

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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The Arrogance of Error

Barry O'Dell

The Old Testament speaks of presumptuous sin. David wrote, “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression” (Ps. 19:13). Of the word *presumptuous* the Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament says, “An adjective meaning proud, arrogant. This word most often occurs in the Psalms where it is used in connection with sin (Ps. 19:13) or to describe the ungodly (Ps. 86:14; 119:21, 85). Elsewhere in the Old Testament it describes the proud who will be judged (Isa. 13:11; Mal. 4:1) and the disobedience of the proud (Jer. 43:2).”¹ In his commentary on Psalms Albert Barnes wrote of *presumptuous sins*, “The

“The false teacher . . . obstinately maintains his own opinions without regard for the feelings of God.”

prevailing thought is that of pride, and the reference is particularly to sins which proceed from self-confidence; from reliance on one's

own strength.”² God used a similar term, a verb, when speaking to Moses about false prophets: “But the prophet, which shall *presume* to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die” (Deut. 18:20). *Presume* means that the false prophet had spoken insolently, proudly, or arrogantly. Literally, the false teacher will take it upon himself to speak for God! Pride is one of the things which Solomon wrote that God hates (Pro. 6:17). James wrote that God “resisteth (is opposed to) the proud” (Jas. 4:6). How does *presumption* tie in with the existence of religious error?

God has spoken (Heb. 1:1-3). The faith was once and for all delivered by men who were inspired or guided by the Holy Spirit (Jude 3; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). The

word of God contains all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). The gospel is God's power to salvation (Rom. 1:16). It would take a truly presumptuous (arrogant, proud) person to attempt to speak for God in a way different than His word already speaks. Paul identified that there were different gospels in the first century (Gal. 1:6-9). Those who spoke anything that was different from the inspired gospel are cursed by God, even if it were an angel! Yet, error abounds. Many so-called preachers *presume* to speak where God has not spoken and fail to speak where God has. When writing about false teachers in the first century Peter said, “But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. *Presumptuous* are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities” (2 Pet. 2:10). *Presumptuous* is a noun meaning, “a bold, daring, or enterprising person. In a bad sense, an audacious or presumptuous person.” *Self-willed* is a combination of two Greek words and literally means, “one who pleases himself.” The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament says of this word, “A person who obstinately maintains his own opinions or asserts his own rights, but is reckless of the rights, feelings, and interests of others.”³ The false teacher then, according to Peter, obstinately maintains his own opinions without regard for the feelings of God. Let's use Peter's thought above and consider some ways in which presumption and self-will is displayed by some who claim to be speaking for God.

Without regard for the feelings of God many teach that the only unifying doctrine of the Bible is the deity of Christ. Does God care what His church teaches and practices just as long as they believe that Jesus is His Son? He absolutely cares! Jesus Christ has written His last will and testament and died on the cross to bring it into force (Heb. 9:15-17). His teachings guide the life of the Christian (Matt. 7:24-27) and we are going to be judged by His words (Jn. 12:48). The book of Acts is the history of the establishment, propagation, worship,

and work of the church. The New Testament epistles written by Paul, James, John, Peter, and Jude guide the work and worship of the church today and also correct errors that may creep into the church. The presumptuous, self-willed do not care. The words of Christ are of no consequence to those who accept and teach the unity-in-diversity error (Rev. 22:18-19).

Without regard for the feelings of God many are seeking a more progressive church. A progressive church is often defined as one that accepts fellowship with the denominational world and does not see the sin in using instrumental music in worship. What are God's feelings on progressivism? Fortunately for us, He is very clear: "Whosoever *transgresseth* and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 Jn. 9-11). The American Standard Version reads, "Whosoever *goeth onward...*" On this passage Guy N. Woods wrote, "Any movement which is away from the teaching of Christ is progress in the wrong direction, and results eventually in the loss of God Himself."⁴ In spite of this stern warning from John, many are proud to be progressive! Often they are insulted when challenged because, as *presumptuous* is defined, they are arrogant and pleased with themselves. Of the progressive, John says that his deeds are evil.

These are only two examples of the battle that the Lord's church must continue to fight: unity-in-diversity and progressivism. May God help us all to be of a humble and contrite spirit in our efforts to serve Him (Ps. 51:17).

¹ Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter (2003). The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament, page 282. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers

² Albert Barnes (1998). Barnes' Notes on Psalms, page 176. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books

³ Spiros Zodhiates (1992). The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament, page 830. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers

⁴ Guy N. Woods (1991). A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles, Vol. 7, page 347. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company

What I Wish the Church Knew about the Challenges of Mission Work

Stacy Ferguson

Mission work is an area where many challenges exist. I am thankful to God that I can do mission work in the Pacific Islands and have a good overseeing eldership at the Forest Park Church of Christ in Lake City, Georgia. I am also thankful for the many good, supporting congregations. Challenges are opportunities for growth. We all have them and, if we meet them, we will mature and develop. I never dreamed of some of the real life issues that confront missionaries until experiencing them for myself. What are the challenges of mission work?

From my experience, and what I know from other missionaries, one of the primary challenges of mission work is raising sufficient funds for your family and the work. I know of those who have not gone to the field because they were unable to get the support needed. I believe more would go if finding the financial support were not such a problem. Challenges exist in the area of raising sufficient funds. I'm going to assume a man has a love for God and the lost, zeal, and has his heart dedicated to the place where he sees the need to labor. In raising support you must have a good overseeing congregation. Most congregations want to send their money to an eldership, not an individual, which is wise and best. Finding an eldership and congregation that will be involved, supportive, and devoted to you and the area you are working can be difficult. The elders do not simply need to handle finances, but go where the missionary lives, having the Lord's work and his family's best interest in mind.

What makes getting funds so difficult? I remember when I first raised funds for full time mission work. IT WAS A HUGE TASK! A man must have many congregations to contact, spend countless hours on the phone, travel thousands of miles, and talk to many elderships and congregations in order to have the support needed to do mission work. Building a list of good, sound congregations to contact and a key person to contact in that congregation is possibly the greatest challenge of all when it comes to getting the money needed. After contacting possibly 100 to 200 congregations, finding enough of them that will actually support you seems to be an endless task. From my own

experience, a personal contact in a congregation is more likely to lead to getting support. After raising funds this challenge is complicated by keeping it and continuing to raise more as the work grows. Reporting to supporting congregations in person and by newsletters is an extremely important help in this area.

I am involved in the Pacific Islands Bible College. We have teachers that go on two or three week trips to conduct the college classes. I have heard many times the difficulties they have had in raising funds. It prohibits some from going and discourages others from even trying. I encourage elders and congregations to truly consider the person seeking support and the work they plan to do. It is very easy to say, "We will not be able to help at this time." Give the missionary an opportunity to share the work with the congregation. Even if the congregation does not have money in the budget, once they see the need, they may be challenged to increase their giving or individuals might help.

Another challenging area in mission work is that of time. I've heard it said that time stands still for no man. How true that is. I just turned 50, and I'm thinking I should not be this old. Where has the time gone? The areas in the Pacific where we work have many opportunities for growth. We do not have the time to do all that needs to be done. Let me give you an example. As I am writing this, my wife Kathy and I have just finished a trip to Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia. We were busy! We were glad to have so many opportunities to teach and I'm thankful to the Lord for them. Many things needed to be done that we just did not have the time to accomplish: people needed visiting, studies with the lost needed to be conducted, other islands needed to hear the gospel, etc. We were going from early in the morning until after sundown, barely taking time to eat lunch. Still, we simply ran out of time. Not having the time to do the things you know are so necessary can be very disheartening and challenging.

The need for workers fits right in with the previous point. Since we only have twenty four hours in a day, more workers are needed. I think so often of what Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:37-38). One thing I noticed is that the denominations have people living and working all throughout the Pacific.

Many Mormons live and work in Chuuk. Our challenge is having men and women, both young and old, willing to make the sacrifices necessary to live and work in the mission field. Since those who are teaching false doctrine can be so devoted, shouldn't those of us who know the truth be more dedicated to the spread of the gospel? Not only Christians living in the field, but short-

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His kingdom ."***

time workers are very important and beneficial. Those going on short-term trips should be going to teach God's word. The most important needs of men are

spiritual. Several preachers have been willing to help, but the congregations where they work are not willing to give them the time, sometimes requiring them to use their vacation time. May God bless us with congregations willing to support and send laborers into His kingdom.

It is also challenging to meet the needs of the congregations and continue to spread the gospel to new areas. Usually on the mission field the congregations are relatively young. Therefore, they need a lot of teaching, edifying, and equipping. When spreading the gospel, it may be very easy to have a new congregation established because of people being receptive to the truth in different villages or islands. This of course leads to another church needing edification and equipping. It is useless to plant churches if they will not remain faithful. Providing for the needs of the congregations, to assist them in growing and developing takes much time and teaching.

Some other challenges are: developing leaders, language, culture, customs, food, transportation and the list could go on. Mission work is challenging, but very rewarding. With these challenges I have not presented detailed solutions. I know you can determine changes that can be made to help mission work be done throughout the world. The solutions begin with each local congregation considering the challenges, learning, growing, teaching, and training all the members to be true, self-sacrificing servants of our Master.

Stacy works with the Forest Park church of Christ in Lake City, GA and the Pacific Islands Bible College

F.C.G.N. CONTRIBUTIONS FOR MAY - JUNE 2016

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Viola (Viola, AR)	50.00
East Side on the Hill (Lexington, OK)	60.00
Lowell (Springdale, AR)	100.00
Crossroads (Gepp, AR)	200.00
Pritchett (Big Sandy, TX)	100.00
Clarkridge (Clarkridge, AR)	150.00
Moody (Moody, MO)	100.00
Agnos (Agnos, AR)	100.00
Pilot (Mammoth Spring, AR)	700.00
Elizabeth (Elizabeth, AR)	100.00
Bakersfield (Bakersfield, MO)	100.00

Sturkie (Salem, AR)	50.00
Camp (Camp, AR)	160.00
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Hilltop (Eufaula, OK)	50.00
Dellhalf (Myrtle, MO)	100.00

INDIVIDUALS

Willene & Luceile (Franklin, AR)	30.00
Gary & Ann Wilson (Hot Springs Village, AR)	40.00
Greg & Becky (Malaga, WA)	50.00
Benny Thornton (Hampton, VA)	100.00
Dortha Johnson (West Plains, MO)	25.00

Service Times for Mammoth Spring church of Christ

- Sunday AM Class - 10:00
- AM Worship - 10:45
- PM Worship - 6:00
- Wednesday Night Class - 7:00

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- God's Authorized Worship**
 - *Colossians 3:17* -
1. Lord's Supper - Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24
 2. Prayer - Acts 12:5; Philippians 4:6-7
 3. Singing - Ephesians 5:19; Hebrews 13:15
 4. Giving - I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:7-8.
 5. Preaching - Acts 2:42; 20:7
- The Churches of Christ**
1. The Bible is the only guide - Rom. 1:16
 2. A Biblical name - Rom. 16:16
 3. Established in Jerusalem Acts 2:1-4
 4. Established by Christ - 1 Cor. 3:11
 5. Established in 1st century - Acts 2:47
 6. The body of the saved - Eph. 5:23
 7. You can be added to the church of Christ by being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins - Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13

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