

THE FOREST HILL NEWS

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Forest Hill

Church of Christ

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VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship.. ...10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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BARRIERS TO UNITY (Part One)

False Teaching

Barry M. Grider

Since the salvation of one's soul is dependant upon an individual's proper understanding and acceptance of divine truth (John 8:32; 1 Tim. 2:4), Satan works diligently to poison the pure gospel. He does this through false teaching. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel [grace and gospel are used here synonymously-BG]: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6,7). The body of Christ, the church, is not to be divided, but, rather, united. Jesus, shortly before His death, prayed, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). This of course was not unity in diversity, which is a contradiction of terms, but, rather, a love, devotion, commitment, allegiance, and appreciation of like minds for the doctrine of Christ, which is attainable, understandable, and can be faithfully followed. When this kind of unity is rejected, obviously division occurs. Consider the following passages:

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement (1 Cor. 1:10).

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers...And all that believed were together and had all things common (Acts 2:42,44).

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing (Phil. 3:15,16).

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...(1 Pet. 4:11).

These passages clearly teach that God's people can know, understand, and follow God's will, and hence, be united. However, Paul makes clear that some will teach another doctrine and many will follow these false teachers, and thus genuine unity will be disrupted (1 Thess. 2:3).

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgement now of a longtime lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not (2 Pet. 2:1-3).

Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

The church of our Lord has been digressing throughout (continued on page 4)

Belly-button Rings and Low-rider Jeans

Jared Jackson

What are little girls made of? “Sugar and spice and everything nice” have been replaced by belly-button jewelry, super small shirts, and pants that reveal far too much information.

It was once the case that the only time “love handles” were exposed in public was when an overweight plumber was struggling to repair the faucet (no offense to plumbers intended).

These days, every other teen-age girl at the mall is wearing her favorite pair of “I wear a size 8, but the 6’s fit so tight, I went ahead and got the 4’s” low-rider jeans that let her wiggle around in pride, showing off her new tattoo just above the caboose along with the belly-button ring she bought with last week’s allowance.

From early on, our society teaches the feminine child that body glitter and exposed cleavage are the rites of passage that will carry her to the status of “cosmopolitan womanhood.” From the time they can fantasize with the Barbie doll that has become progressively more lumpy over the years, to the day she can pick up the latest “sophisticated” women’s magazines, our daughters are slowly being pressed into a mold of destruction and ruin.

Even underwear that only a few years ago was considered “for adults only” is now in vogue for innocent girls at the tenderest age. Recently, the infamous Abercrombie & Fitch porn and clothing store began testing the limits by peddling a line of thong underwear for girls as young as 10 or 12 years old garnished with pictures of cherries, and suggestive words like “kiss me,” “wink wink,” and “eye candy.” Despite the public outcry, the hustlers know that they can pull back, wait a while, then steam on ahead (See: ABC News: “Sex Sells...”).

When your daughter is walking around with “kiss me” stamped on her derriere, what kind of message do you think is being advertised?

The young men in our culture are no less targets of the allure of “glamorous” living. Almost every break in any given televised sports event is peppered with seductive women and carefree young men promoting one prevailing hedonistic message. The adolescent men walk around with their underwear hanging out all over the place, with perhaps something that might be called a shirt. And when mom or dad complain about their son’s behavior, the boys reaffirm their independence and personal sovereignty – then ask for twenty bucks and the car keys.

What is the result of this permeation of sexual marketing and anemic parenting? The fallout is devastating.

Every year, some 12 million Americans contract a sexually transmitted disease; 63% are less than 25 years old (The Epidemic of Sexually Transmitted Diseases).

Every year, nearly 1 million girls between the ages of 15-19 become pregnant; approximately a quarter million of these end their pregnancy by aborting the baby.

The teen mother who keeps the baby will most likely not complete high school, and become a permanent dependent of her parents. Her child will probably have poorer health, fall behind in school, and is more likely to become the victim of abuse and neglect. The father is long gone on to greener pastures – frequently without a thought of the fruit of their sinful, irresponsible behavior. The new mom and her parents

are left with heartache and stress, and a child that desperately needs a family as God planned for her (TeenPregnancy.org: General Facts and Stats).

There may be exceptions to the bleak picture painted above. Still, they are exceptions.

In the not-too-distant past, it was the case that if you went to a public amusement park, or even to the local shopping mall, you would expect to see the fashion sense of worldliness walking around.

Now, however, it is increasingly the case that the young women and men in the Lord’s church are not only wearing immodest apparel with abandon, but they are even arriving to worship the Lord of heaven and earth dressed so inappropriately. Young ladies, with exposed cleavage and tight, revealing clothes sit beside disheveled young men wearing wrinkled T-shirts and scruffy sweatpants. Occasionally, they even have the nerve to “make-out” on the church parking lot.

Preachers and elders need to lovingly, yet firmly, address this type of behavior. We ought not be intimidated by permissive parents who resist biblical teaching when it is applied to their precious offspring. Lessons from the pulpit are important. But so is courageous, personal counseling.

Parents, especially fathers, you need to exercise the authority and discipline *the* Father has bestowed upon you. If your children are dressed for success in Satan’s cause, it is your fault. If they live in your house, take a stand. They may kick and scream, but it’s up to you to set the standard in your household.

Moms please don’t make your daughter the object of your vicarious teenage rebellion. Teach your tender offspring the value of purity and honor. The greatest gift you can give her is the self-respect of not needing to rely upon her curls and curves to achieve the great milestones in life. Actively teach her that she can instead rely upon the majesty of her heavenly Father (1 Pet. 2:9), the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5), and the humility of Mary (Lk. 1:38). Those traits will last much longer, even into eternity.

Young men, tuck in your shirts and show some dignity. Act like Timothy, not like p-Daddy diddly doo or whoever is the big-shot rapper of the day (Dude, that means like, read 1&2 Timothy!). A good dose of the Proverbs is prescribed as well.

Ladies, the way you dress does matter. Please, put on some decent clothes. You may not contract an STD or get pregnant, but avoiding those results are pretty good reasons to live pure and wholesome lives.

If those aren’t good enough reasons, at least dress modestly for the sake of those around you. There are men who will be weakened by your display. And if you don’t care about them, at least have the dignity and self-respect to not advertise yourself as a cheap sex object.

(continued from page 1)

my forty-year lifetime. The apostasy is widespread. Why? Because of false teachers, their followers, and those sympathetic to them. The false doctrines espoused are those which generated apostasy in the first century church. Error is taught concerning the plan of salvation, the organization of the church, and what constitutes scriptural worship. In addition, tolerating immorality, such as unauthorized marriages, has never been more alarming than today. In the first century, Paul had the audacity of identifying by name brethren who engaged in false teaching (cf. 1 Tim. 1:19,20; 2 Tim. 2:17,18). Today, brethren should be well aware of such apostate preachers as “one does not contribute a whit to his salvation” Rubel Shelly and “I would make a good Baptist” Max Lucado. Please understand there are multitudes who follow in their steps and gullible brethren are ready to swallow their poisonous doctrines even to their own peril and that of their children. In the Memphis area, a number of congregations consistently invite into their pulpits such men as Randy Harris, Joe Beam, Walt Leaver, and a host of others who engage in heretical teaching, which is nothing more than warmed over scraps from denominationalism. And brethren will sit in like congregations warming their pews and soaking it in and never discern between truth and error. Why? Because some are in agreement with error, others are willfully ignorant, and most just don’t care.

Brethren, the church is splintered today. The chief barrier to unity is false teaching, just as it was in the first century. As the old preachers used to say, “I would rather be the soldier who pierced Jesus’ side than to do harm to his spiritual body, the church.” False teaching brings nothing but harm to the church. We would do well to remember the following admonition,

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

Just because a congregation was once faithful to the Lord does not mean it is still faithful. Jesus said to the church at Ephesus, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent (Rev. 2:5). The lamp has already been extinguished in many places. Sadly the light is growing dim in many others. May the faithful ever be united upon truth **and** in opposition to error. “Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way” (Psm. 119:104).

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