

*In
search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)

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**Wellsburg
church of
Christ**

Brother Johnson's Singing

By Edwin Crozier



Years ago, the elders and deacons had met about brother Johnson's singing. He was loud and off-key most of the time. They didn't want to discourage brother Johnson, but some of the brethren had complained that his singing was sometimes distracting. Brothers Smith and Buford were elected to talk to Johnson and see if they could teach him how to sing more appropriately.

When they pulled up, brother Johnson was working in his field, plowing behind his mule. They pulled up in a cloud of dust and walked out on to the field. They could hear Johnson's singing broken by various commands to the mule. Buford, who had drawn the short straw, started to speak, "Brother Johnson, we don't want to discourage you, but we have had some complaints about your singing..."

Johnson cut in, hanging his head, saying "I know, brethren. I sing too loud. I never had no training, so I'm off key. I can't carry a tune in a bucket. I tell myself each assembly that I'm not gonna sing that loud 'cause I know it bothers people.

"But I'll tell you brothers, every day I come out here and work this land. I see the sun rise over those mountains over there. I hear the birds singing in the trees and see the fish jumping in the creek. At night I watch the stars sparkling down on me and the moon shining. I just can't stop thinking about this great world God has made. And how He lets me live in it and work it.

TIMES OF SERVICES	
SUNDAY	
Bible Classes*	10:00 AM
AM Worship	10:45 AM
PM Worship	6:30 PM
WEDNESDAY	
Bible Classes*	7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)	

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“Then I think about heaven and how great it must be if it is better than all that. I think about my parents, who died a couple years ago, singing around God’s throne. I think about the voice I will have there. I think about how much I want to go.

“Then I think about how bad I have messed everything up and how Jesus left heaven to come down to this world. I can hear those Jews shouting, “Crucify Him!” I can see those Romans beating Him with that scourge. I know He did that for me.

“Well, then I just can’t help it. I have to sing. I want God to know how much I love Him. I want my brothers to know how much God loves them. In fact, just thinking about it now makes me want to sing right now. Could you hold these reins for me? I just gotta let God know how great He is.”

With his tear-filled eyes looking skyward and his hands lifted up, Johnson began to sing “How Great Thou Art” as if his only audience were God Himself. He was loud and off-key. But Smith and Buford had never heard anything more beautiful. They couldn’t help but join in. When they finished, they thanked Johnson, hugged him and left.

At the next elders and deacons meeting, they reported they thought it might be a better idea if they had Johnson teach the complainers how to sing more appropriately.

The Pope and Church Organization

By W. Frank Walton



[Last year,] the attention of millions of people [was] on the passing and the funeral of Pope John Paul II. We certainly acknowledge that he seemed to be a good moral man. We must remember our faith in what is right and wrong in religion doesn’t rest on any man, but the revealed standard of truth in the Bible. The Bible alone supplies us with “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet 1:3, cf. 2 Tim 3:16-17). God’s Word is what will judge us all in the end (John 12:48).

Church Organization

We wonder, with the college of cardinals [having met] to select a new pope or earthly head of the Roman Catholic Church, do many question where this elaborate ecclesiastical organization originated?

1. The Voice of History. By the time of the 2nd ecumenical council of Constantinople in 381 A.D., the church had evolved into having 5 patriarch bishops over area churches: Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch. The Roman bishop was called “first among equals.” One reason for the emergence of the bishop of Rome’s power was due to his successful negotiation with Attila the Hun in 452 A.D. to not sack the city of Rome, and Atilla soon died afterward which some attributed to divine intervention. With the crumbling Roman Empire, the Roman Bishop filled a power vacuum. History tells us that the first universally recognized bishop over the whole church was Boniface III in 606 A.D. “Pope” means “universal father,” despite Jesus’

command to call no man a spiritual "father" (Matt 23:9).

2. The Pattern of Scripture. However, the organization of the Lord's church is very simple in the New Testament. The rise of centralization in the papacy is a departure from Scripture. We find no universal earthly bishop over local churches, nor a college of cardinals, but rather independent, autonomous local "churches of Christ" (Rom 16:16).

There is only one universal bishop over the Lord's church, and that is Jesus Christ Himself. He alone is chief "bishop of your souls" (1 Pet 2:25). Jesus alone is the head of the church, which is His body (Eph 1:22-23). There is nothing taught in the New Testament about the primacy of Peter over all other apostles. Peter called himself, besides one apostle among the twelve, simply "a fellow elder" (1 Pet 5:1). He wasn't even a presiding elder over the other elders in that local church.

The only collective organization of God's people in the New Testament began and ended with the local church, such as Philippi: "the saints in Christ Jesus...with the bishops and deacons" (Phil 1:1). The terms elder, bishop (overseer) and pastor (shepherd) were all used interchangeably to describe the same position in the local church (Acts 20:32, 1 Pet 5:1-2).

Each local church, if mature enough to be scripturally organized, had a plurality of men serving the active leaders of the congregation (Acts 14:23, Rom 12:8). The oversight of each eldership was limited to the local church, "to the flock of God among you" (1 Pet 5:2). From this, we understand the concept of independent, autonomous churches. Each local church of Christ and self-governing under Christ, not subject to the oversight of other men elsewhere.

News N Notes

Sick:

- Kitty Morgan is in Weirton Medical Center room 848
- Cindy North will go to Cleveland, March 21st for her back problems
- Vicki Renshaw recovering from a broken foot
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband
- Marie Roberts
- Terry Smith with his knee & his brother George.
- Faith Kress, Linda Marshall's niece
- Ed Roberts father
- Grace Lancaster
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother.

Nursing Home:

- Hazel Carroll & Ethel Mahan

Shut-ins:

- Pauline Sellers
- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Rhea Henthorn
- Pauline Midcap

Gospel Meetings:

- March 11-16, Pleasant Valley church of Christ, New Martinsville, WV
- 7:30 PM each weekday evening with different speakers each night

~Don't wait for 6 strong men to take you to church.~

~God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.~

~God loves everyone, but probably prefers "fruits of the spirit" over "religious nuts"!~