

# Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XV

August 1994

Number 1

## Registration Schedule

Florida School of Preaching  
Fall Semester Begins August 22, 1994

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ S.S.# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check Classes Desired

Hours	Course	Instructor	Credit
<b>Monday</b> ___ 8:30 to 12:00 ___ 1:00 to 4:15	Hebrews & Galatians 21343 Introduction to O.T 31379	Davis Burgett	3 3
<b>Tuesday</b> ___ 8:30 to 12:00 ___ 1:00 to 4:15 ___ 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.	Greek 21322 Church History 21341 Interpretative Readings 11263	Stearsman Stilwell Blackman	3 3 2½
<b>Wednesday</b> ___ 8:30 to 12:00 ___ 1:00 to 4:15	Life of Paul 21362 English Grammar 11324	Stearsman Franklin	3 3
<b>Thursday</b> ___ 8:30 to 12:00 ___ 1:00 to 4:15	Ezekiel-Daniel 21314 Song Leading 11333	Stearsman Davidson	3 3
<b>Friday</b> ___ 8:30 to 12:00 ___ 1:00 to 4:15	Sermon on Mount 31380 Personal Work 11320	Stearsman Maxwell	3 3

# Some Thoughts On Religion and Materialism

By  
Jackie M. Stearsman

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines materialism as follows: "*Materialism*: 1. The theory that physical matter is the only reality and that everything, including thought, feeling, mind, and will, can be explained in terms of matter and physical phenomena. 2. The theory or doctrine that physical well-being and worldly possessions constitute the greatest good and highest value in life. 3. A great or excessive regard for worldly concerns."

The Lord would have us "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15-17).

As we think about materialism as defined here, and religion in general, let us pose some questions for thought. (1) Do you feel that the philosophy of materialism has in any way affected religion in our society? (2) Do you think that some people have permitted materialism to become the dominant force in their life? (3) Do you believe that it is possible for a person to believe in the "supernatural" but practically place all of his interest in materialism? (4) If you were asked to evaluate your primary interests in life, how much

has/does materialism affect your life? Some \_\_\_ None \_\_\_ Much \_\_\_ (5) Should a person have no concern for material things? (6) How may we know that we are placing a proper emphasis on material things?

## Religious Materialism

We learn from the Bible that there are people who are religious but their religion is basically and fundamentally materialistic. (1) The Sadducees were of this persuasion. They neither believed in angels or spirits and when the early church preached and stressed the need for spirituality they became enemies to the truth (Acts 23:8; 4:1-4; 5:17). (2) Idolatry is of this persuasion. In Acts 19 Paul has basically destroyed the business practices of those trafficking in the relics of Diana of the Ephesians. It appears that the major interest in the minds of these folks could be summed up as materialism. True religion will always have difficulties with the religious materialists. (3) False religion is dominated by

materialism. Read the vivid picture of false religion symbolized in Revelation 18 and you will be impressed with the fact that what gave that system value to its promoters was materialism. When we have our interest in the "city of materialism" God calls upon us to come out of it (Rev. 18:4).

If we will be honest we may observe that the philosophy of materialism is the dominant force of much that wears the name of religion today. Some religions are famous for their trafficking in religious relics of one type or another. What was the interest in "Jim and Tammy" that preoccupied our minds in the past? What would possess a man to make such a foolish claim that God had vowed to soon kill him if he did not raise \$\$\$\$\$, \$\$\$\$\$. One of the proofs that a religion is false is to evaluate its financial interest and/or enterprise.

Jesus intended for His followers to support His message (Matt. 10:9-14, 40-42). Begging for others to pay for your religion is not authorized by the Bible. A

**"My Treasure;  
Your Treasurer!"  
Oops!**



Sister Evelyn McAnally has informed me that I had a error in the Harvesters each month. Robert McAnally is "her" treasure not ours. I have had him listed as the treasure of the board. Apologies to all. Editor.

## The Harvesters

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fundamental characteristic of the early church was dedication to truth and refusal to be funded by the outsider (III John 7-8). At times those supported by faithful brethren were rejected by the unfaithful. Read the total context of the above reference.

A fundamental element of religious modernism is that it denies the supernatural. When it does there is nothing left but social services as an interest. The end result is little different than what is promoted by Humanism. A sure sign that a preacher or church has been effected by materialism is to see the abandonment of religious truth to become preoccupied by social programs of one type or another. After all, when we do not have a deep appreciation for the spiritual what else do we have to occupy our time and energies? Some religions are known primarily for their social services while giving little more than "lip service" to the Will of God as taught in the Bible.

The entire agenda of Millennialism is a perverted view of the material world. The promoters of this religious foolishness are continually preaching the material, and these doctrines deny the true spiritual nature of the church/kingdom. Some have reached the point of denying eternal punishment and will knock on doors all over the world to preach their materialism. As Jesus said of some in His day, they would compass land and sea to make one proselyte and having done so they have harmed rather than helped the poor soul (Matt. 23:15).

### **True Religion and the Material**

True religion does not deny the material world, neither

does it consider material things to be evil. Material things are neutral before God, but they may become a form of religion to a person who does not understand who he is nor the true God (Col. 3:5). The Bible teaches that we are to have priorities; that without priorities reality becomes blurred or destroyed (Matt. 6:33). Which comes first to you, "things" or what is right, good, and of intrinsic value? God does not demand that we take vows of poverty. God does demand that we use our blessings in a particular manner (I Tim. 6:17-19). A person may have little or no material possessions and be guilty of materialism. He may desire the material to the degree that he would do most anything imaginable to obtain his desire. God never did say that godliness was a way of gain. In the minds of some this probably sounds like blasphemy, but it is true (I Tim. 6:5b-10).

God intended that people face the issue of materialism at least once a week, and to do so upon the first day of the week (I Cor. 16:1-2). Are you affected by the philosophy of materialism? If your material possessions were taken from you would you be able to be like Job, faithful and devoted to God (Job 1:20-22). If it came to the point of having to decide between God or material things would you, like the young ruler, go away sorrowful (Mark 10:17-31)?

### **Conclusion**

Let it be remembered that the worldly minded person has nothing but materialism to give life meaning. What are the ways (Lifestyles) of the non-rich and non-famous? Understand that the Nation of Israel had directions given her in order to to keep

them from becoming materialist. Her sad history reveals that materialism dominated her life far more than her God. Do not forget that most of the religious world we know today is motivated more by materialism than it is in the religious truth of the Bible. Let it be known that if we would enjoy the blessings of God we must not be materialists (I John 2:15-17).



### **What You Have Said And Done!**



June 30, 1994

Dear Brethren:

Enclosed is a small check to be used as needed. Wish I could send more.

Keep up the good work. God bless you all for the good that you do.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Thelma M. Albritton  
Bradenton, FL



Dear Brethren,

As a result of the sale of the property, the corporation was left with a sum of money which we felt would best be used in support of other endeavors of the churches of Christ.

After discussing this matter, the board of directors unanimously decided that we would like to donate a portion of this money to the work at the Florida School of Preaching. Please find enclosed a check . . . We hope that this will help you continue in your effort to train gospel preachers.

We would like to make this donation in memory of our beloved sister, Diann Barton.

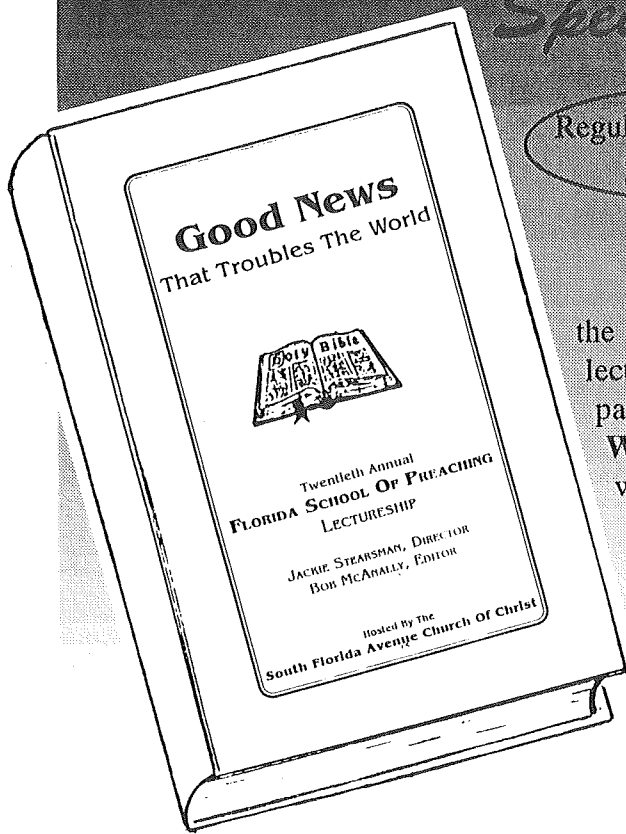
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In Christian Love,  
All the Members  
Indiantown Church of Christ



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