

# *Where are the tears?*

By Rod Ross

In 1978 Roy Deaver wrote the following article. It is well worth the reading. But, there is one thing that strikes me like a sharp slap to the face from the article. Joe Addison opposed the playing of the organ, and Don Morrison advocated it – but both wept audibly. The idea of division in the church, even over something that they felt so passionately and deeply about, caused them to cry. Neither wanted the division that was necessarily to follow. It broke their hearts. They were keenly aware of the scriptural admonition for unity – from the prayer of Jesus to the plea of Paul.

Jesus, in one of his last acts upon the face of the earth, prayed for the unity of the saved, the church: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:20-23).

The apostle Paul more than once pleaded with the early church to have unity.

To the Corinthians he wrote under inspiration of the Holy Spirit: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). The unity that Paul pleaded for was for all those in the church to speak the same thing, to be of the same mind, to be of the same judgment, to be called by the name of the One who was crucified for them and whose name they were baptized in, Christ, and to have no divisions; they were to be one.

To the church at Ephesus, the beloved apostle Paul under the directions of God wrote: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:1-6)

Within the calling of the Christian, the apostle pleads for saints with all humility, patience and love to seek after the unity belonging to the Holy Spirit in peace. The brethren were to be one: as there is one body or church (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18); as there is one Lord, Jesus Christ (John 13:13; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 8:5,6); as there is one faith, one system of

commandments to follow, the doctrine of Christ, the New Testament (II John 9; Galatians 1:6-9); as there is one baptism, immersion in order to obtain the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Colossians 2:12); and, as there is but one God and Father of all, the Almighty Creator (I Corinthians 8:5,6; Genesis 1&2).

The words and the actions of many today make you wonder if they have the same dedication to unity. The name-calling, the abusive language and actions, the jubilation over division that is reported, make you wonder. Regardless of which side of a division you are on, where is the sorrow and the grief over the reality of disunion and division? Even a deep held conviction that you are on the right side of an issue that tears the body of Christ asunder should bring tears to your eyes. More than horror at the division itself, I am in horror that brethren think so little of the unity of God's people, and fail to show a love for their brethren, and for the body of Christ.

*Where are the tears?*

## **Play On, Miss Bertha**

By Roy Deaver

These words are sad words – some of the saddest ever uttered in all restoration history. The dictionary says that “sad” means “to be associated with sorrow. . . – ” Some words are sad because of their inherent connotations. Some words are sad because of the circumstances out of which they came. Some words are sad because of the consequences which they brought.

On Monday, September 1, 1873, in the pioneer village of Thorp Spring, in Texas, Thorp Spring College came into being. This year – 1973 – is the centennial year. In celebration, the ex-students of Thorp Spring Christian College held a reunion “on campus” July 21 and 22. At the time, I was in a gospel meeting at nearby Morgan Mill, and was privileged to attend the reunion. Brother Don Morris spoke on Saturday afternoon, and brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr. was the speaker on Saturday night. Because of my own preaching engagement I did not get to hear brother Wallace, but I did get to hear brother Morris. Brother Morris spoke on “Add-Ran and its Heirs.” His lecture was tremendous. It will become an exceedingly valuable document in Restoration literature.

Brother Morris spoke at length about unscriptural organizations in Texas, and the consequent divisions among brethren. He spoke of the steps which led to the formation of the “Texas Christian Missionary Society” in Austin, Texas 1866.

Brother Morris then discussed the introduction of mechanical instruments into Christian worship. He mentioned that the instrument was introduced “. . . first in congregations in Dallas, San Marcos, Waco, and Palestine.” He continued as follows: “But the place at which the introduction of the organ received most attention was, without doubt, Thorp Spring, in Add-Ran College. The occasion was a gospel meeting in February, 1894. The speaker was B.B. Sanders, and the song director, E.M. Douthitt. These two often worked as a team and were known to use the instrument in worship. Before the meeting began, there was much discussion – on and off the campus of Add-Ran – about whether the organ would be used.

As the meeting began, a crisis at Add-Ran was developing. It proved to affect the church throughout the state.

On February 20, 1894, the climax was reached. Before the service began, Joseph Addison Clark – the father and pioneer – and his wife took seats at the front of the auditorium. Their son, Addison Clark, the president arose to begin the service. Joseph Addison Clark arose, walked toward the pulpit, took a paper from his pocket, and presented it to his son. It was a petition. The petition was signed by the elder Clark and more than a hundred others who asked that the organ not be used, on the ground that it was not authorized in the New Testament. Addison read the petition, conferred briefly with his brother Randolph, and then announced that he had promised the students the organ could be used in the meeting and that he could not go back on his word. He turned to the organist and said, “Play on, Miss Bertha.”

At this point, brother Don Morris was not able to continue for several moments. He wept audibly, and most of the audience wept with him. Brother Morris continued: “As the organ and singing started, Joseph Addison arose with his wife and led the opposition out of the auditorium. He was a graybearded man, seventy-eight years old, and with a cane. About 140 people, according to Randolph’s son, Joseph Lynn, followed the elderly Clark out of the building. Many in the remaining congregation wept. My father, who was a student that year, was present, and he told me many times about Uncle Joe Clark – how he appealed to the audience not to use the organ and how he led the group out of the auditorium.”

Brother Morris closed his great speech as follows: “. . . we of churches of Christ today are the real heirs of the first years of Add-Ran and of the gospel taught in the first Texas churches. This is true because today we continue in the slogan first used by Texas pioneers and the Campbells before them: ‘We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent.’ This principle has been followed by the Thorp Spring Church from the beginning in 1873 until now. And we believe that this is the true pattern for church organization, for purity in worship, and for all things religious. To use this pattern is more important than excelling in numbers or affluence. We look to the New Testament as the guide in restoring the Lord’s church, and we pray that he may bless us as we attempt to follow it.”

And right now, more so than every before in my lifetime – there are in the church those who saying, “Miss Bertha, play on!” May God help us to have the faith, the conviction, the courage of Joseph Addison Clark (reprinted from *The Spiritual Sword* [October 1978] 18-20).