



# Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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## “There Is No Law Saying ‘Thou Shalt Not Go Naked,’”

The title of these reflections comes from a statement from the Associated Press, January 7, 2004, quoted below. I hope you will read it carefully and then consider the reflections made.

### *Naked Walker Gets 3 Months in Jail*

*LONDON - A man trying to walk the length of Britain naked to promote public nudity was convicted Wednesday of breaching the peace and sentenced to three months in jail.*

*Stephen Gough, 44, has endured repeated arrests since setting out in June to walk the 847 miles from Land's End in southwest England to John O'Groats in Scotland's far north.*

*He was most recently apprehended Nov. 29 after residents of Evanton, a village in the Scottish Highlands, complained about his walking through town wearing only boots, socks and a knapsack. He had been released from jail just hours earlier.*

*Gough, wearing only a scarlet prison blanket tied with a police belt at his trial in Dingwall Sheriff Court in the Highlands, argued that he had been exercising his right to free expression as guaranteed by the Human Rights Act.*

*“There is no law saying ‘Thou shalt not go naked,’ Gough said. “All I am doing is dressing how I want to dress and believing what I want to believe. ... I am taking a stand and I hope that inspires others to do the same.”*

*He said he had undertaken his hike to “celebrate myself as a human being” and show people the nude body is beautiful, not disgusting.*

*There is no law in Britain against public nudity. However, there are laws against indecent exposure - which requires proof of intent to insult a woman - or any behavior likely to cause “harassment, alarm or distress.”*

*Evanton resident Robert Thow, who testified at Gough's trial, said he had reported the naked walker to police because he worried about what effect his appearance might have on women and children.*

*“I think there is a time and a place for it,” he said. “I did not think Evanton was the place for it, or any other village.”*

*He suggested that Gough could have walked around the town instead of through it.*

*Sheriff Edward Savage, who also convicted Gough for breaching the terms of his bail, chastised him while handing down the sentence.*

*“You seemed determined, Mr. Gough, to break the law,” he said.*

*Gough, of Eastleigh in southern England, will get credit for the month he's already spent in jail.*

## Explicit Negation

There are those in religious circles who assert that since there is not an explicit, "Thou Shalt not," then whatever one may feel or do has God's approval. However, these same persons would never practice what they preach in other fields.

Read again the assertion that is made in secular society, but was not sufficient justification for walking naked in public. "There is no law saying 'Thou shalt not go naked,' Gough said. "All I am doing is dressing how I want to dress and believing what I want to believe. ... I am taking a stand and I hope that inspires others to do the same."

Are we "free" to dress/undress in public as we wish? No!

However, any informed person in religious matters knows that this is a common assertion offered by many to justify religious thoughts and actions. Consider the following: (1) Where does the Bible say do not sprinkle babies? (2) Where does the Bible say do not use mechanical music in Christian worship? (3) Where does the Bible say do not count a string of beads in religious practices? (4) Where does the Bible say do not have nuns as servants of the church?

The "justification" for many actions in religious circles is as this person asserts—Where does it say do not do it, and if it does not say do not do it then I am authorized to do it?

This "reasoning" is recognized to be most foolish in

secular circles, but is sanctioned by many in religious circles.

Is not most religious division the result of faulty affirmations?

## Implication

Is it not significant that people in general realize that laws and directives have logical implication?

Did not the very fact that there were explicit laws in Britain that would be violated by an act justify forbidding the practice? Read it again: "There is no law in Britain against public nudity. However, there are laws against indecent exposure—which requires proof of intent to insult a woman—or any behavior likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress."

If it is the case that we are to have authority for our words and deeds, then to act without authority is to violate principles of intelligent communication.

The Bible demands that we have its approval for our words and deeds. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17).

If we go beyond what is authorized we forsake our relationship with the Father and His Son. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him

God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

## Law Breaker

"Sheriff Edward Savage, who also convicted Gough for breaching the terms of his bail, chastised him while handing down the sentence. 'You seemed determined, Mr. Gough, to break the law,' he said."

According to Sheriff Edward Savage, acting without authorization equals breaking the law.

We understand this, and act accordingly every day. We realize this when we operate a motor vehicle. We must have authority to drive, to drive on a given side of the road, at a given speed, etc., etc. Can you imagine the confusion that we would experience if we operated a motor vehicle the way some practice religion. "As long as it does not say do not, we are authorized to do it."

Since there is no explicit law on the books that says do not drive in your yard, am I authorized to drive there? Since there is no explicit sign that says do not drive five miles per hour

## *The Harvesters*

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1807 South Florida Avenue  
Lakeland, Florida 33803  
(863) 683-4043

Editor: Jackie M. Stearsman  
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on the interstate, then I am authorized to drive at this speed, and on either side of the road I please? After all, are we under law or grace?

I hope you think these reflections are absurd. Yet, if we are honest and informed, we know that this is the very way many practice religion.

If people would simply apply the authorization principle consistently, we would be much closer in religious matters, and much closer to realizing that for which the Lord prayed. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21).

How serious do we take the appeal of the Apostle Paul? "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

Do we act according to the principle of authorization? Have you ever acted on the premise that if it is not explicitly forbidden, then I am at liberty to act?

Let us remember that we are never FREE to do wrong, and that our liberty is protected by the authority under which we are bound.

[Editor]

January 11, 2004

Mr. Jackie M. Stearsman  
Director  
Florida School of Preaching

Dear Brother Stearsman:

*The purpose of my letter is to tell you how much I have learned from the Florida School of Preaching satellite class in Sarasota taught by Mike Elledge. I have taken all of the classes ever since they have been offered in Sarasota. Mike Elledge is one if not the best teacher of the Bible I have ever had. I have been very blessed to have had some of the "big names" in the brotherhood as teachers (whose names you would recognize if I were to mention them), but to me Mike is the best. He has a rare talent for making the scriptures come to life in his teaching. He has a talent to be able to pull together verses that I am not able to do just by reading different commentaries. I am so thankful that you let him teach the satellite classes. I know you must be very proud of Mike as well as all of the other students who go through the school as they are biblically sound.*

*I am so sorry to see Mike leave Midway but I know the Lord has works that need to be done in other places. Mike's zeal for the lost is a great inspiration and example of what a Christian ought to be. It plainly shows by the way he lives his life and his commitment to the Lord. I know Ed Duffy was a great inspiration and example to him as well as all of the teachers in the school.*

*Thank you once again for letting Midway be one of the satellite centers for the school of preaching. It has helped me more than you will ever know.*

Yours in Christ,  
/s/ Margaret F. Taylor



## Lectureship News

There are bound volumes, and CDs available. Check the Web Page for details. If you need assistance in understanding the different formats of the CDs, call the office for assistance, or E-mail us.



## 2004 Alumni Lunch

Gene Burgett

Lectureship week is full of pleasant things upon which to reflect, but a highlight for me every year is the alumni lunch. The event was held on Monday this year as it is a holiday, thus allowing more alumni to attend.

This yearly gathering is more than merely an opportunity to talk about old times and catch up on the changes that have taken place over the past year for each one. The alumni are one of our greatest assets as we look to the future of the Florida School of Preaching. As Director of Public Relations I find myself looking to them constantly for prospective new students, as well as providing me opportunities to speak to congregations about the work of the School.

I have four goals when I meet with the alumni. My first goal is to give them a report on my work with the Florida School

of Preaching. To share with them some of the places I have visited and some of the more memorable encounters I have had in my travels.

My second goal is to thank them for the help they have provided me in my work. In the year 2003 several congregations agreed to begin supporting FSOP. Most of these are churches where one of our graduates preaches. This is as it should be as those congregations have an opportunity to see our work firsthand.

Third, I solicit their ideas and suggestions concerning the School, and most especially thoughts on how I might better accomplish my work. Solomon tells us there is strength in numbers (Eccl. 4:9-12) and that a

wise person seeks counsel (Prov. 19:20). When a group of people of like mind put their thoughts together amazing things often happen. Several ideas came out of that meeting that are now being considered.

My final goal is to encourage and motivate our alumni to keep the School in mind throughout the year. We wish for the them to know that our relationship need not end at graduation. Preaching can be a difficult task presenting challenging situations. We want our alumni to know that we continue to be a resource available to them as these challenges arise.

Time doesn't stop to allow us to savor the past. With the 2004 alumni lunch behind us,

it is now time to give thought to the ideas that came out of that meeting, and put action to those found expedient.

I want to encourage our readers to contact me with any opportunities you have arranged for me to tell others about our work. Perhaps you, or your congregation, have been supporting the Florida School of Preaching and you would like a report on the work of the School. Or, maybe you would like to learn more about FSOP. Perhaps one of our readers has been giving thought to working as a gospel preacher. You can reach me by phone at 352-339-3195, or via email at [burgett@atlantic.net](mailto:burgett@atlantic.net). Or, simply contact the school office. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Return Service Requested*

WEB SITE: [www.fsop.net/](http://www.fsop.net/)

E-MAIL: [fsop@gte.net](mailto:fsop@gte.net)

FAX: 863-683-0750

PHONE (863) 683-4043 (800) 320-9780

LAKELAND, FLORIDA 33803-2653

1807 SOUTH FLORIDA AVENUE

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
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