

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

**Anderson
church of Christ**
5900 Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

Visit Us On The Web
Anderson-church.org

Men Priviledged To Serve:
Sunday, May 30th

Bible Classes

Song Leader

..... Ronnie Phillips

Bible Reading (Isaiah 3:13-26)

..... Rodney McCrary

Prayer

..... Brian Word

Morning Worship

Song Leader

..... Mark McIntyre

Prayer

..... Ray Tucker

Lord's Supper

Presiding Rocky Rose

Assisting Phil Pressnell

Serving Mark McCrary

..... Ethan Pressnell

..... Jim Phillips

..... James McConnell

Closing Prayer

..... Mark McIntyre

Evening Worship

Song Leader

..... Ronnie Phillips

Bible Reading (Isaiah 4:1-6)

..... Jimmy Glass

Prayer

..... Scottie Goode

Lord's Supper

..... Rocky Rose

..... Phil Pressnell

Closing Prayer

..... Aric Butler

Volume XI

May 30, 2004

No. 22

CENI – A Biblical Hermeneutic

Allen Dvorak

Jesus criticized the Pharisees and scribes for the human traditions which they elevated to the status of law (Matthew 15:1-9). In light of that criticism, it is important that we examine our own practices to “weed out” traditions which have no biblical basis and are treated as “law.” However, we must also be careful not to abandon scriptural teachings in our enthusiasm for house-cleaning.

There are some members of the church today who are challenging the teaching that God authorizes by means of command or precept, approved example and necessary inference (Command, Example, Necessary Inference – CENI). The CENI system of interpretation is merely a “Church of Christ tradition,” according to an increasing number of Christians.

Traditions develop as individuals do the same thing in the same way. Ideas become “traditions” as preachers repeat them without scriptural backing. If CENI is indeed merely tradition, then it should be rejected and we should not teach that this is the right way to interpret Scripture. On the other hand, the assertion that CENI is just tradition should not be given credence just because someone affirms it!

A study of Acts 15 illustrates that, when the early disciples needed to answer the question of the necessity of circumcision for Gentile Christians, CENI was used to determine the Lord's will. First, Peter cited his experience at Cornelius' house, concluding from the fact that the Gentiles there received the Holy Spirit that God “acknowledged them” and “made no distinction between” Jew and Gentile (15:7-9). God never explicitly stated that conclusion; Peter inferred it from the evidence that God provided in the giving

of the Holy Spirit. It was, in fact, a necessary inference, meaning that no other conclusion could be drawn. Peter likewise necessarily inferred that God was not talking about unclean animals in his vision of Acts 10.

Next, Paul and Barnabas related to the brethren assembled in Jerusalem “how God had worked through them among the Gentiles” (vs. 12). As those who taught that Gentiles could be saved without circumcision, they represented the answer to the question by approved (by God) example. It could also be noted that the conclusion that their example was approved is by necessary inference. One must infer from the fact that God empowered them to perform miracles that their conduct was approved.

Finally, James quoted a statement from Amos which predicted that Gentiles would be “called by” the name of the Lord (15:16). Although not stated in the form of a command, the prophecy of Amos is the citation of a precept which also answered the question of circumcision.

CENI, far from being merely tradition, is exactly how God’s will was actually determined in the first century. The push to reject this method of scripture interpretation is motivated by the desire to allow more “freedom” in our practices. The need for divine authority in religion is too restrictive for many who want to gratify their own desires rather than glorify God!

-via *News & Notes*, Madison, Alabama.

Abounding Love

David Posey

Paul prayed that the Philippians’ love “may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment” (Philippians 1:9). I’m impressed with that word “abound.” It proves that he Philippians had a lot of love to begin with. But the apostle, speaking by inspiration, was never satisfied! Nor should we ever be satisfied.

When we stop growing we begin to decline. The Ephesians had been commended by Paul for their love (Ephesians 1:5), but later Jesus had occasion to say to them, “you have left your first love” (Revelation 2:4). They didn’t love as much as they use to. We can never let up, we must keep “abounding” in all the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22ff).

To “abound” means, literally, to “overflow, to move in waves.” That ought to be an easy thing for us to picture here. Just as the ocean gradually builds up its strength until it crashes into the shore, and just as it does so *continually*, thus should be our love (without the crash, of course!)

For the Christian, love is daily bread, not a cake for special occasions. It is part of our personality and, as such, becomes more natural and more extensive as we grow into Christ (v. 11, the “fruits of righteousness which are by Christ”). It overflows, even to our enemies (Matthew 5:44).

Having said that, however, Paul says there are some restraints. Love should be “in knowledge and all discernment” (v. 9b). This means that we are to love within the confines of God’s will. Wise judgment (discernment) is not to be excluded, even in this matter of love. Our love for God and for our brethren must overflow, but it is *conditionally*. It abounds, but “in real knowledge” (NASB). Love is not blind when it comes to spiritual things. It is not a warm, swamy kind of thing, but is a real experience. We may know

Vacation Bible School

July 12-16

10:00 a.m. - 11:25 a.m.

Anderson church of Christ

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of Him; but real knowledge means knowing Him on a personal basis.

Remember when Paul said of Israel that “they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” (Romans 10:2)? That’s what he’s talking about. Zeal, or enthusiasm, that might appear to be “love” means nothing unless it is controlled by God’s will. To say you love God, no matter how bubbly you are when you say it, is meaningless unless you are willing to yield to God’s will in everything (with all your heart, soul, and mind, Matthew 22:37).

But Paul goes even further and says that their love should abound “in all discernment.” Literally, to *discern* means to “separate” or “distinguish.” Paul expects love to be governed by a developed aptitude to discern between right and wrong. We need to use our heads.

Love is to be commanded by intellect, not by our emotion. Verse 10 says if we do this, we will stand before God as “*sincere*” (meaning “transparent” or “unmixed” real or genuine) and “*without offense*” (we will never become a stumbling block to others). There will not be cause for someone to be offended because of us. They may well be offended because of Christ and His word, but not because of some dumb stunt we pulled because we lacked knowledgeable, discerning love.

Many brethren mean well when dealing with other people, but it seems they rarely do or say the right thing. They lack sensitivity, gentleness and tact. It’s like the brother who told the newly converted young lady, “that dress is much too immodest, take it off right now!” He may well have had the best interest of the church and the young lady at heart, but he didn’t use his head!

There is always a lot of talk about “forgetting our differences and loving each other.” In the first place, if you really love a brother and you differ with him on an important matter (realizing that sometimes it is difficult to decide what is and isn’t “important”), you cannot ignore it. Jesus never, ever said to just let bygones be bygones

when it came to doctrinal matters. Nor did Paul.

In fact, they preached with so much discriminating love that they were killed by those who disagreed with them!

Upon what basis do we come along and say that we should forget our differences and just “love” each other? What kind of “love” are we talking about? Paul has something to say about unity later on in the chapter. For now, let’s remember to see to it that our love is real, controlled by knowledge and “all discernment.”

-via *SThe Folsom Point View*, Folsom, California.

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Billy Wallen’s grandmother, Alvis Hooie*, is in the ECM hospital in Florence following surgery on Tuesday ... *Helen Trousdale’s sister, Margaret Neal Newton*, is taking chemo treatments about every three weeks... *Sam Noles* is doing better and the doctor is working with his medication ... *Shelia Goode and Lou Ann Phillips’ grandmother, Vera Simmons*, is in Glenwood rehabilitation in Florence ... *Myrtie Williams* continues to recover at home Remember *Mattie Blanche Word* continues at home ... *Kathy Smith’s sister-in-law, Sue Gilliam*, is undergoing chemo and radiation treatments... *Marcia Cooper’s and Brian Word’s uncle, Paul McCafferty* is at the Countryside Nursing Home in Lawrenceburg ... *James McConnell’s mother, Della Mae McConnell*, continues at home... *Jerry Best’s nephew, Shannon Johnson*, continues at home ... *Tisha Thomas’ grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, is in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

CONFESSION: Last Sunday morning, *Curtis Mosley* came asking for prayers on his behalf. We

appreciate Curtis and his desire to please God. Let us all encourage him as he will encourage us.

GOSPEL MEETING: The *Bethel church* in Bethel, Tennessee is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Friday with services at 4:00 this afternoon and Monday through Friday at 7:30 p.m. *Bill Hall* is preaching.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Butlers: Aric and Andrea* are in Florida this weekend...*Emma, Ella, and Ivy Wallen* are in Florida with Aric and Andrea ...*Jerry Best* is on vacation this week... *Cindy Mosley, Sonya Balckburn, Marla and Lydia Clemmons* are back home after being in Florida last week... *The Hammonds: Eddie, Amber, Lakin and Noah Lane* are in Gulf Shores this weekend... *Cori Williams* is in Birmingham and Starkville, Mississippi today... *Chase Williams* is in Fayette this weekend.

PLACED MEMBERSHIP: We rejoice over the decision of *Eddie and Willodean Hammond* to join themselves to the church here. They have moved here from Huntsville and were members at the *Gooch Lane church* in Madison. We look forward to working with them and I know that they will be an asset to the work here.

PREACHING TONIGHT: Tonight we will continue our series this month with several of our men preaching. *Jerry Dickey, Brain Word and Phil Pressnell* will be speaking this evening. I hope that everyone will come and join with us tonight and encourage these men as they develop themselves in the service of God.

NEXT SUNDAY: The Lord willing, I will begin a meeting at the *Parkway church* in Lawrence county. *Rocky Rose* and *Jimmy Glass* will be preaching in my absence. I appreciate them being willing to do this and I know that you will benefit from hearing them.

THE RECORD: Attendance for week of May 23rd

Sunday: Bible Classes 98
Morning Worship 113
Evening Worship 86
Wednesday: Bible Classes 88

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
Scottie Goode (931) 565-3391
Monroe Pressnell (256) 232-0780

Deacons

Jimmy Glass (256) 247-0571
Mark McIntyre (256) 233-1953
Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
Larry White (256) 247-0988
Brian Word (256) 229-5823

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