

In search of...

Truth & Right

Volume 09 Issue 26

June 29, 2014

Racketeering

It seems that about every line of human activity is cursed with racketeers. If people were not so gullible, common racketeers could not work their schemes. Racketeering was at first a scheme to obtain money or other advantages by threats of damage to person or property. It was usually carried on in the larger cities by one person or by an organization of criminal schemers. But the idea spread to less violent plans, so that now in common speech any fraudulent scheme is a racket. It may be a scheme to obtain either money or advantage. In this sense, its success depends on the gullibility of its dupes, and the pity is, there are plenty of such people. They are the trustful, unsuspecting kind—at least, that is the sort that are appealed to over the radio, and sometimes from the pulpits. A preacher, on his own responsibility, calls on people to send him money

to help him carry on his gospel broadcasts, or else send it to a certain post office box. And to make his scheme more attractive, he promises to send them one of his books or other of his publications, or he promises to acknowledge every donation sent him. That sounds fair and honest to the unthinking, but is it? No, for you do not know how many hundreds sent in their dollars the day you sent yours. If a man cares for his name, his reputation, he will not ask you to send your donation to him personally. The chances are he is not honest, even if he does make great claims of loyalty to the gospel. When a preacher can amass a fortune by asking people to send him donations "to help broadcast the gospel," it is time for people to sit up and take notice. I have never sent a thin dime to such men. It is a shame and a sin for a man to resort to such a scheme to gain a lot of easy money,

and a shame also that people are so gullible as to fall for such racketeers. It is not good policy, not even good sense, to send donations to a preacher whose methods subject him to possible charges of dishonesty. The great apostle Paul was careful to protect himself against the possibility of such a charge. He made a great effort to have the churches he had planted to make up funds for the poor saints in Judea. He told the church at Corinth how to proceed to get their donation ready, and then added: "And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me" (I Corinthians 16:3, 4).

But why would Paul have others go with him? He gives the answer himself. He was using others to assist him in collecting the donations, and to protect himself against any false charges that his enemies might make as to the use he made of these funds. In his second letter to Corinth, he praised the churches of Macedonia for their liberality, and then adds: "Insomuch that we exhorted Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you this grace also" (II Corinthians 8:6). "But thanks be to God, who putteth the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he indeed accepted our exhortation; but being himself very earnest, he went forth unto you of his own

accord. And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches; and not only so, but who was also appointed by the churches to travel with us in the matter of this grace, which is ministered by us to the glory of the Lord, and to show our readiness: avoiding this, that any man should blame us in the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us: for we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." (II Corinthians 8:16-21). If a preacher wants to avoid any charge of dishonesty and to maintain his influence for good, he must "take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." If a preacher will not do that, he should not be trusted, and such are those radio speakers who ask that money be sent to them, for there is no way for any one to check up on how much they receive. If you will exercise half the sense the Lord gave you, such fellows will not get any of your money.

Just today a radio speaker who wants all ailing people to write him a request for prayers for healing, sending along, if possible, a donation, announced that this morning there were in his mail over eight hundred requests for prayer. Of course, in response to his plea, most of these requests would have enclosed a donation. Think what a harvest he is reaping! And

think of those poor, senseless dupes, whose desire for healing is piling up riches for one man.

And it is easy for a preacher to practice racketeering in the pulpit right before the eyes of the people. Flattery does it. No man ever flattered others for their good; but it is an easy and effective way to gain money and advantage. The strange thing is, people will not see it, and are therefore easily fleeced. And stranger still they seem to like it. They gladly exchange fleece for flattery. It makes them feel important, and feel as good as they need to be. Flattery is an opiate. The man who uses it is a quack, even if he does give some good medicine; or to change the figure, he is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Have the people forgotten about Absalom? He was the greatest hypocrite and scoundrel in the kingdom, yet by his flattery and smooth talk he stole the hearts of the people. What a popular evangelist he would have made for this day! Well, I fear he has imitators today, but the imitators are little, if any, better than the original; for "by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent" (Romans 16:18). They "serve not our Lord, but their own belly." And too many of us have forgotten how a man by flattery got a boy to turn the grindstone; and so the scheme still works, for many are willing to turn the grindstone for flattery. If some one criticizes me for this article, you will know what is the matter with him!

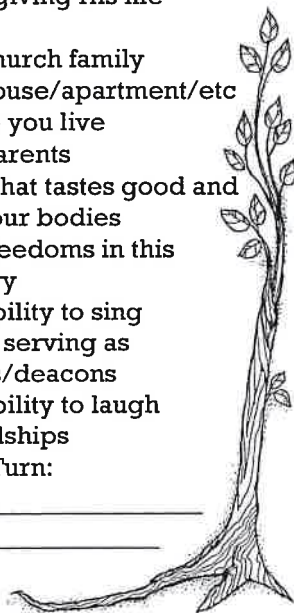
R.L. Whiteside
via The Bible Banner, 1946

Dear God,

thank you for being there
when nobody else was.

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- The house/apartment/etc where you live
- Our parents
- Food that tastes good and fuels our bodies
- Our freedoms in this country
- The ability to sing
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- The ability to laugh
- Friendships
- Your Turn:



This bulletin is published by the
WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Fifth Sunday Photos

Every fifth Sunday of the month, we try to highlight some of great things happening around our congregation that were captured through photography. If you happen to get a good picture of a member doing work for the Lord, please feel free to post it on our Facebook page or tweet us @wellsburgchurch #fifthsundayphotos or e-mail us at minister@truthandright.org with a little description of what is happening in the picture.



Cathy Johnston and her husband, Danny, with their granddaughter, Ava, at her 3rd birthday party.

*"Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."
(1 John 3:18)*



Nathan Marshall took this photo of Laurel Caverns. Many members held a Bible study there on May 31st.

*"Let them praise the name of the Lord! For He commanded and they were created."
(Psalm 148:5)*



Corey & Sarah Latimer play Apples to Apples with Jessica Currence and others.

*"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!"
(Psalm 133:1)*