

Expository Files



Jon W. Quinn, Warren E. Berkley - Editors

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Front Page

The Church of Apathy *Warren E. Berkley*

Several years ago I stumbled onto something obviously satirical, but not without a message.

Have you heard about **The Church of Apathy**? If you don't want to identify with any specific religion or take on any life commitment, yet you are not comfortable with atheism or agnosticism, you may find your place in **The Church of Apathy**. You would be called an Apathists. The founders of this church thought about it for several years before actually doing anything. They looked for a location, but decided it was too much trouble, so embraced the concept of not meeting. Their next step was to find a minister, but nobody really wanted to look for one. Besides, they were having trouble finding somebody who cared about not caring. Finally, they decided to adopt a creed: *Who knows? Who cares? We certainly don't; we're Apathists!*

The word "apathy" is interesting, from the Greek *apatheia* which means without feeling. In English there is the word *Pathos* which means strong passion. The prefix "a" identifies absence. So apathy means without feeling; no passion; without fervent spirit. The simple meaning is well expressed by "Who Cares?"

Apathy makes the Lord sick. “These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth,” (Rev. 3:14-16).

Unbelief is the basis of apathy. “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God,” (Heb. 3:12). “...be steadfast, im-movable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, inasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord,” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Ingratitude is the fuel of apathy. Paul describes the behavior of sin in terms of people who knew God in some superficial way, but “did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful,” (Rom. 1:21).

Inaction is the behavior of apathy. If you do not care, you do not act! All through the book of Acts, the saints who carried on the work of the Lord were those who believed, who cared, who loved. Inaction and lack of initiative is evidence of apathy. (The book of “Acts” – in title shows ACTion.)

Indifference is the attitude of apathy. Attitudes are hard to hide. If you don’t care about the things of God, it is hard to conceal that. If you are unconcerned about the lost, that will be seen in your inaction toward them.

Silence is the language of apathy. If you don’t care, you probably will not say anything. As a preacher I have observed this. When you preach the truth and people say nothing, you cannot assume they agree. It is possible they don’t care.

Three essentials to overcome apathy: Faith, Love & Hope. “But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation,” (1 Thess. 5:8).

“Satan is such a wily sage. He doesn't come up to folks and invite them into the slime pits of in; he just lulls them into indifference... Little by little, he encroaches upon our faithfulness ...,” (Dee Bowman, Christianity Magazine, April 1986).

Warren E. Berkley

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1 Cor. 1:10

Paul's Call For Unity At Corinth

The church at Corinth was a mess. It was divided into various competing groups; disorder prevailed in their assemblies; the Lord's Supper had been corrupted in their practice; spiritual gifts were misused; adultery tolerated and some even denied the resurrection of the dead.

Paul wasn't willing to give up on them. First, he loved God. Second, he loved them and wanted to see them purged of these debilitating conditions. He wrote to them by inspiration of the Holy Spirit as an apostle of Christ. He was firm in renouncing their sin & calling them to repentance.

Right away he wrote this to them: *"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,"* (1 Cor. 1:10).

We can observe **how serious this** was in Paul's language: "Now I plead with you," (KJV, "I beseech you," NIV, "I appeal to you."). This tells us something. I believe it tells us how serious this was. The apostle Paul is writing to a local church and here he says, "I plead with you." This was not on the level of a suggestion shared among peers. This was not a man imposing his opinion on a local church. This was not about some incidental or matter of expediency. This was a problem of a spiritual nature requiring immediate action.

Similarly, the next phrase highlights the urgency of the admonition: "...**by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...**" Keep in mind, this was written by an apostle of Jesus Christ. Paul was *"called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God..."* (see 1 Cor. 1:1). He was an apostle chosen to do the kind of work he was doing in writing this letter. He was chosen and behind that choice was "the will of God." So when the apostle Paul preached or wrote to Christians, what He conveyed was **the singular, authorized message of Jesus Christ**. This is not like a member of the church with a

suggestion to make. This is not like an ordinary critic. Not even like a gospel preacher today. He was speaking and writing instructions to be received “in the name of Jesus Christ.” Paul delivered what was revealed to Him (see 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Paul is pleading with his brethren in Corinth, and what he says – he says as an apostle of Jesus Christ: “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The heart of the admonition: “**that you all speak the same thing...**” In this nation, we take great pride in that part of our law that affords us the right of free speech. The first amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” In the broadest interpretation and stated in simple terms → **You can say whatever you want to say.** Carefully note: *from the standpoint of civil law – You can say whatever you want to say.* It doesn’t matter if people disagree. It doesn’t matter if the majority despise what you say. It doesn’t have to be in the Bible. I’m talking just from the standpoint of civil law – **you can say whatever you want to say.** In civil law, in this country, you are free to say anything. That others say something different, constitutes no legal restraint on you at all. Freedom of speech is a right often abused; yet it was the intent of the founders to allow us freedom of speech.

That’s great, **but let’s be sure we understand, as members of the Lord’s church, we submit to a higher authority. Our speech should be restrained by the will of God!** The government may allow us to do and say things without consequence – but those things may be forbidden by God. If you are a child of God, all your thinking, speech and behavior should be according to His will. The United States may let you say a number things without legal consequence – **but God holds us accountable for all that we say.** Jesus said – “But I say to you, that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment,” (Matt. 12:36).

Paul was pleading with the Christians in Corinth to **speak the same thing.** Diversity may be applauded in society. But when Christians speak of their faith and when we tell people the story of the gospel; when we describe our faith and practice, and express our loyalties – we ought to speak the same thing! Apparently, the members of the church at Corinth were divided, and that division came through in their speech – *they were saying different things (see 1 Cor. 15:12).*

Many years ago, I was visiting someone in the hospital, in Ozark, Arkansas. It was the old fashioned hospital ward arrangement. In this large room there were a dozen or so patients. I spoke with the lady I was visiting and led a prayer. Before I left, a lady who overheard me wanted to visit with me. She fired a number of questions at me and I answered by using my New Testament; reading the passages that answered her questions. And as we completed our visit she said, ***“You people in the church of Christ all say the same thing!”*** I’ve thought about that a lot through the years. I hope and pray this is true, and I hope this is true in the sense it should be true . . . our common devotion to God’s Word. We speak the same thing because our source is the same.

How are we able to speak the same things? By reading and believing the same book! How is unity possible? If I believe in the Word of God, and let my speech be governed by the Word – and you do the same, **there is a great likelihood, we will speak the same things.** We will give the same answers – because we are finding the answers in the same book.

“...And that there be no divisions among you.” Of all the tough experiences in life one of the most unpleasant is to be in a group where there is strife; where people are not on the same pages. And beyond that, where there is envy, jealousy, immaturity and political type maneuvering. For there to be hard feelings and conflict in a family **can make you sick, literally.** As Christians we ought to be a people who seek peace; who pursue peace; who love harmony. And who abhor division!

Some of you have witnessed a church divided. You have watched with dismay, as a local church is torn apart into different factions, led by different men or women. They won’t talk to each other; they are bearing resentments; acting selfishly. Sometimes it reaches the point described by Paul in Gal. 5:15 – biting and devouring one another. It makes you sick.

And we all know the church was not intended to be a place where people hurt each other or kill each other. The local church should be a place of warmth, comfort, harmony. Where there is envy and strife, it make you sick and your impulse is to quit. But I want to address now – **the greater offense involved in division.** How do you think God feels about it? What God wants is what Jesus prayed for (Jno. 17:20,21).

Look at the verse, just previous to our text. 1 Cor. 1:9 – “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” God wants us in the fellowship of His Son – united, with Jesus Christ as our Lord. There is no virtue in the kind of division that tore the church at Corinth apart. It was a mess.

The Unity God Desires is Described by Paul in these words: “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” We are different people. We are not clones. In every local church, there will be different ages; different levels of experience and understanding; different cultural/ethnic backgrounds and different personalities. But in our faith and in the expression of our faith there can be unity; there must be unity. That unity is not found in some sort of unity and diversity plan engineered by men. That unity is not found through creed writing. That unity is found – when we **believe, teach and practice only what the Bible says.**

The unity that pleases God can find its’ place – when we find our place *under the authority of Christ, united by the Spirit’s revelation* (Eph. 4:1-6). First, being baptized into Christ. Then, be certain your life is guided by the instructions in the New Testament. We must “walk worthy of the calling.” We must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. If we were all baptized into the one body, having embraced the one faith, to have the one hope; serving the One Lord and One God – as revealed by the One Spirit.

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! Psalms 133:1.

A Conversation Leading To Conversion
[John 1:43-51]
Steven C. Harper

Many Christians I have met through the years have an unjustified fear of talking to others about the Bible or, specifically, Jesus Christ. Many have told me that they are afraid they will not know what to say, some have told me they don't know where to start, and others still have told me they are simply "too busy" to take out the time to teach a lost soul. *Too busy?* But I believe that these are, for the most part, simply poor excuses for avoiding what is not such a dreadful experience, after all. From all indications, the unnecessary fear is simply the result of rarely or — in far too many cases — *never* sitting down and talking to others about their soul.

But the matter of what we call "personal evangelism" is not as difficult as our minds make it out to be. Talking to others about their souls is really a simple task and can be done in a matter of minutes. Yes, it may lead to hours-long discussions, but if you need assistance, I am sure there are many willing volunteers who will be glad to help you if you need it. Many good brothers and sisters would love to sit down with you, if for no other reason than moral support, so we should utilize these opportunities instead of letting them slip by.

And when it comes to the starting point — that should not be so difficult, either. I believe if we consider a short passage of Scripture, we may see for ourselves how simple it really is. In this text, we see a simple conversation between two men [and then a third], but the result is the salvation of a soul. Let's follow this example!

First, the Believer Tells the Unbeliever He Has Found Jesus. (vv. 43-45) In the context, Philip found Nathanael [that means he was **looking** for him] and said, "*We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*" Wasn't that simple? Philip did not go into a lengthy oration that demonstrated his voluminous vocabulary and he didn't try to bamboozle Nathanael with difficult theological theories and lectures; he simply told him about what all believers have discovered: Jesus!

We need to quit fretting over all the possible questions we might face when speaking to unbelievers and simply tell them about the first thing they need to hear: our Savior. When Philip the evangelist met the Ethiopian eunuch, he began at the Scripture where the eunuch had been reading and taught him Jesus (**Acts 8:35ff**) — nothing more and nothing less. We can do the same.

Then, Skepticism is Answered. (vv. 46-48) When Philip told Nathanael about Jesus, Nathanael didn't jump up and run after Him; he had some serious doubts about this man called Jesus and even made some very disparaging remarks. But Philip didn't hang his head and say to himself, "I knew he'd never listen"; no, Philip said, "*Come and see.*"

In this regard, I believe we often will simply give up too quickly when others seem skeptical about our faith. Often, at the first sign we get that people are uninterested, we surrender and give up without a shot being fired. Why? Do we not realize we are in a battle for souls? Are we giving up this easily? Don't do it! Keep in mind that this soul may be skeptical because, like Nathanael, he simply does not know the Jesus we know. Many people today have *some* idea of Jesus or even *their own* [misguided] view of Jesus, but it is not the **correct** view of Jesus [the Jesus of Scripture]. Don't assume they are completely uninterested; it may just be that they don't have enough knowledge to make a reasoned decision. Give them the opportunity to gain the knowledge they need by asking them what Philip asked: "*Come and see.*"

And when Philip came to Jesus, Jesus gave him the irrefutable evidence that He was, indeed, the Christ. To Nathanael, Jesus said, "*Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.*" Jesus did not enter into a long discussion of unimportant issues or even issues of lesser importance; Jesus gave him the evidence he needed to be convinced.

Again, let us follow the example found here as we go out and teach the lost. Let us not seek a fight, but a discussion; let us not seek to prove ourselves right, but to prove that Jesus is the Christ. Let us get right to the point and give the lost what they need to know, and let us use logic and reason as we present our evidence that God has given us. We cannot afford to use unsound arguments and "traditional" defenses; since every soul is important, we must handle the word of God rightly and argue reasonably and logically and answer their every skepticism. That is not to say we start "chasing rabbits" like answering "What happened to dinosaurs?" but answer from the Scriptures the doubts they may have. Once answered, it is then they are without excuse for obeying the gospel.

Confession and Conversion. (v. 49) In this particular example, when Nathanael heard the words of Jesus [the irrefutable evidence], he said,

“Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Without a doubt, Nathanael believed in Jesus and he was truly converted. [Understand the new covenant is not yet in effect.] No, not everyone will be convinced as easily as Nathanael, *but you never know!*

Yes, we live in difficult times and I know few really want to hear about Jesus, but I also know there are lost souls still out there who are looking for the truth and looking for salvation. Who will tell them of Jesus? I do not know which ones will believe and which ones will remain skeptical and neither do you, but that is the point of this article: tell **everyone!** Some may “come and see” and some may refuse; some may be convicted in their hearts and some hearts will coldly reject the plain evidence; some may confess Christ as their Lord and some will continue to deny Him. But that is not under your control. Speaking to them is, though.

Why not tell someone about Jesus today?

The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth

(Isaiah 2:1-5)

By Jon W. Quinn

"The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it will come about that In the last days, The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, And that we may walk in His paths.' For the law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war. Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." (Isaiah 2:1-5).

It was about 700 B.C. when Isaiah prophesied that the word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem. But he also prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed. He then predicted that it would be rebuilt by Cyrus, yet unborn, and then centuries later from a rebuilt Jerusalem the word of the

Lord would go forth unto the earth. All these things came to pass as history unfolded precisely as Isaiah said it would, event after event, through the coming years. But Isaiah was not the only prophet to speak of the word of the Lord going forth from Jerusalem.

Three Prophets Speak

There are at least three different prophecies about the event that would take place many centuries later when the apostles stood in Jerusalem and began to preach the gospel of the Risen Savior for the very first time.

First, there is Isaiah, as we have already seen. "And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, And that we may walk in His paths. 'For the law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.'" (Isaiah 2:3). This is a wonderful description of what would occur on the day of Pentecost following Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

Second, there is the prophet Joel. "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the Lord has said, Even among the survivors whom the Lord calls. " (Joel 2:32).

Third, there is the prophet Micah who also spoke about the deliverance of the Lord. He said, "And many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Micah 4:2).

The Fulfillment

These three prophecies, as well as others, were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost following Jesus' ascension into heaven. His chosen apostles rose and preached the word of the new kingdom, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Isaiah had said that the Lord would "teach us concerning His ways" and how we might "walk in His paths" promising that the "law will go forth" and "the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Here we have four different descriptions of what the gospel of Christ would be. The gospel is God's "ways"; God's "paths", God's "law" and God's "word."

When the apostles preached the gospel on Pentecost, this is what they were preaching. When they took the gospel from Jerusalem into all the world, they were taking God's "ways" and "paths". When we preach the same gospel today, we are preaching the Lord's "law" and "word."

The gospel of Christ consists of telling of "the mighty deeds of God" (Acts 2:11). The people on that day were told to "call upon the name of the Lord" just as the prophecy had stated (Acts 2:21). When they were brought to faith by the message taught, they asked what this all entailed. They wanted to know exactly what to do (Acts 2:37). They were told the Lord's "law", or "word", on the subject, just as the prophets had said. They were told, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38). Listen! This is not some idea of man. it is the "way", the "path", the "law" and the "word" of the Lord.

The Church is the Product of Saving Souls

This brings us to another point. Some wonder if it is necessary to be a member of the church to be saved, it is difficult to answer such a question because it is based on a flawed premise; a misunderstanding of the relationship between the church and salvation.

First, the church does not save anyone. The church is the product of salvation. When a person is saved, he or she is added to the number that makes up the Lord's church by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:47). When people are saved, they are saved from their past sins; "set apart" from them. You see, being a member of the church is not a requirement for being saved, but being saved is a requirement for being added to the church, and by definition, when one is saved, the Lord adds him or her to the church. This means that there are no saved people outside the Lord's church, because the Lord adds those who are being saved to His church.

Second, we need to understand that there is just one church to which the Lord adds the saved. The church is also referred to in the New Testament as the Lord's body, flock, family and kingdom. As the Lord adds to His church, He is building it (Matthew 16:18; 1 Peter 2:5,9). So, when the Bible uses the term "church" in this sense, it is not talking about a physical structure, or a human organizational structure, or even a local congregation, or church. God does not add us to these things when we are saved. But rather, to His spiritual body.

One final point: all three of the prophecies we noted referred to the church as a "mountain." Isaiah (2:3) called it "mountain of the Lord" and "Zion" and Joel (2:3 2) called it "Mount Zion" and Micah called it "the mountain of the Lord" The New Testament has plenty to say about this as well (Ephesians 1:22,23; 2:16-20; Hebrews 12:22,23). As Isaiah's prophecy says, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord!"

"Now Concerning the Collection"
(1 Corinthians 16:1-2)
by Wayne S. Walker

Through the years some have been heard to ridicule the idea of "five acts of worship." When we understand that the Biblical concept of "worship" involves "an act of homage or reverence to God" (see W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol. IV, p. 235) then we can realize that certain acts are acceptable to God as worship because He has authorized them for that purpose--hence, "acts of worship." Most people have no problem agreeing that prayer, singing, the Lord's supper, and even Bible preaching fit into the general category of worship, but there are those profess not to see how taking up a collection can be considered an act of worship. However, the fact is that in giving as the New Testament instructs each Christian is performing "an act of homage or reverence to God," then we should have no trouble accepting this as an act of worship.

Some words by the apostle Paul should help us to understand more about this. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:1-2, King James Version). This idea of a "collection" is not just a suggestion or some good advice, but an "order" that an inspired apostle of Jesus Christ gave both to the churches of Galatia and to the church at Corinth. Then Paul provides instruction so that we may have more precise information on the subject.

When is the collection to be taken? "Upon the first day of the week." Why specify the first day of the week? We know that this is the day upon which early Christians met for worship, as they gathered together to break

bread (Acts 20:7). Later writers identify it as "the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). Why God chose this day for this special purpose is not revealed, but it may have something to do with the fact that Jesus rose on the first day of the week (Mark 16:9). Some human churches take up a collection nearly every time the doors are open, but since God specified that the collection was to be "upon the first day of the week," it is the only day that is authorized for a collection by the church. The language also means that if possible Christians should give each first day of the week.

Who should participate in this collection? "Let every one of you." To whom was this statement directed? "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2). Those directed to engage in this collection are identified as "the church" and "saints." The church consists of those who have been saved (Acts 2:47). Saints are those who have been separated from sin (Ephesians 2:19). Basically, the church is made up of those who are saints. Some human churches beg money from nearly anyone and everyone. However, the collection is designed as an act of worship for Christians, not an appeal for visitors to donate.

What exactly is the collection? It is an activity in which each member can "lay by him" or put aside his contribution to the Lord. The New King James Version says "lay something aside." It is a gathering together of money for a purpose. According to the New Testament, churches were and are authorized to use their collected funds for three purposes.

The first is to **support gospel preaching** (2 Corinthians 11:8, Philippians 4:15-16).

The second is to provide whatever is necessary for the **edification** of the saints (1 Corinthians 14:26, Ephesians 4:11-16).

The third is **benevolence for needy saints** (Acts 11:27-30, Romans 15:26-28).

How did they obtain the funds for these things? This is the only passage which shows how the money is to be collected.

Where is the collection to be put? "In store." The New King James Version says, "Storing up." This term implies putting something into a place

where goods or precious things are collected and laid up, a storeroom, or treasury. The Jews had a treasury at the temple into which people could put their gifts (Mark 12:41). Even Jesus and His disciples, as they went about their work, had a "bag" into which they put their money for buying what they needed (John 12:6, 13:29). The early disciples brought their money to a common place, after which it was no longer under their individual control (Acts 4:34-37, 5:1-4). This authorizes a church to have a treasury, out of which whatever scriptural needs it has (benevolence, evangelism, or edification) are to be taken.

How is this collection to be given by each individual? "As God hath prospered him," or in keeping with his income. Everything we have is from God, the source of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). He has asked that a certain part of that be returned to Him for the work of the church, but He has not specified an amount or percentage. In the Old Testament, He commanded the people of Israel to give a tithe, that is a tenth (Deuteronomy 12:6-11). However, in the New Testament, tithing is not authorized. The collection is to be a free-will offering in proportion to our prosperity, given cheerfully. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

Why should the collection be taken? "That there be no gatherings when I come." The word translated "gatherings" is a plural form of the same word translated "collection." God has ordained that elders should oversee the work of the local church (1 Peter 5:1-3). This would include making decisions on what to do with the funds collected. These decisions would still have to be made by the brethren during times before elders are appointed (Acts 14:23). Some explain this passage by saying that Christians should just put their money aside somewhere in their homes and then when a need arises they can put it together to meet the need. But that defeats the whole purpose of the passage. When a need arises, Paul is saying that if the money is collected and put in store, then no one will need to go around to people's houses and gather the money. Rather, it will already be together to draw upon in meeting the need.

There are two erroneous ideas about this passage which have arisen. One is that because Paul specifies a "collection for the saints," referring to benevolence for needy Christians, this passage can be applied only to taking up a collection for benevolence. It cannot be applied to taking up money for

evangelism or edification and, some would even argue, to using any money thus collected for those purposes. What we have here is a specific application of a generic principle. The specific application is how a collection for the saints is to be gathered. The general principle is that whatever funds the church needs are to be gathered by saints laying by in store on the first day of the week. While it is important to understand a passage in its context, sometimes a passage contains a principle that can be applied beyond its immediate context. The context of Deuteronomy 25:4 is very specific about the treatment of oxen, but in 1 Corinthians 9:9-10 Paul saw a broader application.

The other erroneous idea is that if we can take a passage which, seemingly, concerns only raising funds for benevolence and apply it to raising funds for evangelism, then why can we not also take other passages which concern how funds are spent for benevolence, sending from one church to another, and apply them to how funds are spent for evangelism, sending from one church to another and thus authorizing a sponsoring church arrangement? Actually, this idea is answered in the previous paragraph, but a couple of examples already cited help us to understand the point. It is true that in benevolence one church is authorized to send money to another church when the receiving church is in genuine need (cf. Acts 11:27-30). However, the New Testament pattern specifies that in evangelism the funds were always sent directly to the preacher (Philippians 4:15-16). Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 deals only with how funds are collected and implies nothing about how they can be spent.

"The collection" is a subject about which some do not like preached. They assume that whenever there is a sermon on the collection that they are being accused of not giving enough or that someone is trying to wring more money out of them. However, it is certainly a Biblical subject and therefore teaching the whole counsel of God demands that it be addressed.

Furthermore, there is definitely a benefit to hearing and practicing what the Bible says on this topic because the Lord Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Those who claim to be God's redeemed should be eager to support the church by giving of their means into the collection.

Topic Page

Water

Warren E. Berkley

One of the most profitable products in convenience stores and supermarkets is water. Have you noticed how many people carry a bottle of water or have one on their desk. Some of this is due to marketing and culture. But perhaps also we are learning, one of the easiest things we can do for good health is to drink water. Have you ever suffered from dehydration? Or have you witnessed someone in a state of dehydration? In many cases – they were drinking coffee, coke or alcohol. But the body needs water. Many common ailments and many serious diseases could be prevented or slowed – simply by drinking more water.

During the recent hurricanes, we watched those who fled from the storm ask for water. The body needs water to survive; it is essential to proper nourishment.

But while we drink plenty of water, we may suffer with parched souls. The thirsty soul, wandering with weakness in the desert of sin – this is how many live who enjoy daily access to abundant water for the body.

Some people eventually figure that out. *They wake up one day with all the toys they could ever want, but have no real satisfaction - - because they are spiritually dehydrated and dieing in sin.* At that low point, there is that condition the Lord described, “hungering and thirsting for righteousness,” (Matt. 5:6).

In John chapter four Jesus stopped his travels for a brief time of refreshment at Jacob’s well. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her: “Give me a drink.” She hesitated and questioned Him about Samaritans having fellowship with Jews; she said, “for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” Jesus spoke to her about living water and He made the vital distinction between physical thirst and spiritual thirst; physical water and spiritual. He said, regarding the well water – “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again.” “But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

David wrote this, when he was living in the wilderness of Judah:

“O God, You are my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
 in a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
So I have looked for You in the
 sanctuary,
To see Your power and Your
 glory,” (Psa. 63:1,2).

Or, in another place he wrote:

“As the deer pants for the water
 brooks,
So pants my soul for You, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the
 living God.
When shall I come and appear
 before God?
My tears have been my food day
 and night,
While they continually say to
 me,
‘Where is your God?’”
 (Psa. 42:1-3).

Jesus said in Jno. 6:35 – “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”

Plan of Salvation
The Plan of Salvation
By Jon W. Quinn

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### *Plan #1*

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (ACTS 2:38)

### *Plan #2*

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

### **The Sinner's Prayer:**

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

Final Page

## ***Theological Conservatism and the Supreme Court***

***By Jon W. Quinn***

When you consider the number of people in America who consider themselves to be conservative Christians with reference to belief in the Bible as the inspired word of God as well as morally conservative, and the number of Supreme Court justices over the past 50 years who share those views, you will find that "conservative Christians" have been woefully underrepresented. If appointments to the Supreme Court came anywhere close to matching the percentage of the general population who are religiously conservative, there would never be fewer than two or three of them on the court. Reliable estimates put the number of white evangelicals in America at about 25% of the population.

But there has very rarely been any to sit on the court. One must go back decades to find one. Now, Harriet Miers has been nominated. She is an "evangelical" and among that 25% of the population. But because of her religious background she is drawing fire, much of it only because of her religious persuasion. Now I am trying hard to understand the mindset of those who are attacking her on this basis. Why is it so important to them that such a large segment of Americans continue to be underrepresented on the nation's highest court?

Before anyone asks, I do not describe myself as an "evangelical" though it may be that the press would. This is mainly due to the fact that I prefer the description "Christian" because that is a name that gives glory to Jesus Christ. But it is true that I believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. I believe in Divine creation and that Jesus performed miracles and died for my sins, was buried, and arose from the grave. I believe that a walk of faith believes in and obeys Jesus as Lord in all things. I believe that a person of faith takes personal moral stands based upon what the Bible teaches.

Just for your consideration, here are some things about Harriet Miers and her convictions. I do not know whether she'll ever take a seat on the court or not. But I do know that even if she does, those that believe as she does will still be underrepresented.

Miers grew up going to Catholic and Episcopal churches, but had not yet found what she was looking for. In 1979, Miers decided, in the well-known evangelical vernacular, to accept Christ as Lord and Savior. She was invited to attend the Valley View Christian Church in North Dallas, and soon she was baptized (full immersion) and became a member of that church. According to Terry Eastland, a writer for *The Weekly Standard*, "Christian Churches like Valley View are descended from the early nineteenth century Restorationist Movement, so-called because of its intention to restore New Testament teaching about the church." Valley View is part of "a loose confederation" of Christian Churches known as the North American Christian Convention. Eastland writes of this convention, "It was formed in 1927, at a time when Protestant churches generally were dividing along theologically progressive and conservative lines. The conservatives among the restorationists called themselves 'independents,' and the North American Christian Convention amounted to a declaration of their independence from the liberal programs and doctrines of the (also restorationist) Disciples of

Christ." The church's web site explains that the church believes in the Bible as "the only infallible, inspired, authoritative Word of God" and that "to receive Christ is to believe in Jesus as God's Son and Savior of the world, repent of personal sin, confess Christ publicly and be baptized."

Eastland summed up: "Valley View teaches certain moral views that it believes are grounded in the Bible. Most notably, it is pro-life and opposes same-sex marriage. Ron Key (then the pastor of the church - J.Q.) says that the church doesn't treat those matters in isolation. 'The major issue is Jesus Christ,' he says, and 'the need to lift him up' and for people to 'walk with Christ' in their own personal lives. Eastland says, "It would be hard to imagine many attending Valley View for two decades as Miers did who hold different views on such questions. Several friends of Miers told me, on background, that she is pro-life and defines marriage in traditional terms."

And that probably explains most of the opposition. She is pro-life and believes that marriage is what the Bible says it is. Those beliefs may be why she never will take a seat on the highest court, neither her nor any of the other people who are numbered in the 25% with similar moral views.