Hickory Grove church of Christ
1131 Hickory Grove Rd.
Almo, KY 42020-9332

Return Services Requested

Sunday Services:
Bible Classes
9:00 a.m.
Worship
10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday:
Bible Study
7:00 p.m.

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Hornets — Increasing Influence of Politics Upon The Lord’s Church

During the past 80 years we have seen the influence of politics upon the church grow by gigantic proportions. Anything which has a detrimental influence upon our Lord’s Church is a timely matter for discussion and should be considered and studied careful.

I can imagine someone saying, in view of the above headline: “There he goes again, discussing politics!” No apology will be made by me for discussing any subject which has to do with the well-being of the church. One can name a variety of subjects, which some had rather not discuss, but that does not mean there is no need to do so. Some of the things which people most need to hear are not things they like to hear. Included in this is the subject of politics, which affect the church.

We are living in a time when the mention of politics is heard every day. Since our government is run by a political system it can be expected that this subject will continually be before us. Since this fall is election time, even more will heard about politics than the usual. Politics affects us all in one way or another, and now, the same is affecting the church as never before in our time.

It is a time for serious concern to those who love the Lord and His church.

Politics – A Sensitive Subject. That is true, but it ought not to be so. Anything which has so much to do with our lives, and with the church, should be discussed in a regular and sensible fashion. Over the years it has appeared that people are more likely be sensitive about subjects about which they feel uneasy for one reason or another. Some people are sensitive about the subject of smoking, because they smoke and feel uneasy about it. The same can be said about a number of subjects.

When it comes to things that cannot be upheld by the teaching of God’s word, people doing them tend to be sensitive about discussion of such matters. I remember brother Guy N. Woods using an example to show that people who do not have justification for their practice are reluctant —
to engage in a discussion of the same. He said, “For the same reason a muley cow will not engage in a hunting contest." I have found this to be true with regard to some who hold political views which they cannot justify by God’s word. A muley cow is one without horns.

The Objective in Our Discussion. We are concerned with the increasing influence that politics is having upon the church in recent years, whereas the time was that politics had little influence upon the church. It is not our objective to discuss individual politicians of recent times, though there is a time for this, but rather to examine the influence which is now being brought to bear by politics in general. Let me say here, that there are no perfect politicians and never will be. It is also a fact that there are some in both political parties which are not noted for upholding that which is in most keeping with Christian principles.

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When I came on the scene eighty years ago, I was not aware of what was going on in the political world. I had just turned four years old in 1929, the year of the great stock market crash. At four, the stock market didn’t register with me. It would not be long, however, until I would know and remember some things in the realm of politics. I can remember people talking about people committing suicide because they had lost their fortune. I remember Roosevelt running for office and winning, and I remember hearing about the “New Deal.” A world-wide depression engulfed our country as well as other countries of the world. President Hoover would be blamed for decades for the depression, especially by the opposite party.

The public works programs inaugurated by Roosevelt are well remembered. There was the WPA and the CCC, and others. Farmers were paid to kill their hogs and destroy them, and they would be allowed to plant only a limited amount of crops. A program which Roosevelt wanted to inaugurate was the NRA, but the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional.

The economy did improve during the 1930s, but was still sluggish until World War II brought on a boom. I knew people who hated to see the war end, since they were making so much money during the war. It is amazing how much some love money. President Roosevelt died during his fourth term in office. I well remember receiving the news while on a merchant ship in the North Atlantic. Harry Truman became the President.

I do remember something about the 1930s which has to do with the spiritual realm. That is, crime was not as frequent as it is today. It is a common thing in our time for people to blame much of crime upon poverty. If their thinking is valid, it would have meant that most of us would have been criminals back then, because most of us were dirt poor. Yet, where I grew up there was little crime.

Quoting the late Carl Sagan again, evolutionists say all of this happened over “billions and billions” of years. In other words, beginning with, let us say, rocks, dirt, gas and water, the evolutionist says that minute, imperceptible transitions spread out over eons is how we have come to the present reality. But now, suppose one counterfactually granted the billions of years and the gradual transitions; they are still going to run into the Law of the Excluded Middle. At some point on the time line you a non-human thing becomes a human thing. That means a non-human thing either gave birth to a human thing, or some force cause it to transform from one thing into another.

To believe in evolution you have to be irrational. You just “believe” it because you want to. Evolution has ETHICAL PROBLEMS. In fact, evolution and ethics do not mix. If evolution is true, then man is nothing more than “matter in motion.” The only thing that separates him from the rest of the organic, or inorganic, world is molecular organization. Evolution runs afoul of the fact that man possesses qualities that are not common to the rest of the world, rather are unique only to him (man). These qualities are: mental, moral, emotional, aesthetic, etc. Each of these qualities is a part of man, and yet all are separate from his physical person. That is, one might dissect a human brain, but he will never locate the mind. He might observe a beating heart, but he will never locate love and compassion. He might explore the entire human body, but he will never locate the conscience that cries out in pain when violated.

How does evolution, a completely materialistic philosophy, account for these transcendent and immaterial qualities of man? The answer is, he doesn’t and he can’t. C.S. Lewis spoke of man’s inherent “sense of oughtness.” Oughtness is not inherent in matter. No one says of a falling rock: “You ought not hit me." Where did matter contrive such? Why does a piece of matter feel the need, in many cases, to sacrifice and give of himself for the benefit of others? What of “right” and “wrong” “beauty” and “justice” and “worship”? Not only must evolution have life coming from non-life, and organic from inorganic, he must also have... the immaterial from the material, the spiritual from the non-spiritual. And, this doesn’t make ANY sense! Our beloved brother Roy Deaver summed it up this way:

If it is the case—
That man has a sense of accountability;
That man does possess a conscience;
That man is the possessor of reasoning power;
That man is a worshipping being;
That man is an aesthetic being;
That man does have a sense of justice, a sense of compassion, the ability to dream and to work and to make dreams realities;
That man does have a natural and abiding concern about God;
That man does possess a firm belief in the immortality of the soul and a marvelous hope with regard to life hereafter;
And, if it is the case—
That there can be no effect without an adequate cause;
That something cannot come out of nothing;
That life can only come from life and that every seed brings forth after its kind;
And, if it is the case—
that there is nothing—absolutely nothing—in the theory of evolution which would explain or account for the moral quality of man—
THEN, it is the case that THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION OUGHT TO BE REJECTED, immediately, thoroughly, decisively, and without hesitation.

Our objective has been accomplished. No proposition can possess so many pithy problems of an insurmountable nature and even be considered feasible. The same difficulties, and some in addition, that “staggered” Darwin when he penned his infamous book, continue to exist and persist.

The positive side of the matter lies in the fact that the options are very narrow, what logicians call strong disjunction. Human origin is due either to evolution or creation. Evolution, as we have seen, is not, cannot be true. If evolution is not true, then we are left with creation, which means we are the created and we have a creator (cf. Rom 1:25). Evolution is akin to idolatry. It would have us “worship...and serve...the creature rather than the creator.” This, and many “problems” stem from the “problems” of evolution.
By summary, evolution has INHERENT problems, and it has SCIENTIFIC problems. Finally, let us consider certain, PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS of the general theory of evolution. After it is all said and done, questions about origins and the total explanation of reality are philosophical questions. Under this general heading, let us consider that evolution has up front and in your-face LOGICAL PROBLEMS. Logic, the science of thought, is predicated upon certain Laws of Thought.

Logic concerns itself primarily with the Law of Rationality. This “law” says, Men ought to accept only those conclusions warranted by the evidence. Put another way. Stuff ought not be considered true unless it is supported by evidence. There is no evidence that compels one to conclude that life came from non-life; that order can come from disorder; that organization came from randomness; and so on. Evolution simply has no evidence to justify it. Rational people will set forth evidence in the form a sound argument which bears the conclusion which they claim to believe. No evolutionist has ever made an attempt at the formulation of sound argument the conclusion of which is: Therefore, we just “got” here.

Rational people also recognize the intuitively true Law of Contradiction which says that any doctrine that implies a self-contradiction is itself a false doctrine. But we have already seen that evolution says (1) That “uniformitarianism” is and is not true; and (2) That the principle of entropy is and is not true.

Though this is reserved for another point, there is also the fact that evolution implies that there existed a transitional form(s) between that which was distinctly non-human and that which was human; therefore, it implies that there existed an entity that was and was not.

Another way evolution flies in the face of logic is seen in the Law of Excluded Middle. This law as applies to propositions states that every precisely stated proposition is either true or false. As applies to objects, it states that every object either possesses a particular quality or it does not. In other words, a precise, which is to say an unambiguous statement or assertion, must be either true or false; and, as regards a specific characteristic or attribute, and object either has it, or it does not. What is the point?

WHO DISCUSS THE ABOVE EVENTS?
At a time in the past, politics had little influence on the church; there was one thing, however, which would incrementally influence the church in time to come. I speak of the socialist influence which began under President Roosevelt. President Lyndon Johnson and his “Great Society” put it in overdrive. Socialism is now a rather powerful influence in our society, and many want more of it.

The Influence of Socialism within the Church. We are now seeing this influence of socialism within the church. It is now aptly called the “Social Gospel.” There are a great many things going on now within the church which are in no sense of the term justified by God’s word, as a work of the church. There is much emphasis now upon the “Here and now,” not the “hereafter.” This first began within the denominational religions but has now been adopted by many of our brethren. In many instances within the church today, it is a matter of what pleases the people than what pleases the Lord. “A thus saith the Lord,” is not being heard as it once was, when there was greater concern with what pleased the Lord rather than man.

Other then the above influence, politics had little influence upon the church in those earlier years. Many of the secular matters dealt with by politicians had nothing to do with the church and did not directly affect the church. Today, however, the laws passed by our political powers have nothing to do with the church or spiritual matters.

One thing which was very significant relative to both major political parties was that they had moral standards that were much higher than now. I’ve lived in a time when the greater majority of people, regardless of their political affiliation, would not lie nor steal. We’ve all heard the expression, “His word was his bond.” That is the way it was. In those days most people were willing to work for a living. Such sinful and immoral acts as abortion and homosexuality were not favored by either party. To uphold and encourage such would have spelled defeat in the greatest measure back then.

Political parties do change. The stage today is far different to what it was when I was growing up. This is just a matter of fact. A good example of change in political parties occurred when a friend of mine was commended for being a member of a certain political party, other than what he used to be. He responded by saying, “It took me forty years to learn. I didn’t leave the party, it left me.” Many people say the same thing in our time. Both major political parties are not the same today in a number of important areas. Especially is this true with morality.

When a political party changes to uphold more immoral activities, then its influence upon the church is clearly realized. When a society becomes tolerant of, even encouraging immorality, Christians and their children often become tolerant and accepting of evil things. Liberal politicians are much more likely to be liberal with regard to morality in general and sexual immoral-ity in particular. The state of the home in our country is in great trouble. The very idea that some in the polit-ical circles support what they call “marriage” between homosexuals is no less than a shame and a disgrace to our society.

There is no doubt in my mind that our immoral society, which is upheld by many politicians, has contrib-uted to the teaching and practice of many ungodly things by religious denominations. When people claim to believe in God and then practice that which is an abomination in His sight; that is as low as they can get. Yet, some churches are in the forefront of promoting ungodly things.

As society goes, so goes the church, to some ex-tent. When people “call evil good, and good, evil,” that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isa 5:20), it is much easier and likely that members of the church will engage in evil. That doesn’t make it right, but that is the way it is. Just think how many are now calling ungodly things good: You hear politicians upholding abortion and homosexuality, and a great many in soci-ety are doing the same thing. I cannot prove it, but I wonder if there are not more abortions by Christians now than fifty years ago? Abortion is such a common thing now, and when evil becomes so common people tend to be desensitized. Another matter is that of out-of-wedlock births. I know there are more many more within the church today than fifty years ago. Could it be, at least in part, due to the fact sex before marriage is much more common and accepted now?

Freedom To Worship. Is this a political matter? Is it surely? If some political forces could have their way, God would be out! The anti-God movement is gaining strength all the time in this country. I don’t
know your age, but whatever it is, did you ever think you would see a time when some many efforts would be made to put God down as is the case now? Virtually all manner of evil can be set forth in our schools, but the mention of God, Christ and the Bible must be kept out. How can a member of the church uphold a politi- cal party which is more in favor of such than another?

There is no perfect political party, and never will be, but who can deny that one party may be more in keep- ing with Christian principles than another?

The time can come that we will no longer have the freedom to worship which we now enjoy. This could happen if a political party which opposes God should come to power. Could that ever happen here? We'd better believe it could.

WHAT ABOUT THE HORNETS?

“Hornets” are a Bible word. The Lord would use hornets to drive out the Hivites, the Canaanite, and the Hittite before the Israelites (Ex. 23:28). In other references the Lord used the hornet to drive out the enemies of the Israelites (Deut. 7:20; Joshua 24:12). We are referring to hornets in a different way in this discussion, though there may be a similarity in the fact that Israel’s enemies were obviously afraid of the hornets. Some members of the church are obviously afraid of hornets now, in a different way.

Getting into a “Hornets’ Nest.” Take it from one who knows, talking to brethren about politics can be like getting into a hornets’ nest. This certainly has to do with the influence of politics within the church. And I do not hesitate to affirm that one has a right, even a responsibility to speak about politics when such is germane to the well-being of the church. In spite of this, there are some who stubbornly disagree. In this opposition to speaking about politics, when such affects the church, a number of things are evid- ent.

1. Those who are strongly oppose speaking about politics are usually reluctant to have an honorable dis- cussion of the subject. This would seem to indicate that they know they do not have any ground to stand on.

2. The opponent may say, “Politics and religion don’t mix.” I don’t know where this statement originated, but I disagree with it, when speaking about politics which affect the church are involved. I will concede that politics which uphold that which is contrary to God’s word should not be mixed with Christianity. In fact, no Christian should support such. I have noted that those who say politics and religion do not mix usually engage in politics themselves. They are often sensitive about the subject, and don’t want it dis- cussed publicly. They almost always are affiliated with the more liberal party. In fact, I don’t recall even one person who is not of a liberal political persuasion say- ing that “Politics and religion don’t mix.”

3. Do those who oppose the public discussion of politics within the church believe it is scriptural to “compartmentalize”? By that term is meant the ability to separate or divide things in one’s mind or activities. It seems that some Christians do not wish to separate or divide these two sins. The folly of this far-out thinking is that in serving the Lord as a Christian, there is only ONE compartment, and in that compartment we are allowed to do only that which is in “the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17). We cannot, in another com- partment, uphold or encourage that which is contrary to God’s word, and still claim to be a servant of the Lord!

How about an elder or any other Christian taking this posi- tion? But this is a matter of fact.

4. Should politics take first place over spiritual mat- ters? Apparently some think so. What about the per- son who detests such things as the welfare state, abor- tion, and homosexuality, and yet serves as a leader in the political party which is known for promoting such? Christ said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness…” (Matt. 6:33). It is a matter of fact that some put their political loyalty before their loyalty to Christ. I know this to be a fact. I’ve seen it happen.

is the Law of Biogenesis. But, as we noted, the evolu- tionist has to “believe” that at least once, sometime in the past, that law was not uniform. Somehow life sprang from non-life. If, though, he rejects uniform biogenesis, then he must also reject “uniformitarian- ism”; if he rejects “uniformitarianism,” he must also reject evolution. Then again, if he rejects “spontane- ous generation,” to the acceptance of “biogenesis,” then he must reject evolution for he has no cause for the origin of life. No problem; it is still a fact of science.

Next in line is the THERMODYNAMICS PROBLEM. When- ever I hear the word “thermodynamics,” I have to smile. A preacher came through Taiwan while I was a mis- sionary there; he preached in a meeting and I trans- lated. I had asked him beforehand to let me know if he planned to use any out-of-the-ordinary vocabulary. He said, “No.” In his very first lesson on “Evidences,” he came out with, “the first and second laws of Ther- modynamics.” I could have strangled him.

In the classic work, *The Genesis Flood*, Whitcomb and Morris note that,

The two most basic and certain of all laws of modern physical science are the first two laws of thermodynamics. The first law of thermodynam- ics is the law of energy conservation, affirming that although energy can be converted from one form to another, the total amount remains un- changed—energy is neither being created nor destroyed at the present time. The second law states that, although the total amount remains unchanged, there is always a tendency for it to become less available for useful work. (P. 222)

The second law is a problem for Evolution. It states that “…the amount of useful energy in any system is always decreasing and there is a tendency toward greater randomness.” The universe, like a giant clock, is slowly running down with the passing of time. In contrast to this fact, evolution postulates that there exists a tendency toward a higher degree of organiza- tion. Well, you can’t have it both ways.

Professor Henry Morris notes,

It would hardly be possible to conceive of two more completely opposite principles that this prin- ciple of entropy increase and the principle of evo- lution. Each is precisely the converse of the other.

As Hurley defines it, evolution involves a conti- nual increase of order, or organization, of size, of complexity. The entropy principle involves a con- tinual decrease of order, of organization, of size, of complexity. It seems axiomatic that both cannot possibly be true. But there is no question what- ever that the second law of thermodynamics is true!

In light of this, it is not so amazing that evolution- ists have little to say or write about the laws of thermo- dynamics. The Bible, of course, realizes and reflects the truths of this Law of Nature.

And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of thy hands: They shall perish; but thou continuest: And they shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a mantle shalt thou roll them up, As a garment, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, And thy years shall not fail. (Heb 1:10-12).

Again, the situation is one in which a person is forced to either adhere to that which has been verified and is observable (i.e. 2nd Law), or that which cannot be verified or observed, and that which contradicts so many major, undisputed facts.

And, finally THE TIME PROBLEM. In the early years of the evolution movement, it was realized that among other things, great quantities of time had to be pro- vided in order for the theory to be feasible. The field of geology answered the call, and provided, at first, thousands and thousands; then later, millions and mil- lions; and now, as Carl Sagan said in that droning voice, “Billions and billions and billions of years. Time is not a force or a cause, it is simply a measurement. Time doesn’t push anything along, you’ve got to have a force or a mecha- nism. We’ve demonstrated the fallacies with →
Evolution (5)

A few years back, my father-in-law and I built a barn behind my house. I had to get various permits before and during the process. I came home from the permit place groaning to my wife: “I’ve already spent $177 before I’ve put a shovel into the dirt.”

Let us borrow and convert this into an analogy as it relates to the problems of Evolution. I only had to get a permit before I could start on my barn—and granted, it was a headache—but, Evolution deals with way more than permit problems. We have considered seven—count them, seven—INHERENT PROBLEMS of the theory of evolution. In other words, before proponents of this theory can ever put a shovel into the ground, much less build their house, they must face and solve these seven problems. They have not; they cannot; they will not: talk about your blind faith. It only gets worse. Evolution is bit like Premillennialism in that both theories are complex and convoluted. It makes it hard to know where to start, which is why we have been attempting to categorize various aspects of the theory under certain “problem” headings. These “problem” distinctions are admittedly to some degree artificial and arbitrary, thus some overlapping is inevitable. Our next broad category of “problems” is: SCIENTIFIC PROBLEMS of the general theory of evolution. In this category, however, the intention is to deal with some problems which belong uniquely in this realm.

Convince a person that something is “scientific fact,” and he will likely concede the point under discussion. More times than we would like to count we have been told that evolution is just that: a fact of science. That raises the question as to how something comes to be considered to be a scientific fact. By what method does something attain the ranks of scientific knowledge?

First in line, then, of the problems under this heading is: THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD PROBLEM. The standard “scientific method,” by which laws and facts are formulated involves: (1) Observation, (2) Statement and definition of problem, (3) Formation of hypothesis, (4) Deduction from hypothesis of prediction, (5) Experimentation (and modification), (6) Theory, and (7) Law.

What should stick out like a sore thumb here is the fact that the whole issue of the origin of life does not fall into the realm of science, and cannot be dealt with on the basis of the scientific method. A hypothesis, for example, is an idea, an assertion, which can either be verified or falsified by observation or experimentation. The fundamental claims of evolution can neither be subjected to observation or experimentation “does not belong to the realm of science.” Yet, Ayala is an evolutionist; which means he “believes” something that is not a fact of science. Then there is the BIODIVERSITY PROBLEM. The Law of Biogenesis holds that all life comes from preexisting life and that of its own kind. Unlike evolution, “biogenesis,” meets every criteria of the scientific method, and has been verified by observation countless millions of times.

This is why, as we noted in a previous installment, honest evolutionists admit, and blindly believe, that spontaneous generation must have occurred at least once in the past. Spontaneous generation, however, is a hypothesis which can and has been falsified. We learned as children how Pasteur tested and falsified the idea of spontaneous generation of life. Consider the irony that many scientists who “believe” in evolution must, and do, accept a proposition that has been falsified (i.e. spontaneous generation), and reject one that has been verified and established (i.e. biogenesis). It is maddening.

Evolution’s religious creed is: Uniformitarianism. This basically says that we should not bring in outside factors—read “God”—to explain present realities. In other words, forces and principles which we observe now are the same forces and principles that brought everything into existence. So, the evolutionist says that a reasonable person starts from the premise of uniform, continuous forces and principles and explains everything, including origins, in that light. Well, one of the most uniform forces of nature 5. One may become your enemy because you speak about politics. Their politics are more important to them than your friendship, to say nothing of how the Lord views the matter. Speaking the truth will sometimes make enemies. Stephen was stoned to death and John the Baptist literally lost his head. These are good examples of truth making enemies. It cost them their lives.

Paul asked the Galatians the following question: “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16). Yes, that is some times the case, though it ought not to be. When the truth disturbs a person, that one should do some soul-searching to see to right which the love which is used most extensively in the New Testament is concerned with the well-being of the person whom it is inevitable. Our next broad category of “problems” is: SCIENTIFIC PROBLEMS of the general theory of evolution. In this category, however, the intention is to deal with some problems which belong uniquely in this realm.

To me it is encouraging to think about the trials faced by the early Christians. They lived in the midst of an evil world, without many of the opportunities we have, yet they did not throw in the towel and give up the race. Their future reward meant more to them than anything else in the world.

We should thank God that we have the opportunity to influence the society in which we live by participating in the political process.

Notice To Foreign Readers of BOT

A concerned reader of BOT has contributed $1,000.00 to pay for the increased postage to foreign countries. Due to this, we will be able to continue sending bundles to other countries. We are so thankful that this individual is willing to have this part in getting the word out to those in foreign countries in spite of the greatly increased cost. Counting the bundles and individual copies, we now have about 330 copies of Banner of Truth going to other countries. We have many positive responses from those readers, and are thankful we can do this.

—Editor
The above is the title of an article by John Seewer of Associated Press, on the Religion page of The Paducah Sun, May 26, 2006. Above the beginning of the article is the picture of a movie house in Maumee, Ohio, which is being rented by St. Paul’s Lutheran Church. We shall note some of the information contained in the article.

The above should be of great interest to God-loving people also as a warning of what can happen when people put their emphasis upon pleasing men rather than pleasing God, because it portends the things which are taking root within the Lord’s church and are growing vigorously. Some of the things already taking place in a great many congregations would have seemed just as far out to faithful brethren forty years ago as does this “New Worship Style” in the Lutheran Church in Maumee, Ohio today.

Looking back over the past few decades, we can clearly see how religious denominations have influenced our own brethren. Like the Israelites of old, who would not hear the voice of Samuel, but said, “‘Now then, we will not serve the Lord, but will do whatever seems best to us’” (I Sam. 8:19-20). The things we are seeing within the church today we never saw early on. Some members of the church who are in their twenties and thirties are not fully aware of what is taking place, since they didn’t live and know the church before some of this commenced. Multiplied thousands of you people never heard the kind and of teaching and preaching which was common almost everywhere the church existed.

Some of us, who have been around longer, knew the time when the term “contemporary worship” was unheard. The emphasis was on following God’s word as closely as possible, requiring a “thus saith the Lord for what was taught and practiced. Worshipping God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23,24) was a respected guideline.

Some of us remember when some young preachers and some not so young became enamored with what denominational people were doing. They saw things being done which drew numbers, yet the truths from which they were being fed were spiritually empty, or filled with contaminated food. In spite of this some younger men began to proclaim with great exuberance, “What we can learn from our religious neighbors.” And, learn, they did. That “learning” is being put into practice in too many places in our time. Prospects are for it to increase.

Below, in the indented section, are selected paragraphs or statements from the article being discussed. We are not carrying the entire article.

MAUMEE, Ohio — The pews have been replaced by upholstered chairs at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church. The altar is now an expansive stage that accommodates drummers, guitarists and keyboard players. The most popular seats in the building are the two leather couches that make the church’s entrance way feel like a hip coffee shop.

St. Paul’s rocks — with dancing, clapping and happy music that is making its contemporary services ever-more popular, eclipsing the traditional Sunday morning services it still offers.

“We needed to offer something different because people were leaving to find churches where they could express more joy or celebration,” said the Rev. Roger Miller, St. Paul’s pastor. “The church is just looking for a way to speak to the culture.”

“Mainline churches are way behind in the ballgame because they were so steeped in their worship traditions,” said Ronald Shifley, pastor at Spencerville United Church of Christ, which started a contemporary service two years ago. “Dow the road, churches will have to move to contemporary worship in some form or they’ll cease to exist.”

Contemporary services are less formal than the coat and tie services. Praise bands take the place of an organ or a choir. There’s dancing instead of sitting sinners (Bible love means we seek another’s best interest). However, we do not accept, support, nor give a platform to those whose sole intent and purpose is to promote their sinful activity. This group’s goal is not to learn the truth and come under its hold, but to promote the acceptance of their immoral behavior.

Shall we accept an “organized group” of thieves or murderers, or drunkards or extortioners or idolaters, or witches into our midst and beg our acceptance and toleration as they promote their immoral and deprave lifestyle? What society calls “gays,” the Bible calls homosexuals, sodomites, abusers of themselves with mankind. They are listed among many groups of sinners (I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 1:18-32).

Yes, Jesus ate with publicans and sinners (Matt. 9:10-11) But these individuals were interested in their seeing and hearing Jesus. Their agenda was not to promote their wickedness and convince Jesus to accept and tolerate them. Their sinful behavior was not the issue with them. They wanted to hear the Lord. And Jesus taught them. Jesus didn’t tell them, “I’m not attempting to correct, much less condemn you.” He told men and women everywhere. “go and sin no more” (John 8:11), except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:3,5), “woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites...ye blind guides...Blind Pharisee...white sepulchers...ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Matt. 23:23,24,26,27,33), “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Lk. 15:10).

Our “dialogue” and “facilitated discussion” with sinners is to “reprove, rebuke and exhort” (2 Tim. 4:2). This means we identify and expose sin for what it is (reprove), convince and convict those who are living in sin (rebuke) and then exhort them to repent and come out of it in complete obedience to the Gospel. This is what the Bible calls love (John 14:15; Lk. 6:46; Eph. 4:15). This is being a true friend of Jesus (Lk. 15:14).

Some Personal Notes

My Physical Health. As most of our readers know, my health at this time last year was not good. I was not able to attend the BOT lectures at all. I’m thankful to God that my health is much better now. I was able to attend more than 20 of the lectures this year, and also to speak once. A number of brethren were good to help out in various ways during the lectures, this included Alan Adams and Richard Guill.

I am not back to my state of health two years ago, but I’m able to continue my work with Banner of Truth. I still don’t know for sure if I have the incurable pulmonary fibrosis. But since there is no cure, I just take things day by day. I greatly appreciate the many prayers that have been offered in my behalf. I do take more time to rest now than I used to take, and with that time off, getting the material together, printing it, and doing all that is necessary to get it in the mail. I have many requests for information, keeping the mailing list up to date, and other things.

My Request for Financial Help. Since I no longer receive any support from the Dexter congregation, our support from our church work has been reduced by well over half. This works a hardship, but we will make it. Brethren have been so good to respond to our plea for help, and this will enable us to receive more from our work with Banner of Truth, which is, as I said earlier, A Full-Time Job. But I’m so thankful that at my age of 80 years I’m still able to do what I am doing. It is not only my work that is involved with the paper; my wife also puts in much time with each issue.

We send out a financial report to those who contribute to our work fund. To any interested in supporting this work, we will gladly inform as to the amount of support we receive.

Thanks to Our Helpers. If it were not for others who help get Banner of Truth out, we could not do it by ourselves. A number of people give many hours of labor each time an issue is prepared and mailed. But our helpers are having a part in getting the truth which people want out to faithful brethren forty years ago. Hundreds of copies of BOT go to other countries. Thanks to all who have a part in making this possible.

—Editor
knew there were differences. Jake (Jack Reitan, the group’s 24 year old director, -editor) kept saying, “I know you think we are sinners.” We tried to correct him. “We are all sinners, Jake. It’s not the ‘being’ gay that anyone was attempting to correct, much less condemn.”

Jack Reese wrote his piece for the internet in Indiana- napolis, Indiana while attending “the national Preach- ing Summit, with mostly Independent Christian Church preachers.” He said, “the support has been overwhelm- ing.” “I could not speak this morning except out of the overflow of emotion, through tears, and through great passion about what God’s voice might be saying to us in such a circumstance, about our middle class, white, American values. It will be a while before I get past it. I’m not sure I’ll be ‘normal’ again.”


This is simply another episode of the long list of departures from the faith this school has been involved in for many, many years. The so-called Equality Riders is a group’s 24 year old director, –editor) kept saying, ‘I know you think we are sinners.’ We tried to correct him. “We are all sinners, Jake.” It’s not the ‘being’ gay that anyone was attempting to correct, much less condemn.”

The article points out that “St. Paul’s” has lost about fifty members due to the changes which have come about. These people evidently still had a little concern about the Bible and its teaching, but of course they knew there were differences. Jake (Jack Reitan, the group’s 24 year old director, -editor) kept saying, “I know you think we are sinners.” We tried to correct him. “We are all sinners, Jake. It’s not the ‘being’ gay that anyone was attempting to correct, much less condemn.”

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This is simply another episode of the long list of departures from the faith this school has been involved in for many, many years. The so-called Equality Riders is a group of homosexual activists (I refuse to call them gay) who are traveling the country trying to raise awareness and acceptance of their chosen lifestyle. I say “chosen” because that is exactly what their devi- ant behavior is. Homosexuality is sodomy and there is nothing gay, happy, merry about it. This SIN is con- demned throughout the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22-30; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1Cor. 6:9).

The Lord’s people do not incite violence. Nor do they stage protests and marches. On the contrary, we are caring, compassionate and loving toward...
Draw the Line Where God Has Drawn It
Fred R. Bogle

"God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son..." (Heb. 1:1-2). "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5).

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecc. 12:13). This will establish the foundation for this study.

We are living in a era unlike any that we have ever seen. We can relate very vividly to the time when the Lord’s church was strong and the fastest growing religious institution. The reason being – the truth, the gospel of Christ; God’s word was preached in its purity and fullness without fear, favor, appeasement or compromise. Faithful brethren preached the word of God; lived by it; stood by it; debated and defended it. They exposed false doctrine and unscriptural practices. They identified those who were guilty of all types of sin and error, yet with the true love our Lord commands.

However, there are faithful brethren today, who express deep concern and are persuaded that they can see certain trends and inconsistencies with the truth cropping up, which if continued could or would lead to further departures from the faith. This matter deserves sober biblical study.

The following four-part question has been asked:

(1) How much false doctrine and error can one teach or preach? (2) On what subjects can error be taught? (3) By whom can false doctrine be taught? (4) And the above still be fellowshipped on lectureships and in gospel meetings? The reply is usually, None and No One. This is the correct and biblical answer.

Additional questions:

"Is this the way it is always done today?" That question draws a variety of answers or comments, one of which is, Where Do You Draw the Line? That is indeed a good question, however, the answer seems to be obvious – DRAW THE LINE WHERE GOD HAS DRAWN IT. Or, better yet, accept the line where God has drawn it. We must accept the fact that God has drawn the line.

"But it can be done and must be done in order to please God. God does NOT tolerate false doctrine and the sin which it produces. We know that, ‘All scripture is given by inspiration of God...’ (2 Tim. 3:16), and ‘that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation...’ (2 Pet. 1:20). We are commanded to ‘study...rightly dividing the word of truth’ (2 Tim. 2:15). And, ‘...try the spirits whether they are of God...’ (1 Jno. 4:1).

Christ said, ‘...if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free’ (Jno. 8:31-32). A false teacher does not continue in God’s word. Christ prayed to the Father, ‘Sanctify them through the truth: thy word is truth’ (Jno. 17:17). Christ said, ‘...the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day’ (Jno. 12:48). Peter wrote, ‘Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth...’ (1 Pet. 1:22).

Who can deny the above powerful scriptures? It is obvious from that one must not compromise truth, nor tolerate false doctrine. Also, we can know the truth and know where God has drawn the line by his word. Furthermore, God expects us to know.

Did not Paul draw the line when he wrote, ‘But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed’ (Gal. 1:8)? Who will deny that the inspired apostle “drew the line” on all false doctrines and false teachers? Note the strong emphatic and unconditional consequences: ‘let him be accursed.’ Jude expressed it so well, so emphatically and convincingly when he wrote: ‘Beloved... it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith’ (Jude 3). That does not sound like Jude would tolerate false doctrine and error on any subject, nor the teacher. Jude also drew the line where God has drawn it.

The above passages are sufficient to convince any man, woman or child. We must not tolerate the preaching of false doctrine, nor fellowship the false teacher. The Psalmist said, ‘I hate every false way’ (Ps. 119:104). This must be our attitude and we must stand solid on God’s word. If we love God’s word and the souls of men, we will obey God’s word.

There is no “loop hole” for: the weak, cowardly, politicians, friends, etc. We must accept the Truth that God has drawn it! The Apostle Paul again used strong and powerful language in rejecting false brethren and false doctrine: and also rebuked a fellow apostle (Peter), for his hypocritical conduct. He did not excuse, overlook or compromise with him (Gal. 2:11-14). Peter also wrote, ‘And because of false brethren, unwares brought... To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour... that the truth of the gospel might continue with you’ (Gal. 2:4-5). We see from God’s word that the gospel of Christ is the saving power (Rom. 1:16), not false doctrines of men. Paul asks the brethren at Corinth “...for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14). We cannot fellowship Christ and please God.

Various reasons or excuses have been given by some for not having drawn the line where God has drawn it – Such as: ‘Let’s not splinter.’ ‘Let’s not divide.’ ‘Let’s have unity,’ ‘be tolerant and patient,’ and ‘show love.’ Indeed we must possess the characteristics of a Christian. Our attitude of mind and our actions must be in harmony with God’s will. However, faithful brethren and churches of the Lord will not allow, condone, endorse, tolerate or fellowship false teachers, in order to have peace and unity. There is only One Way to have biblical unity, and that is to Obey God’s Word. Man often seems to want union rather than unity, for which our Lord prayed (Jno. 17:20-21). “There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling...” (Eph. 4:4).

Some have an unscriptural concept of love, tolerance, patience and unity and have “copped out” or failed to practice the scriptural action or perform the necessary discipline, as a result. Paul said, “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10). We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Paul asks some serious questions and offers inspired instructions: “And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:15-17).

In these days we see people attempting to apply one standard of unity or truth in one area and a different one in another area, or to see the deviation as a loop hole. There are no “holes” in God’s word. The inspired word of God will not allow compromise or compromise with the truth. It only recognizes One Truth. We must be witness for the truth of God’s word.

With regard to discipline, Paul said, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly...” (2 Thess. 3:6). Earlier, Paul wrote, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17).

Indeed, God’s word has unequivocally Drawn The Line, and so must faithful brethren and faithful churches Draw The Line. God expects us to know, among other things, when and why the line must be drawn.

Let it be clearly understood without mistake or doubt that such things as: whims of feeble man, traditions, disagreements, private interpretations, or anything that may have accomplished, are the standard of authority in our pursuit of eternal life in heaven. Christ said “All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18).

Brethren, may we all submit humbly to His Will and Draw the Line where God has drawn it. Let us be challenged to think seriously on this matter. Remember, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God” (2 Jno. 9). Let us “fear God and keep His commandments” (Ecc. 12:13).

Author’s Note: The above article was published in two other sources several years ago. It was needed then, however, it is needed much more today. Some in writing use the word “Drifting,” but that word does not seem appropriate today. It seems more like – “Going at full speed...” The New Testament warns of departures from the faith. Let it not be us.

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