

<i>In search of</i>		
Truth and Right Tim Henderson, Editor		
Vol. 01 No. 40 05/06/ 2007	<i>"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."</i> Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)	A publication of the Wellsburg church of Christ

Have we forsaken our post of Duty?

Where is the Battle-line?

By: Dillard Thurman

The restoration movement in this country had a spectacular growth, when the lines of communication were very limited. The battle-line was staked out on a "thus saith the Lord," and the forces of sectarianism were openly challenged. This movement caught the attention and captured the interest of a staid religious world. The plea was so different and its adherents so dogmatic! Every departure from God and His Will was openly condemned, and peace and harmony was offered only upon the ground of inspiration, with every creed and dogma of man surrendered.

This plea won acceptance by some, but stern opposition from many more. Yet all thinking people were arrested by the challenge: "Speak where the Bible speaks, be silent where the Bible is silent. Call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways." Every point of growth met more and more bitter opposition and persecution. Still, there was not one vestige of compromise, and no sacred ground was surrendered. With this spirit, victory was then assured.

Preachers of that era were often unschooled in the secular affairs of the world. Without the advantages of higher education, they were often challenged to meet the higher echelons of theological scholarship in debate. But they were not at a disadvantage, for God's Truth was the deciding factor, and that Truth prevailed. Soon the world came to recognize a line of demarcation between the church of the Bible and the religious

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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world of denominations. The Cause faced slander, sneers, ridicule and often far more visible persecution. But it grew in strength and rejoiced daily, "*Bringing in the Sheaves*"

New members, just recently converted, went forth declaring, "We call Bible things by Bible names, we do Bible things in Bible ways." They deplored "the language of Ashdod" (Nehemiah 13:24) and sectarian jargon, believing if a thing was Scriptural, there should also be a Scriptural term to describe it. If these new members didn't have the answer, they sought God's Book for the answer, and then in triumph quoted, "*Which things we speak...Comparing spiritual things with spiritual words*" (1 Corinthians 2:13). Though the religious world didn't like the sound of the challenge, they soon were forced to respect it. Soon the word went forth, "If you want to know what the Bible says, ask one of them Campbellites!"

Had those pioneers surrendered a single principle, they would have invited disaster to their cause. Any compromise would have meant the forfeiture of their right to exist, and would have resulted in defeat. Knowing this, they were dogmatic and adamant in the demand: "Let us return to the inspired ground, rally around the cross of Christ, accept no creed but Christ and no church but His church." Yes, they were denounced as "modern Ishmaelites, whose hand is against every man," but they still walked with respect! Their plea became the rallying point for all who recognized the tragedy of sectarian strife and denominational confusion. The wrath of religious bigots only intensified zeal of discerning people for pure and unadulterated Christianity.

Speak where the Bible speaks, be silent where the Bible is silent. Call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways."

History attests to the success of this movement, and it is easy to analyze the factors which brought that success. This distinctive plea and their close adherence to Bible principles won the battle. They triumphed over all opposition because they clung to the Scriptures and would not be either driven or enticed from them. And as a result of their unflinching devotion and zealous endeavor, we have received as our heritage a church which has come to numerical strength, power, prestige, and popular acceptance.

But I wonder, have we surrendered the basic ground our forbears have hallowed? Are we still maintaining the same battle-lines? Are we still "*set for the defense of the gospel*" (Philippians 1:16)? Are new converts being instilled with the same devotion to evangelism as a couple of generations ago? Do members still fly back to the Bible for a "thus saith the Lord" whenever and wherever opposition is encountered?

Every achievement to which the church can point today was made possible by the courageous work of those pioneer preachers and early converts who denounced every false way. Their speech may have been rustic and sometimes uncouth, but it effectively defended the principles of the gospel. They didn't present the veneer of culture, but they built with solid oak of Truth. They may have appeared awkward in striding from the corn field or cotton patch to preach, but they had a quality to "grace God's pulpit" on the Lord's day. It was to "*preach Christ, and Him crucified*" (1 Corinthians 2:1,2) that filled their thoughts and sanctified their efforts.

Those pioneer preachers of nearly 200 years ago sought not polish or fancy phrases or cultural approach. They knew the tragedy of sin, the horrors of hell and the certainty of God's judgment -- and they were campaigning for the souls of men. If their sermons were not scholarly, they were Scriptural. They didn't get fat paychecks, but they got results. They were not able to gesture to a heated baptistery, but they led myriads of candidates into creeks, rivers, ponds and horse troughs, and there they baptized them into Christ, "*For the remission of sins...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:38,47). They did not expend much effort extolling the glories of "congregational autonomy" and "local financial responsibility." But they instructed those new con-

verts with the admonition: "You have a good story to tell. Go, tell it!" God's battle-line has not changed. We may have retreated from it and sacrificed principle it once defended. If so, we have surrendered: but the battle-line remains the same. The world must be constantly reminded: "No book but the Bible. No creed but the Christ. No way but His way. No church but His church." We must accept no authority save that of Christ and must oppose every human synod, council or conference that would enslave the souls of men in the traditions and teachings of men. We must hold forth the Bible as the all-sufficient guide in all religious matters, and show that any addition, subtraction or alteration is an insult to the God who gave it. Let the whole world know that anyone going beyond *"the doctrine of Christ hath not God"* (2 John 9-11). We stand self-condemned if we fellowship error in religion (Galatians 2:18).

Any "regrouping, restructuring, or modifying of forces due to changing social conditions" is a sinister threat against the church -- whether it is spawned without or within the body of Christ. The original order of things cannot be forsaken and no compromise can be allowed. If the ancient landmarks are not maintained, we will find that we have won many members, but have lost the Cause! Let us beware lest that which has been won by distinctive plea and dogmatic adherence to principles be lost by compromise and apostasy.

[Adapted from an article by Dillard Thurman first written on March 27, 1964 and reprinted in Gospel

News N Notes

Traveling:

- Dave and Wilma Harless

Sick:

- Susan and Scott Swanson, Dorothy Lancaster's daughter, and their baby.
- Terry Smith
- Vicki Renshaw
- Cindy North
- 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

Shut-ins:

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