

News & Notes

Sunday, May 29, 2005

Remember in Prayer: Sally Etta Crawford; Tommy Dawson; Ann Feathers has been diagnosed with Cancer; Carol Holmes; Leon Jackson is in the hospital after an accident; Nikki, Christian, and Bryson Kennedy have been ill; Mary Sue Kidd; Deliah Mann; Howard Moody; Kenny Ray of Tupelo had 6 bypasses this past week; Janet Rooker; Gabby Rutledge; Caleb Smith, nephew of Wendy Roberson, is in Methodist LeBonaur Children's Hospital in Memphis, TN; Katie South, Postal worker in Ashland, is in need of our prayers; Jamie Spence, father of Edna Ray, has been diagnosed with cancer; Ruby Street; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; Jonathan Wilkerson, son of Tracy Clayton, will be having surgery; Alvie Williford.

Sympathy is extended to the families of Roger Wilbanks, James Riley, and Lee Earl Perkins.

The **pantry item** for the month is school supplies.

Our annual **Vacation Bible School** starts a week from tonight and will go through Wednesday (6:00 PM to 8:30 PM each night).

Sermon In Preview:

AM: Preaching Christ: His Death

PM: 5th Sunday Evening Singing

For the Record (May 22, 2005):

Attendance: 70 Contribution: \$1380.00 Budget: \$1205.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25
Ashland, MS 38603-0025
ashlandcoc@juno.com

Sunday:

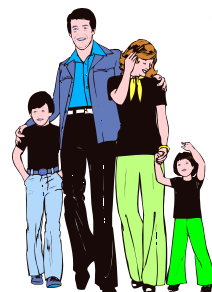
Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King
Junior Roberson
Carrol Street



The Ashland Announcer

*"Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
Give to the Lord glory and strength" (Psalm 96:7).*

Drama in Worship

Jeremy Northrop

To say that there is much change going on in the worship of many congregations calling themselves part of the church of Christ is only to state the obvious. Of course, change—in and of itself—is morally neutral. The specific change that takes place in a given context can be beneficial or sinful. The current age has many Christians singing songs from a song book, listening to lessons accompanied by some kind of computer presentation, and partaking of the fruit of the vine from multiple cups as they are passed out by men who serve it. All of these things—and a great host of others—have come about from change. The old adage is still true: *if there are constants in this world, then one of those constants is change.*

The Christian has a great responsibility when it comes to the change that can and is taking place in the church. The goal for any Christian is to do things by the authority of Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17). The exhortation of Luke is to be noble and search the scriptures (Acts 17:11). The command of Paul is to "Test all things; hold fast what is good" (1Thessalonians 5:21). The bottom line is this: any change that takes place in the church must be biblical if it is to be acceptable to God.

One such change that is taking place in many congregations of the Lord's church is the use of drama in worship. Much of what the advocates of such innovations are saying sounds very good on the surface. However, seemingly good logic and convincing arguments mean nothing if an action is not authorized by the Bible. It is

interesting that those who advocate the use of drama in worship seldom, if ever, turn to the Bible to show its rightness. Does the Bible have anything to say about the use of drama in worship? Are there some biblical principles that are being violated when one practices drama in worship to God?

One biblical principle that has application to this topic is the silence of the Bible. The silence of the Bible often times communicates a message. This is a principle that is easily understood in the day-to-day commands that a person might receive. If a person were to go to a restaurant and order a hamburger with only mayonnaise on it, then it is understood that anything but a hamburger with only mayonnaise is not correct and therefore a violation of what was ordered. The same principle appropriately applies to biblical interpretation. The Bible gives five avenues whereby one is to worship God: (1) prayer (Acts 2:42); (2) song (Ephesians 5:19); (3) communion (Acts 20:6-7); (4) instruction (Acts 20:7); and (5) contribution (1Corinthians 16:2). Obviously, the use of drama in worship is not found in the biblical ways to worship God. The one who advocates drama in worship might argue that the Bible does not condemn it. However, the silence of the Bible communicates a clear message in this regard.

Parenthetically, it is obvious that such an argument leads down a slippery slope where no one would want to go. The Bible does not explicitly condemn dancing in the name of worship. The Bible does not condemn the use of beer and pizza for communion. The Bible does not expressly condemn praying in the name of George W. Bush. The Bible does not generally speak in terms of what cannot be done but rather exhorts the Christian to act terms of what can be done.

There is another principle that needs to be considered when one is thinking about the use of drama in worship. Worship is a matter of total involvement and active participation. No one person in worship is to be elevated above another. "For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:11). The danger of using drama in worship is that it can very easily make worship speculative, even entertaining. In Matthew 6:1-17, Jesus exhorts His followers to make sure that they do not do things simply to be seen of men. Among the things He talks about, He specifically mentions charitable deeds, praying, and fasting. He does not want His

followers to do charitable deeds simply to be seen of men. He does not want Christians to pray in public places or openly so that people will see them praying. Finally, He does not want anyone to fast in such a way that people see them fasting and take notice of their supposed spirituality.

The application of the principle seen in Matthew 6 is simple and straightforward. When a person stands up to act before a crowd, it is obvious that he or she is acting to be seen of men. One might argue that the same could be said of a song leader or a preacher. No doubt, there are people who engage in the public leadership of worship to be seen of men. As with those mentioned in Matthew 6, they will have their reward. However, the bigger point is that singing and preaching are avenues which are authorized by God, even commanded by God. Therefore, they must be done. The use of drama in worship does not fall into such a category. Regardless of the possibility involved in preaching becoming speculative, it still must be practiced and done. Man's reasoning should always give way to God's revelation. Wisdom needs to be used by anyone who leads in public worship to make sure that it does not become an entertainment-oriented event.

Finally, the use of drama in worship to God shows quite clearly that the church is being influenced by the culture instead of the church influencing the culture. Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Paul warned Timothy not to give into the lusts and desires of men but rather to do only what God wants done (2Timothy 4:1-5). The current culture of the United States is one that is entertainment oriented. Most Hollywood actors and actresses make more money than doctors and educators. Professional sports players get more television time than educational documentaries. The reason for such is because the culture is entertainment oriented. Sadly, this mind-set has slipped into the church. People go to worship assemblies with a "what's in it for me?" type attitude. Worship is not about the worshipper. It is about pleasing God. Jesus has this kind of attitude in the garden leading up to the cross (Mark 14:36). Christians today need this kind of attitude in life and worship.

Drama in worship is simply not a biblical practice. It is not biblically authorized and goes against many principles taught within scripture.