

Are You Without Wax?

By Bob West

The study of the origin or our words is at once an interesting and profitable pursuit. According to some scholars, our word "sincere" has a fascinating background.

In ancient Rome, the potters would hide the imperfections in their vessels by filling them with wax. Their best products were, in the Latin tongue, sine cera, meaning, "without wax." Our word, "sincere," is said, by some, to come from this source.

What a beautiful illustration of what it means to be "sincere and without offense till the day of Christ" - **Phil. 1:10**. With a little wax and paint, the most inferior vessel can be made to appear perfect - on the surface. But its inherent weaknesses will ultimately be found out. Just so, the Christian's character is not to be full of imperfections which are hidden from view by the wax of hypocrisy. His life and character should be sound through and through. He must be **SINCERE!**



Classes This Week

Sunday 5:15
Kid's Class at the Building

Sick

Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Lori Holloway	Chick Wade	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Amber Moseley (Toni Herd's niece)	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Joe Perry (Anna Miller's Relative)	Jerry Sandlin (Megan Lee's Grandfather)
Richard Call Seth Humphrey's Uncle	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Mary Smith (Nathan Smith's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher's and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Dale Herd (William Herd's brother)	Larry Alexander (Friend of Phillip Box)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frank Johnson (Debbi Coleman's Uncle)	Dale Wilkes (William Herd's Uncle)	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)

May Birthdays

- 1 - Barrett Gilbert
- 2 - Emily-Anne Rouse
- 3 - Paula Davis
- 9 - Andrea Cason
- 10 - Ian Norman
- 11 - Caleb George
- 11 - Scott Perkins
- 13 - Jana Hall
- 13 - Anna Grace Long
- 15 - Bryce Daniels
- 15 - Kerri Pender
- 16 - Shawna Harris
- 24 - Andy Roberts
- 26 - Fallon Hartsell
- 28 - Candy Long
- 29 - Rebekah Buchanan

News and Notes

- Sharon Bailey's cousin, Chuck kern, was seriously injured in a car accident.
- Lynsey Armstrong had her appendix removed on Tuesday and is doing well.
- Chris Davis has been diagnosed with a viral infection of the heart. And is now undergoing treatment
- We will have our men's business meeting today and our monthly singing tonight.
- Let us remember Matthew Johnson, David Golden and Tim Morton in our prayers as they are deployed overseas.
- Jared Burton continues to undergo tests for his condition.
- Gardner Hall will be at Perry Hill Road May 15-20 in a meeting.

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. **(Matthew 5:16)**

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The Danger of Splintering

By Bobby L. Graham



Thoughts to Ponder

The strength that comes from confidence can quickly be lost in conceit.

From childhood most of us have experienced that prickly point of a splinter, whether resulting from work, play, or casual activity. Oh, how it does hurt, both upon entry and during removal! The splinter considered here—even more hurtful and damaging—is that which separates from an established congregation when members, for a variety of reasons, decide to remove themselves to form another group.

Legitimate efforts to form new congregations, based upon a need necessitated by numerical growth or unscriptural collective activities requiring the violation of conscience, are not the splinter groups that we here condemn. Such unauthorized groups remove themselves when there is unrighteous pressure or ungodly influence exerted from within or without. The contributing influence might take the form of some novel idea, a charismatic leader, or opposition to established practices ("traditions" is the current term), or a combination of the previously named influences.

It is a pity that the faith of many is so shallow and their convictions so superficial that almost any new thing can catch their imagination and excite their fancy, thus becoming the focal point for a splinter group. That novel idea is sometimes a never-before-heard theory on divorce and remarriage, a new approach to the eating of the Lord's Supper, an untried effort to reach the lost, the desire to fraternize with the denominations, or—you name it. If the people favoring the "new thing" think their

preference will never "fly" in their local church, they "fly the coop" so they can believe or practice what they wish. The terminating of congregational ties, the financial impairment of the church's ability to function effectively, the hurt inflicted on existing relationships, the loss of influence in the community where they labor for the Lord, and the myriad of other consequences—all negative—never deter the splinter driver. In his self-interest and self-adulation he drives away so that he can achieve his personal goal, for selfish ambition is the fuel that moves this splinter driver. He is the "new Athenian," somewhat like the old Athenians:

And they took hold of him, and brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.) **(Acts 17:19-21, ASV)**.

A charismatic leader, blessed with speaking skills or just the "gift of gab," can sway the uninformed and the immature. Emotional ties or the power to organize and get things done never hurt in the advancement of such a cause. Many a congregation has been fractured and another one put on its feet to limp along when such a leader seized a novel idea and effectively promoted it in an atmosphere where opinion surpassed faith and emotions outweighed truth. The only person deserving such esteem and cre-

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Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or
E-mail:
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

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dence is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Paul said that He is God's gift to the church to be head over all things (**Eph. 1:22-23**). In all things He deserves the preeminence—first place or first rank (**Col. 1:18**). No human is worthy of such standing in any local church, neither in the time of the debacle at Corinth over human leaders or in our day. Paul urged the Corinthian saints not to think of men (or even to think) above (beyond) what is written in **1 Corinthians 4:6**.

Opposition to established means of operating, frequently called traditions, is often the justification used to oppose the old and to advance the new. Traditions have become acceptable, not because they are the sole means of executing the Lord's will, but because they provide effective and practical ways of obedience to God. Many have cited "our traditions" as their objection and cause for their destructive work. Let it be noted that the Bible never sanctions or condemns anything on the basis of its being old or new, especially expedencies (helpful means or methods of doing the Lord's work). Matters of faith were often upheld as being in harmony with the Lord's will, and other matters were condemned because they lack the Lord's backing (**Col. 3:17**). Matters of expediency (keeping of vows and circumcision) were practiced by Paul, even after the Law of Moses, which had bound them upon Jews as necessary, had lapsed in the divine administration. In fact, one would be hard pressed to find an instance where the Lord or His apostles ever opposed a harmless human tradition. In spite of the divine attitude here affirmed toward such, it seems that some are bent upon such opposition; they seem to enjoy the label of "iconoclast." So much disparaging talk about "our traditions" in recent years has usually been founded on the shaky foundation of misunderstanding/ disbelief of the Scriptures; the talkers don't know enough to even talk about the matter or they don't care enough about the harm they leave in their wake. Divine traditions are never subject to human change (**2 Thes. 2:15**), whereas human traditions can and often do change as new situations and circumstances make them obsolete. Those traditions originating with man need to change when they cause us to set aside the way of the Lord (**Mk. 7:9, 13**). What such novices little understand is that after a week or two they will have established their own traditions, which they must then oppose if they maintain their present attitude.

The weak and juvenile status of one's faith is displayed when he contends to break down a tradition such as a formal dress code for worship. In the first place, no situation known to this writer has such a code, not even an understood one. Some might generally practice more "dressing up" than others, but none enforces such a practice. The use of such justification amounts to subterfuge; it is a cover for something else that the person has

in mind. Some other agenda (some new thing in teaching or practice) is the real driving force behind such efforts. In a county with nearly fifty congregations, surely the person could find one where the people dress more to his liking without having to start a splinter group. Congregations based upon such a flimsy spiritual base can not long endure or prosper in the Lord.

Another justification recently used fits into the same category—the desire to try another approach in reaching the lost that seemed not to produce results in the old environment. In the church-saturated environment just described, how likely is it that some new approach, tried after separation from an existing church and formation of another church, will succeed? Astute observers will quickly question the motivation of the new group, which could not seem to "get along" with their former associates.

Another tradition which some have sought to eliminate is the "pinch and sip" observance of the Lord's Supper. Even one of them has conceded to this writer that the Bible nowhere mandates a certain amount of the bread or the juice, yet they just must leave and form a new work where they can eat and drink as much as they desire. While the love feast and the Passover meal have both been cited to justify this new way of eating and drinking, both fail the test of new-covenant authority (Passover meal) or clear, adequate information (love feast) to justify their practice.

One last idea that seems to be driving such efforts is the hair-brained notion that our only reason for gathering together is to edify each other. Without discounting such as a legitimate scriptural purpose, let it be pointed out that by our singing we make melody in our hearts and sing with grace in our hearts—both to the Lord (**Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16**). When we eat the supper of the Lord on the first day of the week, we remember Christ (**1 Cor. 11:25, 29**). Is not prayer an expression of praise and adoration to God (**1 Cor. 14:16-17**)? One must be trying to miss it to fail to see the vertical dimension of our assembling with the saints, though the horizontal is surely there (**Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16**; numerous uses of "edify" in **1 Cor. 14**). If they are not careful they will rule the Lord out of their efforts even more than they have already done.

It is simply not right to leave a congregation for such flimsy reasons! Civil law allows it but divine law forbids it! Splintering falls into this category! Personal preference, apart from personal conviction, never appears as justification for any practice in the New Testament. Self-interest is not more important than the oneness of the Lord's people (**Phil. 2:1-4**). All of us need to study this part of Philipians to learn of the oneness the Lord desires that we achieve through humility, not the separateness accomplished through self-esteem. It is a serious matter to regard so lightly all of the appeals for unity found in the New Testament.



“Aid” or “Addition” - What is the Difference?

By Wayne Jackson

A kindly gentleman replies: "Because musical instruments are not authorized by the New Testament, hence, they are additions to the divine pattern which prescribes Christian worship."

But the intrigued visitor probes further: "Why then do you use song books? Aren't these also additions?" "No," the brother replies, "our song books are merely aids; there's a difference between an addition and an aid."

Conversations like the previous take place on numerous occasions. There is much confusion in discerning the difference between an "addition" and an "aid." What is the difference? This is a great question, and we focus briefly on it in this week's Penpoint.

How is an "addition" distinguished from an "aid"? An addition occurs when a particular action has been altered, or the fundamental composition or substance of a thing has been changed. An aid alters nothing; it merely facilitates the implementation of the action or substance, without changing anything.

Perhaps several examples will help us focus on this.

Aids vs. Additions

A cane may aid one in taking a walk, but with or without this device, one is just walking. But if one walks for a while, and then rides a bicycle, he is no longer just walking; something has been added to his mode of travel. Now, he's both walking and riding.

A mother sends her son to the market to buy a loaf of bread. He brings the bread home in a bag. The bag is merely an aid. Should he purchase a candy bar as well, he has disregarded the instruction of his mother by an addition.

A man takes his automobile to the service center for an oil change. The attendant may use a wrench and funnel to aid in his replacement of the oil. There is no problem with that. But we all understand that if he changes the spark plugs as well, he has augmented the original instructions.

Jesus taught that the communion supper is to consist of bread and fruit of the vine. A table, plates, and cups facilitate (aid) the implementation of those commands. But to garnish the bread with peanut butter, and "punch up" the fruit of the vine with ginger ale, is to be guilty of

addition.

Christians are obligated to preach the gospel everywhere to the extent of their ability. In order to accomplish this, it is acceptable to use aids (e.g., tracts, television, the world wide web, or a building). But if one combines something with that gospel (as the Judaizers did in the first century when they taught that circumcision, an element of the Mosaic law, is also necessary to receive salvation – **Acts 15:1**), that is an offense.

When the church commences the praise portion of its service, the saints may "sing," for such is enjoined by God (**Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16**). Christians may employ song books, a projection screen, or a tuning fork (to determine the appropriate "pitch"). Still, though, in the final analysis, they would be singing only.

On the other hand, if the church sings to the accompaniment of an organ, piano, etc., those thus participating have added something to what the Lord authorized. There now are two types of music – vocal and instrumental. The nature of the original command has been supplemented.

Additions are wrong.

And so, the serious Bible student must conclude that the use of a mere aid only accommodates obedience to God's will. Such expedencies may fluctuate from time-to-time and from place-to-place.

On the other hand, those who respect the authority of the sacred Scriptures will not tamper with the divine prescriptions for worship by the clutterment of additions. They will not add to sacred instruction, for to do so is to invite the wrath of God ultimately.

One needs to remember what happened to those who put God's Ark of the Covenant on a "new" cart (**2 Sam. 6:3**), instead of transporting the sacred chest as the law had required (**Ex. 25:12-14**). David later admitted that this addition was "not according to the [divine] ordinance" (**1 Chron. 15:16**). It pays to know the difference between an "aid" and an "addition."

To many, such matters perhaps seem rather trivial. This is because they have never fathomed the concept of the necessity of absolute obedience to the sovereign Creator.

