

(Another New Church, continued)

Fourth, Methodist bishops are not overseers of only one local church as were New Testament bishops (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Pet. 5:2). Fifth, Methodist churches permit sprinkling to substitute for immersion as a “mode” of baptism. Baptism is immersion and was the exclusive pattern and practice of the New Testament (Matt. 3:16; Acts 8:36-38; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). Sixth, the Methodist discipline says “that we are justified by faith only,” while the Bible says, “*Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*” (Jas. 2:24).

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To those of you who are familiar with using the internet, you will want to visit our new website. Become generally familiar with what is there, so you can refer people to it and even to a specific part of it. If you have suggestions on making it more effective, mention those to David Halbrook with the understanding that his “web-ability” is limited, so he may not have the ability to do what others are able to do.

-- Our *Arkansas Weekly* article this week is primarily an announcement of our booth at the fair and upcoming Summer Bible Series. Clip it and use it to begin making people aware of these things.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

July 17, 2011

OH BE CAREFUL LITTLE. . .

David Halbrook

The theme of our Summer Bible Series (SBS) is *Oh Be Careful Little...* This theme is based on a song often sung at SBS, but the concept is based on God's word. 1 Corinthians 6:20 says *For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's*. Here's a preview of the week's lessons:

Monday: Oh Be Careful Little Eyes. The Israelite named Achan found himself in a lot of trouble, in part, because he failed to guard his eyes. His sin of coveting might have been avoided with a little more caution. Can you relate to Achan?

Tuesday: Oh Be Careful Little Ears. Before the twelve spies went into the Canaan, God promised to give them the land (Num. 13:2). When the spies returned and gave their report, the Israelites had to decide whom they would hear: God or man. Today, God has a land promised to those who serve Him and another land promised to those who rebel against Him (Mt. 25:46). So be careful what you hear.

Wednesday: Oh Be Careful Little Mouth. The apostle Peter is known for his mouth—in both good and bad ways. Come find out how his tongue contributed to his reputation—and in the process be reminded to guard your mouth. "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

That's reason enough to be careful what you say.

Thursday: Oh Be Careful Little Hands. The Israelites are again complaining against Moses and Aaron due to thirst. God instructs Moses to speak to the rock, but Moses strikes the rock with his rod. Moses' failure with his hands reflected a failure in Moses' heart for which he was punished. We also must learn to be careful so that our hands glorify God for they are His (1 Cor. 6:20).

Friday: Oh Be Careful Little Feet. Jonah is well known for the direction of his feet. And while his feet changed direction several times, his attitude toward the wicked never seems to be right, even when they repented. Join us in reviewing Jonah's steps, to help us see if our feet and heart are headed in the right direction.

Achan, Israel and the spies, Peter, Moses, and Jonah needed to learn and live these lessons, so clearly these aren't "just for kids." Our teachers have worked diligently to adapt this material to every age level, from toddler to adult. Come teach and be taught as we admonish each other with God's word by study and song, July 25-29 (Monday-Friday), 7-8:15PM (2 Tim. 4:2; Eph. 5:19).

IS IT WRONG TO ARGUE SCRIPTURE?

Craig Thomas (Words of Life; 5-25-08; Deckerville [MI] church of Christ)

Many may be surprised that some of the topics appearing in our bulletin sometimes involve identifying and refuting religious error. Our words may not be pleasing nor palatable to all, especially in today's society bent on enforcing its distorted standards of "political correctness." However, as we cover such topics we "*beseech thee to hear us patiently*" (Acts 26:3). God's word commands us to "*expose*" error (Eph. 5:11) and "*believe not*" every religious teacher (1 Jn. 4:1). In fact, we must "*test*" every teacher "*whether they are of God*" for "*many false prophets*" wear "*sheep's clothing*" when "*inwardly they are ravening wolves*" (1 Jn. 4:1; Matt. 7:15). Too much is at stake (Matt. 16:26) not to speak out. With this in mind, it constrains us to address the question presented in our title, "Is It Wrong To Argue Scripture?"

1) **What Does It Mean To "Argue" Scripture?** When we speak of arguing scripture we are simply referring to a discussion in which all views of an issue are examined openly, fairly, and calmly in the light of what the Bible teaches (Acts 18:24-26; 28:14-24). We are not seeking a knock down, drag out fight where sides attempt to annihilate one another. The "*weapons of our warfare are not carnal*" (2 Cor. 10:4), but consist of "*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*" (Eph. 6:17). Our strongest desire is that all, even those who would oppose the truth, be convinced of their error, repent, turn to the Lord, and be saved eternally in heaven (2 Tim. 2:24-26; Jas. 5:19-20). Given the import of these issues, we welcome any scriptural challenge to our teaching (Acts 17:11). For only the truth of God's word and our willingness to obey it can set us free from sin and lead us to heaven (Jn. 8:32; Acts 20:32; Matt. 7:21-23).

2) **Should It Be Done?** The Bible clearly teaches that error and false teaching will arise (2 Tim. 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 2:1-2) and we must be alert for such (Acts 20:28-32). Thus, we have a God-given responsibility to defend the truth (Phil. 1:17; Jude 3) and warn those preaching and practicing error (1 Tim. 1:3). If we fail this responsibility we will be held accountable (Ezek. 3:16-21). This is why the Old Testament prophets (Isa. 58:1; Jer. 1:10; Ezek. 6:11), the apostles (Acts 20:26-31; 2 Pet. 3:1ff), and the Lord

Himself (Matt. 7:15; 16:6, 11-12) preached as they did. For example, Jesus and Paul often debated, disputed, and reasoned with those who were in error (Matt. 22:29; Acts 17:2-3,17; 18:4,19; 19:8). Those who shun such discussions give error an unfair advantage. For if error goes unchallenged and uncorrected it will "*spread like cancer*" (2 Tim. 2:17) not stopping until it has destroyed all that is pure and holy. Hopefully, all can see the need for these discussions and that they may be used to strengthen our faith and build us up in the way that is right and cannot be wrong (Col. 2:4-8; 2 Thess. 2:2-17)

ANOTHER NEW CHURCH?

Larry Hafley (Words of Life; 6-1-08; Deckerville [MI] church of Christ)

From the Wheeling, WV, *Intelligencer*, we extract the following. "Methodist pastors, upset about same-sex marriages and other liberal ideals that have received increasing support in the church, are threatening to pull out and start their own sect....John Christie, pastor of Mission City United Methodist Church in Santa Clara, complained that there are two religions in the United Methodist Church. 'One based on Scripture, and one that feels we are in a new age with new truths,' he said." Notice that cleric Christie believes the Methodist Church is "based on Scripture." It is good he sees the need for a church to be "based on Scripture" (1 Cor. 4:6; 1 Pet. 4:11). Further, it is right that he should "pull out" from those who will not be guided by the Bible (Deut. 13; Isa. 8:20; Acts 19:8, 9; 2 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 5:11). Also, we are happy to hear of his rejection of "same- sex marriages and other liberal ideals" (Heb. 13:4). (At least he did not run to Romans 14 to include his erring brethren in the fold of fellowship!

Wonder if Pastor Christie's critics will accuse him of being a "guardian of the party" or a "brotherhood watchdog"? Will his opponents claim that each local church's autonomy permits it to make its own rules about whether to accept "same-sex marriages and other liberal ideals"?)

However, it should be noted that the Methodist Church of which he is a member is not "based on Scripture." First, it has an unscriptural name. The New Testament church was not called the *United Methodist Church* (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2). Second, the Methodist Church does not observe the Lord's supper "*upon the first day of the week*" as New Testament churches did (Acts 20:7). Third, Methodist Churches often employ fund raising methods which were not used by churches of the first century (1 Cor. 16:2).

(article is completed on the back page)