

Faithful to — What?

By Robert Turner simply were not bound by the love of God in the first place.

I believe Christians may "depart from the faith," "fall away from grace," even "deny the Lord that bought them" (1 Tim. 4:1; Gal. 5:4; 2 Pet. 2:1) for the scriptures clearly teach this. Our Baptist friends err when they apply 1 Jn. 2:19a to "all" (note 19b) who fully backslide.

But "we" err in thinking that all who are baptized, and are "faithful" in their home-town, are truly converted to Christ.

It is a common cry in California, Arizona---and I suspect in the northeastern industrial areas---that many "faithful Christians" from Tennessee, Oklahoma or Texas, come there to work, and "never darken the church doors." Friends write that they were "faithful to the church" back home.

And that is it---exactly. They were indeed "faithful to the church" (apparently but were not faithful to the Lord. Many "grew up in the church" without really knowing, in a direct and personal way, the truth. They may have been drilled in "the right answers" concerning baptism, the Lord's Supper, instrumental music, etc., yet never have committed themselves to honest Bible study--never have given themselves whole-heartedly to Christ.

"Back home" their parents---and later, their friends---expected them to "be faithful" (meaning, attend the "services") and they did so. But away from home, separated from home-town pressures to conform, their lack of genuine ties to Christ is apparent. It was not "worldly California" that drew them away--although I offer no rose to materialism in California or Tennessee. They

Much of our lament about the young people who "quit the church" is equally misdirected. "Area-wide" socials, "church skating parties" and other "fellowship hall" activities do not bind the youth to Christ. They actually increase the rate of apostasy when these young people leave home and are thrown into an environment that calls for spiritual strength. We have fed hungry souls with hamburgers. We have deprived them of training for the church-world, light-darkness battles they must meet in an adult life.

Is "churchanity" responsible for much of the weak spritual fiber seen in those who go astray? I believe it is---and have, for twenty years or more, been preaching the evils of "party line" religion. But God forbid that I should deny the existence of the divinely authorized local church, or the organized functions of its members. Sectarianism arises among God's people--- whether they call themselves "church" or "group"---when they regard themselves as the standard for "soundness." "No church" may be as much a party line as any "church-of-Christ" ever preached.

The church doesn't need another saviour; we (the church distributively) simply need to be faithful to the Saviour we have. By this example, and by objective, non-sectarian appraisal of our practices in the light of the word of God, we may be able to teach the next generation to turn to the Lord, and cleave to Him. (Acts 11:20f)



Philippians 1:9-11 - And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Sick			
Richard Wood (Melanie Smith's Uncle)	Lori Holloway	Mike Reed (Friend of Long's)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Josie Keith (Friend of Heath Fowler)	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)	Jerry Sandlin (Megan Lee's Grandfather)
Gaylord Huffman (Jennifer Daniel's Grandfather)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Mary Smith (Nathan Smith's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's brother)	Larry Alexander (Friend of Phillip Box)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Stacey Harrell (Marcus Harrell's Dad)	Ann Robinson (Sharon Bailey's Mom)	Debra Lowe (Toni Herd's Friend)

November Birthdays

- 1 - Jason Williams
- 2 - Debbi Coleman
- 3 - Darla Hahn
- 6 - Lauren Ledford
- 6 - Troy Godwin
- 7 - Leah Donahue
- 7 - Amy Godwin
- 8 - Ashley Miller
- 9 - Michael Hubbard
- 11 - Davis Fultz
- 13 - Toni Herd
- 13 - Emerson Daniels
- 15 - Rafia Qadeer
- 16 - Nichole Pender
- 17 - Art Daves
- 20 - Andrew Smith
- 23 - Mary Ann Roberts
- 24 - John Burns
- 25 - Timothy Stone
- 25 - Silas Weldon
- 27 - Scott Fowler
- 29 - Richard North
- 30 - David Simpson

News and Notes

- Remember Matthew Johnson, David Golden and Tim Morton in our prayers as they are deployed overseas.
- There will be a special ladies workshop today from 2-3:30 at the building to discuss children's Bible Classes for 2012.
- Spencer Sullivanne had successful ankle surgery on Friday. Please pray for him as he recovers at home.
- Melanie Smith's uncle, Richard Wood, had successful surgery on Friday to remove cancer.
- Congratulations to Blake Edwards and Megan Lee on their graduation! Also we are thankful for Caralise Hunt in receiving her Doctoral degree.

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Involvement and Relevancy

By Irven Himmel



Thoughts to Ponder

When one door closes, another one opens, but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one that has opened for us.

Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or
E-mail:
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Modern churches participate in numerous practices which are completely foreign to true New Testament doctrine. Promoters of such practices find consolation in the idea that they are getting involved, making religion more relevant and meaningful to modern man.

"Involvement" and "relevancy" are two magic words in today's language. They somehow put the stamp of approval on a wide variety of performances. Never mind about the apostolic church, we must relate to our own times. And do not waste time quoting scripture; just get in and participate. Wherever the crowd is swimming, the water is fine, so come on in, and remember that we need a contemporary church. If we do not get involved we cannot relate, and if we fail to relate we are doomed to wither and die!

Before we plunge into some new and daring adventure that may drown us in destruction and perdition, let us examine involvement and relevancy. Let us scrutinize, analyze, study, and ponder the implications of the terminology expressive of a common concept.

One is "involved" when he is drawn

in as a participant. Christians are by the nature of their calling an involved people. Christ's followers are taught to be occupied with prayer, Bible study, teaching, exhortation, joint participation in divine service, good works, support of the gospel, worship, and righteous living. It is regrettable that some who wear the holy name of Jesus are not actively engaged in these important pursuits. Their lack of involvement is a detriment to their spiritual growth and to the advancement of the church of which they are members.

God's word warns that there are some things in which the Christian must not become involved. Here are some examples:

1. Fleshly Lusts. We are to "abstain" from unholy desires which war against the soul. (1 Peter 2:11). This includes lasciviousness, revelings, drunkenness, drinking parties, and idolatries. (1 Peter 4:2,3). Paul refers to such practices as "works of the flesh," (Galatians 5:19-21) and declares that to be involved in these things is to miss the kingdom of God.

2. Works of Darkness. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of

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darkness, but rather reprove them." (**Ephesians 5:11**). The same chapter mentions fornication, covetousness, foolish talking, jesting, and uncleanness. No one involved in these sins "hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

3. False Teachings. John wrote that if one comes and does not bring the doctrine of Christ, "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (**II John 9-11**). To be involved with a false teacher so as to lend him support is to share in his evil deeds.

4. Unrighteousness. Paul asked, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" A child of God cannot be involved in the practice of anything unrighteous. Rather than be drawn into participation with infidels, idolaters, and the like, we are warned to "come out from among them, and be ye separate." (**II Cor. 6:14-18**).

In short, the Bible teaches us to "abstain from every form of evil." (**I Thess. 5:22, NASB**). To be involved in the practice of evil is to forfeit our eternal inheritance. Therefore, before becoming involved in any given situation, the Christian must be sure that he will not compromise the truth, give support to false doctrine, or be led into sin.

A thing is "relevant" if it bears upon, or applies to, the case in hand; it is pertinent, applicable, or related. The dictionary says relevance "implies a traceable, significant, logical connection."

The gospel of Jesus Christ is, and always will be, relevant to man's spiritual needs. The gospel relates to the drunkard, the dope addict, the fornicator, the liar, the thief, the murderer, the slanderer, the immoral person, the hypocrite, the false teacher, the warmonger, the infidel, the lover of money, the factionist, the idolater, the reprobate, the boaster, the sorcerer, the profane man, the talebearer, the prostitute, the law-breaker, the adulterer, the unbeliever, the blasphemer, the glutton, the rioter, the mocker, the homosexual, the busybody, and all others in

engaged in sin. The gospel is applicable to all such people because it is God's power to save them from sin.

God has given to the church the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the lost. The church is necessarily involved with sinners in reaching them with the soul-saving message. But the church must be cautious not to become involved in sin while trying to convert the sinner. The church must not throw aside the authority of Jesus while attempting to persuade men to submit to the rule of Christ. The church cannot adopt practices and methods which have no traceable, significant, logical connection with the scriptural performance of its divine mission.

Jesus became involved with publicans and sinners in order to relate his teaching to their lives. However, our Lord did not become a publican and the disciples were not advised to take up tax-collecting so they could reach more publicans and no instructions were given for the church to establish a "publican mission," a "publican club," or even a "half-way house for publicans."

Paul was much involved in turning people from idols to the living and true God. The great apostle did not try to relate to the idolaters' by urging young people in the church to sing hymns to the tune of licentious songs, or to have devotionals in the temple of Diana at Ephesus, or to set up a sex information center to try to reach understanding with the priestesses at Corinth, or by inviting a heathen priest to speak in the assembly of the saints.

In their zeal to involve the church in that which relates, many have participated in things from which they should have abstained. Relevance requires reproof of evil. Involvement with the sinner does not justify engaging in sin.

What is the relevancy of light to darkness? How may light become involved with darkness? The answer is simple: Light shines to dispel darkness.

Before getting involved, ask yourself: Involved in what? Before accepting something which is supposed to relate, ask yourself: To what does it relate?



"Who Have No Hope"

By F. Yater Tant

The faithful Christian who dies leaves his sorrowing family a comfort, a consolation, a "blessed hope" more precious to them than anything on this earth. Their sorrow, truly is not the hopeless despair of the heathen.

Many primitive people have a custom of making a great show of grief over the death of their loved ones. In ancient times they even hired mourners to lament and bewail the loss of a relation. The idea here was that the grief of the family was so overwhelming it simply could not be expressed by any normal or ordinary outpouring of mournful cries, and must needs have the help of "professionals" to make lamentation.

This was the kind of "sorrow" Paul admonished against when he wrote the Thessalonians, "that ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope." (**I Thess. 4:13**). The Christian does not need hired mourners; in fact, he really does not mourn at all in the sense in which the heathen mourns. For he recognizes that his separation from a loved one is only temporary, and will be followed by an eternity of complete happiness in company with the one who has now gone.

This will be the case if (and what 'a terrific "IF" it is!) both the deceased and the bereaved die as faithful children of God.

Motives For Obedience

Nobody ever acts from a single motive. All the factors lying behind any decision or action have their influence on an individual. His action (or lack of it) is a TOTAL situation. Some of the strongest motivations, of course, can become so dominant in a given situation as to make it seem that a single motive controls the action, but this is not so. Fear of punishment and hope of reward are two of the strongest motives activating the Christian in his service of God. (Psychologists have long since determined that the former is much stronger than the latter — hence, the folly of those teachers who would eliminate all references to hell and eternal punishment from their speech.) But along with these two basic motivating factors, surely the deep feeling of gratitude to God for the gift of his Son is of no small importance. And the blessed relief from the galling burden of guilt and self-reproach for wrongs done all of

these are potent factors in a man's obedience.

But a very valid motivation is often overlooked the love a man has for his family. It is perfectly right and proper to appeal to this as ONE influence that should lead a man to obey the gospel. If he does not, and goes into eternity without any promise of salvation at all, think what a crushing weight of grief this brings to the family he leaves behind! It is bad enough for them to be deprived of his person and association

through the lonely years ahead. But to know that the separation is FOREVER, and that there can be no hope at all of any kind of reunion — surely, no man who loves his family would want to lay that heavy load upon them!! He will compel his family to "sorrow as those who have no hope."

The much controverted expression "baptized for the dead" in **I Corinthians 15:29** may well be another reference to this very motivation. Many scholars (probably most) believe that this means "baptized in the hope of reunion with the dead." If there is no resurrection, obviously such a reason for baptism is meaningless. And any Corinthian who was "baptized in the hope of reunion" with some dead loved one, and then denied the resurrection of the dead, was obviously not thinking very straight!

Those "who have no hope" are the forlorn and broken people whose loved ones have died out of Christ. Theirs is a bitter sorrow, indeed. How brutal and callous the man who would run the risk of subjecting his family to such torture. The faithful Christian who dies leaves his sorrowing family a comfort, a consolation, a "blessed hope" more precious to them than anything on this earth. Their sorrow, truly is not the hopeless despair of the heathen.

This, of course, is not the only motive that should lead a man to Christ. But it is one; and a very powerful one at that. Powerful, that is, for the man who loves his family. - Gospel Guardian - August 5, 1971

