

In
Search
of ...

Truth & Right

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES
GENESIS

Tim Henderson, Editor

Volume-03

Issue-29

02/15/2009

"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)

A publication of the
**Wellsburg
church of Christ**
Which meets at:
112 Sunset Ave.
Wellsburg, WV 26070
304-737-1422

*We appreciate so much
your presence here with
us today. We would like
to extend an invitation
to join us at any of our
other times of worship.*

TIMES OF SERVICES SUNDAY

Bible Classes*

10:00 AM

AM Worship

10:45 AM

PM Worship

6:30 PM

Today's Sermon:

***Sunday**
The Best Day
of the Week*

*Audio CD's are available
free of charge in the foyer.*

*Please visit our website:
www.truthandright.org*

*If you have any questions regarding
what we teach and practice, please
feel free to ask.*

Me-Centered Religion

Bobby L. Graham

It has become increasingly fashionable to hear people protest organized or institutional religion in recent decades, as they have sought to invent their own religious systems, based on what they desire and think. This writer also finds much in current systems to protest, but for vastly different, biblical reasons. Their protests are grounded in their own selfish notions, and mine are based on the teaching of God's Word. One main impetus giving rise to the community churches of recent decades has been the emphasis on selfish desires rather than the will of God. When human beings begin to view themselves as equal to God, they begin acting so by asserting their own will over His will and arrogating to themselves divine prerogatives. The *importance of the individual* truly has become the central organizing thread around which so much of the thinking and teaching of our time has clustered. For this reason there has been much discussion of "The Me Generation."

Out of this emphasis on self, an entire "theology" has evolved, giving rise to me-centered religion. From beginning to end, however, such a religion is similar to those religions so often decried by "The Me Generation," in its fundamental traits, to which we shall call attention in this article. Those traits form the basic tenets of the theology undergirding this religion.

In this Issue:

Me-Centered Religion—pg.

1—Bobby L. Graham

Order of Sunday Evening

Worship—pg. 3

Those Serving—pg. 4

Announcements—pg. 4

**I am my own person;
nobody tells me what to do.**

Expressed in this assertion is the autonomy or independence of the individual from God and all others. Of course, such thinking runs into a brick wall when civil government is involved! To think that people can become so proud that they banish God from their concerns and lives in the thought that they are capable of directing their own course and that they are answerable to no one except self is the outrageous conclusion from this statement. Involved also is the idea of the authority of the individual, who views himself as supreme. He no longer is accountable to God, if there is a God. The Humanist Manifesto I and II from the last seventy years well express what has become dominant thinking with many. Many of this stripe believe that humans are the only "deity" involved in this world. Such thinking enthrones man and dethrones God. It is difficult to appeal to such thinking for self-denial, humility, lowliness, and trust in God (Matthew 16:24), or even for compassion, mercy, and kindness in human relations, when such arrogance prevails.

The entire record of divine revelation demonstrates man's amenability to God. By reason of creation God has ever had dominion over His creation. Early He directed Adam and Eve in their lives, though they soon manifested the spirit of self-sufficiency and autonomy that we here condemn. Whenever human beings have obeyed the Lord, whether as individuals or as nations, they have benefited greatly. On the other hand disobedience to God has always brought troubles. The Christian belongs to God in a special sense, having been bought by Him for a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). He is obligated to live to God's glory in both body and spirit. Any doubters need to consult the inhabitants of Sodom, Jonah, or the nation of Israel to learn the value of seeking the guidance of God in their lives.

Be yourself.

Guided by the basic understanding of individual autonomy, legions have fallen victim to the appeal of one strain of modern psychiatry to live out their own individual dreams, to actualize their own potential in an effort to maximize their self-realization. The most important person is "you," and the most significant culture is self-development along lines of one's own choosing. Nothing that hinders the developing of self is allowable; all else become secondary.

Against this incorrigible spirit of self-determinism lies the demand of God for the alteration of self (Galatians 2:20). Only when the old self is crucified and the new self is formed in one's life, according to the image of Jesus Christ, does one become spiritually useful to this world. To remain in the old mode of sinful living is to remain a spiritual drag and part of the world's principal problem. The changes wrought by the Lord through the power of His Spirit-given Word produce a life that is both salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16). Only in subordinating oneself to the will of Christ does one escape the slavery to sin that captures the old self (Romans 6:10-18).

Your own self-realization is more important than any externally imposed creed.

With the dominance of self imbedded in the modern psyche, the groundwork is likewise laid for rejection of creeds (any religious idea or ideal that infringes upon what the individual desires or conflicts with it). The stubborn will of the individual becomes the impenetrable wall guarding the person against any Biblical concept of God or man. As the Gentiles rejected the idea of God, so have many today similarly repudiated Him. Lip service is too often the only service offered, and that until conscience no longer cries out for something more. No one knows you better than you do, and nobody thinks more highly of you that you do. Thus one reasons himself into a stance of rejecting all that affords not the pleasure, contentment, or satisfaction that self demands. He then forms attitudes, speaks, and acts on the basis of what will promote his own self-realization (or self-actualization).

The value of the benevolent will of God should never be set aside. God has never spoken from whim but for man's earthly and eternal good (Deuteronomy 6:24). God's own selfish pleasure has never been the motive behind the divine mind or plan, and man's own selfish pleasure is always the motive that short-circuits the divine plan (James 4:3; Matthew 6:24).

Express the deity (god) within you.

Though the materialist does not believe in any deity, he acts as if man is deity. He worships and serves the creature—both idols and self—rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25). Others seem to think that the human being is somewhat divine, though they fail to believe in God in any genuine Biblical sense. The outcome of this endeavor is the defying of

God and the deifying of man. The saddest reality of the present is that many live their lives as if there is no God. In doing so, they impede their own spiritual development and, to some degree, obstruct the salutary influence of the Bible.

SOURCES OF ME-CENTERED THINKING

Every major stream has its tributaries; this “stream” of thought is no exceptions. Into it have flowed the influential contributions of many decades, thus gradually conditioning the minds of people for an acceptance of what once was unthinkable. What are these sources?

1. Denominational creeds: They have fostered the idea of diversity of thought about God and His service is acceptable. They have also encouraged people to believe what they wish, making humans the final arbiters of what they choose.

2. New Age Thought/Eastern Religions: Being a hodgepodge of religious thought, it offers people something they want, encourages people’s autonomous view of themselves, and presents a view of humans as divine.

3. Secularism: Possibly its major contribution has been its “Don’t Worry—Be Happy” thinking.

4. Pluralism: This concept has become a major contributing stream in its stress on there being many paths to God.

5. Ecumenicalism: Recent decades have witnessed the merging of different religious bodies by the surrender of convictions and beliefs. In such a climate, it becomes acceptable to surrender God-required teaching to the preeminence of the individual.

6. Segmental Role of God: Too often God has been assigned His place in life, which has usually been some small part of life or some particular time in life, instead of the totality of one’s life. Such thinking motivates one think of himself as superior to God.

It is easy to see the convergence of these varied sources into the stream of me-centered religion. How many of have not been victimized to some extent by the thinking here reviewed. May all of us guard out hearts diligently, that we might subject ourselves to God. We must view ourselves as bondservants of Jesus Christ and even speak of ourselves in this way. What a difference between the way we have viewed such matters and the way Paul frequently spoke of himself!

Period of Worship in Song, Reading & Prayer

Introduction—Tim Henderson

Reading – Ezekiel 43:1-14— Harold Marshall

Prayer of repentance & desire to have hindrances removed—Tim Henderson

Song – 68—Ed Roberts

Song – 73—Ed Roberts

Reading – Psalm 95—Don Coen, Jr.

Prayer of thankfulness to God—Earl Miller

Song – 633—Tim Henderson

Song – 62—Chuck Isinghood

Reading – Philippians 4:4-7—Dan Marton

Prayer – For weak members, lost souls and our need to remain steadfast & endure—Harold Marshall

Song – 69—Don Coen, Jr.

Song – 635—Ken Prager

Reading – Matthew 26:36-46—Blake Headen

Prayer – Thankfulness for the willingness of Jesus to endure as a sacrifice for us—Chuck Isinghood

Song—63—Dan Marton

Reading – Psalm 139:1-10—Blake Headen

Song—104—Harold Marshall

Invitation—Tim Henderson

Invitation song – 322—Ed Roberts

Communion Song—162—Ed Roberts

Communion—Dave Harless

Closing Announcements—Don Coen, Jr.

Closing Song—74—Tim Henderson

Closing Prayer—Don Coen, Sr.

Those Serving This Week

Sunday AM

Class Prayer	Dave Harless
Announcements	Don Coen, Jr.
Song Leader	Harold Marshall
Scripture	Ezekiel 42:11-20
Reader	Terry Smith
Prayer	Ed Roberts
Speaker	Tim Henderson
Lord's Supper	
Bread	Chuck Isinghood
Fruit of the Vine	Don Coen, Sr.
Serve	Dan Marton
Serve	Ken Prager
Closing Prayer	Nathan Marshall

Please inform the one in charge of announcements if you are unable to fulfill your responsibilities.

Sunday PM

Announcements	Don Coen, Jr.
Song Leader	Ed Roberts
Scripture	Ezekiel 43:1-14
Reader	Harold Marshall
1st Prayer	Tim Henderson
Speaker	
Communion	Dave Harless
Closing Prayer	Don Coen, Sr.

Wednesday

Announcements	Don Coen, Jr.
Class Prayer	Ed Roberts
Song Leader	Harold Marshall
Invitation	Chuck Isinghood
Closing Prayer	Don Coen, Sr.

News N Notes

Please continue to remember these in your prayers:

Traveling: Alfred and Mary Jane Myers

Recovering:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Earl Miller - Marie Roberts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ann Rudolph - Phyllis Coen |
|--|---|

Prayer Requests:

- Virginia Malick, Peggy Miller's mother is in Wierton Medical Center
- Ila Marshall, Harold Marshall's mother.
- Cary and Grace Lancaster
- Albert Miller, Earl Miller and Marie Robert's brother.
- Alfred & Mary Jane Myers
- Zeda Goddard's sons, Dallas and Terry, and her daughter Tammy Garrison
- Rick Miller, Dorothy Lancaster's nephew
- Blake Headen, Alberta's husband, as he continues to deal with cancer treatments.
- Jimmy Roberts, Ed & Marie's son
- Jim Roberts, Ed Roberts' father

Don't forget our Shut-ins

Nursing Home:

- Ethel Mahan
- Pauline Sellers

At Home:

- Josephine Clow
- Mabel Fleming
- Betty Hunter
- Pauline Midcap

Send them a card—give them a call—let them know we are thinking about them.

If someone needs to be added
to this list, please call:
304-914-2262 or 304-914-2263