

# 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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## POTPOURRI

by Ted J. Clarke

### INTRODUCTION

The dictionary says that "potpourri" is a French word which literally meant a "rotten pot" back as far as 1749. A modern meaning, which the same dictionary assigns, is "a mixture of flowers, herbs, and spices that is usually kept in a jar and used for scent." As one whose sinuses stop up when I walk down the aisle in a store where such smelly mixtures are kept, I can see how the definition of "rotten pot" could apply to such collections. My apologies to all you ladies who delight in such scents.

However, another definition given to "potpourri" is a "miscellaneous collection" of things in general. What follows is a miscellaneous collection of some articles, which I hope do not smell like a rotten pot and which will not stop up your sinuses!

### PUTTING GOD FIRST

It is fairly easy to read and understand most Scriptures. It is more difficult to understand some passages than others (2 Peter 3:15, 16). Probably the greatest difficulty we face is applying to our lives some of the Scriptures that are the easiest to understand! Perhaps we only think that we understand what the verse is saying, but we really do not comprehend the impact of what it requires. Or, maybe we do understand fully what is commanded, but we do not think about it often enough to apply it to our daily situations.

For example, take Matthew 6:33, where the Lord said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things (the necessities of life) will be added unto you." That verse is not hard to understand, but it appears to give **many** of us great difficulty in applying it. Putting God first means that whatever has to be done to make **pleasing God our number one priority** is what we will do, whatever the costs or sacrifices that we have to make! We can be very inventive and ingenious when we want to **arrange** our time to do things that we want to do. We will juggle schedules,

cancel appointments, call baby-sitters, call someone to provide transportation for us, go without sleep, miss work or make it up later, **whatever we have to do so that we can do what we want to do.** Now, let me ask a probing question, "If we refuse to do the same in regards to things that we know will please God, are we really seeking 'first' God's kingdom and righteousness?" Of course we are not!

Putting God first means that He should get the best of all we have to offer. Israel fell into the habit of trying to give God less than their best, their leftovers. God asked them, "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 1:8). Because of their practice of **not** giving God the best, He said, "I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand" (v.10). It is possible to neglect God to the point where He will not accept what you do offer!

Let's look at our opportunities for worship and Bible study. Do you put God first in this effort? Here is a simple test to help you answer correctly. Do you attend every service? If not, do you do something more important? Do you do something absolutely necessary that you could not possibly do at any other time? Do you try to do everything you can to **rearrange** your schedule so that you can attend each service? Brethren, remember Hebrews 4:13. God knows all. At the judgment can you say, "Lord, you were **first!**"?

### JESUS, OR RATS, COFFEE, & POLITICIANS?

If you have ever doubted that this is a crazy world, read on. A few years back a news item told of a man who was arrested for cruelty to animals because he used a broom to kill a rat that was in his house. I guess he was supposed to call the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to come and get the cute little furry thing, or perhaps catch it in a live trap and take

it to his garage or the dump so it could breed a few dozen more rascally rodents. Are people really crazy enough to allow such laws to be enforced?

A second news item was a lady who won a 2.9 million dollar lawsuit against McDonald's. Why did she sue them? Because they made their coffee too hot! She bought a cup of coffee and clumsily spilled it on her lap and was burned by it. So she sued McDonald's for making coffee the way we all expect it to be - hot. I'm sorry the lady spilled her coffee and was burned by it, but it is crazy to put the blame on the McDonald company because she spilled the drink. And 2.9 million dollars? That's a lot of blame! McDonald's is appealing the verdict. Who can blame them? Maybe the lady can sue them for appealing. Who knows?

People must be desperate for a cause when they complain and turn in a man for killing a rat. Only greed would drive a person to ask for 2.9 million dollars for an accident in which that person was mainly to blame. Pettiness and greed seem to drive an increasingly larger segment of our society.

Gus Nichols, a great preacher of former days, used to speak of his concern when members of the Lord's church would be more concerned about political candidates than the Lord and His church. Men and women will put bumper stickers on their cars, signs in their yards, and talk to their friends and neighbors about "their candidates." They will go to political rallies and shout out "We need Washington," or "We need Lincoln!" But those same people, brother Nichols pointed out, would be embarrassed to advertise and talk about the Lord's church or gospel meetings and the like. They will not talk to their neighbors about salvation and the church for which Christ died. Neither will they shout aloud, "**We need Jesus... We need Jesus!**" Brethren, let's not let things like rats and hot coffee be our concern. Let us talk of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Acts 4:12). Let us not be petty in our faith and practice, but be concerned with souls which shall be in an

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eternal hell unless they know and obey the truth (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10). We can all really do something meaningful with our lives by being Christians and leading others to be saved. Or would you rather be known for rats and coffee?

**FRUSTRATIONS AND PLEASING PEOPLE!**

You have probably heard the story of the criminal who was condemned to death for his crimes. It seems that when he walked onto the scaffold he complained about the new rope they were going to use to hang him. He said it would cause the skin on his neck to break out in a rash. It seems you cannot please everyone. No doubt you also have heard of the man who insisted that his wife cook him one fried egg and one scrambled egg for breakfast and then fussed at her when she served them to him. Yeah, poor woman, it seems that she scrambled the wrong egg. Truly, it does seem that you cannot please everyone. Are there really people like the condemned man and the husband? **Oh, yes!**

There are some people who will spend their last breath finding something to complain about or criticizing someone for

doing something. Still others will make unreasonable demands that you can bend over backwards trying to fulfill, only to find out that there is still that one little thing that you did not get right. If the executioner had given the condemned man a turtle-necked shirt to wear, the convict would probably have said it was the wrong color. If the wife had scrambled the right egg, it would likely have been too soft to suit her husband. Try as you might, you cannot please some people. They are so self-centered and selfish that it never occurs to them that the world was not created for their personal satisfaction. Some of these people may appear to be tolerable to live with, or even nice, as long as things go their way. **But look out if you do something that displeases them!** With such people you don't have to do anything wrong. You may even be doing something that is right, but if it doesn't meet this person's selfish approval he/she will yelp like a scalded dog and try to make you think that he/she has been terribly wronged. Over the slightest things these people will start rumors and attack the character of others, just to get even for what they perceive as some great injustice done to them, even though no real harm was ever done to them. Well, surely Christians would never act like that...would they?

Jesus pointed out the impossibility of pleasing everyone when he likened the Jews unto pouty little children who didn't get their way (Matthew 11:16-19). But Jesus always did what was **right**, whether it pleased others or not. He knew He could not please all men, due to the selfish nature of so many. People may lie against you and work to destroy you, as they did John the Baptizer and Jesus in the passage cited above. What should you do? Bow to the whims of the pouty children? Do nothing that will ever displease anyone? (Good luck on trying!) Do absolutely nothing? The answer is "No!" on all counts. **Do what is right in God's sight!** The outcome of your actions (as far as it depends on you) will always be right when you walk in the light of God's teaching.

How can we deal with unreasonable people? Not by compromising what is true and right! You may give in to such people when it involves something over which you have control, but you have no right to surrender God's principles to someone's pride. Stephen was stoned by hard-hearted and stubborn people, but he pleaded that the Lord not charge his

death to them. Do not seek revenge for those who wrong you (Acts 7:51-60; Romans 12:16-21).

Unreasonable people are the way they are because of their pride. **They are more important than anyone or anything.** At least they think so. Such people need to be taught the principle of self-sacrifice – one of the hardest things for any of us to accept. We do not do people a good service just by giving in to their unreasonable demands all of the time. The mind of Christ, as set forth by Paul in Philippians 2:4-8, is the greatest need of us all. Helping others to see Christ's love and sacrifice for all of us can change a heart of stone. Let them see Christ in you even when they are at their worst. Never sacrifice truth and right, but be willing to suffer personal loss and insult, even when you are innocent of wrong. One day God will reward the Christ-like life and bring the proud to their knees.

**WE NEED CONVICTION!**

by Marvin Rickett

In Kings 18:21, the prophet of God challenged the people of Israel: "How long halt (cripple along) ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." Indecision is a great crippler. It cripples the undecided person, it cripples the church, and it cripples the progress of the gospel. Some folks think it is a mark of maturity, humility and magnanimity to continue to be "open-minded" on a matter, to be forever "still studying the question." There is, of course, a period of time in each individual's spiritual progress that he must spend some time studying and learning. During that time, there needs to be open-mindedness in weighing the evidences and drawing the conclusions. But there comes a time, when all the evidence is in, to make up one's mind, draw the proper conclusions, and take a stand.

We need to have firm convictions on the religious principles we believe in. How can we convince another that gospel principles are important and vital to their soul when we exhibit hesitancy and unsureness on our part? It certainly doesn't inspire confidence to accept another's faith if he is unsure of what its tenets are. Conviction is a vital ingredient for evangelism. Lack of conviction also undercuts our own personal faith.

One of the current concepts which wrecks

conviction is the allegation that we cannot know the truth absolutely. This is a false doctrine! (John 8:32; 17:3). It leaves folks "ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7). They are perpetually "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). This is not the state the Lord intended for us to dwell in.

Those with conviction that they **know** what is right and **know** what is wrong may be criticized for their cocksureness. Yet, the Bible teachers never hesitated in expressing their sureness. Imagine Peter saying on Pentecost: "Brethren, we think it is possible that some of you may have erred slightly in judgment and allowed a relatively innocent man to be put to death. If so, it seems proper to share with you my feeling that you should try to rectify that in some way." Instead, Peter said: "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:23, 36, 38).

The following are some areas we ought to have conviction in:

(1) All men are lost in sin, and without the gospel of Christ will stay lost for eternity. There are brethren who like to rationalize and state that they are not sure that the "pore ole heathen" are really lost without the gospel. Some are not even sure their neighbor is lost. This attitude kills the incentive to try to get the gospel to them. Yet, we know the Bible teaches the world is lost in sin (Romans 3:9-23; 5:12; 6:23). To refuse to have this conviction, at the least, causes only half-hearted efforts at evangelism.

(2) Some brethren act like they are unsure whether there is only one way of salvation. They teach the gospel plan of salvation, but yet want to leave the door of possibility open that someone who obeyed a different plan of salvation just might make it to heaven. The Book declares that there is only one way, and it is narrow and restricted (Matthew 7:13, 14).

(3) Some brethren are not sure that there is only one church. They want to grant a measure of acceptance to denominations; or to honest, sincere, and knowledgeable individuals within denominations. The Bible says there is one church and it is the only body which the Lord saves

(Ephesians 4:4; 5:23). Why can't we have a conviction on the subject of the church?

(4) Some brethren are not sure that mechanical instruments of music in worship are unacceptable to God. They refuse to make up their minds about it even though they have searched the Bible through and found that the Bible authorizes only singing (Ephesians 5:19), and condemns whatever is not authorized (II John 9). We would have a much greater chance of converting denominational people if we stuck by our convictions instead of hinting that their worship might be acceptable after all.

(5) Some brethren are still scratching about to find loopholes in God's law of divorce and remarriage. They are looking for another cause for divorce and remarriage besides the one in Matthew 19:9. "We're still studying the question," they say after 25 years of research. "We want to remain open-minded." Sooner or later, all the evidence is in. A decision has to be made. A stand has to be taken. Leaving the question open perpetually only allows for more error to creep in and gain a stronghold.

God, give us the courage to establish convictions based upon the Scriptures, then give us the courage to stand by those convictions.

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## WORSHIP GOD'S WAY!

by Bruce Stulting

In the first century, the church worshiped according to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). He also promised the apostles that "when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13). Therefore, the apostles' doctrine is in complete harmony with the will of the Lord.

It is imperative that we continue to worship according to the New Testament pattern. Failure to do so renders our worship vain (Matt. 15:9). We read how "Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And

there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD" (Lev. 10:1-2). This example admonishes us not to substitute our desires in place of God's commands.

New Testament worship was always carried out with reverence and in an orderly manner (1 Cor. 14:30). The order of the worship is usually determined beforehand by the elders. Godly men take the lead in the assembly and direct us in the various acts of worship. These men often briefly explain the item of worship in order to help us better prepare our minds to worship God. Extremism in worship is to be avoided. Ritualism or emotionalism should never characterize our worship. Today, many "new innovations" such as choirs, swaying with upraised hands, spontaneous singing, and hand clapping are being added to the worship. However, a casual reading of the New Testament will find that these acts are not authorized in worship.

Authorized worship includes the Lord's supper, giving, singing, prayer, and teaching the gospel. We dare not try to alter, substitute, add to or take away from the worship that God has authorized. As Christians, we are satisfied to worship God in the way that pleases Him. Any change on our part would be presumptuous and sinful.

During the singing, all members of the congregation are to join their voices together in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. In doing so we not only praise God, but also teach and admonish one another as well (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). With the specific command to "sing" addressed to the individual, we do not add mechanical instruments of music in our worship songs. For the same reason we do not have choirs, solos or any type of mood music for entertainment.

During worship on the first day of the week, Christians are to give liberally as God has prospered them (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Our liberality in giving is evidence of our devotion to God (2 Cor. 8:1-8). Although there are many factors to determine the amount given, our money must always be given freely (2 Cor. 9:6-7). Guests are not required to give, but may do so if they choose. The funds collected are used in the work of the church, which includes evangelism, benevolence and edification.

A vital part of any Christian's life is prayer. Through prayer, the Christian

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gains strength, offers thanksgiving to God, makes requests, and intercedes on the behalf of others (1 Peter 5:8; Phil. 4:6). When Christians come together to worship, prayers are offered frequently. During times of prayer, a godly man speaks his prayer out loud with the rest of the congregation following him in silence (1 Tim. 2:8). Praying in this fashion allows us to maintain order, reverence and avoid noise and confusion.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus as a memorial of his death on the cross (Matt. 26:26-29). The unleavened bread and fruit of the vine are emblems which represent our Savior's body and blood and help us to center our minds on the events of His death. In partaking of the Lord's Supper we have communion (fellowship) with Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). In Acts 20:7 we have the example of the first century church partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of each week. We do not practice closed communion, but each person must examine himself that he may partake in a worthy manner (1 Cor. 11:27-29). Guests are not encouraged or forbidden to partake; it is their choice. We must, however, point out that there can be no communion or fellowship with Christ unless we are faithful children of God (1 John 1:5-7).

Teaching is also part of our worship. The Bible is the inspired, authoritative and all sufficient word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). As such, we believe that if a man speaks it should be from the Word of God (1 Pet. 4:11). Therefore, our Bible class teachers usually teach directly out of the Bible. Sermons from the pulpit will be Bible centered with scriptures given to enable the listener to check the Bible for oneself (Acts 17:11; John 5:39). At the close of each sermon an invitation will be given. This is an opportunity for the believing sinner to be reconciled to God by obeying the Gospel. This is done by repenting of sins, confessing Christ and being baptized for the remission of sins (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matt. 10:32; Acts 2:38). The erring Christian also has the opportunity to repent and ask for the prayers of the congregation (Acts 8:22).

The foregoing is a brief account of New Testament worship. From the time of the apostles, men have sought to improve upon the Divine pattern. All attempts to do so end in failure and sin. Let's stick with the pattern and worship God "in spirit and in truth." We encourage all to

accept the teaching of the New Testament and "Worship God's Way!"

4215 Lorance Dr.  
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**THE BIBLE LIVES**

Generation follows generation—yet it lives.  
Nations rise and fall—yet it lives.  
Doubted, suspected, criticized—yet it lives.  
Condemned by atheists—yet it lives.  
Scoffed at by scorners—yet it lives.  
Betrayed by fanatics—yet it lives.  
Wrongfully accused, misquoted—yet it lives.

Yet it lives—as a lamp to our feet.  
Yet it lives—as a light to our path.  
Yet it lives—as the guide to heaven.  
Yet it lives—as a guide for our youth.  
Yet it lives—as a comfort to the aged.  
Yet it lives—as food to the hungry.  
Yet it lives—as drink to the thirsty.  
Yet it lives—as rest for the weary.  
Yet it lives—as a light for the ignorant.  
Yet it lives—as salvation for the sinner.  
Yet it lives—as grace for the believer.

To know it is to love it.  
To love it is to accept it.  
To accept it is eternal life.

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**GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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