

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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January 30, 2022

Volume 42, # 05

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### "Our" Church "Offices"

*Does the church of Christ have an hierarchy?* Most brethren would give you a blank stare at that question; or say, "Hmmm, No, we don't have anything like that."

*Does the church of Christ have a system of church government, with a body of rulers having differing rank?* To this question some might ponder a bit, then say, "Well, the bishops are above the deacons, if that's what you mean." A few hardy souls might add, "Of course, that is just in the local church."

Webster's says of hierarchy: "A body of rulers. especially of ecclesiastics, (that means, in the church — RT) disposed organically in ranks and orders each subordinate to the one above it; also, such a system of church government or its authority."

There is much discussion today regarding the "elders" "rule", etc., and some seem ready to ignore God's plan for qualified leadership (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1) because of abuses they have seen, or think they have seen, among bishops. On the other hand, unlearned or careless brethren play right into the hands of these majority rule advocates (and make no mistake about it — a common mind or decision for action must be reached by some means in order to have team action) by talking about the "office" of the elders or deacons in exactly the same way others speak of their "hierarchy."

In 1 Timothy 3:1, the King James translation, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" — is an English version of seven (7) Greek words. Literally they say, "If anyone oversight aspires to, a good work he desires." (I have underlined to indicate the seven words translated, as shown by Marshall's Interlinear.) There is no Greek for "office" here.

A man who paints, is a painter, and "If anyone painting aspires to, a good work he desires." The "office" (function, work) of painting, is an honorable work.

In the same way, in 1 Timothy 3:10, 13, "let them use the office of a deacon" (eight words, KJ) is a translation of one Greek word, "let them minister" or serve. (Verse 13,

"having served" or "having ministered.") There is no justification for the "official" idea of a rank of capital Bishop or Deacon in the church, local or otherwise.

A quarterback is part of the football team, one of the players. But he is one who has been judged qualified to call signals, and do the work of a quarterback. He doesn't make the rules of the game; he functions, as a player, in keeping with the rules. So also, the elders in a local church.

Jesus said, "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Matthew 23:8). "All ye are brethren —". That says: no hierarchy. No differing rank, just different jobs to be done. No Clergy-laity distinctions — but all saints are priests, "a holy and a royal priesthood" (See 1 Peter 2:5, 9) in keeping with our High Priest who is "after the order of Melchizedek" both King and Priest.

- Robert F. Turner, via *Plain Talk*, November, 1970

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## Borne On Eagles' Wings

"You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself." (Exodus 19:4)

Recently I was spectator to a rather macabre spectacle. Two small, grey mice had been put into a glass cage containing two large rattlers being displayed outside a sporting goods store. One of the snakes was slowly positioning itself to devour one of the mice. The mouse, sensing the danger, ran frantically back and forth at one end of the cage. Then it tried crouching behind a rock. Realizing the rock provided no real safety, it ran back and forth again. Finally, exhausted and resigned to its fate, it turned its back to the snake and sat shivering in a corner of the cage to await the inevitable. I turned away. Not all of nature is beauty.

The Israelites once faced a similar situation. The sea before them, the chariots of the Egyptians bearing down on them - they were trapped between the sea and their enemies, unarmed and helpless. Then, at the last moment, God rescued them. They crossed the sea on dry land; the Egyptians tried to follow - and perished. A short time later, as God reminds them of what He had done, He says, "I bore you on eagles' wings."

All of us at times face situations which appear hopeless. All the paths of escape have been cut off. We may feel deserted and abandoned to a cruel, merciless fate. In such times we must remember there is One who can deliver us. Trusting Him, David escaped

the arrows of Saul, Daniel survived the lion's den, Paul withstood a stoning, and Jesus conquered death. Remember that.

- Tom Turner, via *Bulletin Digest*, December, 1982

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## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

# 1- "You shall have no other gods before me," Exodus 20:3.

Taught in the New Testament: Acts 14:8-18; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6.

# 2- "You shall not make for yourself an idol..." Exodus 20:4-6.

Taught in the New Testament: 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Acts 17:24-28.

# 3- "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain," Exodus 20:7.

Taught in the New Testament: Matthew 6:9; Ephesians 4:29; Matthew 5:33.

# 4- "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," Exodus 20:8-11.

Not required in the New Testament: Colossians 2:14-17.

# 5- "Honor your father and mother ..." Exodus 20:12.

Taught in the New Testament: Ephesians 6:1-3.

# 6- "You shall not murder," Exodus 20:13.

Taught in the New Testament: Romans 13:8-10; 1 Peter 4:15; Revelation 21:8.

# 7- "You shall not commit adultery," Exodus 20:14.

Taught in the New Testament: Romans 13:9; 1 Corinthians 6:9.

# 8- "You shall not steal," Exodus 20:15.

Taught in the New Testament: Romans 13:9; Ephesians 4:28.

# 9- "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor," Exodus 20:16.

Taught in the New Testament: Romans 13:9; Colossians 3:9.

# 10- "You shall not covet..." Exodus 20:17.

Taught in the New Testament: Romans 13:9; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Colossians 3:5.

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**Are you old enough to remember when ...?**

A few hundred years ago great transformations in many areas of life were set in motion by what historians call the Industrial Revolution. The development of production machinery took off like a rocket, where "by-hand" production had been the most widespread means of generating goods. America saw great changes in population, income and availability of goods. The movement of people followed the employment opportunities of this era. It was common in society to see the shift from rural to urban life.

In days gone by, the farm family had to work together in God's creation daily in order to survive. The center of social activity and Bible study was the supper table or around the home's hearth. Older children helped with younger children and all pitched in and did their part to take care of life's needs. All were a blessing from the Lord. No power on earth would have prevented them from praying together! Marriage was for life, and divorce was rare. But society's transformation opened another door for the devil to undermine spiritual progress in our nation's people.

Small farms went out of business. Country congregations died out or moved to town. Material progress in metropolitan areas produced many things that the family didn't know it needed. Eating places and taverns sprung up everywhere. World Wars left countries in ruins. Orphans, widows and the deserted were everywhere. These conditions started the trend toward easier divorce laws. Churches across the country began departing from faith in the Bible as the infallible word of God. Religious leaders stopped showing God's solutions to man's problems as found in the Holy Scriptures. The one-time moral restraints of a godly people would be shattered to bits when the sexual revolution arrived. Females burned their under garments and clamored for the right to murder their unborn children. The "new morality" transformed America into a nation of animalistic behavior: "free love" became the chant of the day as fornication was, for the most part, no longer condemned. Pornography has continued its progression from the shadows of the back alleys to the television screen and one click away on America's laptops.

I shudder to think of what is in store for today's "reimagining" of America. God has long since been thrown out! If history teaches us anything, only through desolation and destruction will He ever be invited back in, if then!

Do you remember when males and females living together outside of marriage was frowned upon by most of society? Do you remember the days when divorce was rare? Do you remember when mother was at home when children came home from school? Do you remember when public school teachers opened the class day with Bible reading and prayer? Do you remember when you could not sit comfortably because of a well-deserved spanking from a loving father? Do you remember when all forms of sodomy

were illegal? Do you remember when able-bodied, lazy men were pressured by their peers to get a job and work to provide for their families? Do you remember when children were afraid to disrespect their parents? Do you remember when cursing and vulgarities were not allowed on radio or television? I can go further.

However, there are still Christians in America who are faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ! These godly people love the truth and live it in their lives. There are still godly parents who raise their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4). There are still courageous Christians who oppose wickedness and evil wherever it is found; they "walk as children of Light." (Ephesians 5:8). There are still unselfish mothers who continue to sacrifice for their families, keeping them from the clutches of the devil. There are still homes where the Bible is read and studied regularly, and prayers are offered often. Humility is still alive in many who prefer to be slaves of Christ as opposed to men-pleasers (Ephesians 6:6). There are still husbands and wives who love God and love their families (Ephesians 5:22-33). There are still many who live a disciplined life, refusing to be discouraged, refusing to grow weary in doing good deeds (2 Thessalonians 3:11, 13). There are still disciples who have continued in the things they have learned from God (2 Timothy 3:14-17), in spite of the "difficult times" forecasted by the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

I thank the Lord for you and the good you do for His name! May you ever remain vigilant and strong!

- Gary Smalley

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\* "Better the storm with Christ than smooth waters without Him!"

\* "Christ replaced the dark door of death with the shining gate of life!"

\* "Christians never see the last of each other!"

\* "Christ's return is certain. Don't miss it for the world!"

\* "Bibles that are falling apart usually belong to people who aren't!"

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# ***What Must I Do To Be Saved?***

## **HEAR THE GOSPEL**

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

## **BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST**

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

## **REPENT OF PAST SINS**

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

## **CONFESS CHRIST**

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

## **BE BAPTIZED**

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

## **LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE**

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)