

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **OUR PLEA IS FOR UNITY ON GOD'S PLAN**

In the agony of approaching crucifixion Christ prayed for the unity of His followers (John 17:20-21).

In America today there are more than 300 distinct parties, denominations, sects. All these groups recognize the tragedy of division, and most of them are increasingly seeking means and ways far effecting unity of all believers.

It is impossible to unite all these groups on any single HUMAN (I) Creed, (II) Name, or, (III) Worship.

We earnestly plead therefore for the unity of all believers on the following SCRIPTURAL platform:

#### **I. NO CREED BUT THE BIBLE**

Human creeds are nearly always occasions, and often even the cause, of discord, division, and strife. Yet all denominations can agree to accept the Bible. And the Bible is sufficient for all our spiritual needs. (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

#### **II. NO NAME BUT CHRIST'S**

Human names in religion are marks of distinction and differences. Yet all believers in Christ are willing to be known by the simple name of "Christian." On His name we can unite. Why not, therefore, eliminate the distinctive party names?

#### **III. NO ORGANIZATION BUT THE CHURCH**

It would be a hopeless task to seek agreement on the multitude of guides, societies, clubs, and other ecclesiastical organizations of modern denominationalism. But in the day of the

church's greatest power and glory, the local congregation was the highest, and only, organization known. The church, as such, can do all the work God wants His people to do. (Ephesians 3:10, 21).

#### **IV. NO WORSHIP BUT THAT AUTHORIZED BY CHRIST**

The essence of Christ worship is simplicity - a worship that is spiritual and not material. The great emphasis given to religious pageantry, ritualism, and elaborate forms in many churches today cannot but destroy the purpose of worship. The appeal is to the senses rather than to the spirit. By following strictly the plan of worship given by Christ and the apostles we can occupy a position broad enough for all Christendom. A position broader than that is too broad, and one narrower than that is too narrow.

#### **V. NO LIFE BUT THAT OF THE CONSECRATED CHRISTIAN**

Worldliness and secularism have sapped the vitality of so many nominal church members. Only a godly, Christ-centered life will do.

- Unknown, via The Instructor, January, 1972

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## **We Must Pursue the Truth**

It's fun to watch a good football game. Sometimes, runners will break through the line and sprint downfield. Their opponents pursue them vigorously. They do not want them to score. Sometimes, they score; sometimes, they are stopped. Regardless, they are pursued. Do we love the truth enough to pursue it like a linebacker chasing a halfback?

Paul told the people of Athens, "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:26-27). He told Timothy, "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness" (1 Timothy 6:11). Proverbs 23:23 says, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it, Also wisdom and instruction and understanding." In no uncertain terms, God is telling us to pursue the truth! We must make a concerted effort to know, understand, and love the truth.

If we do not love the truth, God will let us wander off into darkness. He will not force us to do something against our own will. However, there will be consequences for all eternity. Second Thessalonians 2:11-12 says, "And for this reason God will send them strong

delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Oh how important it is to pursue, believe, and love the truth! May God help each one of us to make our best effort to do so.

- Kevin Cauley

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## **The Culture of No Consequences**

In the beginning, the Lord blessed man with a paradise garden to keep, trim, and enjoy. Only one prohibition was mentioned. Adam and Eve were not to eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:17). If they ate, they would lose their place in the garden and forfeit their right to the "tree of life." They would lose their lives and their special relationship with the Lord. This was the consequence. Sadly, they ate of the prohibited tree and paid the consequences.

Have you noticed the singular lack of consequences in almost every system of American culture? God's plan of behavior management for children (the rod of discipline, Proverbs 22:15) has been set aside by parents and schools. Athletes, stars and politicians are seen to break laws with impunity. Bad manners and rudeness are tolerated if one is popular or famous. Coaches throw chairs, athletes sling helmets, and parents attack other parents, all clear violations of team rules and rules of appropriate behavior. Yet, rarely are those actions held to account. Proverbs 19:19 tells us the truth: "A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty; if you rescue him, you will have to do it again." Priests and teachers have abused children without penalty. Presidents lie, congressmen take money, etc.

Human beings require structure and discipline. Fortunately for us, our Creator planned for our growth and happiness by holding us accountable. God is honest with us: sin brings death. The Word clarifies His expectations and holds us accountable. God is predictable, consistent, and fair. And aren't we thankful for that! The beauty queen and best player have the same consequence and reward as the rest of us. Moses, God's chosen leader, was held accountable for disobedience (Numbers 20). Samson, a judge chosen by God, maintained supernatural strength as long as he followed God's directions. However, God allowed Samson to suffer the consequences of foolish behavior: the Philistines cut his hair, blinded and imprisoned him. Ultimately Samson gained victory over himself and over his enemies; God did not abandon Samson but answered his prayer.

Obedience begins with the fear of consequences. God's people cannot thrive if they accept the culture of no consequences. Churches grow numerically but not spiritually. Many are suffering from the lack of discipline among their members. Fornication, bar-hopping, gossip, and bitterness find their way into churches. Behavior that is plainly un-Christian is ignored while the "positive" is accentuated. By overlooking sin, the

consequences of sin are not seen or felt. Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for this (1 Corinthians 5:1-5). They accepted an adulterer as a faithful brother. Paul told them to deliver him to Satan — to let him know where he was spiritually. They were not even to eat with him. How cruel! No! This is God's way of shocking the sinner into seeing the consequence of his sin.

Not all consequences are bad. In fact, the disciplining of the Corinthian adulterer caused him to repent and return to Christ. Paul urged the brethren to reaffirm their love to him (2 Corinthians 2:3-9). The renewal of Christian fellowship was crucial in helping this brother remain faithful. It remains the same today. We cannot live without consequences. Some believe, because God does not punish sin immediately, He will not punish it at all. This is a serious mistake. In this life we might evade many bad consequences. However, in judgment all will be made right. Everyone will stand before God to be judged based on the things we have done on earth (2 Corinthians 5:10). Don't buy into the idea of a culture with no consequences, for there is no such place in existence.

- David Hartsell (1956-2017)

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## **Welcome to Gospel Meeting Week!**

Attending our Gospel Meeting could prove to be the very best decision of your life! Why? The greatest message ever delivered to mankind will be preached! It is the one and only prescription designed to heal and sooth man's greatest illness: sin! Since the first century thousands upon thousands of people have had the opportunity to hear its powerful words, and very many have allowed it to change their lives for the better. This could be YOUR opportunity to hear this message of great blessings!

Wilson Adams will preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and we invite you to bring your Bible and investigate what is taught. Wilson will merely be the messenger of what has already been revealed to man by God. He will neither add to nor take from the sacred Scriptures. If he should make a mistake in teaching some wrong point, please bring that to his attention and he will correct it immediately. We are interested in teaching and preaching only the Bible!

You will not be embarrassed by being asked to do anything you do not wish to do. You will not be asked to give any money into the collection on Sunday. That is a command for the members (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). We are interested in YOU, not what is yours. We only ask that you listen carefully to the preaching of God's word. Ask questions if you wish.

Thanks so much for coming to our Gospel Meeting!

- Gary Smalley

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- \* "It is better to be short of cash than to be short of character!"
  - \* "The man who is self-centered, is off-centered!"
  - \* "The yoke of Christ will never fit a stiff neck!"
  - \* "Conceit is a form of 'I' strain!"
  - \* "The person who has a good opinion of self is usually a poor judge!"
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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)