

Weekly Newsletter

Volume 25, Number 37

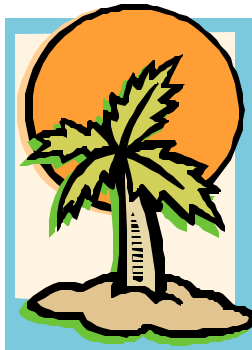
June 12, 2006

Christians Only

By Steve Higginbotham

Is it possible to simply be a Christian today, in the 21st century? Can we avoid being entangled in and weighted down by all the trappings and innovations of man which have found their way into religion over the past 2000 years?

I believe the answer is "yes," and can be accomplished by taking an "island approach" to Christianity. What do I mean by that? Suppose there was an isolated island filled with people who knew nothing of Jesus. However, one day a chest washed ashore and contained therein was a copy of the Bible. The islanders began reading this book with great interest. After months of careful study, they came to the point of faith, turned from their sins, confessed their faith in Jesus as the Son of God, were baptized into Christ, and began worshiping God together and committing themselves to the moral standards contained in the Scriptures.



Question: What denomination were these islanders when they obeyed the gospel? What "brand" of Christian were they? It's a silly question, isn't it? They would not be a part of any denomination, sect, or party. They would simply be Christians, and Christians only.

Now friends, if people on an isolated island can be "Christians Only," then why can't we be "Christians Only" in our respective communities? The fact is, we can. However, it will require that we do what they did...open the Bible, unite on what it teaches, leaving behind those practices and doctrines that are not found therein.

CHRIST IN Youth

David Burleson, Youth Minister

This week is one of the most anticipated weeks of the year. **Camp week** is filled with so much fun and good Bible study that it is no wonder why it is enjoyed by so many people. This year's Bible camp will focus on returning to Bible basics. There are forty of us going from South Green this year.

I wish that you could have been at our **on-site devotional** last Tuesday. From eating Mexican food with those who came, to reading about Jesus walking on the water by the lake, it was a day I will not forget. We will continue to meet at the building on Tuesdays on June 20th; when everyone gets back from camp.

Also, mark you calendar for the **meeting at the Beckton church of Christ**, which is the week of June 18th. Steve will be conducting this meeting. Let us try to attend every night if possible, but if that is not possible we are taking a group on that Tuesday to "Pack the Pews."

At the end of this month is our **Vacation Bible School**. There are going to be classes for all ages, including a teen class. This is scheduled for the 26th-30th of June.

After a long week of work and study, the teens are going to go to **Kentucky Kingdom** July 1st. There will be a sign up for this event following church camp.

There are some that are still planning on going to **Horizons**. If you still want to go but have not got your application in it is not too late. Horizons is July 2-7 at Freed-Hardeman University.

I can't wait to see what the Lord can do with us!

Let Not Man Put Asunder

By Steve Higginbotham

We live in a time when divorce is prevalent. Marriages are discarded with little regard to the vows that were made before God. Some statistics state that for every marriage, there is also a divorce. Along with the abundance of divorce, there is an abundance of accommodating doctrines. One such doctrine states that it's permissible to get a divorce as long as you don't remarry.

Although I've heard many Christians make this statement, I believe it to be a serious misunderstanding of the biblical text. Just what does the Bible say?

First, most would agree that to remarry after a divorce that did not involve fornication is adultery, and thus would be sinful (Matthew 19:9). However, some are saying that if no remarriage follows, that no sin has occurred. This position is supposedly supported by Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 7:10-11... *"Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, **let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.** And a husband is not to divorce his wife."*

We are told that Paul gives permission to divorce so long as the person remains unmarried or is later reconciled. I believe that such a view disregards the immediate and remote context of this passage.

Please note what the Lord said about divorce. *"What therefore God has joined together, **let not man put asunder**"* (Matthew 19:6). When one divorces, he does exactly opposite of what the Lord said. Is that not sin? Furthermore, note what Paul said about divorce "...a wife is not to depart from her husband...and a husband is not to depart from his wife" (1 Cor. 7:10-11). When one divorces, he does exactly opposite of what Paul said. Again, is this not sin? Jesus and Paul both said not to divorce. If we can do what the Bible says not to do, then the Bible is a useless book for determining proper conduct. Clearly, God's will regarding divorce is to not divorce.

Then what are we to make of Paul's regulation in 1 Cor. 7? Some say Paul gave permission to separate if one remained unmarried or is reconciled. However, this confuses Paul's "regulation" with "permission."

Allow me to explain by way of illustration. Imagine if I was teaching a High School class and I said, "Do not drink alcohol. But if you do drink, drink alcohol at home, not behind the wheel of a car."

Now, what is my will in this matter? "Do not drink alcohol." Although I did say, "drink alcohol at home" I was not giving my permission, but rather attempting to regulate the conduct of those who would violate my will. In no way should my regulation be construed as permission. The regulation was imposed to prevent compounding the problem.

This illustration is parallel to what Paul was saying in 1 Cor. 7:10-11. What was Paul's will in the matter? "Do not depart." Although Paul did say if you do depart, remain unmarried or be reconciled, we should view this statement, not as permission, but as a regulation of the conduct of those who would violate his will.

This regulation was imposed to prevent people, who had already violated the Lord's will, from compounding their situation with adultery.

Brethren, every time a home is broken by divorce, someone is guilty of sin. When someone puts asunder what God has joined together (saving for the cause of fornication, it is wrong—whether it leads to adultery or not, for it does exactly the opposite of what God commands.

Let us remember, "...The Lord God of Israel says that he hates putting away" (Malachi 2:16)

Family Matters

Sick List

- Ann Leftwich is recovering at home following recent surgery.
- Mattie Lee underwent surgery on Wednesday.
- Scotty Adwell, nephew of Peggy Adwell, will undergo surgery this week on his leg.
- Samantha McPherson, niece of Shara Page, has been moved to a rehab center. The address is: Samantha McPherson, room 3206, Stallworth Rehabilitation Hospital, 2201 Children's Way, Nashville, TN 37212.
- Continue to remember: Brooklyn Alexander, Mary Anderson, Rosie Baker, Mamie Birge, Wendell Britt, Shawn Bryant, Andrew Carson, Ruby Cloyd, Margaret Cox, Jim & Dot Dunaway, Ralph Dunbar, Gary & Bettye Edmunds, Eddie Gerald, Kathy Hamilton, Eugene Harlow, Sally Henry, Fred Hensley, Reba Herri-ford, Amanda Hinton Stacey King, Jeanette Krume, Mary Lynn, Dr. George McKinley, Charles McDonald, Marney Nunnally, Allen Peden, Linda Pedigo, J.C. Polson, Teddy Ray, Shelley South, Donald Smith, Ed Staley, Donnie Stephens, Ann Surber, Helen Pedigo Tucker, Ronnie Walker, Mandy Weaver and James Wil-liams.

Gospel Meetings

The Pleasant Hill Church of Christ will conduct a Gospel Meeting, June 11-14, 7:00 p.m. Jimmy Bunch from Owensboro will be the speaker. Everyone welcome.

The Beckton Church of Christ will conduct a Gospel Meeting, June 19-23, 7:00 p.m. Steve Higginbotham will be the speaker. Everyone is invited to attend.

Vacation Bible School

Our Vacation Bible School is scheduled for June 26-30. There will be classes for all ages, including an adult class taught by Steve. Make plans to attend.

Thank You Notes

Dear Friends at South Green,
Thank you for your thoughts, prayers and concern for my dad these past few months. We thank God for the successful surgery and are hoping for a good recovery. You all have a special way of reaching out during a difficult time.

In Christian Love,
Rita May

To the South Green Street Congregation,
We wanted to say thank you to everyone for the cards, visits and gifts for our new bundle of joy. You have made us feel very welcomed! God bless all.

Doug, Carla, Logan & Aubrey Tooley

Thanks to all of you for your prayers, phone calls, food and visits during my recent stay in the hospital and during the loss of my mother-in-law, Lela Jackson. Your kindness will always be appreciated.

Runelle Jackson

To the Elders and members of South Green Street,
Thank you for the personalized Bible you presented me for graduation. It will be a source of strength and a constant reminder of my church family. A special thank you to David Burleson for the Senior Reception and slide show. Thanks to all who helped to make that a special evening. To all the members of South Green, thank you for all the encouragement and well wishes not only upon my graduation but throughout my life. I am happy to be a part of such a wonderful church family.

In Christian Love,
Elliot Bowman

Thank you for all the prayers for our parents. Ann Surber is recovering following successful surgery. Teddy Ray is still waiting test results. We are still hopeful that it is nothing serious.

Ken & Carla Smith

