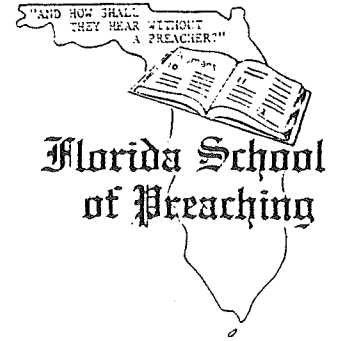


THE HARVESTERS



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Some Reflections About the Love of God

By

Jackie M. Stearsman

Proper thinking must precede proper action. Proper thinking relative to religious issues must be in harmony with what is authorized by the Bible.

Today in religious circles, one of the most misunderstood and abused subjects is love. On the lips of individuals the term may portray the loftiest or the lowest of ideas and any facet in between. Men may depict their actions as love but lust would be the correct term.

Some speak of the love of God but the Bible does not support their allegation.

We hear and read such expressions as: "God loves all men the same." "Because you are not a Christian does not mean that God does not love you." "God may condemn you to hell but he still loves you." "The only difference between the sinner and the saint is that the sinner is forgiven."

From what some are saying and writing it is clear that many do not understand what the Bible teaches relative to God's love for us.

Misrepresentation will not help us understand our responsibility toward that love.

Passages for Thought

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21).

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:9-10).

"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall

not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (Prov. 1:24-33).

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:" (James 1:13).

Observations and Affirmations

These truths follow from the array of passages cited. (1) God loves all men, even those who are opposing His dominion over them. (2) Given the teaching of the Bible relative to the nature of God, we know that God is absolutely holy and can not in any way be promoting evil. (3) Evil is foreign to His nature, and he must oppose it or cease to be

holy. (4) Man must make the proper response to the love of God. (5) When man refuses to make the proper response to the love of God man forfeits the fullness of God's benevolence. (6) Man must make more than a token response to what his Maker requires of him--he must continue in the love of God. (7) Those who teach that the love of God is different from doing what God requires of him as revealed in the Bible has not understood God's love (I John 5:3; 2:3-6). (8) Man may refuse to obey his Maker and find himself in a state where God's benevolence is not available to him.

Conclusion

When we understand the love of God for man we know that he loves all. When we understand the love of God for man we know that His character (holiness) will not permit him to ignore man's rebellion forever.

Men misrepresent when they emphasize one attribute (love) to the neglect or abuse of other attributes (holy wrath).

When we understand man we know that God has given him directives in His Word and that man must comply with these duties if he is to be a recipient of the fullness of God's benevolent love.

All things do not work together for good to all men (Rom. 8:28).

The same Bible that says "God so loved the world" (John 3:16) also says that we must "keep ourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21).

Does not your Bible say that Jesus teaches "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (John 15:10)?

Did not John write, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3).

Proposals

Brother Kenneth Franklin, an elder and preacher for the Bell Shoals Congregation in Brandon, Florida, states that they have tentative plans to help train men to work with the Lord's Church in Scotland.

They hope to bring some one from Scotland to the *Florida School of Preaching* for training and upon graduation return him to Scotland.

We commend them for these proposals and hope to see them realized in the near future.

Presently working with the Bell Shoals Congregation is Jack Strachan, a native of Scotland. Brother Strachan will return to Scotland each July and August for special meetings.

We would encourage other congregations to do as Bell Shoals is proposing. Select a field, train men at the *Florida School of Preaching*, and send them to the mission field of your choice.

If we can be of help to you in these proposals please let us know.

SUMMER SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Summer classes will be Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 9:30. A break will come for July 4th, classes will be from May 22 thru June 30, resume July 10 thru July 21.

Psalms class taught by Stearsman meets on Tuesday.

New Age Movement taught by Newell meets on Thursday.

JAMAICA BOUND

At least one staff member and 10 students and recent graduates will travel to Jamaica for two weeks to work with the brethren there in a special campaign. They will fly direct from Tampa, Florida

to Montego Bay, Saturday, July 29, 1989. They will return Saturday, August, 12, 1989.

The Central Church of Christ in Clearwater, Florida will be sponsoring this trip.

Please keep the brethren in Jamaica in your prayers as well as those making the trip as preparation for the evangelistic campaign continues.

THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT: AN INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION by Clifford Newell, Jr.

"America is currently being flooded with New Age ideas, concepts, awareness, spirituality, and organizations. You have awakened to trance mediums on Good Morning America" so states Paul Zuromski, editor and publisher of *Body, Mind and Spirit Magazine*, p. IX.

The New Age Movement has many aspects concerning it which are not new nor novel. Many of its tenets have been around for a long long time. In all actuality, it is but a resurgence of paganism and heathenism which characterized old Egypt, Babylon, Rome, China, and Japan. Hence, it is an old philosophy clad in new garb!

The New Age has attracted millions of adherents who are new to the religious scene. Many of these people have re-

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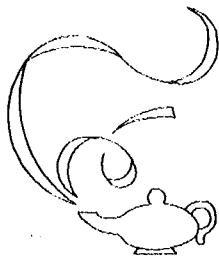
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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

jected "traditional religion" and by the groves, have embraced and espoused New Age philosophies. This writer is convinced that the major reason for this embracing is the movement does nor can it restrict nor restrain various doctrines or behaviors. "Inwardly, the New Age continues the historical effort of humanity to delve deeply into the mysteries of the nature of God, of ourselves, and of reality. In the midst of materialism, it is a rebirth of our sense of the sacred, an inner impulse to understand and express our own divinity in cocreation and synergy with the divinity within creation and with the Source of that divinity whose ultimate nature we are still seeking to know" (David Spangler, *The New Age Catalogue*, Doubleday: New York, 1988, p. XI).

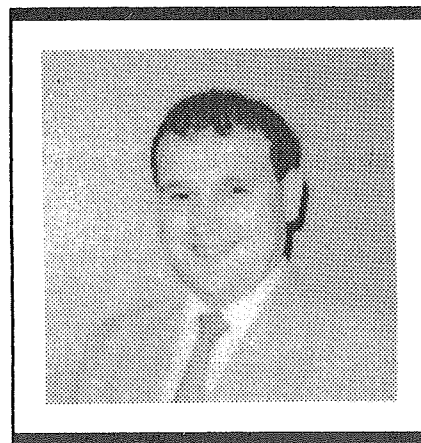
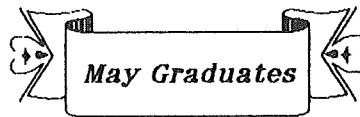
Defining the New Age Movement is not as easy as it may seem. The real difficulty surfaces because of the diversity of thought within this movement. Brooks Alexander said, "You can do one of two things, you can either keep up with the New Age Movement, or you can write about it--but not both" (Russell Chandler, *Understanding The New Age*, Word Publishing: Dallas, 1988, pp. 16-17).

David Spangler, a philosopher and educator wrote, "Often the New Age is seen as the pursuit of pagan religions, interest in Eastern philosophies or in the occult, or involvement with channeling, crystals, reincarnation, and other psychic phenomena . . . However, to equate the New Age with psychic phenomena, the occult, or with a specific kind of spirituality is a *limited* and potentially



distorting approach" (*The New Age Catalogue*, p. XI, Emphasis mine, CEN).

This New Age thinking has affected many of our educational institutions. It has affected the religious world, with many denominational preachers integrating this philosophy into their congregations. Dear reader, the Scriptures says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). This New Age Movement has a "form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Timothy 3:5). Paul gives an admonition to be heeded, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Timothy 4:1). Thus, the Florida School of Preaching is offering a summer course on this topic that can equip us on how to identify and confront its ungodly and immoral ways.

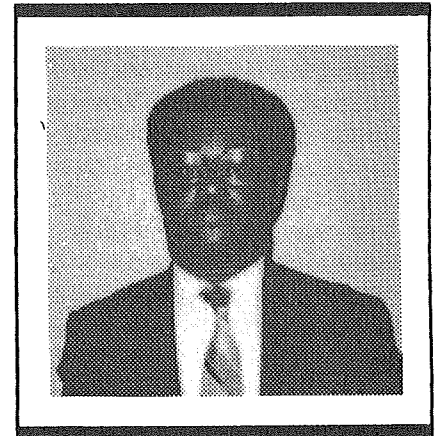


Steven Bedard

Steven Roger Bedard was born in Syracuse, NY. In 1985 he moved to Central Florida from Woodbridge, Virginia. Steven graduated from Garfield High School and spent four years in the United States Navy.

Steven and Karen married in 1987. While in school the past two years they have attended the Orange Street Church of Christ in Auburndale, Florida, where he has participated in leading singing, preaching, and preparing communion.

Steven states that he was encouraged to attend the school of preaching by Dan Jenkins and others. Steven plans to continue taking classes at the *Florida School of Preaching* until permanent position is available.



Harold Rodriguez

Harold was born October 27, 1951, in Charleston, South Carolina. He graduated from Howard W. Blake Senior High School in Tampa and attended Hillsborough Community College.

Harold, with his wife Deborah, attends the Southside Church of Christ in Tampa, Florida. He leads singing, teaches classes, and preaches by appointment.

Harold plans to attend school during the summer while seeking a permanent preaching position.

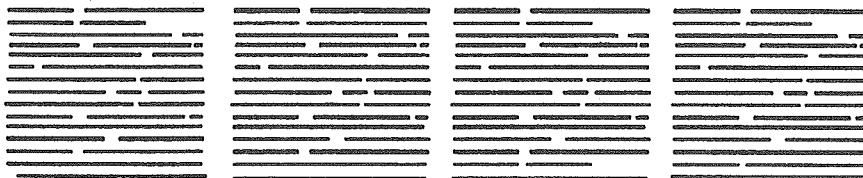
EXTRA!!! The Times EXTRA!!!

CONGRATULATIONS

B. C. and SYBIL CARR

CELEBRATE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

April 8, 1989



Family and friends gathered in Boonesville, Mississippi to participate in the celebration of brother and sister B. C. Carr's 50th Wedding Anniversary.

This is where the Carr's were married and where brother Carr had taught school. Brother Carr has also preached for a number of congregations in the area.

Added pleasure came when a bus load from Tennessee made the trip. Their excursion taking some six hours for the round trip.

At a time when the family unit is under attack from most every quarter it is encouraging to know that some respect the vows they made to one another and to God.

The Carr's received recognition from the President of the United States and we feel it most proper to congratulate them through the pages of *The Harvesters*.

Many who are friends and graduates of the *Florida School of Preaching* gathered last year for the appreciation banquet honoring brother and sister Carr. We feel that those that may not have known of this milestone in their lives would want to know of it.

The Carr's influence will live for generations to come through the lives they have touched. Their sacrificial generosity in training preachers is known and appreciated wherever the cause of Christ is respected.

B. C. and Sybil are deserving of every expression of love and appreciation they receive.

In addition to the special occasion arranged by the family honoring brother and sister Carr in Mississippi, the members of the staff and student body of the *Florida School of Preaching* had a noon luncheon honoring brother and sister Carr, April 14, 1989.

We love them for their work's sake.

The Bible teaches that Christians render "*honor to whom honor is due*" (Rom. 13:7, 12:10). The same Bible admonishes us to "*rejoice with them that rejoice*" (Rom. 12:15).

To honor them is indeed proper.

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