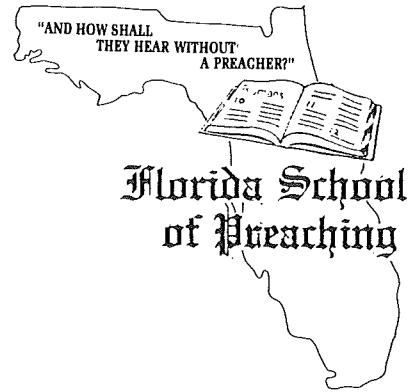


THE HARVESTERS



VOLUME XII

October 1991

NUMBER 3

CHURCH BASHING

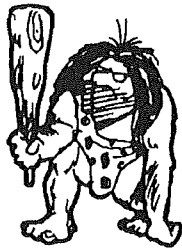
By
B.C. Carr

It seems there is a new game in town. At least in the brotherhood. We call it church "bashing." Let me define the terms.

By church we mean the church of Christ. The only one revealed in the new testament. We are not speaking of denominational groups. These are often ignored in their teaching of error today. Brethren quake in fear at the very mention by name of a denominational group.

By "bashing" we mean to strike a hurtful blow intentionally.

Picture a cave man, with his gnarled club, striking an animal on the head so as to maim or kill.



This is bashing. The difference is instead of using a wooden club men are using a poison tongue

or pen to strike a hurtful blow to the church of our Lord. Their intent is not to help but to injure the church or to beat it into submission so as to bring about change.

Who are those doing the bashing. They are the "some-what's" of our day, often regarded as "scholars" or dynamic leaders in the church of Christ. They are applauded for their church bashing by those who want to change the "old traditional church" into a more relevant institution that will meet the "felt needs" of our day.

Specific Cases

Let me give you some real examples of what we are talking about. A well known preacher stands in one of our pulpits and charges that "The church of Christ" has been guilty of making remarriage the unpardonable sin. He says one could be forgiven of murdering his wife, but if he puts his wife away and marries another, com-

mitting adultery, the church of Christ will never forgive such a one. This particular preacher believes the alien sinner is not amenable to the law of Christ as stated in Matt. 19:9. Other preachers are echoing the same false doctrine. They speak of a "church of Christ" doctrine that is false. One preacher was withdrawn from because he taught that all men are amenable to the law (Matt. 19:9).

Another "leader" has taught publicly and in writing that the "church of Christ" has been guilty of teaching the doctrine of salvation by works. This same man is echoed by his followers as saying "There is nothing a man can do toward his own salvation. We are saved by grace alone." Personally I have never known a faithful gospel preacher to teach salvation by works in the sense the church is being accused. In the event one should teach this false doctrine he should be rebuked, but let us not "bash" the church

by such charges.

Still another popular preacher among us swings his cave-man club in an attempt to "bash" the church by saying "the church of Christ claims they have no creed but the Bible, but they in fact do have one." He refers to a well-known tract, "Can we understand the Bible alike." He claims this is an ignorant viewpoint (that we can understand the Bible alike). This man thinks we cannot understand the Bible alike and would like to fellowship those with different views on worship and other important matters. Evidently he thinks Paul was ignorant in his charges recorded in First Corinthians 1:10. More than one false teacher among us has said "the church of Christ" as well as the Christian church has sinned in making the instrument a test of fellowship in worship. Thus the church is "bashed" again by the charge that it has sinned by not fellowshipping those who worship by using the instrument.

Again the church is "bashed" for the way it has held back women in the church. One has said the church will not survive unless we allow women to exercise their ministerial rights. Please observe the church is being blamed for a failure to "let women preach." The word of God is ignored in all of these cases.



Finally, brother Leroy

"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5:30-31)

Garrett asks, "what the church of Christ must do in order to be saved." He concludes the church must confess we have been wrong in its refusal to have anything to do with other churches and other christians. He further says we must change our ways and confess we have been wrong in thinking only those who are members of the church of Christ will be saved and go to heaven. Our preachers and elders need to publicly confess we have been wrong about instrumental music and what shall we say more? These are but a few samples of how the church is being "bashed" today.

The Tactics Are Evil

(1)

It is not wrong to expose error. This is right whether it be a member of the church or some false religious teacher. We have a duty to rebuke and reprove (II Tim. 4:1-2). We believe it wrong to charge the church with error when maybe there are only a few isolated cases of guilt.

(2)

By such language the

weak and untaught are made to despise the church. This will result in many turning away from the Lord's church.



Young people are especially turned off by such remarks.

(3)

Such language betrays a denominational concept of the church. Denominations have their own doctrines. The Lord's church is regulated by the word of God. The church does not originate doctrine.

(4)

When men speak of "the church of Christ" while they are a part of it, is to suggest they are really outside this body. We wonder if in their heart they have already separated themselves from the church. If they are not of us they should have the courage to say so and get out. If they really feel they are a part of the body they ought to quit "bashing" themselves and others.

Conclusion

We believe this is part of an overall effort to change the church into something of a modern day denomination. Be-

The Harvesters

Published Monthly by the Florida School of Preaching
1807 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland, Florida 33803
(813) 683-4043
Editor: Jackie M. Stearsman

Board of Directors

B. C. Carr, President	Glenn Leo
Paul Thomhill, Vice President	Wallace Maxwell
J. H. Blackman, Jr., Secretary	James Medlin
E. Robert McAnally, Treasurer	Gordon Methvin
Maurice Davis	Willis Pack
Paul W. Eubanks	Dale Spung
Kenneth W. Franklin	Jackie Stearsman
George K. French	Gene Stillwell

TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

fore this can be done the members must be made ashamed of that which now exists. When members become unhappy with the church they are then ready for a change.

Let us beware of those who are always putting the church down. They cannot well serve the cause we love while trying to destroy it. Any man who insists upon "bashing" the church ought to be viewed with suspicion as to his motive. For any false accusation he ought to be rebuked.

Congregational Representatives

By
Wallace Maxwell

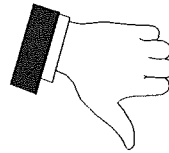
Elders are being appointed in some congregations to serve for a predetermined period of time. When their tenure is up, they are reevaluated by the membership. This election and evaluation of elders is comparable to the representative form of government that we have at the state and federal level. Representatives are elected by the people and for the people. If they do not meet the approval of the people, they are not reelected.

Biblically, elders are chosen by the direction of the Holy Spirit to oversee the flock of God (Acts 20:28; I Tim. 3; Titus 1). They are answerable to God as they that are to give an account (Heb. 13:17). Elders are



to oversee the congregation according to the will of God which may not necessarily be the will of the people. Each elder is under the eldership and answerable to the eldership. Elders are instructed to "take heed to yourself" (Acts 20:28). An eldership that cannot or will not oversee itself and correct a wayward elder is in no position to oversee the flock of God.

If elders are to be appraised triennially or biannually, why not apply the same rule to members of the congregation? Members could be accepted in the congregation for a two or three year tenure at which time a determination could be made by the elders to see if they are living up to their commitment to Christ. If they have not lived up to their commitment to Christ, tell them they are no longer accepted as members of the congregation. If appointing elders for a determined period and then reevaluating them make better leaders, why would not accepting members to the congregation for a different period of time followed by reexamination make better followers? Why should there be a periodic litmus test for those who are to lead and have no exam for those who follow? I am opposed to this concept of representative church government which is without scriptural command or example. The Bible tells us that the elders who rule well should be honored, and the elders that



sin should be publicly rebuked (I Tim. 5: 19-22). The danger in these limited appointments and reexaminations is that elders become more answerable to the people than they are to God. The voice of the people becomes the voice of God. [Brother Maxwell is the preacher and one of the elders of the Wesconnett Church of Christ, Jacksonville, Florida. He also serves on the Board of the *Florida School of Preaching*. The article was copied from the *Wesconnett Church of Christ Bulletin*, August 4, 1991, editor]

Potpourri From Jamaica

For the third consecutive summer students from the *Florida School of Preaching* worked in Jamaica. Leading the student group was **Robert Lindsey**. Robert is a graduate of the school and preaches in Brooksville, Florida.

The Central Church of Christ in Clearwater covered the expenses for the group. In addition to sending the students they have recently purchased property in Kingston for the local congregation. The first Sunday there were eighty (80) present and the second Sunday there were ninety (90) present.

There are two congregations with whom the group worked. One in Maxfield Park and the second in the new facility. The property has a home on it and it has been renovated to accommodate their assembly.

To date sixteen (16) have been baptized as a result

of this year's activity.

This event has been the source of edification to all involved. The brethren in Jamaica receive encouragement and help as do the students who participate. Some continue to return yearly to be a part of this occasion. Brother and sister **Cliff Martin** in Jamaica, have built lasting friendships with many of the students participating. They are a great encouragement to those who know and respect their work. The members of the Church in Clearwater are continually rejoicing as they see the progress and development of the congregations they are assisting.

In **Tydixon** Harold Rodriguez, Charles Orr and Robert Lupo shared preaching responsibilities. VBS was conducted Monday through Thursday. One was baptized

In **Kingston** there were fifteen baptized. Sunday services were held at Maxfield Park Children's Home. The weekday activities included devotionals, conducting Bible studies at the tent, in homes, on street corners, and VBS at Maxfield Park Monday through Thursday.

Robert Lindsey who coordinated the effort for the

Clearwater Church observed that "the students saw first hand the numerous souls that are lost and groping in darkness."

Potpourri From Africa

Ted Wheeler, graduate from the *Florida School of Preaching* and W.E. Wardlaw, special lecturer at the school were involved in strengthening the cause of the Lord in Ghana and write of their joint work.

In The Bulletin from the Venice Church of Christ, where Ted preaches he writes: *During our time there we spoke at nine different congregations; conducted street preaching at night in two towns; conducted many Bible studies during the day and held a workshop with over 80 preachers and church leaders in attendance. All of this resulted in 26 precious souls being baptized into Christ!*

In a letter to brother Carr brother Wardlaw writes: *We were in Ghana twenty-one nights and we had preaching services all twenty-one nights. Some nights we divided up and were preaching in three different places the same night. I personally presented twenty-*

three lessons in six different towns or villages. Two of these lessons were in a market place with loud speakers. One of the places was a village where the gospel had not been preached publicly before. My lesson lasted for an hour and forty-five minutes with an interpreter speaking half that time. One week a lectureship was conducted for about 75 native preachers. The total time I lectured that week to them was seven and one half hours, plus a question and answer session afterwards. On other days I studied the Bible with people in their homes. Some days I had three home studies during the day and preached at night. It was necessary to have interpreters for both the home studies and the preaching.

Spiritual Sword Lectureship

October 20-24, 1991
Jim Laws, Director
Getwell Church of Christ

THEME

"There Was A Man
Named Job"

Brother Carr will speak Tuesday, 1:00 p.m. His assignment is "Bildad, 'The Place of The Wicked in A Moral World' (Ch. 18)."

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING

1807 SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE
LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33803-2653

DIRECTOR: B. C. Carr
Phone: (813) 683-4043

Address Correction Requested