

## COME AND HEAR—EVEN IF YOU DON'T AGREE

*David Halbrook*

We have had a chance to meet some of you at local fairs. Some of you took a Bible quiz, tract, or DVD (*Searching For Truth*). We hope for further similar opportunities.

We invite you to our gospel meeting, **September 12-16**, at 7:00PM. We will express thanks and praise to God in song and prayer and show due respect to Him by listening to a lesson from Scripture by **Burl Young, Jr.**, a native of Batesville. Expect no admission fees, bounce houses, suppers, or requests for money. We simply plan to do things you read the church in Scripture doing.

If you are thinking “I read y’all’s articles and don’t agree with what y’all teach, so there’s no need for me to come,” then we especially invite you. The Bible tells of many folks who did not agree, who at least met and talked—Jesus & Nicodemus (John 3), Peter & the Jews (Acts 2), Paul & the Athenians or Ephesians (Acts 17, 19), just to name a few.

The week’s topics are basic and important subjects: sacrifice, atonement, sanctification, redemption, and justification. Will you come and hear?

-- *Editor’s Note*: I realize this article does not apply to the church here, but I print it so that you know what to look for in the *Arkansas Weekly*, and so that you can plan who you might show it to. Consider pointing it out or handing it to someone that you have invited or spoken to before about spiritual things. Do what you deem best—just do *something!*

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# The Exhorter

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

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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[WWW.QVCOC.COM](http://WWW.QVCOC.COM)

## ***WOULD ANYBODY NOTICE?*** *Jeff Smith (www.trainup.org)*

If this congregation were hit with a devastating plague, or its membership fell victim to an unexplained sinkhole during worship, or it just suddenly decided to stop functioning as a church, would the community around it notice?

Even if the building remained, would anybody notice that the parking lot was now always empty, the lights always off?

More importantly, would the community suffer from the loss of this congregation? Would anybody even notice?

Or would it be business as usual, except that the grass would need mowing?

As Christians, we are heirs of the Great Commission – we are spiritual descendants of the apostles and those whom they converted two millennia ago. They are gone, and so is their evangelistic capability, and all that remains is that we should imitate their zeal and strive to fill the gap.

While this community might crave entertainment, employment advice, nutritional assistance, educational opportunities and daycare service, what it really needs is religious enlightenment (Acts 18:9-11).

The early Christians were accused of having “turned the world upside down” with the doctrines of Christ and the resurrection and the New Testament (Acts 17:6). There can be little doubt that preaching that message today would have the same effect, but if we are content to keep it locked up inside our cozy meeting house, it is unlikely to have much impact at all on the community. Surely, we will be letting our lights shine in kind and neighborly ways, but perhaps not in any obviously evangelistic sense.

What if this congregation just picked up and moved? Moved to a different part of town or took up residence somewhere secret? What if it ceased to exist? Would the community we claim to serve even notice? What have we been doing to get their attention – even if that attention is treated negatively and is rejected because of unbelief or discomfort with biblical morality (Acts 19:28-34)?

Too often, the church considers its building to be its evangelistic outreach into the community. We built it, now come! To the community, however, the building might just look inaccessible and foreign, until perhaps someone ventures forth and issues a cordial invitation to visit.

What will impact this community? Social services are not part of our mission and do not provide any satisfying impact. Spiritual information, the scheme of salvation, moral growth – that will have impact. A knock on a stranger’s door. Even literature hung on a doorknob or dropped on the mat.

And prayer.

Barring a plague, sinkhole, or the second coming, we’re not going anywhere, but if we did, would anybody notice?

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### ***ARE GOSPEL MEETINGS OUTDATED?***

*Joe Price*

Are gospel meetings advantageous in today’s world? Some brethren say gospel meetings are not useful in today’s world. The basic reason for a gospel meeting is to arrange meetings where the gospel can be heard. Is it no longer beneficial to make such arrangements? Is it no longer helpful to attend such meetings and invite others to come? The lost can hear the saving gospel and Christians can be edified in the truth (2 Tim. 4:1-5; Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 2:15). Still, some Christians complain against having gospel meetings. As you consider these typical criticisms of gospel meetings see if you detect the common thread running through each one.

**1. Gospel meetings are outdated and ineffective in the modern world.** This attitude leaves the impression that the gospel must be dressed up in some new way if it is to have any impact upon the lives of sinners today. This simply is not true. God’s word is powerful and persuasive and able to convert the lost and strengthen the saved – today (Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12; Psa. 19:7-11). Some suggest the only way to reach souls for Christ today is to first develop personal friendships (so-called “friendship evangelism”); gospel preaching is not enough. Certainly friends need the gospel, and a friend is more likely to talk with you about the gospel than is a complete stranger. Still, it was not friendship that persuaded about 3,000 souls on the day of Pentecost to believe and be saved. It was the power of the word of God (Acts 2:40-41). The gospel, when preached, continues to save those who believe and obey it (1 Cor. 1:21).

**2. A week is too long and too tiring.** This is usually said by the Christian who has already decided he will not come to every worship service. Yes, to participate in any week-long activity requires a certain amount of dedication and energy. That usually

means we will get tired. But, is this the best attitude we can develop when it comes to gospel preaching? Can you imagine Cornelius saying to Peter, “*Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God*” – just make it quick (Acts 10:33)? If this had been Jesus’ attitude toward His work of redeeming sinners would He have endured the cross or said, “That’s too demanding!”?

**3. Only brethren come to gospel meetings.** This is not true. The lost are saved as a result of gospel meetings. I have seen it and perhaps you have, too. Maybe this criticism hides a more troubling picture: perhaps the lost do not come because we do not invite them and bring them to hear the gospel (cf. Jno. 1:46). But, what if only Christians come? That does not nullify the good that is done when saints assemble (Heb. 10:24-25).

**4. Meetings are just another way for preachers to make money.** This sort of motive judging is sad but true of some Christians. The gospel preacher should not be made to feel ashamed for receiving financial support for preaching the gospel, but it happens. Jesus said, “*The laborer is worthy of his wages*” (Lk. 10:7), and the apostle Paul said, “*Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel*” (1 Cor. 9:14). Could it be that some brethren do not wish to support gospel preaching by their presence as well as not supporting it with their giving, even though God has commanded both (1 Cor. 16:2; Heb. 10:25)?

Did you discover the thread running through these objections to gospel meetings? These complaints show a **lack of faith in the power of the word of God** to save the lost and convert souls into the image of Christ. They reflect attitudes of selfishness and excuse-making, not faith in the power of Christ and His gospel. Gospel meetings are not the only scriptural arrangement we can use to teach the lost and encourage the saved. We understand that. But, we ought to realize that **no** scriptural arrangement of spreading the gospel will succeed unless and until we diligently commit ourselves to it, including gospel meetings.

We should examine our commitment to gospel preaching as our gospel meeting approaches. Let us use our opportunity to hear the gospel and to help others hear it, too. Invite your friends, family and strangers. Invite your brethren in Christ. Plan to be present, to grow in faithfulness and in service. Trust the power God’s word has on the lives of good and honest hearts (Lk. 8:15). God’s word will accomplish His purposes (Isa. 55:11). Good can and will be done through gospel meetings.