

News and Notes

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

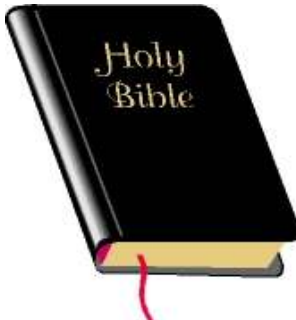
- Sandy Craig** - Broken shoulder/urinary tract infection, but recuperating well.
- Jo Ann McLerran** - Still unable to get out. COPD
- Dub McClish** - To have a stent implant Mar. 29th in Denton, Texas for blocked artery.
- Glenda Marble** - Faithful Christian at Lexington, Okla. Heart problems.
- Debbie Post** - Wife of Doug Post, preacher in Salisbury, MD. Cancer has returned. Recently hospitalized in pain and dehydrated, suffering from pneumonia and very weak.
- David Brown** - Spring, Texas preacher. Blood clots in his leg.
- Sissy Craig** - For spiritual and emotional strength.
- Charles and Linda Pogue** - Congestive heart failure.
- Nancy Verkist** - Ellensburg, Washington. Suffering from Von Hippel Lindau disease.
- Don Smith** - Faithful brother in Christ persecuted for teaching fellow inmates in an Ohio prison.

HEALTH REPORT - Sissy reported on Tuesday that her Mom, Sandy Craig, is doing much after suffering from a urinary tract infection in addition to her broken shoulder. Different antibiotics have been used to fight the infection and she is much improved. Jo Ann McLerran is stronger after receiving an infusion of iron and sounded much better on Tuesday.

KENYA REPORT - Benard sent this report on March 19: "Last week we had two gospel meetings in Rift Valley and the two gospel meetings (Tendonok and Sugutek) ended up with six restorations, as well as Bomet school of preaching students were in class for a week. This week three gospel meetings, Nyabigena (Kisii), Eastside (Nakuru Rift Valley), Port Victoria (Busia Western Kenya) has been going on and so far, four baptisms at Nyabigena and one baptism at Port Victoria." On Mar. 20, we sent two boxes of materials to Benard. The Bellview church in Pensacola, Fla. graciously provided 16 copies of their lectureship book, *Innovations*, for the brethren in Kenya. Benard had requested these books, but they are out of print, so Bellview sent us the last copies they had, which had been damaged in their flood a few years ago. They are only slightly damaged and will be put to good use in combatting the errors of the Nairobi Great Commission School, which is affiliated with Abilene Christian University. They have corrupted many churches in the Rift Valley, but some of them have been restored through Benard's and his co-workers' efforts. We also sent a large box of tracts which were graciously supplied by the church in Spring, Texas. All of these materials will be put to good use by the faithful brethren in Kenya.

GONE TO SALLISAW -Earl and Nancy will be in Sallisaw this Lord's Day. Jerry will teach the adult class.

<p>Those Who Serve Sunday Morning, Mar. 26, 2017 First Prayer - Patrick King Closing Prayer - Landry Brewer Communion - Patrick King Offering - Landry Brewer Sunday Afternoon, Mar. 26, 2017 First Prayer - Dylan Brewer Closing Prayer - Jerry Brewer</p>	<p>Records - Mar. 19 Attendance Bible Class.....17 Morning Worship.....17 Afternoon Worship.....16 Contribution.....\$.N/A</p>
<p>Weekly Meeting Times</p>	
<p>Sunday Morning Bible Classes.....9:30 Sunday Morning Worship.....10:30 Sunday Afternoon Worship.....5:00</p>	



Sound Doctrine

“But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1)

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The Rise And Embrace Of “Civil Religion”

Jerry C. Brewer

What is known as “The Social Gospel” today had its genesis in 19th century religion in the North during the War Between The States. Harry S. Stout wrote, “By late 1863 this war that was not self consciously fought for the creation of an American civil religion was unintentionally becoming about the creation of an American civil religion that would grow as the killing endured” (*Upon The Altar of The Nation*, (Penguin Books: 2006), p. 249).

From that time until the present, denominations have pursued and embraced a civil religion known as “The Social Gospel” that bears no resemblance to New Testament Christianity. The social gospel was further refined and articulated in the early part of the 20th century. Washington Gladden (1836-1918), a “clergyman” is styled “‘a pioneer’ of the Social Gospel even before the term came into use. ...For Gladden, the ‘Christian law covers every relation of life’ including the relationship between employers and their employees” (Wikipedia). Consequently, American religion (denominations) shifted its emphasis from the salvation of the soul and eternal life to an earthly life characterized by fair and equal treatment of the individual, by reforming social institutions, and providing material benefits for everyone. In short, denominationalism created religious socialism modeled after that of Marx in the civil state, and merged the two. Religious socialism has become America’s civil religion.

The rise and embrace of the social gospel as the country’s “civil religion” was accelerated by the large influx of immigrants from Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Although the population of America was growing by leaps and bounds, there were many empty seats in the pews of urban Protestant churches. Middle-class churchgoers were ever faithful, but large numbers of workers were starting to lose faith in the local church. The old-style heaven and hell sermons just seemed irrelevant to those who toiled long, long hours for small, small wages. Immigration swelled the ranks of Roman Catholic churches. Eastern Orthodox churches and Jewish synagogues were sprouting up everywhere. At the same time, many cities reported the loss of Protestant congregations. They would have to face this

challenge or perish. Out of this concern grew the social gospel movement. Progressive-minded preachers began to tie the teachings of the church with contemporary problems. Christian virtue, they declared, demanded a redress of poverty and despair on earth (www.britannica.com/event/Social-Gospel).

Historically, churches of Christ have been latecomers to apostasy, but have, nevertheless, eventually embraced it. Like Israel, who grew weary of Judges after four centuries and cried for a king, “that we may also be like all the nations” (1 Sam. 8:20), many churches of Christ have fallen into line with the social gospel. To them, the gospel no longer appeals to the masses of people. Our age is characterized by crass materialism and, because that is the pursuit of most people, churches have decided they can “attract more people” with programs, events, seminars, and rallies than they can with the gospel—and they are right. But, is the church charged with “attracting people”? The answer is a resounding *No!* The church’s mission, first and last, is to proclaim the saving gospel (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Christ, and Him crucified, is what draws honest seekers to salvation (John 12:32). The social gospel is a “motivator” to bring in numbers, but the church was never charged with “motivating people.” I was once asked by a young preacher, “How can we motivate people?” I replied, “That is not our job. Our job is to preach the gospel to lost humanity.”

Sadly, churches of Christ in many places today are seeking to “motivate” people by the social gospel—instead of drawing men to Christ through the gospel. That is seen in the proliferation of “seminars” conducted by churches, preachers, elders, and others on such things as marriage, family relations, and finances, none of which have anything to do with salvation or the mission of the church. They are “attractants” substituted for the gospel because with little interest in spiritual things today, churches have, “empty seats in the pews.” Therefore, those churches look upon, “the old-style heaven and hell sermons” as irrelevant. Hence, churches have adopted a “bait-and-switch” style of “evangelism.” Their rationale is that, “We can attract people with our programs, then teach them the gospel.” That’s like setting up a deer feeder, then shooting the deer from a blind when they come to eat the corn. The problem with that kind of thinking is that no one will be converted to Christ unless he first *desires* to be. The kingdom of heaven is not for those who are baited by material things, but for the “poor in spirit” who “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matt. 5:3, 6).

Jesus did not charge us with creating programs to “attract people,” but to, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). The disciples who were scattered from Jerusalem, “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). They did *not*, “go everywhere creating programs to attract people.”

Disney - Still Promoting Perversion

Lee Moses

The Walt Disney Company has a long history of advocacy for homosexuality. *Ellen*, broadcast on their television network ABC, made history when its main character came out as lesbian. Their show *Relativity* pushed the boundaries to what became “the most passionate lesbian sexual encounter so far on network TV.” Disney’s ESPN, which was once a 24-hour

sports network, now devotes quite a bit of its airtime to promoting liberal causes, including homosexuality. Countless families over the years who made the mistake of planning a trip to Disney World in late May to early June were shocked to find they had arrived in the midst of Disney World’s “gay days,” an annual event which Disney boasts as “the world’s most popular gay and lesbian celebration.” Several years ago, one often heard of numerous boycotts of Disney provoked by their immoral advocacy. Perhaps some may have been wondering, “I haven’t heard too much about Disney in that regard lately. Have they backed off their perverted position?” Sadly, the answer appears to be, “Not one bit.”

As last Wednesday’s headline from the *New York Daily News* reads, “‘Beauty and the Beast’ to make history this month as Disney’s first film to feature openly gay character.” The director of this remake of an old classic describes its homosexual subplot involving two male characters, LeFou and Gaston: “LeFou is somebody who on one day wants to be Gaston and on another day wants to kiss Gaston. He’s confused about what he wants. . . . It’s somebody who’s just realizing that he has these feelings and Josh [the actor playing LeFou, LM] makes something really subtle and delicious out of it, and that’s what has its payoff at the end. But it is a nice, exclusively gay moment in a Disney movie.”

He added, “The studio is sending out a message that this is normal and natural—and this is a message that will be heard in every country of the world, even countries where it’s still socially unacceptable or even illegal to be gay.” What God calls “*abomination*,” “*vile*,” “*against nature*,” and “*unseemly*,” the Disney studio wants to send a deceitful message to the world that “this is normal and natural” (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26-27).

The editor-in-chief of a homosexual magazine calls this a “landmark moment” for the homosexual movement. He states, “It’s only a first step towards creating a cinematic world that reflects the one in which many of us are now proud to live. . . . In doing so hopefully helping to change attitudes and bring about real social progress.” He believes that this movie is going to help other movies more closely re-reflect the world in which homosexuals are “now proud to live”—that world of sodomy, sleeping around, sexually transmitted diseases, and utter abandonment of morality—this is where those behind this movie are hoping it helps to lead.

This is not all that Disney is presently up to on the cutting edge of immorality. Just last week, Disney aired its first ever same sex kissing scene in *Star vs. The Forces of Evil*, a children’s cartoon aired on channel Disney XD. And there are suggestions that Disney intends to push the envelope further and further. According to an article in the *U.K. Daily Mail*, “Directors of Disney Pixar movie *Moana* have also hinted that the company are opening up to the possibility of their very first LGBT+ Disney princess.”

One would think that children’s cartoons and children’s movies would be a safe haven from such perversion. But based on Disney’s own comments, this is very deliberate—they intend to desensitize young people to immoral conduct so that it can be normalized. But it will never be normalized in the all-seeing eyes of God, and if the righteous are to remain so, they must never let themselves be indifferent to immorality. Christians and their children need to avoid this remake of *Beauty and the Beast* and the television show *Star vs. The Forces of Evil*. And they need to be very wary of Disney in general, because they have made it very clear that they intend to continue promoting perversion. (***The Berean Searcher*, Rives, Tenn., Mar. 5, 2017**)