

## GOING GREEN

Thursday, April 22, 2010, marked the 40th anniversary of “Earth Day.” Those who celebrate “Earth Day” probably do so in many different ways and for just as many reasons. God placed man in “dominion over” His earth and all that dwells on land, in the air, and in the sea. Though man should take care of what God has given him to rule and reign over, man should never consider himself subservient to the creation. Sadly, many in the environmentalist movement have created a religious devotion to the Earth. God explicitly condemns those who “worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25). Those who believe that the Earth needs man to save it disclose a lack of faith in God and His Son, Jesus, “for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Col. 1:16- 17). “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1), and He created it to last as long as He pleases. In fact, God made the Earth to last until “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). Our emphasis, therefore, should not be on saving that which is going to “melt with fervent heat” and be “burned up,” it must be on saving souls who inhabit the Earth.

This is God’s view for man to “save the planet.” The first thing man must do to save the planet is PLANT the SEED. The Bible states that “the seed is the word of God” and that seed which falls “on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:11, 15). Second, in order to save the planet, we must use only ONE BOOK –The Bible. How many trees could be saved every day if the printing of creed books and confessions of faith ceased? Jesus states that we will be judged by His Word (John 12:48) and the apostle Paul proclaims, “though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8). Third, we need to PROTECT our FOUNTAIN – “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. 21:6). That fountain was opened when Jesus died on the cross (John 19:34). In order to keep the fountain clean, we must follow the Words of Christ – “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6). Adding to or taking away from God’s Word is like adding pollutants to the fountain (Rev. 22:18-19). Many pollutants, like the doctrines of “faith only,” grace only,” etc., have been used to contaminate God’s plan to save. Man can only enjoy the blessings of the fountain of life through obedience to the Gospel which culminates in water baptism, where one has his past sins “washed away” (Acts 22:16). Any addition or subtraction to God’s plan is a pollutant, and a polluted stream cannot save. Fourth, we must CONSERVE WATER. God says that water baptism “doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21) and that baptism requires “much water” (John 3:23). The Greek word translated, baptize, means “to immerse, submerge; to make overwhelmed (i.e., fully wet)” (Strong’s). Therefore, sprinkling and/or pouring is not baptism and if it is not baptism, it is a waste of water. Also, one

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*“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)*  
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(Greater Augusta, GA area)  
SCHEDULE OF SERVICES  
SUNDAY:      WEDNESDAY:  
Bible Classes for all ages      10:00 am.      Bible Classes for all ages      7:00 p.m.  
Morning Worship      11:00 am.  
Evening Worship      6:00 p.m.  
EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley – Tel. No. (803) -279-8663  
[www.belvederechurchofchrist.org](http://www.belvederechurchofchrist.org) E-mail [church@belvederechurchofchrist.org](mailto:church@belvederechurchofchrist.org)

## “I Can’t” or “I Won’t”

Moses stuttered. David’s armor didn’t fit. John Mark was a young man, rejected by the apostle Paul at one point. Hoses’ wife was a prostitute. Amos’ only training was in fig tree pruning. Solomon was too rich. Naomi was too poor. Abraham was too old. David was too young. Timothy had stomach trouble. Peter was afraid. Lazarus was dead. Paul was involved with hate crimes. Moses killed a man. Jonah ran from God. Gideon and Thomas both doubted. Jeremiah was depressed. Elijah was “burned out.” John the Baptist was blunt. Martha was a worry-wart. Samson had unusually long hair. Moses had a short fuse, and so did Peter, Paul, and lots of other people we read about in the Scriptures.

God doesn’t require a job interview. He does not hire and fire like most bosses, because He is not the boss—He is the Father. God does not look at the bottom line of financial profit or loss. He is not prejudiced or partial, not deaf to our cry nor blind to our need.

As much as we try to think otherwise, God’s gifts are free. We just need to be obedient and accept them. We could—and maybe do—do wonderful things for wonderful people, and still we may not be wonderful or perfect. Satan says, “You’re not worthy,” and he is right. He looks back and sees our mistakes, but God looks back and sees a cross on which His Son gave His life to cover our mistakes. God does not calculate what we did, He has forgiven every sin of which we have repented, and the wrong is not even on the record any longer.

There are lots of reasons why God should not want us. There are plenty of times we think we are justified in saying we cannot do what He wants us to do. But He will make us qualified to do what He wants us to do. And if we love Him enough to say, “I will,” He will use us in spite of who we are what we have done, where we have been, or what we look like.

Author Unknown

## FREE SPEECH

With the recent announcement of the nomination of Elena Kagan, by President Obama, to the Supreme Court, there has come to light certain statements which show that she advocates limits to the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment of the US Constitution. She, along with others, would argue that free speech should be limited. She has written: “Whether a given category of speech enjoys First Amendment protection, depends upon a categorical balancing of the value of the speech against its societal costs.” While the government may constitutionally restrict speech based on “neutrally conceived harms,” Kagan says, it may not restrict speech based on “hostility toward ideas.” But, as she more or less acknowledges, this distinction ultimately collapses because people are hostile to ideas they consider harmful. Note, who is to decide, under this concept, what free speech is to be limited? The government! While such statements, are aimed more at political speech, and there are efforts by some to restrict free speech against of those who oppose whatever the government of the day decides, it has further implications in the religious world. Such is seen in efforts to define as “hate speech” the teaching of the Bible on certain topics, such as homosexuality.

Did the framers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the Constitution believe that such restrictions should be placed on free speech, or did the adoption of that amendment show that they rejected such restrictions?

The founding fathers of this nation or their ancestors, had come to this country to escape the restrictions and the sufferings they had endured because of the restrictions that governments placed on free speech? Clearly, they came to escape the persecution that followed as a result of their speech being subjected to the government of the day’s perception of its “societal costs” and “conceived harms.” In time past the temporal and spiritual authorities combined together to regulate speech that they did not approve. One can read, in history, of the way that those who spoke out were treated and even put to death for expressing their views. This included what happened to those who spoke out against false religion. It was not just Roman Catholicism that was involved with such but also the protestant reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin and their followers. Also, the state church established in England, the Church of England (Episcopal Church) was also involved. One reads of what happened with many who sought to proclaim the unadulterated gospel of Christ in the book, *Traces of the Kingdom*, written by Keith Sisman. Today, it is not the temporal and spiritual authorities that attempt to restrict free speech, but the temporal combined with the irreligious, those who do not believe in God or accept the Bible as the word of God. Hence, the efforts to restrict those who oppose such things as homosexuality from speaking out or simply quoting what the Bible has to say. Remember the recent case in England of the preacher who was arrested and placed in jail for what he said when he taught what the Bible says. Such is deemed by some as “hate speech” and must be restricted while they remain free to speak vile things against Christ, the church and Christians.

If those who would seek to limit the freedom of speech guaranteed under the First Amendment are allowed to succeed, we will find that the freedom of speech for Christians will be lost and the free proclamation of the word of God would be restricted because it “offends” some and thus, “societal costs” and “conceived harms” would be sufficient reason for the government to ban such speech.

However, even in the 1<sup>st</sup> century the apostles were called upon cease preaching and teaching about Christ (Acts 4). However, we note the response of Peter and the rest of the apostles: “*We ought to obey God rather than men*” (Acts 5:29). May ever uphold the first amendment right of free speech, even if we don’t like what is said, because it allows us to speak freely of the things of God. If the forces that would seek to restrict free speech and succeed, may we be ready to stand with the apostles, whatever the cost and “*obey God rather than men.*”

*Ken Chumbley*

## NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: 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.

Jean Peebles has been down with leg problems this week and has been taking medicines. Her daughter, Betty Peebles, is home again right now. She still has some infection and when that is cleared she will go to Charleston, SC for surgery. Keep them in your prayers.

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must hear and believe (Rom. 10:17), repent of sins (Luke 13:3), and confess the name of Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), before being qualified for immersion. Since babies are unable to fulfill these prerequisites, any attempt to “baptize” a child is a waste of water. The only way we can conserve water is to simply and humbly obey God’s Will. Fifth, we can save the planet by AVOIDING HOT AIR. The apostle Paul warned Timothy to “shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2:16-18). Lastly, we can save the planet if we practice the Lord’s “RECYCLING PROGRAM.” Jesus says, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mat. 28:19-20). It is God’s desire that men teach the truth to others and then, have those who have been taught go out and teach others, and so on. Notice Paul’s admonition to Timothy – “the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). This is God’s plan for producing, and reproducing, Christians.

By following God’s Word, and only doing such things as He has authorized, we can fulfill our responsibilities to God to help “SAVE THE PLANET.

*Brad Green  
Knoxville, TN*