

## PARENTS — WINTERFEST — YES OR NO?

Jon Gary Williams

Parents, do you want your children exposed to this? The 1999 “Winterfest” to be held at Gatlinburg, Tennessee is scheduled for February 19-21. The featured speaker is Jeff Walling. Some do not know what this man participates in and promotes. This past year (July 1-4) he was featured speaker at the Nashville Jubilee. At this event outlandish and unscriptural things were practiced, all of which were done with his endorsement and encouragement. For example, there were women song leaders, a chorus which hummed during prayers and instrumental music. In his speeches he promoted the TV and radio program called “Crossview” which produces programs featuring denominational preachers. Obviously, he feels it is alright to promote denominational preachers. But we are not to bid Godspeed to such (See II Jno. 9-11).

In his “sermons” he belittled the Lord’s church, often having the audience in laughter. He was very dramatic. During one speech he stood over a pile of dirt with a shovel in his hand and then had a casket rolled onto the stage, supposedly to illustrate the death of Christ. He had a woman give a public testimony which turned out to be a sermon - in violation of I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12-15. He cleverly promoted the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. In a charismatic tone he spoke of the need for Christians to get “out of control.” Much hand clapping was heard indicating the people approved of this kind of entertainment.

He brought a number of small children onto the stage and used them to create a deplorable emotional scene. A woman sang an Amy Grant solo and was joined by the children in a crescendo with the accompaniment of instruments. There was much swaying, clapping and waving of hands.

Walling prayed several prayers that were really little more than sermons, during which a chorus hummed to give an emotional tone - a practice long used by denominational churches. Parents need to know what their children can expect at “Winterfest.” Things promoted by Walling is what one can expect at “Winterfest.” Many do not know that “Winterfest” is not the work of a local church, but is the work of a corporation known as “The Winterfest Group” centered in Edmond, Oklahoma. These “fests” are held all over the country. Their primary aim is to make money! Sad to say, they are doing this at the expense of our children.

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Editors Note: A hundred years ago the church of our Lord was split and great numbers of churches carried into apostasy by the missionary societies. In this generation religious corporations are claiming our young people and dividing churches. The “Winter Fest” Corporation is doing a similar work to that of the Nashville “Christian Jubilee” Corporation. That is, bringing division, sorrow and heartache among the churches of Christ. The Holy Spirit said, “mark them (‘to watch out for’) which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17).

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ELDERS AND/OR PREACHER

# BULLETIN BRIEFS

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## LAGARD SMITH’S NEW BOOK

Wayne Jackson

F. LaGard Smith is a professor of law at Pepperdine University. In addition, he writes popular-level books on a variety of religious themes. One of these, *Who Is My Brother?*, is creating a good deal of controversy. In certain areas of the book, brother Smith makes some excellent points. At other times, he argues positions that are inconsistent with New Testament teaching. For example:

- 1) LaGard favors a much broader level of religious fellowship than is sanctioned in the Bible. He has no problem appearing with Pat Robertson on the 700 club (to promote his books). He worships with the instrument with brethren in England, and celebrates the Passover with “Messianic” Christians in Jerusalem, personally assisting in the preparation of the sacrificial lamb.
- 2) Though brother Smith argues strongly most of the time for the essentiality of baptism for the remission of sins, on other occasions he suggests that “commitment to Christ” is “more important” than baptism. He contends that the issue of whether or not one must understand the “purpose” of baptism when receiving it, is one of those “grey” areas about which “we’re simply not told.” His *’tis/’taint* mentality is quite confusing.

- 3) LaGard is very open-ended on the issue of divorce and remarriage. A case can be built for concluding that he believes that non-Christians are not amenable to the marriage law of Christ. His spirited defense of Homer Hailey, who wrote a book advocating this position, clearly points in that direction.

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4) Our esteemed brother does not believe that the wicked will suffer eternal, conscious punishment in hell. He advocated that view at Pepperdine in 1988, and confirmed it in a series of letters to me in '92. He further hints of this in his *Brother* book.

5) While he censures liberal writers like Rubel Shelly, Mike Cope, and particularly his good friend, Max Lucado, he does not believe that these brethren have gone so far as to deserve the appellation of "false teachers." He has a very narrow, strictly unbiblical view of what constitutes a "false teacher." He contends that some of us, who have opposed these erring brothers, "owe them an apology."

6) One of the dangers of Smith's book is its tendency to use human legal standards as a base for opinions about God's final judgement. He wildly speculates as to who may or may not be saved, without any biblical basis whatever for his mental meanderings.

As much as many of us love and respect LaGard, we believe he has some serious doctrinal errors. I wrote a major review of his book in February of 1998. I sent him a copy as soon as the manuscript was available. He responded with a kind note thanking me for such a thorough review in a brotherly spirit. Eight months later, obviously feeling pressure, he is charging that he was misrepresented. He wasn't. **NOTE:** You may order a copy of Jackson's full review for \$3.00 postage paid. P.O. Box 55265, Stockton, CA 95205

**BULLETIN BRIEFS:** This January 1999 issue marks the beginning of the second year for *BULLETIN BRIEFS*. This little paper is designed 1) to acquaint Christians across this nation with the effort of the self-proclaimed "change agents" to restructure the churches of Christ, 2) to alert saints of the destruction of the moral fiber in our culture, and 3) to advocate a vigorous defense of the faith once for all delivered to God's people (Phil. 1:16, Jude 3). Some have taken exception to our expose of error and false teachers. Some have asked to be dropped from our mailing list; but you just might be pleased to know that the rejection rate is only five per thousand. I believe this brotherhood is more biblically based than it is sometime considered to be. Here is a welcome comment:

*Dear bro. Waldron: Thank you very much for sending us Bulletin Briefs. The format requires getting right to the point and addresses concerns of faithful brethren regarding what some are teaching and practicing plus good informative teaching on a variety of subjects. The day we get away from "Speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent," demanding a "Book, chapter and verse" for all that we do in religion, that will be the day we won't be a dime's difference from denominations. Anyway, it is good that you are bringing to attention error that is being taught and practiced by brethren that ought to know better. Brotherly, Bill Brown, October 1998*

## THE FIVE FOLD WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

Jim E. Waldron

Through the apostle Paul the Holy Spirit enjoined that the young man Timothy should, "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince. Rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering...but you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (II Tim. 4:2, 5 NKJV).

The work of an evangelist is five fold. He must:

**1. Preach the word (II Tim. 4:2).** The Samaritans "...believed Philip (the evangelist) as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 8:12).

**2. Exhort (stir up, encourage) the saints.** Paul told Timothy, "give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine..." (I Tim. 4:13).

**3. Defend the faith.** Paul told Timothy, "I urged you...remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine (I Tim. 1:3).

**4. Appoint elders as Paul told Titus.** He was to do this in Crete (Tit. 1:5). An evangelist should do this when men have been trained and fit the qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-11), and when they have been selected by the congregation (cf. Acts 6:3).

**5. Train preachers, evangelists and elders.** Again Timothy was told, "the things that you have heard from me among any witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). We have a few good schools of preaching among the 12,000 churches of Christ in the United States, and faithful churches that are conducting these need to be encouraged. Yet we need thousands of Bible training schools conducted by local churches in the evenings, on Saturdays and Sundays. Here is one of the greatest failings of located preachers. Most don't even have a men's training class, let alone classes that really obey 2 Tim. 2:2. Our young men should be trained to do the work of evangelists not to be glorified baby sitters, planners of teen socials or as drama coaches for aspiring talent among young adults.

## BACK TO BASICS

Freddie Clayton

There used to be a television commercial for soap which promoted the idea, "Get back to the basics." The promotion was for the purpose of combating false notions as to what soap was supposed to accomplish. There were many who could be influenced to buy soaps because of various appeals:

1) The shape. It looked pretty in the soap dish. 2) The smell, like Ireland in the Spring. 3) The color. It matched the curtains.

It seemed many had forgotten the basics as far as soap was concerned. Is it not basically to get the dirt and smell off the body while not removing the top layer of skin?

This is a common problem among many religious leaders who masquerade as Christians. They seek to sell their product by appealing to any and everything - except what really matters which they regard as inconsequential or unnecessary. In fact, the religious world in general has gotten so side-tracked from God's will and His way that multitudes of false impressions have been made as to what true Christianity is. It has become a matter about which as much attention is shown as choosing one's soap.

Those who refuse to think about the filth of sin will go for the fleshly appeal (sights, sounds and smells); and never have the dirt of sin removed (Romans 6:1-6, 17, 18). They will do so falsely thinking their brand of "Christianity" is the genuine article, or that it will at least accomplish the same purpose. Yet the Holy Spirit warns, "There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Pro. 14:12).

**Some think  
"any brand  
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Leaving the impression that just anything called "Christianity" is okey does not make it the religion of Christ as God defines it in the New Testament (Matt. 7:21). Even among brethren, many have forgotten what Christ, the cross, salvation and the church are all about. Peter warned that the one who has not grown in faith is "shortsighted, even to blindness and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (II Pet. 1:9). False impressions are often the results of not getting back to the basics. May we ever strive to stay with the basics (Acts 20:32). That is, with "the book."

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