

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XXV

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Number 4

[The school often receives a request for assistance in studying a given Bible subject. Often others have made contributions to understanding topics, and we are happy to make their reply available in these pages. Brother Ferguson, the author of the following question and answer, is the evangelist of the Stage Road congregation in Memphis Tennessee, Editor.]

Questions and Bible Answers

Q: Is it scriptural to engage in two acts of worship at the same time such as singing and the Lord's Supper or singing while we are giving of our means?

A: This is certainly a relevant question as some congregations do engage in two acts of worship simultaneously. The simple answer to the question is: **NO**, it is not scriptural to engage in two acts of worship at the same time. Most who understand the necessity of following the New Testament pattern understand that we must have **divine authority** for all that we teach and practice. Whatever we do or teach must be "in the name of Christ;" i.e., by His authority (Col. 3:17). There is no scriptural authority for engaging in two acts of worship simultaneously nor is there an example in the New Testament which would support and endorse such a practice. In **Questions and Answers**, Volume 1, the scholarly **Guy N. Woods** addressed the question, *"Is it inappropriate to sing while*

partaking of the Lord's Supper?" He said, "It is not only inappropriate, it is wrong! Observance of the Lord's Supper, and singing are two separate and distinct acts of worship, involving very different, physical, mental and spiritual participation.... We who sing "with the spirit and with the understanding" (I Cor. 14:15),... must (1) give attention to the lyrics, and (2) we must follow the music to which the lyrics are set in order to properly sing in unison with others. Neither act, singing, or partaking of the Lord's Supper, can be properly engaged in while attempting the other...The practice is without apostolic precedent and wholly unacceptable to those who are content with the New Testament order."

The same principle can be applied regarding singing while the congregation is giving of their means or singing during any other act of worship. If it is acceptable to sing while we are giving of our means, then why would it not also be acceptable

to sing while we are praying or while the gospel is being preached!?! Some might argue that we have already purposed in our hearts what we are giving (2 Cor. 9:7). While it is true that the purposing or planning of our contribution should have already been done beforehand, does that mean that when we give our contribution that we may do so without any thought whatsoever to that distinct act of worship at that moment? Remember that each act of worship is to be **in spirit** as well as in truth (Jno. 4:24).

We should always strive to be consistent: we do not use instruments of music in worship because we have no authority to do so; we do not engage in hand clapping in worship because we have no scriptural authority to do so. Why then engage in another practice for which there is no scriptural authority?!?

The bottom line is that those congregations who engage in two acts of worship simultaneously cannot use the New Testament to support the

practice. There is no scripture which authorizes such nor is there an apostolic example which would endorse the practice.

—Jimmy Ferguson, *The Key Word*, September 19, 2004, published weekly by the Stage Road church of Christ, Memphis, Tennessee.

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Burdens Common to All

There are events in life that defy our explanation. They are not within the things made know to human beings (Deut. 29:29). Even the Apostles were troubled because a man was born blind (John 9:2). Job's suffering was not easy for him to understand, nor did his friends contribute to his understanding. In the words of Job, they were miserable comforters (Job 16:2).

Some would be wiser in their evaluations if they refrained from speaking. Again we cite the words of Job to his friends: "But ye are forgers of lies; Ye are all physicians of no value. Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace! And it would be your wisdom. Hear now my reasoning, And hearken to the pleadings of my lips. Will ye speak unrighteously for God, And talk deceitfully for him? Will ye show partiality to him? Will ye contend for God? Is it good that he should search you out? Or as one deceiveth a man, will ye deceive him? He will surely reprove you If ye do secretly show partiality. Shall not his majesty make you afraid, And his dread fall upon you? Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes, Your defences are defences of clay"

(Job 13:4-12 ASV).

Over the years I have read and heard discussions relative to "quality of life" being a justification of permitting innocent lives to be taken. This give-and-take usually revolves around the unborn and the aged. Some "specialists" feel they have the wisdom to say who has a right to live and who should die, and it is determined by what they consider "quality" of life.

Over the years, in most of the congregations where I attended, there have been handicapped children. I have been sensitive to their plight for a personal reason—I had an older brother that was mentally retarded.

Few people enjoyed life more than my brother Bill. Most of the enjoyable events (holidays, birthdays, family gatherings) were made more enjoyable when Bill was living. There was, and still is, a deep void in our family after the death of Bill.

My mother prayed without ceasing that she could outlive him, she never wanted anyone to be "burdened" with caring for him. Her prayer was answered.

When I first began preaching, my mother asked me, "Explain why Bill was born this way, how did I fail?" As if I could answer her longing cry.

Mom could never bring herself to accept what happened with the birth of Bill. Somehow it was a failure on her part, nothing could be farther from the truth.

Recently I was looking through a Family Bible that I had given her, and the family gave to

me when she died. Inside the back cover was pasted the following poem, and I reprint it here for the comfort I hope it may bring another mother with a burden on her soul:

*"Why? O, Why?" A young mother
was overheard to say,
"Was my child born a cripple—
not in the usual way?
How can I face the way of life,
that I have always known?
For now this child will hamper
me, in years and years to come.
But cease, O thoughts, from my heart!
These thoughts that I just said.
This child to me was loaned by God,
to be loved and be led."*

The impact of my mother on my life can never be weighed, nor could I express in a thousand years how much her spiritual strength, even after her death, encouraged me when heart ache was mine to bear.

The following verse was often the meditation of my mother: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).
Jackie

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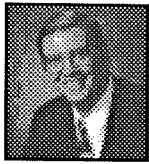
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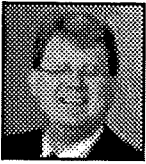
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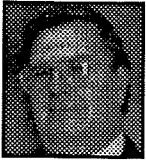
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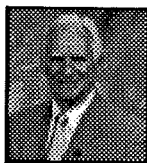
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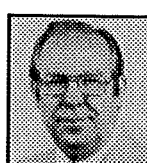
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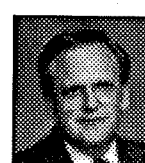
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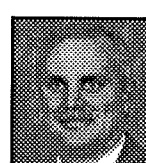
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“Do You Understand Church Growth?”

30th Annual Bible Lectureship — January 17-20, 2005

Jackie M. Stearsman - Director

Monday, January 17th

9:00 Understanding Growth (Eph. 4:11-16) J. Stearsman
 9:40 Supporting Faithful Efforts Eric Dawkins, Sr.
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Preparing Fields White Unto Harvest Ed Smith
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Growth Hindering Manipulation
 1:30 Do Contests Promote Growth? Steve Atnip
 2:00 Faulty Growth Comparisons Don Hudson
 2:30 Attacking the Church, Yet Promoting Sects G.Summers
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions on Forum Topics
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Wolves Hinder Growth Ryan P. Roark
 7:45 Growth Difficulties in Third John Billy Lambert

Tuesday, January 18th

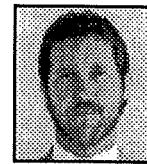
9:00 Failed Unity Proposals Billy Lambert
 9:40 Growth in Antioch Harold Redd
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Church Growth and Mail Outreach A. Webster
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Proper Growth Motivations
 1:30 Love the Truth Bruce Daugherty
 2:00 Know the Truth Steve Atnip
 2:30 The Lord's Approval (2 Cor. 10:18) M. Elledge
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions on Forum Topics
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Producing Fruit Implies Growth Keith B. Cozort
 7:45 A Living Name But Dead (Rev. 3:1) J. Clark

Wednesday, January 19th

9:00 Proper Foundation for Growth Harold Redd
 9:40 Elders and Church Growth Scott Gerhardt
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Alabama School of Biblical Emphasis J. Clark
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Growth Models to Follow
 1:30 Planting of Paul Bruce Daugherty
 2:00 Edifying of Barnabas William Howard
 2:30 Watering of Apollos Brian Kenyon
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions on Forum Topics
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Faulty Building Materials Emmanuel Charles
 7:45 External and Internal Problems Robert McAnally

Thursday, January 20th

9:00 Stabilizing Congregations in Ghana E. Owusu-Ansah
 9:40 Refusing Gatherings (Neh. 6:2) James E. Rogers
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Do All Programs Result in Growth? Raymond Sieg
 11:30 LUNCH
 Forum: Growth and Preaching
 1:30 Importance of Preachers Barry Gilreath, Sr.
 2:00 Training Preachers Gene Burgett
 2:30 Preparing Healthy Diets Steve Riley
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions on Forum Topics
 4:30 DINNER
 6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Singing Songs of Church Growth Tom Holland
 7:45 How May Singing Promote Growth? Tom Holland



Mike Elledge



Scott Gerhardt



Barry Gilreath, Sr.



Tom Holland



William Howard



Don Hudson

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FSOP—Preparing Souls to Serve the Lord

The phrase Preparing Souls to Serve the Lord is splashed across the front of each issue of our newsletter. This is not merely a slogan, it is our goal as an institution that trains men to “do the work of an evangelist.”

Though we charge no tuition, the education our students receive is second to none when it comes to preparing people to serve the Lord. From time to time events in life remind those of us who are graduates of FSOP about the quality of education we acquired during our two years in Lakeland. Recently one of our graduates related to me an event that took place in an ethics class he is taking at a local college. The professor advocated abortion-on-demand. Our graduate said he gave the very argument in rebuttal that had been so convincing to him ten years ago as a Florida School of Preaching student. He noted that the professor had no answer to combat the argument he presented.

Logically we know that a sound argument is valid and unassailable whether it is given in a state

university or a school of preaching. Still, I can remember sitting in classes at Lakeland twenty years ago wondering if the arguments I was hearing would sound as powerful in a more antagonistic setting. Many of us who have graduated from the Florida School of Preaching did not find out until we got into the world just how good an education we received.

The reason we charge no tuition has nothing to do with the quality of education we offer. We are able to charge no tuition only because of the generosity of individuals and churches who understand the value of our work. We want to thank all who have so kindly supported us financially through the years. If any of our supporting congregations would like a report on our work please contact me and I will be glad to set up a time for us to get together. Of course, it goes without saying that I am also available to speak to any who would like to learn more about our work even though you are not currently among our supporters.

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