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Why Preachers Quit

By J. Wayne Kilpatrick

I love my work of preaching and feel that it is the greatest calling in the world. For twenty-one years of full-time ministry, I've known and loved many outstanding preachers. They loved preaching, planning to give their lives to this work. However, many who once were in local work have now chosen another field of endeavor. Something happened to them over the years to cause them to re-evaluate ministry as a full-time occupation. You may think it is a lack of commitment, inability to perform over a period of years, laziness, or ineptitude. In our area, four men recently decided to quit preaching to go into a secular career. They are all talented, dedicated, and effective ministers. I love them dearly and cherish their friendship. They are quitting for none of the above reasons. Today I called them and asked each one to tell me why they are quitting. Read carefully what they have said. It may help us keep others from quitting, once we understand some of the reasons behind such decisions.

"I have given until there is nothing left to give." As we discussed this, he pointed out how everyone came to him for solutions to their problems. He had counseled and taken to heart their hurts and frustrations until he could bear it no longer. He could not shake off the things that bothered others, hence took their pains as his own.

"Preachers are not allowed to be human." He said when he reacted in a human way to some situations, he was sometimes criticized for it. Others could say what was on their hearts, speak their disapproval of something, but when he did, he was told that preachers shouldn't act like that.

"There is no security in our work." Not many preachers have any retirement program, insurance, nor fringe benefits,

often enjoyed by those in business.

"I don't have time to be with my family." There are so many calls, so much that needs a minister's attention, that his family is often pushed far into the background. Many picnics and trips are interrupted at the last moment because someone called, needing to see the preacher immediately. The children and wife are left alone once again.

"I was never once asked if my financial needs were being supplied." When the leaders met to discuss the budget, they arbitrarily decided on what kind of increase, if any, the minister was to receive. Often without considering inflation, the preacher's increased needs because of children growing up, or sickness in the family. Many worked year after year, getting farther and farther behind in their income, until finally they could no longer remain in the work they had set their hearts upon.

"I became frustrated with the lack of leadership provided." The elders had no plans for future growth, for supplying community needs, nor vision for what we really needed in the church and community.

"I felt like I was the most expendable member in the congregation." There was no security in his work. If the church is not growing, get rid of the preacher. Getting rid of the preacher often becomes the panacea to all church problems.

"I never felt appreciated and hardly ever received any thanks for what I was doing." In fact, this minister said, the elders of the church where he preached often told him not to take any credit for ideas, plans, and programs, but present them as if the church had come up with them. They thought this would be good

for the church, but they were failing to encourage the very one who had dreamed and planned the most.

"I became tired of brotherhood criticism of me and my work, which could affect my job and my income." There are so many negative brethren who want to make opinion law, who are constantly looking over other preachers' bulletins, reading all their writings with the view of finding fault. These men are most vocal, and some of our brethren read everything they write, believing every word without once stopping to check it out. Such men should be stopped, but who and how will it be done?

"I have become disenchanted with local work because so much of what I'm called upon to do has little or nothing to do with winning the lost and edifying the saved." We are "programmed" to death. Everything that is done in many churches has to be pushed, pulled, or tugged on by the preacher. If he misses any social event he is accused of not being a good mixer. This minister was denied time for study and prayer, and felt the work he had chosen and studied for was the last thing he was allowed to do.

"The church is majoring in minors." He meant, we are spending too much time talking about versions, arguing about methodology, making issues of matters that should never become such. We all need to learn the difference in doctrine and opinion and not force our opinions on the brotherhood!

Well, four more great men have quit, and I weep. These men are badly needed. Our brotherhood is not made better because they ceased their work. We are poorer by far. Who will be next? Brethren let's stop the attrition among ministers. Let's pray that God will open our eyes to these men's needs and supply them. Let's become more concerned with caring for and nurturing men who are giving their

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WHY PREACHERS QUIT

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lives to the work of God. We can stop this great loss any time we "wise up" and become a caring fellowship, filled with love and patience. God help us to encourage one another as we should!

Truth Invites Investigation But Never Fears It!

By Mike Pace

"And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free", said Jesus in John 8:32. Should you and I ever be free from our past sins, and have hope of eternal life, it will only be, when and if, we **obey** the truth, which means that we must **know** and **accept** the truth! "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth" (John 17:17). So this leaves us **NO CHOICE** but to know the truth if we wish to be saved, and God's word (the Bible) is this truth. **Therefore to be saved, one must obey the Bible, and first must know it!** If I **know** the truth and am obeying it, then I have the hope of eternal life. If **not**, I am **lost!** My soul being worth more than the whole world, then surely it is **worth saving**. Then to **know** and **obey** the truth should be the most important thing in the world to me!

Now suppose I only **think** I know the truth and some one tells me I should check with God's word to be **sure**, should I become angry, because some one is **interested** in me? Is this the proper atti-

tude toward God and a friend? Is this gratitude? If I have the truth, the Bible will only **confirm** it, and I am taught to make my "*calling and election sure*", (II Peter 1:10). Should I not appreciate some one being interested enough in my soul to want me to be sure I am saved?

THE TRUTH DOES NOT FEAR INVESTIGATION! A person who is **sure** he has the truth will **not** become angry when asked, "*To give an answer to every man that asks a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear*", (I Peter 3:15). The **true** physician will invite investigation, the **quack** fears it! The **true follower of Christ** invites investigation, the **quack** fears it! If I have the truth and **know** it, it does not make me angry for someone to tell me that I do not have the truth, or for someone to teach a different doctrine than the one I teach! When a person thinks you do not have the truth, then if you do have it, you should be willing to study with him. It is not any time to be angry when you hear error and souls are at stake. Defend your doctrine; if it is truth it will shine brighter, if error you should know it **now** while you can change!

EVERY TIME WITHOUT EXCEPTION, a person becomes angry when asked to defend his religious practice, it means that he **knows** that the darkness of error, cannot stand before the light of truth! A person who has committed no crime does not become angry when asked to prove he was not near the crime. He is not afraid if he **knows** that he is **innocent!** Truth will prevail.

The people of Berea, in the days of the apostles were not afraid of checking to be **sure** they had the whole truth. They were not angry to hear Paul preach something different, but **searched** the Scriptures to **know** who was right, and when they learned they were wrong, they changed, (Acts 17:11). They were not **sure**, but they wanted to **be** sure, so they searched the truth! They **wanted** truth and they **found** truth! They were in error, but when the truth revealed the error, they were too honest to hide behind anger, but came out of error and followed the truth!

SOME ARE IN ERROR TODAY AND KNOW IT, BUT WILL NOT ACCEPT TRUTH! So these become angry when they hear the truth; knowing it will show up their error! Stephen found some of

these in Acts 7. "*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you*", (verse 51). "*When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth*", (verse 54). Here it is from the Bible. In **error** and **knew** it, but would neither listen, nor change! So when the truth was presented they became angry, because it showed up their error. Their error could not stand against the truth, so they stopped their ears and killed the preacher! They will be judged by the truth! It was true then and it is true today. Some will say, "I am satisfied with my religion and do not wish to study". Which means he knows he is in error. Yes, only known error fears investigation; truth invites it! Where do you stand?

Can You Find It In God's Holy Word?

By Mike Pace

1. **The name of the church of which you are a member.** Jesus said, *I will build my church*" (Matt. 16:18). There is *one body*" (Eph. 4:4). and "*the body*" is "*the church*" (Col. 1:18). "*The churches of Christ salute you*", (Rom 16:16).
2. **The name you wear in religion.** "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch", (Acts 11:26). "*Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in that name*", (I Peter 4:16).
3. **The creed book you follow.** Paul taught in Galatians 1:8-9, that if "*any man or any angel from heaven*" taught any other Gospel than the one he preached he would be "accursed", for Paul received his Gospel from Christ, (verse 12). God's law is "*perfect*" (James 1:25); supplies us with everything we need according to God, (II Timothy 3:16-17).
4. **The confession, "I believe that God for Christ sake has pardoned my sins".** We must confess "Christ", (Matt. 10:32-33); "*with the mouth*", (Rom. 10:9-10); saying "*I believe Jesus Christ is the son of God*" (Acts 8:37).

5. **Voting to be received into a church.** "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

6. **Having an experience of grace.** One must believe in Christ, which faith comes by hearing God's word, (Mark 16:15, Romans 10:17). He must then repent (Acts 2:38); then confess Christ with the mouth, (Rom. 10:9-10); and be baptized for the remissions of sins (Acts 2:38).

7. **Tithing.** Today the Christian is to "lay by him in store, as God has prospered him", this is to be done "on the first day of the week". He must "purpose in his own heart" and not give "grudgingly or of necessity". (I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:7).

8. **Instrumental music.** There are only two kinds of music, vocal and instrumental, ONLY vocal is authorized by Christ. (Eph. 5:19; Col 3:16).

9. **Omitting the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week.** Jesus commanded us to eat the supper (I Cor. 11:23-30); and the disciples did so on the "first day of the week". (Acts 20:7).

10. **Taking collection every time the church gathers.** As has been pointed out, the ONLY authority for collection in the New Testament church is "upon the first day of the week", (I Cor. 16:2).

11. **Sprinkling for baptism.** Baptism is a "burial" (Rom. 6:3-5) a "going to the water" and a "going down into the water" (Acts 8:36-39).

12. **Baptizing babies.** One must "believe" before he can be Scripturally baptized, (Mark 16:15-16). He must "repent" (Acts 2:38). He must confess Christ (Acts 8:37). A baby cannot do this. Baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). The baby has NO sins, (Matt. 18:1-6).

13. **Baptizing those who are ALREADY saved.** Baptism is to SAVE (I Peter 3:21; Mark 16:15-16).

14. **Joining the church of your choice.** One must OBEY Christ to be saved (Heb. 5:8-9). Christ commanded believers to repent and be baptized in order to obey him and be saved, then HE "added" the saved to the CHURCH OF HIS choice, (Acts 2:47). Had you not rather obey Christ and let him add you to the church of his choice (His church the one he purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:

28), than to obey the creeds of men and join the church of your choice. Think about it!

15. **Teaching alien sinner to pray away their sins.** There is NO WHERE in the Bible that the alien sinner was ever taught to pray for ANYTHING! On the contrary when Paul, an alien sinner at that time, had prayed for three days and nights, was told by the preacher WHOM GO SENT, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord, (Acts 22:16).

Which View Do You Hold?

By Harold Turner

What standard of authority should we recognize to govern moral and spiritual issues? Frequently people ask, "What does your church teach and believe about certain controversial issues?" It is obvious that different churches often hold different views about many moral and spiritual practices. Therefore the views of the church become the authority for these practices, or the abstention of them. Seldom do people seem concerned with what the Bible teaches. Many seem to have more reverence for the views held by their church than they do for the word of God. Which views do you hold, those of the Bible, or those of some church? Suppose some view held by a church is in conflict with the Bible, which would you accept? There are people who boldly express, "I don't care what the Bible says, my church doesn't hold that view." How sad when any person expresses such disrespect and indifference toward the word of God. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, has one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48). Church views will not be of significance when we stand before Christ in the judgment. The word of God will be the only standard used, as it should be today.

To look more closely at the above question, let's consider some applications for it. When it comes to sin, which view do we hold? Frequently people ask what the church's views are on such subjects as abortion, homosexuality, social drinking, pre-marital sex, divorce and remarriage, drugs and many other such issues of

which there are conflicting views. Is it the right of churches to decide what is and what is not sin? Suppose some church decides that there is nothing wrong with abortion, that homosexuality is just a hormone abnormality, that alcoholism is only a disease, etc., would you accept these views? Are these views in harmony with the Bible; Certainly not, but does it make any difference? If the church has decided that these things are only a sickness and not a sin, does this change anything? Does the church have authority above the word of God? In reality, the church has no authority over any matter. Christ is the head over all things to the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). He alone has the right to decide what is and what is not sin. To understand what God considers sin, one should read carefully such scriptures as Romans 1:24-32; I Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; II Tim. 3:1-5; Ephesians 5:1-5; Colossians 3:5-9, etc. We should keep in mind that we will be judged by the word of God rather than by church views.

What views do you hold about the church itself? The modern view held by most people is that while the church is important, one can be saved, live a Christian life, and go to heaven apart from belonging to any church. The church is viewed as a product of man, which has been designed to meet the various theological concepts of different people. These views are offered to justify the theological concepts of different people. What is the Bible view of the church? Notice the following Scriptures carefully. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus promised, "I will build my church." This indicates clearly that man is not the builder or designer of Christ's church. In Eph. 5:25 Paul wrote, "Christ loveth the church, and gave himself for it." And in Acts 20:28 he said that Christ purchased the church with his own blood. Do these sound like the church is a product of man? In Acts 2:47 the Bible states, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The Bible view of the church is that Christ is its builder and owner, he died for it and purchased it with his blood, and that he adds such as should be saved to it. The Bible teaches that Christ built only one church, and those who are redeemed by his blood are added to it. The Bible teaches that religious divisions are sinful and wrong, while man supports and encourages such divisions. Which view do you hold? Do

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WHICH VIEW DO YOU HOLD?

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you stand with the Bible view, or with today's modern views of religion?

When it comes to the view of salvation where do you stand? There are several different things taught about salvation. To justify all views about how one is saved, it is suggested that one must accept Christ as his personal savior, and how he does this is of little concern. All would agree that we must accept Christ in order to be saved, but does it make any difference how one does this? Do we have an option of ways to be saved? Many suggest that to hold the view that there is only one way to be saved is to sit in judgment condemning all other ways. Since no one wants to be guilty of this, then it must be accepted that there are various ways to be saved. What does the Bible teach about this? In Acts 4:12 the Bible makes it clear that there is no salvation outside Christ. Ephesians 2:12 states that outside Christ there is no hope. We must be in Christ to be saved. How do we get into Christ? Men may suggest any number of ways to get into Christ, but what does the Bible say? Which view will you accept? There are only two verses in the Bible that tells us how to get into Christ. In Romans 6:3 Paul wrote, "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ*

How to Become a Christian

The most important question ever asked is: "*What must I do to be saved?*" (Acts 16:30). Then, the **HOW** becomes equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2). This faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God. (Rom. 10:17). "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*" (Heb. 11:6). With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. "*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*" (Acts 17:30). In repentance, we turn from sin, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord. (Matt. 3:8,

Luke 13:3). With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*" (Rom. 10:9-10). Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. "*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*" (Gal. 3:27). Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

BECOME A CHRISTIAN

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"He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

—Hebrews 11:6c