



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XXVI

January 2006

Number 6

Recent Developments



Maurice Davis

Maurice Davis has asked to be relieved of his service on the Board of Directors effective, December 31, 2005. He has served on the Board since 1988. He will continue to teach classes for the school.

In addition to having the 2006 Lectureship Book dedicated to him and the Sixth Street congregation, he is being **honored as the**

alumnus of the year by the alumni of the Florida School of Preaching.

Maurice is a graduate of the Florida School of Preaching, and he received an A.A. from Hillsborough Community College and a B.A. from American Christian Bible College.

Brother Davis has been a Gospel preacher for more than 40 years. He is presently preaching at Sixth Street in Lakeland.



John D. Smitherman

Brother Denny Smitherman has been **appointed** by the Board to serve as **Vice-Chairman** to the Board of Directors. He is an elder for the Wesconnett church of Christ in Jacksonville, Florida.

Brother Smitherman is a retired school teacher and administrator. He has served on

the Board of the Florida School of Preaching for a number of years.



Gene Burgett

Gene Burgett, Director of Public Relations, has been **added to the Board of Directors**. Gene, as many of you know, is a 1985 graduate of the Florida School of Preaching. Gene has taught classes for a number of years both in the extension classes and the classes meeting daily at South Florida Avenue. Gene received his

A.A. from Palm Beach Junior College, a B. A. from American Christian Bible college in 1998 and an M.A. from American Christian School of Religion in 2000.

Gene was the preacher for the High Springs congregation for fourteen (14) years where he also conducted a weekly radio program and published a bi-monthly periodical. He continues to teach classes at the Florida School of Preaching.



Brian R. Kenyon

Brian Kenyon, Associate Director, has been **appointed** by the Board to be the **associate Secretary to the Board of Directors**. He will be assisting brother J. H. Blackman, Jr. who is the present secretary. Brian is a graduate of the Florida School of Preaching, 1991, and has an A.S. degree from the Florida Institute of Technology, 1984. He has

three degrees from Freed-Hardeman University. In 1993, he received an M.A. in New Testament. In addition to his teaching duties, his work as Associate Director, Brian also edits the annual lectureship book.



Bill Norton

Frank W. (Bill) Norton has been **added to the Board of Directors.**

Bill serves as one of the elders of the Orange Street

church of Christ, Auburndale, Florida.

Brother Norton has served as a deacon in churches in California and Ohio. During his military days, he helped establish a congregation in Iran. He retired from the Air Force in 1972. He has preached full time in Ohio, and Eagle Lake, Florida from 1974-1980.

With the recent developments in the administration of the Florida School of Preaching, we are confident that the school will continue on the path we have traveled since the school began.

We regret to lose brother Davis, but having him continue as a member of the faculty will mean that we will still be able to draw from his wisdom as decisions are made for the school.

Ω

Reflections On Restoration

By

Jackie M. Stearsman

Since the 2006 Lectureship for the Florida School of Preaching is in January, and the lectures are centered on restoration, I thought additional reflections on the idea of restoration at this time might be

profitable. From the Merriam Webster's College Dictionary, we have the following as the commonly understood meaning of the term restore:

- "1. give back, return
- "2. to put or bring back into existence or use
- "3. to bring back to or put back into a former or original state: renew
- "4. to put again in possession of something"

Observations

When we propose to give back or return something, we must decide what it is we wish to return. If restore means to "3. bring back to or put into a former or original state; renew," we must have something that is possible to be recognized as a former original state. To put again in possession of something, we must know what would be entailed in such an effort. If not, all talk about restoring is nonsense.

Examples

The Handbook of Denominations in the United States, by Frank S. Mead (10th edition, revised by Samuel S. Hill), is "widely recognized as the most accurate, objective, and comprehensive source of information about America's religious denominations" (Taken from the cover). Using this source, we wish to cite the date of origin of some Denominations in our country. A random listing shows the following:

1. Seventh-Day Adventist, 1840s (page 37).
2. Southern Baptist Convention, May 1845 (page 76).

3. "The Church of the Brethren was formed in 1708 in Schwarzenau, Germany" (page 85).
4. Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints "claims to be the continuation of the original church organized by Joseph Smith, Jr., 1830" (page 172).
5. The American Lutheran Church at a constituting convention held April 22-24, 1960, in Minneapolis (page 178).
6. The African Methodist Episcopal Church, one of the largest Methodist groups in the U.S., ... began in 1787" (page 199).
7. General Council of Assemblies of God, Hot Springs, Arkansas, 1914 (page 238).
8. "The Christian Church (Stone-Campbell Movement) ... Campbell used the word *Disciples*. In 1832, the Christians

The Harvesters

Published Monthly
Florida School of Preaching
1807 South Florida Avenue
Lakeland, Florida 33803
(863) 683-4043

Editor: Jackie M. Stearsman, Director
Brian R. Kenyon, Associate Director
Gene Burgett, Public Relations Director
Board of Directors

Gordon Methvin, Chairman
John D. Smitherman, Vice-Chairman
J.H. Blackman, Jr., Secretary
Brian R. Kenyon, Associate Secretary
Greg Littleton, Treasurer
Steve Atnip
Glenn Burgess
Gene Burgett
George K. French
Scott Gerhardt
E. Robert McAnally
Bill Norton
Jackie M. Stearsman
Ted Wheeler

TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

and the Disciples merged; both names are still used, but usually and officially, the body is known today as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" (Pages 94 and 96).

Contrast

In contrast to the above Denominational dates of origin, the church of Christ had its origin in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2).

It began under the divine supervision of the Holy Spirit and did not need a convention of men and women to originate its doctrines and faith. The Holy Spirit was sent by God (John 14:26) and Christ (John 16:13-15) to guide the founders into all truth. The finished product of their work is the New Testament, referred to as the Apostles' Doctrine (Acts 2:42) and the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11).

Anyone claiming to be spiritual or guided in their doctrines that differ from what the Apostles presented are to be rejected (1 Cor. 14:37-38; Gal. 1:6-12; 2 Cor. 10:12, 18, 4-5).

Suppose I were to have as my goal the reproduction of one of the denominations cited above. What would I need to do? What period of time and source of information would I need to have in order to accomplish my goal?

Could I take the doctrines of one denomination and establish a different denomination? Could I take Baptist doctrine and establish a Lutheran Church?

Because I may agree with Campbell or Stone, Luther or Calvin, or a Pope in Rome on an item, it does not make them my Lord nor do they become my standard of religious authority.

Are all religious groups the same? Would some say that one religious group is better than another? If yes, on what basis would the evaluation be made? If religious values are totally subjective, none could claim superiority over another.

There are truths taught by most religious groups, but if a given group teaches truth, that truth must be verified by an objective and authoritative source. The only objective and authoritative source of religious truth is the Bible, properly translated and interpreted.

Were Stone and Campbell desiring to start a religious movement named after themselves? If yes, where may we read of this and have the documentation sufficient to restore it (a Stone-Campbell church)? If no such documentation is available, is a person honest if that person claims to restore that which never had an existence?

Let me illustrate, if I claimed to have located and restored a \$3.50 dollar bill, how much credibility would I have? Such never existed, thus never could it be restored.

Let us place God's Word before us and have His will foremost in our mind as we contemplate restoration. If we cannot agree on His Word, then no restoration is possible. If we cannot understand His will, then

no restoration is possible.

If restoration is not possible, where are we authorized to start any religion?

Merely using the name of a person, no matter how much respect that individual may have, is no value in restoration. Do you think for a moment my claim that I have located and restored a \$3.50 dollar bill would be given credibility if I called it a "Stone-Campbell \$3.50 dollar bill"?

Yes, there are those who would call themselves a part of a movement—the Stone-Campbell Movement. When they so identify themselves, they reveal to all their weakness.

If Stone and Campbell did not claim any authority for themselves, why should we cite them as our basis for religious ideas and customs?

To paraphrase the Apostle Paul: Was Stone or Campbell crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Stone or Campbell? I thank God that I was not baptized by Stone or Campbell lest some think that I am a part of a Stone-Campbell Movement.

We hope you will avail yourselves of the studies we have made on the subject of restoration in our 2006 Lectureship Book.

The Lectures are available in hardback or on CD. You may also obtain the lectures live when they are presented (www.fsop.net), and they are available on individual CDs and in MP3 format (all speakers on a single CD) for your car or home CD players. NOTE: MP3 CDs must have an MP3 player.

Gene Burgett Report

We have entered a new year. It would be correct to say that is nothing new. After all, I have personally seen forty-six new years come. Yet it is also something new, for while many of us have seen numerous new years, we have never seen this particular one. The year we name 2006 is a stranger to us. We could write a hefty little volume about 2005; but the book for 2006 contains mostly blank pages. What will be written on those pages will be, to a great extent, determined by what we do with our lives in the new year. Let us, however, not get too self-indulgent in thinking it is all up to us. The wise person makes plans having counted the cost of each and every endeavor. Wise

men also make their plans in humility remembering, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that" (James 4:15).

I want to thank the many congregations that allowed me to visit with them during the year 2005 and tell them about the work of the Florida School of Preaching. Not every congregation with which I spoke has been able to support us financially in the work of training preachers. However, I am thankful that all received me with kindness.

I recently returned from a trip to Alabama where I worshiped with the Lord's church in Double Springs. I was elated to learn from the elders that they had made room for the Florida School of Preaching in

their 2006 budget. My parents live in the Double Springs area, which has given me many opportunities to worship with the church at that location. I have grown quite fond of the Double Springs brethren and look forward to holding a meeting there October 29 - November 1 of this year.

As always, I am available to speak to any congregations or individuals that would like to know more about the Florida School of Preaching. I am always searching for men who would like to preach the gospel as well as those who would like to support a good work.

Have a great new year!

Gene Burgett

352-339-3195

burgett@atlantic.net

Return Service Requested

WEB SITE: www.fsop.net

E-MAIL: 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
PAID
Lakeland, FL
PERMIT #235