

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Publication No. 211780

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, AR

Volume 21

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

May 1987

No. 5

## Teaching and the Church

By Mike Pace

We know that the church was in God's Eternal Purpose. The church is a manifestation of God's wisdom. Consider Ephesians 3:8-11, "unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men to see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Also, we should know that the church which was planned by God was foretold by the prophets of old as in Daniel 2:44, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." And it is this **same church** (kingdom), that was promised by Jesus in Matthew 16:18 when He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it." Jesus died for His church, Acts 20:28, it was and is that important to Him. We should therefore, always remember that we are not laboring in a social club, nor in some secular educational institution, and we **do not** belong to a humanly designed denomination. We serve God in a divine body which He planned before Adam and Eve drew their first breaths.

Observe with me that the organization of God's church is designed to accomplish His purpose. This is set forth in Ephesians 4:11ff which reads, "And He gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Among those responsibilities listed, notice that Paul lists "TEACHERS": Serving under the elders in the congregation their work is to instruct each member in a knowledge of God's Word. When God created man, He placed within him the ability to reason, to make judgments, to ascertain the distinction between right and wrong, and to make decisions himself. As a result, **MAN IS TEACHABLE!!** This being true, it is easy to understand why teachers were included in the organization of the church.

**THERE IS DIGNITY AND PURPOSE TO THE WORK OF TEACHING.** In teaching, one is fulfilling God's plan as part of the church. The teacher is handling God's inspired Word. So a teacher should **study the word, respect the word, and teach it** as divine truth. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15).

In the Great Commission, as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20, part of the instruction given was "to teach them all things whatsoever I have commanded you." If we consider what the church is doing in our generation we'll notice that we have done a **fair** job of preaching the gospel, and a **respectable** job of

baptizing those who believe. On the first two parts of the Great Commission, we can score ourselves "EXCELLENT": But what about our practice of the third part of that commission, namely teaching those to whom we have preached and baptized. **RESULTS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!!** When you consider our brotherhood as a whole, it appears that many of our teaching programs have produced a generation of people who are ignorant of God's Word. God revealed the consequences of an ignorant generation when He told Hosea, "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge," (Hosea 4:6). The ignorance of God's Word of which I am speaking is recognized when a Christian is asked to teach a Bible class and you hear a reply something to this effect, "I'm sorry, I just don't feel I know enough about God's Word to teach someone else!"

Much of the apostasy in the church today is for the most part the consequence of a lack of knowledge of God's Word. The Bible teaches us that there is just simply no excuse for an ignorance of God's Word, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at (overlooked).." (Acts 17:30). Many Christians who have attended Bible classes in the Lord's church for years are still unable to share with others the truth of God's Word. The Apostle Paul exhorted brethren, "For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the Word of Righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS  
P. O. Box 251  
Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Publication No. 211780

**TEACHING AND THE CHURCH**

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use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:12-14). We are encouraged as faithful children to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (II Peter 3:18). When we understand that, and are willing to exercise our minds to grow, we then, and **only** then will be adequately equipped to be qualified teachers of God's Word.

**Teaching and the church** go hand in hand, literally and figuratively. Teaching God's Word is one of the major responsibilities of the Lord's church. And we should all respect and appreciate the place and role that teaching has within the structure of the church.

**Successful Bible Classes and an increase in knowledge of God's Word involves hard work, but the results are worth the effort!!!**

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It has been said that "a little learning is a dangerous thing." It is also true that a **little** Christianity is a dangerous thing. Some church members have enough Christianity to lull the conscience to sleep, but not enough to save the soul. Said the Lord to the Laodiceans, "Because thou art lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth." (Revelation 3:16).

\* \* \* \*

The church will improve when you improve yourself.

**GOOD ELDERS****"Worthy of Double Honour"**

By Dean Fugett

When Paul penned his statements to young Timothy concerning treatment of and respect for elders, he made this statement: "Let the elders who **RULE WELL** be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (I Timothy 5:17). We have known such men, and we count that knowledge a blessing. We have worked under such and we know it was a blessing. Paul does address himself to the need to honor, protect the rights of, and be respectful to such men. With the swing of the pendulum, we may need to look at the other side of the coin. Since it is open season on "delegated authority" by some who want to be "set free" in every radical respect, we need to look at the proper, Biblical treatment of elders.

1. I Timothy 5:17 definitely provides **HONOUR** to the work and position of good elders of God's people. The disdain thrown toward good elders just because some have gone rotten needs to be withdrawn. We know better than throw away the whole basket of apples just because we found one bad apple. We just remove the bad one and make provision to protect the good ones for future use. So should it be with elders. Only the bad elders need to be handled severely, while we strengthen the remaining ones. To condemn the "eldership" because of a bad set of elders or a poor one within a group would be like condemning preaching because we have some who "consider godliness a way of gain" and some who preach because they can do nothing else, or some who preach out of "envy and strife", or those who loaf at the job. To charge the whole church of "hypocrisy" just because some members don't live as they should has long been a source of anguish to some of us. So, to charge the "eldership" with dereliction of duty just because one man, or one

eldership went bad, is poor judgment and behavior. There was still an "apostleship" even though Judas fell! **GOOD ELDERS ARE TO BE HONoured AND SUPPORTED!!**

2. I Timothy 5:19 is to protect elders from unfair accusations. One should not be willing to listen to charges against elders unless it can be substantiated by witnesses. There will always be those who choose not to live on the high Christian plane. As a result, elders must apply certain discipline. Those "goaded" will often, without consideration of Christian principles, attempt to undermine and even destroy the life and work of the elders who applied the Scriptural exhortation and admonition to them. To protect them from such unscrupulous actions by unprincipled persons, Paul gave us the above mentioned scripture. Just think how many splits could have been thwarted, how many good elders could have been saved, if **EVERYONE** would have obeyed this scripture. Men who would never violate a scripture on baptism will randomly ignore this one on accusations against elders. **ACCEPT NOT AN ACCUSATION AGAINST AN ELDER WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF WITNESSES!**

3. I Peter 5:4 tells us that good shepherds will receive a crown of glory that fades not. The work of shepherding the flock of God is sometimes a thankless task, watching over rebellious sheep, chasing down delinquent sheep, and disciplining without respect of persons. All these things often gains the ire and not the thanks of some members of the flock. But those good shepherds who keep on shepherding as the Owner of the sheep wants are storing up great blessings. If the deacons who use that office properly purchase to themselves good degree, surely even greater can be said to elders who use well their office of work.

Brethren, isn't it about time that we put the work of elders back into the position of honor, honour, and esteem that it should hold and stop making the elders the whipping-boys of every disgruntled member,

preacher, and church. Elders, hold your work in the HIGH level of performance expected of servants of the LIVING GOD. Members, obey them that have the rule over you. In all things, HONOR GOD! Until we restore the proper attitude toward the role of elders, we still haven't restored New Testament Christianity. Until we do, we will continue to have serious trouble finding men who will serve in the local congregations.

## Organizing Our Lives

By N. Wayne Brewer

Why is it that most of us use organization in our daily lives to some degree, but when confronted with the idea of being organized, become uneasy? The mere setting of the alarm clock is an attempt to be organized. As Christians, it is important that there be a sense of scriptural organization found in our personal, family, and congregational lives. The need for this kind of organization is important because of what it demonstrates about us.

First, organization demonstrates an attitude of care. God illustrates His great loving care and concern in Exodus 16:1-30. There, the Israelites were experiencing freedom in the wilderness, but they were without adequate food supplies. God hearing their cries, organized a plan by which they may be nourished (Exodus 16:13-16). There were explicit instructions concerning how and when the food should be gathered. This was an expression of the attitude of God's care for them. However, God's concern for them ran much deeper than simply supplying their physical needs. His care and concern reached to their spiritual needs. Through this organization God fulfilled both. In Exodus 16:4 God said, "I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, THAT I MAY PROVE THEM, whether they will WALK IN MY LAW, or no." God's Word today, will provide the scriptural organiza-

tion we need in our lives, physically and spiritually. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness."

Second, organization demonstrates a willingness to be honest with God and self. When we fail to organize our lives, plan, or think ahead, we can all find a million things that we would like to accomplish. However, when the proper time is given to organizing, we are forced to be honest. Am I really interested in growing more patient, kind, or knowledgeable in God's will? Or am I indifferent? Are these my goals or passing wishes? Paul seemed to be a man who set for himself scriptural and realistic goals. In Romans 15:24 and 28 he speaks of desiring to go to Spain to proclaim the Word of God. Evidently he was organizing his life in that direction. In Philippians 3:14 Paul said, "I press on toward the mark (goal) for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This was a real, genuine, and scriptural goal for Paul and he was organizing his life so as to realize this goal. He "buffeted his body, endured all things for the elect's sake, kept the faith," etc. He was honest with God and himself. As Christians, through organization we can accomplish the same in our lives. In Matthew 25, the one talent man did nothing because he was afraid to organize and plan his next move. Unfortunately, all he did was bury his talent. It is better to set a goal, strive for that goal, and not reach it than to do nothing. Planning helps us deal with the fear of failure. Honest with God and self are the result.

Third, organization demonstrates a willingness to reap the blessings of God. Imagine a farmer, spending thousands of dollars on chemicals, seed, fuel, etc., to put in a crop and then come up in October unprepared to harvest. Saying in the fall, "how am I going to get this crop out of the field?" The fact that we organize and plan means that we will accept and receive the harvest. The difference between the wise and foolish virgins of Matthew 25:1-13, was planning and organization. Those who took along extra oil, through their plan-

ning, were demonstrating a willingness to enter in. Without a sense of godly planning and organization in our personal, family, and congregational lives, how could we ever expect to reap the blessings which God has to give? Our willingness to receive them, may just depend on our willingness to scripturally organize the various aspects of our lives.

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## "Soul Conservation"

By Garry Stanton

The Pratt County Soil Conservation District invited all the area preachers to a breakfast to promote soil conservation through the various churches. Soil conservation is a worthy consideration, of which, I am sure every Christian farmer is greatly concerned. But there is another area of concern of which every Christian farmer, businessman, laborer, teacher, retiree, and student should be dedicated, and that is with "Soul Conservation." Every person who puts on Christ in baptism, every Christian, should work at the task of soul conservation. Therefore, the difference between soil conservation and soul conservation, comes down to "u" and "i." You and I are to be involved and not just a small minority. You and I are the hands and feet of Christ, it is up to us to see to it that his work is accomplished. His work is the saving of the soul of man, or in other words, "Soul Conservation." The soul is that eternal part of man that survives physical death. "Conservation" means the act of keeping in a safe or sound state; to preserve from loss. God has given us **all the knowledge** and tools that we need to be good "Soul Conservationist." It is up to us to put these things to work, saving the souls of men.

There are two areas in which this is accomplished. First, we are to be concerned with keeping the saved, saved. The danger and threat of apostasy is always with us. The good soil conservationist will not totally forget about the land that

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**"SOUL CONSERVATION"**

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has received his attention in the past, but he will constantly keep watch in case erosion begins. A much more costly mistake occurs when the erosion of a saved soul begins to take place. If left unchecked, the soul can be eroded to the point of total destruction. Of which Peter says that this would be worse than before any conservation was started (II Peter 2:20-22). We need to be close enough to each other and familiar enough that we can spot any sign of erosion soon enough to prevent total destruction.

The second area that the soil conservationist is concerned about is the land that has never been preserved. He has his eyes open for new land that needs his attention. The Christian, in like manner, should always be alert for opportunities to plant the seed of the kingdom in the hearts of men and women. There are thousands who die every day, never having had received the blessing of "soul conservation." The gospel of Christ is the greatest cure for the greatest disease known to man, yet many die having never known there even to be a cure. Listen to the words of the song, *You Never Mentioned Him to Me*.

When in the better land before the bar we  
stand,  
How deeply grieved our souls may be,  
If any lost one there should cry in deep  
dispair,  
"You never mentioned Him to me."

"You never mentioned Him to me.  
You helped me not the light to see;  
You met me day by day and knew I was  
astray,  
Yet never mentioned Him to me."

It is not too late to join the ranks of the "Soul Conservationists." It is a job in which **every Christian** should take part, a job whose reward is eternal life.

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If your enemy does a noble deed, praise him for it.

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I 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; I Corinthians 12:13).

**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; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

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