wayne Seaton to thank him for sharing my journal with his friend, Chris. I then requested that Wayne include me in his next preaching trip to Ghana. On the 2nd of April 2024, I got an email from Wayne after I released my magazine for the second quarter of the year. Wayne said: *"Hi Lesley, Thank you for your latest issue of Unmasking Sophistry. You do a great service for Africa. Will you be able to join us on July 18 through August?"* Indeed, that was the beginning of my travel plans to Ghana. All plans were set and all 5 of us (Wayne, Steve, Nathan, Justin, and I) were supposed to arrive at Kotoka International Airport, in Accra, Ghana about the same time (7 am) on the 19th of July. Unfortunately, Wayne, Steve, and Justin had their flights delayed for some days due to a weather



problem and a software issue from a third-party contractor. Wayne and Steve did not get to Ghana until Tuesday night (23rd July) and Justin did not get to Ghana until Wednesday morning (24th July). However, Nathan and I made it to Accra on the 19th as planned and started the work.

Arrival at Kotoka International Airport

On Friday, 19th July 2024, Nathan Peeler and I arrive at Kotoka International Airport, Accra, Ghana at about 7 am. The Ghanaian brothers (Felix Adjei, Dan Arthur, and Prempeh Agyemang) were already waiting for us at the airport, and upon our arrival, we met them. Felix preaches at Otuam, Dan preaches at Cape Coast, and Prempeh attends church at Asuofua in Kumasi, Ghana. Upon arrival at the airport, we began our journey to Otuam and Apam where we preached for one week. It took us about 4 hours to get to Otuam from Accra with Brother Prempeh driving. Brother Dan did not go with us to Otuam but another brother, Divine Agedede, a gospel preacher from the Volta region of Ghana joined us on the way to Otuam. We got to Otuam and after eating some rice and stew with meat, we rested until the next day.

Preaching in Otuam and Apam

The next morning, there were lectureships in the churches of Christ in Otuam and Apam. The original plan was for Wayne, Justine and I to speak at the church in Otuam while Steve and Nathan were to speak at the church in Apam. However, since only Nathan and I were around and the lectureships were already scheduled with topics assigned to all the team members, Nathan and I had to fill the gaps and speak at both churches that same day. In Otuam, Nathan spoke on the book of Daniel while I spoke on the church's responsibilities to the preacher, and in Apam, Nathan spoke on the Restoration Movement while I spoke on the Lord's church today. The lectureships

were great at both congregations with many questions from the audience to which we gave scriptural answers. In attendance, there were about 100 people in Otuam while Apam church had about 150 people present.

On Sunday, 21st July, I worshipped at the same church in Otuam where I taught the Bible class and gave the sermon while Nathan went to preach at another church nearby in Dago. In the evening of that Sunday, Nathan and I travelled to Apam where Nathan spoke on how God helps us in different situations, and I spoke on the individual responsibilities towards church growth after which we travelled back to Otuam that night. On Monday, the 22nd, we did door-to-door preaching in Otuam in the morning with the Ghanaian preachers, and in the evening, there was street public preaching (what we call open-air or outdoor preaching in Nigeria) in various locations including Etsibedu, Aboano and Hweda. Nathan and I went to different locations where we both preached using very large speakers to reach the audience members of the community. My topic for that evening was "God's plan of salvation for man." In all our travels and preaching in Otuam and Apam, Brother Divine of the Volta region as well as Brother Felix of Otuam church were very helpful in the interpretation and the coordination of activities. There were various local preachers from other congregations who were also invited to join in the preaching and they helped with interpretation at various times since none of us could speak the local languages of Ghana that were mostly spoken there (Twi and Fante).

Men's Training And Lectureship in Apam and Okyereko

On Tuesday, 23rd July, I travelled to Apam to await the arrival of Steve Walker while Nathan remained in Otuam. Steve and Wayne arrived at the same time in



Ghana but while Wayne went to Otum to meet Nathan, Steve came to Apam to meet me, and we both stayed in Apam for the remaining days of the week in which we visited churches in the area and conducted a men's training class for the men in Apam church of Christ. Justin arrived Ghana Wednesday morning, and he came to Apam to see Steve and I before going to join Wayne and Nathan in Otum that morning. From Wednesday to Saturday, Steve and I had a men's training class every evening at the church of Christ in Apam while Nathan, Wayne and Justin had a preacher's training class in Otum for the remaining days of the week. There were at least 10 men on each of the nights in Apam. During the day, we visited some churches in some villages around Apam. In one of our visits to one of the churches in the Apam area, we preached to some young people and 4 of them got baptized. Wayne, Nathan and Justin also had some baptisms while working in Otum. For the men's training in Apam, I taught a series on Authority while Steve did a series on Marriage and the Bible character of Boaz.

Two brethren in the church at Apam were always going out with us to preach. They were Ibrahim Adams and Solomon Acquah. But it happened that they did not agree with the Bible's teaching on the use of the Lord's funds. The church in Apam uses the Lord's funds for funerals, weddings, tertiary education graduation, as well as other ceremonies as they come up among the members. We saw this practice clearly written on a bulletin posted on the church notice board in the building. Steve and I requested to meet with the men of the church on Saturday morning to discuss it and they agreed to meet with us. At the meeting, we stated that the Lord's funds are to be used only as God directed – for preaching the gospel (Philippians 1:5), grooming the

saints (Ephesians 4:12; Matthew 28:20) and helping needy members of the church (I Timothy 5:16; Acts 4:34-35; Romans 15:25-26) and that social events like graduation, weddings, etc. are individual responsibilities. However, they did not agree with us that such ceremonies are not part of the work of the church. They argued that the church in Jerusalem buried Ananias and Sapphira when they died in Acts 5:1-6. One of our responses was that if the example of Ananias and Sapphira is an authority to spend the Lord's funds for funerals, then that would authorize the church to spend her money on the funerals of disfellowshipped members of the church since Ananias and Sapphira were both punished by the Lord after they sinned, and they died. The brethren in Apam would not fund the wedding or graduation of any erring member, but the same passage they use in defense of church support of social ceremonies is directly the opposite of what they do. They did not agree to this but insisted that they were right in using the Lord's funds for the aforementioned ceremonies. After meeting with them for about 2 hours on Saturday, Steve and I travelled from Apam to Okyereko for a lectureship. Wayne, Justin and Steve also travelled from Otum to Okyereko for the same lectureship and we all met there. That was the first time I got to see Wayne. Solomon Abidi is the preacher at this church. At this lectureship, Wayne taught on division, addressing some institutional issues in Ghana while Nathan spoke on the organization of the church. However, there was a bit of disturbance as Solomon Acquah from Apam church was present at this lectureship and was not pleased that Wayne, while teaching, opposed the unscriptural use of the Lord's money for ceremonies such as funerals, etc. He expressed his disagreement and was confronted by Wayne. During the



intermission, Wayne tried to get Solomon to study this issue from the Scriptures, but he said he was too tired after Wayne got his Bible. He eventually left the venue upset before the end of the lectureship without giving any scriptural justification for his position on why churches must pay for social events like funerals.

Preaching in Cape Coast

After the lectureship on Saturday, we travelled to Cape Coast where we preached for the next 7 days. At this time, Brother Prempeh had returned to Kumasi where he lives, so we had Brother John Arthur drive us to our various destinations throughout our stay in Cape Coast and Takoradi until we left for Kumasi. The work at Cape Coast included door-to-door evangelism, radio preaching, lectureships, question-and-answer sessions and visitations. Nathan, Justin, and I were on air with Dan on his radio programme at 5 am on Sunday where we answered Bible questions from the radio audience who phoned in. After that, we visited a nursing school to meet with some students and worshipped with them and we proceeded to various churches to teach and meet with them. At Cape Coast, we were at different churches for the whole week. Wayne and Justine were at the church in Esuekyir, Steve was at the church in Ntranoa and Nathan was at the church in Wiampoah. I was at the church at Nkanfoa where I preached the sermon on Sunday and taught every evening from Monday to Friday on Bible Authority. Brother Ben Nkrumah, a preacher from Sun City was with me every night as I travelled to Nkanfoa church, and I enjoyed his company. The church at Nkanfoa was receptive and very good to me and I enjoyed my time with them. They even gave me a plaque. There were not less than 80 people present each night.

Our work during the day included travels to various places where we preached the gospel. On one of the

days, we travelled to a village called Brease where we preached and baptized a young man after he listened to our preaching. Another woman was also baptized at Ntranoa one of the days we went out for door-to-door preaching. We had a question-and-answer session with about 15 gospel preachers on Monday, 29th of July at Esuekyir in which we received questions on issues about Institutionalism – how gospel preachers should be trained, and the work of the church. We also visited Efutu Senior High School to see the headmistress for an opportunity to preach the gospel to the students in the school and she allowed us to preach to them. The work in Cape Coast ended on Saturday, 3rd August with a gospel lectureship at the church in Esuekyir. There were about 100 men in attendance for the lectureship. Wayne, Steve, Nathan and Justin spoke at this event on different topics under the theme “Authority.”

Preaching in Takoradi

We left Cape Coast on Saturday, the 3rd of August after the lectureship at Esuekyir and we travelled to Takoradi. Justin did not go with us as there was no room in the van to accommodate one person. So, he stayed back with Dan at Cape Coast for just one night and featured in his radio programme the next morning as well as worshipped with the church in Esuekyir before he and Dan came to join us in Takoradi on Sunday evening. We stayed in Takoradi for 10 days and we preached there throughout this period. The local preacher there is Robert Jackson. There are other preachers in this area as well that we met and worked with as Robert introduced them to us. The preaching efforts in Takoradi included gospel lectureships, door-to-door evangelism, open-air street preaching and question-and-answer sessions at different churches.

On the first Sunday (4th of August), I and Wayne



worshipped at the church at Asemasa, Nathan worshipped and preached at the church at Sankor, while Steve worshipped and preached at another church close to Asemasa. Wayne taught on Giving while I gave a sermon on using one's talent from the parable of the talent in Matthew 25:14-30. There were 40 people in total. There were lectureships at Asemasa and daily public preaching at a village called Chavene where we planted a new church and worshipped with them before we left. We had baptisms during our preachings in these areas. During one of these days, Justin and I did some preaching at Sankor and 2 people gladly received the word and got baptized – a man and a woman. On the last 2 nights before we left Takoradi, we visited a church close to the hotel where we lodged in Busua and taught them about Marriage as some of the members were having marital issues.

We had some challenges with the terrible state of the roads leading to the villages we preached in Takoradi. At one time, our vehicle was stuck in the mud when we were going to preach in the evening at Chavene and we had to trek to the venue of the event so as to meet up with the preaching schedule. Another challenge was with the members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church who were predominant in the Chavene community and were very hostile to us. On one of the days, they blocked our way with their car as we were going to preach for about an hour until some passerby came to speak to them aggressively before they got out of our way. There was a 2-day lectureship at Asemasa church on the 11th and 12th of August on the themes: Authority, How to Study the Bible and Marriage. Steve, Wayne and I taught the lessons since Nathan and Justin had returned to America. Nathan left on the 8th while Justin returned on the 12th of August. The work in Takoradi came to an end on the 13th of August and we traveled to Kumasi on Wednesday,

14th August with brethren Tachi Menson and Dan Arthur from Ghana joining us.

Preaching in Kumasi

In Kumasi, we had the opportunity to preach in various churches. The churches include Nkwantekese, Asuofua, Abrepo, Achiaise, Esaso, Trede, Barekese, etc. On Thursday and Friday (15th & 16th August), we had lectureships at Nkwantekese church of Christ. Steve, Wayne and I all spoke on topics relating to Authority and Marriage. In the evening of these days, Steve, Wayne and I all spoke at the churches in Achiaise, Esaso and Barekese. I had two very amazing Ghana brethren who travelled with me to these churches and helped with interpretation – they were Justice Chiah and Emmanuel Appiah. On Sunday, 18th August, we all worshipped at Asuofua church of Christ – there were over 300 members at this church. Wayne taught the Bible class and Steve gave the sermon while I conducted the Lord's Supper and Giving. Around 1 pm of the same day, I taught the youths of this same church about maintaining the purity of the church (this was the only time in my six weeks of preaching in Ghana that I taught in a church without having to use an interpreter). We spent the whole week conducting a men's training class at Asuofua church in the mornings, teaching from the book of Matthew and addressing the AD 70 doctrine. In the evenings, each of us travelled to different churches to preach there. For the next three evenings (Monday - Wednesday), I taught a series on individual and church responsibility as well as the work of the church at Asuofua church while Wayne was at Abrepo for that period. On Thursday and Friday, Wayne came to Asuofua and I went to Abrepo to teach – I spoke on man's need for authority in religion for the remaining two days. Steve spent the whole week going to Trede preaching and teaching the word every evening.



Asuofua church was amazing. The teaching was well received, and the church was happy to receive us. They even gave us gifts as we departed Kumasi on Saturday morning.

Preaching in Sun City

We left Kumasi on Saturday, 24th of August for Sun City (a journey of about 6 hours). Unfortunately, our vehicle broke down on the way and we could not fix it. We could not get to Sun City that day and we had to lodge in a hotel around the area where our car broke down. The next morning, we were able to locate a church around where we worshipped. It was the church of Christ meeting at Lowcost. Wayne taught at this church on the individual and church responsibilities while Steve gave the sermon. After the service, we proceeded to Sun City in another vehicle, and we got to Sun City late at night. We only preached in Sun City for 3 days (Monday – Wednesday) and at two churches – the church in Sun City and the church in Stone Quarry. Wayne, Steve, and I preached at these churches turn by turn. On Monday night, Wayne preached in Sun City church while Steve preached at Stone Quarry church. On Tuesday night, I preached at the Sun City church while Wayne preached at the Stone Quarry church. On Wednesday night, I preached at the Stone Quarry church while Steve preached at the Sun City church. We taught on individual and church responsibilities and matters relating to Bible authority and what God wants all Christians to do. During the day, we did some door-to-door preaching and visitation to strengthen some brethren.

Departure From Ghana

On the 29th of August, Wayne, Steve, and I travelled from Sun City to the airport in Accra. Brethren Tachi, Ben and Dan travelled with us to the airport until we passed the boarding gate to fly to our various

countries. I got to Nigeria at about 10 am on Thursday (Nigerian time).

Conclusion

The preaching efforts have been a wonderful opportunity for me. I believe that the efforts were fruitful, and our influence exceeded the number of churches that we physically visited. This is because many of the lectureships and programmes in Ghana had people from other congregations that we could not visit attend the event. And so, our preaching efforts were not limited to the members of the churches we visited but were way more than the churches we visited. Barnabas and Paul were said to be “men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:26). I also think that Wayne, Steve, Nathan and Justin are men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord. I pray that God would bless our efforts in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Question & Answer

Continued from pg. 34

The Bible declares that it contains all that is good for man ([II Timothy 3:16-17](#); [II Peter 1:3](#)), but it doesn't necessarily imply that everything bad for man is spelled out. In order to prove your point that Christians are allowed to practice polygamy, you must show a command, example, or necessary inference that polygamy was approved of by God in the New Testament. As I pointed out above, there are several passages that clearly state that marriage is between one man and one woman. If polygamy is godly, upon what passage will you base this conclusion?