

Reformation or Transformation?

Rather than a social, political, or moral reformer, Jesus came into the world to be a heart transformer. The heart is purified through obedience to the truth (1 Pt 1:22). He came to seek and save the lost. (Lk 19:10) Saving the lost involves transforming their lives. In other words, it is His will that we be "transformed" (Gr. metamorphoo, the word from which we get metamorphosis), rather than merely reformed (cf. Rom 12:2).

Reformation brings about cosmetic change, whereas transformation brings about change deeply from within. It is like fixing up a broken down old car. You can give it a new paint job, new tires and new upholstery and it will look much better and draw compliments

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr. from passersby, but unless you have fixed the old engine it is not going anywhere. To get it going you are going to have to do something about that engine first.

I fear that too much of our "gospel preaching" is spent in telling folks how to do great paint jobs and not enough on how to change engines. Transformed hearts will indeed reform lives, but so can other factors. It takes believing and obeying the gospel of Christ from the heart to bring about true transformation. It takes being born again (1 Pt 1:23). Then we need constant reminders as to how to stay transformed (Rom 12:2)



Classes This Week				
Sunday 5:00 PM Song leading class in college classroom	Sunday 5:15 PM Kids class in the auditorium.	Tuesday 8:00 PM Truth-seekers Campus Study in Room 2310 in Student Center	Thursday 7:00 PM Ladies Class at the Rouse's on "Giving God Control"	Friday 7:00 PM Class at the Rouse's on how to discuss doctrinal differences among brethren.

Brad Marshall (Allie Hosey's Cousin)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Wanda Price (Ada Owen's sister)
Terri Moore (Joey's aunt)	Audrey Barnett (Joanetta's sister-in-law)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Tom Davis (Walker Davis' Uncle)	Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	William Herd	Rebecca Davis (Chuck Hahn's Niece)	Eva Jean Cavender (Matt's grandmother)
John M. Rhodes and Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Joe Perkins (Scott Perkins' Dad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	Esther Biddle

February Birthdays

- 2-Ken Sullivanne
- 2-Wesley Herd
- 3-Chris Long
- 4-Emma Hayes Bagents
- 5-Jude Hosey
- 5-Chase Counsell
- 5-Jimmy Owen
- 6-Jackson Fowler
- 8-Bruce Daniels
- 11-Blake Tolliver
- 13-Leslie Freeman
- 14-Leighton Daniels
- 14-Anna Jean Selsvik
- 15-Ella Miller
- 15-Dave Johnson
- 16-Seth Humphrey
- 17-Ivy Hall
- 18-Caralise Hunt
- 18-Wyatt Boyd
- 20-Andrew Tominack
- 22-Brock Hester
- 22-Alexander Calvert
- 23-Greg Lanier
- 23-Luke Carter
- 24-Jeff Jerkins
- 24-Thomas Peek
- 25-Valerie Liverett
- 27-Julie Johnson

News and Notes

- ☒ - There is a gospel meeting at Wilsonville with Terry Benton starting today thru Wed.
- ☒ - There is a gospel meeting at Prattmont Feb. 14-16 (Sun-Tues) with Doy Moyer.
- ☒ - Sympathy is extended as Larry Lauderdale lost his uncle, LJ Lauderdale.
- ☒ - Sarah Norman's grandmother is better and in a rehab center now .
- ☒ - Ken Sullivanne will return to Bham Feb 19 for another cardioversion. Prayers appreciated.
- ☒ - Please remember will Harris' great-grandmother, Bernice martin, as she is gravely ill.
- ☒ - Erica's cousin's baby, Everett Nowlin, continues to make progress.
- ☒ - Please pray for Erica's friend, Terri Sams, has begun chemo for leukemia.
- ☒ - Palmer Kate had successful surgery on Monday and was able to go home
- ☒ - All audio is at www.auchurch.com

The Auburn Beacon



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

Is It Growth Or Apostasy?

By Cled E. Wallace



Thoughts to Ponder

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; (2 Timothy 4:3)

This is the story as it was told to me. A successful businessman and his wife were driving through the state. She observed and made some remarks about some nice meeting-houses under construction. Some of them were for the use of churches of Christ. She asked her husband why these people appeared to be enjoying a steady growth. His answer was that they are still exercising some evangelistic fervor but indicated that he thought they would get over it in time.

Religious movements display a large amount of zeal in their youth, press their claims with fervor and fight hard for recognition. They grow up, ardor cools and the original convictions that started them rolling are diluted. They become institutionalized and depend more on that than they do individual zeal and personal consecration. Popularity and respectability bring in large numbers of adherents who know little and care less about original principles and aims.

What individuals and congregations formerly took care of is now routine work for institutions who look after it for everybody. Individuals and congregations toss in a little money, and it requires little sacrifice if the field has been thoroughly propagandized by a trained headquarters, boast

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about their institutions, relax and go to sleep with a good conscience. The emphasis is more and more on money and less and less on the strict standards of doctrinal conviction and personal devotion. People being what they are it is a comfortable feeling to make a comfortable contribution and let the institution do it. What is the result? The movement acquires definite denominational characteristics. The bigger and older it gets, the weaker it becomes in the things that really count. Doctrinal convictions and standards of conduct are diluted to meet the minimum requirements of the prevailing sentiment of an institutionalized constituency. Settling down to lower and lower levels is the inevitable ten-

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Elders
Walker Davis (334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse (334) 734-2133

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
E-Mail:
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Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

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dency in this process of degeneration sometimes boasted of as growth.

The history of Christianity in its pure and corrupted forms offers some striking testimony to such developments. In the early church individuals and congregations continued in "the apostles' doctrine and fellowship". It was the time of "the simplicity that is in Christ". Denominational organization with its inevitable institutional setup was unknown. The church grew, became popular, triumphed over persecution, conquered the government and became recognized. Organization broke out of the bonds of "the simplicity that is in Christ". Progress was the order of the day. In a few centuries the church had a pope and a hierarchy.

The influence of it is still strong in religious movements that originally started in protest against such abuses. The process is gradual. One departure from original simplicity calls for another. What is taken for granted today would not have been tolerated a generation ago. Is it growth or is it? John Wesley would not recognize the Methodist church of today with its highly organized modernism. Some of the sects which have broken away from it would more nearly harmonize with the ideals he zealously campaigned for.

Paul recognized the trends at work even while he was active and called it "the spirit of lawlessness". The law was the gospel order which came by inspiration. It was the doctrine, organization, worship and manner of life revealed from heaven. "The spirit of lawlessness" was rebellion against the restraints of divine law, no doubt in the name of progress and growth. Many were ready to contend that the Lord's way could not triumph over the world. Something more impressive had to be employed.

Was the business man right? Will churches of Christ in time get over their evangelistic fervor and settle down on an institutional basis and respectably carry on in a denominational sort of way? It looks like we are on the way in spots. The Christian Church with its diluted doctrine, its emphasis on a social gospel and its general liberal attitude except in the despotism of its institutional organization has set us a good example once we

drift away from simple and divine standards. We are already hearing about "What the church of Christ teaches", "our papers", "our schools", "our orphan homes", "our institutions" and other denominational terms which clearly indicate that some of us do not know what the church of the New Testament is.

Denominational language is a sure symptom of denominational thinking and if widespread enough will eventually lead to a denominational setup. Sure, a warning along this line will bring sneers and mockery from many just as it did a generation or so ago when the digressive movement started.

What, if anything, can be done about it? Form an organization to combat trends hostile to and leading away from the ancient order of things? The only remedy there is will be overlooked and spurned by the institutionally minded. It is too simple. It means "contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints", "holding the pattern of sound words" found in the New Testament, "guarding that which is committed unto thee", faith in God and suspicion of everything in religion of a purely human origin. What is the New Testament and what does it teach will have to be the consideration. Every step in the right direction and every protest against trends and worse will have to be made within the framework of the New Testament order.

The church in its widest usage includes all the children of God, all who have obeyed the gospel, baptized believers in Christ. Any use of the word church, which is smaller than this and larger than a local congregation is unscriptural and therefore misleading, unless it is properly qualified by some geographical term, such as "the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria." There is the church or congregation in or at a certain place which is independent of any jurisdiction except the law of the Lord revealed in the New Testament. With its elders and deacons, it is the nearest approach to institutionalism you can find in the New Testament. Individual disciples are the units which spark the whole movement. A knowledge of, and loyalty to the teaching of the New Testament on the part of all who care anything about it is the "sine qua non" of the whole situation. The right kind of preaching and teaching and plenty of it will keep us on the track and spare a wreck.

Gospel Guardian, June 2, 1949



A Separate People

By Foy E. Wallace

The growing idea that the "church of Christ" is just a church among churches will prove fatal, and it must not prevail. It is the church or nothing. It is one way or none.

The divine idea of separation in religion is as old as the Jewish race. Abraham was chosen of God to be the father of the chosen race. But idolatrous Ur of the Chaldees was not a land to nourish such a race. Influences were overwhelmingly against God's purpose to raise up a separate people. Hence, the call of God came to Abram to abandon country and kindred and seek a home in an unknown land. And that is the beginning of a separation—a separate family.

Years afterwards the posterity of Abraham, through a series of varied providential circumstances, settled in the land of Egypt. There they grew into a numerous race. Time developed that they could not serve God in Egypt. Separation was essential. God called them out of Egypt. A peculiar nation was formed at Sinai, with peculiar laws, a peculiar government, and peculiar life and relations. In keeping this law and maintaining this separation Israel was blessed. But when they departed, changed their government (**1 Sam. 8**), served other gods (**Deut. 8:19**), and formed alliances, they were rejected by God and subjected by their enemies. And only after reformation did God grant them restoration. (**Ezek. 10:10,11**.) The lesson of the story is separation—a separate nation.

But that is not the end of the story of separation. God still requires it—a separate church. As fleshly Israel was called out of Egypt, God has called the church, spiritual Israel, out of the world. And to retain the favor of God, the church must maintain that separation distinct and peculiar.

1. The church must maintain separation in speech. "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard in me." (**2 Tim. 1:13**.) The power of a united language is demonstrated in the Tower of Babel. It became the bond of an apostate union which God had to break up in a confusion of tongues. And it is so that unity and purity of speech—calling Bible things by Bible names—is a

bond among Christians that will triumph over error and bring order out of confusion.

2. The church must maintain separation in doctrine. Paul's admonition to "speak thou the things that become sound doctrine" needs constant emphasis today. The New Testament command to "touch not, taste not and handle not," does not refer to strong drink, but to "the commandments and doctrines of men." (**Col. 2:21, 22**.) It is a warning against flirting with er-

ror and fraternizing with denominationalism. The growing idea that the "church of Christ" is just a church among churches will prove fatal, and it must not prevail. It is the church or nothing. It is one way or none. Any participation on the part of members of the church of Christ in denominational functions can only compromise the church and is detrimental to the cause of truth.

3. The church must maintain separation in worship. The Old Testament injunction to "take heed lest ye turn aside" has its counterpart in the New Testament counsel: "Let no man beguile you.... intruding into those things which he hath not seen.... and not holding the Head, . . . after the commandments and doctrines of men. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship." (**Col. 2: 18-23**.) Self-devised worship is condemned along with man-written creeds and man-made doctrines. The New Testament Pattern must be adhered to.

4. Christians must maintain separation in life. Terms of dignity are applied to Christians. The church is "a chosen generation;" it is "a royal priesthood" and "a holy nation." Christians are to "show forth the praises (or excellencies)" of God who called them.

The demand of the Bible upon Christians is to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and to live "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." - **Bible Banner – December 1941**

