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Worship 10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.
Bible Study

so can we. — Ed.)

“Brethren, I would like for you to send me Banner of Truth. I verily enjoy reading it — **Mr. Lloyd Gannon, TN.** (Please pass it on to others. Ed.)

“Thanks so much for Banner of Truth. It’s about time some one took a stand for the TRUTH. We are not alone when we stand for God’s truth. He will always be with us. Please accept this small contribution — **Lavada Hayes, MO.** (There never was a time, in my time, when the need to stand for the truth was more urgent than now. God’s word doesn’t change even if all people do — Ed.)

“I just wanted to drop you a line and thank you again for all the work you do on Banner of Truth. I greatly appreciate it! Along with the support check enclosed, I have a question. Have you covered the issue of women interpreters in a past issue of BOT? I’ve flipped through all the issues I’ve received since I discovered BOT, but didn’t see an article on it. If you have covered this in a previous issue at any time, would you send me a copy of it please? Thank you, so very much! **Jake Taft, AL.** (Jake, it has been quite a while since I had an article on that subject. But in the past we have discussed it in several issues. I believe I have sent you those issues, but if I haven’t just let me know. Among those who upheld the use of women translators, some have supposedly quit using them, not out of conviction but for the sake of unity. The users of the women came up very short in proving from God’s word that the practice is authorized.— Ed.)

A PERSONAL NOTE: I have not met my goal to get the April issue out on time. I’ve suffered for more than two weeks (at time of writing) with a respiratory ailment, which my doctor says was on the verge of pneumonia. Having taken the prescribed round of antibiotics I’m yet not well. This has caused a big delay in my work but I’m trying to get this issue out. I hope to print the paper next week.

FOR YOUR ADDRESS BOOK

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The Tragedy Of Terry Schiavo’s Death By Court-Appointed Starvation

To deliberately kill anyone by starvation is a tragedy of major proportion. Especially is that true in a country where life of the innocent used to be treasured. But the principle set forth in the Schiavo case is so far reaching and portends frightening things for the future and the sanctity of life.

Life had its beginning with God. When God made Adam, He “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” and man became a living soul. He endowed man with a “soul” or inner man, which with respect to his actions would be accountable to God, his creator. We have been blessed with God’s inspired revelation which makes known to us how we should live before Him and our fellowman.

God, through David, said, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. 14:1). David goes on to say, “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God” (Ps. 14:2). A timely question for our present day is: “How many are there who un-

derstand and seek God?” This question comes to mind due to the rapid and distinct changes which are taking place in our society with respect to belief in God. The evidence that many are “fool[s]” is abundant and irrefutable. Ironclad evidence of this is seen in the court-ordered starvation by death of Terri Schiavo. This evidence is a case in point that only those who don’t believe in God could fail to see.

The story of Terri Schiavo’s condition over the past fifteen years has been told and retold hundreds of times. She suffered brain damage which resulted in her inability to care for herself. She remained in this condition until the courts decreed that she should

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Continued from Page 1

die or be killed by the cruel and inhuman means of starvation. It is our intention to consider the ramifications of this tragic act by a consideration of a number of things relating to the case. We encourage those who have any respect for the sanctity of life to consider these things seriously. Who knows who will be affected in time to come?

Terri's Condition When Court-Ordered Death By Starvation Was Commenced

Many things were said on this subject that were in no sense of the term factual or based on reliable evidence. The bias on the part of those who wanted this woman, a creature of God, to die by starvation was very, very strong. This bias is clearly seen in light of the facts of Terri's condition which were not set forth; several things which were not the case concerning her condition. We shall consider a few of those things which were not the case.

1. **She was not "brain-dead."** Her brain was impaired, yes. But dead? No. Those who made

charges that she was "brain-dead" either spoke from lack of knowledge, or wanted to justify her being killed.

2. **She was not "in a coma."** People in a coma are in a state of unconsciousness, and do not respond to stimuli. This was not Terri's condition if we speak truthfully. Some obviously wished her to be in a coma, or to go a step further, dead.

3. **She was not on a respirator.** No. She breathed on her own as we all do, naturally. No one I know of has even suggested that she had any breathing problems. She could have been killed by suffocation as well as by starvation, the method that was chosen.

4. **She was not near death.** For death to come it was necessary that she be killed by some means. There was no medical danger of death. To kill a totally innocent person because of a partially impaired physical and/or mental condition is evil and without justification, but to choose to kill one by starvation is unmitigated cruelty, a total disrespect for the sanctity of life.

5. **Her heart was not kept beating by artificial means.** There was no indication of a heart problem. Her heart was beating by natural means just like our hearts are kept beating.

The Importance of the Above Facts. Although some would like to so do, it is impossible to equate the condition of Terri Schiavo with one who is "brain dead," in a "coma," or totally unconscious and without any medical evidence that such a one might regain a better state of life. This person was alive and living by natural means, only depending upon others for food and drink, and the assistance that many incapacitated people require in order to live.

For some years now, people have been allowed to die a natural death by withholding certain life support systems which kept the person alive by artificial means, and especially when the person had made it known that it was not his or her desire to be kept alive by that means. But food and

Congregation Seeks Faithful Preacher

The church at Hickory Grove, sponsor of *Banner of Truth*, is looking for a preacher who loves the truth and stands up for it.

This is a rural church of about 60 located nine miles from Murray, KY. The church has a preacher's house.

Contact the elders: James Lockhart, (270) 753- 4460, or Mike Smith, (270) 437-4616.

Readers' Response

"I want to thank you for Banner of Truth, Jan. 05, God's Plan for Elders in the Church. Walter, like you wrote Jan. 2001, without exception the greatest blessing ever promised to may by God is that of salvation. I pray God will continue to bless you and your good wife with good health and a long life to preach the gospel of Christ" — **Raymond and Olga Thomas, IN.**

"I would like for you to place my name back on your mailing list. A few years ago I was in the process of moving and forgot to tell you, or did and forgot to give you my forwarding address. I have used your material in sermon preparation and general research. Thanks and God Speed" — **Gene Hill, LA.** (*I guess we all forget. I surely do. We do appreciate it when readers let us know of their change of address. It saves us time and expense — Ed.*)

"I enjoy your bulletin very much. Please send it to my daughter. Thank you" — **Pat Brumliebow.** (*Thanks for a name for our mailing list. We need 25 or 30 names each month to keep our mailing list as its current level. — Ed.*)

"Enclosed you will find a check for ten dollars. Please send me 'Banner of Truth' — **Ralph L. Jarrell, WV.** (*Thanks for your request and the check to help in our work. You should be receiving BOT by now. — Ed.*)

"The congregation at Chestnut Grove wanted to send this contribution to Banner of Truth, and let you know that we appreciate what each of you are doing and standing up for the truth. Happy holidays to you and sister Naomi and all your family. Your brothers and sisters in Christ, the Chestnut Grove congregation" — **TN.** (*Thanks for your encouraging words and the contribution to help us keep going. Please convey to the brethren*

our sincere appreciation. Your concern God's saving truth is to be commended. The love of the truth has waned with so many. How sad, since truth is the only way to be made free— Ed.)

"I am Tito N. Peralta, a gospel preacher. I got a copy of your paper, Banner of Truth, dated January 2003, 'An Update on the False Religion of Islam.' I also read the other articles. I like the paper because it teaches God's truth and also exposes error. I love reading books and other reading material, especially authored by sound Christians. I am interested to receive your paper. So I ask you to please include my name on your mailing list. I hope you will consider my request. Thank you and regards" — **Philippines.** (*We are happy to add your name. If I can find the time I will send you some back copies. In years gone by I have visited in the Philippines — Ed.*)

"After reading the recent issue of 'Banner of Truth' having to do with a reprint of a '93 issue as to what was taking place morally and as to God even back then, it gives one cold chills to realize how much farther we have gone down those paths since then. Frankly, I see no way it can turn around for I am convinced we are in the last days — if not, what does man have to do to stir up God's wrath. I would like to know. All this is so upsetting I can hardly even type. All of it has to be laid at the feet of ACLU, whose goal is to destroy the American that was — plus liberal judges and politicians — who are no longer patriots. Murderers never pay for their crime; we the people make appeal lawyers even richer with appeal after appeal.... — **Dorothy Roberts, TN.** (*Yes, it is frightening that evil continues to increase at such a rapid pace. The forces of evil are effective in lessening Godly influence in our society. I've never seen such a spirit of indifference as that which is not upon us. Sadly, much of this has reached into the Lord's church. There is not question but that the ACLU is one of America's worst enemies. We are now seeing a great battle between belief in God and secularism. We see that battle raging in some of the highest circles in realm of politics. Many individuals seem not to give it a thought. As sad as this condition is, it is not a great surprise. The many warnings in the New Testament tells of times like these. We can take comfort in one assurance, and that is that we can be victorious if we maintain our faith and fight the good fight of faith. When I think about the conditions of today I think of what the Christians endured in the first century. If they could remain faithful, ¶*

A Confused Reader's Response

We welcome responses from readers of Banner of Truth. We are encouraged by the many positive ones we receive. Some responses are very critical, but we try to respond to those when we believe a response would be worthwhile to the critic and/or our readers. The following is from Daniel Ross, sent March 12, to me and a number of other people, including Olan Hicks. Daniel's "response" had enclosed thirteen pages apparently written by someone else. We here reproduce some of Daniel's comments just as they came to us. The response follows—

This message is for Walter Pigg, and his banner of truth. It's sad when people teach things like this. I get Mr Piggs banner of truth every month, although he has a lot of good things in it, there also "man made ideas" and when you mix the two together, you get people to no longer attend the church. I have read statements about good hearted people "leave" the church, or was "kicked out". this is a sad thing, for mere man to take on a roll of God and rule His kingdom with serious accusations like this. Not only Walter, but there are others who teach things that can only come from Satan himself! It's hard in this day and age to teach someone the Gospel message of Jesus, and to have a response of them to obey it and get themselves baptized into Christ, it's another who takes on a roll of God, and say "I forgive you, but I don't forgive your second wife" this is were man comes into play, this is where many good souls are lost, confused, and die in this state of mind.... I can go on an on, but this one thing about MDR can cost someone their souls! This is not right. Jesus is not coming to break up the happy home, like some would have you believe.—Daniel Ross.

Dear Daniel,

Your letter of severe criticism has been received. In view of our communications in the past, my response may be of no benefit to you, but it could be helpful to our readers who have a desire to know what God's word teaches with regard to marriage, divorce and re-marriage.

Daniel, I spent quite a bit of time with you, thinking that you sincerely wanted to know what God's word

teaches on this subject. But in view of your above response, I must have been completely mistaken. It appears that you simply wanted to find someone to agree with you on a matter of error, that of opposing the teaching of Christ on the subject of marriage and divorce. It makes no sense at all to try to find others who agree with one on a matter of error. When a matter is not according to God's will it is error regardless of how many agree on it.

Another thing which quite often happens when one is seeking others to agree on matters of error, is the turning against those who will not agree. Daniel, this is the very thing that has happened in your case. Don't you realize that it is much more important for me to stand with the teaching of Christ than to agree with you in opposing His teaching? The unity which God desires of His servants is acceptable only on the basis of truth, or what God teaches. Yet, you have turned against me and made an absolutely false statement because I would not agree with you.

Your accusation that I "teach things that can only come from Satan," implies that what Christ teaches on the subject of marriage is from Satan. You well know that I have pointed out to you what Christ said in Matthew 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery...." If you want to suggest this teaching is from Satan, no one can stop you, but you will face the judgment.

You say, "but this one thing about MDR can cost someone their souls!" You are dead right on that. But who will pay with the loss of his or her soul? Those who respect the teaching of Christ, or those who go against Christ and His teaching? Is not Christ "the author of eternal salvation unto them that obey him"? You have transgressed and are abiding not in the doctrine of Christ (2 Jno. 9). Neither the Father nor the Son are with you or anyone else in a marriage which is in violation of Christ's teaching.

Finally, Daniel, you have not produced one iota of God's truth to uphold your position. This is a characteristic of nearly all the critics I hear from. If one has a position that cannot be upheld by God's word, then that position must be of men, the only other religious authority. Our prayer is that you will turn to God's truth as your guide. Sincerely, —Editor

water are not artificial means. Death by starvation is a new step in the eradication of unwanted life. Once this step is taken, who knows how far it will go, and at what point the majority of people will actually care?

Efforts To Uphold The Brutal Killing Of Terri Schiavo By Starvation

The fact that such a thing would happen here in what is called a civilized country is in itself frightening. Our country used to be referred to as a "Christian Nation." While this was never true in the true sense of the term, our country used to be ruled to a great extent on the basis of Christian principles. The sanctity of life was accepted by most people.

The fact that such an inhuman thing would be done should awaken everyone who has any faith in the God who created man to the reality of what is happening. But that such a major portion of our people have already come to the point that they see nothing wrong with this tragic case has taken me by complete surprise. I thought I had been fully aware of the immorality which has enveloped our society, but I see now that I was sadly mistaken.

"Killing by Euphemism" is the title of an article in *National Review*, Apr. 25, 2005. It was pointed out that words like "starvation" and "dehydration" were discouraged. This reminds us of the tactics of the increasing number of pro-abortion people in our country. They don't use the word "murder" and never refer to the innocent boys and girls, human beings which are killed because they are unwanted. They will talk about a "fetus" as though it were nothing more than a glob of tissue to be discarded at the will of the mother. Why is this done? Is it not an effort to cover up the horrific nature of the crime? Those who wanted Terri Schiavo dead didn't dare use the truth of the matter and refer to her premeditated death by inhuman starvation. Was this to

lessen the appearance of the cruelty which was forced upon her?

Terri's court-ordered death was described by some in the most hypocritical language that can be imagined. Can one imagine the horrifying death of this innocent woman being described as "lovely" or "beautiful" or a "death with dignity"? This was done when her lips were parched, her nose bleeding, and her skin losing all of its tone as in the case of death. Who but a cruel and ungodly person could see such an act of sheer brutality as lovely or beautiful?

I have wondered if people with such a warped mind as this would think it lovely and/or beautiful to see the brains suctioned from the skull of a God-created boy or girl? I would think so. If not, why not? At any rate, they do not believe it is wrong to do so.

Victim's Consent Not Verified. If a person had, previous to any affliction, verified that they preferred being starved to death rather than being kept alive by a feeding tube [Who could imagine anyone wanting that?] it would still have been wrong, but more understandable by some than by starvation.

In the Schiavo case there was nothing in writing to indicate that she would have wanted her life to end by removing all artificial life support, much less by being starved to death. The only evidence offered was nothing but hearsay. But there was also hearsay evidence that countered that. To believe a story by Michael Schiavo, Terri's sorry, cheating husband who has fathered two children by another woman that he lives with, would be to me to believe the unbelievable. The story goes that seven years after Terri's condition began, Michael offhandedly remembers that his wife had said that she would not want to live if a burden or if life was maintained by artificial means. Who can believe such a story? But even if it had been true, it would not have warranted death by starvation. †

The judge chose to believe the words of the cheating husband, when his wife could not speak for herself, and when other evidence did not agree with the husband's flimsy story.

The Courts Order Death By Starvation. It is a fact that we should be law-abiding people. This is not to say, however, that all laws are what they ought to be. A law may approve or make legal that which is completely wrong in God's sight. This has been seen in legalized abortion, homosexual marriage, and many other things which are at variance with God's word. When commanded not to teach the gospel, "Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). This was putting God's will first.

Some favored defying the law in Florida and reinserting the feeding tube. But if this could have been done, one life would have been continued for some period of time. While this involved only one life, if the courts allow the killing of one by starvation, the laws are corrupt and ungodly, and the number affected in the future will be countless. If our laws allow such brutality it is high time that our laws need to be changed. Someone suggested that the death certificate of Terri Schiavo should read that she was killed by court order. Another source suggested, "The Schiavo case was a tragedy not because the government failed to stop it from happening, but because it directed it to happen." Our government should favor life over the death of the innocent.

Judge Greer evidently decided that Terri's life was not worth living, and therefore decreed her death by starvation. But did he actually have that much power? When judges wield the power to decree death by starvation they have too much power. It seems to me that it would make sense to elect judges as we do many other officials. This would give people the option of removing judges who legislate rather than adjudicate.

Changing Attitude Toward Human Life

The rapid change in society's attitude toward the value and sanctity of life as reflected in the Schiavo case has been no less than flabbergasting to me. I remember some things relative to conditions and attitudes almost eighty years ago. Most people treasured life and mourned the loss of it. The practice of wantonly taking unwanted life was virtually unheard of among upright people. It is so different now.

I could hardly believe what I was hearing during the Schiavo case, that polls were indicating some 70 to 80 percent of people surveyed were in favor of "pulling the tube," that is, killing Terri Schiavo by outright starvation. I know that polls are often not accurate, but if such polls are only halfway accurate, our society is now in its most troubling times. Something which made this stark reality even worse was the fact that many people who claim to be religious or to believe in God were in favor of that tragic act of death by starvation.

The value of human life at its lowest level. When more people believed in God there was much greater respect for God-given human life. Who would have thought we would see a time in our country when animal life is given more protection than human life?

There have been a couple of cases in our general area of people getting into trouble for starving horses and dogs. There are laws against cruel mistreatment of animals, but in the Schiavo case many have said, including the law, that there is nothing illegal about killing a person by starvation. How can this be explained other than by admitting that there is less respect for human life than for animal life?

Legal abortion, to be further discussed, is now in full swing. This allows on-demand killing of innocent boys and girls just because they are unwanted. Just today I heard on the news of a thirteen year old girl in Florida who wants to get an

the plan of salvation and ridicule the "five-steppers." In both cases, it's a simple matter of arithmetic.

As we have seen, and shall see again, these activities of the assembly are "acts of reverence paid to God"; that is, they are acts of worship. We've discussed three of these acts: Hearing ("the word [voice] of the Lord"; Cf. Is 28.14, 23; Neh 8.1-8) which is led by one who Preaches (Ac 20.7, KJV) or Speaks (1 Cor 14.19); The Lord's Supper ("remembrance of me," 11.25); and Singing ("to the Lord," Eph 5.19). Each of these acts takes place in an Assembly gathered before God; and each act is uniquely "God-ward." Not a single one of these acts is, shall I say, *Spectator Worship*. The New Testament knows nothing of an Assembly wherein one or more *do* these "acts of worship," while an audience of appreciative (even if "edified") spectators looks on. If ever there was a case of "joint participation (fellowship)," it is in The Assembly: There, each christian gathered, participates heart and soul, "in spirit and in truth" (Jno 4:24), in each act of reverence to the glory of God.

WHAT ABOUT "GIVING" AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP?

Now, let's turn to the act of Giving. Every so often, you come across someone who thinks he has discovered that the act of Giving in the assembly is not an act of worship. Let's see: That it is an act, surely no one would deny. I mean, it is something, in The Assembly, that you *do*.

First, that an act of giving, an offering of a portion of one's material goods, can *ever* qualify as an act of worship, is seen in Matthew 2:11. The record says when the wise men "were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." Surely, no one will dispute that these men from the East were giving a portion of their material goods; and that that very act of giving was indeed and an act of worship.

Second, as regards "giving" in The Assembly, consider carefully the context: We have an Assembly of "the whole church" coming together on the "first day of every week." Among the various

activities of that Assembly, each christian ("every one of you") was to "lay by him in store as God hath prospered him" (I Cor 16.2). We have a *specific* act, done at a *specific* time, and in a *specific* setting or place ("in the assembly"). It was done with view toward and in consideration of how God "hath prospered" the giver.

This Assembly, by its nature, was "God-ward," gathered "before God." Wouldn't then, this Divinely prescribed act, therefore be an "act of reverence paid to God"? Isn't that precisely what Worship is? No, it doesn't follow that *anytime* I take money from my pocket to give to a good cause or a needy person, I am, therefore, worshipping. Such "giving" falls under the purview of Christian Service, but, giving outside The Assembly is without that "to-God" quality which constitutes it an "act of worship" in The Assembly.

PRAYER AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

The fifth, and final, "act of reverence paid to God" in The Assembly is Prayer. We pray "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Matt 6.9). Prayer, we see, by its nature, is an act of worship whenever or wherever it is done. And it is to be done in The Assembly (I Cor 14.15-17; II Tim 2.1, 8).

So much more could, and should, be said about The Assembly. I have no doubt that the picture of The Assembly painted by Paul in I Cor. 11:17-16.9 gives the lie to: (1) The idea that the New Testament doesn't speak of "worship services"; (2) The idea that The Assembly, the one in which the five acts of worship are done, may be divided on any basis; (3) The idea that women may lead The Assembly in its acts of worship, either as Speaker, Prayer, Singer, Translator; or with regard to Giving or The Lord's Supper; (4) The idea that *part* of The Assembly may *do* the acts of worship while the rest watch and listen; and (5) The idea that an act of worship which is to be exclusively done *in* The Assembly may be rightly done *out* of The Assembly; and, of course, (6) The age-old idea that a person can get just as close to God out of the assembly as can all those people in the assembly. —Alan Adams

The Whole Church Assembled Together

Is the concept of the “whole church...come together in one place” (I Cor. 14:23), a mere First Century happenstance, or an integral and permanent part of christianity which must today be imitated by those seeking to please God? Some have averred that such an assembly is merely a New Testament incidental and not part of a unchangeable pattern. I disagree.

PLOTTING THE COURSE

When plotting a problem on a piece of graph paper we take particular interest when several lines intersect the same point. The same thing is true with ideas, doctrines or practices. For example, when I hear mention of the notion that non-christians are not amenable to (under) the Law of Christ, the New Testament; and that the commandments of God do not exceed the mercy of God; and that repentance is not retroactive; I then strongly suspicion that the real topic under discussion is that of Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage. And I conclude that the one raising such patently erroneous ideas is trying to find, for himself or someone close to him, some way to make right what the Bible says is wrong (Matt. 19:9). If the Gospel and the New Testament are the same thing, and if the Gospel is to be preached to “every creature” (Mk. 16:15), and if the “law speaketh to those who are under the law” (Rom. 3:19), then it’s pretty clear that the New Testament is addressed to every single solitary soul in this world; and they are thereby amenable to it. Our merciful God, through His “grace...instruct[s] us, to the intent that, denying worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world” (Tit. 2:11-12). God’s mercy is not a mere emotion. It is manifested through and appropriated by man living in harmony with His Word. Apparently some of Corinthian brethren had to, among other things, give up their homosexual partners and practices in order to become christians (I Cor. 6:11, “and such were some of you”). The inspired Paul new nothing of this non-retroactive repentance scheme.

Would that Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage were the only source of innovation and division to-

day. Some of the more popular innovations among us today also appear to have a point of intersection. Instrumental Music has reared its head once again; there are Solos, Choirs, Choruses, special music; there is the Divided Assembly (divided by age, gender; and in one case, even by academic degrees); we are regularly seeing women used as worship leaders in mixed assemblies (Preaching, Praying, Translating, leading in taking the Lord’s Supper and the Offering); there are Skits and Dramatic Presentations, et al.

Each of these innovations intersect at the concept of The Assembly. The Assembly is truly under assault. Brother Calvin Warpula flat out says, “The New Testament speaks of Christians ‘coming together’ but not of ‘worship services.’ The idea that ‘worship services’ have special rules not binding on other Christian assemblies is a human tradition....”

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE ASSEMBLY

With this article, we will have completed our study of that continuous, connected composite of The Assembly as seen in First Corinthians 11:17 — 16:9. We’ve noted: *The People of It* (“whole church assembled together” [14.23]; men and women [34-35]); *The Nature of It* (“worship God...God is among you” [25]; “speak...to God” [28]; Cf. “all here present before God” [Ac 10.33]); *The Place of It* (“together...into one place” [1 Co 11.20]); in other words, the people in The Assembly were there to worship God and thereby be edified (“teaching and admonishing one another...singing...to the Lord” [Col 3.16]; “church received edifying” [I Cor 14.5]). We should also note *The Time of It* (“the first day of every week” [16.2, RSV]).

WHAT ARE PEOPLE TO DO IN THE ASSEMBLY?

Now, as to *The Activities of It*. A careful consideration of our text will show **five** separate and distinct **acts**. I say this with the complete awareness that there are those among us who literally scoff at the notion of any acts of worship, much less five specific ones. The are the same people who scoff at

abortion. Since she is under state supervision, the state opposed the action, but a judge rules that she should have the abortion anyway. In various places now a child can get an abortion without the parents even being notified.

The Background Of This Lack Of Respect For Human Life

On Monday, January 22, 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court voted 7-2 in favor of abortion. To God-fearing, morally conscious people this is a black day in our history. That the long-held sanctity of life would be so challenged and repudiated by the highest court of the land struck many with great dismay.

At that time a majority of people did not favor the legalizing of abortion. This is a case where the highest court of the land engaged in legislating rather than adjudicating.

With the passing of time more people have come to favor abortion. It seems in some cases that those who favor this practice of cold bloodedly murdering infants, whom God created, have consciences with a bit of life left yet. I say this because of their preferred use of the term “pro choice” rather than the cold facts suggested by such words as: “murder,” “killing,” or even “abortion.” A conscience which is not troubled greatly by the gory facts of “partial birth abortion,” must indeed be “seared.” In this case the innocent child is only inches and/or minutes away from living a life by natural means as God intended, when its brains are suctioned out of its skull bringing about instant death.

Estimates are that since that infamous date in 1973, more than 40,000,000 children have been murdered, simply because they were not wanted. Although partial birth abortion has been ruled illegal, the court could overturn that.

Political forces against the sanctity of life. Before World War II, and for several years thereafter, the plank of abortion in a politicians platform would have been political suicide. In more recent times a primary plank in the platform of many politicians, even of the highest level is “Pro Choice,” that is,

murder of the unwanted, which they will not say.

Both political parties have some who favor abortion, but the liberal party is the one which is overwhelmingly in favor of abortion, though they usually call it “freedom to choose.” The very fact that a major political party would go all out for supporting abortion in order to get political support shows just how far our country has gone in the past several decades. God-given life is coming to mean less and less. This is frightening, especially when we consider what has happened in other countries.

A case in point of politicians resorting to the willful taking of life, as in “power to choose,” we call attention to recent words of Howard Dean, Democratic National Committee Chairman. From an article in *The Paducah Sun*, Apr. 17, 2005, in which Dean says the Schiavo case will be used against the Republicans in coming elections. Note the following from the article by Siobhan McDonough of AP.

“This is going to be an issue in 2006 because we’re going to have an ad with a picture of (House Majority Leader) Tom DeLay saying, ‘Do you want this guy to decide whether your die or not? Or is that going to be up your love ones?’” Dean said in West Hollywood, Calif. Dean, answering questions at an Access Now for Gay and Lesbian Equality event on Friday, went on to say, ‘The issue is: Are we going to live in a theocracy where the higher powers tell us what to do? Or are we going to be allowed to consult our own high powers when we make very difficult decisions?’”

The definition of “theocracy” by *Webster* is: “1. a form of government in which God or a deity is recognized as the supreme ruler.” Deans makes his point very clear. “Our own high powers” which Dean supports is the high power of men with God left out of the picture. He can’t respect the power of God and uphold the taking of life as in the Schiavo case, or in abortion, any more than he can support the Gay and Lesbian group to whom he was speaking. With God out, evil is free to move in, and it does. †

Our current President, George Bush, is some times criticized for invoking the name of God as he speaks publicly. Just think of the implication of such criticism. Is this not valid evidence that such critics prefer an atheistic person as their leader? No too many years ago virtually everyone would have preferred a leader who believed in God.

In some political circles those who still believe in God are referred to as “the religious right,” or “the radical religious right.” They are criticized and blamed for many things. The problem with the liberal people seems to be that these people believing in God conflicts with their advocacy of such ungodly things as abortion and homosexuality.

The Conflict Between Pure Secularism And Belief In God And His Principles

For several years now there has been a very pronounced effort to completely secularize our society. When such a state occurs it is then that belief in God and His principles have faded away. This battle is raging in several areas, all of which are important.

We have just noted what is happening in the political world. We’ve never seen such a push in the direction of completely divorcing ourselves from God and His principles that used to be respected by the majority of people, whether they pretended to be religious or not.

The mention of God and acts of respect for Him in our schools are now taboo. All manner of immoral things can be discussed, but not God. Prayer is strictly out, and evil is in.

In our civil society ungodly people are being heard from far and wide. They are against the use of God’s name. There are those who oppose the holiday of Christmas. The Bible doesn’t teach us to observe Christmas, but those who oppose it do so because it has in the minds of many a connection with Christ, and this the critics detest strongly.

A great many of our schools of higher learning are now filled with professors who disdain belief in God and do not hesitate to try to recruit others to follow their ungodly ways.

Opposition to God is now found in religion, even the religions which claim to be of the Christian religion. We do not include in this group those referred to above as “the religious right.” These religions where outright opposition to God’s will is found are the very liberal ones. In these one will find the upholding of homosexuality, and in some cases abortion.

In Paul’s charge to the elders of the church at Ephesus he said, “Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30). In first century John said, “many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I Jno. 4:1). Paul writes to Timothy, saying “some shall depart from the faith,” and “they shall turn away their ears from the truth” (I Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:4). Christ said “Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing” (Matt. 7:15). Peter warns of false prophets (2 Pet. 2:1).

The very fact that we are warned of false teachers is proof that there would be those who oppose God. When error is taught rather than truth God is being opposed. That can be clearly seen in some of the religion of today. There are those in religion, even among those who claim to be Christians, who stand against God in various ways. A classic example are those who uphold homosexuality, even the so-called marriage of such. No sin is more clearly condemned in God’s word than that of homosexuality. Those who stand for such are opposing God and encouraging the secularism which rejects God. And, to make it even worse, they are doing it in name of God and/or religion.

The devil works in devious ways. Paul says of him, “we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). In Ephesians 6:11 Paul speaks of the “wiles

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Location: *Curris Center, M.S.U. Campus, Third Floor Theater*

Monday, June 27

- 10:00 a.m. Alan Adams — “In The Beginning God Created” — Genesis 1:1
- 11:00 a.m. Richard Adams — “The Eyes of Both of Them Were Opened” — Genesis 3:7
- 1:30 p.m. Garland Robinson — “Stand Still And See The Salvation of The Lord — Ex. 14:13
- 2:30 p.m. Walter W. Pigg — “The Lord Rained Fire And Brimstone” — Genesis 19:24
- 3:30 p.m. Paul Curless — “But They Have Rejected Me” — I Samuel 8:7
- 7:00 p.m. Roger Campbell — “Arise, Go Nineveh, that Great City” — Jonah 1:2
- 8:00 p.m. Garland Robinson — “And The People Sat Down To Eat And To Drink” — Ex. 32:6

Tuesday, June 28

- 10:00 a.m. Ken Bureson — “The Feet Of Him That Bringeth Good Tidings” — Isaiah 52:7
- 11:00 a.m. David Lemmons — “The House Of Israel; All Came To Pass” — Joshua 21:45
- 1:30 p.m. Robert Alexander — “Life And Good; And Death And Evil — Deut. 30:15
- 2:30 p.m. Roger Campbell — “I Will Make Of Thee A Great Nation” — Genesis 12:3
- 3:30 p.m. Roger Scully — “Ye Shall Not Surely Die” — Genesis 3:4
- 7:00 p.m. Ken Bureson — “Art Thou He That Troubleth Israel?” — I Kings 18:17
- 8:00 p.m. Leon Cole — “Prophecy Not Unto Us Right Things” — Isaiah 30:10

Wednesday, June 29

- 10:00 a.m. Leon Cole — “The Lord Had Respect Unto Abel” — Genesis 4:4
- 11:00 a.m. Lindon Ferguson — “To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice” — I Samuel 15:22
- 1:30 p.m. Michael Willey — “Gave Thanks Before His God, As He Did Afortime” — Dan. 6:10
- 2:30 p.m. David Lemmons — “Out Of Zion Shall Go Forth The Law” — Isaiah 2:3
- 3:30 p.m. Jeff Bates — “A Virgin Shall Conceive, And Bear A Son” — Isaiah 7:14
- 7:00 p.m. Alan Adams — “And They Stood Every Man In His Place” — Judges 7:21
- 8:00 p.m. Roger Scully — “My People Are Destroyed For Lack Of Knowledge” — Hosea 4:6

Thursday, June 30

- 10:00 a.m. Guyton Montgomery — “Offered Strange Fire Before The Lord” — Leviticus 10:1
- 11:00 a.m. Rick Knoll — “Turned Not Aside To Right Hand Or To The Left “ — 2 Kings 22:2
- 1:30 p.m. Jimmy Bates — “In The Plains Of Ono” — Nehemiah 6:2
- 2:30 p.m. Joe Spangler — “And Shall Cleave Unto His Wife” — Genesis 2:24
- 3:30 p.m. Gilbert Gough — “Can Two Walk Together Except They Be Agreed?” — Amos 3:3
- 7:00 p.m. Joe Spangler — “Joseph Was A Goodly Person, And Well Favored” — Genesis 39:6
- 8:00 p.m. Richard Guill — “Fear God, And Keep His Commandments” — Ecclesiastes 12:13

of the devil.” What could be more effective with some than to appeal to them through a religion which claims to be of God, but is in reality opposed to God, as they show by actions?

When a child is born into the world today, the influence brought to bear upon it to believe in secularism rather than God will be stronger than any that we have known.

Some Encouraging Signs Of Respect For The Sanctity Of Life

The last national election showed that the majority of voters are not yet ready to accept secularism over belief in God and His principles. While that is encouraging, the fact that in the presidential election fifty million voted in favor of secularism is frightening. In the presidential election people were given a clear choice, and it is of great concern that almost half the voters demonstrated their lack of faith in God by voting for things which are clearly opposed by God. If this election had been held fifty years ago with the same issues considered, those on the side of belief in God would have by major proportions overwhelmed those who favor secularism.

Many of the writers in newspapers and magazines spoke plainly in their opposition to the court appointed killing of Terri Schiavo. The real issue at stake in the Schiavo case was the choice between secularism and belief in God and His principles. Of the writers that I have read I have not seen the demonizing of those who are “pro life,” as some have done. Some have reflected the view of a great many people that the Schiavo case is the beginning of a slide on the slippery slope of euthanasia

The *Millard Fillmore* cartoon had a thought provoking message in *The Paducah Sun*, Apr. 19, 2005. Millard is looking at his news source which says, “This just in. . . Numerous state legislators are rumored to be considering an end to lethal injections for death-row inmates. . . in favor of starvation, which we’ve all been hearing lately. . . is such

a ‘beautiful, peaceful, humane way to die.’”

As stated earlier, the writers from whom I have read have been quite effective in pointing out the shameful and inconsistent aspect of the court-ordered killing of Terri Schiavo. On the other hand, indications are that the larger papers have taken a more liberal stance upholding “pulling the tube.”

One writer points out that a dozen or more of those of a liberal persuasion voiced their opposition to the death by starvation. This is somewhat puzzling since most of the liberals are in favor of abortion. Many abortion advocates are in favor of taking the brains from the skull of an innocent baby just moments from a natural birth. Surely, one who favors such a barbaric act certainly has no respect for human life; it must be, then, the manner in which Terri Schiavo was killed that they oppose. But if one doesn’t believe in the sanctity of life, what difference would it make as to how “the deed is done”?

The outpouring of support to save Terri Schiavo’s life was encouraging. Even children showing support were willing to be handcuffed by police. There is hope that this tragic deed will awaken people to what we are really facing, if this trend continues. Many people must not have stopped to think just what this killing of an innocent, helpless individual signifies. For some time now there have been discussions of the practice of euthanasia. Most people that I know are opposed to this method of killing people. Euthanasia, some times called “mercy killing” is defined as a “painless death.” No one knows that the cruel starvation of Terri Schiavo was painless. But we do know that the taking of her life was an arbitrary decision made by her cheating husband and the courts. It was the killing of one who was not wanted to be alive but to be dead.

Added to the tragedy of this was the fact that Terry Schiavo’s parents wanted to take their daughter and care for her and let her live. But no. The courts said she must die. †

Is This The Kind Of Future We Want For Our Country?

What kind of country do we want?—

1. A country like India where in some places girl babies are killed because they are unwanted? Boy babies are valued more highly than girls.

2. A country like Germany during Adolph Hitler's reign? Under his rule a process of elimination was begun. The old, the infirm, and mentally inefficient were simply destroyed. Then the process of eliminating the Jews began. Millions of Jews, including women and children, were starved and gassed to death in the concentration camps. The people of Germany were educated people, not ignorant and uncivilized. Yet they considered some human life to be of no value. Those in rule determined who would be killed and who would live.

3. Like the Netherlands where the old and infirm, along with children born with some defects, are simply eliminated, put to death? Like the Germans, these people are not ignorant, they just have little or no regard for life. Or,

4. Do we want our country to continue as it is, when more than a million unborn children are killed every year because they are unwanted? Unless those who believe in God stand up and speak out, this will not only continue, it will get worse as demonstrated in the Schiavo case.

5. Do we want judges who make their own rules rather than judge according to the law? We, the people, could change this if we really wanted to do so. It will not change unless the upright stand up and speak out.

6. Do we want a country completely controlled by secularism? Great strides have been made in this direction by those who want God out of the picture so that man can rule according to his own desires, without any fear of answering to any higher power.

Such conditions as the above are what happens when people turn away from belief in God and

make gods of themselves. As a nation we have already "forgotten God" to such a great degree, as evidenced by our immoral society.

George Will points out a startling fact with regard to the rapid growth of the non-religious in our country.

According to the American Religious Identification Survey, Americans who answer 'none' when asked to identify their religion numbered 29.4 million in 2001, more than double the 14.3 million in 1990. If unbelievers had their own state – the state of None – its population would be more than twice the size of New England's six states, and None would be the nation's second largest state: California – 34.5 million; None – 29.4 million; and Texas – 21.3 million.

If this doesn't tell us what is happening to our country, we probably can't be told.

As Faithful Christians, What Should We Do?

We can help change the future if we so desire. We cannot make a perfect society, but we can have an influence for good. The church was born in the first century into the midst of an evil and godless society, even worse than what we see now. But in face of great trials and difficulties it made a difference.

We must seriously recognize the sanctity of life. Life is sacred, it is from God. "And God said, Let us make man in *Our* image, after *Our* likeness"[emp. added] (Gen.1:26). "So God created man in his own image." (v. 27). Someone has suggested that man in his nature was intended to be the highest representation of God possible, short of the incarnation of Christ.

We must not be influenced by the many evil people who do not respect the sanctity of life. If ninety-nine percent think that way, it is still evil in God's sight and Christians must stand for truth. We must come down on the side of life, whether born or unborn.

Some Closing Remarks for Consideration

This has been written with a sincere motive of calling to the attention of at least a few people, if not more, the true sanctity of life, and the forces growing forces of evil which are working tirelessly to remove every vestige of influence of the true and living God, the Author of the sanctity of life.

My choice to write about the Terri Schiavo story was foremost because it represents a powerful case in point as to the rapidity with which our society's value of God-given life is going down. The court-decreed killing of Terri Schiavo by the cruel and inhuman means of starvation is enough to seriously trouble anyone who has the least bit of moral sensibility. As sad as the taking of this one innocent life is, it pales in comparison with what this act portends for the future, unless there is a drastic change. The lives of untold millions are hanging in the balance. Will they be allowed to live or will they be condemned to die?

The sordid disrespect for God-given life took its greatest advance in our lives when our Supreme Court in early 1973 legalized infanticide. The innocent blood of untold millions has flowed since that infamous day. The majority of people did not approve of unlimited abortion then, and certainly would not have approved the killing of those outside the womb by starvation as in the Schiavo case. But as is the case with evil acts, when one act is accepted it is much easier to accept another which is even more evil. This is the progressive nature of evil.

People generally have certainly not sought God's authority to justify these kinds of killing. What few efforts have been made to show that God's word authorizes such they have been few and far between. It is rather a matter of unconcern and rejection of such authority, which allows people to do all manner of evil. This is the way of secularism.

As we look back into religious history we see a people who for the greater part did not know God. They were already away from God. Their concern was not the doing of the will of the one true God. With God's chosen people, the children of Israel, it was a matter of them turning away from God time after time. If God's chosen people would do that, why should we think it strange if those who claim to believe in God today should do the same thing? As we noted earlier, one source said that in 2001 twenty-eight percent of the people had no religion. They are away from God to be sure.

A great concern of mine is that those who profess to be New Testament Christians are showing powerful signs of turning away or forgetting God, when it comes to human life and its sanctity.

Some may say: "Why be so pessimistic? Christians are always going to value human life highly." The signs that I see are based on what I've seen in my almost eighty years. I have seen great changes in our society in the area of morality. In addition to this, I have seen the changes which have come about within the Lord's church in the fifty-one years that I have been preaching.

Some of my brethren have veered away from belief in the distinctiveness of the Lord's church. Some believe people may be saved outside the body of Christ, never having been baptized for remission of sins and to put on Christ. God's law on fellowship and divorce and remarriage has been cast aside and ignored. The true Christian lifestyle has become out-of-date with a great many. Materialism has stolen the spiritual hearts of many.

In view of the above changes which have come about, why would it be thought unlikely that many will be influenced by the secularism of today, to turn away from belief in the sanctity of God-given life?

May the Lord help us see the battle that we face and be prepared to taste victory. —Editor