



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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Florida School of Preaching

Dear Brethren,

Enclosed is a memoriam check for my husband, Charles Vernon Cox, in the amount of five hundred dollars for the Florida School of Preaching. I am sharing a portion of the undesignated funds, given to me in lieu of flowers, with the school. Charles graduated from the school in May of 1978. Charles and his dad, Cecil Cox, began in the charter class of September 1969. Due to a conflict in his work schedule he had to quit for a time. He was able to return full time to the school in 1976. Brother B. C. Carr alluded in his humorous style at graduation to the fact that Charles had attended school from '69 to '78 before he could graduate!

In 1980 Charles moved us to Lake Park, Georgia to work with the congregation planted there. He served as a full-time evangelist there for five years. He continued to preach part-time until his work as a millwright took him out of town. He was making plans to learn Spanish fluently and be able to return to Central America to help evangelize, especially in Costa Rica.

In August of this year Charles was diagnosed with a rare type of cancer of the lining of the chest cavity caused by exposure to asbestos when he was in the Navy in the sixties. The severe pain he had prior to his diagnosis was thought to be caused by a job-related injury. When faced with the diagnosis and knowing the prognosis, he reminded us that he had God on his side. Charles' spirituality and attitude made this ordeal much easier to bear. He often said that he was in a win-win situation. If the treatments were effective, he would win; and if not, he would win. He said he felt like the apostle Paul "... for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ: which is far better ..."

God answered our prayers for the relief of the intense suffering he experienced. He contracted a cold and subsequently developed pneumonia in his unaffected lung. The infection was not responsive to the antibiotics and the pneumonia prevailed. Charles went to be with the Lord on Saturday night, November 14, 1998. Just four weeks before he died, he delivered his last sermon and was planning to return to Costa Rica on another mission trip in January. As Revelation 14:13 states, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

I am realizing the peace spoken of in God's Word more and more each day. I earnestly solicit your prayers on behalf of Carl and Curtis, our two sons, Charles' family, and myself. It is my prayer that God continues to bless the Florida School of Preaching. Please continue to send *The Harvesters* to me just as you do now.

Your sister in Christ,
Dorothy Cox
5339 Golf Drive
Lake Park, GA 31636

Brother Carr and I have both written to sister Cox and expressed our condolences to her and the family. I asked that we be permitted to reproduce her letter to the school, and she granted us permission. I have given her address so that others who have known of Charles and his work may know of his death and perhaps they too may wish to send condolences to sister Cox. Preparation of the Harvesters in advance of publication did not enable us to place the letter in earlier editions, Editor.

January 31, 1999

Dear Brothers in Christ:

Thanks so much for following the New Testament. So many churches are straying.

We really appreciate the "Preparing Souls to Serve the Lord" we receive each month.

*Keep up the good work!
In Christian Love,
/s/ Ransom and Betty Boone*



GUEST EDITORIAL

Snakes, Poison And Deadly Results (#2)

By
Thomas F. Eaves, Sr.

Marvin (Bud) Gregg of The House of Prayer in Jesus Name in Hamblen County, TN was quoted in *The Tennessean* (7/16/91), "We believe the Bible. Not part of it, but all of it. And we don't only read it, we practice it." Reference was to Mark 16:18.

"They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

It is tragic to note the results of handling poisonous snakes and drinking poison.

Jimmy Ray Williams, Sr. died in 1973 after drinking strychnine during a worship service at the Holiness church of God in Jesus Name in Cocke county. (#1)

Buford Pack took poison and died along with Williams. (#1)

Charles Prince, 47, of Canton, NC drank strychnine and handled two poisonous snakes at a religious service August 17, 1985 at the Apostolic Church of God in Greene County. He died Monday, August 19, 1985. (#2)

Jimmy Ray Williams, 28 of Hot Springs, NC was bitten by a 3 foot black timber rattlesnake at 8:20 p.m. on July 13, 1991, at a worship service of The House of Prayer in Jesus Name in Hamblen county, TN. He died about an hour after being bitten. (#1)

Kale Saylor Sr., 77, a Pentecostal minister from Harlan County, died in March 1995 after being bitten by a snake in Bell County. He was one of two people who died in Bell County that year from religion-related snake bites; two others were injured last year. (#3)

While many members of his congregation prayed for him Daril Ray Collins, 23, died of a snake bite in Bell County. Police reported that Collins was bitten during a religious practice. Collins was a member of the

Saylor Pentecostal Church in Bell County. (#3)

John Wayne Brown Jr., who had been handling snakes since he was 17, was bitten "by a 4 foot timber rattler during a snake-handling service in Macedonia, Alabama. He died 15 minutes later. His wife Melinda, died in 1995 after being bitten while handling a snake at a church in Kentucky. (#4)

While our sympathy goes out to the wives and children of these men, we wonder why they died. They give Mark 16:18 as their proof text for the practice of handling snakes and drinking poison, but note what the passage actually says.

1. "They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing...IT SHALL NOT HURT THEM"...yet we have documented three deaths from drinking poison and five deaths from snake bite.

2. This same verse (Mark 16:18) also states, "they shall lay hands on the sick and THEY SHALL RECOVER." When the above mentioned individuals became sick, even

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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

unto death, why didn't the faithful lay hands on them that they might have recovered. If the first half of the verse is applicable today—why isn't the last half of the verse also applicable????

Miracles were performed during the first century to confirm the word of God (Hebrews 2:1-4). Now we have the confirmed word which is God's power unto salvation (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3; Romans 1:16; Jude 3). May God help each of us to study God's word diligently, and carefully consider the context of each passage that we might come to a knowledge of the truth (John 8:32).

#1-*The Tennessean*, July 16, 1991, p. 3B.

#2-*The Knoxville Journal*, Tuesday, August, 1985, p. 5A.

#3-*The Tennessean*, Wednesday, December 17, 1997, p. 5B.

#4-*The Tennessean*, Friday, December 11, 1998, p. 12B.

[This article appeared in the February 7, 1999, church bulletin from the Sibles Road Church of Christ, Montgomery, AL, Editor.]



From Whom Do We Seek Approval?

By
Brian Kenyon

We all have standards by which we are expected to live. At school the standards may be rules of conduct and the grading scale. At work the standards may be

promptness and effectiveness in doing a particular task. By meeting and exceeding these standards we are "approved." For example, a student who is well behaved and/or earns good grades often receives special recognition or rewards at the end of the year. The employee who meets or exceeds the set standards of his or her profession often receives special recognition or even a promotion. In living the Christian life there is also a standard by which one is "approved." In Second Corinthians 10:12-18 Paul gives us eternally important information on being "approved" according to the only standard for Christian living, the Lord.

First, let us note that we are unwise to compare ourselves with those who "approve" themselves. *"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise"* (2 Cor. 10:12). Paul knows better (and so should we) than to "measure" himself against the standard of those who think of themselves as the standard of approval. The charge of "self-approval" was leveled against Paul by his opponents (2 Cor. 3:1; 5:12), but he refused to put himself on the same level as them. Making "ourselves of the number, or compar[ing] ourselves" has to do with including one's self among "the crowd" for the purpose of comparing. Those who "measure themselves" are those who set themselves up as the standard.

Consequently, those who consider themselves the standard always "measure up" to the standard because they have nothing but themselves with which to compare. However, others who do not meet one's self-approved standard always fall short. The standard of self-commendation is destructive. It is too uncertain because it is subjective, and it leads to self-conceit, boasting, and arrogance. No wonder Paul says it is "not wise"! The Inspired wise man's words are especially appropriate here, *"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him"* (Prov. 26:12).

Second, let us note that we must not boast in anything except the Lord and His cause. *"But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord"* (2 Cor. 10:13-17).

Those who commend themselves have nothing but themselves with which to compare and are thus led into

immeasurable boasting (cf. with the first person pronouns in the Pharisee's prayer in Luke 18:10-12). However, Paul's only glory was in what the Lord enabled him to do (cf. 1 Cor. 3:5-10; 15:9-10; 2 Cor. 12:10-11; Eph. 3:7-8; 1 Tim. 1:12-17). Paul refuses to boast in anything outside of the measure of God's "rule." The word "rule" comes from a Greek word (κανών) which first means a reed, or measuring stick, and secondarily refers to a rule or standard by which to walk (cf. Gal. 6:16). It is the same word from which we get "canon" (as in "the New Testament canon"). Paul only boasted in that measure of rule which God gave him. That "measure," says Paul, reached all the way to Corinth (i.e. "even unto you"). Unlike the false teachers who opposed him, Paul was given authority from God to bring the gospel to Corinth (2 Cor. 10:13-14). It was Paul, not the false teachers who commended themselves, who laid the foundation and had begotten the Corinthians in the Gospel (1 Cor. 3:10; 4:15). Paul does not boast in what others have accomplished (2 Cor. 10:15a). In fact, Paul avoided building on other men's labors (cf. Rom. 15:20). He does, however, expect

the Corinthians to help him spread the gospel to regions beyond them (2 Cor. 10:15b-16 cf. Rom. 15:24). What Paul and the Corinthians did in the name of the Lord, the Lord did through them. In that respect, he that "gloriethe" must glory in the Lord (2 Cor. 10:17). As Jeremiah confirmed many years ago, there is absolutely no grounds for boasting in human wisdom, might, or wealth--only in a genuine acknowledgment of God's sovereignty can there be legitimate boasting (Jer. 9:23-24)! We must not, therefore, measure our "approval" upon the standards and/or the accomplishments of self or others.

Third, we must seek our "approval" from the Lord, the only true standard. *"For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth"* (2 Cor. 10:18). It does not matter how "good" we are in our own eyes or in the eyes of others. God's "rule" (standard) is what is important. Paul's claims were not founded upon self-conceit, nor did he rest upon the commendation of others. Rather, Paul stood on the standards of God and was therefore approved. When God's approval is secured, it matters

little how we measure up to others. We must seek God's approval through His "rule." The majority is not the standard of approval (cf. Ex. 23:2). The majority is often in error. Prestige and status are not the standard of approval (cf. Phil. 3:4-8). One may have "status" among one's peers and think that he or she is approved of God, but that only amounts to an attitude of thinking that one is "good enough already." The only true standard of approval is God's will. The word of God is the standard that does not lie (cf. Jas. 1:22-25). Only those who do God's will are approved and commended by the Lord. May we be among the Lord's approved so that when He returns again in Judgment, we may be among those who "have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5).

Special Contribution

Brother and sister Charles Hendrickson from Mobile, Alabama have donated \$1,000.00 to the Florida School of Preaching to purchase us a Digital Camera and a Color Scanner. These items will be used to attach pictures and materials to the Web Site and to enable us to place pictures in the Harvesters.

We appreciate the Hendrickson's gift and their continued interest in our work.

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