

## CAN ONE BE A GOOD CHRISTIAN AND NOT BE A PART OF ANY CHURCH?

Marvin Rickett

Many people pose this question. Not a few are actually trying to make their way to heaven and not be a member of any church. They wish to just live an individual, autonomous "Christian" life. They may keep the Ten Commandments, abstain from any really evil practices, donate to some good charities, be good family members and good citizens; but are not part of any church. May they by this obtain the favor of God and eternal life?

It is readily conceded that one may be a good Christian and not be a part of any **denomination**. In fact, the Lord never authorized, nor approved of, anyone being a member of a denomination. The Lord never required that one be a member of a denomination. That is a far cry from admitting that one can be a good Christian and not be a part of **any church**. The Lord's church is not a denomination. The one who is a Christian **will be** a part of the Lord's church (Matthew 16:18). If he is not a member of the Lord's church, he is not a Christian in any sense. The Lord adds all the saved to His church (Acts 2:47). The saved are the only ones who are Christians.

Perhaps the confusion which prompts this question is caused by a misunderstanding of what the church is. Many view the church as a kind of a social club, an organization to hand out food from the pantry to anyone who asks and to pay rent and utility bills for those who get themselves into a bind. They see it as a group of fallible (even hypocritical) people whom one may voluntarily choose to associate with, or he may choose not to. They see that it makes demands of its members and places obligations on them of which they desire to be free.

They fail to see the church as the Bible pictures it: the blood-bought body of the saved (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:23), the object of Christ's love (Ephesians 5:25), a part of God's eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:10-11), the product of God's planning and inseparably tied into God's scheme of redemption (Ephesians 1:22, 23). The church is the Lord's doing, not a mere association of claimants who follow Christ based on human wisdom.

Apart from the church, one's spiritual vitality will wither and die. He just will not thrive and live. Even with the faults which are invariably found in some church members, the church is still necessary for anyone who lives a Christian life. (P.O. Box 159 - Bay, AR 72411)

DUNLAP CHURCH OF CHRIST  
BULLETIN BRIEFS  
Jim E. Waldron, Editor  
P.O. Box 123  
Dunlap, TN 37327

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U S POSTAGE PAID  
DUNLAP TN 37327

BULLETIN EDITOR

# BULLETIN BRIEFS

Vol. 1

July 1998

No. 7

To Churches of Like Precious Faith July 1, 1998

Attention Elders and/or Preacher:

Greetings in the name of Jesus our Savior and King. We thank God we can serve with you in this generation to spread the borders of our Lord's kingdom, which was founded 1968 years ago on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection with about 3000 members the first day.

Our Master commanded, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Before the close of 1998 there will be more than six billion people in our world. It is most urgent that every local church of Christ mobilize to reach these masses. Through "**Bulletin Briefs**" we are urging churches of Christ across this land to begin their own in-house training school (II Tim. 2:2) to train men to preach the word (II Tim. 4:1-4) and/or to be elders (Titus 1:1-10) and deacons (I Tim. 3:8-10); and to train women to teach women (Titus 2:3-4).

Also, through this little paper we hope to present some short articles that will help in your combat with the evils of society and the digression threatening the church through the activities of the so-called "change agents." Many of whom would restructure the churches of Christ in North America into being a soft-soaping Protestant community church.

We hope you will use these brief articles in your bulletin or save them for future use.

In Christian love,

Frankie Boynton, Elder	Rubel Clayton, Elder
Barney Hollis, Elder	Randall Standefer, Elder
Freddie Clayton, Preacher	Jim E. Waldron, Editor

## DO YOU EXERCISE?

Bryan Hodge

The U.S. Center for Health Statistics reported in 1990 that 40.7% of American adults indicated that they physically exercised on a regular basis. Perhaps you are one of these, but do you spiritually exercise?

“For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things...” (I Tim. 4:8). One brother put it this way, “If there is life after this life, and there is; and if every accountable person shall stand before the Christ, and each shall; and if this life is given us that we may prepare for the life to come, and this is the case; and if the Bible is our only and all sufficient guide in making preparation for the Judgment and the life to come, and it is; then, it has to be the case that a knowledge of the Bible is the most important factor in the life and education of an individual.” Certainly our spiritual needs are infinitely more important than our physical needs (Matt. 4:3-4).

And so I ask, “Do you exercise spiritually?” How often do you read and meditate upon God’s Word?”

The Psalmist said of God’s judgements, “More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter than honey and the honeycomb” (Psa. 19:10). And as Job said so should we, “I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.” (Job 23:13). Psalm 1:1-2 says, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.” Again, “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (I Tim. 4:13).

May we all develop a love of the truth (2 Thess. 2:10) so that we may present ourselves “approved unto God” (2 Tim. 2:15).

(Rt. #4, Box 152X, Savannah, TN 38372)

### LAW

Moral, legal and criminal law is made for the “**lawless ...for murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers... for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers...**” (I Tim. 1:9-10).

## LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY SUMMER SERIES

### FEATURES FALSE TEACHER

Toney L. Smith

I received a brochure advertising the 1998 DLU Summer Series and I could not help but be disheartened when I saw the names of some of their speakers. For example, one of these was Joe Beam about whom much has been written concerning his apostasy. Generally these articles state that Beam is teaching false doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit’s work in today’s world. Also I have recently listened to a series of lessons presented by Beam at the 1996 Nashville Jubilee. He clearly is one of the “change agents” who is seeking to move the church of Christ away from its firm foundation. He strongly denies that he is Pentecostal, but his position clearly overrides his denial.

Notice some of his positions concerning the Holy Spirit. He said, “Some people will never be free of sinful addictions in their lives without God’s intervention.” Beam stated that the Holy Spirit works in three avenues: through the Word, through spiritual wisdom, and in what he called waking or promptings. It is in this latter category his Pentecostalism is exposed. Notice these examples that were given:

- ◆ In counseling a young couple, Beam stated he asked God to let him know when either lied. After some time in the counseling session, he stopped the young man and told him that God had just told him that he had lied!
- ◆ On another occasion, he claimed he was led by the Spirit to a home where he surmised that the man was having an affair, without any evidence to sustain the allegation.
- ◆ He said a prisoner’s soul was saved because God led him to a trash can where someone had discarded some Bible material.
- ◆ He alleged a Texas preacher was able to keep a man from committing murder because God sent him to stop the would-be killer.
- ◆ Once he asked God to speak to him. He turned on the radio and pushed buttons until a woman came on singing a song that related directly to him.
- ◆ He also stated that sometimes he listens to his speeches and hears himself saying things that he never knew before.
- ◆ He saw a denominational program on television concerning a man who had not been able to speak above a whisper for 10 years and God miraculously restored his voice. He then affirmed that God cannot be put in a box and that His fellowship extends beyond the church of Christ.

It is difficult to comprehend how a “Christian University” could promote and endorse such. It is clear that the administrators of this school no longer desire to make any real distinction between truth and error. We are to “mark and avoid” false teachers and those who promote such (Rom. 16:17). (Ed. Note: What good does it do for the president to preach the truth on baptism for remission of sins, then turn around and have Joe Beam’s pentecostalism “featured in daily classes” in the Summer Lectures?) (517 Gaylord Rd. Dresden, TN 38225)

## HEMLOCK SOCIETY

Jim Waldron

The Hemlock Society USA is the leading group in the United States promoting the legalization of assisted suicide. On December 3, 1997, they issued a statement endorsing the killing of individuals, such as those with Alzheimer’s and children with disabilities, who are legally incapable of making the decision for themselves.

The executive director of the Society, Faye Girsh said, “A judicial determination should be made when it is necessary to hasten the death of an individual whether it be a demented parent, a suffering, severely disabled spouse or a child.” (National Right To Life News, December 9, 1997).

Girsh’s statement was issued in the context of the trial by jury in Louisiana of David Rodriguez for the murder (second degree) of his 90 year old father. Rodriguez was convicted on December 4th.

The Hemlock statement also said, “If the Rodriguez death had been the result of a decision to forego life-sustaining medical treatment no criminal liability would have ensued. In such instances the person dies naturally. *Some provision should be made for a situation in which life is not being sustained by artificial means, but in the belief of the patient or his agent, is too burdensome to continue.*” (emphasis added - JW)

Faithful Christians expect death (Heb. 9:27) and are prepared for it (Phil. 1:23). They have been delivered from the fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15). It is not necessary or reasonable to have artificial life sustaining equipment attached to the body when the body is no longer capable of sustaining life or there is no hope of recovery.

Yet, this is not what the euthanasia crowd are pushing for. They advocate the actual killing (murder) of an individual when “the patient or his agent (believes life) is too burdensome to continue.”

Think of the healthy children and other relatives who, due to greed and without mercy, could persuade themselves that someone helpless, infirmed or aged was just “too burdensome to (be allowed) to continue.”

Beloved, write, phone or fax your congressmen and let them know your opposition to the killing of the innocent, the helpless, aged, and infirmed in this country. “**Evil triumphs when good men (and women) do nothing.**” (P.O. Box 123, Dunlap, TN 37327)