

# *The Keys Of The Kingdom*

*June 2018 - Vol: 5 Number: 6*



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

***©Copyright 2018 All Rights Reserved***

***To Visit Our Website***  
***Click Link Below***  
***[Keys Of The Kingdom](#)***

# Contents

---

<i>Our Staff</i>	<i>Pg: 3</i>
<i>Editor's Note</i>	<i>Jim Miller Pg: 4</i>
<i>What Are Elders For Anyhow?</i>	<i>Dub McClish Pg: 9</i>
<i>"There Must Be Heresies"</i>	<i>Jerry Brewer Pg. 16</i>
<i>Medical Ethics Pt. 2</i>	<i>Michael Hatcher Pg: 21</i>

---



## *Our Writing Staff*



**Jim Miller**

Jim Miller: Preacher at the Gray, church of Christ semi-retired, publisher, writer, editor. A member of the Lords church since 1985. Preached in NC, TN, KY, and Maine. Two years Co-hosting Bible Talk Radio. Owner of Keys Of The Kingdom magazine and website.



**Michael Hatcher**

Michael Hatcher: Preacher Bellview Church of Christ <http://www.bellviewcoc.com> August 1994 to present · Pensacola, Florida. Preacher of the Gospel since the mid 1970s. Preached for the Bellview Church of Christ since 1994. While with Bellview, edited monthly publication "Defender," and weekly bulletin "Beacon." Directed the Bellview Annual Lectureship since 1995 along with editing the book of the lectures.



**Dub McClish**

H. W. (Dub) McClish: Preached first sermon in June 1954 at Boise, Idaho, at age 16. After 35 years of work as local preacher in 5 states (the last 12 years of which were with the Pearl St. Congregation, Denton, TX), began work under oversight of Pearl Street elders in 1992, devoting time to combined works of Gospel meetings, mission trips, and lectureships and to writing and editing sound Biblical materials.



**Jerry Brewer**

Jerry Brewer was born in Childress, Texas in 1941 and was baptized into Christ by O. M. Curry in 1954. He attended the Elk City, Okla. School of Preaching, directed by W. R. Craig, in 1969-70 and has done local work in Oklahoma and Texas. He has made three trips to Kenya to preach and teach in the Kalamindi School of Preaching. He currently preaches for the Northeast church of Christ in Elk City, Okla., where he has been for 19 years. He has authored a commentary on Galatians, and formerly published "The Gospel Preceptor," a monthly paper. He is married to the former Sherlene Holley of Carter, Okla. They have six children, and 17 grandchildren.

**If you would like to be a guest writer for TKOK you may contact me at [jfmiller61@gmail.com](mailto:jfmiller61@gmail.com).**

**To announce up coming events like Gospel Meetings, Lectures, Singing events etc... Just use the email link above to contact me. Please feel free to tell others and have them pick up their copy today. Use this link to direct them to our page. [http://jfmiller.com/keysofthekingdom/?page\\_id=1316](http://jfmiller.com/keysofthekingdom/?page_id=1316) .**

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

## Editor's Notes

***We do allow you to print this off on your computer and give it away, you may make as many copies as you wish as long as you Never charge for it and Never make any changes to it. You may also pass on this publication in its PDF format to anyone you like with NO changes or Charge.***

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 thew same time.

### ***The Journey***

The Journey, How Larry Became A Christian.

***Paperback [Click here](#)***

***Kindle Version [Click here](#)***

### ***The Journey Continues***

***Paperback [Click Here](#)***

***Kindle Version [Click here](#)***

---

## ***“All” Can Understand the Bible***

*Jim Miller  
Gray, Maine*

It amazes me that still today there are many who think the Word of God is some mystical book of dark sayings, that can't be understood by common folks like you and me. Over the years false teachers have more or less indoctrinated

people rather than teach the Truth stating that even the simplest passage is some kind of deep mystery that only the elite can understand properly. A perfect example is that if a Bible passage contradicts some much-loved false doctrine of man the advocates of said doctrine will dismiss the passage saying, "We cannot understand it," or some other clearly illogical statement. Let's use Acts 2:38 as an example. When quoted or read without comment to prove that baptism is for the remission of sins, many will retort, "That's not the way I see it" or "That is just your interpretation." These statements have led many to believe that the Bible can't be understood because men differ on what is stated rather than taking the Word as it is written.

Erroneous as it is to think that men can't understand the Bible, you will hear folks say we can't understand because "Some don't understand it." Furthermore, it's completely absurd to say that we can't understand **any** of the Word because we do not perfectly understand **all** of the word. I am the first to admit that there are some things hard to understand. Peter wrote:

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness (2 Peter 3:15–17).

Take note here that **some, not all, things are hard** to understand, yet **not impossible**. Hard things simply require more study and effort.

Still, even today Catholics, Protestants, and others will tell you that ordinary men are not capable of understanding the Word of God, thus a specially trained priest or preacher is needed to explain what God said. Think about that carefully; these uninspired men are the only ones who can understand what God, Christ, and the Spirit-guided apostles said. This is utterly ridiculous. One has to ask how these so-called educated preachers and priests are more intelligent and more capable than God, Christ, and apostles? To suggest such elevates man above God. Of course, we can always assist one another in study by pointing out what the Word says and discussing it, yet it is still not necessary to have man's explanation.

The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all the Truth, speaking to and through them, revealing the Will of God to man. (John 16:13). They did not choose and use words of man's wisdom, but words that the Spirit taught (Acts 2:1–4.) Keep

in mind that thousands understood these words without having an interpreter to explain the apostles' preaching (1 Cor. 2:13.) We have those same words from the same apostles in the written Word, and yes, we can understand just as the thousands understood then.

The apostle Paul stated,

If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. : 2-5).

So to say that one can't understand what was written denies this passage and charges God with the inability to give His creation the Word in an understandable message.

The very definition of the word used to describe God's Word, "revelation," asserts that one can know what the Bible teaches. If man cannot understand the Bible, then it is not a revelation! God has affirmed that men can understand His Word. He also commands men to understand it. Paul wrote, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). Ask yourself if God would command us to do that which is impossible? Men can understand the Bible. Paul affirmed that men can understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ by the reading of the Word.

Many other passages emphasize that men can understand the Bible. Christ expected those in his day to read and understand the apocalyptic words of Daniel (Mat. 24:15). Paul told the church at Thessalonica, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 The. 5:21), so he expected them to be able to discern good and evil. Ezra read from the Scriptures, and the men of his day understood them (Neh. 8:7-12). Men were said to know the Truth in New Testament times (Col. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:3; Heb. 10:26; 2 Pet. 2:20-22).

Christ plainly made salvation conditional upon knowing the Truth. He said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). "The truth" about which he was speaking was His Word. One not only **can** know the Truth—to obtain forgiveness of his sins, he **must** know the Truth.

God's commands have always been and ever will be simple and easy to be understood. Name one command of God that men cannot easily understand. Every command that is necessary for one to become and remain a faithful

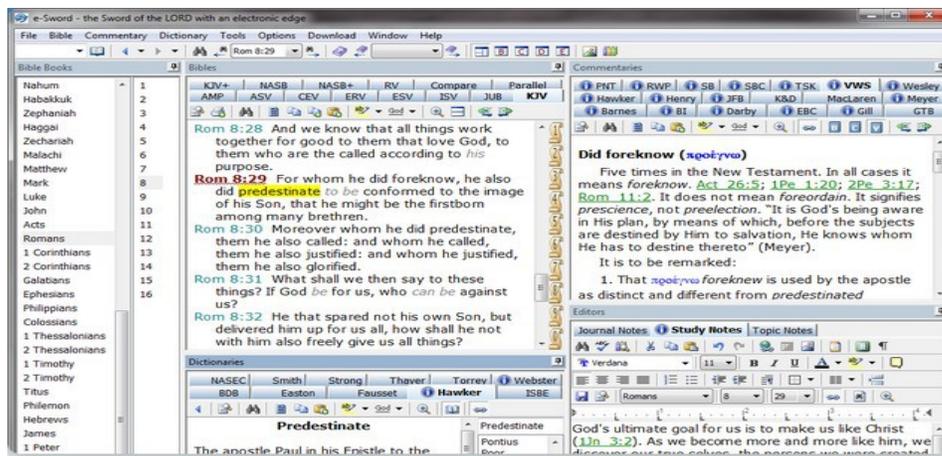
Christian is so clear that no honest soul can possibly misunderstand. Read the following list of God's requirements to become a Christian and observe the simplicity of the gospel.

One must believe in God (Heb. 11:6), believe in Christ (John 8:24), repent of sins (Luke' 13:3), confess Christ (Mat. 10:32–33, Rom. 10:10), and be buried in baptism for the remission of sins (Rom. 6:4; Acts 2:38). The recorded cases of conversions in the Scriptures prove that God's plan was clearly understood by the multitudes. It is still being understood and obeyed today.

It is man's failure to obey God that has caused the so-called impossibility of understanding the Bible by his failure to read and believe it. Too many today are willingly ignorant of God's Word because they choose their own way of life over Gods way. They want to practice their sins without a painful conscience, thus they quit reading and studying rather than cease sinning.

Till Next We Meet  
God Bless

## E-Sword



e-Sword is a fast and effective way to study the Bible. e-Sword is feature rich and user friendly with more capabilities than you would expect in a free Bible app. The fact that e-Sword is free is just one of the blessings and does not speak of the quality of the app. Below you'll find a list of features that you will discover helps make Bible study both enjoyable and enriching. [Get it here](#)



**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.

**[Click Here to visit our site.](#)**

# *What Are Elders for, Anyhow?*

*Dub McClish  
Denton, Texas*

## **Introduction**

The foregoing title seems appropriate when we hear and read what some say about elders. When elders refused to let brethren teach their “anti” hobbies in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, they attacked the authority of those elders by labeling them as “pontifical bishops.” Subsequently, the all-out assault on all authority by the 1960s generation has apparently had its effect on attitudes in the church toward elders and their authority.

In 1973 the elders where I preached announced at the conclusion of the Sunday morning assembly that the church sadly must withdraw from a brother. Before the assembly could be dismissed, another brother stood from his pew near the back of the auditorium and challenged the authority of the elders to take such action without first “consulting” the membership; he then took the withdrawn-from brother and his wife out to lunch.

The late Reuel Lemmons had moved far to the left doctrinally by the time of his passing several years ago. One of the early signs of his “evolution” was his infamous *Firm Foundation* editorial (August 2, 1977), titled, “Who Calls the Shots?” In it he allied himself with radical anti-authority voices in the church that were growing ever louder. The issue of the authority of elders continues to surface. Only recently I have had several conversations with brethren in a distant city concerning grievous problems in their congregation directly relating to this subject.

The Scriptures set forth in the clearest possible terms the authority which the Lord has delegated to elderships (not to individual elders) in local churches. Often resistance to this authority surfaces mainly when it becomes necessary for the elders to lead the church in withdrawing from impenitent sinners, as in the case above. I have observed three classes of those who thus resist:

1. Some folk are simply ignorant of what the New Testament teaches. They do not study their Bibles. They do not read any sound publications that would inform them. They never attend an edifying, faith-building lectureship, and perhaps their local preacher has neglected the subject.
2. Others react emotionally rather than rationally, perhaps because the disciplined brother or sister is kindred or a dear friend. (“I don’t care what you say about him; he’s my friend and I’m going to defend him,” as an **elder** where I preached once said about a false teacher in the congregation.) They may defend the sinner because they have the same sins in their own lives (per millions of defenders of Bill Clinton’s outrageous wickedness).
3. Still others reject the authority of elders because they want to have free rein to teach their heresies, commandeer congregations, and restructure them as denominations. Their principal “argument” is that the only “rule” elders may exercise is by their example (which is no “rule” at all). These brethren “despise dominion” (2 Pet. 2:10).

We obviously need to study this subject seriously. I submit that it is God’s will that a plurality of elders/bishops/pastors serve as superintendents over each local congregation in which Scripturally qualified men may be found. This oversight involves keeping the church free from doctrinal error and moral pollution, as measured by the New Testament, as well as the authority necessary to fulfill this oversight. There are four distinct major areas of their work, which overlap to some extent. Although it is clear enough from the English, it will be further helpful to examine the Greek words the Holy Spirit used to convey eldership authority. For the sake of brevity, I will cite definitions given by Joseph Henry Thayer in his recognized standard, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1889 edition.

### **Overseeing, Supervising**

One of the principal words the Holy Spirit used in reference to elders is *bishop*, used in Acts 20:28 as an interchangeable term for *elders* (v. 17). The Greek word for *bishop* is *episkopos*, a compound of the preposition *epi* (“over”) and *skopos* (“watcher,” “watchman”). Thus a bishop is one who watches over or oversees, per Thayer: “an overseer, a man charged with seeing that things to be

done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, superintendent” (p. 243). Elders are to “tend the flock of God, exercising the oversight [*episkopeo*]” (1 Pet. 5:2). Has an overseer, guardian, or superintendent no authority concerning his charge?

Bishops are also called God’s “stewards,” and in this responsibility they must be blameless (Tit. 1:7). The Greek word rendered “steward” is *oikonomos*, a compound of *oikos* (“house”) and *nemo* (“to dispense, manage”). Thus Thayer says: “the manager of a household or of household affairs; esp. a steward, manager, superintendent” (p. 440). Authority is inherent in these terms. If elders have no authority to manage or superintend that which is placed in their charge, these terms are meaningless, and elders are mere figure-heads—exactly that to which the liberal, anti-authority gang wants them reduce them.

### **Shepherding, Feeding, Tending, Teaching**

Elders have the responsibility toward their respective congregations that literal shepherds have toward their respective flocks of sheep— that of feeding and tending them. The Greek word for “feeding” (Acts 20:28) and “tending” (1 Pet. 5:2) is *poimaino*, of which Thayer says that literally it means “to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep,” but metaphorically, “to rule, govern...of the overseers (pastors) of the church” (p. 527). Another form of this word is translated “pastors” (Eph. 4:11). Have shepherds no authority over their sheep? The connotation of authority inherent in this word is readily seen in the Lord’s words to Thyatira: “I will give him [who overcomes] authority over the nations: and he shall rule [*poimanei*] them with a rod of iron” (Rev. 2:26–27).

This “feeding/tending” elders are to do refers to the spiritual food and attention they provide the flock, either by themselves or by others of their appointment. Each elder” must be “apt to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2) and able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers” (Tit. 1:9). Some first-century elders were fully supported, enabling them to “labor in word and teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17). Elders must be aware of what is being taught by those to whom they delegate this responsibility. Good elders will not allow the flock to be fed religious locoweed. They must protect the flock from “ravening wolves” dressed up as sheep, whom the Lord calls “false prophets” (Mat. 7:15). Therefore, they must be on the lookout for “grievous wolves” who seek to prey on the flock—including such who may arise within the eldership— drawing away

disciples after themselves (Acts 20:29–31). How can elders even begin to carry out these responsibilities with no “authority” but their own examples? The figure of a shepherd implies eldership authority.

## **Ruling, Leading**

The authority to rule and lead is also seen in several other words that relate to elders. One of these is *proistemi*, a compound of *pro* (“before”) and *histemi* (“to stand”). After giving the literal meaning (“to set or place before; to set over”), Thayer says it means “to be over, to superintend, to preside over, [A.V. rule]” and correctly cites 1 Thessalonians 5:12 and 1 Timothy 3:4–5, 12, and 5:17 as illustrations of its use, all of which refer to elders (p. 539). *Proistemi* is rendered “over you” in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 and “rule” in all of the passages just cited in 1 Timothy. This word clearly connotes authority, and it tells us what elders are to do—they are to rule.

Hebrews 13:17 is such a key passage on this issue that liberals work hard to convince us that it does not even refer to elders. However, none others in the congregations are ever said to “watch in behalf of [our] souls” (cf. Acts 20:28–31; Tit. 1:9–11). This passage contains three significant words indicating the authority of elders.

We are commanded to “**obey**” the elders. *Obey* is from *peitho*, which, in the middle voice (as here) means “to listen to, obey, yield to, comply with” (Thayer, p. 497). Thayer not only lists Hebrews 13:17, but also James 3:3, as illustrations of its use. James 3:3 speaks of our putting a bridle in a horse’s mouth that it may “**obey**” us. One may as well argue that the rider has no authority over the horse as to argue that elders have no authority over the congregation.

We are commanded to obey those who have the “**rule over**” us. *Rule* is from *hegeomai*, meaning “to go before; to be a leader; to rule, command; to have authority over” (Thayer, p. 276). In the same citation Thayer illustrates the use of this word in reference to one who is a “prince, of regal power” (Mat. 2:6) and of a royal governor or viceroy (Acts 7:10) in the political realm. Another form of this word is rendered “governor” in relation to Pilate (Mat. 27:2) and to Joseph (Acts 7:10), both of whom had great authority over others. Thayer then references the application of *hegeomai* to elders: “so of the overseers or leaders

of Christian churches,” and cites Hebrews 13:7, 17, and 24. Obviously, this term **includes** the “influence” and “example” of one in authority, but it goes much further than mere moral persuasion.

The saints are to “**submit**” to those who “rule over” them and who “watch in behalf” of their souls. *Submit* is from *hupēixō*, a compound term composed of the preposition *upo* (“under”) and *eikō* (“to yield”), occurring only this one time in the New Testament. The prepositional prefix intensifies *eikō*, making it mean “to yield to authority and admonition, to submit” (Thayer, p. 638). The reason we must submit is because we are under their rule.

### **Initiating, Executing Discipline**

Elders have a very specific duty to protect the church and to keep it pure from both doctrinal and moral corruption. They are to “take heed” to their respective flocks, feed, and be on the lookout for grievous wolves (Acts 20:28–31). They are to rule their own houses well, demonstrating their ability to “take care of the church of God” (1 Tim. 3:5). They must be “able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers...[described as] unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers...whose mouths must be stopped...” lest they overthrow entire families (Tit 1:9-11).

Congregations without elders can also carry out church discipline, as the case in Corinth illustrates (1 Cor. 5:1–13). However, where there are elders, as the watchmen, leaders, rulers, shepherds, overseers, superintendents, and stewards, it is their duty to **lead the church** in this grave and necessary responsibility. How can they claim to be “taking care of” the church if they let impenitent, immoral, doctrinally corrupt members continue among the flock? Paul strongly rebuked the Corinthian church for failure to act and commanded the entire church to meet immediately and deliver the fornicator to Satan. Had there been elders at Corinth, no doubt Paul would have rebuked them for their unseemly delay and ordered **them** to **lead** the church in the necessary action.

While watching for all moral and doctrinal threats to the congregation is not **all** the work of elders, it is most definitely a **significant part** of it. If such cannot be corrected by convicting them of their errors, then they must be purged out (1 Cor. 5:7), marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17–18), withdrawn from (2 The. 3:6, 14), and refused (Tit. 3:10), as plainly included in “taking care of the church of God.”

## Conclusion

Elders sometimes abuse their authority, just as political rulers do. Peter warns against all such abuses (1 Pet. 5:3). However, we must not understand Peter's caution to be a cancellation of eldership authority. And yes, sometimes people have been withdrawn from who were not deserving of it. However, a fundamental rule of hermeneutics is that the abuse of a Scriptural principle can never be used rightly as an argument against the principle itself. What Are Elders for, Anyhow Let us respect the Word of God in regard to elders and their authority and thank God for good men who approach this task seriously.

**[Note:** I wrote this MS, and it originally appeared as an "Editorial Perspective" in the December 2001 issue of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*, a 36-page monthly of which I was editor at the time.]

**Attribution:** From *TheScripturecache.com*, owned and administered by Dub McClish.



***Your Site for Bible Exposition, Exegesis, and  
Commentary on a wide variety of topics and passages***

***<http://thescripturecache.com>***

# Bellview Lectures

June 8 - 12



*The Church*

Please join us!

[www.bellviewcoc.com](http://www.bellviewcoc.com)

## 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bellview Lectures

*The Church*

June 8 – 12, 2018

### Friday, June 8

7:00 pm The Church in the Eternal Purpose of God Jerry Brewer

8:00 pm The Church Identified Philip Smith

### Saturday, June 9

9:00 am The Church Established Doug Post

10:00 am The Church as Seen by the Prophets Michael Hatcher

11:00 am The Church and Its Preaching Bruce Stulting

*Lunch Break*

1:00 pm Preparatory Work by John and Jesus Harrell Davidson

2:00 pm Resolving Conflicts in the Church Gene Hill

3:00 pm Benard Kagaga's work:

*Dinner Break*

7:00 pm The Church and Denominationalism Wayne Blake

8:00 pm Christ and the Church Danny Douglas

### Sunday, June 10

9:00 am The Church and Its Worship Doug Post

10:00 am The Church and Its Salvation Ron Cosby

*Lunch and Dinner Break*

1:00 pm Three Divine Institutions Danny Douglas

The Keys Of The Kingdom 15

2:00 pm The All Sufficiency of the Church Philip Smith

### **Monday, June 11**

9:00 am What's Right with the Church Benard Kagaga  
10:00 am The Church as Seen by the Prophets Michael Hatcher  
11:00 am Organization in the Church Jerry Brewer  
*Lunch Break*  
1:00 pm The Church Indestructible Ron Cosby  
2:00 pm The Fellowship of the Church Bruce Stulting  
3:00 pm Open Forum:  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 pm The Mission of the Church Lee Moses  
8:00 pm The Church Its Eternal Destiny Harrell Davidson

### **Tuesday, June 12**

9:00 am The Church and Morals Wayne Blake  
10:00 am The Church as Seen by the Prophets Michael Hatcher  
11:00 am The Church Walking Before God Gene Hill  
*Lunch Break*  
1:00 pm The Church and Self-Discipline Jerry Brewer  
2:00 pm The Church and Liberalism Lee Moses  
3:00 pm Open Forum:  
*Dinner Break*  
7:00 pm Are We Going to Take the Backbone Out of the Church Bruce Stulting  
8:00 pm The Militant Church Danny Douglas

## **Bellview Lectures Information**

### **Housing**

The Red Roof Inn (2591 Wilde Lake Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32526) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$69.99—one King size bed and \$79.99—two Full size beds. Their phone number is 850.941.0908. **Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.** If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

### **Books**

The lectureship book, *The Church*, may be purchased for \$5.00 (plus \$3.75 per book for postage). The book will contain 27 chapters and will be a **spiral-bound book**. The books will not be mailed until after the lectures.

### **Books-on-CD**

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2018) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD is \$37.75. The CD also includes the Defender (1970, 1972-2017), Beacon (1972, 1974-2017), and other material. The 2018 CD will not be mailed until after the lectures.

### **Meals**

The ladies of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

### **View Lectures Live on the Internet**

If you cannot attend the lectureship in person, please view them live on the Internet:

**[www.bellviewcoc.com](http://www.bellviewcoc.com)**

## **“There Must Also Be Heresies...”**

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

“For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Cor 11:19). The word “heresy” is from the Greek *hairesis*, which Strong defines as, “properly a *choice*, that is, (specifically) a *party* or (abstractly) *disunion*. (“heresy” is the Greek word itself.): - heresy [which is the Greek word itself], sect” (*eSword*). Robertson says the word indicates a theory which results in division. “Heresy is theoretical schism, schism practical heresy” and that, “God’s purpose in these factions makes the proved one become manifest. ‘These *haireseis* are a magnet attracting unsound and unsettled minds’ (Findlay)” (*eSword*). Heresy is a *choice* of the inner man.

Like all actions, organic division in the church begins in the heart of man which entertains theories contrary to the word of God (Matt. 12:34). When heresy enters the heart, it usually issues in factions and division is the result. That was the case in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when innovations of men were introduced into the work and worship of the church—The American Christian Missionary Society and mechanical instruments of music. From the mid to late 1800s, discerning brethren could see apostasy in the hearts of those who were not content with the New Testament pattern for the church. Earl Irvin West wrote, “The missionary society and the instrumental music...were but two expressions of the attempt at progress. Back of these and underlying them were dangerous trends of thought” (*The Search For The Ancient Order*, Vol. 2, 1866-1906, Religious Book Service, Indianapolis, 1950, p9. 130, 131).

The, “dangerous trends of thought” of which West wrote were the theoretical schisms that Robertson defines. They were the seeds of schism, factions, and the ultimate “standings apart”—*dichostasia*—(Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 3:3). Those trends were observed by Moses Lard, who wrote,

He is a poor observer of men and things who does not see slowly growing up among us a class of men who can no longer be satisfied with the ancient gospel and the ancient order of things. These men must have changes; and silently they are preparing the mind of the brotherhood to receive changes (*Lard’s Quarterly*, “The Symptoms of The Future,” April, 1865, pp. 262, cited by West, p. 131).

Another observer of those “dangerous trends” was Robert Graham. West described him as, “ordinarily a man of milder moods” who “saw there was a radical change

underway in the church during these years." (p. 132). In 1869, Graham wrote,

...there is among ourselves a falling off from the simplicity of the gospel, a conforming to the mode of *other* denominations, the loss of zeal for the spread of the gospel for fear people will think us solicitous only to build up a party, the decrease of Bible reading and study among us of late, the growing disposition to recognize the distinction of clergy and laity in our churches, and among much more that might be named, our conforming to the unscriptural phraseology of sects, to say nothing of our adopting many of their anti-scriptural customs. With the uniform experience of past ages before us, the tendency of men to make the gospel popular under the plea of extending its influence, and that, too, even at the cost of its purity and power to save, should make us keen to detect and fearless in our condemnation of all departures from the faith ("The Signs of The Times," *Apostolic Times*, April 15, 1869, p. 4, cited by West, p. 132).

The missionary society and instrumental music were only the tip of the iceberg. The trends that Lard and Graham saw—"theoretical schism"—were many and resulted in the sundering of fellowship between brethren and in the emergence of another denomination in 1906, "The Christian Church." When that occurred, those whom God approved were "made manifest" among the disciples of Christ and faithful brethren recognized what had already taken place. A sect (heresy) arose within the church and, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:19).

Another sect has been in the process of of incubation in the church for about the past 50 years. It has also introduced unscriptural practices into the work and worship of the church and captured the hearts of many Biblically ignorant and unsuspecting brethren. Apostasy never occurs in one fell swoop. It is silent, devious, conniving, and manipulating and occurs in gradual steps. This sect grows today under the facade of "the mainstream church of Christ" and consists of hundreds (if not thousands) of churches which at one time were sound in the faith. Those churches once carried out the Great Commission, preaching the gospel and saving souls, and worshiped according to the New testament pattern. But, through the years, heresies arose in the hearts of many of their elders and preachers, reaching a point that Paul's command to preach and practice only those things for which we have Christ's authority (Col. 3:17) became meaningless to them.

In 1966, the "progressive" *Mission Messenger* published a book of essays edited by Robert Meyers, entitled, *Voices Of Concern* in which apostates vented their spleen against the body of Christ and called for "change." The change the book advocated is a rejection of the exclusive nature of the church.

We consider variety itself a significant part of the lesson this book would teach. Free minds cannot be predicted. The Spirit of God really does move at liberty like the invisible air, and it impels men in various ways. There are writers here who believe in the principle of Restorationism, and men who do not; men who believe in what is loosely called Fundamentalism, and men who do not; men who are restrained and analytical, and men who verge upon the mystical in their rhapsodies about the guidance of God's Spirit. The book obviously means to urge no one way of religious expression, but plead from such evidence as is here the need for *unity in diversity* [Emph. his] (Meyers, Introductory, p. 5).

*Voices of Concern* is perhaps the clearest statement of heretical thinking that was extant more than 50 years ago in the church and has since borne its poison fruit. Some of its essayists may be familiar; others may not. They were Logan J. Fox, J. P. Sanders, Laurie L. Hibbett, Norman L. Parks, Thomas P. Hardeman, Carl L. Etter, Roy Key, Ralph V. Graham, Margaret Edson O'Dowd, William K. Floyd, Cecil L. Franklin, Charles E. Warren, Ralph Milton Stolz, David R. Darnell, Martha Armstrong, William P. Reedy, and Robert Meyers. These were the “progressives”—progenitors of modern “change agents” who articulated their heresies and urged them upon the churches.

In those years, faithful brethren could “discern this time” and sounded warnings against the heresies that were being promoted in churches of Christ. Among those was Ira Y. Rice, Jr. who wrote three volumes entitled, *Axe On The Root*. The first was issued in 1966, the second in 1967 and the third in 1970. In all three volumes, he documented departures from the New Testament pattern that characterizes the New Testament church and warned brethren of the dangers facing the church.

Another who lifted up his voice “like a trumpet” was Foy E. Wallace, Jr. who traveled across the land warning brethren of the dangers of modern (so-called) “versions” of the Bible that teach fatal error. Brother Wallace's prolific pen examined the errors of modern “Bible versions” in a large volume published in 1973. That book, *A Review of The New Versions*, exposes the errors of *The Revised Standard Version (RSV)*, *Today's English Version* (also known as, *Good News For Modern Man*), *The New English Bible (NEB)*, and *The New International Version (NIV)*. The adoption of this babel of conflicting versions by many brethren fed heresy in the churches, and continues bearing its nefarious fruit today. At the Freed-Hardeman lectureship in 1973, G. K. Wallace said, “If the denominations cannot read their creeds out of the Bible, they will write them into it.” That is what they have done and heretical brethren have bought those pseudo Bibles by the hundreds that purport to be the word of God, but teach fatal error.

In the 1960s, erroneous doctrines concerning the Holy Spirit gained prominence among many members of the church—Pentecostal doctrines that in previous years and

generations were met and defeated by faithful men on the polemic platform. Those caused no little stir among the faithful, and in 1967 Foy E. Wallace, Jr. produced his book, *The Mission and Medium of The Holy Spirit*, to answer those errors. In its introduction, he wrote,

In the realm of religion there is an affectation known as Pietism. It is an estoteric system that originated in Germany as a religious movement in the seventeenth century. The distinctive tenet of this inner circle society was an emphasis on the devotional over the intellectual based on emotional experience. The modern Pietist is an adherent of this medieval theology of Pietism in the form of an excessive religiosity. It is not piety, nor a synonym for it, nor a derivation of it. The term Pietism is the cognomen for that religious belief--the designation for the principles and practices of the class of persons who advocate an immediate experiential sanctification, a sentimentalism that substitutes feeling for intellect, a substitution of a religion of feeling for the religion of the will. ...The extent to which this "Operation Holy Spirit" has developed is evident in the wave of emotionalism across the nation which is crystallizing into a new movement within our ranks. The promoters of it have had a field day, without significant or effective opposition, through the printed mediums extending from California to Tennessee, in articles full of error, some of which could be adapted and printed without comment or exception in a Holiness magazine and in most of the denominational publication organs. The emphasis of this revolutionary movement is on the activities of the Holy Spirit apart from the word (pp. 1, 2).

Faithful men such as Leroy Brownlow, Franklin Camp, Guy N. Woods, Roy J. Hearn, Gus Nichols, and a host of others also warned of creeping apostasy over the last half century but, like Israel of old, were ignored by those who desired, "that we also may be like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:20). And, "*like* the nations" they have become. In hundreds of places in the world today, churches of Christ cannot be distinguished from "the nations" (denominations).

The likenesses are innumerable, and are found in both the work and worship of those churches. Discerning brethren can readily see the loss of distinction between those and the church revealed on the pages of the New Testament. Thus, those whom God approves are "made manifest" among us. Heresies devolve into division, which the undiscerning may not see. But it exists in fact and, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19).

## ***Medical Ethics Part 2***

*Michael Hatcher  
Pensacola, Florida*

### **INTENT**

Intent is vital in so many areas. Our legal system recognizes intent. When one takes the life of another, intent is always considered. If one intends to take another's life, then they are dealt with very differently than the person who accidentally takes the life of another while doing something illegal and the person who is doing something legal. In the medical ethics realm, some of the procedures will be deemed moral or immoral based upon one's intent. Some moral items, however, would never be right under any circumstances or intent of those involved. (Ethics are not situational, and they are not autonomous as Humanism teaches.) However, there are some medical procedures that might not be wrong of itself, but if the intent of the person doing it is violates the principles previously noted, then the procedure is wrong.

### **APPLICATION**

While we certainly cannot cover every medical situation that might arise, yet we can show some applications of the previous principles and thus help us to understand how we relate these principles to what might come about.

#### **Sanctity of Human Life**

Abortion is morally wrong. As noted previously, life is sacred from the moment of conception, and God views the life in the womb as He does outside the womb—there is no difference. Abortion is the taking of innocent human life and is thus murder.

In vitro fertilization is a process where human eggs are fertilized in a test tube (glass dishes) and then transferred to the female and babies brought to term. However, in the process, numerous additional fertilized eggs are sacrificially destroyed—aborted. Thus this process, in spite of its good intent to help a couple that has not been able to conceive to have a baby, is wrong and must be avoided. However, even if scientists were able to achieve this process without sacrificially destroying any fertilized eggs does not immediately mean they should do so. God has designed a method for the conception of babies. Man must be careful of by-passing God's design.

Since euthanasia is discussed in another chapter, we will not spend time on it but to say simply that there is nothing wrong with allowing the death process to

take place (often called passive euthanasia), but it is wrong to actively do something to cause the death to happen (called active euthanasia).

### **Honor Of Man**

We have previously noted that our Lord endorsed the principle of going to a physician and taking medication for the body. With this endorsement we would find that inoculations, surgery, artificial organs, and organ transplants are all morally acceptable. Some have objected to blood transfusions based upon the prohibition of not eating blood in Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 7:26, and Acts 15:28-29. However, a blood transfusion is not eating blood and there is no prohibition against a transfusion.

However, modern technology has gone far beyond these types of actions. First there is the category of Genetic Engineering that is taking place. In 1953 two British scientists (James Watson and Francis Crick) discovered DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). Located along the chromosomes of the living cell, DNA is composed of four chemicals that are arranged in an infinite variety of patterns that form the genes. Depending on the particular code the development of this material produced a worm, mouse, cow, etc. Each human cell contains 46 chromosomes that are tiny packages of DNA. The order of arrangement forms the “blueprint” that regulates the production of all living things. Each one of the billions of cells in the human body contains all of the genetic information for the production of the entire person.

Scientists have been able to “map” genes (gene or genome mapping) and thus determine, in part, what their specific functions are. The Human Genome Project (an international scientific research project) has done an amazing amount of work in this area having been able to map approximately 20,000-25,000 genes from both a physical and functional standpoint. Mapping might be profitable for plants and animals, yet might present some problems regarding humans. We must all remember that God has designed man and man must not try to *play God*.

Genetic testing or screening (some like the U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment distinguishes between the two) can possibly detect hereditary problems before birth. This can be valuable in treating diseases and problems before they can cause problems. However, it can also be used to identify problems in an unborn child to allow the parents to abort the baby (especially if there is a disease for which there is no known cure).

Genetic testing or screening leads to genetic engineering. Genetic engineering is an attempt to manipulate the code of the hereditary pattern by the

introduction of new genetic information into the cells. There are two types of engineering: germline gene therapy that would alter the traits a child is born with and make them inheritable, and somatic cell gene therapy that swaps our bad genes for good ones. Engineering can very possibly have great beneficial results. It might be able to eliminate many diseases such as Cystic fibrosis, sickle-cell anemia, dwarfism, cardiomyopathy, diabetes, et al. However, we do not know what dangers might be involved in trying to accomplish these things. Additionally, it becomes very easy to go from repairing something that is wrong to attempting to play God (i.e., curing dwarfism to creating a race of giants).

There is also the attempt being made to control the mind. There are various ways in which they desire to accomplish this control: genetic bank, electrical stimulation of the brain (some call it transistorized humans), chemical control, and psychosurgery. Human conduct should not be controlled by these types of things but by moral persuasion and reason leading to the person making moral decisions to change to practicing self-control under the will of God.

To view man as a mere animal to be experimented with (a kind of Dr. Frankenstein-like scientist) to create or redesign the human being the bounds of morality has been crossed; it violates the dignity of man, usurping the creative prerogatives of God.

### **Sacredness of the Family Unit**

There are likewise several areas of medical ethics that encroach into the family unit. Cloning has garnered a great deal of attention the past few years. When Dolly, a female sheep, was first cloned (she was born July 5, 1996), she garnered a lot of attention since she was the first mammal to be cloned from an adult somatic cell (they used the process of nuclear transfer). Cloning is a process of reproduction apart from the normal mating (there are three different types of cloning: recombinant DNA technology or DNA cloning, reproductive cloning, and therapeutic cloning or embryo cloning). Reproductive cloning is to create a genetic duplicate of an individual organism, animal or human, through asexual reproduction, as by stimulating a single cell. Some claim that great historic figures could be reproduced by a preservation of their cells or if a loved one dies an untimely death then save some cells and clone him, and some could arrogantly decide to clone themselves. However, all such attempts at cloning strike at the heart of God's design for human reproduction within the family unit. Another basic problem is producing humans (even in embryonic form) for experimental purposes is wrong (a violation of basic human rights). Then the process would involve creating several human embryos and destroying all but the *fittest* (aborting them) which would violate the sanctity of human life.

Within the last few decades there has been an overt attempt to blur the lines of distinction between male and female. It was seen in the unisex movement and in the homosexual movement. A growing practice has also been surgically altering one's sex. (We are not discussing when a person is born with a sexual abnormality: i.e., intersex—formerly known as hermaphrodite.) While surgeries of this type go by various names (sex reassignment, gender reassignment, genital reconstruction, sex affirmation, sex realignment), it is most commonly called sex change surgery. Most who seek this type of surgery are referred to as *transsexual*. Altering oneself from one sex to the other flies in the face of God's creation. The psalmist correctly records: "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). Those who seek this basically state that God got it all wrong and they need to correct it. Any attempt to alter the design of the human body for the purpose of an arbitrary gender change is a perversion of God's design of the distinction of the sexes.

When a woman finds herself sterile, many will opt for a surrogacy. There are two types: traditional surrogacy where it is the child's genetic mother, or gestational surrogacy where no genetic relationship occurs. In surrogacy a fertilized egg will be implanted in a woman's womb who then carries the child to term or a woman may allow herself to be artificially inseminated so she can have a child naturally as opposed to adoption. The concept of womb for hire is contrary to the sacredness of the family unit. Parental responsibility begins at conception (and in many ways before conception) and does not end till that child reaches a stage of maturity that allows him to be independent and in many ways does not end. There is the training and restraining of children by their parents (Pro. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4). To surrender one's reproductive powers to another person would end up being a neglecting and abdicating of the parental responsibility God has given. Also having a child for the purpose of selling or giving it away would be a violation of the family unit God established. Any situation that violates that family unit God established is not moral.

### CONCLUSION

In the Charles Dickens novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens begins by saying: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." In many respects this is true of today in regards to medical advances. We can do things today that were not even dreamed of in times past. However, with the advances in technology come moral issues that were never faced in prior times. The only way to determine what is ethical in any situation is to have our feet firmly planted on the Word of God. It has everything we need to know pertaining to making moral decisions. If we keep those principles of the sanctity of human life, the honor of man, and the sacredness of the family unit in mind, then whatever medical issues might arise

in the future, we will be able to determine what is right and what is wrong.

### WORKS CITED

All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

**Jackson, Wayne.** *“Moral Aspects of Modern Medical and Scientific Technology.”* *Morals in an Immoral Age.* Ed. Eddie Whitten. Bedford, TX: Christian Supply Center, 1985. 213-24.



[Click Here](#)

***Come visit us on FaceBook get scriptural answers to your questions.***