

Banner of Truth

"The truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

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

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Inasmuch as politics are having a much greater evil influence upon the Lord's church now than seven years ago, we are reprinting the above article. It was in the June 2006 of Banner of Truth.

Although Political Influence was having a serious and debilitating influence upon the church then, and something to reckoned with, that influence is much greater now. We suggest that readers seriously consider the reprinted article and compare the thoughts with the condition, which is holding sway now. If this does not provoke some serious concern, it is evident that an indifferent attitude prevails.

Another timely article could be written now; there is plenty to consider. But we are simply calling attention to a few things that should provoke some serious thinking by those who are spiritually minded and put the Lord's church in its proper perspective of being absolutely essential to salvation. There may be some repetition.

Much of politics today is rotten as never before in our time. As we have stated before, there are no perfect politicians or political parties. But it is an evident fact that some are better than others. We are now facing a condition wherein evil has reached a point in politics never seen by us before. Taking a lead in evil politics is none other than our President. His stance is clearly against even the core values of Christianity and the church. He has clearly revealed that he intends to push in even a greater way such ungodly things as: abortion, homosexuality, and failure to work, as God's word teaches. He is also an evil example of telling a lie rather than the truth. He, along with many more now, is not trustworthy. Not only is our President taking a lead in things which are truly opposed to God's will, those who support him are also partakers of his evil. Moral standards are now at an all-time low in our time. God-fearing people should speak out for the truth and oppose the false ways.

When thinking about those who will not think, which is a greatly increasing number, I'm reminded of those who say, as it were a fact, "All politicians are just alike!" Those who make such a statement reveal a couple of things. They are woefully ignorant of the facts, and they contribute to sad mess in which we find things today.

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Politicians Opposed to True Christianity.

This is my greatest concern with regard to the negative influence of politics upon Christ's church and the freedom to worship God. For centuries one of the outstanding and positive things about our country was that it was, "A Christian Nation." Now I know this was not literally true, but it did suggest that people generally had some sort of belief in God. In fact, many of the things in our government were based upon the teaching of God's word. Now, things are greatly different. Even our President doesn't go along with our country being "A Christian Nation." He is going all out to make it something else.

It could hardly be more evident that many in the political world are dead set against virtually every vestige of God's influence in our society. In a number of circles evil Islam is shown more

favorable consideration than belief in God. Moral standards have virtually disappeared in many instances. Hedonism is holding sway in increasing circles.

What Can We Do? As true believers in God and Christ we can recognize the ungodly state in which we find ourselves. This is not something new. The early Christians were faced with all manner of evil. Their faith was put to a test in a severe way. The faithful survived the onslaught of error and persecution. So can we if we allow our faith to be the victory that overcomes the world. We, as God's servants, can utilize our opportunity and responsibility to help select the politicians who come nearest to upholding God's will and instructions for a life that will be rewarded by a perfect state in the world to come. Let us always remember, "Heaven will surely be worth it all." It is up to us to utilize God's way and means to making heaven our eternal home.]

— June 2006 Article Begins Here —

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 hooking 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. Therefore, when referring to the major political parties, we have reference to that which is the general tendency of the party, and not just with one individual. Before dealing with the more recent political influence we shall reflect upon the

political realm as I saw it a long time ago, when there was little influence brought to bear upon the church, or our religious world in general.

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.

WHY 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 socialistic 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 more 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 as to what pleased the Lord rather than man.

Other than 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 it. Tax policy and many civil 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 ex-

pression, "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 immorality in particular. The state of the home in our country is in great trouble. The very idea that some in the political 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 contributed 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 about 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 extent. 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 society 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 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? It surely is! 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 political 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 keeping 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 evident.

1. Those who are strongly oppose speaking about politics are usually reluctant to have an honorable discussion 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 discussed 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 saying 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 signifies different compartments. It seems that President Clinton was commended for being able to compartmentalize. I guess an example of that would be his sexual activity with the young intern while carrying on business from the White House.

Consider an example of "compartmentalizing": A person declares that he does not believe in Abortion and Homosexuality, that the Bible teaches such is sin. This would be in the compartment of the church or spiritual things. But in another compartment, the political, he can support the politician who upholds and encourages 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 compartment, uphold or encourage that which is contrary to God's will. How, in the name of common sense, can a Christian do in politics 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 position? But this is a matter of fact.

4. Should politics take first place over spiritual matters? Apparently some think so. What about the person who detests such things as the welfare state, abortion, 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.

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 some times 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 what is right. The love which is used most extensively in the New Testament is concerned with the well-being of the person to whom it is shown. But the person in error may react differently. Some times an individual will "take it out" on the person who is presenting the truth, instead of conforming to the truth.

THE PREACHER AND HIS RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING SPEAKING ABOUT POLITICS

As stated earlier, it is my conviction that not only does one have a right to do so, but he has a responsibility when such affects the well-being of the church. I have written and carried articles in Banner of Truth concerning politics. Most responses from readers have been very positive, but a very few have been negative. I remember on preacher who was greatly upset, and made some very critical comments about me personally, but he never did prove his point that one could support the political party which is foremost in supporting abortion and homosexuality. He even asked why I mentioned those two things. Well, the Bible teaches those things are sin. That is the reason why I called attention to those things. Some things in politics are not biblical issues, while others are very much so.

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White House Pursues Ungodliness

Should a preacher, teacher, or individual Christian fear the hornets? It is true that politics may stir up a hornets' nest! But what are we to do? Keep quiet so we will not disturb the hornets? Some do, but is that in keeping with our responsibility as a Christian?

For example, should I, as a preacher, stay away from the subject of politics for fear that I might upset some? If I'm afraid of stirring up the hornets' nest about politics, what about drinking, dancing, smoking, and a host of other subjects which some do not like? You see, if we compromise on one point, it is easier to compromise on another, or others.

The Part We Should Play? As citizens of our country we have the opportunity to support those politicians who are most in keeping with the teaching of God's word, whoever they are. We are indeed living in "perilous times." We, as Christians, will never be in the majority, but we can make a difference if we try. I've heard people say, "All politicians are just alike." Do they actually believe such an absurd thing? It makes about as much sense as saying, "All animals are just alike."

Some members of the church say, "I will just not vote." When one of the politicians is more conducive to the furtherance of the gospel of Christ than the other, a failure to vote is to support the other politician. Members of the church in an area like ours could have considerable power in electing officials who have the highest moral standards, in the wide sense of that term.

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. —*Editor*

We have mentioned brother Brent Duncan's (Olive Hill, Kentucky) letter to the White House, which contained a copy of the May issue of *Banner of Truth*, which contains an article entitled: **At The Gate Of Sodom And Gomorrah Our President Leads Powerful Influence to Enter In**. Brother Duncan suggested in his letter that he believed it would be good for the President and his family to read the "Banner of Truth. Brother Duncan made other profitable suggestions.

Under date of August 15, 2012 a letter addressed to: Mr. Brent Duncan [address] was received. Brother Duncan's suggestions were completely ignored. Instead of a fair response, the President launches into his support of "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights." The letter from the President is carried in full in the May 2013 issue of *Banner of Truth*.

My purpose in setting forth the above information is to briefly acquaint our readers with the, **White House Responds to Banner of Truth**, article. I have done that to call attention to another letter that was written to the President, pointing out things of great concern. The letter was written by brother Raymond T. Thomas of Linton, Indiana.

Brother Thomas received a letter from the President with almost the same words [if not exactly] as brother Duncan received. From the content of the letters it could not be made clearer that the President's objective is to push his ungodly intentions to the fullest. How sad and heart-breaking it is that so many of our people are willing to embrace the same ungodliness.

Brother Thomas had the following notes in his letter to me. "At the Gate of Sodom and Gomorrah Our President Leads Powerful Influence to Enter in. Men and women who practice homosexuality are very grievous sinners (Genesis 18:20). A nation rejects God (Romans 1:18-21) and it becomes bogged down in immorality and violence (Romans 1:26-31). And then God judges it (Romans 1:32). A nation without God is a nation in serious trouble. How do I know? The Bible tells me so, for it plainly says in Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." —*Editor*

Good news!: Naomi Walters Named Minister in Residence at Stamford Church of Christ

Reflection on Announcement, July 7, 2013, By Dale Pauls At The Stamford Church of Christ

This is a big Sunday here at the Stamford Church of Christ. This is a landmark summer, and this is a big Sunday when we formally announce our one-year Ministry in Residence with Naomi Walters starting in September. And so I decided to break from our series on Philippians and share with you more personally my own thoughts on this auspicious occasion.

I began by thinking back to how I became a minister. To many people it seemed foreordained. I was a minister's kid, more precisely, a minister's son when I was in my very early teens I was already preaching sermons in small country congregations near where we lived. I am glad that this was long before the day of audio-visual record and that there remains no evidence of those sermons, but it just seemed natural that I would a minister.

Well, natural to everyone but me. So I took a detour on the way to ministry, studied pre-med, then psychology, then sociology, and only when I was already in graduate school in sociology at the University of Michigan did I feel drawn back to studying religion. And that's what I was drawn to, studying religion not necessarily ministry. I was fascinated by Jesus and by things spiritual, but about ministry I was reluctant.

Still when three years later I graduated from Harding Graduate School of Religion, I already had a job waiting for me with a mission church in East Brunswick, New Jersey sponsored by the Madison Church of Christ in Tennessee. A year later I had a job waiting for me at Michigan Christian College, now Rochester College. Two years after that I was here.

Naomi's path was a bit different. No one expected here to be a minister. To no one - except God - was it foreordained. Many people otherwise close to her did not want her to be a minister. Still she graduated from Rochester College in Michigan with a ma-

ior in Biblical Studies and a minor in Counseling. She then went on to Abilene Christian University where she excelled academically and received her M.Div. There was no job waiting for Naomi. It was well-known at ACU circles and circles that spread out from there that Naomi Walters was exceptionally skilled at preaching. I heard her name, and I heard she was the best, long before I ever met her. But no one was lined up to offer her a job. For one reason only - she was a woman. Other women in her position, and there are others, in increasing numbers all the time, are simply leaving the churches of Christ, but Naomi choose a different track and determined to stay within our fellowship. Almost two years ago, she and Jamey began driving up here from Princeton, New Jersey passing East Brunswick (where I began) on the way. This past Christmas Day they brought into our lives dear little Simon. This summer Naomi begins an on-line D. Min. program at David Lipscomb University in Nashville. The D. Min. program is a practical program that supposes you already have a ministry position and ministerial experience. The wise people who run David Lipscomb's D. Min. program made an exception for Naomi. But no one else did. No churches did. No churches offered her an opportunity to gain ministerial experience.

That is, until Naomi summoned up her courage and approached us wondering if we might be able to find a way to give here at least part-time ministerial experience. So conversations began and then on Sunday, May 16th, she met for an extensive interview with our elders and ministers. We were all blown away. E-mail flew back and forth - the morning-after gist of which were, "Wow! Could you believe that interview? Most of us had been part of many interviews; few of us had ever seen a person who

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interviewed as well as Naomi, who came across with her poise, wisdom and spiritual insight.

So we propose a part-time year-long Ministry in Residence position for Naomi to all of you, and the response was strongly supportive. As the current minister here, the support seemed maybe too strongly supportive. My favorite responses was in an email from Kelly Beel, “What about you, Dale? You won’t be giving the sermon?” Thank you, Kelly. But that seemed to trouble no one else, and in fact it wasn’t the case anyway. I will be giving sermons. Lots of them. And they will likely be listened to with the same measure of interest and indifference as usual. The larger point is this proposal was strongly supported. So we sent Naomi an offer letter, which she signed. And that brings us to this day, Sunday, July 7th, 2013.

Still I am struck by the difference between my story and Naomi’s. All because of gender. And I am deeply disappointed that Churches of Christ have made such slow progress on all this. Too many ministers who know better, who agree with what we are doing here, are simply, for the sake of survival, I guess, staying silent. Too many churches are being held back by the views of just one or two of elders (even when most elders are open to progress). Too many people in the pews have nothing to lose are sitting this out; in the process they risk losing much.

All of this does not augur well for Churches of Christ. I am by academic training a historian, so I find it natural to think historically, to catch a sense of the flow of history and to from that map out where the future will be taking us. One day almost all churches will be gender egalitarian. Outside of Catholicism, most in the West already are. One day Catholicism will be. And those movements that prove resistant to this will be in serious decline. Again, for most the decline has already begun.

I do not doubt that many people who resist change on this are acting in good faith. But they are not studying the Bible. They are not doing their homework.

They do not seek the original intent of Scripture nor do they seek to understand Scripture in its historical context. So they do not understand that those passages that restrict women’s participation in public worship – I Corinthians 14:33-35 and I Timothy 2:9-15 – address specific circumstances in the particular cultural context of the original first-century audiences. They do not understand that Paul is calling his readers to live gracefully as disciples of Christ within the strongly patriarchal patterns of their day. They do not understand that he is guiding Christians in the setting in which they live; he is not advocating their patriarchal, even misogynistic, setting for all time. So they do not distinguish between what the New Testament says about the new life in Christ and the degree to which it is possible to implement this in first-century culture. As a result, although they would no longer use the teaching, “Slaves, obey your earthly masters” (Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1; Titus 2:9-10) to defend slavery in our time, they will still use 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 or 1 Timothy 2:9-15) to silence women’s voice in our public assemblies in our time.

This is a big Sunday. This is landmark summer, and this is a big Sunday. By giving Naomi this ministerial experience we are fulfilling the vision of Peter in Acts 2:17-21 that God has poured out his Spirit on all people, both men and women; our sons and our daughters will prophesy. By insisting in this place that the use of God-given gifts will not be restricted on the basis of gender, we are being true to the spirit of Christ, true to the goodness in the gospel, true to the freedom we have in Christ, and true to the original intent and the historical contexts in question. We help end patterns of prejudice and discrimination that bring shame to churches in our time. We save our sons and daughters, and we play our part in seeing that women everywhere are treated with the same respect that men just naturally are by virtue of their being male.

In hiring Naomi to this part-time Ministry in Residence we are of course stepping out in faith in many ways, including our absorbing her \$20,000 in salary. We did not budget for this. → *Continued on Page 11*

“Whatever It Takes”

Ivie Powell

The Heritage church of Christ in Ft. Worth under the caption of “**Whatever It Takes,**” announced last Sunday, May 19th, that they will be adding an instrumental worship service at the Sunday evening service in the Fall of this year. [The entire announcement along with a Question and Answer section can be read on their web site, Heritage Church of Christ in Ft. Worth TX.]

Among the many revealing statements made by the Heritage elders, the caption of “**Whatever It Takes**” sends a clarion call of an apostate church! As one reads the Q/A section of their defense, it becomes very obvious they are parroting the identical arguments of the Christian Church, which have been adequately answered in public debates many times.

The quibble and attitude of the apostate Heritage elders, regarding Biblical authority, and faithful churches of Christ is stated as follows:

Where do we get the authority to use instruments in worship? The essence of the NT gospel is ‘freeing,’ not ‘enslaving’ though, ironically, Churches of Christ chose an interpretive principle that ‘enslaved’ ...God’s people were never meant to look, act, think, or worship the same in perpetuity....

Through the years, that which kept instrumental music out of the assembly is our adherence to Biblical authority, not culture nor human tradition!

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.... (Colossians 3:17). If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11).

Once the demand for Biblical authority has been removed, and “**Whatever It Takes**” becomes

the basis for “authority” then there are no limits, no boundaries and no restrictions!!

There are only three ways the Word of God authorizes:

1. **Direct Command** (Acts 12:48).
2. **Approved Bible Example** (Acts 20:7)
3. **Necessary Inference** (Matthew 3:16).

The absolute fact of the matter is, one **cannot** turn to the New Testament and **find** a direct command authorizing mechanical instruments of music in Christian worship! If so, where? Neither can one find an approved Bible example where the instrument was used in Christian worship. If so, where? Neither can one find an inference or implication where mechanical instrumental was used in Christian worship! If so, where?

Biblical authority frees one from human innovations (Jno. 8:32,36), whereas “Whatever It Takes” enslaves and separates from God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the faithful.

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, received him not into you house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. 2 Jno. 9-11

Without hesitation or apology we (faithful brethren) affirm that instrumental music in Christian worship is a sin, and will cause people to lose their immortal soul! Furthermore, we call upon advocates of instrumental instruments of music in Christian worship [Heritage Church of Christ, etc.] to repent.

→ *Continued on Page 16*

Continued from Page 8 → And so we ask those of you who can to give toward offsetting her salary. And we will be asking people across the country who support what we are doing, who see the significance, even the necessity, of churches providing ministerial experience to women like Naomi, to help us in this.

TOGETHER we will build a future in which people will no longer be held back or held down simply by how they were born, where all people will be respected, honored and empowered not for how they were physically born but for how they are spiritually reborn. The gospel will again be heard as gospel that is for all people. And the world will know that we all live in a world lit by resurrection and open to the Spirit of God, a word of amazing possibilities, a world where grace reigns, a world where in all things God works for our good, a world where we are all called to be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God, and this is true for women as it is for men.

It is now our privilege to hear Naomi Walters.

An Uncommon Journey: Naomi Walters at Stamford Church of Christ, July 7, 2013

My call to ministry is less like a Burning Bush or a Damascus Road situation, and more like a matrix of personal skills and life situations that make a particular path a good fit. My path is made up of steps that, only in retrospect, show that God was leading me to ministry, to what turns out to be this moment. Dale has already given you a sketch, but I'd like to share more with you about a few of those formative moments.

I was raised in the Church of Christ. My parents gave me a love of church. We were there Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, Saturday youth group, summer church camp, potlucks (though we called them fellowship meals), small groups, picnics, work days.... you name it we did it. And church wasn't just somewhere we went, it was what we did and who we were – *you can go to a building, that is something you can do, but you can't go to church 'cause the church is you* – you know. My parent's best friends were from church and my best friends

were their kids. We lived in community. Churches of Christ were my people. And these were the people who gave me a love of Scripture: reading it, studying it,, memorizing it, Bible Bowls it – even teaching it (to other girls and in children's church of course).

When I was deciding where to go to college, I only considered Church of Christ schools; I chose Rochester College (in Michigan). I started out as an English major, then became a Bible major because those were the classes I was most excited to attend. But I was intentionally “just” a Biblical Studies major, decidedly not a ministry major. My intention was to go on to get a PhD and teach College Bible courses. But even Biblical Studies majors have to take a preaching course, which I put off literally as long as I could, until my Senior year. And in that class I discovered I loved preaching, that I was good at even. But at this point, I didn't think it was worth fighting over or fighting for. Upon graduation, I planned to pursue the M.Div., but, again, for the purpose of going on to a PhD and teaching Bible courses.

For my M.Div., I chose another Church of Christ school, Abilene Christian University. This was the first time I had female classmates who wanted to minister in Churches of Christ; at Rochester the only other female Biblical Studies major was also “in it for academics” – at least at the time. So my first passion regarding gender justice in Churches of Christ was advocacy-based. It wasn't for me; it was for my friends. Again, I put off taking the required preaching course until my last semester. Again, I found that I loved it. And again, it was confirmed that I was good at it. But this time around, I also found that I wanted to do it, that it was worth fighting for. What started out as advocacy had turned into hope. Abilene is also where I met and married Jamey, who was planning to do a PhD and teach Bible at the college level.

These two factors led me to reconsider my long-held plan of doing at PhD: First, since it is unlikely that Jamey and I would receive tenure-track →

teaching positions at the same university in the same top department. But second and mostly, because I was ready to admit that my plans were at least partially denial. (I was also able to teach a few undergraduate courses at ACU, and found that to be something that I enjoy and have skill in as well, so this is not to say that teaching is nowhere in my future; just that I was hiding behind it). I was afraid that being honest, with myself and with others, about my desire to preach would open the floodgates, that it would consume my life and make it impossible for me both to be faithful to who God made me and to be able to continue to love God's people. It turns out there was good reason for this fear. My initial steps toward speaking out for gender justice in Churches of Christ met with anger, resentment, condemnation, judgment, disappointment, and confusion – by complete strangers, and more painfully, by some very close to me.

It was in the midst of this that we moved to Princeton for my husband's PhD at Princeton Theological Seminary. In this time of transition, as we searched for a church home, I thought of leaving Churches of Christ so that I could more easily find work in a church. In fact, many people suggested that I just do that – some suggested it to get rid of me, others suggested out of concern for my spiritual health. I thought of it, but I never really considered it. I could no more leave Churches of Christ as I could leave my family. Just as I will always be my parent's daughter, I will always be Church of Christ. Even if I stopped attending a Church of Christ and attended another church, Churches of Christ would not stop being my people. They are the tribe that formed me, that instilled in me the very gifts I now want to use for ministry. Although I am certainly not what my church could ever have imagined, the fact remains that it made me who I am.

And, again, there's the question of advocacy. I have other female friends who want to preach. I have nieces. I have friends with daughters. Maybe some

day Jamey and I will have a daughter. There are women, young and old, many of whom I have never met, who have been silenced and ignored. If everyone who wants Churches of Christ to change leaves, what will become of them? I felt – I still feel – that as long as God gives me strength to stay, in fact even on days that I'm not so sure I have the strength, Churches of Christ are where I'll be.

This commitment is what brought us here to Stamford, even though it is a two-hour drive from Princeton. I had heard about Stamford at undergrad at Rochester from my friend and soccer player, Hudney Piquant, who attended here. I heard about Stamford from Justin and Kat Burton, who Jamey knew in undergrad. So we visited, and we could tell from just one Sunday that things were different here. This is the type of Church we wanted to attend. In fact, this is the type of church that I wanted work for and work with in embodying the mission of God in the world.

These are the steps that brought me here. Like Jonah, I ran and hid and denied a little bit along the way; I'll even admit that I have cursed my share of leafy trees. But it is clear to me looking back on my story so far that God was shaping me – through parents who modeled community life and gave me a love of church, through community that encouraged in me a love of Scripture, through preaching classes I did not want to take, through professors and mentors, and through a hundred other people, skills, and situations – to minister to God's people.

And it is clear to me from Dale's story that God was shaping you to be the kind of church that would provide space for me to minister – though it may be risky socially for all of us, though it may be costly monetarily for all of us, though it is always difficult to commit to live together to live in community.

So, as I stand here today, I have many emotions. I am excited. I am grateful. I'm a bit scared. But I'm confident that God will use you in this next year to shape and challenge me in ministry, †

and I'm hopeful that God can use me to shape and challenge you as well. I'm not exactly sure what that will look like, but I can't wait to see what the God who clears a path through roaring waters, who reveals a way in the wilderness, who makes stream in the dessert, and who provides a ministry position if Churches of Christ for a woman (!) will do among us in the next year.

It was hard for me to imagine his day would come. But, to the one who is able to do immeasurably more than one can ask or imagine, to God be the glory in the church – in this church, in you, and in me – to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen!

Editor's Reflections re Stamford Church Articles

The articles were received by way of brother Garland Robinson's website. He said of the articles: "Read this and weep!" That could not have been a timelier directive. To God-fearing brethren it is indeed a time to weep, in that here is a live and forceful effort to turn people away from God's word. We are reminded of the apostle Paul, with regard some who were false teachers: "(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." (Philippians 3:18).

When the Women's Liberation Movement took root a few decades ago it was predicted by some, and rightly so, that the use of women in areas in the church where God forbids would become a serious innovation; that God's will would be ignored. That prediction could not have been truer. With the increased use of women where God prohibits, that has reached the apex with the Stamford church of Christ.

A most serious thing that struck me upon reading the articles was – **A lack of scriptural proof for the practice.** A few scriptural passages are mentioned, yet rejected. It is a reminder of the apos-

tle Peter speaking of the "unlearned and unstable wrest. . . to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16). John declared that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). However, some prefer darkness rather than light, when they set about to follow their own unscriptural ways.

Another dangerous and misleading matter in the articles is the references to God bringing about the condition which the Stamford church is now practicing with the utmost jubilation. To say this is to fly in the face of God and His unlimited authority. The erroneous practice has come to the fore with the Stamford church because men love their own way of unrighteousness.

Some schools and congregations mentioned in the articles may have had some influence relative to the Stamford innovation. The list contains: Harding Graduate School of Religion. Madison church of Christ in TN. Michigan Christian, now Rochester College. Abilene Christian University. David Lipscomb University. Princeton Theological Seminary. And, of course, Stamford church of Christ.

A top priority of the Stamford church to convert others to the unscriptural use of women in the church is evident; even characterized by euphoria. This being done with zeal but zeal for the study and reverence for God's word is conspicuously absent.

In the article by Naomi Walters, we see strong evidence of narcissism [inordinate fascination with oneself; excessive self-love; vanity (*Webster*)]. She brags on herself as being a good preacher, and most especially since she is a woman.

Much more could be said, and should be, but to put the articles in a nutshell – they are a true and powerful example of following the minds and desires of men rather than God and His inspired word, by which we will be judged (John 12:48). Following the mind of men rather than God's will, has always been a problem, but it is worse now than ever in our lives. Let us pray for these people that they may repent and turn to God and the soul-saving Truth.

— Editor

Reader Response

Dear bro. Walter: We pray that you and sis. Pigg are doing well. Please add this small check to the Banner of Truth and add this name to your mailing list ... In Him, **Bill Kelly**” — **AL**. (*Thanks for the name to be added and for the check. — Editor*)

“Brother Pigg, Inclosed is a small check for your work with BOT. Thank you for being a defender of the Truth. May your health be good and sis. Naomi’s as also. Keep up the good work. In His Holy name and in Christian love, **Gene and Margie Neese**” — **AL**.

“Dear Brethren, I’ve enjoyed your publication and would like to receive or renew for this year and next year. Any money left over please apply to the great work you are doing in the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I have also included our new address. Thank you. Your brother in Christ,” **Randall Gruenewald**” — **CA**. (*BOT is sent free, but we always appreciate the gifts which make our work possible, — Editor*).

“Bro. Pigg, May the Lord bless you as you continue your good work, **Barclay Riley**.”

“I can not tell you how much we appreciate Banner of Truth. The church in most places has drifted far from the truth. It is hard to find a church that is like we grew up in, in the 40s and 50s. How sad. Most congregations will do anything to get more members. Liberalism is like getting old – it happens a little at a time. Marriage & divorce, wearing shorts to church, missing church services, using every version of the Bible, and the list goes on and on. I think our biggest problem is that we don’t have Bible elders, and I think they will be held accountable for what goes on in their congregations. I hope and pray this problem will get better, but I see nothing that makes me think it will. Keep up the good work, we just need more people like you, **J. B. Smith**” — **TN**. (*Brother, you have hit the nail square on the head! I, too, have seen great changes since becoming a Christian in 1953. Things have grown much worse since then. I, too, wish the problem would get better, but see no evidence that it will. —Editor*).

“We appreciate your stand for the truth in BOT. May God continue to bless you! In Christian love, **George & Roberta Folk** — **TN**.

“Thank you for your good work, **Royce Adams**” — **CA**.

“To Banner of Truth, We are sending a check to help with the great Banner of Truth. Thank you for the great job you do on BOT, —Fairview church of Christ, **Robert Lusk**” — **TN**.

“A friend of mine has your Banner of Truth sent to me. Thank you for it. It has helped me to see the truth. Keep sending it. Inclosing a check to help pay for it, **John J. Stoelting**” — **IN**. (*We are thankful that Banner of Truth has been helpful to you. If you have friends that it might help, please send us their name and address. — Editor*).

“Banner of Truth, Thank you for sending out a good Biblical publication, **Joshua & Molly McDonald**” — **KS**.

“Dear brother Pigg: I am grateful for Christians like you that love the Lord and love our nation. May the Lord bless you. Thank you for the booklets “Dangers of Islam,” I’m putting them to good use. Many U.S. citizens are still complacent and unaware, it seems, and some of our leaders in Washington and other places seem to be betraying us – going along with things that are detrimental to our country. Every single day I pray for this land of America. We have some serious problems, and do not have the strong leadership we should have, **Lillian Todd**” — **TN**. (*It is indeed sad when our leaders do not stand for that which is right. Our nation is in great danger, yet many are sleeping. — Editor*).

“Bro. Pigg, Thanks for Banner of Truth and the stand for the truth you take. We greatly appreciate brethren like you, **Kenny Birdwell for Northwest church of Christ**.”

“Dear bro. Pigg, A sister in Christ from another congregation in another city has many times mentioned “Banner of Truth” to me. She often has sent me articles from it. A couple of weeks ago she gave me a copy and I can see why she is so happy with it. I gave it to a sister here in my congregation and I hope she sees the light. Before the election I was plainly talking about how we as Christians need to vote according to what God tells us in His word. Homosexuality and killing babies in the womb is an abomination to God. We will face Him in the judgment for every word and deed done here on earth. Voting for the Democrat ticket is voting in favor of those two things

↑

as that is voting for their platform. She still voted for Obama. I am so sick inside of all the Christians who could lose their souls because they did the same. Please put me on your mailing list to receive “Banner of Truth.” I’m sending a little donation to help. — Name withheld by editor.” *(I can’t understand why some of our brethren support those who stand for things which are clearly against God’s will. No politician is perfect, but some are better than other. Some of our brethren frown on the mention of politics, but God’s word clearly teaches that some things are wrong, regardless of whether or not politics are involved. Yet, I have known those who on the one hand who claimed to uphold the church but on the other hand were very active in upholding outright evil in the world of politics. — Editor).*

“Hope all is going well with you and your good work. The May edition was excellent and contained so much information that is need by the church and the world. May God bless you! **Ms. Betty Welch**” — TN.

“I still enjoy Banner of Truth and have a friend who would be interested in receiving it. If you have an extra couple of Banner of Truth April 2013 about notes on Roman Catholicism, I have friends who are of the Methodist faith and Episcopal church. I think they could benefit from it if they will read it. **Dorothy Strattis**” — TN.

“Dear Walter, Enclosed is a check for Banner of Truth; from the Murfreesboro church of Christ. You and brother Lloyd Gale do a wonderful job exposing the evil going on in this country; beginning at the top with President Obama. You are correct about people of this country not being able to think on their own without someone telling them what to think. Sad!!! Spiritually speaking we have many in the Lord’s church who aren’t thinking either, allowing liberalism and other isms to come in. Keep up the good work; we pray for you and sister Naomi. In Christ, **Paul Curless** for the Murfreesboro church of Christ — TN. *(Thanks for your comments and for the check to help in our work. Yes, we are in “perilous times” due to our being in the doldrums. Some times I wonder if God is bringing us to our knees because we are forgetting in such a great way. — Editor).*

Thank You Dear Readers

There can be no end to the need to thank our readers, without whom none of this would be possible. Thank you for your reading and interest. Thank you telling others about BOT and encouraging them to subscribe. Thank you for letting us know in a timely way of a change of address; this saves us so much money. A special thank you to those who supply the necessary funds to make Banner of Truth possible. Our costs are almost continually on the increase. For every gift, regardless of the amount, we are grateful.

We also are thankful for others who have a part in producing the paper. This includes those who submit articles for publication. We are thankful for those who furnish the labor, which is necessary to print the paper and do the number of things, which are necessary to get it ready to mail. We are thankful for our son-in-law, Alan Adams, for formatting the paper and getting it to us so that we may print the plates, which are necessary in order to print the material. We are thankful to brother Garland Robinson for printing our mailing labels. He is indispensable.

I must thank God for His giving me many good years of service; and He willing, I will have more yet. He has blessed our work with Banner of Truth more than I ever dreamed possible. We have over the years reached thousands of people more than I was able to reach from the pulpit.

Beware! Beware!

The Spread of Islam

in Both Country and Community

UNHEEDED WARNINGS LEAD TO CATASTROPHE

Walter W. Pigg

Of the ten thousand pamphlets printed, a few hundred are left. There are no plans to print more. It should be obvious that Islam is one of the greatest threats to the Lord’s church, as well as our American freedom and way of life. Too many, even Christians, are asleep.

While they last, order from: Walter W. Pigg, 164 Coles Campground Rd., Murray, KY 42071. Postpaid prices per copy are: single, \$1.40; ten, \$11.00; twenty-five, \$22.00; fifty, \$46.00; one hundred, \$80.00

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From Page 10 →

Faithful followers of Christ will not introduce any unauthorized practice into the worship, work or mission of the Lord’s church. To do so is to add to God’s Word (Rev. 22:18-19).

It is very obvious from reading the “special announcement” of the Heritage elder that they have completely abandoned the principles of New Testament Christianity. Their new “outreach ministries” [English as a Second Language Classes, Upward Sports program] are based on community outreach and entertainment. It is also obvious from the following quote that these brethren are under the delusion they are doing God’s will. “However we are convinced that God has called us to a mission that requires us to consider the needs and preferences of others above our own. Leaving the two morning services unchanged while adding an instrumental service allows people to focus on worshipping God in their own way, without binding preference or tradition.” Like those in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, these brethren love not the truth, but have great pleasure in the lie that will damn their souls.

It is evident from the Q/A they have received numerous objections from the members. **What should those members do?** First, they are not going to change the decision of the Heritage elders. Second, they should **leave and identify with a faithful church of Christ.** If not, they become partaker of their evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

[The above is a reprint from THE INFORMER, of the Shelbyville Road church of Christ.]

FOR YOUR ADDRESS BOOK

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