

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

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## Why the Early Church Grew So Fast...

Unity . . .

Today it is said that we have near three hundred different kinds of churches in the United States alone, and estimated to be near two thousand throughout the world! Yet Jesus promised to build only one church (His church) Matt. 16:18. The Bible states that He (Jesus) purchased the (one) church with His own BLOOD, Acts 20:28. There is "ONE BODY" (Eph. 4:4) and this one body is "THE CHURCH", Col. 1:18, so there is ONE church which the Lord established. The Lord "adds" all those "who should be saved" to the church, not one of the more than two hundred churches in the United States! Paul taught unity (I Cor. 1:10-13); Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:20-21) And the EARLY CHURCH HAD UNITY! "ALL THAT BELIEVED WERE TOGETHER, AND HAD ALL THINGS COMMON", Acts 2:44. They spent no time proselyting, no time supporting conflicting doctrines, no time explaining away the Bible, no time writing, learning, or teaching human creeds. ALL THE SAVED WERE IN FELLOWSHIP (Acts 2:42), not joining hundreds of churches teaching conflicting doctrines, contrary to the word of God. Now man "joins the church of his choice". In New Testament times, you could not, neither now can you "join" the Lord's church. On the contrary, the LORD ADDED THOSE "WHO SHOULD BE SAVED" TO THE CHURCH OF HIS CHOICE. The ONE HE PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD! Now a man "thinks" he is saved and then looks for a human governed religious group to join. One which believes what he ALREADY believes. But the Lord makes no mistakes, those who OBEY HIM to become Christians, He adds to the "called out", or the church. Yes, today if EVERY person would obey Christ, every person would be "added", by the Lord, of His church and there would be ONE church and ALL would be in fellowship and we would have the

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## TIME

By James D. Jarrett  
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One of life's most useful commodities is that of time. The wise man said, "for everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven." (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

If we think of time in its future aspect, it is a most uncertain commodity. No one knows how much time we have left. Concerning the time when Jesus shall return, no man knows, no angel in heaven knows. Jesus himself did not know the time of his return while upon this earth. (Matthew 24:36) Future life upon this earth is always uncertain. Only eternity is certain.

Time past is forever finished. No man can relive his life. Past mistakes while they may not be forgotten are over, whether in the teens, middle age, mature age, or old age; it is a mistake to try to live in the past. Many older Christians act as if the Christian life is in the past. This is a mistake. "Let the younger ones do it", sounds good but it is not right. The young and old must pull together in the Lord's church.

When we consider time now, it is dispensed in equal portions. There is sixty minutes in everyones' hour. It is hard to conceive an occasion when the statement, "I don't have time," doesn't really mean, "I don't intend to take time."

The student in school that said his paper was not handed in at the scheduled deadline because he didn't have the time, had just as much time as the student that completed the assignment. They merely used their time differently.

This article is not for the purpose of criticizing leisure time. Neither is it a tirade against busy people. It is an attempt to stimulate better planning and better use of our time.

We make time for that which we deem important. Consideration of and for Almighty God is vitally important in the judicious use of our time.

Our life is like a candle and must burn out, but the glories of heaven and the

## The Challenge of The New Year

By Clovis Ragsdale

With the ushering in of a new year much is being said about the advantages and opportunities the new year will afford in the business and political world. Hope and optimism abound at the beginning of each new year. This attitude should also be present in the spiritual realm of life.

The Lord's people should use the beginning of a new year to inventory the success and failures of the past year and to make plans for improvement in the coming year.

The church faces an ever increasing responsibility with the passing of each year. This is true because there are more souls who become accountable to God with the ever increasing numbers of men upon the earth. It is true because our abilities to communicate with more of the peoples of the world are expanding and improving with each passing year. The church is growing in numbers and in financial ability each year, though not as fast as we would like. It should be growing in faith and knowledge as we find and possess ever improving methods to teach and edify one another.

The church will continue to make progress in the coming year if every member will resolve to give more time to prayer, Bible study, and in letting his light shine brighter each passing day. Our lights will shine if we are regular in church attendance, kindness toward all, in controlling our speech, in the wearing of modest apparel, in abstinence of the sins catalogued in Gal. 5:19-21, and in the full use of all the talent God has given unto us. In an age of material prosperity we must be diligent that we give of our earnings as we are prospered.

This is a success formula for being a better christian in the coming year. It will call for greater effort and dedication on the part of each christian. It will also have a bearing in where you spent eternity.

torments of Hell will burn for eternity. Therefore, our time is too important to waste on totally trivial things.

## The Fulton County Gospel News

... is a monthly publication distributed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name, be SURE to include the Zip Code Number. It must be with each address according to the Postal regulations. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we are grateful. If you care to know of its financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request.

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and James E. Henley.

## Church News

The Church of Christ in Mammoth Spring, Arkansas reports record breaking attendance for the year of 1969, with Sunday morning attendance averaging 257, averages for Sunday evening 151. Two were baptized into Christ here in Mammoth Spring during the month of December.

The Church of Christ in Viola, Arkansas reports that Brother Gerald Owens is now living at Viola, and working with the church there. They report one baptism:

The Church of Christ in Mountain Grove, Missouri reports three baptisms in the month of December.

### Contributions for December

Edith Kirksey	\$5.00
Wheeling Church of Christ	5.00
Opal Gleghorn	5.00
Mrs. L.D. Karns	2.00
Mabel Spurgeon	1.00
Ring Church of Christ	5.00
Agnos Church of Christ	5.00
Viola Church of Christ	5.00
Mrs. J.H. Laman	1.00
Sturkie Church of Christ	10.00
Freddie Powell	5.00
Elizabeth Church of Christ	5.00
Dorothy Mae Skiver	5.00
Dellhalf Church of Christ	5.00
Mr. Dewey Cox	10.00
Harvey Blue	2.00
Maggie Cambell	2.00
Sitka Church of Christ	5.00
A Friend of the Paper	5.00

## I've Been There!

Have you ever gone to a restaurant and received such poor service from the waitress that you decided not to go back even though the food was really good?

Have you ever sat impatiently in your car at a service station and decided to stop patronizing that establishment because the attendant was more concerned with visiting his friends than in giving good service?

Have you ever gone to a department store and waited so long for service that you decided not to go back?

Have you ever gone to a grocery where untrain, uncaring personnel conducted the business so poorly that you decided to take your shopping elsewhere?

Most of us have. And no amount of advertising will persuade us to go back to these places. The examples set before us on our previous visit lingers as a constant reminder that there are better places to go.

The same is true of the church. People who know little about the Bible and about the church will often judge its soundness and its value by the way they see us react to it. And just as we will stop going to the above named businesses, if they are not favorably impressed by what they see, they will not come back. They conclude that there are better places to be spending their time.

If, for instance, they see us whispering during the lesson, they will decide that the messages here are of little importance. If they find us drowsy, they decide coming here is a waste of time. If they see us entertaining ourselves and those around us with our babies, they will decide this time is better spent at home. And don't forget, they won't be back!

—Richard E. Stephens.

*"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father in Heaven"—Matt. 7:21.*

## Dividends on Our Religion

### Average Religion . . .

Too many people in all religions today, are not really sold on what they are doing. Most have simply "joined" the family religion as that is what was expected of them. Still others are sprinkled into some religion and the father and mother promised to see that they are married in the church and buried in the church cemetery. This keeps the family respectable as far as a church is concerned. But this is not New Testament Christianity.

### Must Make Investment . . .

It is rather trite, but still true, that we are only interested in that in which we have an investment. Jesus said that the heart is where ever our treasure is. In New Testament times the Christian "first gave himself" to the Lord, II Cor. 8:5. They realized that the Lord had "bought them", I Cor. 6:19-20. In view of those two facts it was simple, logical and natural to "present one's body" to God as a "living sacrifice, holy and acceptable" to God. This was to be a "reasonable", or "spiritual" service, Rom. 12:1. Now when a person has committed himself completely unto God, it is not a burden, but a pleasure, to look after one's investment. When we put both heart and treasure into the hands of God, we can say with Paul, "I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him", II Tim. 1:12. ARE YOU NOW DRAWING ANY DIVIDENDS BECAUSE YOU HAVE MADE NO INVESTMENTS???

### COOPERATION

A traveler found his path blocked by an immense rock in a precipitous ravine. No matter how much he exerted himself, he still could not move the boulder. He sat down in helpless despair. Soon another traveler came along the same road. He, too, tried to move the rock, but failed as had the first. After several hours had passed, suddenly one of the men thought of a way, and asked, "Might we not succeed together where we have failed alone?" Then, before their united strength, the barrier yielded and left the way open. We need this lesson. There is strength in unity. Christians must work together if they expect to successfully fulfill the Great Commission of Christ. (Mark 16:15,16).

## By Faith Abel Offered...

From Heb. 11:4, we learned that Abel "offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain", and that God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's offering. This was all done by FAITH! Faith comes only by "hearing the word of God", Rom. 10:17, so this means to do something "by faith" it must have been commanded by God. Where God has NOT commanded ANYTHING, then to engage in such can NOT be by faith! Without faith we can NOT please God, Heb. 11:6. We WALK by faith and NOT by sight, 2 Cor. 5:7. This again means that ALL we do to worship God, must have been COMMANDED by Him, or else it is NOT of faith and can not please God.

Cain may have been honest and sincere, just as much as Abel, yet God rejected his sacrifice, because it was NOT of faith, meaning that God had NOT commanded the KIND of sacrifice Cain offered. Now God did not tell Cain NOT to offer the fruit of the field, but in stating the KIND of sacrifice he did want, this excluded EVERY OTHER kind of sacrifice in the world! God ONLY has to state what he wants, he does not then have to go through hundreds of other things stating not this, or not that. When he told Noah to build the ark of gopher wood, this at the same time excluded all other types of wood!

### BEAUTY ONLY IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER?

A little girl wrote this composition on "people".

"People are composed of girls and boys also men and women. Boys are no good at all until they grow up and get married. Men who don't get married are no good either. Boys are an awful bother. My mom is a woman and my dad is a man. A woman is a grown-up girl with children. My dad is such a nice man that I think he must have been a girl when he was a boy."

Isn't this all of us seen through the eyes of a little girl? Yet how small so many people look through "small eyes."

## A Man Who Happens to be Blind

There were those who were physically blind recorded in the Bible (Matt. 9:27; Mark 10:46) and those who were spiritually blind (Matt. 23:16 and 15:14.) Most of our writing concerns those in spiritual darkness, but at this time I want to speak a word in behalf of those who "happen to be blind" from a physical stand point. I have for many years contributed to the National Federation of the Blind and have been deeply interested in those who must walk in physical darkness. Not sympathy, but profound respect and great admiration. Though they see not through the natural eye, they truly "see". more of real life than most of us. As most of us have friends or relatives who fall in this group, I want to share with you some "do's and don'ts" provided by the National Federation of the Blind.

1. I'm an ordinary person, just blind. Don't shout, or address me as if I were a child. Don't ask my wife, "Does he take cream in his coffee?" Ask me.

2. I can walk more easily with you than with a dog or cane. Don't grab my arm; let me take yours. I'll keep a half-step behind, to anticipate curbs and steps. Going down stairs I prefer to hold the railing.

3. I want to know who's in the room with me. Speak when you enter. Introduce me to others. Include children, and tell me if there's a cat or dog. Guide my hand to a chair, and show me the ashtray.

4. The door of a room or car left ajar is a hazard for me. So are toys on the floor. Watch out for projecting lamp-shades; I hate to break things.

5. At dinner I may ask help to cut meat. Tell me where the food is on my plate. "Meat at nine o'clock; peas at two o'clock"; potatoes at four."

6. Don't avoid words like "see." I use them too. I'm always glad to see you.

7. I don't want pity. But don't talk about the wonderful compensation of blindness. Whatever I've learned has been the hard way.

8. If I'm your houseguest, show me the bathroom, closet, dresser, window, the outlet for my electric razor. The light switch, too; I like to know whether the lights are on.

9. I'll discuss blindness with you if you're curious, but it's an old story to me. I have as many other interests as you do.

## Why the Early Church Grew So Fast

(Continued from Page 1)

unity Paul demanded, Christ prayed for, and the early New Testament church HAD! The same doctrine taught and obeyed today would produce the same unity which would produce the same rapid growth! ARE YOU WILLING TO FIRST HAVE UNITY WITH THE LORD THEN TEACH ALL MEN TO UNITE WITH YOU ARE YOU UNITE WITH THE LORD? DO YOU KNOW OF A BETTER WAY THAN THE WAY OF THE LORD? HE SAYS HE IS THE WAY, John 14:6. THEN WHY NOT WALK IN THE LORD'S WAY?

### The Apostles' Doctrine Was Their Standard of Authority . . .

"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine", Acts 2:42. In every business, government, or religion, there must be some standard of authority. There must be a final authority to which all may turn to have unity of operation. Today most religions find this in the authority of creeds written by men, or in the traditions of men. When modern generations no longer like the existing creeds, or traditions, they have the authority to add to them, take away from them, or change them to fit the thinking and desires of the present generation. So really in most religions, the final authority or standard in religion is what the majority or hierarchy, wants to do in each religion. The creeds are "kept up to date", by changing them to meet the wishes of the present generation. Instead of men changing to fit the requirement of the creeds, the creeds are changed to fit the wishes of the people! Now in the New Testament church, past, present and future, men are "born again" by this doctrine and repent, or conform to the requirements of God. When there was a misunderstanding, or error brought into the church, the inspired word was still in the inspired apostles and had not been written into what is now the New Testament. SO TO THE APOSTLES WENT THE CHURCH MEMBERS, AND WHEN THE APOSTLES SPOKE THE MATTER WAS SETTLED ONCE AND FOR ALL (ACTS 15). GVP

10. Don't think of me as a blind man. I'm a man who happens to be blind.

Some of my very dearest friends happen to be blind and we hope this will help us all to appreciate these wonderful people more! GVP

## By Faith Noah Moved...

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith", Heb. 11:7.

Did Noah's "moving" and "preparing" an ark, VOID his salvation as being "by faith"? NO, it was ONLY when faith MOVED him that his faith was acceptable to God! Faith WITHOUT works (moving and preparing on the part of Noah) is DEAD, James 2:24. From this verse and the account in Gen. 6:3-18, we learn that Noah was Devinely admonished concerning the coming of the flood, and advised to go to work to prepare an ark to SAVE HIMSELF, and that no doubt that he had 120 years to prepare for the flood.

Just BELIEVING that the flood WOULD come and that God was ABLE AND WILLING to save him was not enough! Noah had something to DO to SAVE HIMSELF, he had to MOVE AND PREPARE his OWN ARK! No man can BELIEVE God and NOT do what God COMMANDS him to do! The time of salvation was far in the future, there was no natural sign to confirm the possibility of a flood and the "reasoning" of man was against such an event! YET, NOAH BELIEVED GOD, MOVED AND PREPARED AN ARK; ALL THIS WAS DONE "BY FAITH".

The wicked scoffed and did not believe it necessary to "move and prepare" no doubt many "believed" (?) in God, as millions today "believe in Christ" (?), yet they refused to "move and prepare" as millions today refuse to obey God, because this would make their salvation only by "works". There is no such thing as "faith without works", for no faith is acceptable to God, until the faith is strong enough to "move" the person to OBEY Christ, Heb. 5:9, James 2:26. Read it for yourself! Millions are "believing" themselves to heaven, but this is impossible!

## If We Could Tune In...

If it were possible for everyone to look into the heart of a dedicated Bible school teacher, or hear some of the earnest pleas such teachers make before the throne of God, NO ONE would miss Bible school wilfully.

In the August, '66 issue of Church School Worker, Lodene B. Hathaway wrote this meditation/prayer of a Bible school teacher. This is typical of what we would hear if we could tune in:

"Here I sit, Father, with some tools in my hands — tools that will help to reveal you to young minds: A Bible, a teacher's coursebook, a student's book, and some references. I will need, too, some ideas of my own, if I am to meet the particular needs of these young individuals. The weeks ahead look so long, with so many hours of study, so many Sunday mornings of racing to make an early class hour, yet so little time to try to introduce the young people to all that is here.

"I've failed so many times, Father — failed to reach them with the vital points; failed to bring them to the place where you can meet them, and where they can begin to grasp the magnificence and power of being part of your love and concern.

"Yet I cannot quit, Lord. To do this would deny me an opportunity for my own spiritual growth, because every hour spent with these texts is a face to face confrontation with you. To stop now would deny me the singular experience of hours spent with great minds who have conceived these texts and recorded these scriptures; who have searched and found you, and then placed their findings before those of us who follow, seeking.

"Somehow, Father, I feel that you know all this. Somehow, sitting here with a whole new semester stretching before me, I feel that I will not be alone through the weeks that loom so long and difficult.

"Here is my hand, Father: Walk with me. We have a job to do! Amen."

—Tex Stevens

## Luke - - Alone

2 TIM. 2:11

These two words open the pages to the most absorbing story. They find the apostle Paul in a Roman dungeon awaiting the touch of the heathen blade that will signal his departure from this life into the next. He had said to Phil. 1, "This is far better for me—to go and be with the Lord." Yet, death will always parade its fears and uncertainties—especially in such a case as Paul's. You see, he faced death at the hands of Roman executioners.

The prospect of dying became more and more frightening with the departure of his "friends". Writing the second letter to Timothy, desperately urging him to come, Paul said, "You are aware that all in Asia turned away from me . . ." 2 Tim. 1:15. "Do your best to come soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia." Just here—Paul offers the words of our text: "Luke—alone is with me." We begin to see how very deep, the meaning of these two words—Luke alone!

Now Luke was a very important man. He was a physician and could have been as wealthy as he might have chosen, yet here he is, standing by as a faithful friend to the condemned apostle. Those were dangerous times and such loyalty might well have cost him his own life. Reading the two great books that he wrote, Luke and Acts, it seems likely the Jews would have welcomed his death, yet he had the faith and courage to be there when Paul needed him most. How touching these two words become, "Luke alone is with me."

Have you ever considered that in a given moment, facing a specific need, you alone may be left to carry out Heaven's wishes? There are ever so many things that will depend on you alone. Aren't you thankful that Luke was willing to stand alone when our beloved brother, Paul needed him so? At the same time, don't you just know that Jesus must be proud of you when you prove that you are willing to take your place as a solitary sentry by his side? — Ray Beeson

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