



The Harvester

*Preparing Souls
To Serve The Lord!*

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Quentin Chalaire

Graduating May 10, 2020

Brother Chalaire grew up in the North Port, Florida, area. He came to the Florida School of Preaching immediately after his graduation from North Port High School in 2018. He is a member of the Venice, Florida, church of Christ and is also involved with the Port Charlotte church of Christ, who generously supported him as a student. He has been on missionary campaigns to Ghana, West Africa. He has also worked with Weeki Wachee Christian Camp as both a counsellor and junior counsellor. After graduation, he plans to continue his education so he can “make tents” and be in the position to help smaller congregations who cannot provide for a full-time preacher.

We Have Been Here Before (Part 1)

Bruce Daugherty

The coronavirus epidemic is something new for everyone. Nothing like this has occurred in our lifetimes. Since it is a new experience and with all the media hype, it is uncertain as to how to respond. The desire is to be prudent but at the same time not give oneself over to panic. We want to live by faith rather than fear.

Though we have not lived through a pandemic, there are precedents in history that can help give guidance as to what course of action individual Christians or congregations should take. One reason for studying church history and the history of the Restoration Movement is to be reminded that “there is nothing new under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9-10). Examining the responses of God’s people in previous times of pestilence and plague can prove to be

beneficial to God’s people today. Parts 1 and 2 of this article will briefly examine the responses given to the “Black Death” of 1348, Martin Luther’s course of action during the plague, David Lipscomb’s example during the cholera epidemic in Nashville in 1873, and the impact of the Spanish flu of 1918-1919 on some Christians in the Ohio Valley.

“The Black Death”

Medieval history tells of the “Black Death,” which today is believed to have been the bubonic plague, which swept over Europe in 1347-1348, and in successive waves in 1361, 1368, 1375, 1382, 1438-1439, 1454-65 and possibly 1471. The disease was transmitted by fleas and rats and thrived in the filthy living conditions of the time. Since medicine of the day

day was powerless to diagnose the illness, no remedy was available except preventative measures of isolation and quarantine. Though it is impossible to know exactly how many died, the mortality rate in England approached 50%, and is indicative of what was happening on the European continent (Coulton, 131-132). The suddenness and helplessness of the situation loosened all social ties and brought out the best and worst of humanity, as many people helped their neighbors while others fled for safety to less populated areas. Many people of the day attributed the disease to a punishment sent from God on the sinfulness of the age. It went along with overall medieval perceptions that mankind was going from bad to worse.

As the plague advanced in England, parish priests suffered a mortality rate of more than 40% while the hierarchy of bishops, archbishops, and cardinals suffered a mortality rate of less than 18%. These numbers indicate that many of the hierarchy had abandoned their cities and stayed in comparative safety in secluded country homes. As a result of the high mortality rates among the parish priests and a mass of resignations due to fear or an impoverishment of living due to non-support, many English churches were abandoned to birds and beasts and were rapidly going to ruin (Coulton, 133). English bishops complained that they could not find enough priests to visit the sick, administer the sacraments, and care for church property.

Due to the shortage of priests, English bishops began allowing

people to confess to laypeople, especially in situations of last rites. If the penitent survived, he or she was expected to repeat his or her confession later to a priest. If no priest was available to administer extreme unction, then “faith in the Sacrament would suffice” (Coulton, 130). Here were seeds of the coming religious revolution in the Reformation as the ideas of *sola fide* and the priesthood of all believers were already being practiced.

Another consequence of the “Black Death” was the rapid growth of the Lollards, the disciples of John Wycliffe. Since many priests and much of the hierarchy had fled the plague, public opinion judged them as having fallen from their sacred offices. The pretentious claims to nearly superhuman powers were negated by their conduct during the plague. The English people judged them as being unworthy of the privileges they enjoyed. The pandemic swept away the terrible “system of putting ignorant boys into the best livings, while curates at starvation wages did the actual work” (Coulton, 138).

Luther's Response To the Plague

“Whether one may flee from a Deadly Plague” — a letter written to Dr. John Hess.

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*Our final deposit for the month is usually made on the last Wednesday of the month. All contributions received after that time are reported on the next month's financial statement.

I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me and I have done what he has expected of me and so I am not responsible for my own death or the death of others. If my neighbor needs me however, I shall not avoid place or person but will freely go as stated above. See this is such God fearing faith because it is neither brash nor fool hardy and does not tempt God. (*Luther's Work*. Vol. 43:132, as cited in *The Jenkins Institute*, 16 March 2020)

David Lipscomb's Example In a Cholera Epidemic

In the summer of 1873 the city of Nashville, like many cities of the day, experienced a severe outbreak of cholera. There were one thousand known deaths, yet historians believe that there were many more as poor people, especially former slaves, were often buried in shallow, unmarked graves with no record of their identity.

David Lipscomb wrote of the situation in several editorials in the *Gospel Advocate* during the months of May through August. These editorials urged Christians to give help and aid to those in need, no matter the color of their skin. Lipscomb chided his fellow citizens as they fled the city to live in a safer environment in the country. He asked, "What would Christ have done? Would He have panicked and run?" Lipscomb acknowledged that prudence was needed, and that women, children, and especially the elderly ought to move to safety, but he also believed that able bodied men should remain in the city to give help to the sick and dying. Lipscomb went on to praise doctors and preachers who remained in the city when others had fled.

Lipscomb cited Matthew 25:31-46, as proof of a Christian's duty, even in a time of epidemic. If one

could not help personally, then he or she ought to make generous gifts to help the poor. When one reader criticized Lipscomb for making himself an object of charity, Lipscomb replied, "My purse is in a perfect state of collapse, as if it had the cholera ..." Any funds he raised went to give aid to cholera victims. Lipscomb offered his critic of this remedy. "A good generous gift to the poor, in the name of Christ, would relieve your soul of its bitter bile and you would feel better, much better."

David Lipscomb practiced what he preached. He went to the poor areas of Nashville, black and white. He fed those who were starving. He nursed and administered medicine to those who were ill. He cleaned away filth, rubbish and trash. He buried the dead (Hooper, *Call*, 48-49).

Some readers were not happy that Lipscomb was helping blacks as well as whites. A Mr. Payne wrote stating that Negroes did not have souls, and therefore they were not in need of aid. Lipscomb could barely hold back his anger as he replied, "If Mr. Payne would put himself under my guidance for one week, if he possessed any honesty of heart, I would convince him of his error. How would I do it? ... Simply by putting him to feeding and nursing starving, sick and dying Negroes" (Hooper, *Call*, 50).

Lipscomb paid a price for his service. He himself contracted cholera that summer. For two days his life hung in the balance. Lipscomb eventually pulled through, but for the rest of his life he would suffer on occasions with asthma and bleeding of the lungs (Hooper, *Crying*, 135-136). But Lipscomb later looked back on his activity that summer and recalled that those events were more satisfying than any one thing he had done. (Works Cited and Part 2 will be in the May 2020 *Harvester*.)

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“Back Alley” Haircuts and Other Indications We May Be “Calling Good Evil” Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Brian R. Kenyon

Recently, a preacher got a haircut, but instead of being in a barber shop, it took place in the alley. It was legal in that small Florida town. The barber, who wore a mask, goggles, face-shield, and gloves, previously checked with a town official who approved the action ... as long as it was outside in the open air. The designation “back alley” is usually reserved for immoral activities (such as abortions, drug deals, or prostitute

“STIMULUS CHECKS”

We are thankful to live in a country where our government can step-in and send mass relief. During this time of nation-wide shut-down, we urge you to provide for your family and to continue supporting the local church of which you are a member. Then, if you have funds available, please continue your support of FSOP. Some of our students do not qualify for “stimulus checks” and operate on a very minimal budget. Thanks for your help! —*Brian*

propositions), but in the present COVID-19 environment, the term is applied to something that is normally good. An even more serious indication that good is increasingly being looked upon as evil are the attitudes, even among brethren, toward public worship assemblies. Who would have ever thought that Scriptural worship assemblies would be deemed something to avoid at all costs or labelled “unloving” by “conservative, mainstream” brethren? Yes, encourage high risk people to stay home, but is it not possible for low risk people in low risk areas in “social distancing” mode to safely worship together? It could be argued that these assemblies would be safer than any assemblies Christians have ever attended (cf. flying a month after 9-11)! We are all legitimately concerned about safety for self and others, but may we never be so convinced by the world (medically or politically) to “call evil good, and good evil” (Isa. 5:20).