



**Anderson
church of Christ**
5900 Highway 207
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The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

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THE GOSPEL POWER

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation...” Romans 1:16

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OH BOY! IT'S ALLOWED!

Bill Hall

How many times have new converts received sound instructions concerning the life of a Christian, only to have the instructions nullified by the example of older members? A brother in Canada recently told me of his first trip south after his conversion. Struggling to overcome his tobacco habit—because he had been taught that he ought to do so—he watched with delight as the men of the “down south” congregation went out between Bible study and worship to enjoy their cigarettes. “O boy!” was his immediate reaction; “It’s allowed!”

The same thing happens in other areas of teaching. “Attend every service,” new converts are told, and sound reasons are given to back such instructions. But Brother Smith only attends the 11:00 o’clock service, and he is accepted as a faithful

member. “One service a week must be sufficient,” they say to themselves. “O boy! It’s allowed!”

“Study your Bible daily, and prepare beforehand for every Bible class,” they are wisely told. But they see little evidence of Bible study on the part of others, and some of the comments in Bible classes definitely betray a lack of preparation. “Ignorance of God’s word must not be too bad,” they conclude. “O boy! It’s allowed!”

“Modesty of dress is essential for Christians,” they hear repeatedly. But then they hear of mixed swimming among the members and see Sister Jones wearing the tightest pants in town. “O boy!” they think; “It’s allowed!”

Older Christians ought to be constantly aware that they are being watched, watched by

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UPCOMING EVENTS AT ANDERSON CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Book of James

AUGUST 11TH AT 10:00 AM Chapter 3

JULY 17TH AT 3:30 PM **GOSPEL SINGING**

Join us as we, "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,"

- Ephesians 5:19



"a motivational story full of powerful ideas..."

GETTING TO DID!



HOW TO GET RID OF YOUR BIG BUT
AND LIVE A LIFE WITHOUT REGRETS

EDWIN CROZIER

In Home Bible Study

JULY 17TH AFTER
GOSPEL SINGING

Please join us as we discuss what to do when it seems our life is crumbling apart.



Please read: *The Professor*

SAVE THE DATE!

July 10th–15th 2011

Anderson church of Christ

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Classes for ALL ages.

Adult Class taught by David Cox



Shaping Hearts for God Vacation Bible School Series

WHAT IS RELIGION?

Mark Roberts

A recent article in the local paper details an interview with several members of a pagan religion, Wicca. After the celebration of the Spring Solstice they were asked about the nature of their beliefs and faith. "Tell me if this is true," said the interviewer. "You pick what you like from other religions and throw the pieces together. You might be absolutely wrong, and you know that. But this religion seems true to you, so you believe it is. Is that right?" To the amazement of the article's author, "the pagans were delighted. They cheered and laughed and yelled, 'That's it.'" (Christine Wicker, "Pagans' Progress, The Dallas Morning News, page 1G.). A pagan is even quoted as saying "I don't care if your god is 5,000 years old or something you just made up last Tuesday. If it gets you through the dark of the night, if it's there for you when you celebrate, if it's there when you need comfort from the death

of your mother or your best friend, then it's a true religion, whatever it is. My religion is there for me just as much as a Baptist's is there for him" (page 3G).

While being somewhat concerned by a handful of people who wish to wear laurels and celebrate spring, I must confess great distress that their description of religion accurately reflects most Americans' assessment of it. Is religion whatever we make of it? If it seems true to me does that make it true, even if I just made it up last Tuesday? What is religion?

The apostle Paul sheds light on this matter in his sermon in Athens. Addressing a crowd that was very religious, with more idols and temples than he could count, Paul did not tell his audience all was well. Acts 17 is completely without any statement of Paul that "You are making it up as you go along, and that is great" or "If it seems good and true to you, then it must be." Instead Paul challenges his listeners to

realize what religion is actually all about: "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:26-27). Religion is the seeking of the Lord that we might find Him. That is what religion is concerned with, and that is the driving force behind it. Religion is, in simple terms, the search for God that we might understand Him, His purpose for us, and how we can serve Him.

Do we understand the vast implications of this definition? It means, for example, that religion is not primarily concerned with improving conditions on this planet. Many have decided that this is organized religion's role in society. The church should offer homeless

shelters, soup kitchens, job training and every other kind of social program to improve humanity's lot here. Yet this is a man-centered focus in religion, instead of being God centered. Is it a coincidence that the social-gospel movement was born in Europe's seminaries, where faith in God and the Bible had long been destroyed? Since religion's primary object (God) had been declared dead and nonexistent a new emphasis had to be found: the problems of people. Read Paul's statement again. He does not say that we are here to create our own utopia or paradise. Our job is to seek God and find Him. That is religion.

Further, religion was not designed to provide a coping mechanism for life's unpleasant realities. In truth, this may be what most people think religion is for. As the lady quoted above says, "If it gets you through the dark of the night . . . if it's there when you need comfort from the death of your mother or your best friend, then it's a true religion." Many people who are not religious in any form (right or wrong) suddenly want to have all sorts

of religious ceremonies, services and preachers around them when they are near death, or a loved one has died. This is also true whenever there is a tragedy or terrible illness. People just seem to sense that religion ought to have something to do with life after death, or prayer and petition when in real trouble. Yet again, this is not the purpose of religion. Religion is about finding God. Once we find Him then we may discover that He offers comfort in time of trouble, or has promised to respond to our prayer. But that would simply be a "by product" of finding that God is good and benevolent in His care for the universe and creation. Like a small child who is only concerned with the candy that his grandfather offers, with no concern at all for the grandfather, all too often we want to grab the "goodies" that God offers without showing any concern for Him. Religion is the showing of that concern, and should not be confused with the benefits that religion might offer.

Religion is not about the business of making you into a happier, more fulfilled person. Again, so many today want to

substitute their own agenda for the real purpose of religion. There is so much talk about "spirituality" in our media that many have decided they need to address the spiritual dimension of their lives. In a characteristically human way, they selfishly look to see what they want, rather than seeking God to see what He desires. This is not religion. This is nothing more than selfishness wearing the mantle of religion to conceal its real intent. It will not work. Gratifying self is different from seeking and serving God. It does not matter if I gratify myself in a cathedral or church building, and everyone calls it "Christianity." Doing for me, finding what I want, and serving myself is not the goal of religion. Finding God is all that matters.

Finally, religion is not something that we are at liberty to "make up" or do as we please. Religion is the search for God. As such, it is a quantifiable, objective process and pursuit. Every kind of evidence ought to be marshaled to first determine if God even exists. Then we

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BIBLE TRIVIA - THE KINGS

Answers in Next Month's Gospel Power

- 1.) Who was the first king of Israel?
 - (a) David
 - (b) Saul
 - (c) Solomon
 - (d) Herod
- 2.) Who built the temple in Israel?
 - (a) Nehemiah
 - (b) Solomon
 - (c) David
 - (d) Nebuchadnezzar
- 3.) Which King was made to eat grass like oxen?
 - (a) Absalom
 - (b) Saul
 - (c) Nebuchadnezzar
 - (d) Jehoiakim
- 4.) What King prayed to God for deliverance, with the result that the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 Assyrians?
 - (a) Samuel
 - (b) Saul
 - (c) David
 - (d) Hezekiah
- 5.) What King was tricked into throwing Daniel into the lions' den?
 - (a) Saul
 - (b) Nebuchadnezzar
 - (c) Darius
 - (d) Absalom
- 6.) What King sent for Sarah to take her as his wife, believing she was Abraham's sister?
 - (a) Hezekiah
 - (b) David
 - (c) Absalom
 - (d) Abimelech
- 7.) What King died after seeing the handwriting on the wall?
 - (a) Belshazzar
 - (b) Nebuchadnezzar
 - (c) Saul
 - (d) Darius
- 8.) King Ahasuerus took Mordecai's cousin as his wife. What was her name?
 - (a) Esther
 - (b) Vashti
 - (c) Abigail
 - (d) Naomi
- 9.) Who was Saul's wife?
 - (a) Ahinoam
 - (b) Jochebed
 - (c) Ahijah
 - (d) Jezebel
- 10.) Who was the King that said of God, "He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions?"
 - (a) Nebuchadnezzar
 - (b) Belshazzar
 - (c) Cyrus
 - (d) Darius

(Continued from page 5)

should examine all evidence that He has communicated with humankind. Is God there? Has He spoken to us? What does He want? For what purpose did He make and create us? These are the primary questions that religion is concerned with. Understanding this it becomes apparent that the idea of "making up" a god is ridiculous. The god that I conjure up will not be the true God that real religion is involved in finding and serving. Instead, I will have deluded myself with my own little concept of God and actually deprive myself of finding the true God! How sad (and crazy) it would be if someone who was searching for

Mount Everest decided to make a little mountain out of modeling clay and proclaim that this was, for him, Mount Everest. No, it is not, because Mount Everest is an objective, fixed item existing in this universe. Likewise, those who fashion their own gods have failed to reckon with God's objective, fixed nature and that He exists in this universe just as surely as Mount Everest does. Any search that ends before it finds Him is a search that has been called off too soon! In truth, the person who bows down to their own creation of god (made up last Tuesday) is simply not as well off as the person who is serving the real God who can answer prayer and save our souls. A made-up god is a cheap and poor substitute for the real God

who governs our world.

What we are saying then, is that God is not an amorphous, do-with-Him-as-you-will abstract notion that no one can find or really understand. God is a fact. He is a Being with a nature, the ability to speak with His creation, and actual purposes and design for each of us. Our feelings and what we want to believe have exactly nothing to do with His reality. Let us search for Him, and be content with no other god or substitute religion. The Bible claims to be from the God who created us all (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Genesis 1:1ff). I would strongly suggest that all turn their attention to this Book of Books and begin their search for God right there. Then and only then can we find true religion. *(Via Abundant Life)*

DO YOU ENJOY RECEIVING THE GOSPEL POWER?

We would like to make the Gospel Power available to all those who would be interested in reading it. We now have an emailed version of the Gospel Power. If you would like to receive the emailed version instead of the hard copy, please email your request to: thegospelpower@gmail.com.

**IS THERE ANYONE YOU WANT US TO SEND
THE GOSPEL POWER TO? LET US KNOW!**

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Class 9:45 AM
AM Worship 10:45 AM
PM Worship 6:00 PM
3rd Sunday 3:30 PM
Worship

WEDNESDAY

Bible Classes 7:00 PM

ELDERS

Michael Clemmons
(256) 247-0836

Scottie Goode
(931) 565-3391

Cecil Cox (256) 627-5349

DEACONS

Jimmy Glass
(256) 247-0571

Eddie J. Hammond
(256) 247-3038

Mark McIntyre
(256) 729-8316

Steve Parker
(256) 247-7843

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newer converts who are looking to them for examples. Part of the teaching those new converts are receiving is coming from the pulpit; the other part is coming from the lives of the other Christians around them. What are they seeing? What are they learning? How sobering to think that some new convert might have been discouraged and led astray by something he saw in my life! Let each live in every aspect of his life so as to be able to say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

Newer converts, though, must learn that God's word is the standard of authority, not the conduct of other Chris-

tians. Loyalty in a kingdom is determined by loyalty to the king rather than to the subjects of the king. It is to Him that one pledges his allegiance when he becomes a Christian, and he must be faithful to Him whatever others around him may do or fail to do.

One's "O boy! It's allowed!" then must be limited to those things which God allows in His Word. But even then he would anticipate a certain reserve in one's expression, for the true Christian's greatest delight is not in some activity that just happens to be "allowed," but in serving the Lord. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). (*via Perspectives*)

Check us out on the web at: www.anderson-church.org