

## Where is the Kiss?

By Greg Gwin

Someone has written to ask: "Where is the kiss?" Our correspondent lists five passages which refer to the greeting of a "holy kiss" (**Rom. 16:16, 1 Cor. 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:12, 1 Thess. 5:26, 1 Pet. 5:14**). He goes on to say, "I remember once being told that in the place of the holy kiss we use a handshake. But is this not a violation of the exclusionary principle? If we condemn someone for using an instrument when the scriptures say sing, why do we use a handshake when the scriptures specify a kiss? Is this not an equally severe violation of Bible authority?"

Our querist has made a serious mistake. The Scriptures do not specify a kiss as the **ONLY** form of greeting. We read of salutations given by spoken or written word, by a wave or gesture of the hand (**Acts 21:40**), **AND** by a clasp of the hands. In **Galatians 2:9**, Paul mentions that James, Peter, and John "... gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship."

The "exclusionary principle" does not apply here, simply because there is not one form of greeting which was taught to the exclusion of all others. In contrast to this, as we read the New Testament, we find that **ONLY** vocal music (singing) was used by early Christians in their worship to God. Therefore, we properly apply the principles of Biblical authority when we insist that our worship today follow that ancient pattern.

The instructions given concerning the "holy kiss" were designed as an injunction against wrong motives and impure emotions. If people greet one another with a kiss (as is still commonly practiced in many places) it must be a **HOLY** kiss. Such greetings provide an obvious opportunity for lustful or improper thoughts, and the statements concerning the "holy kiss" were given as a regulation of an existing practice, rather than the establishment of a new and exclusive law concerning salutation methods.



<b>Sunday 5:15</b> <b>Kid's Class at the Building</b>	<b>Wednesday 10:00 AM</b> <b>Ladies Class on "Parenting" at the Rouse's</b>
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Sick			
Richard Wood (Melanie Smith's Uncle)	Eli Williams (Friend of Sarah Norman)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	Johnny Welsh (Debbi Coleman's Cousin)	Stephen Freeman (Phillip Box's Friend)
Virginia Crawford (Hunter's Sister-In-Law)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Easton Alexander (Phillip Box's cousin's baby)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Gaylord Huffman (Jennifer Daniel's Grandfather)	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Betty Bradford	Arlene Harkrider (Nichole Pender's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna 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, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Melissa Walker (Chuck Hahn's Cousin)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Marion Vanhal (Paula Davis' Uncle)

- May Birthdays
- 1 - Barrett Gilbert
  - 2 - Emily Anne Rouse
  - 3 - Paula Davis
  - 10 - Ian Norman
  - 11 - Caleb George
  - 11 - Scott Perkins
  - 12 - Daphene Whatley
  - 13 - Jana Hall
  - 13 - Anna Grace Long
  - 15 - Bryce Daniels
  - 15 - Kerri Pender
  - 16 - Shawna Harris
  - 19 - Madison Seals
  - 24 - Andy Roberts
  - 25 - Chuck Hahn
  - 26 - Fallon Hartsell
  - 28 - Candy Long
  - 29 - Rebekah Buchanon

**News and Notes**

- Let us be working towards our VBS on June 18-21. The theme will be "Following the Footsteps of Jesus!" Be sure to have the registration forms for children attending to be turned in by May 18.
- Let us remember David Hartsell and his family in our prayers. He is making progress in his recovery!
- Let us remember our expectant mothers in our prayers, Candy Long and Terria Burton.
- Congratulations to our graduates!  
Amber Adams  
Josh Edwards  
Barrett Gilbert  
Preston Guthrie  
Hannah Marsh  
Jared Rice  
Nathan Smith

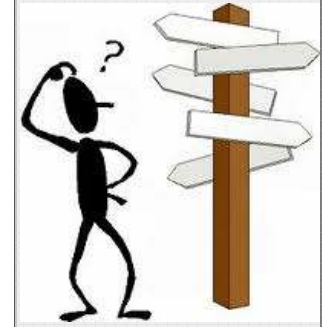
# The Auburn Beacon

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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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### Thoughts to Ponder

Jesus Christ always speaks from the source of things; consequently those who deal only with the surface find him an offense.

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

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**Sunday**

Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
Worship .....10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse  
Evangelist and Editor

## Does God's Grace Excuse Doctrinal Error?

By Dale Smelser

Some are asserting that there is sufficient latitude in the grace of God to accommodate the various aberrations found in the numerous groups considered a part of the Restoration Movement, and this on the premise that God's grace pardons doctrinal error. But when we study God's pattern for our service, the epistles, we learn that such conclusion is unwarranted.

Paul was a recipient of grace and taught of God's magnificence in it, yet one of his most emphatic censures concerns the dissemination of doctrinal error. As an example, he castigates Hymenaeus and Philetus, and their belief that the resurrection was already past (**2 Tim. 2:15-18**). This is decidedly doctrinal, not moral. Yet, Paul, the Spirit's chief exponent of salvation by grace, would not tolerate the corruptive influence of such upsetting ideas. And any concept tolerating the advocates of corruptive error, simply because they have been baptized into Christ, does not square with the necessity for sound doctrine and speech laid upon us in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. How can we tolerate what God does not?

In an attempt to lessen the menace of equally significant doctrinal error, some, as Ketcherside, even have distinguished between gospel and doctrine. To them, the gospel is constituted only of truths as to the identity and function of Christ, and how we are brought into

But I have seen some flawed ratiocination to that end, dividing truth into (1) that which brings us by grace into Christ, and (2) that which sustains us there. That is all right as an observation, but not as a basis for a creed of permissiveness that seems to make moral degeneracy the only part of sustaining truth which should prompt a disruption of fellowship.

grace; doctrine has to do only with the beliefs and service of those who have been saved by grace. Then in a classic example of arbitrary and non sequitur reasoning, we are told that "gospel" error is significant and damning, while "doctrinal" errors are not especially so.

But that comprehended in the term, "the gospel," is not so restricted as thus imagined. For, in the gospel is revealed God's righteousness (**Rom. 1: 16-17**). In this revealed scheme of righteousness there is instruction to the end that, through Christ, right-wiseness is both imputed and retained by our conditional submission and continued service. All this being classified as God's righteousness (**Rom. 10: 1-4; 6:19**), and that being contained in the gospel (good news), all of this instruc-

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tion must be included in the gospel. It is the totality of the message that is good news, not just a few of its wonderful facts.

To see further the contrast between Paul and some brethren in their permissive ideas about doctrinal error, Paul did not say of Hymenaeus and Philetus, "These are brethren whom we love and who are saved by grace in Christ, and since there is no condemnation in Christ, their error need not be condemned or stand in the way of fellowship." (Admittedly, some within the purview of these remarks would be more subtle.) He did indicate that Hymenaeus and Philetus continued not among those whom the Lord knew as his and labeled their doctrine, "unrighteousness" (**2 Tim. 2:19**); it was opposed to the righteousness of God, that contained in the gospel.

Why should not theistic evolution, premillennialism, and institutionalism be considered just as insidious and corruptive of God's order today, and call for the same kind of response seen in Paul? I know the gospel teaches salvation by grace: justification imputed as a gift through faith, or utter yieldedness and trust. But I do not know of a single passage in the gospel that tells me to overlook the corrupting errors of someone because he is genial, was at one time saved by grace, and still accepts the fact of Christ's deity.

But I have seen some flawed ratiocination to that end, dividing truth into (1) that which brings us by grace into Christ, and (2) that which sustains us there. That is all right as an observation, but not as a basis for a creed of permissiveness that seems to make moral degeneracy the only part of sustaining truth which should prompt a disruption of fellowship. The inference would be that the day and frequency of the Lord's supper, the kind of music in worship, and the type of organizational function utilized by churches, would all lack temporal relevance and eternal consequence, and that all variations should be tolerated.

I hope this is not the conclusion of very many, but any principle that would make those things pertinent to fellowship would be fatal to what they have concluded about whom they have fellowship in Christ with on the basis of justification by faith. Such is really only an application of Ketcherside's creedal distinction between gospel and doctrine, just using more careful terminology to refer to what is distinguished.

It would be better to divide error into that which is

inconsequential regarding action, and that which precipitates disobedience and unfaithfulness. Using salvation by grace to soft-pedal the significance of doctrinal error that has to do with action is a fallacy. While thinking principally of grace, of what God has done, such ones appear to have neglected the concept of God's sovereignty; his right to require specific service and the necessity of our giving it. It has been well observed that one truth isolated from others becomes perversion. So, it is here, for being saved by grace does not diminish our loyalty to God and his word one whit. Having been saved from sin on God's terms, the gospel of grace only provides for our lapses and inadequacies, not for continued intractability or incredulity. No, God has not required perfection in his children, save in the matter love (**agape, Mt. 5:44-48**), but he has required faithfulness (**Rev. 2:10; 2 Cor. 4:2; Rev. 17:14**), that is, reliability, trustworthiness. Justifying behavior which the word of Christ does not justify, and that is what one does when he accepts a practitioner of error as just, makes one not a trustworthy servant of Christ, and thus unfaithful. Being unfaithful to what God has declared, how can one lay claim to trusting God, or being justified by faith?

It is true that some have at times shown an unholy rancor toward their brethren, and have evinced anger at any disagreement with themselves. Some have been too ready to break ties with others pettishly, unnecessarily, impetuously and precipitately. Such in their smallness have desecrated fellowship for the most trivial of matters, even when a differing idea had nothing to do with essential conduct. But repudiation of such must not vitiate the loyalty Jesus Christ is due, and cause us to tolerate that which is intolerable to his revelation. Such toleration will produce a doctrinally emasculated brotherhood, standing for almost nothing. The resulting lack of militance will further lessen respect for the authority of revelation, and consequently lessen ardor for converting sectarians who are not following it, and man's being saved by grace will suffer an immense reversal as far as its incidence is concerned.

Brethren are going to continue to differ. Where those differences are of personal application, and not corruptive of collective service, nor disruptive of our common faith and hope, let us be longsuffering and forbearing. But let us continue to try the spirits. And where the influence of a man or doctrine is sinister and the error malignant, let us stand with the word as a sword unsheathed. No, the answer to the divisiveness of hypersensitive implacability and spiritual paranoia is not permissive tolerance of doctrinal error which is inimical to working righteousness (**Acts 10:35**).



## Alternatives to Indifference

By Dee Bowman

Indifference is unconcern. It is an individual matter, but churches become indifferent to the extent that the people which comprise them are indifferent. It is likely the most common malady among local congregations today. It may be found in every section of the country and in every size congregation. Personally, it pervades the lives of the most spiritually intelligent people just as it does those who have little knowledge of the Scriptures. It is subtle, gradual, and many times, imperceptible. It moves slowly and without fanfare and is thus hard to diagnose, even for the most sagacious person.

The conquering of indifference can be done perhaps more effectively by preventative measures than by diagnostic ones.

The measures for the prevention of indifference are so obvious as to almost seem simplistic. But we must begin with these or we are apt to fool ourselves into thinking we are active when we are, in fact, indifferent. Make no mistake about it, there is no time to lose, for this most pervasive of all spiritual maladies is most assuredly at work.

**1. There must be a stronger tendency toward Bible study.** Indifference has a hard time making much progress in a life that is duly influenced by regular exposure to biblical instruction. Bible study is hard, no doubt about it. It takes work, concentration, planning, perseverance. No wonder Paul calls the one who does it a "workman" (**2 Timothy 2:15**). He says one must "handle aright" the word of truth; it takes a workman to do that. Handling calls for concentration. "Cutting along a straight line" is the idiom in the original language. Cutting is hard work, no matter if it's cutting meat, cutting material, cutting the grass, or appropriating the word of God to one's life. You have to try hard.

And there is no such thing as "corporate study" (it is not so that because there is studying going on, you have studied); but there is such a thing as "corporate knowledge," or the whole of what each person knows, viewed together. Such corporate education is necessary for strong churches. And to whatever extent it does not exist, to that same extent the local congregation suffers indifference, sometimes even moral decay.

**2. There must be a greater devotion of worship, both public and private.** Worship illustrates commitment. It is unthinkable that a person who meditates about God and His word and is seeking to apply it to his life would be derelict in worship. And yet, we see people who affirm their faith in Christ who are indifferent to such opportunities. You may rest assured that when people are sporadic in attending public worship services, there is an amount of indifference

in their lives.

Nor does the mere fact that we attend the public assemblies declare how much private worship we do. What seems to be worship may be an empty ritual, one designed to walk through the various exercises in order to keep down some controversy or maintain family tradition. But true worship is a great combatant against indifference.

Notice, I said *true* worship. Worship, public or private, must have the right elements (**see John 4:23-24**), or be "in spirit and in truth." No worship can ever be proper without the right attitude; nor can it be proper when truth is not present. Otherwise, the worshipper has no idea if he is pleasing God. The truest worship you can give begins when you *present yourself* to God (**Romans 12:1-2**). Both private and public worship depends on first giving yourself. It means nothing if it starts some other place.

**3. We must have a genuine concern for one another.** We can do much to combat indifference—both in ourselves and in others—by mutual exhortation. **Hebrews 10:23-25** recommends that we exhort one another to greater faithfulness. Sure, there is a risk involved; do it anyhow. If someone were headed toward some sure disaster, you certainly would ignore the risk and warn them, would you not? **Hebrews 3:12-14** tells us we should do it "while it is today," indicating that we sense the urgency in the situation. There may be no other opportunity.

**Romans 12:4-21** gives an abundance of information which, if implemented, would do much to combat indifference. Among other things, it requires that we not think too highly of ourselves (**verse 3**); that we each do what we have the gift to do (**verses 4-8**); that our love be pure, not feigned (**9**); that we be family affectioned toward one another (**10**); not flagging in our energetic pursuit of that which is right (**11**); keeping hope alive for one another, forbearing one another and urgent in our remembrance of one another in prayer (**12**); benevolent to those who need us, hospitable to each other (**13**); involved with one another (**15**); same-minded, always descending to the level of those lower than we are (**16**); and handling disagreements with care, considering God in all we do (**17-21**). If these few things were put into service, indifference would suffer a serious blow.

Let's get going again. Let's get ourselves up and begin again to do what we know is right. Let's rid ourselves of the deterrents to our faithfulness, charge ourselves with our own responsibilities, fuel ourselves with a love for God and for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

