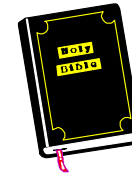


WEST COLUMBIA CHURCH OF CHRIST



"every disciple that is perfect shall be as his master." Luke 6:40b

The Crucial Issue Of Authority

Every thinking person realizes that authority plays a very significant role in all of our lives. Before we may drive a car, we must have the authority of a license. A doctor must have a diploma from a reputable medical school before he can practice. A policeman must have a badge which authorizes him to carry out his duties. To get married, we must have a license. There is little that we can do in life without proper authorization.

Especially in the realm of religion must we have proper authority for all that we do. In the worship and service of God we must do that which we are authorized to do and nothing else.

The question Jesus once faced, "**By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?**" (Matt. 21:23) is a good one for all of us.

Possible Sources Of Authority— Final or ultimate authority in religion rests in one of three possible sources. First of all, there are those who believe that final authority rests in the church. Councils, conclaves, and synods meet and make decisions. From these human deliberations such doctrines as purgatory, the adoration of Mary, the seven sacraments, papal infallibility and others have come.

It was Martin Luther who pointed out the problem of such human authority when he said, "...I cannot trust either the decisions of Councils, or of Popes, for it is plain that they have not only erred but have contradicted each other..." (Friedenthal, Luther: His Life and Times, p. 278).

Second, others conceive final authority to rest in the reasoning power of men. One's own conscience, inner feelings, or reason is the final arbiter. Saul of Tarsus demonstrated this view to be erroneous. In spite of his honesty of purpose and intensity of zeal, he was wrong. Many a person, guided by his own inner feelings, believes and practices what is contrary to the will of God.

The whole blight of denominationalism is a result of man's trusting his own views, rather than conforming his convictions to God's teaching. Liberalism makes the mistake of thinking that man's reason is the infallible authority in religion.

The third possibility, as the absolute source of authority, is the Bible, the inspired word of God. God the creator of the universe and of man is the only ultimate, final source of authority. He has spoken in his word. It is our responsibility to read the scriptures, understand them and obey them. Let us say, as Samuel did, "**Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.**" (1 Sam. 3:10).

Never With Men— Authority always rests with divinity. "**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth**" (Gen. 1:1), and in so doing established his ultimate supreme authority. Later, when Jesus was upon the earth he said, "**All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.**" (Matt. 28:18). - (continued on page 3)

Let Your Light Shine in 2009!

www.WestColumbiaChurchOfChrist.org B802South Carolina 5/2/2009

VOLUME 35, NUMBER 18 May 3, 2009

RECORDS 4/26/2009

SERMONS 5/3/2009

Sun 10 AM Bible Study: 59
Sun 11 AM Assembly: 84
Sun 6 PM Assembly: 59
Weds 7 PM Bible Study: 44
CONTRIBUTION: \$2170

AM: Jerry Manning
PM: Jerry Manning
FOR THE GRACE OF GOD
DESIGNED FOR PERFECTION

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." - Ephesians 3:20,21

A Warm Welcome awaits you at all our services. Come see!
www.WestColumbiaChurchOfChrist.org

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SERVICES

Sunday 10 AM Bible Study
Sunday 11 AM, 6 PM Assembly
Wednesday 7 PM Bible Study
Office Phone (803) 794-5320
Nursery provided
Bible Classes for all ages

LADIES CLASS
2nd Tuesday of month 7-9 PM

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“PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER” - James 5:16

- **REMEMBER IN PRAYER:** Lamar Reeves, Beryl Parks, Nina Ruth Meadows (Marcella Klieves' mother), Jack and Elma Berrier, Lynn Drago (Jerry's sister) and Phyllis Johnson.
- **Margaret Herring** is in Baptist Hospital Rehab after her knee replacement surgery. She fought off a staph infection and should be coming home a week from Friday.
- **Bunny, Jean Boyd and Pat Joyner's** sister, had quadruple bypass surgery.
- **Carolyn Lee** requests prayers for her son **Michael** who had to return from Iraq on emergency leave due to severe family difficulties. She also requests prayers for the **Hinson** family.
- **Beth Johnson** was in the hospital in India, but is out now, and though doing some better still needs our prayers.
- **Eddie and Doris Sheppard** will be visiting family in Florida. It's been awhile since they've been down there. Pray they have a safe trip and good time.
- **Lorraine Welsh** is in the hospital in New York with possible food poisoning.
- Remember all these, those that are grieving and recovering from loss, and brother **Manning** and those he studies the Bible with, in your prayers.

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." - 2 Timothy 1:12

“WEEP WITH THEM THAT WEEP” - Romans 12:15

- **Holly Wilson's** grandfather passed away Tuesday. The funeral will be Saturday in Greenville. Remember, Holly and the family in your prayers.

"I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." - Revelation 3:8

“AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY” - Acts 2:42

- **Ladies Day great success!** About 85 in attendance from many congregations. **Sister Burluson's** lessons on "Just how Much Can We Bear" were very timely and well received by all. Many thanks to the men who served lunch, taped the lessons and cleaned up afterwards.
- **Volunteers** needed to **clean the building**. Sign up sheet in the foyer.
- **Foundation Class**, Saturdays 11 am at the building. All are invited.
- **Visual Aids** help needed for VBS, see brother Manning.
- **YOUTH RETREAT!** North Columbia church of Christ Fri-Sat 5/15-16.

"Love ... beareth all things" - 1 Corinthians 13:7

Let Your Light Shine in 2009!

The Crucial Issue Of Authority—(continued from page 1)

Jesus further announced to his apostles that when he left the earth, the Holy Spirit would come in his place and **"...shall guide you into all truth." (John 16:13)**. Authority has always rested with the Godhead, and never with men. The prophets, the apostles, and others miraculously guided by God were simply spokesmen. God's word has always been the final authority among men. Our Only Guide

The Bible is our guide — our only guide. For this reason, it is encouraging to hear people say, "Let us have a 'thus saith the Lord' for all that we do in our religious faith and practice." Still, another way of saying it is "Let us speak where the scriptures speak, and be silent where the scriptures are silent." Each of these is a statement indicating the acceptance of the authority of the scriptures.

At this point let us examine two opposite positions on the matter of the authority of the scriptures. Martin Luther championed the idea that, "Whatever is not expressly prohibited in the scriptures is permissible." (History of the Great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, by D'Aubigne, Book II, p. 297). Luther's view opens the door to all kinds of innovations, such as the burning of incense, the lighting of candles, the use of images, instrumental music, and even adding other elements to the Lord's Supper.

Huldreich Zwingli championed the second view which said, "Whatever is not expressly authorized in the scriptures is prohibited." (History of the Christian Church, by W. Walker, 1959, p. 322). This is the view set forth in the scriptures themselves. In Galatians 1:8, Paul wrote, **"But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema."** The apostle John said the same thing in these words: **"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9).**

Three Avenues—In determining what the scriptures authorize, there are three avenues through which we may receive guidance. First, there are direct commands, such as Acts 2:38. In the second place, there are approved apostolic examples, such as the apostle Paul's eating of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7). And, finally, there is necessary inference. Each command of God authorizes whatever is necessary to carry it out. When the Lord commanded Christians to meet for worship, he necessarily authorized the providing of a place for Christians to assemble for worship.

Our religion — our relationship to God — is our most important relationship. We must be absolutely certain about everything that we believe and practice.

- Batsell Barrett Baxter, 1916-1982, Preacher, teacher, elder, church of Christ

“... PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.” - Titus 2:14

WORK TEAM SCHEDULE: 5/3—A 5/10—B 5/17—C 5/24—D

Work Team A will meet Saturday May 2 7pm at the building.