

*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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## *Searching For Runaways*

*By: Mark White*

*via Gospel Power, Vol. 14, No. 11, March 18, 2007*

Throughout this country, thousands of children are "on the streets," having left their homes in search of "freedom" from the restraints of parents, teachers, rules and regulations. Many of them are quite young, celebrating an eleventh or twelfth birthday "on their own." Parents and friends live in anguish not knowing the whereabouts of these children. Unsure whether their children are living or dead, these parents and friends endure tremendous agony as they seek them out and bring these children back home. Many of these children leave home because they feel unloved and unwanted. Others run away because they actually are not welcomed at home, for one reason or another.

Throughout the kingdom of God, thousands of God's children have turned back into the world, leaving the fold of God in search of "freedom" from God's demands. They are also running from the watchful eye of elders and other members of the family of God. These are spiritual runaways who have disassociated themselves from the body of Christ.

It is nothing less than a terrible tragedy that so many members of the church have gone astray. Like sheep wandering away from the fold, they have placed themselves in great spiritual danger. Peter declares that a Christian who migrates back into the world is in an ugly predicament. *"...The latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it*

| TIMES OF SERVICES              |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| <b>SUNDAY</b>                  |          |
| Bible Classes*                 | 10:00 AM |
| AM Worship                     | 10:45 AM |
| PM Worship                     | 6:30 PM  |
| <b>WEDNESDAY</b>               |          |
| Bible Classes*                 | 7:00 PM  |
| (* Bible Classes for All Ages) |          |

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has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'The dog returns to his own vomit,' and 'The sow, that had washed to her wallowing in the mire.'" (2 Pet. 2:21,22). The writer of Hebrews explains that those who do not endure, but draw back, do so to the condemnation of their own souls, Heb. 10:26-29.

Most every church has members who have "run away" from duty. They no longer attend and if we are not careful, we may even forget they exist. Too often, we fail in our duty to "round up the strays." In some cases, a "runaway" might not even be missed for quite some time. Even after a year or more, someone may inquire "I wonder what every happened to John and Mary Doe? I never see them at a Bible class or worship service anymore." What a shame! How pitiful when some of the sheep have jumped the fence and we are so busy we don't even take notice! Elders, as shepherds, do have primary responsibility to watch out for souls, Heb. 13:17. But every faithful Christian is charged to "restore" those "overtaken in a fault" (Gal. 6:1).

Perhaps a runaway is reading these lines. If so, please know that God still loves and cares for you. So do your brothers and sisters in Christ. We all want you to come home and take your place with the family of God.

## *Are You Planning To Be...?*

*By: Nathan Ward*

*Via—Renewed in Spirit*

I have lost track of how many times I have been asked if I am planning to be a preacher. It is happening less and less as I enter my "late twenties"—I guess people have given up on me—but it is an extremely common question for young men to be asked. In fact, as soon as a young man shows himself to be spiritually minded, he is asked by nearly every Christian he meets. And soon, his preacher training and preaching internships begin. Do not get me wrong—these can be good and beneficial things for the young man (I went through a three-month preacher-training program, which was a wonderful experience; and I know of many other congregations who also offer beneficial programs of the same sort). But when was the last time you ever heard a spiritually-minded young man asked, "Are you planning to be an elder?" I am not sure that I have ever been asked that.

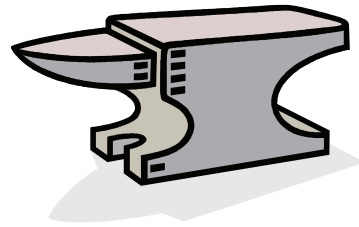
Which is more important? The Bible makes it clear that to be an elder is more important. After all, the elders are the leaders of the church. It is elders who have a stricter requirement of qualifications (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1). Paul made sure to appoint elders in every church, not to set up a full-time preacher in every church (Acts 14:23).

And which takes more planning? Again, the job that requires more planning is the position of an elder. Sure, preaching takes a lot of Bible study and work on your technique of presenting the message—and good preachers are not made overnight. But to be an elder requires a lifetime of planning. Who you marry and the lives of your children are just a couple of factors that can prevent someone from being an elder in the Lord's church—never mind building a character that is beyond reproach.

So why do you suppose it is that so many congregations don't have qualified men to be elders? There are probably several factors, but one of them is certainly that spiritually-minded young men aren't planning to be elders. Why not? Among other reasons, because the adult generation isn't telling us how important it is to plan to be elders. Rather, preachers are emphasized, and so that is what we plan to do.

And understand: being an elder does not preclude you from being a full-time preacher also. Certainly, one cannot become an elder while he is a young Christian. And being a preacher is a good way for you to plan your life to be an elder. After all, elders must be "apt to teach," so preacher-training and years of evangelism could come in very handy as part of your duties as an elder.

Spiritually-minded young men, I urge you: plan to be an elder. Otherwise, it will not happen. Becoming an elder is not something you just happen to decide one night and make a few changes in your life to accommodate that decision. Unlike preaching, working for the Lord as an elder is not an occupation—it's the culmination of a lifetime's worth of planning and work.



I paused last eve beside the blacksmith's door,  
And heard the anvil ring, the vespers chime,  
And looking in I saw upon the floor  
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had?" said I'  
"To wear and batter all those hammers so?"  
"Just one," he answered. Then with twinkling eye:  
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, I thought, the anvil of God's Word  
For ages skeptics' blows have beat upon,  
But though the noise of falling blows was heard  
The anvil is unchanged; the hammer's gone.

## *News N Notes*

### **Traveling:**

- Dave and Wilma Harless will be in Florida for the next couple of weeks.

### **Sick/In Need of Prayers:**

- Susan and Scott Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's daughter, and their baby; Terry Smith in his recovery; Vicki Renshaw; Blake Headen, Alberta's husband; Marie Roberts; Amanda (Coen) Dowdy in North Dakota; Terry Smith's brother George; Faith Kress, Linda Marshall's niece; Ed Roberts father; Grace Lancaster ; Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother.

### **Nursing Home:**

- Hazel Carroll; Pauline Sellers; Rhea Henthorn

### **Shut-ins:**

- Ethel Mahan; Josephine Clow; Mabel Fleming; Pauline Midcap
- A card, phone call or a visit can really brighten someone's day.