

News & Notes

Sunday, May 20, 2007

Remember in Prayer: Alton Lee Alberson; Daryl Alberson; Mary Alberson; Tommy Alberson; Emma Bennett; Vikie Cobb; Diane Cox; Melba Cox; Sally Etta Crawford; Gwynn Curtis; Dot Ketchum; Michelle Little; James Luna; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Kaylee Northrop; Shirley Ortiz; Adam Shaver; Chris Spence; Jamie Spence; Ruby Tapp; Wayne Tapp; Ron Tega; Calvin Ursery; Nancy Griffin Wamack; Alvie Williford;

Sympathy is extended to the families of Bobby Bateman, James Williams, and Dorothy Knight.

Pantry item for the month of May is oats.

The new **We Care List** is in the foyer.

Ashland events: Today: Prayer meeting at 4:00 PM;

Area events: Today: Area-wide youth devotional at the Tiplersville church of Christ at 6:00 PM.

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Love One Another (John 13:34-35)

PM: 2Corinthians: Christ: The Them of Paul's Ministry (4)

For the Record (May 13, 2007):

Attendance: 89 Contribution: \$1571.00 Budget: \$1326.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25

Ashland, MS 38603-0025

www.ashlandcoc.org

acoc@ashlandcoc.org

Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King

Carrol Street

spreading the Good News
Ashland Announcer

"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS..." (MATTHEW 28:19)

What Leads to Denominationalism?

Part 3 of 3

Chuck Northrop

Christians are to be vigilant because the devil walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). A part of that vigilance is to know the devices of Satan. In 2 Corinthians 2:11, Paul wrote, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." God provides us with the needed information of Satan's devices within His word so he will not have an advantage over us. Two weeks ago, we considered the first four of seven devices the devil employs to lead the church of Christ into denominationalism. In this article, consider the last three.

Device #5: Emotionalism. Most religious people have heard the expression, "A better felt than told religion." This idea is expressed in a number of ways. One example is when asked how a person knows his or her religious practice is right, a common response is something to the effect that he or she "feels it in their heart." Though numerous people appeal to this type of reasoning, it simply cannot be a good criteria for religious practices. This is nothing more than subjectivism which means it is based upon one's own personal experiences

and/or mental condition. This was part of the problem in old Israel during the time of the judges. “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 21:25). In other words, every person became their own standard. When emotionalism prevails, a person becomes his own standard, and reason is pushed out of the picture to one degree or another. Furthermore, rationale becomes relative, and truth becomes contradictory. The fact is feelings and emotions can be mistaken. The truth, the word of God (John 17:17), is the rightful standard, and Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). The subjective standard of emotionalism will lead the Lord’s glorious church down the primrose path of denominationalism.

Device #6: Professional Preachers or a “Clergy/Laity System.” For various reasons, men have always tried to elevate some men over others especially religious men. There are several Biblical examples of such. The fickle folks of Lycaonia tried to attribute deity status to Paul and Barnabas saying, “The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men” (Acts 14:11). Devout and God-fearing Cournelius fell down at Peter’s feet and worshiped him (Acts 10:25). Often such elevation comes in the form of titles. However, Jesus said, “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ” (Matthew 23:8-10). Sadly, today, many members of the Lord’s church do not understand this teaching of Jesus. There are those within our ranks who would not use such titles as “father” or “reverend” but without hesitation use “doctor.” Any title that elevate one brother or sister over another is wrong for within the same context Jesus said, “And

whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:12). Such titles are the tell-tale signs of denominational jargon and the clergy/laity system of denominationalists.

Device #7: A Change of Mission. The mission of the church is threefold: evangelism, edification, and benevolence. In too many circles within the Lord’s church, the mission has become entertainment. The multibillion dollar entertainment enterprise is having a tremendous effect upon the church of our Lord. This can be seen in numerous ways. The age old argument most of us have heard concerning mechanical instruments of music is how beautiful it sounds. Sadly, some are making the same argument for the bebop sound of A Cappella. Such an argument has its foundation in being entertained rather than the glorification of God. Many “youth rally” have become nothing more than entertaining our youth. And, the proper use of our assembly halls are being expanded to include so-called “family life centers” which are nothing more than gymnasiums. In other circles of the church, the mission has become unity. Too many brethren are setting aside the plain teachings of Christ to have union with nearly everyone. However, our plea to the world is to return to the Bible. When one returns in word and practice, then true unity will result. Thus, our mission is not unity, but unity is a natural result of those to whom we evangelize and edify. When men change the mission of the church, men change the church, and this is a sure indication that the church of our Lord is headed down the road of apostasy toward becoming a manmade denomination. The devil uses these seven devices to draw the church of Christ into denominationalism. We must be on guard for these attitudes and devices of Satan, lest he should take advantage of us. Nothing would make the devil happier than for the church of our Lord to become just another denomination.