

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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SCHOOL BEGINS 29th YEAR



(photo above) Jackie Stearsman, director of the school, addresses opening session of the 97-98 year. The student body includes a good number of new students from many areas including several foreign countries. The critical need for preachers both in the U. S. and around the world has never been greater.



(photo at left) Gordon Methvin, president of the board, presents Jackie Stearsman with the keys to the new 1997 Dodge Van.

This fifteen passenger vehicle will be of tremendous help to the school. One of its uses will be to transport students to many areas of the state to conduct student days.

Why Should I Change My Religion?

By
Jackie M. Stearsman

Change is all about us. Change is forced upon us. Change at times is painful (Jer. 1:10). Change has the potential for good or for harm. How may we be sure that we have changed or are being asked to change for the good? In the church today we read and hear of "Change Agents." Written manuals and directives are produced and promoted that will produce a desired change. Should I change or not?

Changing Gods

There are the "gods" of paganism and there is the God of the Bible. There are the "gods" of Modern Cults and there is the God of the Bible. As Paul would say: "... there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Cor. 8:4-6).

The gods of paganism and cultism are the invention of men. They do not represent the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is the only true God that meets the test of reason and the needs of mankind. The "God" of Mohammed and Modern Judaism

is not the God of the Bible. A god without the Saviour Jesus Christ can not meet the needs of man. Without the true God of the Bible, we are without a God and without hope in the world. To say, as one politician in the past reflected upon political solutions in the Middle East, that "Jewish, Moslem, and Christian all worship the same God" may be practical politically, but it is false Biblically. True, all three systems are Monotheist (affirm One God), but these concepts of God are not the same. True Christianity does not worship a mere monotheistic being, but the true God of the Bible. Why would I want to change?

Changing Creeds

It is a characteristic of man-made religions to continually modify religious doctrines. Man does not have the wisdom to know the future and all the consequences of a given set of dogmas. As time goes on modification and change is forced upon man-made religious dogmas.

In the Bible we have a perfect, all sufficient, authoritative written revelation to man from God (II Tim. 3:14-17; II John 9-11; Gal. 1:6-12). Man has, time and again, been forced to give up his productions and return to the perfect foundation, the Bible, for adjustments. Informed religious

persons know that this took place on a wide scale in the what historians term "The Reformation Period." Men attempted to reform religion, and in doing so "formed" many similar man-made religious groups labeled as Denominations. Do any of these claim to be true to the original source, the Bible? Only partially so, for the names they wear, the governing organizations they have developed and worship services they have evolved are not to be found in the Bible. Most members of such groups will acknowledge that the group they are a part of is not essential. To quote them: "one church is as good as another." Is not the Creed the foundation for the church? If so, one Creed is as good as another. Surely we can not say this of the Bible.

If you are asking me to

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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969



The Old Must Go

give up the absolute devotion to the Bible for all my decisions in religious matters for man-made dogmas and doctrines, why should I change?

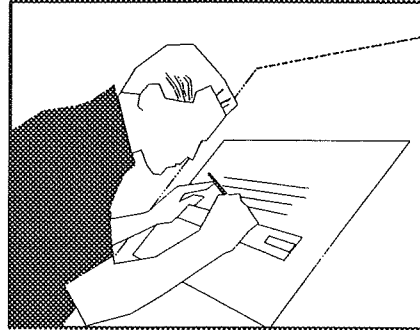
Change Churches?

In a land of religious freedom such as America, man has almost unlimited freedom of religious expression. He can start a new church, name it after most anyone, admit or exclude members as he chooses, worship and organize such groups as his will dictates.

You may give up a part of all of such religious organizations and change to another, modify, "unite" and combine efforts in most any conceivable manner. Watch the TV and listen to the "message" being presented. What is there that is distinctive? What is there that is essential? How far in "unbelief" would one have to go before he would be rejected?

We often hear that if we would simply lay aside our differences and unite (in all manner of contradictory doctrines) the world would be so impressed that we would make a great impact upon it. Is this true? For decades Billy Graham and his

religious Crusades have gone throughout the world. One of the primary requirements to participate in such efforts is to lay aside your religious differences for the success of the Billy



Draw Up Another

Graham Crusade. Q Is the religious world more united today than it was when Mr. Graham started? Q What groups have given up their religious convictions to join Mr. Graham? Are they told to choose the church of God's choice or their choice? Are they not told that Denominationalism is a failure when it comes to evangelism? Q Why should I take up my Denominational structure after the Crusade is over if it was a hindering factor in the crusade? Some would answer, Faith in Jesus is essential, but religious denominationalism is not essential for salvation. This is only partly true. True, Denominationalism is not essential. Q Where may I read in the Bible that Faith in Jesus alone is the only essential? Q When Jesus saves a person where is he placed? Into what denomination is he added? (Acts 2:47).

I deplore religious denominationalism. I reject it for it is a failure in evangelistic efforts, and it is condemned in the

Bible (I Cor. 1:10; Gal. 1:6-9; II John 9-11). Change from being a member of the church of Christ that you read about in the Bible (Matt. 16:18-20; Rom. 16:16) to religious denominationalism, why?

Conclusion

It is interesting to see how men will use the Bible to open doors and then lay the Bible aside to promote man-made dogmas. It is interesting that men will use the name of Jesus, as if they believed and followed Him, only to promote their man-made agendas.

Two men came to my house once. They were well dressed, smiled, devoted to what they were promoting. They approached me somewhat like the following: "Hello, we are in the neighborhood studying the Bible with people, are you interested in religious matters?" I replied that I was interested in religious matters



**Upon What
Do We Build?**

and studied the Bible. They reached into their satchels and produced a "Watchtower" publication. I again replied, "I

thought you wanted to study the Bible. This is filled with false information." I asked if they would permit me to go to their Kingdom Halls and preach the Bible and only the Bible? They would not answer. Do you know why they did not answer? I begged them to tell me what happened to them that would enable them to believe something so contrary to the Bible as Watchtower Dogmas? No answer. I pointed out a few obvious Bible denying teachings of the Watchtower Movement. They left saying that they had another appointment.

A second illustration will help make my point. At the present time over TV there is offered a Bible free of charge and without any obligation. A toll free number is given. Many will be caught in the veiled approach. Do you think the Mormon Church believes and teaches that your Bible is trustworthy and complete revelation from God? They do not. They will depreciate the Bible once they get in your home and try to persuade you to accept the foolish notions of Joseph Smith and modern revelations that contradict the Bible on many points.

Change? Yes, I admit that

we all need to change. But not all change is good. We will be led into many foolish and harmful practices if we do not have a firm foundation for religious convictions.

Do you believe the trustworthy and inspired words of the Bible: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14). "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9). "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 steadfastness. But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen." (II Pet. 3:15-18).

When men want me to change, I must ask why? Change from partial obedience to full obedience, why? Change from practicing true religion that is taught in the Bible to man-made modifications, why?

The Apostle Paul desired that all men become as he was, except for his bonds (Acts 26:29). Are you what Paul was religiously? If not, then change and be what he was, nothing more nor less. If I am what Paul was religiously, **WHY SHOULD I CHANGE?**

NEXT ISSUE

Tributes to Winfred Clark. Our sympathy is extended to his family and friends.

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