

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

Volume 33

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

June 1999

No. 6

A PLEA FOR NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIANITY

Part Two - Seven "Ones" of the Church

Number 7 - "One God"

by Ted J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION

The last of our seven "ones" which Paul gave as required for the unity of the church is "one God" (Ephesians 4:4-6). The "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (verse 6) ties together the six previous "ones" we have discussed. "One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, and one baptism" are exclusive to true Christianity because the "one God" has given them to be uniting factors in Christ's church. Remember, where there is only one of anything, we have no choice. We must be part of the "one body" of Christ's church, led by the "one Spirit" of truth, seeking the "one hope" of eternal life, which is found in the "one Lord" Jesus Christ, ready to walk in the "one faith" of Christ's new covenant, and putting on Christ in the "one baptism" of immersion in His name for the forgiveness of sins. No one has the right to add to, take from, or modify these "ones" as they are set forth in the Scriptures.

God the Father, as set forth in Scripture, is such a Being that we could not do justice in describing Him or His works if we had a thousand years and a thousand articles to do so. We will set forth some things about God which relate to the over all theme of salvation in the Lord's church, as we have done with the other "ones" of Ephesians 4:4-6.

"ONE GOD"

Monotheism is the belief in one and only one God. Judaism and Christianity have always set forth that concept that the Deity the Scriptures refer to as God, or the Lord, is that one and only God. Isaiah 44:6, 8 is one of the clearest claims in the Old Testament that there is one and only one God. "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God...is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I

know not any." From the New Testament the apostle Paul said, "...We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS

The idea of the Trinity is found in Scripture, even if the word is not. The word God refers to the very essence or substance of Deity or Godhead. There is only one God, but there are three persons who possess the essence of that Deity. While the Old Testament does not express this trinity (three in one) as clearly as the New Testament, the bud of the flower that came to full bloom in the NT is there. In Genesis 1:26 the text says, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The plurality of this verse cannot be God speaking to the angels, for Colossians 1:16 says that Christ created everything that was created. The common Hebrew name for "God" in the OT is "Elohim," which is a plural form, indicating more than one person possesses the quality of Deity. Psalms 110:1 reads, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Acts 2:34 in the NT quotes this verse and applies it to Jesus Christ.

In the NT no clearer evidence can be found than that supplied by the inspired apostle John in his gospel account. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). In verse 14, John said, "and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." In verse 17 Jesus

Christ is identified as the one who brought "grace and truth." John 1:18 and 3:16 identify Jesus as God's "only begotten Son." Following Christ's resurrection from the dead the apostle Thomas called Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Jesus did not rebuke nor correct Thomas, but accepted his praise and worship. One can be certain that Jesus accepted worship as God, for neither men nor angels could accept such worship (cf. Acts 10:25-26; Revelation 22:8-9). The denomination of Jehovah's Witnesses translates John 1:1 in their New World Translation, "the Word was a god." There is no justification to translate the original NT Greek language into an English phrase indicating that Jesus was "a god," meaning a lesser Deity than God Himself. One should also study Philippians 2:5-11 to see the identification of Christ as being equal to God.

In the NT it is also clear that the Holy Spirit (translated Holy Ghost, meaning Holy Guest, many times in the KJV) is God. In Acts 5:3-4, the apostle Peter convicted Ananias of telling a "lie to the Holy Spirit." In the very next verse, as Peter reminded Ananias of what he had done, he said, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." To lie unto the Holy Spirit was to lie unto God. The Holy Spirit is also included in the Holy Trio in several passages where the Father and Son are named. The Great Commission to preach the gospel of Christ and baptize believers is "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). The great benediction (blessings given at the conclusion of Paul's letters) given in 2 Corinthians 3:14, says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen." The very passage that prompted our present studies, Ephesians 4:4-6, mentions "one Spirit, one Lord, and one God and Father of all." Many other passages give the same three Persons as sharing the same essence of Deity.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one in essence, one in purpose, and one in will. Christ and the Spirit are sent by

(Continued on page 2)

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

USPS Publication # 211780

...is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

FCGN is mailed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name we must have a complete address, including number and street name, or R.R. or HCR number, plus box number, or a P.O. Box number and the **NINE DIGIT ZIP CODE**. This paper is supported by voluntary contributions for which we are grateful. Financial information will be furnished upon request. **Mail all address corrections or manuscripts to:**

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

P. O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Ted J. Clarke EDITOR
Phone (870) 625-3217
Fax (870) 625-3137
E-Mail tedjc@centuryinter.net

(Continued from page 1)

the Father and are given different tasks, but these all work to accomplish God's will for saving mankind (cf. Matthew 26:39; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-15; 17:11, 21-22). These passages all demonstrate the unity of the Godhead three in accomplishing the same goal—the salvation of mankind. Another passage in Ephesians expresses this unity of purpose: *"For through him [Jesus Christ] we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father"* (2:18).

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

The Being of God can be characterized as possessing certain attributes to the fullest degree. God's attributes are those qualities of His Being which constitute what He is. These are qualities of the entire Godhead and they are infinite (unlimited). God is all-knowing [omniscient] (Psalm 147:5; Romans 11:33-36); all powerful [omnipotent] (Jeremiah 32:17; Ephesians 3:20-21); present everywhere [omnipresent] (Psalm 139; Hebrews 4:12); eternal—He has always existed and always will (Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 90:2; Romans 1:20); unchangeable [immutable] (Psalm 102:25-26; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17); perfection (Isaiah 40:25-26); and God is holy, without sin, (Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:15-16). Other attributes of God are His love, justice, mercy, goodness, grace, truth, and still others might be

mentioned. For the purpose of concluding our article, I want to focus on God's love and justice. God's attributes are a perfect blend of these qualities into a perfect Being (the Trinity). All of these attributes are involved in God's plan for saving mankind. God is the standard of perfection in what it means to be loving and just.

GOD'S LOVE AND JUSTICE

God's love is infinite in the sense that what He is and does is perfect love, meaning, *"God is love"* (1 John 4:8). The great love of God in creating mankind originally is surpassed only by His love in sending Christ to atone for our sins, so that we can be a new creation (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21). In some ways God shows His love upon all men (Matthew 5:44-48). However, God's love in the creation we enjoy will one day be blended with God's attribute of justice and judgment. God does not possess more of a sense of justice than He does love, but He is a Being of both love and justice. While *"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16), that does not mean that everyone is automatically saved. The false doctrine of universalism teaches that God is so loving, good, and gracious that He will universally save all men, not allowing even the worst person to be lost. Such a concept ignores what the Bible teaches about God being a God of justice and truth.

The *"one God"* of whom Paul spoke in Ephesians 4:6, *"so loved the world"* that He sent Christ to die on the cross for our sins. In the first gospel sermon preached in Christ's name, the apostle Peter said that those who believed in Christ (Acts 2:36), repented of their sins and were baptized in Christ's name would receive remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Those who do not believe and obey the gospel commands will be lost (Mark 16:16). Does that mean God is not a God of infinite love because some will be lost? No, it merely means that some people's perception of what perfect love is does not square with God's perfect love. Jesus, who died for us, taught that only those who do the Father's will can go to heaven (Matthew 7:21-24). The perfect blend of God's love and righteous justice is seen in Second Thessalonians, chapter one. Paul spoke of the church being persecuted, but said God's *"righteous judgment"* would one day come upon the persecutors,

while Christians would then be given *"rest"* (verses 4-5). *"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power"* (verses 6-9). Those who reject this blending of God's attributes as He accomplishes His will do not worship the *"one God"* of Ephesians 4:6.

Jesus is the perfect example of God's love toward us and of how our love should be toward God (John 5:30; 6:39). Jesus said that if we have *"seen"* Him, in the sense of what He taught and practiced we have *"seen the Father"* (John 14:8-11). The Scripture says of Christ, *"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* (Hebrews 5:8-9). If we accept Jesus as our example, we will show our acceptance of God's love for us and our love for the Father by our obedience to keep His commands (John 14:15; 21, 23; 15:10). First John 2:1-6 emphasizes the same principles in a very clear and forceful fashion.

CONCLUSION

The *"one God"* of Paul's seven ones for the non-denominational church of the Lord is a great God and Father in the Trinity with the Son and Holy Spirit. How great is His love shown in Christ Jesus (John 3:16)? We may obtain complete forgiveness of past sins in Him (Acts 2:36-38), and continue to be forgiven of sins we commit as Christians if we confess them, repent and ask forgiveness of them (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7-10). God's ultimate love, goodness, mercy and grace are seen in these provisions through Christ.

Also, God's justice required atonement for our sins (Romans 5:6-11). God's justice requires that we love and serve Him by obeying the gospel and keeping His commandments to the best of our abilities (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Hebrews 5:9; 1 John 2:1-6 et al.). Despite God's love for you, His justice teaches that you have the responsibility to *"save yourselves"* (Acts 2:40); to *"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"* (Philippians 2:12); and to *"keep yourselves in the love of God"* (Jude 21). Otherwise, God's jus-

tice demands you will be judged by the one and only great God of love as one who did not "obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9), or as one who once obeyed but later "turned from the holy commandment delivered to them [so that] the latter end is worse for them than the beginning" (2 Peter 2:20-22).

The "one God and Father" is not a God of confusion (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:33) who allows different religious groups to teach different plans of salvation or different ways to worship and serve Him. Are you sure that you are following the "one God" of the Bible and not the commandments and doctrines of men? We would be delighted to study the matter with you further, or we encourage you to contact a faithful church of Christ nearest to you.

WARM WEATHER AND IMMODEST DRESS

by Bobby Duncan

As the weather warms up, we generally wear less clothing and/or lighter clothing. There is nothing wrong with adjusting our clothing to fit the weather, so long as our clothing adequately covers our bodies. The fashion of the world, of course, is to wear scanty provocative clothing, especially when the weather is warm. Unfortunately, some in the church will be influenced more by the fashion of the world than they are by the word of the Lord.

Your Bible says: "[I will therefore] that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety..." (1 Timothy 2:9). Certainly the same is required of men. In case some woman wants to know what modest apparel is, then she should read verse 10: "But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." It is modest if it is becoming (appropriate, suitable, proper) to women professing godliness.

It is a fact that times have changed, and styles have changed, and society has changed, but the word of God has not changed and human nature has not changed. Several years ago a well-known preacher wrote the following:

"What is wrong with mixed swimming? I can't speak for the ladies, but I can speak for the men. There's not an ordinary man who can look at a woman clad in nothing but a bathing suit for a long time without entertaining evil thoughts.

'But,' some will say, 'it does not bother me.' One who says that may be so young that his passions have not arisen, or he may be so old they have subsided, or he may be so ignorant he doesn't know what is going on, or he may not be normal, or he may be lying. He fits into one of these five categories, or he is a spiritual giant; but spiritual giants don't spend their time at mixed swimming parties."

Our Lord warned against looking and lusting when he said: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27-28).

I know there are those who accuse anyone who warns against the evils of immodest dress of being "evil-minded." This accusation has intimidated many preachers and caused them to stop preaching against immodest dress. I pray I might never be intimidated by such charges. I hasten to say also that the danger of lust is not the only reason Christians should dress modestly and decently. The matter of our good influence should be weighed carefully in determining how we are to dress.

In the forty-odd years I have been preaching I guess I have heard all the arguments as to why the Bible injunction with reference to modesty does not have to be obeyed: "Nobody thinks about it any more." "In some cultures the women go bare-breasted." "Time was when a woman was immodest if her ankle showed." "Some are going to lust anyway." And on, and on, and on the arguments go. But the real reason most members of the church persist in wearing clothing that is less than modest and decent is simply this: God's will is not important enough for them to yield their own will to him.

4207 Adamsville Pkwy.
Adamsville, AL 35005

"NOW THEY SHOP AROUND"

by Terry W. Frizzell

For many years, faithful men have been sounding the alarm at a gradual departure from the truth which is among us. The day has now come where we can no longer be passive about the battle cry. In many instances the distinctiveness of the church has disappeared. This would

be a tremendous blessing if it was because the world was now following the truth, but this is not the case. The distinctiveness is disappearing because the church is becoming more like the world.

On March 21, 1996, an article appeared in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette which is an incredible thermometer for the religious world. There is not enough space to deal with everything in the two-page article, however, there are a few statements which expressed the overall attitude.

Early in the article there was a statement that reveals the purpose for everything involved in the new worship styles. The author wrote: "Across the country, cutting edge churches are retooling more than their outward appearances to attract and keep younger members." The author then continues by giving the solution to which many churches are turning: "Part of the attraction is a contemporary worship service, which often includes a short drama or skit rather than the traditional sermon lasting 20 to 30 minutes. The style targets baby boomers who seek a faster-paced and more entertaining worship experience."

Lest one gets the idea that we are only dealing with denominations, consider the following statement from the preacher who fills the pulpit in a congregation of the Lord's church in Little Rock: [The preacher] "describes the worship services as praise-oriented, designed to make people leave on a high note, not a guilt trip. Don't expect to hear much about the fiery depths of Hades here. Life's too short to feel miserable at church..."

The problem has been created because of a lack of knowledge of God's word, much like the days of Hosea (Hosea 4:6). As Christians, we are called to worship God. The New Testament word for worship is "proskuneo," which is defined as "to prostrate oneself in homage." Where in the world does anyone find entertainment in this? Worship, in order to be accepted by God, must be according to His will. Jesus asked the question, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). The principle behind this passage could also be applied to the tactics of these so-called churches. What good would it do to have all 250 million citizens of the United States as members of the church of Christ if they weren't converted? They

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

might be entertained, but they would still be lost. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for making some "twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matthew 23:15). They were converting people to something other than the truth.

The reason for these changes is to keep people from leaving. But Jesus didn't change anything because people wouldn't listen (cf. John 6). Jesus knew it would do no good to have large numbers of people, unless you gave them the truth. And I wonder, if people don't hear of the fiery depths of Hades from the preaching of God's Word, where will they hear about it? In actuality, life is too short NOT to know the truth about eternity!

The final statement in this article read: "It used to be if a...family moved to town, they would automatically go to the nearest...church. Now, they shop around," (denominational name omitted, TWF). Sorry, but true Christians will refuse to become a part of the "church circus." The last time I checked, the Bible still read, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). The gospel will attract, and the gospel will save. Let's depend on God.

111 Golfview Drive
Tequesta, FL 33469

TEN REASONS FOR STUDYING THE BIBLE

1. The Bible yields food for the soul. It has milk necessary for the spiritual growth of the babe, and strong meat to sustain the older, mature Christian. (See 1 Pet. 2:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14).
2. A knowledge of the truth and obedience to it is necessary to be made free from sin. (See John 8:31-32; 1 Pet. 1:22).
3. The Bible reveals God's view of man. It enables the student to see himself as God sees him, for the Bible is God's mirror of the soul. (See James 1:21-25).
4. A working knowledge of the Bible arms one against the difficulties and hardships of life. It has a message to cover every condition and problem. It can be used in every emergency from the cradle to the grave. (See Rom. 15:4).
5. The knowledgeable Christian is able to comfort and edify the discouraged and brokenhearted. (See Col. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:14).

6. The Scriptures contain all good works that are pleasing to God, and give all things that pertain to life and godliness. (See 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).
7. One must study the Bible to have the approval of God, to be a ready workman, and to handle correctly the Word of truth. (See 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:15).
8. A knowledge of the Bible is the only safeguard against fatal error. (See Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1).
9. The Scriptures are able to build us up and to give us a home in heaven. (See Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:15).
10. The Bible will be our standard of judgment in the last day. (See John 12:48; Rev. 20:12).

"Many a man thinks he has an open mind, when in fact it is only vacant."

CONTRIBUTIONS CHURCHES

Souder Church of Christ, Souder, Mo.	\$25.00
Lowell Church of Christ, Springdale, Ar. .	50.00
Church of Christ, Elizabeth, Ar.	25.00
Jeff Church of Christ, Thayer, MO	25.00
Pilot Church of Christ	40.00
Mammoth Spring, Ar.	
Church of Christ, Thayer, Mo.	200.00
Church of Christ, Clarkridge, Ar.	75.00
W. 160 Church of Christ	100.00
West Plains, Mo.	
Church of Christ, Garfield, Ar.	35.00
Church of Christ, Viola, Ar.	15.00
Church of Christ, Moody, Mo.	25.00
Crider Church of Christ	25.00
West Plains, Mo.	
Church of Christ, Bakersfield, Mo.	25.00
Dellhalf Church of Christ, Myrtle, Mo.	25.00

INDIVIDUALS

M/M Gordon Daniel, McCrory, Ar.	\$10.00
M/M Gary Wilson, Hot Spgs. Vlg. Ar.	25.00
J. Rex Taylor, Springfield, Mo.	100.00
Ms. Brenda Porter, Hamison, Ar.	20.00
M/M Sherman Ball, Beatty NV	50.00
Loren Fitzhugh, Crockett, Tx.	40.00
M/M Bruce Badgero, South Bend, In.	5.00
Williard Shelor, Magnolia, De.	10.00
M/M John Scher, Granite City, Il.	10.00
Chuck Pearson, Ringgold, La.	25.00
Mrs. Ola Gundy, N. Little Rock, Ar.	20.00
Jim Parsley, Columbus, Ne.	25.00
Troy Nicholson, San Antonio, Tx.	20.00
Anonymous, Mammoth Spring, Ar.	20.00

"YOU CAN HELP WITH POSTAGE"

MOVING? CHANGING TO 911?

Be sure to send us your change of address.



GOD'S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP - COLOSSIANS 3:17

1. **LORD'S SUPPER** - The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; 16:1-2).
2. **PRAYERS** - (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).
3. **SINGING** - God's word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.
4. **GIVING** - Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).
5. **PREACHING OF THE WORD** - The gospel of Christ, not men's doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-23).

CHURCH OF CHRIST
P.O. BOX 251
MAMMOTH SPRING, AR. 72554

ADDRESS
CORRECTION
REQUESTED

#BXNGZD *****3-DIGIT 325
MICHAEL HAITCHER
4852 SAUFLEY FIELD RD
PENSACOLA FL 32526-1724
..ACK 112
PAGE 2

Periodical Postage
Paid At
Mammoth Spring, AR
72554-9998
Publication #211780