

The University Heights Messenger

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Adorning The Doctrine Of God

By Sewell Hall

“Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well-pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things” (2 Timothy 2:9-10).

Normally, a master would not be the least bit interested in any religious doctrine which had been accepted by his slave. But this passage suggests that the slave could conduct himself in such a way as to adorn the doctrine, *i.e.* make it more attractive.

Moses E. Lard told of a Christian slave who walked 15 miles, bringing his 16 year old master, to hear him preach in Stanley, Missouri. When the invitation was given, the young master responded and was baptized that day. Later, the slave and his master met Lard on the road, invited him to preach in their own community, cleared off a place *“in the shade of some great trees,”* and provided seats for the people who would come. For several days and nights, the gospel was preached with the results that at least 40 were obedient to the gospel.

Lard concluded his report with these words: “Thus, kind reader, to a single act of a servant man in his fidelity to Christ, do I trace the origin of a church, the joy of a neighborhood, and the salvation of many a soul.” The church in time reached a membership as high as 300, and a church is still meeting in the building where they erected, though they have drifted from the original purity. Doubtless many souls were saved because Dick was the kind of slave whose life adorned the doctrine of Christ.

Godly lives alone will not save a lost world. The gospel of Christ is **“the power of**

God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16), but it can only save those who hear it. In the noise of our modern “information explosion,” mere words, powerful as they may be, can easily be lost in the din of secular babble and conflicting voices of religious error. If the gospel is to be heard, it must gain the attention of those who are hungry for it. This is best accomplished when people see the gospel being lived. Some have called this “lifestyle evangelism.”

Where churches are growing through true conversions, “lifestyle evangelism” is nearly always the method that is most fruitful. For many years, while work was being done in North Ireland, the Irish Republic was written off by brethren as an impossible field for evangelism. Yet, when a young Irish couple, who had been converted in South Africa, returned to their native Dublin just 19 years ago, it was the beginning of a congregation that has now grown to approximately 45 enthusiastic members.

How has this church grown so impressively? It has not been by Christians moving in; very few if any have done so. It has not been by large expenditures to utilize the mass media; such funds have not been available. There has been considerable door-to-door teaching and distribution of literature; but this has seldom brought a significant contact. The growth has been made because of the lives of those converted have been so completely changed that they have attracted the attention of their acquaintances to the gospel which changed them. In other words, their lives have adorned **“the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”**

Steve and Cora Kearney were the couple who returned as Christians from South Africa. The first to be reached with the gospel were those who had the greatest opportunity to

observe their lives--their family.

Steve's brother who was converted adorned the doctrine for a fellow-worker who was eventually won for Christ. Later, they formed a company together and I heard first-hand testimony of an accountant whom they employed. He reported that he began to suggest to them commonly used tax dodges that could save them considerable money, but after deliberation they always decided against using them. When he asked why they were not interested, they explained that they were Christians, and were determined to operate an honest and lawful business. He had never seen such Christianity, and his heart was opened to the doctrine which they eagerly shared with him. Similar stories could be told, explaining the conversion of most of the members of the congregation.

It has been well said that the darker the night, the brighter a light will shine. Moral and spiritual darkness has long existed in Ireland, but that darkness is deepening, as it is in Britain, in the rest of Europe, and the United States as well. Uncompromising godliness stands out more in contrast now than it has for many years. This means more ridicule and even persecution for **"those who would live godly in Christ Jesus"** (2 Timothy 3:12), but it also means a greater opportunity **"in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation...to shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life"** (Philippians 2:15).

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mathew 5:16).

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Dennis Brennan, a friend of Sandra Russell, is experiencing serious health problems.

John Bennett, an acquaintance of Jim Edwards, has been able to return home. However, he still deals with significant problems stemming from his accident.

Gail Hunter was able to join Brent in San Diego this past week. A tremendous weight has been taken off both their shoulders!

Our members: **Glenn Davis, Glenn Kimberlin, Janet Brundige**

Others: **Sara Phillips, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Warfel family, Gail Hunter, Kay Montgomery, Jean Gartland, Ruel Baker, Wes Kidd, Vera Howerton, Gail Stein, Glenn Goldy, Shannon Gilbert, Chuck McDavitt, the Shamas family.**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

The men's meeting will be today at 3:30.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Sunday: Prov 7-8, Ps 66, John 6

Monday: Prov 9-10, Ps 67, John 7

Tuesday: Prov 11-12, Ps 68:1-18, John 8

Wednesday: Prov 13-14, Ps 68:19-36, John 9

Thursday: Prov 15-16, Ps 69:1-18, John 10

Friday: Prov 17-18, Ps 69:19-36, John 11

Saturday: Prov 19-20, Ps 70, John 12

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. God Has Rights, Too
(Revelation 4:10-11)

Sunday PM. The Lament Of A Nation
(Lamentations 1:6-9)