

# *The Keys Of The Kingdom*

*May 2018 - Vol: 5 Number: 5*



***Published By: J.F. Miller***  
***Editor: J.F. Miller***

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# Contents

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<i>Our Staff</i>	<i>Pg: 3</i>
<i>Editor's Note</i>	<i>Jim Miller Pg: 4</i>
<i>Deaver Doctrine- Where Does It End?</i>	<i>Dub McClish Pg: 8</i>
<i>Church Growth</i>	<i>Jerry Brewer Pg. 15</i>
<i>Medical Ethics Pt. 1</i>	<i>Michael Hatcher Pg: 18</i>

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**May God Bless You. Jim and the Staff**

## Editor's Notes

Don't forget you can pick up copies of the Journey and the Journey Continues below. These make great teaching tools and best of all are affordable. Follow Larry on his journey and help others to find Christ at the same time.

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## *Will you be deceived?*

*Jim Miller  
Gray, Maine*

There are an estimated 4,200 different religions in the world, and these can be categorized into several main religions. These include Christianity, Roman Catholicism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism and so on. Satan has been a busy fellow over the years devising these religions and deceiving men down through the ages. Satan knows that men seek to hear what pleases them what makes them feel good. I ask you is this not the same Idol worship that has been established by our enemy throughout the years.

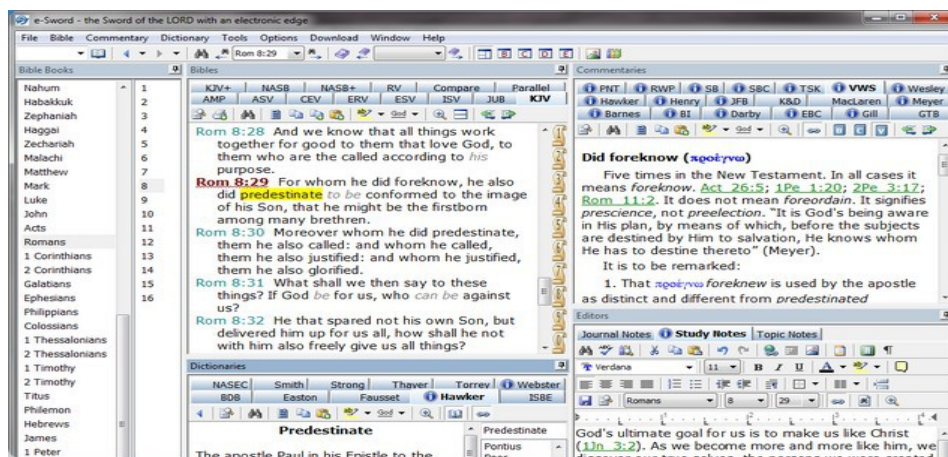
Are today's religions any different than the ones in the first century like Paul confronted in Athens. Act 17:16-30 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with them that met him. And certain also of the

Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babbler say? others, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. And they took hold of him, and brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.) And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things, I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you. The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent:

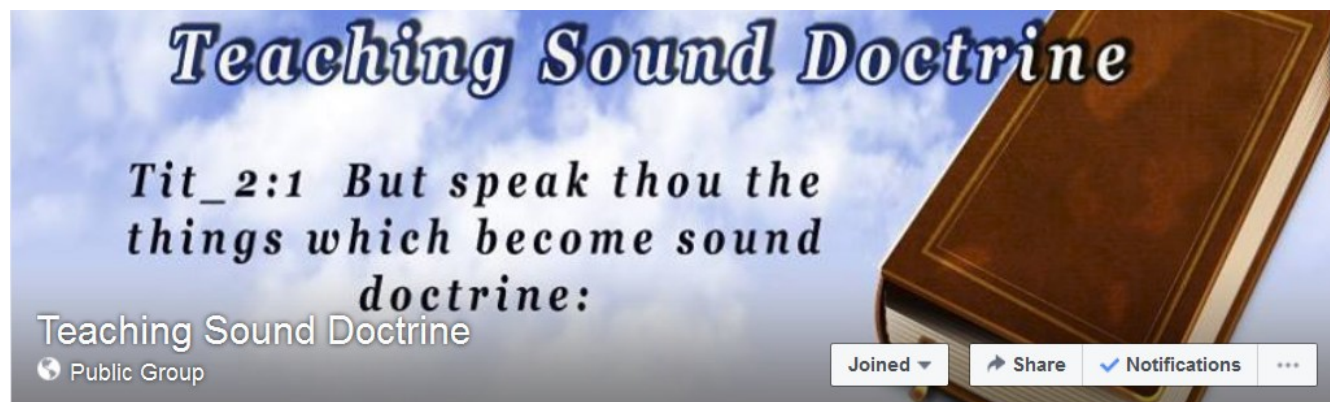
You see Paul proclaimed the One True Gospel of God and we should follow the example he left us. The world wants to believe the lies of the enemy Satan but the true follower of Christ knows there is only one straight path and he endeavors to stay on it. The problem we face today is that the truth of Gods word is rejected and men have made evil good and good evil so as to have their own way. Yes my friends look around you Satan has set the world afire with his many religions the question now is will you be deceived?

Till Next We Meet  
God Bless

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**This is a new website created to expose the Compromised/liberal teaching institutions that claim affiliation with the church. The following is from our home page and you will find a link to the site at the end.**

### **The Shipwreck of Colleges and Schools of Preaching**

***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Tim. 4:3).***

Why and how did compromise and/or liberalism come to dominate the preaching schools and colleges of today? This Site is dedicated to trying to answer these questions while showing that (1) compromise and liberalism have already destroyed the “Big Gun” Colleges and (2) the way that compromise is having a devastating effect on our smaller schools of preaching. These smaller schools, begun by congregations to replace the colleges that went off headlong into error, are now teetering on the edge because of their compromises.

There was a time when men who were sound in the faith taught younger men in the church how to preach and teach. We believe this should still be the norm. However, as sadly seen in these institutions today, this is no longer the case. Most people in the congregations have been dumbed down to the point that they believe that unless a preacher has a piece of paper stating he has been trained formally, he is unable or unfit to preach. Read the rest on our site.

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# ***DEAVER DOCTRINE—WHERE DOES IT END?***

*Dub McClish  
Denton, Texas*

## Introduction

Solomon observed that there is “a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Ecc. 3:7). Perhaps all of us wish for the “wisdom of Solomon” to know just when to do which (more about “wisdom” later). Through its four years of publication *The Gospel Journal* has observed “a time to keep silence” concerning a grievous false doctrine being foisted upon the church. It has already caused considerable disturbance and threatens to cause much more. I believe it is now “a time to speak.” Accordingly, this “special edition” addresses the doctrine just mentioned. Each writer has prepared his material, regretting the necessity of it. We all love those who have embraced this doctrine, but even more we love Christ and His church.

## The Heart of This False Doctrine

Approximately ten years ago (1994) Mac Deaver began iterating a novel doctrine relating to the work of the Holy Spirit. He and a few cohorts have promoted it in oral debates, lectures, published articles, numerous letters, and private conversations. Their basic error is well summarized in the debate proposition Mac affirmed in a November 2000 debate with Jerry Moffitt in Denton, Texas (sponsored by the Pearl Street Church of Christ):

**Resolved:** The Bible teaches that, in addition to His sanctifying influence through His Word, the Holy Spirit operates directly to sanctify the heart of the faithful Christian.

The core of the doctrine asserts that the Holy Spirit works **directly** on the heart/mind/spirit of a faithful saint, beyond what He does indirectly through His objective Word, to make one holier than he could otherwise be. It implicitly denies that the inspired Word can make a saint sufficiently holy to enter Heaven. I have been accused of being “hypersensitive” toward Mac’s doctrine because I



dared oppose it in a fellow-elder with whom I served. How could one be “hypersensitive” to a doctrine that is so devastating and deadly in its implications?

Mac Deaver has been so much the leading advocate of this doctrine that its common designation is “The Deaver Doctrine.” Seven years ago (March 1997) Mac claimed in a letter to me that his father, the beloved Roy C. Deaver, had believed this doctrine “for about thirty years” (i.e., since about 1967). It has now come down to a third generation: Both of Mac’s sons, Weylan and Todd, promote this teaching. Mac and Roy have for years been in the forefront of our battles with both anti-ism and liberalism, which fact makes their behavior the past few years even sadder. Now, instead of being pleased to stand and fight with them, I (with many others) must oppose them and separate myself from them.

### This Doctrine Is Novel

As do all false teachers, Mac strives mightily to convince us that his doctrine is not novel (which is true, of course—among Calvinists, Wesleyans, Pentecostals, assorted other denominationalists, and liberals in the church). He would have us believe that it is merely the doctrine of the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit and therefore is nothing about which to get excited. Were this all there is to it, most brethren would agree. Brethren who differ on the means of the Spirit’s indwelling have for generations lived and worked in close fellowship. As long as Roy and Mac believed/taught only the Spirit’s personal indwelling, there was no problem.

Mac would also have us believe that to deny his direct-operation doctrine is to deny the providential work of Deity as well as the power of prayer. We dare not be confused by this ploy: Providence and prayer are areas in which God works **behind the scenes** and **for us**. Mac teaches that the Holy Spirit works **immediately** and **does things** and **to us**. There is a vast difference in Bible doctrine and in what Mac is advocating.

Neither providence, prayer, nor the means of the Spirit’s indwelling are the issues. Mac’s assertion that a direct, in-addition-to-the-Word impact of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of Christians occurs makes his doctrine “novel”: new and strange.

Mac’s doctrine is **new** in the sense that it is not old enough to be Scriptural. Although a few brethren over the past two centuries have professed this

doctrine, It has never taken hold among those dedicated to the old paths, and for good reasons: (1) The Bible does not teach it, and (2) It was—and is—correctly perceived by most brethren as a reflection on the power of God’s Word. It is also a **new** doctrine in regard both to Roy and Mac Deaver. Roy wrote the following in 1989:

For near fifty years...I have preached the **transforming power of the Holy Spirit** in the lives of men, but the **Spirit’s working always in and through, by means of, the written Word** of God, both in the matter of **conversion and in the guiding of the Christian**—never separate and apart from the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. This I will continue to preach (*Biblical Notes*, March-April 1989, emph. DM).

Roy made it clear that the Spirit works only through the “written Word of God” in both “conversion and in the guiding of the Christian [i.e., ‘sanctification,’ DM].” This statement flatly contradicts Mac’s “direct-operation” doctrine, which, since 1994 (at least), Roy has endorsed. Furthermore, Roy wrote these words in 1989, **only fifteen years ago**, which contradicts Mac’s claim that Roy had held this doctrine “**about thirty years**” (i.e., since 1967). (Son and father need to get their **stories** straight, as well as their doctrine.) Does Roy believe what he wrote in 1989, or does he believe what Mac began teaching in 1994? He cannot believe both.

Nor has Mac always believed that the Holy Spirit works directly on men’s hearts. He wrote in 1993:

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit **indwells** the Christian, but it also teaches that He **guides/directs** the Christian through the word (cf. Eph. 2:22; 2 Tim. 3:16–17). **Here we stand**; and in opposition to any and all who deny this view (emph. His).

In a recent meeting of brethren...who are seriously concerned about doing what they can to **prevent rupture in fellowship**—it was stressed forcefully (after many hours of careful, prayerful study) that as long as we agree that the Holy Spirit convicts, leads, directs, and **edifies only through the Word of God**, whatever other differences there may be on the subject ought not to have the least effect on the question of our fellowship (*Biblical Notes*, Nov.-Dec. 1993, emph. DM).

He contended that the Holy Spirit, among other things, “...edifies **only** through the Word of God,” with which most sound brethren agree completely. He said that he would oppose “any and all” who deny this view (i.e., those who would teach that the Spirit **directly** edifies the Christian) and that any view besides Word-only-for-edification would affect fellowship. He was right—and precisely **because** he was right we have had to oppose and cease our fellowship with him. Were he yet teaching what he believed in 1993, I would not be writing these words, but would—with many hundreds of others—still be enjoying the sweet fellowship I once enjoyed with him. (An interesting incidental question here is why Roy, editor of *Biblical Notes*, printed Mac’s article **if he believed in 1993 [as Mac claims] that the Spirit edifies us directly?** If Roy then believed in the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, Mac apparently did not know it and Roy did not tell him.)

Mac’s doctrine is **strange**, at least among those generally counted faithful through the years (again, admitting a few exceptions), and most sound saints have strongly opposed it.

In an attempt to calm some concerned brethren, Mac has stated that he is not claiming: (1) any miraculous manifestations of the Spirit or (2) any physical sensation by which one may know he is receiving extra strength, spiritual fruit, or wisdom. If what he is teaching involves no **miraculous** activity, it does describe **mystical** activity. *Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* defines *mystical* as follows: “Having a spiritual meaning or reality that is neither apparent to the senses nor obvious to the intelligence; of, relating to, or resulting from an individual’s **direct communion with God** or ultimate reality” (emph. DM). (One is tempted to speculate that Mac was reading this definition when he formulated his post-1994 Holy Spirit doctrine.)

His “direct operation” claims might make more sense if he professed getting some “whispers” and “nudges.” The absence of any sensation of this special, immediate help (“better told than felt”?) renders it—even granting its occurrence—utterly impractical and defeats its purpose.

The Bible clearly indicates that, when the Holy Spirit operated on men directly, causing them to speak by inspiration, speak in tongues, and such like, those affected were quite aware of it. Why should Mac’s direct-operation-of-the-Holy Spirit activity be different?

## This Is a Progressive Doctrine

As with every false doctrinal system, this one began with just one basic aberration—direct Holy Spirit impact on the Christian internally, Spirit-on-spirit, doing more than what He does through His Word. Also, as with every false system, additional “far-out” positions must be taken in an effort to remain consistent with the basic one.

Mac and his companions have already advanced to other errors. When asked if there is a difference between the wisdom God allegedly gives directly through the Holy Spirit (Jam. 1:5) and the spiritual gift of the “word of wisdom” (1 Cor. 12:8), he replies, only in “degree.” (Surely, if he had received this “direct wisdom,” he would not have attempted to force his doctrine upon the church. Or maybe he has not prayed hard enough.)

He has made similar statements regarding Jesus’ inspiration promises to the apostles (John 14:26; 16:13)— what the Spirit did for them and what He does for us differ only in “degree.” Mac and company now insist (as Pentecostals have long done) that “born of the Spirit” (John 3:5) implies Holy Spirit baptism. They therefore argue that Holy Spirit baptism is as universal as water baptism. (It is amazing that Mac Deaver is thus teaching!) He has already reported one “rebaptism” among converts to his Holy Spirit baptism dictum—the late Bob Berard (Mac did not administer it, but approved it). Todd, another one of Mac’s sons, suggested that *spirit* in John 4:23–24 refers not to our human spirits, but to the Holy Spirit (2003 F-HU Lectures Open Forum).

Another false system of theology is unfolding before our eyes. The further Mac goes, the further he **will** go. What he has thus far told us will not be the end of it. His doctrine is bad enough in its infant stage. We should have nightmares in living color about the monster it will become if allowed to develop to maturity. This Is a Destructive Doctrine

Besides the dire spiritual consequences of “Deaver Doctrine,” its practical consequences are also increasingly apparent. It has either caused congregational problems or outright division in Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and even in Singapore. Mac has already succeeded in alienating numerous brethren who once worked shoulder-to-shoulder with him facing enemies of the Truth. This doctrine—and the stubborn manner of its advocates in pressing it—threatens another major division among us if it is not headed off.

I am sometimes asked if this doctrine should be a fellowship issue. It not only **should** be, it **must** be, and for various reasons addressed in this journal. Not too long ago Mac was pleading that his doctrine should not be a fellowship issue. However, he is on a course that will soon demand, if it has not already demanded, that **he** make it such if he is consistent.

## Conclusion

Those doing the most harm concerning this doctrine may not be those who openly agree with Mac. Perhaps more harmful are those who profess disagreement, but who do not count it something that affects fellowship. All such are aiding and abetting a handful of brethren who are teaching an exceedingly dangerous doctrine that they seem determined to force on the church, or to divide it trying. (Whatever happened to Mac's 1993 "serious concern" about a "rupture in fellowship"?)

If/when general division over this doctrine occurs, it cannot be rightly laid at the feet of those who have resisted it. Blame will belong primarily to those, led by Mac Deaver, who were determined that we must believe it, and secondarily to those who disagreed but did not count it a "fellowship issue." Let us all pray that those who teach this doctrine may soon awaken to what they are saying and doing, both for their own sakes and for the body of Christ. Let us also pray that those who profess to see no harm in it soon realize their harmful attitude.

## Post Script

The Pearl Street Church of Christ sponsored the Moffitt-Deaver Debate as a means of exposing and opposing the "Deaver Doctrine" in 2000. A new eldership of four men was appointed in 2001, of which I was one. Unfortunately, unknown to any of the other men at the time of our appointment, one of the new elders eventually revealed to the remainder of the eldership that he was in agreement with Mac Deaver's doctrine and had held such views for many years. In spite of my opposition (and that of brother Gary Summers, Pearl St. preacher at the time) to this doctrine within the eldership over several months, the elder in sympathy with Mac Deaver eventually persuaded the other two elders (besides me) to support him. These developments resulted in the departure from Pearl St. by brother Summers and me in the spring of 2003. My accusations against the remaining elders of their acceptance of the Deaver position brought forth their vociferous denials by means of a series of letters in 2003–2004 aimed at discrediting me. The utter hypocrisy and dishonesty of these men became

evident to all when they employed Mac Deaver as the Pearl St. preacher in August 2005.

**Note:** This MS, in a slightly different form, originally appeared as an “Editorial Perspective” in the February 2004 issue of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*.



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# **“Church Growth”**

*Jerry C. Brewer*  
*Elk City, OK*

Ill-informed, Biblically ignorant, and carnally minded members of the church, who are tainted with denominational influences, generally become overly concerned when the “church doesn’t grow.” By that, they mean that numbers are not being added to the membership and they usually lay the blame at the feet of the local preacher. That concept is as far from the New Testament as the worship of Mary by Catholics. The only kind of “church growth” that is mentioned in the New Testament is the spiritual growth of individual members. Peter commanded, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2). There is not a single precept, inference or example in the New Testament about the preacher “growing the church” and those who complain about him are the same ones who have failed to grow spiritually, as Peter enjoins.

There are even congregations that are otherwise “sound” whose members believe an increase in numbers is the responsibility of the preacher. And, though they would never admit it, they view the preacher as their “Pastor” whose job is to “get things going” and bring in numbers. They need to read First and Second Timothy and Titus again. Those books constitute the “manual” for gospel preachers and Paul did not say a single word about “church growth” as part of the work of an evangelist. Not only is that the case, but there is not a single passage in the New Testament that makes “church growth” the responsibility of any Christian. There are, however, a number of passages which lay out responsibilities and examples for evangelism by all Christians.

In Matthew’s account of the Great Commission, Jesus said, “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*” (Matt. 28:19). Mark’s account reads this way: “*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15). Luke recorded, “*that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his*

*name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*” (Luke 24:47). In none of those accounts did the Lord say, “grow the church.”

“Church growth” is not the mission of the church. If that were so, then games, door prizes, \$20 bills strategically taped to the underside of the pews, concerts, dramas, puppet shows, carnivals, bingo, and other entertainments could be provided to “grow the church.” Growth in numbers of any congregation does not result from those things. It results from, 1) preaching the gospel in its simplicity to the lost and, 2) obedience to the gospel by hearts which “*hunger and thirst after righteousness*” (Matt. 5:6). It is the responsibility of the preacher to do the first and the responsibility of lost souls to do the latter. No congregation’s numbers will increase unless those things are present.

Neither does the local preacher have the sole responsibility to teach the lost. That is the responsibility of every Christian. When the church was scattered from Jerusalem upon the death of Stephen, “*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word*” (Acts 8:4). It is worthy of note in that chapter that, “*they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles*” ([Emph. JB] (Acts 8:1). The preachers (the apostles) did not go “every where preaching the word.” Who went “every where preaching the word”? The members of the church in Jerusalem. In Samaria, and on the Gaza road the church’s numbers increased because of Philip who “*preached Christ unto them*” (Acts 8:5) and to the Ethiopian he, “*preached unto him Jesus*” (Acts 8:35). Philip, and those who “went every where preaching the word” preached Christ as Jesus had commanded in the Great Commission. We later learn that those who were “*scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch*” (Acts 11:19). As a result of their preaching, “*The hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord*” (Acts 11:21). *There was “church growth”—“a great number believed and turned unto the Lord.”* Very simply, the church “grew” because faithful Christians loved men’s souls, preached the gospel of Christ to the lost, and those to whom they preached obeyed and were saved by the blood of Christ. There was no “Pastor” among them who was charged with “making the church grow.”

If neither preachers nor other members are charged with “church growth,” then whose responsibility is it? According to Paul, it is God’s. Of himself and Apollos, Paul asked the church at Corinth, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted,



Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:5-6). the church “grows” when the gospel is preached, men obey it, and they are added to the church (Acts 2:47).

Legion are church members (and even elders) who carp and complain about “church growth,” blame the preacher for its lack, replace him with one who will “get things going” and then sit back and do nothing while he works his public relations “magic.” There are three reasons a church should stop supporting a preacher, and none of those has anything to do with growth in church numbers. A preacher who preaches false doctrine should not be supported, but marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17-18). If he refuses to preach “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) he should not be supported. If he sins, bringing public shame on Christ, and refuses to repent, he should not be supported. But as long as the preacher is living according to the doctrine of Christ and preaching it in its simplicity and completeness (1 Tim. 4:16), the church is duty bound to support him to the very best of its ability. *“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel”* (1 Cor. 9:14).

A faithful gospel preacher whom we once knew was told that he was responsible for the church’s lack of growth. After hearing that charge, he developed a form to hand out to members of the congregation, on which they could write the names and contact information of prospects, including their family members. Of the 30 or 40 he handed out, only one member returned it, with the note that this member didn’t know anyone and had no names for him. The gospel preacher who is faithful to his charge (2 Tim. 4:1-5) is not a public relations expert charged with “church growth” and those who believe he is need to repent or find a comfortable denomination with the kind of “Pastor” they desire.

If every member of the church took the words of Christ seriously, instead of considering the preacher a “hireling” to “grow the church,” numbers would increase, not because numbers were being sought, but because Christians were obeying the Lord. “Church growth” is God’s province. Ours is to “preach the word.”

# ***Medical Ethics Part 1***

*Michael Hatcher  
Pensacola, Florida*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Should I try *in vitro* fertilization? Should someone act as a surrogate parent? Should I try to clone myself? How should we view sex change surgery? How should we view various types of medical engineering (i.e. genetic engineering, gene splicing, genetic screening, genetic mapping, et al.)? What should we think about various types of brain control (electrical stimulation, chemical control, psychosurgery, et al.)?

These are just some of the questions people are faced with today. How is it possible for a book that was completed around 2000 years ago to deal with medical questions that we face today? When the Bible was completed there was absolutely no way for the writers to envision the advances of medical technology that would take place today. Just as there is no way for us to look into the future, if God allows this world to stand, and see what advances will come.

Brethren have long said, and correctly so, that the Bible gives us answers for our every need. The Bible answers every moral and religious need and question we might face. Peter writes, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:3-4). God did not simply give man what he needed to be saved or to worship properly. God also gave man what he needed regarding anything and everything that might come along in our life. As such, these medical questions, while not dealt with specifically, are answered for us in the principles God established. There are three principles that if properly applied, I believe, will answer all the questions regarding medical ethics that we presently face or will face in the future.

## **SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE**

If man simply evolved from lifeless matter or lower life forms. Man is the creation of God. Notice what Moses writes by inspiration of God: “And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the

breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). In speaking to the Athenians, Paul would tell them concerning God: “Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25). It is Jehovah God that gives life to all things. Human life is a gift from God. As such, human life needs to be respected.

Since life is a gift of God and man is expected by God to respect that life, God has always considered the unjust taking of life to be wrong. When Cain murdered his brother, Abel, God said to him: “What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand” (Gen. 4:10-11). God made Cain realize the great evil he had done, thus Cain responded, “it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me” (4:14). Cain realized the penalty for murder would be death for the murderer (himself). So others would not “slay” him, God “set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him” (4:15).

Later God would instruct man: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (9:6). Under the Mosaic Law, God saw fit to make this one of the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt not kill” (Exo. 20:13). Many of the later translations use *murder* instead of kill (NKJV, NAS, ESV, NET), which is probably a better translation.

We would also note that God views human life from the moment of conception. The sweet singer of Israel would write, “For thou hast possessed my reins [formed my inward parts; NKJV]: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well. My substance [frame; NKJV] was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously [skillfully; NKJV] wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect [unformed; NKJV]; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them” (Psa. 139:13-16). David considered himself a human life while he was still in the womb, and God knew him while still being formed in the womb.

Jeremiah also stated that God knew him while still in the womb when he wrote: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:5).

## HONOR OF MAN

Closely associated with the previous is the dignity, honor, or respect of man. Man did not evolve from the apes and thus simply an animal, as the evolutionist teaches. God created man in His image. Moses recorded, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:26-27). Being made in the image of God, we are the offspring of God. Paul said to the Athenians, “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device” (Acts 17:28-29).

In writing about the tongue and its evil, James shows that we should not curse man because man is the offspring of God. He writes, “Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God” (Jam. 3:9). This certainly demands a respect or dignity for mankind.

When God created man and placed him in the Garden, Moses records, “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day” (Gen. 1:31). During this time, God would come to man and fellowship him. It was a custom for God to come “walking in the garden in the cool of the day” (3:8). At this time man had not been spoiled by sin. However, since man is made in the image of God, man has the right to choose right from wrong; man was created as a free moral agent. With the ability to choose, when Satan came tempting Eve, she chose to disobey God (3:1-6). Sin came into the world and sin brings a multitude of evils with it. God pronounced certain consequences to Adam and Eve’s disobedience (3:16-19).

Sin continued to abound in the world. This resulted in sorrow on God’s part with man: “And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (6:6). Thus, God said, “My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (6:3). Because of that evil that God saw man doing, He determined to destroy the world, “And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them” (6:7). To destroy

man from the face of the earth, God sent a global flood, yet sparing righteous Noah and his family in the ark. The flood destroyed the water vapor canopy above the earth, resulting in the harmful effects of the sun reaching man (this is why the ages of the patriarchs were in the 900 year range prior to the flood, but after the flood it settles to about 70 to 80 years, Psa. 90:10). Those harmful effects of the sun have brought additional ills, afflictions, and sufferings into our world.

God does authorize us to do what we can to improve our health. Paul speaks of bodily exercise when he writes, “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). While it is of little profit compared with godliness, it is still profitable for the human body. Jesus authorized the principle of going to a doctor to regain one’s health when He said, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick” (Mat. 9:12), and Luke did not have to stop being a physician when he became a Christian (Col. 4:14). Thus, those things that are necessary to improve one’s health would certainly be authorized by God; i.e., blood transfusions, medications, surgeries, organ transplants, et al.

However, because we have the right and opportunity to take advantage of many of the medical procedures available today does not mean that we are like an animal to be experimented on. God made man as He so desired. The sweet singer of Israel, David, would state: “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well” (Psa. 139:14). To alter or try to change God’s design is to go beyond what is right and moral.

### **SACREDNESS OF THE FAMILY UNIT**

On the sixth day of creation, God created man. In seeing His crowning of creation, God said, “*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him*” (Gen. 2:18). God makes all the animals pass before Adam so he could name them, “but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him” (2:20). Therefore God made for man the woman. “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (2:21-22). In bringing the woman to the man, God was sanctioning the marriage relationship. God still joins together an eligible man and woman in the bonds of holy matrimony: “And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mat. 19:5-6).

Almost no serious thinking person denies the importance of the home. There is an old adage that says, “As the home goes, so goes the nation.” One changed it to say: “As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the world in which we live.” Throughout the Bible, God was concerned with the home and continually gave instructions for the home. After making the valid point that the “ultimate thrust of the home is spiritual” (220), Wayne Jackson gave five benefits of the family unit:

(1) It provides an atmosphere of companionship (Genesis 2:18). (2) It is that sphere wherein the sexual appetites of the body can be morally satisfied (1 Corinthians 7:2). (3) It stabilizes social relationships and enhances international solidarity. (4) It is the divinely planned method of introducing children into the world (Genesis 4:1; 1 Timothy 5:14). (5) The family unit was planned to provide a warm atmosphere of love and trust—an ideal environment for spiritual growth (221).

The importance of the home is why marriage is to be for life. Man is not to put it asunder. Divorce is contrary to God’s Will. Jesus states, “Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery” (Mark 10:11-12). The general rule is that if one divorces their mate and marries someone else, they continue to commit adultery. God did allow one and only one exception to this law and this is if the marriage partner commits fornication, then the non-fornicator can divorce the fornicator and marry again without committing adultery. “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Mat. 19:9).

Thus, we see that God views the home and family unit something that is sacred. Anything that attempts to circumvent the home and family is morally wrong and must be opposed.