

Voice of Baptists

"The Voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."
Isaiah 40:3

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SHOULD BAPTIST CHURCHES DISCIPLINE MEMBERS?

By Kenneth W. Massey

"But ye, brethren (church at Thessalonica), be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." II Thessalonians 3:13-15

OUR CHURCHES IN THIS AGE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN POWER FROM GOD, MUST DEMAND FROM HER MEMBERS LOYALTY, LOVE, AND RESPECT FOR THE HOLY DOCTRINES OF GOD AND MUTUAL REGARD FOR LIVING SO AS TO KEEP THEMSELVES UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD. A holy God, righteous and divine, established His Church, and those same Godly characteristics are indispensable for achieving the greatest heights in His Vineyard. When churches continue disunited with constant bickering, they project an image of God that turns sinners away. Sinners are looking for examples of better lives consisting of love, purity, and unity. If the church compromises and becomes hypocritical in either doctrine or life, its power is diminished. Thus, the testimony of the church in relating the grand old story of Jesus and His love to the world is ineffective. We may sing loudly; we may preach boldly, but does the life of every member of your church strengthen the influence? Do some weaken your labors?

BIBLE CONSISTENCY

One of the greatest weaknesses of Americans in general, which is carried over into our churches and is even visible

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WILLINGNESS TO SUFFER

By Jerry A. Reynolds
Davisville, W. Va.



"...All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (II Tim. 3:12) I need draw on no other of the abundant passages of Holy Scripture to strengthen Paul's statement. It is true. Over twenty years ago my new-born soul curiously sought an answer to a puzzling question, "why do we not suffer persecutions and afflictions as our brethren, the prophets and apostles, did?" What portion of an answer I have honestly settled upon since I do not like. It makes me ashamed. It makes me fear. Briefly speaking, I understand that the elect of God are called unto suffering with Christ. (Rom. 8:17, 8:36, II Cor. 1:7, I Pet. 2:20 & 21) "For even hereunto were ye called..." Paul presented the abundance of his sufferings as proof of his apostleship (II Cor. 11:23) and expressed his will to know Christ better by "the fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil.

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CHURCH COVENANT

By Paul W. Bryson
Alvaton, Ky.



I feel that the meaning of the document that hangs behind the pulpits of our Missionary Baptist Churches is more than just a decoration. The purpose of this covenant is to unite our efforts in carrying out the will of God on earth. Please allow me to define "Church Covenant." A "church" is a body of born-again scripturally baptized believers, who have covenanted together to carry out the great commission, as recorded in Matt. 28:18-20. A "covenant" is the coming together of two or more parties who have agreed on a mutual undertaking. So when we join the church of the Lord Jesus Christ we agree, or covenant, that we will strive to carry out the commission as the Lord commanded. We should never take joining the Lord's church lightly.

Each clause of the covenant sets forth our duty and obligation to God and each other. Regardless of the conduct or faithfulness of others, we have vowed to God and each other that our best efforts will be put forth to honor this covenant. It was the blood of Christ's heart that bespattered the divine roll that sealed or ratified the covenant of eternal redemption on Calvary's cross. So in view of His example concerning covenants, He calls upon us to honor ours. Those who knowingly and willingly break this agreement are not worthy of the fellowship of those who do strive to walk upright according to the gospel. The spiritual condition of our church stands or falls on our faithfulness to the covenant. The reason that so many of our churches are suffering is because of the

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ONE MAN'S OPINION

By Kenneth W. Massey

QUESTION: "How often should the Lord's Supper be observed?"

ANSWER: There is no Bible declaration saying it should be once a week, once a month, once a year, etc.

The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to show in symbol the death of Jesus Christ until He comes again. It should be observed until the end of the world. Some say it should be observed each Lord's Day for the strength we receive alone. That being the case, we should observe it in all of our regular services and become that much stronger. Others say it should not be observed until the church gets rid of so-and-so. We ought to cut off the unclean from our table alright, but not to the point that we perish waiting.

Deep meaning and solemn respect for this occasion should be maintained at all times. If it is observed too often, it could become a meaningless form. When put off too long, the church may be detracted from the Crucified One. The Lord's Supper in the church is the anti-type of the Passover in the Israel nation.

Jesus observed the last passover and instituted the Lord's Supper. The Passover was kept annually marking the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt's bondage. To be thankful to God for past blessings enhances our faith for the present. I think every church should observe the Lord's Supper at least once a year.

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To: Voice of Baptists

1501 Pleasant Street
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CHURCH COVENANT

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cold, heartless concern of carnal-minded covenant breakers. The world reckons itself to be as well off as they are. Satan has mastered the art of confusion through half-hearted obedience to these holy precepts.

Can we imagine the success the churches would enjoy if the principles of this covenant were practiced by their membership? How fruitful the preaching, if the gospel fell on the hearts of Baptist people "walking together in Christian love?" Zion would travail, dissension could not find a proper forum to present its case, and most of all, God would be glorified!

I know that it is the prayer of all humble Christians that the Holy Spirit would again be able to manifest Himself to us and to slake our thirst in drinking from the deep wells of Salvation. It would be so if we personally made the Church Covenant a living reality. It is my honest opinion that we will never again experience the joys that once filled our churches until a sacred earnestness grips the hearts of our church membership. As long as preachers, teachers, and lay members are satisfied with a life destitute of harmony with each other and God, then we can expect the cold services we have to become even colder. The covenant should bring harmony and unity. But a broken covenant provides no ground of fellowship or cooperation. God complained to Israel about their flagrant violation of their covenants. It seems to me that He must withhold His blessings from us for the same reason.

As the first clause of the covenant states, we are to enter into agreement, "joyfully and solemnly." What a privilege to be a member of a church that affords me the privilege of expressing my opinion, even tho I may be wrong. The same church also allows me to acknowledge my mistake when I recognize it. That is a joy. It is also "solemn" to make a public vow before God and my church that in my life, both public and private, I will prayerfully strive daily to carry out the articles set forth in this covenant. This so strongly believed by us that when we fail we are willing to "confess our faults one to another" as recorded in James 5:16. There is a world of difference in those who are trying to keep the covenant and those who could care less about the example they set before the world. The question is, can we honestly say that we have tried to promote Christian sympathy and feeling among our members; used courtesy in

our speech toward each other; sustained the worship of our church by our regular attendance; our cheerful giving to the relief of the poor and spread of the gospel; watched over one another in brotherly love; been slow to take offense, and secured a quick reconciliation the way the Saviour taught us; and not just a mild interest, but a burning zeal in our efforts to advance the Lord's cause. He that soweth these virtues, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

I could not close this without one observation; men join all kinds of fraternal orders and promote their prestige and success in the community while the cause of Jesus falls under the feet of wicked men! By the grace and mercy of God, I pray the greatest institution ever known to man shall prevail until she has put all her enemies to condemnation by the pure gospel she preaches, if they repent not. But, thank the Lord, someday, with a joyful shout, she will throw away the sin-stained garments she wore in battle here and will go to stand on the summit of Zion's Hill arrayed in righteous linen singing anthems of praise and everlasting joy upon her head.

SUCCESS

The father of success is work.

The mother of success is ambition.

The eldest son of success is common-sense.

Other boys in the success family are perseverance, honesty, thoroughness, foresight, enthusiasm and cooperation.

The eldest daughter of success is character.

She has several sisters whose names are cheerfulness, loyalty, care, courtesy, economy, sincerity and harmony.

The baby in the success family is opportunity.

If you would meet the success family, get acquainted with the "father" first, and you won't have any trouble getting along with the rest of the family.

(Copied)

VOICE OF BAPTISTS
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WILLINGNESS (Continued from page 1)

3:10) Jesus told his disciples, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." (Matt. 5:11) He commanded them to "Rejoice". That is exactly what the apostles did after they were beaten for preaching the gospel (Acts 5:41)

What about us? Is not boredom in our spiritual lives much more common than reproaches and persecutions? Would we be any less happy if we could somehow trade the boredom for some trouble? Why haven't we? Do we, as Paul, desire to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, even to "being made comfortable unto his death"? Are we twentieth century Americans somehow exempt from the treatment of the Christians of all ages or have we in some measure sold the truth for ease.

I admit that the true religion of God is messy to the flesh. There is nothing about this way that is appealing to the flesh. What have men done? "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean; but much increase is by the strength of the ox". We need the increase. We must have it. "God giveth the increase." All of the planting and watering are vain if God does not give the increase. Where is the power of God? "The preaching of the cross. . . it is the power of God. (I Cor. 1:18) The cross is an instrument of suffering. Jesus suffered for our redemption. In a much lesser sense his church has always shared in his suffering to further that redemptive effort. It is necessary for everything and everybody to be crucified. Can we really remain the church of God if we forget how to suffer? Do we will to suffer loss or do we will to avoid it? Moses willingly traded ease for affliction. Jesus is the greatest example of the condescension he teaches us to practice. May I remind you that the flesh of Jesus did not will to die the sacrificial death when he surrendered to the father with "not as I will, but as thou wilt." Why did he do it? He did it "for the joy that was set before him". (Heb. 12:2) See what he gained by it. He bought for his father innumerable sons and daughters and brethren for himself for eternity. He likewise teaches us the value of the cross. Surely there is a cause and effect relationship to the much talked about loss of power in and among our churches. The next time we are disturbed about our lack of effectiveness in helping the world find salvation let us ask ourselves how much we are willing to suffer.

ELDER W. T. RUSSELL JOINS VOICE OF BAPTISTS

It is with profound pleasure that we announce the addition of Elder W. T. Russell to our staff of writers. Elder Russell is presently serving as pastor of Fairview Memorial Baptist Church of Bowling Green, Kentucky.

For almost half a century, he has been actively involved with the Masters work. Today, he is in much demand for his doctrinal teachings in sermon or writings. We look forward with great anticipation to his articles and the years of experience that he brings into this endeavor.

IN MEMORY OF AUNT BIDE RUSSELL

I have searched for the past several years to find the grave site of Sister Russell. A few weeks ago, while in revival at Lafayette Church, I visited with Elder and Sis. J. E. McDonald. Sister Bell McDonald, daughter of the late Elder C. B. Massey, informed me that Sister Russell was buried in Dixon Springs Cemetery. She also mentioned with regret the fact that a nice monument was lacking. We agreed to start a fund to receive donations for the erection of an appropriate monument with her picture mounted into it.

Aunt Bide Russell went blind at age six months, never married, but devoted her life to God, His churches, His preachers, His people, and ALL lost humanity. From reports brought to my attention, I am impressed to believe that a woman of no greater faith has ever passed through the hills of Tennessee and Kentucky. Anyone wishing to contribute to this cause should send your money to Mrs. Bell McDonald of Lafayette, Tenn. 37083 or to Voice of Baptists, 1501 Pleasant St., Indpls., IN. 46203. Be sure to state AUNT BIDE RUSSELL MONUMENT FUND.

EISENHOWER'S EQUATION

Former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz recalled a conversation shortly after Eisenhower left the White House. The subject was national power, "and Gen. Eisenhower told us he had a

simple equation for national power. It was, "National power equals a nation's military power times its economic power times its spiritual power."

"He told us to note that the equation involved taking one item times another instead of plus," Butz said. "That way, if any quantity is zero, the entire equation amounts to zero. It's only as strong as its weakest component."

"Gen. Eisenhower wasn't worried about our military power or our enormous economic power. He was worried about America's spiritual power." His concerns would be greater, if he were here almost 20 years later.

TENN. ASSOCIATIONS TO HOLD ANNUAL SESSIONS

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT

The SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT BAPTIST ASSOCIATION will convene with New Bethel Baptist Church, located four miles northwest of Henry, Tenn. in Henry County.

Elders Harold Carver, Harlon Campbell and T. L. Campbell have been chosen to preach the annual sermons. This sitting will mark their 430th session in succession.

ENON

The 129th annual session of the ENON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION will be held with Oak Grove Baptist Church of Macon County, Tenn., Oct. 6-8, 1978, beginning each day at 10:00 A.M.

Annual sermons will be presented this year by Elders Gilbert Barton, James Oliver and Gordon Wheeler.

WISEMAN

The 87th annual session of the WISEMAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION will convene with McFerrin Avenue Baptist Church of 1208 McFerrin Ave., Nashville, Tenn., beginning Friday, Oct. 20, 1978.

Annual sermons will be delivered by Elders Kenneth Woodall, C. L. Russell and Howard G. Taylor.

This year's itinerary of subjects to be discussed includes: Christian and Ministerial Education, Faith and Practice of True Baptists, Temperance — Morality and Church Discipline, Financing the Lord's Work and State of Religion.

"GOD NEEDS MORE SPIRITUAL FRUITS AND FEWER RELIGIOUS NUTS."

SHOULD BAPTISTS DISCIPLINE (Continued from page 1)

in our actions regarding church discipline, is our whole hog or nothing attitude. Some churches exclude members for missing three successive services without a legitimate reason while others hold drunkards and adulterers by the score within their number. I think the reason these extremes occur is due in part to a lack of knowledge in the Bible method of administering church discipline.

Here we come face to face with our basic problem: How can the church balance justice and mercy, discipline and loving acceptance? How can the church maintain unity and purity at the same time?

We continuously must contend, it would seem, with the unifiers on the one hand, and the purifiers on the other. The human tendency is either to unite at all costs, no matter how delinquent the doctrine and/or conduct, or to proceed to separate the wheat from the tares now. To be sure, separation to a degree is essential to holiness. There is, however, an unholy separation — a separation that neglects love and mercy, and descends inevitably into judgmentalism and schism. Likewise, unity is good — it is the fundamental character of the Godhead and must be mirrored in the life of the church. Yet unholy unity appears when unity comes at the price of unfaithfulness, compromise, and doctrinal defilement.

WHAT A DILEMMA! Yet there is a solution: it is the exercise of proper church discipline. And the Bible clearly teaches church discipline. Every church should approach church discipline with the idea of saving the member. But if the member will not hear the church, the holy influence of God's House must be preserved. Ultimately church discipline separates people from church membership. The New Testament outlines a pattern for proper church discipline. Jesus made it clear who is to be disciplined, why he is to be disciplined, and how he is to be disciplined. A look at this pattern should enable us to avoid extremes and to achieve scriptural consistency.

WHO SHOULD BE DISCIPLINED?

Any member guilty of unrepentant, overt moral delinquency. "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Cor. 5:13). Also, any member guilty of persisting in teaching heresy. "If any man preach (teach) any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:9).

One thread, characteristic of God, running throughout the Bible, is that He is no respecter of persons. It is His desire that His churches would discipline all members with the same eye, irregardless of their social or financial standing in the community. Some churches feel they should have a certain number of exclusions a year to make the record look good, so they pick out a few who haven't been in ten years or joined another denomination, and that's all well and good, but not to the point of leaving the wicked members in good standing just because they are attending every Sunday and we wouldn't want to rock the boat.

When the church fails to discipline her members it becomes guilty of either the sin of impurity or unholy unity, and stands under the judgment of God.

WHY SHOULD THE CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

The primary purpose of discipline is to restore the member who has sinned; thereby helping him, strengthening the church, and keeping another soul-winner on the mission field. Discipline in Paul's day was "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:5). Through discipline men were to learn not to be blasphemous (see I Tim. 1:20). In short, church discipline is designed as a means of grace, not of destruction; as an evidence of love, not of hate or of fear.

A second motive in church discipline is to warn others. Discipline in this sense is a deterrent to sin. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (I Tim. 5:20).

The third motive for church discipline is to protect the reputation of Christ and the church. Defilement must not be given free course.

HOW IS CHURCH DISCIPLINE TO BE ADMINISTERED?

The first step in exercising church discipline is prayer and self-examination. Jesus said, "First cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matt. 7:5). Paul established ground rules that should eliminate guilty persons from being the most active in bringing others to reconciliation — "Ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:1, 2).

The New Testament pattern for church discipline is outlined by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-18.

Step One: Go to the brother in person counsel (verse 15). Don't tell everyone in the community and church except

the offender. Tell him first; if he hears you, you have won your brother over. Step Two, should Step One fail: Take other spiritual-minded members along to counsel with the erring member (verse 16).

Step Three, should the first two steps fail: it must at this point be brought before the church collectively. If the erring member will not hear the congregation, you must then treat him as a heathen or tax collector (verse 17).

In conclusion, God's character must find its reflection in His people today. Only are we ready for use as churches, preachers, deacons, teachers, singers, musicians or whatever task assigned us, when the outside world sees God beaming through our lives. Church discipline is the human instrumentality that God uses to keep the mirror clean.

REVIVAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

OCTOBER 1

McFERRIN AVENUE MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - 1208 McFerrin Ave., Nashville, Tenn. Elder F. L. Ray of Goodlettsville, Tenn. will assist Pastor Howard G. Taylor in the preaching. ALL are welcome to attend the services each evening.

OCTOBER 8

CEDAR CROSS MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - Allen Co., Ky. Pastor H. B. Eaton will be assisted in the preaching by Elder Paul Bryson of Alvaton, Ky. Services each day at 1:30 and 7:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 8

BETHEL MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - 1501 Pleasant Street, Indpls., Ind. Elder James (Pete) Porter, the evangelist, will be bringing the sermon each evening. Pastor Kenneth Massey and all members of Bethel extend a warm welcome inviting your visits. Services at 7:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 15

MEADORVILLE MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - Highway 10, four miles south of Lafayette. Elder H. D. Linville will assist Pastor F. W. Lambert in the preaching, and Elder Tommie Lankford of Pleasant Shade, Tenn. in charge of singing. The public is cordially welcome to the services at 7:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 22

GRACE MISS. BAPTIST CHURCH - Lantern Road, Fishers, Ind. Pastor John A. Keen, Jr. will be assisted by Elder Kenneth Massey. YOU are welcome to the services beginning at 7 p.m. each evening.

If you are never persecuted by the world, examine yourself, maybe you are too much like them.