

THE USE OF CHURCH BULLETINS

These weekly periodicals are used by congregations for a multiplicity of purposes. These include keeping the local church informed concerning the membership and their families. This is a high priority because it helps us all to apply such scripture as: *“And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it”* (1 Cor. 12:26; see also Rom. 12:15). Various good works effecting the congregation could be announced in the church bulletin. After all, we should *“...be ready to every good work”* (Titus 1:3). However, some local churches are guilty of becoming little more than social clubs. Their bulletin is used more to announce social activities instead of to promote spirituality.

Good articles thoroughly thought out, whether written by the local evangelist or borrowed articles by other faithful brethren, can teach many valuable biblical truths and motivate the brethren to become involved in good works. I've seen many articles in some church bulletins which would be more suitable for denominations. They may present some moral truths, but do little to indoctrinate brethren in New Testament Christianity. Such lack of teaching in depth of God's inspired Word is why the church of our Lord in many areas is drifting away from a thus saith the Lord. Such happened in the Old Testament when the priest kept back God's Word from the people. The Lord declared through Hosea: *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children”* (Hosea 4:6).

There should be balance in the proclamation of biblical truths. Gospel preachers should not be guilty of proclaiming an incomplete picture of the inspired Word. This might be done by placing emphasis upon only positive teaching. Others may be guilty of tipping the balance toward negative preaching. Either way would be contrary to the will of the Lord. The Apostle Paul pointed out: *“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God”* (Acts 20:26-27). The Lord will hold accountable the preachers and elders who fail to uphold the whole council of God.

The church bulletin is a medium in which brethren can not only be informed about news effecting the congregation, but also as a means of teaching and informing them of religious issues that can destroy it. The leadership of a local church does not serve it well by deliberately keeping it uninformed about damnable doctrines both in the world and within the brotherhood.

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BUT I OBTAINED MERCY

The Bible teaches that God's mercy and love are in overabundance (Psa. 25:6). When the apostle Paul recalls how God's plan of salvation was offered to him despite his past, he states, "the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love (1 Tim. 1:14). The grace of God is "exceeding abundant" and is offered to all men just as it was to Paul. The inspired John writes that Jesus "is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). Many times, people look back into their pasts and conclude that they are not "good enough" to be called a child of God. What must be realized is that "Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15), not people who are already "good enough." Jesus says, "they that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32). Paul considered his past and concluded that he was the chief of all sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). However, because Paul obeyed the Gospel plan of salvation, which culminated with his baptism, he had his past sins "washed away" (Acts 22:16). No wonder Paul was so thankful to the Lord, "for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy" (1 Tim. 1:12-13). If the grace of God is able to forgive the sins blasphemy, persecution, and murder (Acts 8:1), so too, can you and I obtain mercy. Obtaining, or acquiring God's mercy, is individual responsibility. God has offered mercy, we must do what is necessary attain it. By following the same plan salvation as did Paul, one can become Christian – a child of God – "for ye are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). No matter what one has done in his past, by turning away from those things never to return, (i.e., repentance), he can be forgiven. Paul states, "this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phi. 3:13-14). There is, however, a way that one can be "unforgivable" – by totally rejecting God's offer of grace and mercy. Though Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, we must appropriate that grace by obeying His Word (Heb. 5:8-9; John 12:48). Paul "obtained mercy" and was forgiven because he obeyed. In order for us obtain the same mercy and be forgiven, we too, must obey. Let us put the things which are behind us to rest and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Brad Green, Lenoir City, TN

**GUEST EDITORIAL:
WHEN THE CHURCH BECOMES A GARBAGE DUMP**

A number of years ago the late G.K. Wallace commented to this writer concerning the looseness of some congregations. He remarked, "There has to be a garbage dump in every town." We greatly fear that some churches have gone so quantity crazy that quality has been forgotten. If growth means accepting brethren like Ananias and Sapphira, then may God help us to be smaller in number. We cannot fathom churches wanting a membership comprised of those who "lie to the Holy Ghost."

If churches want the Judas Iscariots of our day, then their spiritual makeup is warped and twisted. Such persons will always do as Judas did. There is something terribly wrong when churches are so starved for numbers that they rejoice to have in their midst "**Diotrephes who loveth to have the preeminence**" (3 John 9).

What has happened to the Lord's body when we not only tolerate but welcome people like Hymenaeus and Alexander—blasphemers who have ship-wrecked their faith (2 Timothy 2: 17,18)? Do we really want members like "Demas" who "**hath forsaken me, having loved this present world**" (2 Timothy 4: 10)?

Are we so goal crazy that we would welcome "them **that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate**" (Revelation 2:15)? Do we want our Lord saying to us because of such corruption: "**Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth**" (Revelation 2: 16)?

Are we so determined to overflow our buildings that we will tolerate "**such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles**"? "**And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you**" (1 Corinthians 5:1,2).

We **do not want** such persons in the Lord's body. With Paul we say, "**Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened**" (1 Corinthians 5:6,7). How horrible it is when churches want to keep "**the old leaven**" rather than purge it out. The Bible describes God's people as "**a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light**" (1 Peter 2:9). Our aim, whether we number five or five thousand, is to so love and preach that the purity of the Lord's church in life and doctrine will radiate throughout the community, magnifying our Lord's name.

God's people must be separate from the world in order to be a holy nation.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

God giving us the strength, we will fight for a pure church with all the ability and power within us.

If we want "Ananias and Sapphira," "Judas Iscariot," "Diotrephes," "Demas," "the Nicolaitans, fornicators, —Hymenaeus and Alexander, and others of like corrupt nature to fill our buildings, then the church has indeed become a garbage dump. Assuredly the sins of the Laodiceans and those of Thyatira (Revelation 2: 20-23; 3:17) make for the church of the *garbage dump* and **not the church of Christ**.

David P. Brown, Spring, TX

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, Maomi Aaron's sister, Leann Rogers, who is having health problems, and Lanny Niver together with his daughter and son, and Tim Smith.

Lanny Niver is scheduled to have surgery February 1 on his neck. He is still in great pain.

Helen Culpepper has not had a good week with sinus infection problems than have not cleared.

Steven Wilson was sick Sunday with strep throat and unable to be out.

Aiden Arnold was sick Sunday and not able to be out. By Wednesday, Aaron was sick, the Arnolds and Kathy were unable to be out.

The men decided to send \$1000.00 for Haitian relief to the South Seminole church in Winter Park, FL. The Haitian brother they help support in North Miami that goes regularly to Haiti to work has reported that of the four congregations he works with there three buildings have been destroyed and the fourth has a crack in one of the walls. At the present time there is no word on casualties among the brethren.

Please mark you calendars for January 31. We will have a pot luck meal together after morning worship. Plan to stay and eat.

HE MADE "ONE" (BIG) MISTAKE

1. He brushed his teeth twice a day—with a nationally advertised toothpaste.
2. The doctor examined him twice a year.
3. He slept with the window open.
4. He stuck to a diet with fresh vegetables.
5. He golfed—but never more than 48 holes at a time.
6. He got at least eight hours of sleep each night.
7. He never smoked or drank or lost his temper.
8. He was all set to live to be a hundred.

The funeral was held last Wednesday. He is survived by 18 specialists, 4 health institutes, 6 gymnasiums, and numerous manufacturers of health foods and antiseptics.

He made one big mistake! "He forgot God." And he lived as if this world were all there was to this life and now he is with those who say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jer. 8:20).

If you should die tonight, where would you spend eternity? Think!

Author Unknown