



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 44, No.17, April 25 , 2017 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian

School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter **is a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church; and is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

[NOTE: Not that it really matters... but somewhere along the way, years back, the 'volume #' of the Newsletter began to be printed incorrectly. Once discovered, we decided to 'just continue as is'... In reality THIS MONTH we are completing volume 42...]

A LOCAL CHURCH: Relevant and NOT Relevant— ALL at the Same Time!

THE CHURCH MUST BE relevant TO A CHANGING SOCIETY, says mega pastors, denominational leaders, books, and publications! THUS, MANY CHURCHES are looking more and more like SPORTS and ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS; and also allowing members to simultaneously keep and practice all of their flesh feeding gods— of course, with a little gospel ***(gospel-LITE)*** added.

Way back in the 1950s, **A. W. Tozer wrote:** For centuries the Church stood solidly against every form of worldly entertainment, recognizing it for what it was— **a device** for wasting time, **a refuge** from the disturbing voice of conscience, **a scheme** to divert attention from moral

accountability. For this she got herself abused roundly by the sons of this world. But of late she has become tired of the abuse and has given over the struggle. She appears to have decided that if she cannot conquer the great god Entertainment she may as well join forces with him and make what use she can of his powers. SO TODAY WE HAVE THE astonishing spectacle of millions of dollars being poured into the unholy job of PROVIDING EARTHLY ENTERTAINMENT for the so-called sons of heaven.

RELIGIOUS ENTERTAINMENT is in many places rapidly crowding out the serious things of God. Many churches these days have become little more than poor theaters where fifth-rate 'producers' peddle their shoddy wares with the full approval of evangelical leaders who can even quote a holy text in defense of their delinquency. And hardly a man dares to raise his voice against it.

THE GREAT GOD ENTERTAINMENT amuses devotees mainly by telling stories. The love of stories, which is a characteristic of childhood, has taken fast hold of the minds of retarded saints in our day, so much so that not a few persons manage to make a comfortable living by spinning yarns and serving them up in various disguises to church people. IS IT NOT A STRANGE THING THAT in an hour when mature saints are so desperately needed— vast numbers of believers have reverted to spiritual childhood and clamor for religious toys?

G. Campbell Morgan wrote: *"When amusement is necessary to get people to listen to the gospel there will be failure. **This is not the method of Christ.** To form an organization and provide all kinds of entertainment for young people, in order that they may come to the Bible classes, is to be foredoomed to failure."*

R. E. Bieber, stated: “How are you going to reach this generation unless you get with the times? **GET WITH THE TIMES? The greatest need of “the times” is not ...** more smooth, cool preachers... who compromise the Word of God... more prophecy hobbyists... more promises of prosperity. **RATHER,** THE NEED OF THE TIMES IS CLEAR PROPHETIC GOSPEL WORDS from real Christians who are crucified with Christ! **The Kingdom of God is not** worldly music, sounds, flashing lights, or promises that you can have Jesus and keep your sin. **THE KINGDOM OF GOD is,** "righteousness, and peace, and joy IN THE HOLY SPIRIT." (Romans 14:17) THE KINGDOM OF GOD comes in POWER; and that power is found nowhere, but IN THE CROSS! **"For the preaching of the CROSS is** to them that perish FOOLISHNESS; but to those of us who are saved it is the POWER OF GOD!" (1 Cor. 1:18) "... IT PLEASED GOD by the foolishness of PREACHING to save them that believe." (1 Cor. 1:21b)

"But we PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; BUT TO THEM WHICH ARE CALLED, both Jews and Greeks, CHRIST, the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:24

"When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words of wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST and HIM CRUCIFIED. And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. 2:2)

EVEN SO, CHURCH LEADERS ARE 100% CORRECT! In America in 2017, to be relevant to modern society and most congregations—

CHURCHES must be SPORTS and ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS with lots of culturally loved music sounds, and churches must also allow members to simultaneously keep and practice their flesh feeding materialistic gods... WITH a little ***gospel-LITE*** added!

IN OTHER WORDS, I would like to have about THREE DOLLARS' WORTH OF GOD, please! Not too much - just enough to make me happy, but not so much that I get addicted to God and the ministry of the saints! I don't want so much gospel that I learn to really hate covetousness and lust. I certainly don't want so much that I start to love my enemies, cherish self-denial, and be a missionary in the alien culture where I live. I want ecstasy, not repentance! ***I want fun time religious experiences, not transformation into the likeness of Jesus!*** I would like enough God and gospel to make my family secure and my children well behaved, **but not so much that I actually LOVE GOD more than I LOVE myself!** I would like about three dollars' worth of God and gospel, please. (Drawn from, Edited from Wilbur Rees' Three Dollars' Worth of God)

YES, CHURCH LEADERS, ETC... ARE 100% CORRECT— IF our goal is to be RELEVANT to society! And pardon me for PROVING the point from an OLD BOOK— but the BIBLE proves their point! Example: **Noah was 100% IRRELEVANT to his culture.** He preached for at least 100 years *and was not able to build a mega-church— because HE DID NOT AND WOULD NOT ADAPT to society in order to reach them.* HE SIMPLY WALKED WITH GOD, OBEYED GOD, AND PREACHED RIGHTEOUSNESS! NOAH was at one and the same time totally irrelevant in the eyes of society while being totally RELEVANT to God!

And now we are in the last days, which Jesus says are LIKE the days of Noah. **TO WHOM SHALL WE BE RELEVANT? GOD or MAN?** By the grace of God, LET US SEEK to walk in the example of Noah!

1 Corinthians 2:1-5—“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with Excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

SADLY, TODAY, many churches choose the pastors they choose because the people have ears itching for something pleasing and gratifying! They turn a deaf ear to the TRUTH; and instead, they give their interested attention to foolish stories, myths, and legends and wander off after man-made fictions!

They want an Aaron— for they are ready to make a GOLDEN IDOL! They desire 'Aarons' who are ready to lead congregations in flesh-pleasing worship services with very loud music and dancing! (See Ex. 32:1-35... especially verses 17-18; 2 Tim. 4:1-4) Aaron was the top innovative, creative pastor of his day! **He is the first ‘pastor’ on record to install the loud sounds of man centered worship!** He and the whole congregation were well pleased! They had high attendance and awesome congregational participation! **However, then came God's judgment and God's wrath!**

In contrast, Noah preached 'righteousness' for about 100 years. Beyond his immediate family, he had no converts! In his day, **Noah's preaching would have been VOTED THE MOST IRRELEVANT PREACHING over the last 100 years!** However, the supreme issue is faithfulness to the Word of God regardless of whether or not there is a response, whether or not a crowd comes to listen! **(Listen to Noah? Are you kidding? He is too negative! He is too radical. Besides, how big a church has he built? etc.)**

Many 'sermons' today are but a string of stories with a few Scriptures thrown in! **JESUS DID NOT** TEACH AS THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF HIS DAY. What was the chief difference? He taught with AUTHORITY!

TODAY, we have many GREAT PREACHERS who are 'master communicators' and the people love it and crowds sit at their feet— **but they speak with no Divine authority.** FROM MANY pulpits, there is no, **"Thus saith, the LORD!" There is no call to repentance. There is no call to forsake idols.** There is no CHRIST EXHALTATION! No wonder there is such a low level of Christian living! (Note: The problem we face is not new! (SEE: Jer. 5:7-8, 12-13, 23-25, 30-31; 6:13-15)

WHAT IS GOD'S METHOD TO BUILD HIS CHURCH IN SUCH A WORLD? R-rated movie clips, or even Mayberry clips, or play acting? IN THEIR OWN LIFESTYLES, many Pastors and congregations love HOLLYWOOD MOVIES, including the R-rated— thus, it is no surprise to find them promoting such in church services. **GOD'S METHOD IS RADICALLY DIFFERENT— the gospel experienced, lived, and preached by the redeemed!**

GOD'S SETS 'VISUALS' are NOT the 'play-acting' type. Rather, He uses the real deal— real redeemed Christians! Real Christians who are overflowing with His love, His holiness, His forgiveness, etc. THE METHOD OF JESUS is **real Christians** who know that the ONE TREASURE of the Christian faith is the GOSPEL; and that the GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD....! (Romans 1)

LET US BEWARE: While Jesus continues to Build His Church by the exclusive power of the Gospel and by the agency of the Holy Spirit, AN ENEMY PLANTS TARES. False apostles and deceitful workers transform themselves into 'apostles of Christ' (2 Cor. 11:13-15) **BEWARE:** In the olden times there were false prophets and the New Testament warns that there 'shall be'...**and MANY FOLLOW their ways, so much so that discredit is brought upon the real truth!** (2 Peter 2:1-22)

BEWARE: Today, there is a great and impressive HARLOT RELIGION SYSTEM... not limited to one denomination...for there is almost endless variety on the Broad Road to Destruction! (Matt. 7:13-29)

2 Timothy 4:1-4-- “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and His kingdom; 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 they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

Throughout the history of man, what God says is usually OUT OF TOUCH with the masses! It was so in Noah's day. It was so in the days

of the Prophets, even among those who were 'God's chosen people.' It was so when Jesus walked on earth.

To be sure, they loved the healings, miracles and 'dinner on the grounds'... but when Jesus set forth truth-- even many of the disciples walked with Him no more! (John 6) **BOTTOM LINE:** Our one focus is to be **RELEVANT TO GOD!**

Grace to all! James Bell

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

MONDAYS: Jail Ministry— First and Second Monday of each month at 7:30pm. Questions? Contact Mike Munday at 615-681-7533

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing

Home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM.

WEDNESDAYS: ☐ 6:30pm— Children Ministry/activities; ☐ 6:30pm— Youth Activities and Bible Study— (For both of these... enter via double doors by gym)

☐ 6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE... Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room

LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Studies in the Gospel of Luke! ... **NEXT MEETING:** TUESDAY, *May 9, 2017 @ 11:00am*; Cindy Bell teaching. [Front door open at 10:45 till 11:05am; or come in Iron Steps side entrance!]

MEN: EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! *{STUDYING the Epistle of First John}* AT THE back of Church building...

Come in under the drive-thru awning, walk forward, coffee & biscuits
WAITING!

Sunday Services For APRIL 30

9:30am - Sunday School

10:45am - Worship Service

NOON MEAL

5:30pm - 7:30pm FAITHFUL MEN'S

MONTHLY FELLOWSHIP/STUDY/EQUIPPING