

## RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING

By Danny Tunnell

Today, it doesn't take much clicking of television channels to find a religious broadcast. Modern-day preachers have recognized that television can greatly magnify the impact of their ministries. Someone has said, "Television is to entertainment what the pulpit is to preachers - a platform of communication."

The pros for using television are obvious - the potential for reaching millions of people. When Billy Graham first televised one of his meetings in 1957, the ratings showed 6.5 million people watched the telecast, enough to fill Madison Square Garden in NYC to capacity every day for a whole year.

The sway a TV preacher can have with the audience can be commanding. Back in the early days of television, young parents made sure their children heard Milton Berle's sign-off. He would say to the little ones, "Listen to your Uncle Miltie and go to bed." And they would.

Hundreds of preachers today are using television to get their message out.

Jesus gave the Great Commission:

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15,16.) In that era and during many of the centuries that followed, fulfilling this commission depended on donkeys, horses, wagons, ships, and footsteps. That is how missionaries and itinerant preachers went.

They were expected to heed the instructions Paul gave to Timothy ... to have genuine faith ... to study and show themselves approved ... to rightly handle the Word of Truth ... to stir up the gift of God within them ... to hold fast the pattern of sound words ... to continue to learn the Holy Scriptures which are able to make one wise for salvation ... to preach the Word. (2 Timothy, chapters 1-4.)

Is modern-day religious programming good or is it bad? I believe it has the potential for good when it helps to lead someone to Christ.

One fellow wrote these thoughtful words about his own experience: "I was clicking my remote from channel

to channel looking for something to take my mind off my troubles. I surfed past a comedy show but didn't feel like laughing. I skipped over a drama because the story was too much like my own. I wasn't interested in watching a documentary about suicide because I was almost there myself. I was desperate to find comfort and peace. I kept clicking. I stopped on a channel long enough to hear a preacher talk about sin. I started clicking once more. God knows I'm a sinner. I went back and found that channel."

At least that's somewhere to start on a path that could lead to heaven. Some modern-day religious programming is good.

— Miami, OK

(The reader is encouraged to watch the Search program, with Phil Sanders, televised each Lord's Day morning on a station (hopefully!) near you. Invite your searching friends and neighbors to watch as well!)

## FINDING UNITY IN A DIVIDED WORLD

By Dalton Key

How do we go about the business of uniting our divided, fragmented religious world? We know that Jesus prayed to the Father asking for such unity (John 17: 20,21), but just how do we bring it about?

Should we ignore our faith-based differences, disregard our conflicting doctrines, and simply agree to disagree? As appealing as this approach might seem, it simply will not work. While it could result in some semblance of disjointed union, true unity would be impossible. Genuine unity depends upon fundamental agreement, as Amos suggested in his inspired question, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3.)

Perhaps we could all unite upon some common creed or manual. But who has the influence or the authority to devise such a document? And doesn't the

Bible teach, "There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death?" (Proverbs 14:12.) Even if it were possible for all of us to agree upon one common, human creed, we would find it full of mistakes and in constant need of revision. Garbage in, garbage out comes to mind.

This leaves us with but one possible alternative. We determine to throw off all party names, discard all party platforms, reject all humanly devised doctrines and unite upon the Word of God alone.

As the very body of Christ, as His church, we make and bind no laws; we leave that to the Lord and His inspired message of truth. From the earliest days of the church, Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." (Acts 2:42.)

As disciples of Christ, we strive

simply to do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names. Our platform is simple and based upon God-breathed Scripture: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." (Ephesians 4:4-6.)

Simple? Yes. But then, that may well be why the scriptural plan has always and continues to be so very unpopular. —

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing - life forevermore." (Psalm 133.)

# Old Paths

Vol. 42, No. 7 July, 2018

"ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16)

## CARING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

By Joe Dale Wilson

Older people have lived their adult lives making their own decisions. They have developed an attitude or resolve of being their own boss. They have grown comfortable with the way things are at their home and are not quick to make changes. This makes them strong-willed because that is a part of their survival mode in life. At the same time they may have developed hearing and eyesight problems, and are often dependent upon medications. Others become disabled and unable to get around. Some begin to have memory problems and when this happens it is imperative that the children step in and help organize their life to a better plan. Others become physically unable to care for themselves and need help. In these cases they might not want help but they need it.

"But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God." (1 Timothy 5:4.) The word translated "parents" means generally any living relative and is not limited to parents or grandparents, although that seems to be in agreement with the beginning of the verse. Such actions are considered "good and acceptable" in the sight of God. This is the reason that McCord translated the passage, "But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show respect for their own family, and to repay their parents. This is pleasing in God's sight." The inspired writer went on to say, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8.) No matter how faithful a person claims to be, faith is only seen when it is active and productive in the family setting. (James 2:14-17.) A person can do many things that are great works, but if he does not show care and concern for his family, he is in worse shape than an unbeliever. Many excuses are often offered for not caring for parents or grandparents: "I'm too busy;" "I live too far away;" "My family needs me;" "You know we did not always get along well;" etc. Excuses will not save us! If you are the only one living near the relative that has a need, you will need to keep the others informed and ask them for help.

Caring for an older person is not an easy task because they can be a real handful at times. It is easy to lose patience with them. "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." (Galatians 6:9.) We have to keep in mind our labor of love for those who cared for us when we were young. We are bearing "one another's burdens" and fulfilling "the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2.) If you are the only caregiver find someone who can give you some time off and allow you to take care of yourself. It is a very difficult thing to take care of failing parents or even a husband or a wife. Ask for help from your family, and from the church. It is not a sign of weakness but shows that you need to be refreshed so you can do the best you can for the ones you love.

It is a good idea to remember the Golden Rule in dealing with the older ones, as one day soon we will be there too. (Matthew 7:12.) As we grow older we should also strive to grow more understanding and sweeter, especially toward those who are trying to help us!

— Vernon, TX

## "LOOK AT MY HANDS"

By Hershel Dyer

A little girl was once admiring her mother. She spoke of her eyes, her hair, her face, and then, stopped to add, "But your hands . . ."

The mother's hands were drawn and misshapen. She felt it was time to explain to her daughter the reason for this disfigurement. She told of a fire in her house about ten years earlier. Her baby was upstairs in its cradle and she had rushed up the stairs and into a room, which was ablaze, snatching the infant up into her arms. In doing so, she suffered severe burns on her hands, leaving them scarred for life.

The little girl, listening intently to her mother's words, now looked with reflection and deep affection upon her mother's hands. Finishing her statement earlier begun, she added, "But I love your hands best of all!"

Another scene had transpired on the day of our Lord's resurrection. He appeared to His disciples behind closed doors and, at first, it greatly frightened them – thinking He was a spirit. However, when He showed them his nail-pierced hands and the hole in His side made by the soldier's spear, they rejoiced.

One of the apostles, Thomas, was not there that evening to see the Lord. When the others told him about it, he averred that he would not believe until he saw "in His hands the print of the nails." A week later, Christ again appeared to the group and this time Thomas was present. Again, as before, the resurrected Jesus appeared. He especially addressed Thomas, saying, "Reach your finger here, and look at my hands . . ." (John 20:27.)

To the believer's eye, surely no set of hands could be so beautiful as those that were pierced for our redemption!

"I shall know Him, I shall know Him, and redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, by the print of the nails in His hand."

— Tulsa, OK

(The sudden passing of Brother Hershel Dyer last month brought to a close his lifetime of faithful service to the cause of the Kingdom. Brother Dyer, like Paul, fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith. Though he is much-missed, his words live on. - ED.)

## FROM THE ARCHIVES . . . “I’LL GO AS FAR AS I CAN”

By Bobby Key

The preacher of the gospel should not be overcome with material things. He must not lose sight of spiritual values. It is unwise to turn aside after things that perish while neglecting the great things that will outlive him.

One is a hireling who preaches simply for what he can get out of it from a financial standpoint. I am afraid for the preacher who is forever seeking better and more comfortable quarters, bigger and better churches, and bigger and better salaries.

It is true that the laborer is worthy of his hire, but the servant of the crucified Master ought not to be a seeker after luxury.

Preachers of today have it so much better than those of yesterday. Over a century ago, brother James A. Harding said to a young man, a student in the old Potter Bible School in Bowling Green, Kentucky, “Frank, I want you to hitch up the carriage and drive me to the depot. I must leave for a Meeting.” When this young man stopped in front of the Harding home a little later, Mrs. Harding was inquiring how her husband expected to buy a ticket without money. That good servant was heard to reply, “I’ll go as far as I can.” The trip into Bowling Green was made without further word of ticket or money.

Soon after entering the little city, a man waved for the carriage to stop, explaining that for some time he had desired to have fellowship with Harding in spreading the gospel of Christ, and handed him a twenty dollar bill. At the depot he purchased his ticket, turned to Frank, and placing every bit of the change in his hand, instructed that it be given to his wife.

Harding then boarded the train and continued his journey to some favored place to tell of Him who said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33.)

— Miami, OK

“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:5-6.) “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28.)

## EDITORIAL . . .

### OUT-OF-CONTROL COVETOUSNESS

By Dalton Key

Ours is a strange and curious age, a time of short cash, easy credit, and out-of-control covetousness.

Confusing wants for needs, more and more of today’s anxious consumers race through life in a mad scramble for more and more of less and less, never fully satisfied, never completely content.

Yes, ours has become a culture governed by greed.

Jesus warns, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” (Luke 12:15.)

Paul teaches, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (1 Timothy 6:6-10.)

Heaven’s wisdom is speaking, but are we listening? Isn’t life too short, death and judgment too certain, and eternity too endless for us to give undue importance to money and the things money can buy?

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:15-17.)

I once read of two unusual grave markers, hidden beneath the brush of an old, long-forgotten English cemetery. Over one grave, the marker bears the curious inscription, “She died for want of things.” Alongside that stone is another which reads simply, “He died trying to give them to her.”

While this may well describe many of the more covetous souls in our world today, never forget this: we, as God’s children, are not of this world. The world, “lying in wickedness,” will forever be obsessed with and enamored by the material things of Mammon; but “we are of God.” (1 John 5:19.)

We simply cannot serve, both and at the same time, God and Mammon. (Matthew 6:24.)

(Men, mark your calendars! September 13-15 will find many of us gathered for our annual Old Paths Men’s Retreat, held once again on the site of Flint Hills Christian Camp just a few miles north of Sedan, Kansas. We hope to see you there!)



## Treasure!

By Joe Slater

Maybe you should vacation in the Rockies this summer. Back in 2010, Mr. Forest Fenn, a New Mexico art dealer, hid a chest of gold nuggets and precious jewels worth about \$2-million somewhere in the Rockies. He even published a map and poem he said contained all the hints you need to find the treasure. Some 350,000 people have tried to locate it, all to no avail. A few people have died in accidents while searching. Mr. Fenn said he hid the cache to promote fishing and other outdoor activities involving families pursuing the riches. “I wanted to give kids something to do. They spend too much time in the game room or playing with their little handheld texting machines.” No doubt our children would be better served by hiking and fishing than by endlessly playing video games! And I understand the attraction of a \$2-million stash of gold

and jewels! I’m disturbed, however, by the preoccupation with “uncertain riches” (1 Timothy 6:17), contrasted with the evident lack of interest in eternal, spiritual matters. Jesus spoke of a treasure hidden in a field; the man who found it sold everything he had to buy the field. It wasn’t money, but God’s kingdom. (Matthew 13:44.) I’d love to see 350,000 people seeking the kingdom with the intensity they show toward gold and jewels.

What about us? What are we telling our children when we will move heaven and earth to attend every practice and every game for sports, but casually miss Bible classes and church? We say God is most important, but is He? Really? Think about it.

— Justin, TX

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is

## WHAT WILL BE JUDGED ON JUDGMENT DAY?

By Milton Smith

The question posed in the title of this article is not “who” will be judged on Judgment Day, but “what” will be judged. We know that every soul will be judged on this day. Jesus, Himself, said in Matthew 25:31-32, “When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.” Consequently, we know that every soul who ever lived will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. But “what” will be judged on that day? In other words, exactly how and in what manner will each person be judged?

Revelation 20:12 tells us, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works.” Paul tells

us, “. . . every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.” (1 Corinthians 3:8.) It seems quite obvious that each person will be judged by his own obedience, conduct, and faithfulness. Even our motives will be considered. There are some people who do many good works in this life, but they often do those things for the wrong reasons. I’m sure there are even some atheists who do certain “good” works. But God will judge our motive as much as our action.

Paul tells us that we are going to be judged according to the things done in the body, “whether it be good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10.) We thus know that our conduct in this life will be part of our own judgment. Jesus also tells us that our service to our fellow man will be a part of our own judgment. (cf. Matthew 25:34-40.) Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 3:13 that “every man’s work shall be made manifest.” Every feature of our life will be judged on that day. Obedience, motive, conduct, service and faithfulness will be the

like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” (Matthew 13:44.) “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also . . . But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:19-21, 33.)

type of things that will judge us. It will be those things viewed by God as having eternal value that will prove to be worthy of eternal reward.

— Tulsa, OK

## Old Paths

829 S. Rockford Ave.,  
Tulsa, OK. 74120

On a nonprofit basis.  
Published monthly and supported  
by Churches of Christ  
and individuals.

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“Subscription Free;

Prayers Requested;

Contributions Appreciated.”