

Weekly Newsletter

Volume 26, Number 1

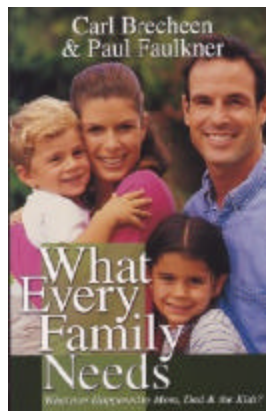
January 2, 2007

Debt Retired!

As we begin 2007, we have great news to announce! Due to your sacrifice and generosity, we were able to retire the debt on the church building! On the last Sunday of 2006, you contributed \$36,996.00. This was \$12,000.00 over the necessary funds required to retire the debt. Consequently, the elders have several new mission works to announce to the congregation on Sunday.

Young Adult Class

Beginning this coming Sunday, January 7, 2007, Chris Page will begin a new study in the Young Adult Class which meets in the basement auditorium. Chris will be teaching a book written by Carl Brecheen and Paul Faulkner entitled, "What Every Family Needs." This book was formerly titled, "Whatever Happened to Mom, Dad, & the Kids?" It is an excellent book that addresses many of the challenges facing families today. If you're a Young Adult, I hope you'll take advantage of this opportunity to learn and be challenged.



Requesting Prayers

We rejoice that Judy Wilson responded to the invitation on Sunday morning and asked for the prayers of the church on her behalf. We are certainly thankful for her love for God and her desire to conform her life in line with His will. Please keep Judy in your prayers as she requested.



CHRIST IN Youth

All of us can probably quote the verse which says we must, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind..." (Matthew 22:37) But have you ever asked why? I mean, why should we love God? The answer may demonstrate that we need to continue to mature and grow as Christians.

It sometimes appears that we love God because of what He can do for us and for what He can give us. But is this the kind of love that we should have for God? Not that this is not "a" reason to love him, but if that is as deep as it goes, then is that really love?

What would you think of a young man who told his girlfriend that he loved her in order to use her for selfish purposes? That isn't real love. But why would we think it is real love for us to profess our love for God in order to use Him?

We need to spend time reading the Bible and thereby learning more about Him. It takes time to fall in love. It requires an intimate knowledge of a person to truly fall in love with him. It's no different with God. Only through getting to know Him better through reading the Bible can we learn to love Him for who He is and not simply for what He can do for us.

So we have a choice. We can love God for His own sake, or we can love Him for the sake of using Him for our own advantage. One love (if you can call it love) is selfish. The other will take time and effort to get to know Him.

Question: Just why do you love God?

—Steve

How A Liberal Theologian Sees It

By Steve Higginbotham

How many times have you read an article or heard a sermon preached that contained the following statement... “**The Secret To Church Growth**”? Now, if there is such a thing, the church would nearly pay any price to possess it. We want the church to grow. God wants the church to grow. Genuine church growth means souls are being saved. But we find ourselves in a time when churches are on the decline. Churches are shrinking in number, and dying off. As a result, people are scrambling, looking for some bandage to stop the bleeding, some salve to stop the pain, grasping for anything that might do the job. As we stand back and watch the flurry of activity, it becomes clear that liberalism is not the answer to church growth.

Several years ago, Dean M. Kelley, a liberal theologian, wrote a book entitled, “Why Conservative Churches Are Growing.” In this book he came to the conclusion that stagnating churches, by and large, are those that take a liberal stand on social issues, are broadly tolerant of differing theological views, and permissive about personal behavior. On the contrary, Kelley suggested that growing churches are conservative on social issues, authoritative in proclaiming their doctrines, and intolerant of any deviation from them. They make strict demands on their members regarding personal behavior and religious practice, and are quick to rebuke and expel those who fail to conform.

As Kelley sees it, the following are traits of robust growing churches:

- **Commitment.** A willingness to sacrifice social status, possessions, even life itself for the good of the church and its faith.
- **Discipline.** A willingness to obey the commands of the authorized leadership without question, and a readiness to accept punishment for infraction of the rules rather than leave the fellowship of the group.
- **Missionary Zeal.** An eagerness to tell the good news of salvation to as many other people as possible.
- **Absolutism in Doctrine.** The believe that “we have the truth” and others are in error.

By contrast, Kelley found in stagnant or non-growing churches such traits as:

- **Relativism.** The belief that no one has a monopoly on truth and all insights are partial.
- **Diversity.** An attitude of leniency toward individual differences in belief and behavior, and a prevailing idea that everyone should be free to “do their own thing.”
- **Dialogue.** Readiness to exchange views with other religious groups, and an appreciative rather than judgmental attitude toward them.
- **Individualism.** Refusal to give unquestioning obedience to any church authority, and readiness to quit the group rather than submit to any rebuke or demand.
- **Reserve.** A reluctance to expose one’s convictions or try to impose them on others, with consequent decay of missionary enterprise.

Basically, I would agree with the findings of this liberal theologian. However, rather than making the contrast between “liberal” and “conservative” churches, I believe a more appropriate contrast would be between “biblical” and “unbiblical” churches. I find it a shame that many of our brethren are abandoning biblical positions and are running to the unbiblical positions that are herein mentioned and have proven to be ineffective. Maybe a liberal theologian has something to say worth listening to.

Family Matters

Sick List.

- Edna Vibbert underwent surgery last week. She is recovering at home.
- Hannah Simmons, granddaughter of Guy & Annette Simmons, recently underwent back surgery in Louisville. She is now at home. Please continue to keep her in your prayers.
- Continue to remember: Evelyn Alls, Mary Anderson, Junior Bowman, Wendell & Lena Britt, John Bull, Shawn Bryant, Linda Cable, Ruby Cloyd, Dorothy Coffey, Pauline Cole, Marie Denton, Jamison Dugard, Jim Dunaway, Ruth Elliott, Eddie Gerald, Eugene Harlow, Sally Henry, Fred Hensley, Amanda Hinton, Caden Hodges, Ruel Houchens, Carl Hutchinson, Preston Jolly, Stacey King, Jeanette Krume, Art Lattanzi, Linda Pedigo, J.C. Polson, Cindy Proffitt, Nina Richardson, Judy Riley, Donald, Vickie & Kyra Smith, Kenny Smith, Marian Smith, Philip Smith & Family, Shelley South, Mary Stephens, Ruth Stephens, Dixie Strode, Sherry Tabor, Ronnie Walker, Sandy Wilkinson, James Williams and James Wooten.

Sympathy

We express our sympathy to the friends and family of William E "Bud" Kingrey. He passed away on December 30. Funeral services were conducted on Wednesday at the Hatcher & Sadler Funeral Home. He was the brother-in-law of JoAnn Kingrey.

Pew Packers

The Pew Packers class will meet Sunday afternoon, January 7, at 5:30. This class is for children 4th grade and younger and is being taught by Steve Higginbotham.

Visitation Team

Visitation Team #1 will meet Sunday night, January 7, after the evening worship service. We will meet in the basement for our first meeting of 07. The meeting will take about ten minutes. Bring any visitation sheets that you may have of your visits. Team Leaders are Darrell Pitcock and Ronnie Turner.

Ladies Bible Class

The Thursday morning Ladies Bible Class will meet Thursday, January 4, at 10:00 in the Youth Center. All ladies are invited to attend this class.

Prayer Breakfast

The Men's Prayer Breakfast has been scheduled for Saturday, January 20, 2007, at 7:30 a.m. All men of the congregation are invited to attend.

Thank You

Thanks to the church for the fruit basket. A special thanks to all the good singers.

With Love,
Otha Billingsley

Updates

Please make the following updates and changes to your 2007 Pocket Directory:

- McKinley, Carolyn 651-3498
- Page, Julie; Andrew, 106 Lexington Dr., 834-8459
- Vibbert, Edna 834-8431

College Students:

- Gossett, Whitney 100 Keene Hall Suite 173, Richmond, KY 40475
- McCracken, Mandy 1766 Normal Drive, Bowling Green, KY 42101

