



UNMASKING SOPHISTRY

A Journal of Christian Evidences and Comparative Religions

“See to it that there is no one who takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception in accordance with human tradition, in accordance with the elementary principles of the world, rather than in accordance with Christ.”

(Colossians 2:8, NASB)

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From The Editor's Desk

We are glad to introduce you to the second edition of Unmasking Sophistry Magazine. In the maiden edition, we examined various subjects under each of the sections. As stated in the previous edition, the different sections will be permanent and only the topics under each section will be transient as the case may be. In the erstwhile edition, we looked at topics such as: *Can We Rely on the Bible?*; *Why Does the All Loving All Powerful God Allow Suffering?*; *The Myth of African Traditional Religion*; *Is Christianity a Religion or a Way of Life?*; *A Discourse on the Necessity of Baptism*; *The First Church*; *Helping God*; *Is the name of Satan "Lucifer"?*; *Are Babies Born Sinners*; *When Situations Question Your Faith*; and a few other interesting topics. We appreciate all the feedbacks received from our dear readers.

In this issue, we shall beam our searchlight on certain topics including; *The Whole Duty of Man*; *Why Believe in Jesus Christ?*; *Is there an Afterlife?*; *Suppose I was Born a Muslim*; *Is Christianity A Religion or a Way of Life? (Part 2)*; *A Discourse on the Role of Women in the Church*; *The Rise of Catholicism*; *The Troubler of Israel*; *Alcoholic Drinking*; *When Parents Fail*; *Where did Elijah Go?*; *Has God Predestined the Plan or the Man?*; *Scriptural Answers to Popular Objections From Gospel Prospects*; and other intriguing topics.

Meanwhile, we are delighted to inform you that Unmasking Sophistry is now available online and all editions (past and present) can be accessed and downloaded online at www.unmaskingsophistry.com

We wish to remind you about the open door policy of the magazine – if anyone disagrees with an article in any edition of the magazine, such could write a rebuttal to it and we would be willing to publish it in the same issue to which the article he is replying appeared. Alternatively, a proposition will be set for the writer of the article and whoever dissents to affirm and deny respectively as the case may be – with the aim of knowing the truth on the subject matter.

We would do our best and would not relent in giving you the best as it relates to issues about the Christian faith and Comparative Religions.

Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba
Editor

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES



The Whole Duty of Man

By Rowland Femi Gbamis

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Introduction

It is no doubt that we all have a duty or responsibility to perform at one time or the other. At work, we all have a job description indicating what task our boss expects us to do in our roles. A Christian husband commits to his wife. He is duty-bound to love, care, lead and support his wife even to the point of laying down one's life (Ephesians 5: 25). Also, the wife has a duty call to submit to the man's leadership, love, and be a homemaker (Ephesians 5: 22-24; Tit. 2:4-5). The children have the mandate to be obedient to their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). Collectively, as parents, we have a responsibility to provide, train and nurture our children in the way of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Moreover, in the Church, the elders have the divine mandate to shepherd the congregation by providing counsel through the Word of God (Acts 20:28-29). Likewise, the Holy Spirit has saddled the evangelists with the responsibility to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). Nevertheless, to accomplish all these responsibilities, the fear of God is critically important. To enumerate, we shall focus our attention on some of these issues by drawing various application through our text.

The Fear Of God Leads To Immense Wisdom

God bestowed wisdom on Solomon enormously from above, but unfortunately, he was a man who did not retain God in his understanding. After King David's death, Solomon ascended the throne as the King of Israel (1 Kg. 2:10-12). The Bible says He loved the Lord and walked in the statutes of his father David (1

Kg.3:3). In one of the occasions at Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?" (v.4). Solomon's response was fantastic! 2 Chronicles 1:10-12: "Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead these people, for who can govern these great people of yours?" On the strength of his request, God said to Solomon, "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king— wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like." (2 Chronicles 1:11-12).

In several ways, Solomon, no doubt, is one of the greatest of all the kings of Israel. However, it was saddening to note that even though Solomon received godly wisdom when he asked from the Lord, yet in the later years of his life, he apostatized- he turned away from following the Lord, for his heart was no longer upright before the Lord. He disobeyed the Lord in all ramifications and began to worship idols (1 Kings 11:1-11). The rest of 1 Kings 11 details Solomon's failure as the Lord removed His hand of blessing from a man who started well and ended weak because the fear of the Lord is no longer in his life. He was legendary for his wisdom, and people came from different countries to hear his wisdom, including the queen of Sheba (1 Kg. 10: 1-13). Solomon was a man



who had wisdom, money, power, time, and energy to make his dreams come true. Anything his heart desires, he gets. However, with all that God had blessed him, Solomon was also restless. He wanted to figure out what life was all about, and he was searching for ultimate meaning and satisfaction. Regrettably, receiving wisdom from the Lord did not ensure that Solomon would follow the path of wisdom because of the fear of God lacking in him. Sadly, he exchanged his godly wisdom for worldly wisdom. Truly, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10, Psalm 111:10).

Experimentation With Life

Solomon experimented with various adventurous feats. Learning was one of the things he applied his mind to research. Solomon was philosophical; his erudition is unsurpassed because the preacher went further to investigate all that is done under heaven through the wisdom God endowed him (Eccl.1:13). He gave his heart to pleasure through the gratification of alcohol (Eccl. 2:2,3). His massive projects' exploratory quest is unparalleled (Eccl. 2:4-6, 1Kg. 7:1, 9:10, 9:24). In addition, he possesses servants and staff, flocks and herds, vineyards, silver, and gold. Solomon had the best male and female singers, intimate relationships with seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (Eccl. 2:7-8; 1Kg. 11: 3). While Solomon denied not himself any of the things his heart desired, it was not enough to satisfy his cravings (Eccl. 2:10,11). Thus he concluded that everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind (Ecclesiastes 2:22-23 NKJV). In other words, Solomon now realized that he needed something more than all he had ever craved because there was nothing that satisfies his soul; all his achievement is but vanity! Whatever height one might have climbed, without the fear of God, one is just as empty as he who

chases the wind (Eccl. 2:26).

A Sober Reflection Toward Life

At the climax of his admonition in Ecclesiastes, Solomon the great wise man penned the following words: Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man (Eccl. 12:13). The Preacher reiterates the fact that life apart from God is meaningless. He calls to remembrance that all of man's activities and arduous task here on earth are pointless when God is excluded. Solomon articulates that self-gratification and success in the world would at no time bring satisfaction to the human's heart. In other words, man needs to understand that life lived without a knowledge of God and in fellowship with the Almighty is empty and meaningless. Thus, in reinforcing his message, the preacher notes that the purpose for one's existence here on earth is for one to "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." (Eccl. 12:1). Markedly, we can do so many things when we are young, but the question is: are we doing things that please the Lord when we are young? While so many young people believe that they can indulge in whatever they deem fit because there are many years ahead of them in life, Solomon is saying no! There is no time as you may think (Eccl. 12:1-7). Today, the older ones among us can testify because of advancement in their age that the word of the "Preacher is acceptable, upright and even words of truth." (Eccl. 12:10). We thank God for as many godly exemplars in the Church of Christ because they have decided to encourage our young ones to take up the preaching work and give the youths the necessary support to succeed in their ministerial careers.

To be continued.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

Why Believe in Jesus Christ?

By Julius Egharevba

The miracles of Jesus Christ are clear evidences to believe in Him. "And he says to them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then, having arisen, he rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm" (Mt 8:24-26).

Jesus is a unique being that ever lived on the planet earth. He is wonderful and great. Several individuals believe in Jesus but the reason why they believe in Him makes the difference. When we speak of Jesus, we mean the Son of God who died for the sins of the world (John 3:16). Let us consider the following incontrovertible facts and reasons why one should believe in Jesus Christ:

1. The circumstances surrounding His birth:

Many prophecies concerning His birth are found in the scriptures (cf. Isaiah 9:6; 53:2; Lk2:11; 1:26-28). There is no prophet on earth that can tell who is going to be the president of his nation ten years from now, the name of his mother, what he will accomplish, name his town and tell the manner of his death. This is beyond man, even in the circle of speculations. In the case of Christ, prophecies concerning His birth, death and resurrection made several years before His coming, were fulfilled in details.

2. His moral teaching and principles are beyond human sentiment:

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect." (Matt 5:43-45)

"Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Jesus said unto him, If

thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." (Matt 19:19-21).

"But he answering said [to them], Have ye not read that he who made [them], from the beginning made them male and female, and said, On account of this a man shall leave father and mother, and shall be united to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh? so that they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt 19:4-6).

3. His works and miracles: The miracles of Jesus Christ are clear evidences to believe in Him. "And He went on board ship and his disciples followed him; and behold, [the water] became very agitated, so that the ship was covered by the waves; but he slept. And the disciples came and awoke him, saying, Lord save: we perish. And he says to them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then, having arisen, he rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm" (Mt 8:24-26).

4. His death and resurrection: Jesus told his disciples that He was going to die and resurrect the third day (Matt 14:27; Luke 24:44-46). "Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the scripture. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the



Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day.”

There are overwhelming evidence of eye witnesses to his death and resurrection (Matt. 28:5-7); “And the angel answering said to the women, Fear not ye for I know that ye seek Jesus the crucified one. He is not here, for he is raised, as he said. Come; see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and say to his disciples that he is raised from the dead; and behold, he goes before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him.”

Apostle Peter said; “Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day” (Act 2:29). This is to say that all who have lived and died remain in the grave, but Jesus of Nazareth that was crucified has arisen from the dead. Who is that person that knows he was going to die yet move to it?

Acts 2:36 – Peter announced to the people who killed Jesus Christ; “Let the whole house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him, this Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

5. He promised to come back to judge the world: Mt 25:31-32 “But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”

Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment John 5:28-29. See also Jn. 14:2-3; 2 Thess. 1:7-9 and 2 Corinth 5:10.

Conclusion

Five among many reasons have been discussed on why one should believe in Jesus Christ: (1) His pre-existence, (2) Fulfilled prophesies about his birth, death, burial and resurrection (3) His teachings (4) His miracles and (5) His promise of second return and the purpose of His coming. All these and many made me to believe in Jesus Christ. Those who do not believe in Jesus Christ are deeply rooted in ignorance; they should believe and repent now, because God has appointed a day in which He is going to judge the world in righteousness: such assurance is that He raised Him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

I believe in Jesus Christ! Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

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ASAOLU – OBENTY DEBATE

On Saturday, April 17, 2021, Brother Olumuyiwa Asaolu met Brother Peters Obentey in a debate on an issue about the Christian faith which was conducted in the hall of the Lagos Island church of Christ. Asaolu affirmed that “In the first century, regardless of whether Christians in a city met in a single or multiple assemblies, they constituted one church with one common presbytery” while Obentey denied the proposition. Detailed review of this debate will be published in the next edition of this Magazine. Meanwhile, those interested in the video debate may **F R E E L Y** download it from https://drive.google.com/file/d/11yaY6pBAPBvxUlaId3dhaOe8PBQhuxs2/view?usp=drive_web



Christian Evidences

Is There An Afterlife?

By Samuel C. Omaka

What happens to the soul after a man dies? Does he die just like animals die and that is the end of everything concerning the man? Is the soul only temporal and doesn't outlive the physical body? Does all souls inherit heaven after death regardless of actions? Are only wicked annihilated? What do Christians believe?

"Where did I come from?," "Why am I here?," "What becomes of me after death?" These are the questions that intrigue each of us.

In this article, we shall be looking at the question of whether man has a soul or not and where does the soul of man go to after death.

Long ago, Job through inspiration made the same inquisition when he inquired, "if a man dies, shall he live again?" (Job.14:14). There are so many theories regarding the existence of a soul/spirit in each man and the destination of that soul/spirit after death. The words, soul/spirit are used together because in the scriptures, both are in most cases used interchangeably to mean that part of man that is formed in the image of God, which cannot be seen that lives eternally. But in this lesson, we shall go with the term soul!

Some Misconceptions Regarding The Soul Of Man

1. The agnostics (i.e. those who believe that it is impossible to know if God exists) believe that man has nothing like soul. They believe that man, just like animals dies and that is the end of everything concerning the man. The Bible teaches us that man is made of the "body" and "soul" (Matt. 10:28); "dust" and "spirit" (Eccl.12:7); "inward man" and "outward man" (2Cor.4:16). These passages rubbish the claim of the agnostics that man has no soul/spirit for they affirmed that man is of dual nature, the body and the soul.

2. What about those who believe that man actually possesses soul but that such is purely temporal and does not outlive the physical death of man? This is known as the temporal soul position.

Such position is simply indefensible in the light of what the scripture teaches. A lot of passages like Acts 7:59, Rev.6:9, Matt. 10:28, etc. affirm the fact that the soul of man does in fact partake of an immortal nature.

3. There are those who teach that indeed, man possess an immortal soul and that every soul will survive the physical death of the body in order to inherit the heavenly realm with God regardless of their actions on earth. This view is known as universalism. Again the scriptures totally disagree with this view! Numerous passages like 2 Cor. 5:10, Matt. 26:31-46, Rev.20:12-15, 21:6-8 et al clearly teach that although man's soul will survive the physical death of the body, only those who obey God's will shall inherit the heavenly realm with Him while the unbelievers and sinners shall be punished eternally.

4. Annihilation for the wicked/ eternity in heaven for the righteous? This is the doctrine that only the souls of the faithful children of God shall live eternally while the souls of the wicked one shall be annihilated at death! In other words, the souls of the wicked shall cease to exist when the body dies. This position is derived from the belief that God cannot watch the souls of the wicked suffer for eternity in the lake of fire since He is the God of love. Therefore, He will cause



the souls of the wicked to go into extinction and not allow them suffer eternally. Jesus destroyed the doctrine of annihilation when he presented the picture of what the end will be like in Mathew 25:46. He said that the wicked would “go into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life.”

Furthermore, the apostle Paul while writing his second epistle to the Christians at Thessalonica, wrote specifically of “them that know not God” and “obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” as those “who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might” (1:8-9). Additionally, in Luke chapter 16, Jesus told a story of two men who died under different circumstances. One named Lazarus, who went to Paradise. The other, an unnamed rich man, who found himself in the portion of Hades where he cried; “I am tormented in this flame” (16.22-24). The spirits of the two men were alive, conscious and even able to communicate, upon leaving their bodies—though they were in two different places.

Moreover, in Revelation chapter 14:10-11, John gave a description of the wicked men who “shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God...and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...and the smoke of their torment goeth up forever and ever, and they have no rest day and night.”

What Are We To Believe?

As Christians, we must understand that there is an afterlife! When Job asked, “if a man dies, shall he live again?”, he, through inspiration answered his question when he said, “But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth, And at last He will stand up upon the earth: And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed, Then without my flesh shall I see God; Whom I, even I, shall see, on my side, And mine eyes shall behold, and not as

a stranger. My heart is consumed within me” (Job.19:25-27 ASV).

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:19, “If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable.” But we have seen that the reward for our labor as Christians is not just in this present world, for our reward in heaven is far greater than the imagination of our mind! It is with this view that Paul wrote, that the persecutions, sufferings and trials that we experience as a result of our faith are just but a “light affliction “when compared to the glory we shall share after this life (Romans 8:18). We do not look at the things of this world which are temporal, be it the sufferings or the riches therein, but we focus our attention to that which are not seen, eternal in heaven—the crown of our glory! (2 Cor.4:16-18).

Conclusion

The world is filled with confusing teachings about the existence, nature and destination of the soul. But Christians who believe the word of God, must understand that indeed, man has a soul (Eccl.22:7, Matt.16:26; 10:28, 2Cor.4:16, etc.) and that the soul of man is eternal in nature (Matt. 25:46). God shall reward each soul “according to what he has done in the body, whether good or bad.” (2Cor.5:10). The faithful Christians shall live eternal life in bliss with God while the agnostics, atheists, infidels and everyone who rejects God and the gospel of Christ shall have their part in the eternal lake of hell fire (Matt.25:46, 2Thes.1:8-9, Rev.14:10-11).

World Religions

Suppose I was born a Muslim

By Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba

Often and often, Muslim folks have suggested that if I was born a Muslim, by now, I will be promoting Islam and that the reason why I am so zealous about the Christian religion is because I was born a Christian.

Introduction

Several times during our evangelistic trips as gospel preachers, while moving from house to house in an effort to fulfill the Great Commission – a method known by some as “door-knocking” or “door-to-door,” we have approached people with a view to introducing the gospel of Christ to them and merely seeing the Bible in our hands, the response that usually welcomes us is “I am a Muslim.” Such response is intended to stop the preacher from making any further effort to tell them anything about Christ. (It should be noted that not all Muslims behave in this manner as some would actually listen to you and ask questions).

Recently, while speaking to an ex-Muslim turned denominational church member on the necessity of baptism for salvation, and after showing incontrovertible passages of scriptures that teach baptism is for (in order to obtain) salvation, he concluded that I am teaching what I have been taught in “my church” and that if I was born a Muslim like he was, I would understand that it is not easy to have been converted from Islam to Christianity (Indeed, within the few years of his conversion from Islam, he had been taught and had swallowed the denominational sentiment that “faith alone” saves and that baptism is just an action to be done after one is saved). I hinted that the sincerity that made him dump Islam for another religion should make him see reasons to believe the word of God (the Bible) since he claims he is now a Christian.

Often and often, Muslim folks have suggested that if I was born a Muslim, by now, I will be promoting Islam and that the reason why I am so zealous about the Christian religion is because I was born a Christian. Well, let us get down to business...

Natural/Physical Birth Does Not Make One A Christian

In the first place, I do not believe that the natural birth makes one a Christian. By natural birth, we mean the giving birth to a child by a pregnant woman who is due for delivery. And so, we are referring to someone who is physically given birth to and raised by Christian parents. It is true that I may have been born by Christian parents into a family of Christians but that in itself does not make me or anyone a Christian.

In John 3:3-5, Jesus taught that a man must be “born again” to be eligible to enter God's kingdom. Nicodemus was confused about this birth and conflated it with the natural birth process but Jesus told him that this new birth involves two elements – water and the Spirit and except a man undergoes this birth process, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

All living people today came to the world through the first kind of birth but those who desired to come to God and have everlasting life at the end (thereby avoiding the second death – Revelation 21:8) must undergo the rebirth process once they reach the age of accountability and have heard the gospel. The choice is theirs to make. It is after one has gone through these steps that he can be said to be a Christian.

The name “Christian” is mentioned three times in the



New Testament (Acts 11:26; 26:28 and I Peter 4:16) and it refers to a person or people who actually accepted Christ by obedience to the gospel. It refers to those who have believed the gospel, repented of their sins, confessed their faith in Christ and are baptized in water for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38). Such would then be added to the church (Acts 2:36-47). Regardless of his age at the time of his baptism, when one is born again, the Bible calls such “a new born babe” that should desire the sincere milk of the word that he may grow thereby (I Peter 2:2).

But it seems that certain world religions regard someone as a member or belonging to such religious group if and when such is born into such religion. Like Islam, it seems one born by Muslim parents and taught to recite the Shahada (I testify that there is no other god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammed is Allah's messenger) is already considered a Muslim. But even if that is the case, the fact that one is born into a religion that recognizes one as a member without his or her own choice of decision should not make one dogmatic. The Jews were so deep-rooted in Judaism and became legalistic that they were not ready to hear about another religion even when their own prophets had spoken about Christ and His work. One could wonder why King Agrippa said he was “almost persuaded” to become a Christian after hearing such excellent and mind-blowing speech from Paul the apostle (Acts 26:28).

Parental Upbringing/Influence

It is true that parental upbringing and the environment that one is bred could greatly affect the religion one practices. The training given to children will have huge impact on them. The Bible says; “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6 cf.

Ephesians 6:4). Indeed, if anyone follows this biblical instruction and brings up his child in the way he should go, such child, properly brought up will not depart. It appears that the Lord would see the parent as incompetent if the children are unruly, hence, a man whose kids are wayward cannot serve as an elder in the church of the Lord (I Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6).

A parent, whether Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Pagan, etc. who brings up his or her child properly will raise godly kids. Timothy's mother was a Jewess and his father was a Gentile (Acts 16:1). Yet, he had the proper upbringing (II Timothy 1:5; 3:15). Cornelius was not a Christian and he was neither a Jew. Islam was not in existence at that time, so he was not even a Muslim but he had been taught to fear God (Acts 10:1-3).

The same thing with religious values; a child who has been raised by Christian or Muslim parents and has been taught to follow such religious requirements is most likely to follow suit. However, sense of reasoning is in every man as man was not made to be robotic but a free moral agent. In fact, such situation should make one to search more and find out if such religion he finds himself is the right place to be. Like the Holy Book of God instructs; we are to “prove all things” and “hold fast that which is good” (I Thess. 5:21). One must examine if the faith he professes is the true one. A faith or religion that would not allow for its scrutiny is a faith not worth having in the first place. Indeed, an unexamined faith is not worth believing. When one is open minded and not biased against another religion, learning could take place.

One Could Be Zealously Religious in Error

It is also true that one could be zealously religious without having the truth and such would continue to



progress in error except someone with the truth guides him. Apostle Paul spoke of Israel as a people having zeal for God but not according to knowledge (Romans 10:1-3). The same Paul, at a time was zealously religious in Judaism that he persecuted the Christians for a while before he was converted. In his words; “I persecuted this Way unto death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women” (Acts 22:4). He actually thought he was fighting a good cause for God but he was actually trying to fight against Him and it was really difficult for Paul to “kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:5, KJV).

Furthermore, I have known and read of certain individuals who were devoted Muslims and who have served “Allah” for many years but later accepted Christ and came out publicly to declare that they are now Christians through their writings and other publications. Some of these individuals risked their lives and lost physical or material benefits that should come while others were even disowned by their parents simply because they left Islam and embraced Christianity. These individuals took their decisions after much patient learning/study of the Bible in contrast with what they have believed.

Conclusion

Sincerity is demanded from everyone! One could be convinced of a particular thing if and when he is open-minded. The Ethiopian eunuch was sincere enough to admit that he did not understand the scriptures he was reading even when he was a religious man (Acts 8:27-31 – he had come to Jerusalem to worship). He was also sincere enough to listen to Philip as he preached Jesus to him beginning from that same scripture he was reading (vs. 35). He was sincere to point to water and made a request to be baptized (Acts vs.36-37). Why then should anyone not be sincere enough to listen to God's message when it is being preached to

him simply because he thinks he already knows it?

Not many people have the fortitude to swim against the swelling current of mediocrity and the status quo. They are already satisfied with their state and religion and feels they do not need anything else. Once a person's mind is closed about a thing, he would hardly welcome other ideas but once one is open minded, he will be able to see the truth when presented. Let us be open-minded. Meanwhile, suppose I was born a Muslim and I have the opportunity to listen to God's word taught by faithful Christians and I am receptive to understand it, I will become a Christian. The gospel is God's power to save man (Romans 1:16) and it is still living and active (Hebrews 4:12).

Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba is a Christian and worships at the church of Christ, Ado-Badore in Lagos, Nigeria.

ANSWERS TO QUIZZES

1. What church had their faith spoken of throughout the world in the New Testament?

Answer: The church at Rome (Romans 1:8)

2. What church had their faith spread abroad in the New Testament?

Answer: The church at Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 1:8)

3. Can we please God without faith?

Answer: No (Hebrews 11:6)

4. Will faith without works save?

Answer: No (James 2:14,17,20,24,26)

5. How does faith come?

Answer: Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17)



World Religions

Is Christianity a Religion or a Way of Life? (Part 2)

By Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba

Morally upright people are found everywhere. In almost all religions of the world, you are likely to find people who possess good moral standards and exhibit great and admirable lifestyles... However, does the fact that these people live good lifestyles make them Christians?

In the erstwhile edition of this journal, we examined this very topic, trying to debunk and unmask the sophistry behind the notion that Christianity is not a religion but merely a way of life. In this issue, we shall look at one of the incongruous implications associated with believing the idea that “Christianity is not a religion” and show why such is wrong.

Many think that it is just enough for one to live a morally upright life – be kind and generous, loving and caring and do all manner of things that are considered “good.” Merely doing all of these, already makes one a Christian in their viewpoint. Those who hold this view are invariably saying that it does not matter what religious group you associate yourself with, you can still be a Christian in any of those groups provided you maintain a good life.

In other words, it does not matter where and how you worship God. Since you are already living a life that is admirable and in fact, pleasing to all, they conclude that with such “sacrifices,” God is well pleased. From this notion comes such statements as; “Church does not save anyone,” “Just live a good life, God will not ask you on the last day what church you belong,” and many of that kind.

“Good” People Needs Conversion

Morally upright people are found everywhere. In almost all religions of the world, you are likely to find people who possess good moral standards and exhibit great and admirable lifestyles. These individuals know that it is wrong to kill, steal, etc. They know that it is a

good thing to help a person when he is in need. Jesus talks about the Good Samaritan who was neither a Christian nor a Jewish priest, yet knows it was necessary for him to help the injured man (Luke 10:30-37). Same level of hospitality could be done by people today who do not even believe in Jesus Christ. However, does the fact that these people live good lifestyles make them Christians? Not at all! Let us consider some individuals in the New Testament:

Cornelius: Cornelius was the first Gentile man that was converted to Christianity. Before his conversion, he was described as “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always...a just man...and of good report among all the nation of the Jews...” (Acts 10:2, 22). In the thinking of certain individuals, Cornelius is already a Christian with all the excellent qualities that he posses. But that was not the case! Despite all of these, there was something that was lacking which he needed to do to make him a Christian. Listen to the voice of the Lord as He told Cornelius in verse 5-6: “Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.” Notice the word “must” suggests a necessity and shows the action is compulsory if Cornelius is really interested in his salvation. He actually sent men to Joppa and invited Peter as instructed and when Cornelius and his household heard and believed the word, they were baptized and were saved (cf. Acts 2:47).



Lydia: Lydia was a woman from the city of Thyatira; a city in the Roman province of Asia, the very place the evangelists were prevented by the Holy Spirit from going at the beginning of their second missionary journey (Acts 16:6 cf. Revelation 2:18). It happened that their first convert is from the same Asia. Lydia was a seller of purple and trades in Philippi; a Roman colony that has no synagogue (Acts 16:12-14). She was obviously devoted and she was at the riverside on the Sabbath day with other women praying. Just like Cornelius, she was a worshipper of God and she demonstrated this fact by praying to God. For most people, Lydia was already a Christian and Paul needs not even disturb them seeing they were praying to God. The truth is: such lifestyle is not enough to make one a Christian. The translation of individuals from the power of darkness into the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13) requires that they do certain things and such works are not of man's righteousness but rather obedience to all of God's commandments. The grace of God that brings salvation actually teaches us to do certain things (Titus 2:11-14).

Does it matter if and how we worship God?

Ecclesiastes 12:13 says the whole duty of man is to "Fear God and keep His commandments." Many denominational churches today all practice different things in the name of worship and in an attempt to find solace for the divisive practices in their worship services, they claim that it does not matter "provided God is worshipped" and provided "it is the name of Jesus that is being called upon and not the name of the devil." Other claims include; "it is not the church that will take you to heaven," etc. How true are these statements?

We find that in the New Testament, the early Christians worshipped God in a certain way – they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and

fellowship in the breaking of bread and in prayers. They were also praising God and having favour with all the people and the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42,47). This continuous practice is a collective action of the people and suggests devotion. All through the New Testament, we find one church (Ephesians 4:4) and one doctrine of Christ (II John 9; I Timothy 4:16). The Christians were not told to go away after their conversion to join any group of their choice and continue living a good life; rather, they collectively continue to worship God together as a church. It was this same church that spread to all parts of the world through the preaching of the gospel (Acts 1:8; Colossians 1:23)

Indeed, it actually matter if and how we worship God. In John 4:23-24 we read; "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth" Two things are worthy of note in this verse; (1) God wants us to worship Him and (2) this worship must be in spirit and in truth. That implies that we must not only be devoted but our worship must be in accordance with His word (John 17:17). What this means is that we do not have the choice or the right to import our own thinking or style of worship. Our worship must be in conformity with what we have read in the New Testament.

In Matthew 7:21, Jesus emphasized that merely calling Him "Lord, Lord" is not enough to take one into the kingdom but one must also be obedient to the will of His Father in heaven. Does God want us to worship Him today? If yes, has He given us a pattern on how to worship Him? Yes, we must abide in the doctrine of Christ (II John 9).



Matthew 15:8-9 reveals certain people whose worship became vain as a result of teaching the commandments of men. “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honour Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” This indicates that there are certain kinds of doctrines that people teach and practice which will nullify their worship to God and render it unacceptable. In the same vein, I Timothy 4:1-3 lists some unacceptable teachings and refer to them as “doctrines of demons.” We are also informed that some individuals worshipped God ignorantly (Acts 17:23) but only true worshippers are recognized by God and such He seeks.

Dear readers, let us not be mistaken to believe the lie that merely living a good life is enough to guaranty salvation and be pleasing to God. We must also be devoted to God and be obedient to all that God has commanded us as the Great Commission instructs (Matthew 28:20). The church is like the ark of Noah in the Old Testament and only those who have been added into it, and remain faithfully till the end will be saved. Christianity is a religion; a pure and undefiled religion for that matter (James 1:27).

Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba is a Christian and worships at the church of Christ, Ado-Badore in Lagos, Nigeria

MY CONVERSION STORY

I was searching for more as I was not getting it from the denominational Church I was in. I had even been baptized there but there was no conviction by way of the preaching and I began to feel something was off.

I was studying on my own in the evenings and I would look for preachers on YouTube to help me. I ran across

a radio broadcast on the YouTube channel, 'wilsonrdcoc'. I studied with them for about 6 months or so and during that time I looked up a Church of Christ in my area and I loved the authenticity of the worship and everything involved.

One day I called the radio station because they always talked about baptism and there being one body, one church, and just book chapter and verse with everything and I asked them about my baptism and they told me I was not saved and begged me to find a Church of Christ and be baptized. I told them I had found one. I was frozen with fear after I hung up and I said; "Lord please help me I cannot wait until next Sunday or even Wednesday to be baptized. I could die or You could return before then!!"

It was a Sunday after Church when I called, so all I could do is run back to the Church. Praise God they were still there! I wanted to interrupt everything trying to get to the water but the Lord must have calmed me down because I sat down quietly and the Brother said; "Um Sister, we are getting ready to close out here and I said; "well I've come to be baptized! So nobody is going anywhere just yet!! Grab your hymnals and start singing please."

Sister D. Green from North Seattle Church of Christ, Seattle, Washington, USA

Editor's Note: Sister Green was baptized on July 28th, 2019 at Tacoma church of Christ in Lakewood, Washington. By July 28th, 2021 she will be celebrating her 2 years as a Christian in the Lord's Church. I find her conversion story to be interesting and I believe others will be blessed by it. She has given her consent and we are glad to have it published. We pray that others in search of the truth will find it and it shall set them free from all religious bondage (John 8:32).

DISCOURSE

Resolved That It Is Scriptural For Women To Take On Leadership Roles In The Church Such As Teaching In Public Gatherings Of Men And Women As Well As Founding A Church

Affirmative: Catherine Freerksen (Foursquare Gospel Church)

Denial: Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba (Church of Christ)

The above proposition is affirmed by Mrs. Catherine Freerksen (Foursquare Gospel Church) stating that women could take on leadership roles in the church. O. Lesley Egharevba (Church of Christ) denies the proposition and insists that it is unscriptural for a woman to teach or usurp authority over the man in the church.

Affirmative by Catherine Freerksen

I am writing this article because I was asked to share my thoughts regarding the role of women in the church. Theologians and the church itself are both deeply divided as to the intent and application of scripture when it come to certain topics, and women in authority or leadership is one of those places of divide. I can see how both sides have come to the conclusions they have, however, I would like to add some commentary for consideration regarding specific scriptures that have been brought to my attention.

I do want to state that according to my understanding of scripture as explained in the commentary below, I believe it is not prohibited for women to take on leadership roles within the church that include teaching both men and women as well as founding a church if they are called by God to be in that position. The first scriptures that I will address are found in I Timothy 2:11-14:

“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”

The following commentary is based on 1 Timothy 2:11-14:

(IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament) 2:11. The proper way for any novice to learn was submissively and “quietly” (a closely related Greek term appears in 2:2 for all believers). Women were less likely to be literate than men, were trained in philosophy far less often than men, were trained in rhetoric almost never, and in Judaism were far less likely to be educated in the law. Given the bias against instructing women in the law, it is Paul's advocacy of their learning the law, not his recognition that they started as novices and so had to learn quietly, that was radical and countercultural. (In the second century, Beruriah, wife of Rabbi Meir, was instructed in the law, but she was a rare exception. Women could hear expositions at the synagogues and did sometimes attend rabbinic lectures, but the vast majority of rabbis would never accept them as disciples, and Hellenistically oriented Jews like Josephus and Philo were even more biased against them than the rabbis were. There is evidence for a few women filling higher roles in some Diaspora synagogues, in local cultures where women had higher social positions, but the same evidence shows that even there prominent women in synagogues were the rare exception rather than the rule.)

2:12. Given women's lack of training in the Scriptures (see comment on 2:11), the heresy spreading in the Ephesian churches through ignorant teachers (1:4-7),

and the false teachers' exploitation of these women's lack of knowledge to spread their errors (5:13; 2 Tim 3:6), Paul's prohibition here makes good sense. His short-range solution is that these women should not teach; his long-range solution is "let them learn" (2:11). The situation might be different after the women had been instructed (2:11; cf. Rom 16:1-4, 7; Phil 4:2-3).

2:13. Paul argues for women's subordination in pastoral roles on the basis of the order of creation, the same way he argued for women wearing head coverings (1 Cor 11:7-12). Some writers take his argument here as universal, for all circumstances, even though that is not the most natural reading of the Genesis text to which he alludes (Gen 2:18 in Hebrew suggests a complementary partner). Other writers take Paul's statement here only as an ad hoc comparison (see comment on 2:14), as most writers take his same argument for head coverings in 1 Corinthians 11.

2:14. Paul refers to the account of Eve's fall as it is told in Genesis 3, although some later Jewish stories increased Eve's guilt or deception considerably beyond that account. That he compares the unlearned women of the Ephesian church with Eve is clear; his earlier letters also compare the whole church of Corinth, both men and women, with Eve (2 Cor 11:3), the Corinthian church with Israel (1 Cor 10:1-22) and his opponents in Galatia with Ishmael (Gal 4:24-25). That he would actually apply this illustration to all women in all times, as some have thought, is less likely (if he did, he would be implying that all women are more easily deceived than men, and his illustration in 2 Cor 11:3 would lose its force; moreover, the local false teachers themselves were men- 1 Tim 1:20; 2 Tim 2:17).

The second set of scriptures are 1 Corinthians 14:34-35:

"Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church."

The following commentary is based on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35:

(IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament) Interruptions at Lectures-

While addressing the topic of church order, Paul briefly digresses from his contrast of prophecy and tongues and regulations concerning them to address the interruptions of some women occurring during the teaching period of the church service. Unless Paul changes the subject from women's universal silence (v. 34) to asking questions (v. 35a) and back to universal silence again (v. 35b), his general statement about women's silence in church addresses only the specific issue of their challenges in verse 34a. The issue here is thus their weakness in Scripture, not their gender.

14:34. Biblical law includes no specific text that enjoins silence or submission on women, although Paul could refer back to his creation argument in 11:8-9 or to the effects of the curse in Genesis 3:16. But he can also use "law" generally (1 Cor 14:21); thus here he could be referring only to the generally subordinate position of women in Old Testament times. (On this reading, Paul counters an objection of Corinthian prophetesses, who do not think they should be in subjection; although Paul may not believe they should be subjected in all cultures, that they were in the Old Testament period suggests that it is not wrong for them to be submissive in some cultural settings.

According to another view, Paul cites the Corinthians' view in 14:34-35 and refutes it in 14:36; cf. comment on 14:22. Others object that 14:36 is too weak to supply a refutation for 14:34-35.)

14:35. Informed listeners customarily asked questions during lectures, but it was considered rude for the ignorant to do so. Although by modern standards literacy was generally low in antiquity (less so in the cities), women were far less trained in the Scriptures and public reasoning than men were. Paul does not expect these uneducated women to refrain from learning (indeed, that most of their culture had kept them from learning was the problem). Instead he provides the most progressive model of his day: their husbands are to respect their intellectual capabilities and give them private instruction. He wants them to stop interrupting the teaching period of the church service, however, because until they know more, they are distracting everyone and disrupting church order.

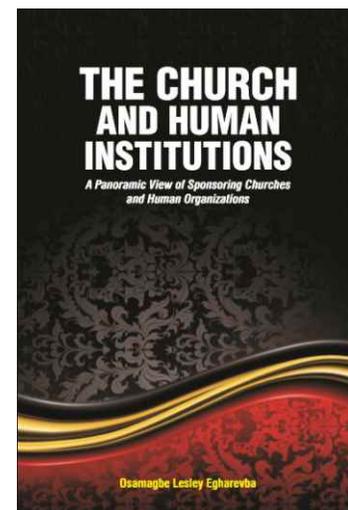
These commentaries sum up what our Pastor taught our congregation years ago. I've studied other commentary that agrees with what I've selected and a few that didn't. What each of us agree with may be influenced by culture, what our church denomination traditionally teaches, or personal bias, which means anything we choose to support our beliefs may be relative to the mindset we have developed. But is what we have cultivated in our thinking the mind of Christ in this case? In order to discover what God thinks about something, I found I have to be willing to set aside what I believe to be the truth and seek the Lord until He gives me His answer. He has shown me a few times that what I have been taught or the conclusion I've drawn is not His heart on a particular matter.

I've prayed extensively since I was first asked to participate in this discussion. "Lord, show me what to

write. What do you want me to say?" I only want to do what I see the Father doing. In this case, surrounding my stance with more scripture to persuade the thinking of the reader is not really the answer. Instead, like the widow that relentlessly petitioned the judge over a matter of concern until he gave her an answer, this matter likewise needs the attention and insight of a wise, loving God. While we, as His body, might not agree on everything, this particular matter is truly of utmost importance and Jesus is our mediator in all things. Let us agree to approach the One who is always interceding for us to find out what His heart is regarding the matter of the role of women in His church. We both believe we have an answer, but His answer will be glorious.

The Spirit of truth will guide us into all truth. (John:16:13).

Catherine Freerksen has been a member of the Foursquare Gospel Church. She and her husband currently worship with a home group in Montana, USA.



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Resolved That It Is Scriptural For Women To Take On Leadership Roles In The Church Such As Teaching In Public Gatherings Of Men And Women As Well As Founding A Church

Denial by O. Lesley Egharevba

The above proposition is what I shall be denying in this piece. Since I am in the negative on this proposition, my duty is to pay careful attention to the points raised in the affirmative article and show what is wrong in the position that has been taken therein.

Mrs. Freerksen and I have engaged in Bible discussions. We talked about the church of Christ, the Foursquare Church and a few other things. Several of her friends attend the church of Christ. And in my case, the first published research work I carried out was based on a study of the history and practices of the Foursquare Church. So it seems that we both know certain things about our religious backgrounds.

In one of our correspondences, she asked me if I believe that the Foursquare Church teaches unsound doctrine. My answer was in the affirmative. Then she asked me again; "Like what?" And one of the things I mentioned was that the Foursquare Church was founded by a woman and that women are allowed to take up leadership roles in the church which I believe is contrary to the New Testament teaching recorded in I Corinthians 14:34-35 and I Timothy 2:8,11-14. She hinted that what I was implying with those scriptures is not exactly what they mean and she requested for some time to reply in order to address those scriptures. So I offered for us to have the discussion on the pages of this magazine and she gladly accepted.

Mrs. Freerksen affirmed that according to her understanding of the Scriptures, "it is not prohibited for women to take on leadership roles within the church that include teaching both men and women if they are called by God to be in that position." But I respectfully disagree on such affirmation; and I am

going to show that there is no scriptural justification for women to take up leadership roles in the church of the Lord. In fact, the Bible speaks against such very emphatically. For a woman to stand before the congregation of the saints to lead in any capacity, whether leadership on teaching, singing, praying, etc., she would have to go beyond the teaching of the New Testament.

Meanwhile, I wish to state that the case against women taking leadership roles in the church is not an attack against women. Both the man and the woman are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and in Christ Jesus, both the male and the female are one in respect to salvation (Galatians 3:28). However, the equality of nature of man and woman does not prove that they are also given equal function of leadership in the church. For example, Paul clearly states in I Timothy 2:8; "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." This is an example of an injunction that is exclusively given to men (masculine in Greek) to carry out in the public assembly.

All Scriptures Is Given By The Inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16)

Before addressing the two key passages on this issue, I would like to emphasize that the Bible is God's word. The only way to know the mind of God on any issue is to look at His revealed word, the Bible (I Peter 1:5; Jude 3). II Timothy 3:16-17 reads; "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." No scriptural injunction should be jettisoned on the basis that the writer is only giving his own opinion and that

it is not God's command. If this fact is admitted, we should not have to deal with the issue that it is "Paul's prohibition" and not "God's prohibition" as it is suggested in Mrs. Freerksen's referenced commentary. Paul himself said in I Corinthians 14:37; "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord."

Addressing the Key Passages

I Timothy 2:11-14 reads;

"Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."

A simple reading of these verses of scriptures clearly shows that in the church service, the women are to LEARN in SILENCE. Also, the women are not permitted to (1) Teach the men or (2) Have authority over the men. Paul gives two reasons for this injunction and they are (1) Because in the order of creation, Adam was formed first before Eve and (2) Adam was not deceived but the woman fell into transgression. Hence, it is not true that it was as a result of the heresy or abuse of the women in the Ephesian church, due to their weakness or low understanding of the scriptures that necessitated Paul to give the injunction. Errors could also be spread by men and there were male false teachers even in the Ephesian church (Rev. 2:2,6). Part of Timothy's work in Ephesus was to charge some that they teach no other doctrine (I Timothy 1:3). Paul did not prohibit the men from teaching since they could also spread errors.

Acts 18:26 shows that a woman could teach a man;

I Corinthians 11 shows that there were occasions when women both prayed and prophesied. The prophecy of Joel quoted by Peter in Acts 2:17-21 said that both men and women would prophesy. Philip, the evangelist, had four virgin daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9). **But there is not a single statement in the Bible to indicate that any of these women ever took a leading part in any public worship involving men. All the praying and prophesying they did was in harmony with the restrictions placed upon them in I Timothy 2:11-14 and I Corinthians 14:34-35.**

I Corinthians 14:34-35 reads;

"Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church."

Granting the argument that there were abuses at the Corinthian church, Paul's objection to these abuses at Corinth was derived from a deeper, more fundamental fact: there was a "law" which was being violated in principle. Notice the explicit command: the women are "commanded to be submissive, as the law also says." The law in reference is the law first established in Genesis 3:16 where God told the woman, "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Paul said that law requiring man's leadership and woman's submission has not been repealed even in the New Testament.

Women at Corinth were not refused the right to speak only because it bred confusion, but they were not permitted primarily because God's law places woman under the leadership of man. Such an eternal law is not to be treated as if it had only a temporary, or even a local significance. It is God's law today and those who

respect his rule must reverence his purposes.

The fact that women are not to be preachers is also obvious in the ones chosen as leaders in the early church. Jesus was a man; all the apostles were males. All the preachers in the New Testament are males without a single exception, and the law regulating this goes all the way back to the beginning, and it was neither provincial nor temporary. The case against women preachers is as solid today as it was when it was originally planned in the mind of God.

As to founding a church, God never gave any human (either man or woman) the authority to build one. Christ established only one church (Matthew 16:18; Eph. 4:4) and this church is where the saved people are added to (Acts 2:47). Christ is the head of this body (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). There is no other foundation that can be laid apart from that which is laid (I Cor. 3:11; Ep. 2:20).

Finally, there is just one calling (II Timothy 1:9) and the only way God calls people today is by the Gospel (II Thess. 2:14). God will not call any woman today to take leadership roles in the church which is contrary to His revealed word. We are to reject any doctrine contrary to what He has revealed to us, even if it comes from an angel (Gal. 1:6-9).

Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba worships with the church of Christ, Ado-Badore in Ajah area of Lagos, Nigeria

INTERESTING FACTS

Did you know that:

1. There are 12 books of the Bible that start with J.
2. Psalms 14 and 53 are the same.
3. Solomon wrote 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs (1 Kin 4:32).
4. Green is the 1st color mentioned in the Bible (Gen 1:30).
5. Delilah did not cut Samson's hair (Judges 16:19).
6. The disciples were called Christians for the first time at Antioch (Acts 11:26).
7. There are 6 women named Mary in the New Testament.
8. Gamaliel was Paul's teacher (Acts 22:3). He was also an important member of the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:34).
9. Jesus is the most mentioned name in the Bible.
10. Abraham's wife, Sarah is the most mentioned woman in the Bible
11. Zimri was the shortest reigning king at 7 days (1 Kings 16:15).
12. Joash was the youngest king at 7 years old (2 Chron. 24:1).
13. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kin 11:3).
14. Stephen was the first Christian martyr (Acts 6:7-8:2).
15. Othniel was the first judge of Israel (Judges 3:9-10).
16. Miriam is the first woman recorded singing in the Bible (Ex 15:21).

QUIBBLES THAT BACKFIRED

This section tagged "Quibbles that Backfired" deals with interesting statements and arguments that have been made by people during discussions by way of defense in attempts to justify and sustain their position regarding the subject involved. Some of these quibbles backfired in that the termination of it showed the complete incongruity of the statement made. Others backfired because they reverted upon the person who made them and put him in the very same predicament in which he intended to put the other fellow.

In 1961, Forrest D. Moyer (evangelist of the church of Christ in Sunnyvale, California) met R. Lawrence Crawford (a Missionary Baptist Preacher) in Napa, California in a debate. Concerning the establishment of the church, Crawford maintained that the church was established before Pentecost and that it consisted of "a called out body of believers" and that these believers had been cleansed – saved by the blood of Christ. Moyer showed that this would be a little difficult – for them to have been saved – cleansed by the blood of Christ – inasmuch as Christ had not died yet. Crawford would have people who are saved by the blood of Christ before Jesus ever died on the cross.

In the same debate, Crawford argued that the Lord had a "company" of scripturally baptized believers before Pentecost per Acts 1:21-22 — that this "company" comprised the church beginning from the baptism of John (John 1:35-38). He said these were the first members of the Lord's congregation. Moyer showed that to this SAME "COMPANY" Jesus said: "I will build my church" (Matt. 16: 18) SIX MONTHS AFTER JOHN DIED.

In 1936, Curtis Porter met H. A. Thompson in Weatherford, Texas and they were discussing Rom. 6:3-4 about burying the man. Thompson claimed a man is raised in newness of life before he is buried in baptism. Porter claimed that we buried a dead, then he is raised to walk in newness of life. On the last night of the discussion, Thompson said, "Mr. Porter, if you

bury a dead man, is it not true that you become a religious undertaker instead of a gospel preacher?" Porter said, "Maybe so. But if I bury a live man, then I would be a religious murderer. I think I had rather be a religious undertaker."

Concerning Mark 13:34; "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch." Crawford argued from this passage that (1) The Lord left his house when He went to heaven (2) What is his house? — church-1 Tim. 3:15 (3) Therefore the Lord had a house (church) to leave before Pentecost. Moyer asked the question: "Do you teach that Christ is now separated from the Baptist Church and will be until He comes again?" (Passage refers to the second coming). This put Crawford in an embarrassing position inasmuch as he had used Matt. 28:19-20 to refer to the church and there Jesus said he would never leave the church. Moyer thus showed that he could not use Matt. 28:19-20 to refer to the church because in Matt. 28 Jesus said he would never leave the church (per Crawford's use of the passage), and yet he had Mark 13:34 referring to the church stating that Jesus left it and would not come to it (her) again until the second coming. Moyer showed that Mark 13:34 is teaching on watching and not on the church. See http://www.wordsfityspoken.org/gospel_guardian/12/v12n47p3,10-11.html for the full review of the debate by K. A. Sterling.

Church History

The Rise of Catholicism

By Julius C. Nwankwo

Pope Vitalian in 660AD is reputed to be the first to introduce instrumental music in the Christian worship and it was rejected by the church and as late as 1250 AD, it was still not accepted in the Catholic Church. In the 4th century a special class of singers became common in the church.

The history of God's people in the Old Testament is a history of faithfulness, apostasy, and restoration. This is also true of the church. Next to a study of the Bible, church history is the most valuable study for a Christian. In this study we are going to consider the origin of the oldest of the denominations in the world – Roman Catholic Church.

Before we go into the study proper let us tell a brief history of the church of the bible – the one true church. The church was promised and built by Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18). He is the foundation and chief cornerstone of the church (1Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:19-22) and He shed His blood to purchase it (Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28). It was established on the first Pentecost day following Christ's resurrection, AD 33 (Acts 2).

The church of Christ has a specific organization with Jesus Christ as the Head (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18). The New Testament is the authority and the constitution of the church (Mark 16:15; Galatians 1:6-9; 2Timothy 3:16, 17; Revelation 22:18,19). Each congregation is autonomous with elders to oversee her work (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1; 1Peter 5:1,2). These elders are called bishops, overseers, pastors and shepherds (Acts 20:17, 28, Titus 1:5,7; Ephesians 4:11; 1Peter 5:1-4). These elders have to meet some specific scriptural qualifications before they are appointed (1Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Deacons are to serve under the elders (Philippians 1:1; 1Timothy 8-13).

There are also evangelists, ministers of the gospel of Christ, who are the preachers of the word in the churches (Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11; 2Timothy 4:1-5). The New Testament church has a specific pattern of worship which is in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24). They met on the first day of the week to observe the following as items of spiritual and scriptural worship; they observed the Lord's Supper to remember Christ as He commanded (Matthew 26:26-28; Acts 20:7; 1Corinthians 11:23-34; Acts 2:42); they worshiped in prayer (Acts 2:42; 1Timothy 2:1-8); They sang praises to God in worship (Ephesians 5:18, 19; Colossians 3:16, 17); They also edified themselves by the preaching of the word of God (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 20:7; 2Timothy 4:2-4); and they gave as God had prospered them (1Corinthians 16:1,2; 2Corinthians 8 & 9).

The church has a three-fold work to do – the preaching and teaching of the word of God; (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46, 47; 2Timothy 2:2; Colossians 1:23). They are to edify themselves (Matthew 28:20; Acts 20:7; Ephesians 4:12; Romans 1:15; Hebrews 5:12-14; 2Peter 3:18). They are also to help the needy among them (Acts 11:27-30; 2Corinthians 8 & 9). The New Testament church was one and united (Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 1:18). Division was strongly condemned in the church (1Corinthians 1:10-13; Romans 16:17, 18).

However, the scripture foretold a departure from the



faith. Jesus warned of false prophets (Matthew 7:15). Apostle Paul warned that the falling away will be from the leadership of the church (Acts 20:28-32; 2Thessalonians 2:1-10; 1Timothy 4:1-3). All these happened as it was said by the apostle Paul.

By second century the “presiding” elder became the “bishop” from there the “bishop” of a large, influential church began to rule over other churches in the area. By the 4th century “patriarchs” ruled in Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. In 606 AD, Boniface III of Rome took the title “Universal Bishop of the church” and became the first Pope.

With the emergence of the pope, a separate priesthood patterned after the Jewish and pagan system was developed, where only the priests could preach, give Lord's Supper, baptize, marry, and bury. Celibacy was enforced by Pope Gregory VIII in 1075 AD. Councils were held as early as the second century to settle disputes and the first creed was produced by the Council of Nicea in 325 AD.

The doctrine of original sin began in the second century but was made popular by Augustine. From original sin to infant baptism; in 251 AD, Novatian, a sick man was “soaked” in bed for baptism. In 1311 the council Ravenna made sprinkling and pouring equally valid as immersion.

Did you know that the Catholic Church did not exist until the 7th century? The Baptist denomination in 1611? Methodists in 1739? Pentecostals in 1900? The church of Christ was established in 33AD!

Pope Vitalian in 660AD is reputed to be the first to introduce instrumental music in the Christian worship and it was rejected by the church and as late as 1250 AD, it was still not accepted in the Catholic Church. In the 4th century a special class of singers became common in the church.

“Closed” communion began to be practiced in the second century and Communion “in one kind” began in the 12th century. Transubstantiation was adopted by 4th Lateran Council in 1215 AD. Veneration of Mary (Mary mother of God) came to be used after the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD. The doctrine of the “Immaculate conception” became official in 1854 AD. It is believed by Catholics that the merits of the dead saints could be applied to the living, and this gave rise to the sale of indulgences.

Many Jewish and pagan festivals were “Christianized.” The council of Nicea determined the date of Easter in AD 325. Other false teachings they teach and believe is that the Catholic Church is the one and only true apostolic church. Pope Boniface VIII, in the bull “Unam Sanctum” issued in 1302, stated that outside the Catholic Church, “there is neither salvation nor remission of sins.” He further said “...it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff” (Eternal Kingdom, P. 196). They teach that there are seven sacraments (i.e. rites by which grace is conferred), although the word “sacrament” is not found in the Bible; Baptism, Penance, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, Matrimony.

They teach that tradition and the decrees of popes and church councils are equal in authority with the Bible; “Like two sacred rivers flowing from paradise, the Bible and divine tradition contain the word of God...of the two, tradition is to us more clear and



safe” (Catholic Belief, by J. Faa Di Bruno, P. 33).

They believe and teach that Peter was the first Pope and had the power to forgive or retain sins as have all succeeding popes and that the church was founded upon Peter, based on their misunderstanding of the statement of Jesus in Matthew 16:13-19. They practice “Mariolatry,” the worship of Mary. They believe and teach that Mary is the “mother of God and the spouse of the Holy Spirit” (See Matthew 1:19,24). They also teach that Mary is a mediatrix between God and man (See 1 Timothy 2:5). They teach that Mary was born without original sin (the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception); the Bible knows nothing of either doctrine (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 3:4; Ezek. 18:20). They teach that Mary ascended bodily into heaven without dying (the doctrine of the bodily assumption (See Heb. 9:27; 1 Cor. 15:50); they also teach that Mary was perpetually a virgin, but the Bible teaches she had other children (Matt. 1:25; 13:55, 56; John 7:3-5; Gal. 1:19; Jude 1).

They practice hagiolatry (the worship of departed saints), they believe that “saints” have left extra merit in heaven, that “saints” can hear their prayers and aid them. Nowhere is such taught in the Bible, and it is contrary to the teaching that Christ is our high priest, advocate, and mediator and His blood alone can cleanse our sins (Heb. 4:14-16; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 1:5-2:2). They divide members into laymen and clergy; the Bible makes no such distinction, all Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6).

They teach the doctrine of Purgatory; that Catholics who are not good enough to go to heaven at death go to a temporary place to be purged of their sins. This doctrine is nowhere taught in the word of God. Catholics say that indulgences can be bought to bring early release of souls from purgatory. The Bible

teaches that there is no second chance; one's destiny is sealed at death (Heb. 9:27; Luke 16:19-31). They teach that the bread and fruit of the vine become the actual body and blood of Jesus in the Mass; transubstantiation. When Jesus said, “This is my body...This is my blood,” He was using a metaphor, He was in his body with His blood flowing in His veins when He instituted the supper, therefore, the Lord's supper is a memorial, not a sacrifice (1 Cor. 11:24). They do not teach the plan of salvation as taught in the Bible, instead they believe in original sin (See Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:20; 1 John 3:4; James 4:17). And they “baptize” infants (See Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Matt. 10:32; Luke 13:3,5; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12). They commonly sprinkle for baptism against clear passages like Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; Acts 8:36-39 etc.

Conclusion

There are other false teachings by this religious organization that space will not allow us to include in this write up, but with the above facts about the Catholics we can see that they started too late to be the true church as they claim and their doctrine is far removed from the Bible to give anybody salvation (2 John 9-11; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18,19).

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BARBS WITH A POINT

Alcoholic Drinking: What Level Are You?

By Rowland Femi Gbamis

We read in 1 Peter 4:2-3: “That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.”

Peter uses three phrases in connection with drinking liquor: excess of wine, revellings and banquetings. Thus, after careful study of our text, I do not think the Holy Spirit deliberately uses words carelessly in delineating the phrases concerning liquor drinking.

Excess of wine (Gk. οἰνοφλυγίαις, oinophlygiais: wine-drinking, drunkenness) is describing those who have drunk so much that they are throwing up—just spilt out drink. The truth is, everyone knows the description above is wrong and is quick to condemn such behaviour.

However, there is a fellow that is guilty of revelling (Gk. κώμοις, kōmois, revels, orgies). He is the fellow that is half looped, usually loud and boisterous.

Lastly, you have the one described as banquetings (Gk. πότοις, potois, drinking, carousing). The English Standard Version (ESV) translates it as “drinking parties.” Yes. That is the person that is just “drinking a few”, a Christian “social drinker.” The one who believes there is nothing wrong with serving assorted beers at his/her naming and marriage ceremonies, nor is anything inappropriate to entertain guests with alcoholic drinks in their homes and offices.

Remarkably, in all the three categories of alcoholic drinking, Apostle Peter says it is part of doing the will of the Gentiles. As children of God, we should want no part of the sinful lifestyles enumerated in our text. Our desire should be to spend our time doing God's

will. If you are one of those who have wasted enough of your life serving the flesh, you need and must devote the remainder of it doing the Lord's will in faithful obedience to His Word.

SODIUM

Sodium is an extremely active element found naturally only in combined form; it always links itself to another element. Chlorine, on the other hand, is the poisonous gas that gives bleach its offensive odor.

When sodium and chlorine are combined, the result is sodium chloride, common table salt, a substance to preserve meat and bring out its flavor.

Love and truth can be like sodium and chlorine. Love without truth is flighty, sometimes blind, willing to combine with various doctrines. On the other hand, truth by itself can be offensive.

Spoken without love, it can turn people away from the gospel.

When faith and love are combined in an individual or a church, then we have what Jesus called “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13) and we're able to preserve and bring out the beauty of our faith (Ephesians 4:15).

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6).

Author Unknown

Institutionalism

The Troubler of Israel

By Rowland Femi Gbamis

1 Kings 18:17-20: And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. (KJV-1900).

Introduction

The confrontation between Elijah and Ahab in 1 Kings 18 brings to the limelight the stark reality: truth and error, light and darkness, the workers of iniquity and the servants of righteousness (cf. 2 Thess. 3:1-5). Unfortunately, Ahab did not realize or acknowledge that his transgression brought calamity upon Israel. Instead, he directed all the blames toward Elijah- "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" (vs 17-NKJV). Today, we can draw the exact correlation when people introduce unscriptural practices into Christ's Church, and God's faithful children oppose their unbiblical innovations. The faithful are quickly labelled "troublemakers" and "unprogressive elements" within the brotherhood. It is not surprising because, like Ahab, unscrupulous men have never wanted the credit for the evil influence of their deeds. They have continuously sought their ways but have never been willing to shoulder the blame for the evil resulting from their unscriptural practices. They always blame those who oppose their ungodly conduct. Forgetting that part of the wickedness of Ahaz, King of Israel, was his rejection of the divine pattern of the altar and fashioning one like the pagan altar in Damascus (2 Kings 16:10-11). Indeed, evil men appear entirely impervious to the word of warning. Fortunately, for the speakers of truth, Elijah would say, No! Those who refuse to follow the divine pattern revealed in the scripture are troubling spiritual Israel - Christ's Church today (cf. Acts 15:1-2). The rest of this article examines those like Ahab

who are the real troublemakers in the Lord's Church.

Face To Face With Reality

After a long while, about three years into the severe famine, Ahab and Elijah confronted each other for the first time since the famine began (1 Kings 18:1). King Ahab was quick to accuse Elijah, the man of God, of being responsible for all the calamity that befell the land. Remarkably, Elijah was not daunted because of Ahab's intimidation. In contrast, he appropriates the blame where it belonged: "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed the Baals" (vs 18). Said differently, Elijah is saying, "Ahab, this disaster has come upon you because of your disobedience and sin." The Church of Christ is composed of God's Israel today since we are the "Israel of God", and as lively stones, we make up the Church of God (Gal. 6:16; 1 Pet. 2:5). Hence, just as there was trouble in Israel in those days because Ahab and his household forsook the commandment of God, so it is today in the Lord's Church. We continue to see how the forces of unfruitful works of darkness wreak havoc upon the blood-bought Church of Christ (2 Tim. 2: 19; Eph. 5: 11-12). Remarkably, faithful brethren defending the truth continue to be accused of causing trouble or unsettling the peace within the brotherhood by preaching the truth.

Issues And Personality

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he did say that

Christians should learn "not to go beyond the things which are written" (1 Cor. 4:6), it is worthy of note that sometimes, when personalities and attitudes are infused in a doctrinal issue, they often becloud the issues, and we end up forming cliques with our associates instead of standing for what is right. Let it always be our desire on all matters bothering on doctrinal issues or scriptural fellowship to constantly ask, "what would the Lord have me do on this matter?" (cf. 2 Chro. 11:13-17; 1 Cor. 10:20; Col. 3: 17). We should study objectively as much as possible to determine where lies the truth. It is not healthy to form a clique with propagators of error either because we do not want to damage our friendship or because of American dollars (Tit. 2:1,7). Let us be like the noble Bereans who searched diligently to see whether the things they were taught is according to the Word of God (Acts 17:11). We thank God for the many write up from our brethren in American, but it is not enough for us to swallow such materials hook, line and sinker without scrutiny. Hence, Paul told Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Sadly, some preachers who hold tenaciously in Nigerian congregations that women must cover their heads and not ask questions during general Bible study because it is "thus says the Lord" does not apply the same yardstick when they travel to America, all because of US dollar. It seems some of the preachers love to keep their friendships at the detriment of speaking the truth. How would any preacher hold that head covering and women asking a question is a matter of faith in Nigeria but get to America and soft-pedal that it is a cultural issue-really! That is nothing short of hypocrisy. The truth is that Nigerian preachers who are being supported in USD need to deliberate openly and honestly about some of the doctrinal issues with

their American counterparts by letting them know what their stands are on those issues. God fed Elijah amid nothing-during a severe drought, the same God is still meeting the needs of His children today (1 Kings 17:8-16; Phil. 4:19).

Furthermore, as God's children, we are required to contend earnestly for the faith and to be set for the defence of the gospel (Jude 3; Phil. 1: 17). Paul would later say, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." (Philippians 1:27). The biblical injunction to faithful gospel preachers is to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Tim. 4:1-2). God's faithful children must diligently and prayerfully observe all the above instructions to guide against departures from the faith (Acts 20: 27-30). Accordingly, as we see brethren in error and oppose them, our aim must be no other purpose than to ensure the truth triumph (cf. Gal. 2: 11 - 14). A preacher of righteousness must be willing and ready to teach with gentleness, humility, and patience (2 Tim. 2: 24 - 26). While tact and diplomacy are an essential ingredient of a good preacher, it is not a tool for acting hypocritically within the Fold of Christ. Therefore, as disagreements arise among brethren over divisive issues and errors, let each of us be set for the defence of truth, study as objectively as possible in order to determine what the will of God is on each subject that we found controversial. We should be able to defend, teach the truth and oppose error without dealing in personalities. Let us follow no man wherein he does not follow the wholesome word of God (cf. 1 Tim. 4: 6-7).

Correspondingly, pride is another "spiritual endemic disease" that we need to deal with in our lives. Solomon, the great wise man, writes, "only by pride cometh contention" (Prov. 13:10-KJV), "the fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, and the perverse mouth I hate (Proverbs 8:13-NKJV). The truth is bitter, but I must submit that pride has enslaved many brethren in false teaching. Not surprising, Apostle Paul, in his letter to Timothy, says, "If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain" (1 Timothy 6:3-5). Sadly, many within the Fold of Christ, particularly the preachers, find it difficult to change their stance on several doctrinal issues even when the truth is staring them in the face. How sad! God's children need not behave indecorously by casting smear on other fellow preachers or comrades through innuendoes and aspersion. Let us repent and stop causing trouble in the Lord's Church.

Conclusion

It is not surprising, Ahab accused Elijah of causing the trouble in Israel, the Jews and chief priests accused Christ of perverting their nation (Luke 23: 2, 5); at Philippi, the fortune-tellers accused Paul and Silas of troubling their city (Acts 16: 16-20). May God bless his Church with bold men who will stand in the way of the error to have it dismantled from its foundation. Apostle Paul would say, "Praying always with all prayer for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I

may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel." (Acts 4: 5-13; Eph. 6:18, 19). Those who disobey God's divine pattern in the Church today should be held responsible for the problems that accompany their unscriptural practices; the faithful Children of God who oppose them are to be strengthened for standing for the truth (Romans 16:17-18). When people begin to follow the opinions and desires of men, institutions, and practices unknown to the New Testament will soon be evident on every hand. Accommodation with error does not promote unity in the Church of God. It only encourages the union of unscriptural organizations (Eph. 4: 3-5). Thus, compromising with error only produces a loss of fellowship with God, and it causes one to partake of error (2 John 9-11). Let us arise and oppose false doctrine for the sake of truth and the salvation of our souls (Jude 3-4). We cannot stop false teachings by compromising practices that promote them (Rom. 1:18, 32). On a final note, Jeremiah says, "Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16). May God help us to walk in the precept of our Lord so that we do not perish like Ahab and his prophets of Baal in hellfire. Amen!



Myth Buster

Does John 6:53-54 Refer To The Lord's Supper?

By Emmanuel Oluwatoba

In John 6:53-54, Jesus says, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

This passage has often been used by proponents of transubstantiation and consubstantiation as evidence. But does this passage refer to the Lord's Supper?

Examining the context of the passage will allow us to find out the truth. As we consider everything Jesus said in John chapter 6, the meaning of this passage becomes clearer.

Earlier in the chapter, Jesus fed the 5,000 (John 6:1-3). The next day, the same multitudes continued to follow Him, Jesus knew they were doing so because they wanted another meal, and He pointed out their short-sightedness: they were only seeking physical bread, but there was something more important: “Food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you” (verse 27). At this point, Jesus attempts to turn their perspective away from physical sustenance to their true need, which was spiritual.

Jesus explains that it is not physical bread that the world needs, but spiritual bread. Jesus identified himself as that spiritual bread (John 6:35,48, 51) and highlights faith as the key to being able to assess this bread. (John 6:40, 47). In John 6:56 the root Greek word for “abides” is “meno,” which means “to remain”. That is, those who believe in Jesus will remain in Jesus. They will never lose their salvation if they continue to believe in Him. That is why Jesus promised in verse 54 that He will raise up those who believe in Him on the last day. Once again, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood” refers to faith in

Jesus.

Jesus speaks in metaphorical terms and makes His audience understand that He is to their spiritual needs what bread is to their physical needs. To prevent being misconstrued, Jesus specifies that He has been speaking metaphorically: “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life” (John 6:63).

Therefore, Jesus' figurative statement in John 6:53 about “eat My flesh and drink My blood” is a symbolical reference to faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of one's sins. The consumption of His body and blood are the equivalent of ingesting His sacred instruction. He was not referring to the Lord's Supper. He did not institute the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion until the night before His death on the cross. Therefore, if He had been referring to the Lord's Supper, the group of disciples would not have understood His comment as a reference to the Lord's Supper which had not even yet been instituted.

Besides, In John 6:54, the terms “eats” and “drinks” are both present tense participles, signifying that the disciples were to be eating His “flesh” and drinking His “blood” at that very time and continue doing so as a process. If it refers to the literal eating and drinking of His flesh and blood, the disciples were not eating and drinking the Savior's literal flesh and blood at that moment! The important point for all of us is that Jesus clearly taught that a person must believe in Him to have eternal life (cf. John 3:16), and only those who believe in Him have eternal life. Salvation is only found in Him and no one else (Acts 4:12).

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IDEAL HOME

When Parents Fail (Part 2)

By Julius C. Nwankwo

Only a false religious faith permits a division between "belief" and life... If a generation only has knowledge of His commands and no love for His ways (this is where Christianity has degenerated into a mere religion), then the next generation will depart from those commands. How do we avoid this generational departure? Parents must pass on the fear of the LORD to their children and children's children.

For parents not fail or disappoint God, they must:

3: Be convinced of the need for God's blessing.

In Eph 6:1-3 God says "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." God's ways always bring the greatest blessing. To the degree our lives are shaped by His teaching, we are able to live by His high standards. When we carefully apply these teachings to our lives, then we see how God's promises fill our lives. Part of this blessing is material blessing. Part of it is multiplication. God wants to increase what is good. Having many children is a blessing of our LORD, which should not be hindered.

4: Have undivided loyalty to Jehovah (LORD).

"Jesus said to him, "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind". (Mat 22:37). "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (Luke 16:13). Since the Lord is one, we must not divide our affections between Him and something else. If there were several gods, then our loyalty would be divided. Since He is one, all of our devotion, inspiration and strength must be used to do all that He says. His words take a priority in our lives. God is asking, even demanding, that we take all of our work, family, and

personal plans and re-work them so that He becomes the center of our lives. A doctor, for example, should give up his occupation if he is required to do abortions. He should not murder. The commitment to life requires him to help not hurt people.

Jesus told us that we could only love Him or wealth (mammon – Matthew 6:24). If a family worships money, then their decisions will be made with those prior commitments in mind. In the end, we will only prioritize one God. We need to commit to serving the LORD Jehovah as a family. This decision sets our family apart from others. This is important to communicate to our children.

5: Be devoted to His Word: Psalms 1:1-3 "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper."

2 Tim. 3:15: "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus".

We fool ourselves if we think that we can raise our children to become godly men and women without having a passion for God and His Word ourselves. His



words must be in our hearts. We can judge our commitment by discerning how much time we spend keeping God's Word fresh on our hearts and minds. When we do spend time in His Word – is it because we desire His Word or because we are obligated to? We do go through ups and downs in our spiritual life, but the real test is how much we really love God through all those times.

6: Be committed to teaching our children. God told the children of Israel and said “Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me 'Gather the people to me, and I will let hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children” (Deuteronomy 4: 9, 10). The wise man said “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6: 7-9). There are two commands here. First, we are instructed to “teach them diligently to our sons.” This describes formal teaching. Secondly we are to “talk of” His ways. This is informal teaching.

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EGHAREVBA - OBOROH DEBATE

On Saturday, 19th June, 2021, brother Osamagbe Lesley Egharevba met brother John Robo Oboroh in a debate on the subject of **Church Cooperation in Financing Evangelism**. The debate was conducted in the meeting hall of the church of Christ, Igando in Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria.

I sincerely appreciate the speakers and the audience; both those physically present and those online. As the Organizer and Moderator, I thank God the event was successful. It was held for two reasons:

1. To investigate the issue of church cooperation from two perspectives, given the modern trend of solicitations for funds from various sources to embark on evangelism in the brotherhood.
2. To set forth an improved format for debating.

The objectives were achieved.

The debaters both agreed that:

1. Churches and individuals, especially Preachers are to do the work of evangelism.
2. Human institutions or organizations/agencies are not entrusted with this work and should not be funded by a church.
3. There are Bible passages indicating money could be sent as benevolence for a needy church.

The *divergence* is what constitutes “a need.”

Lesley affirmed that each church should evangelize according to its ability while John affirms it may solicit and receive help. Lesley sees that as “a want” and not “a need” since such projects are self-created. John sees it as 'mutual helpfulness' covered by generic authority to create equality.

Continue on page 40.

SALVATION

Unconditional Election: Has God Predestined the Man or the Plan?

By David Olajire

Calvinists and its adherents believe that God, since the foundation of the world, before the birth of any man, has determined those who will be saved. That is, man has no choice but to either be saved or damned, not because of his actions, but because God has arranged it that way...This doctrine of predestination is completely absurd to reason and the Bible

Introduction

It is a clear fact that the Bible teaches predestination. However, what has been predestined (the plan or the man), has for centuries been a subject of debate. When we say the man, it means that God has specifically chosen some people to heaven and others to hell. And when we say the plan, it means that God has prepared a way and anyone who follows that particular way will be saved. Some folks believe that man cannot make choices because God has predetermined every action of man. Therefore, anyone who goes to hell has been predestinated to go to hell, regardless of his choice and actions. Some others believe that God has not predestinated the actions of man, though He has foreknowledge of all a man will do. These two beliefs are obviously different and contradictory; both cannot be correct. Therefore we must be diligent to ascertain what the Bible teaches on this matter.

Difference Between Foreknowledge And Predestination

Before addressing the two views on the subject of predestination, it is important that the difference between predestination and foreknowledge be made clear. This is because most of the problems regarding the subject of predestination germinate from the ill-informed understanding of what foreknowledge is. Foreknowledge is defined as the knowledge of something before it happens or exists¹ while predestination means to predestine; that is, to determine the future or the fate of something in

advance².

Foreknowledge is different from predestination. Someone might have a foreknowledge of an event without predestining it. Let us consider two examples to show the difference between the two. First, a mother told her child not to play with some of his friends because she knew they will influence him badly. The child refused to obey and ended up badly influenced. In this case, the mother has not predestined that the child be badly influenced because she did not plan it but she foreknew the child will be badly influenced with such company. Second, a teacher sets in her mind that anyone who sits at the front row of the class will be rewarded. In this case, the teacher predestined those who will be rewarded because she made a plan. From these two examples, we see the difference between predestination and foreknowledge. While the mother of the child only foreknew what will happen, the teacher predestined what will happen.

God in His omniscience is able to know, without mistakes, what will happen in the future (Isaiah 48:5). Nevertheless, there is always a choice for man (Josh. 24:14, Jer. 18:5-12). Therefore, God knows everything but does not predestine everything. Consider the case of Pharaoh; God knew Pharaoh will be stubborn and intransigent (Ex. 3:19-20). Pharaoh truly became stubborn and intransigent (Ex. 5:2). Then because of Pharaoh's stubbornness, he was dealt with (Ex. 6:1). God never predestined Pharaoh to die such death, although He foreknew Pharaoh will



end up in such way. He gave Pharaoh enough time and signs to repent yet Pharaoh was hardened in heart (Ex. 8:13-14).

Considering The Two Views

Calvinists and its adherents believe that God, since the foundation of the world, before the birth of any man, has determined those who will be saved. That is, man has no choice but to either be saved or damned, not because of his actions, but because God has arranged it that way. In the very words of John Calvin, the father of Calvinism, **"No one who wishes to be thought religious dares outright to deny predestination, by which God chooses some for the hope of life, and condemns others to eternal death"**³. Truly, no one will dare to say there is no predestination but anyone, dead or alive, should be scared to say that God has predestinated some to go to heaven and others to go to hell. This doctrine of predestination is a doctrine the Bible does not agree with, and it is spreading like wildfire because people fail to rightly divide the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15). If this doctrine be true, why should we blame anyone for his actions? Why should God judge anyone for their wrongdoings? Why should we expect people to change? The Calvinist doctrine of predestination is completely absurd to reason and the Bible. It goes against everything the Bible teaches about God and the salvation of man. The Bible teaches that:

Salvation is for all (1 Tim 4:10, 1Tim 2:6). Although not all will be saved, God has made salvation available to all men. Those who are not saved are not saved because they refuse to obey and not because God purposefully wish to make them damned **"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men"** (Titus 2:11). God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2Pet 3:9). God's wish

is that all men be saved (1Tim 2:4). It is unreasonable to think that God will wish all men to become what He has not prepared for all men. Paul, referring to the Jews who rejected the message of salvation said, **"however, they have not all obeyed the gospel"** (Rom 10:16). Salvation is a choice; **For as many who believe He gave the right to become sons of God** (John 1:12). God's wish that everyone be saved proves that God has not predestinated some persons to heaven and others to hell.

In addition, God is a just God (Job 8:3). How will God be just if He punishes people for what they have no power against? Those who teach that God has predestinated every action of man, including his eternal destination, get confused here and they say **"Since all humans are sinners and lost without God's grace, those who are not elected to be saved simply receive the just results of their rebellion. It is not that God specifically predestined, or elected, them to be damned, it is just that since God didn't elect them to receive grace and be saved, they simply wind up getting what they deserve"**⁴. Do you not see their contradiction? They teach God has predestinated whatever a man does yet the man must be blamed if he does wrong. Can a man challenge God? No. If God has truly predestinated everything a man does, it means God made man to do whatsoever he does. Thus it is God who must be blamed and not the man. I still find it hard to imagine that a mortal man will dare to charge God of injustice! For that is what Calvinist and those who propagates this false doctrine has done. It is undisputable that God will not be just if He should punish man for what He has ordained man to do. Think about it, dear reader! However, the Bible says God punishes men because of their sin (Rom 14:12). God will punish man because of the choice he made



while on earth (2 Cor. 5:10). Again, the just nature of God teaches us that God has not predestinated some to hell and others to heaven.

Furthermore, God is not a respecter of persons (Rom 2:11; Acts 10:34-35). The doctrine that God has predestinated some to hell and others to heaven, charges God with favoritism but with God there is no favoritism (Eph 6:9). It is against the nature of God to do such selection. God accepts those who fear Him and does righteousness (Acts 10:35). This proves that it is in the hands of man to either be saved or damned. Once again, the impartial nature of God does not support the doctrine which states that God has predestined some to hell and others to heaven.

Moreover, it makes God insincere (Rom 3:4): How will a man dare to charge God of injustice, favouritism and insincerity! This is exactly what those who teach that God has predestinated the man have done. The Bible says "**Go into all the world and preach to all creatures, he that believes and is baptised will be saved**" (Mark 16:15-16). Why will God tell us to preach to everyone, when He knows it is useless? Why will God say that whosoever believes will be saved, when He knows it is not in the hands of he who wishes to believe? Why should we tell all men to repent, when God has already assigned it that all men will not repent? Truthfully, this wrong belief of predestination is strange to the bible.

What Has God Predestined?

The Bible makes it clear that God has predestined the plan of salvation and anyone who follows that way or pattern will be saved. The Bible teaches that the way to salvation prepared by God is Christ. The eternal purpose which He purposed is in Christ (Eph 3:11). Everyone who believes in Christ will be saved (John 8:24). Salvation has appeared to all men but can only

be received in Christ (Acts 4:12). All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph 1:3). For as many who believe in Christ, God gave power to become His children (John 1:12). Clearly, the Bible states that Christ is the way to salvation (John 3:16; 14:6; Eph 1:7-10). Definitely, this does not contradict anything the Bible says about God and salvation. It makes the call of God to salvation sincere (Mark 16:15-16). It makes God a just God if he punishes anyone who disobeys (John 3:16). It shows that man can make choices and that he is responsible for his choices (Joshua 24:14). It makes one sure of his salvation (1Tim 1:12). It makes God impartial (Acts 10:34-35).

Conclusion

We have seen clearly, that although there is predestination, but what has been predestinated is the plan of salvation and not the men who will be saved. God has created the plan of salvation in Christ but does not choose those who will be saved or not. This indeed is what the Bible teaches.

References

¹Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Edition. Copyright © 2010 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. All rights reserved.

²[Http://wiktionary.org](http://wiktionary.org)

³Institutes of the Christian Religion, (1975, III,xxi). Cited from Jackson, Wayne. "Calvinism and the Great Commission." ChristianCourier.com. Access date: May 3, 2021.

<https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1455-calvinism-and-the-great-commission>

⁴<https://www.gci.org/articles/predestination-does-god-choose-your-fate/>

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: I have been baptized by immersion in my former church. Can I be baptized again now that I am hearing the gospel by another preacher who seems to be emphasizing the necessity of baptism?

Answer: Baptism is a command of Christ in the New Testament. Those who believed and are baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21). Their sins are washed away (Acts 22:16) and they have put on Christ (Col. 3:27). Nearly all denominations deny this fact, perhaps, including the questioner's "former church."

Baptism is by immersion as we have seen in clear passages of the scripture (John 3:23; Acts 8:36,38-39; Mark 1:4-5). This truth is also denied by some groups as they practice sprinkling for baptism.

Furthermore, the scriptures teach that the Lord adds those who have been baptized, the saved, to "the church" (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 12:13). This church is one and not a denomination (Eph. 4:4) and it has Christ as its head and not a human general overseer or superintendent (Eph. 1:22-23). Again, all denominations believe that they have the right to establish their own group and call it a church.

Baptizing a person into a denomination which is a different body (even if done by immersion) is not acceptable and rebaptism is necessary when that understanding is not present about what the purpose of baptism is and the body to which one is baptized is a different one than the ONE body of Christ just like the 12 men were re-baptized in Acts 19:1-7. These 12 men had previously been baptized by immersion (cf. John 3:23; Mark 1:4-5) but it was "unto John's baptism" (Acts 19:3) which was already obsolete at that time. Christ had enjoined baptism in His authority (Matthew 28:19) and they needed to be baptized again.

Question: Listening to a program at my working place, I heard one of your Pastors call "Tongues" spoken by present churches as an "emotional outburst." He went further to say that except any of the founding apostles lay hands on you, you can't speak in tongues. Do you guys also mean that what Paul spoke was emotional outbursts? Because the person who laid hands on him was Ananias, the Bible called him a certain man, not an apostle.

Answer: The Bible teaches that tongue speaking is simply speaking in another human language. Acts 2:1-12 shows the people understood the apostles while they spoke in tongues. The apostles miraculously spoke in language that other people could understand. This was necessary due to cross-cultural language barrier since the apostles need to preach the gospel to the whole world. Paul made it clear that tongues were a sign for the unbelievers and not to those who believe (I Cor. 14:22). They were supposed to be a help to the unbelievers so that the gospel could be preached to them. However, tongues were never intended to be forever (I Cor. 13:8-10). But here are the problems with modern day tongue speakers: (1) They do not speak in a known human language; (2) They speak in tongues for their own sake and not for unbelievers; (3) They speak when there is no interpreter (I Cor. 14:27-28); (4) They do not speak in tongues one at a time (I Cor. 14:27); (5) They allow their women participate in this exercise (I Cor. 14:34-35). I am sure all of these made the COC preacher refer to present day tongues speaking as an "emotional outburst." As for Paul, he was an apostle and qualified to be. Ananias did not make him an apostle but Christ Jesus (I Cor. 9:1; 15:1-11). Hopefully, we will deal with the issue of tongue speaking thoroughly in the next edition of this journal.

Addendum

Scriptural Answers To Popular Objections From Gospel Prospects

By Opemipo Olusola

Often times, gospel prospects raise some objections to members of the church of Christ. Since we are commanded to “always be ready to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (I Peter 3:15), we shall take a look at some of these objections and proffer scriptural answers:

1. Judge Not: This phrase has been misinterpreted by modern religious leaders to mean “Don't pass any comment on any religious belief and practice of other people whether right or wrong”. “Leave everyone to his own faith, no need to correct others or to prove them wrong”. What actually is Matt.7:1-6 saying? Are we not going to judge at all? If God alone judges, why can't the word of God judge us? (John.7:24, 12:48, 1Cor.11:31-34, 1Thess.5:21). False Pastors often use this phrase to shield their members from reasoning with other people of opposing views in the scriptures; they may say it in this other way; “stop condemning others” citing the parable of wheat and tares. Can the Bible be used to judge our actions? If yes, why can't same Bible judge our worship? (2Tim.3:16-17). Jesus only forbids hypocritical judgment from His disciples in the context of Matt.7:1-5!

2. Preach Not The Church: The proponents of this idea often claim that preaching Christ and holiness is much more important than preaching about the church! Will God ask you about which church you attend when you get to Heaven? What relationship does the church have in regards to our salvation? What sin is committed if a morally upright person places membership with any church of his choice? Is our holy life not more important to Christ than church membership? From the Bible point of view,

church is a product of God's eternal plan according to Eph.3:10-11; the place of origin and the builder were announced by the Old Testament prophets (Isa.2:2-3, Zech.6:12-13). The divine measurements for the church's doctrine are revealed in the New Testament (Eph.3:18-21). Jesus died for her and He is coming back for His blood-bought Church (not churches –Eph.5:25, 27). How could someone now imagine that membership with such a divinely planned church is not important to our salvation? (Acts.2:47).

3. How Does The Bible Prove That The Church Of Christ Is The Only Church Approved By God? God always love to give pattern for His works and worship since the beginning of the world (Acts.15:18); His eternal plan about the church was fulfilled by Jesus Christ when He said “upon this Rock I will build my church” (Matt.16:18, Eph.3:10-11). God gave Noah the pattern and measurements for the construction of Ship (Gen.6:13-22). God of Israel also gave Moses the pattern for the building of Tabernacle, a sanctuary where God meets with His people, Ex.25:8-9,40. In a similar way, God the Father of our Lord Jesus has given us the pattern for His church (i.e the True Tabernacle) in the New Testament. A church that conforms to this New Testament plan is the only church that is qualified to be reckoned as the church that belongs to Christ (Acts 2:38-47, 1Cor.3:11,21-23) while all other churches that deviate from this divine pattern are called “denominations”; they are “trees not planted by God” which shall be rooted up one day! (Matt.15:8-14, 2 Jhn.1:9-11).

4. I Am Experiencing Spiritual And Financial Breakthrough As A Denominationalist: Bible



says there is one body, meaning that there is one church with one faith which does not involve the establishment of various denominational churches with conflicting faiths (Eph.4:4-5, Col.1:18, Heb.12:2). Nevertheless, there are claims of breakthrough from spiritual attacks and from financial problems as a member of the church not approved in the Bible especially the New Testament. How could you now conclude that denominations are not acceptable in God's sight or that they are not part of the body of Christ? (1Cor.12:13, Eph.4:4, Matt.7:21,24:24, 2Thess.2:9-11). Is it not possible for false prophet or Pastor to work miracles mentioning the name of Christ? The Bible says yes! (Deu.13:1-10, Jer.14:14, 1Tim.4:1-4, 1Jhn.4:1,6).

The only means of getting the assurance that we are living or worshipping God in the True way is to have the testimony of the Laws of the Holy Spirit which are recorded in the New Testament scriptures (Rom.8:14,16, Jhn.5:39). If any of your beliefs and practices could not be established in the teachings of Christ and His Apostles, then you are not in the right church! (2Jhn.1:9-11). No matter how fervent you are in prophesying, speaking in tongues, in performing healing, if you violate any law of the Holy Spirit (i.e. when you deviate from any New Testament instruction) then you are under the influence of seducing spirits and doctrines of demons! (1Tim.4:1-4, 1Cor.14:34,37).

5. Stop Confusing “Believers” With New Teachings, Look-Out For Sinners Or Pagans And Preach To Convert Them! Paul, an Apostle of Christ was a believer when he humbly presented his Gospel before other Apostles and brethren at Jerusalem (Gal.2:1-11). Bible teaches against the spirit of pride and self righteousness as demonstrated by the Pharisees (Lk.18:9-14, Matt.23:12-13, 21,31-

32). A faithful Christian is always prepared to answer everyone who queries his or her faith (1Pet.3:15, Phil.1:17).

6. Why Not Leave Everyone To His Own Faith? Bible teaches that there is one Faith (Eph.4:5). Jesus Christ is the Author and finisher of this faith (Heb.12:2). This One Faith is what Jesus Christ expects from every one of us at His return (Lk.18:8, 1Tim.4:1). Our right attitude should be “Self-examination” whether we are in the faith or not (2Cor.13:5) rather than saying “Leave everyone to his own faith”. May we learn from the Bereans in Acts.17:10-11.

7. Hold Fast To What You Have Believed: This phrase is written to those who uphold the same teaching of Christ as it was upheld by the first century believers (Philadelphia – Rev.3:11 cf. 2Pet.1:1). If you believed perverted Gospel, it is dangerous to uphold such Gospel (Gal.1:6-9, Matt.7:21-23). The memory that we are living in a perilous time should motivate us to examine carefully anything we believe or practice today! (2Thess.2:15,3:6, 2Cor.13:5).

8. I Have Made A Covenant With God Not To Commit “Church Adultery”. There is nothing like “Church Adultery” in our Bible. We only have “Spiritual Adultery” (i.e the act of mixing the authority of Moses and Christ together for worship – Rom.7:1-6). God's word says “Test all things...” (1Thess.5:21). “...avoid them”, Rom.16:17-18. Any covenant in religious matters that cannot be established in the teachings of Christ is null and void! (Jer.44:15-23). If anyone is in Christ (i.e in Christ's church), old things have passed away (2Cor.5:17).

9. My Conscience Always Tells Me If I Am In The Right Church Or Not! Heart of man is deceitful above all things (Jer.17:9). Human



conscience can mislead a man once it is not being filled with the word of God (Ps.119:11). For example, some people believe to have worshipped God by slaughtering the disciples of Christ, (Jhn.16:1-3). Brother Paul had good conscience while imprisoning and killing early believers (Acts.23:1, 8:1-3, 9:1-8, 1Tim.1:12-13). Thus, except you allow the words of Christ to lead you, your conscience will always mislead you to worship God in a wrong way (Prov.14:12, 2Jhn.1:9-11). Let the Laws of Holy Spirit lead you (Rom.8:2,14,16).

10. How Could The Church Of Christ Be The Only Body Of Christ When Some Of Her Members Are Well Known In The Public With Unpleasant Characters? Jesus, the best and master teacher from God had a thief and a traitor as one of His disciples (i.e. Judas Iscariot – Jhn.12:4-6). Our Lord's parable about “the Dragnet” in Matt.13:47-50 tells us that the gospel net often drags both the good and bad persons into the church, that is why the judgment must begin from the church of Christ (i.e. the house of God – 1Pet.4:17). Since God will judge us individually, we must seek “to be the doer of the word” and leave the wayward ones until that time (2Cor.5:10, Jam.1:22,25). We are charged to look unto Jesus alone as our perfect example (Heb.12:2). Though there may not be a “perfect Christian” but there is always a perfect church, for Jesus said that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against His church, (i.e. the church of Christ – Matt.16:18, Eph.5:27). There is church discipline for erring members purposely for the purity of the church (1Cor.5:1-13). Once the report of a wayward member reached the hearing of the church, investigations and necessary discipline must be effected without partiality, tribalism, or favoritism (Jam.2:1-5). But the secret sins shall be judged by God who sees the secret (Rom.2:11,16).

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EGHAREVBA - OBOROH DEBATE

Continued from page 33.

Lesley avers the NT pattern is for churches to send money unto another church to relief the poor saints and to send money directly as support unto a preacher. John avers that there is no pattern in co-operation and any specifics can occur though there is no passage showing money was sent for evangelism. He declared that if materials like tracts/Bible may be sent, then money could be sent to procure same.

Lesley submitted these are not equivalent; that tracts are a finished work of the sender whereas money is not and could be diverted. That giving every saint or unbeliever a tract is not same as giving money unto such person.

We all agreed each individual and church should continue to study the subject and seek to practice the NT dictates.

The professional video in DVD will be uploaded to google drive when ready and the link made available.

The Debate guidelines and presentations are:

http://www.lainosint.com/download/faith/Church_Cooperation_Debate_June2021_Rules_and_Program.pdf

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