

ISSUE

17.28

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

July 19,
2015

Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM

10:20 AM

6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Jeff Nunn

Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Steve Dixon

Ryan Ferguson

Arend Gressley

Ben Hight

Jack Langley

Blake McAlister

Brady McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Rusty Scott

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



Will Approach Be the Next Cause of Division? By Kyle Pope

In spite of the Lord's prayer that those who believe in Him should be one (John 17:20-21), from the early days of church history, there have been issues that have shattered this unity. In this country since the Restoration Movement first began, which called people back to the patterns of worship and church organization practiced in the New Testament, there have been divisions over many things. Brethren have parted over instrumental music, missionary societies, Bible classes, one cup in the Lord's Supper, located preachers, premillennialism, support of human institutions, the social gospel, the head covering, the discipling movement, and divorce and remarriage. When issues of Biblical authority



are involved such division may be unavoidable. If, on the other hand, we divide over personality conflicts, preferences and opinions, Lord will surely call us to account for such choices.

I have no power to know future events, but I am seeing some tendencies in recent years that make me worry about what could be a future cause of division looming on the

horizon. While the Lord's church upholds **“one faith”** (Eph. 4:5), just as Paul taught the same thing **“everywhere in every church”** (1 Cor. 4:17), the Lord's body is made up of different members with diverse abilities, strengths, personalities, maturity levels, and backgrounds (1 Cor. 12:12-30). This diversity is not only evident in our individual life choices such as where we work, what car we drive, or where we live, but also in how we carry out those authorized works of the church. Do we sing three songs or five? Is the contribution offered after the Lord's Supper or after the sermon? In some churches around the country I fear that these kinds of choices, regarding what could be called *approach* are coming to be viewed as tests of soundness.

For example, one church purchases a new song book with newer songs. They then look down on area churches that use older books. I once heard a brother mockingly speak of an older popular book as **“SCARED Selections.”** Perhaps one preacher uses a projector and computer to display his sermon while another has no visual aids. The latter accuses the other preacher of trying to “entertain the congregation” while the former accuses the other of being “backward” and “out of touch.” Perhaps in making the announcements one congregation chooses a brother who is enthusiastic and





readily displays emotion, while another congregation approaches all aspects of the assembly with a reverent solemn seriousness. One sees the other congregation as “cold” and “lifeless” while the other accuses them of “emotionalism” or becoming “like the charismatics.”

These tendencies are one thing when they are confined to private preferences that are a matter of individual choices. It is another thing when they are manifested in avoidance, criticism, or judgment of one another. Do we allow these kinds of issues to lead us to avoid supporting another congregation’s gospel meetings? Do we allow such choices to cause us to look down on our brethren? Are we openly critical of another congregation that is sound in their adherence to Scripture but different from us in approach? Have we considered how this type of behavior could affect the unity of the faith in the future? Are we prepared to explain to the Lord why we are divided from our brethren over such trivial matters?

My intent is not to over dramatize the dangers of this situation, nor to predict “doom” and “gloom” for God’s people. I am afraid that many of us have just never thought about how easily some of these attitudes could splinter God’s people (if they have not already done so). If a brother or sister gains comfort from the old songs they have sung since they were young we should not characterize them as “out of touch,” or “backward.” By the same token, the fact that brethren learn new songs in not (necessarily) some kind of apostasy. While the religious world has turned worship into entertainment, not all aids to teaching are (necessarily) used that way.



At the same time, we must not allow ourselves to become so addicted to technology that we can't be edified by a brother with a Bible and a word of encouragement. There is emotion that comes as a result of our relationship with God and His people. However, this emotion is a consequence not the

goal of sound faith. We must be very careful not to judge an individual or a congregation as sound or unsound; alive or dead; spiritual or carnal; cold or loving by the outward demonstrations of emotion. It doesn't mean that we have gone "charismatic" if we show some emotion nor that we are at "death's door" if we are more reserved.

In truth these things are much like the issues that Paul addressed concerning the eating of meats. Under Christ eating of meat was not a test of soundness, but rather a matter of indifference to God. The instructions that Paul gave to the church in Rome should guide our behavior in such matters as well. He wrote through the Holy Spirit — **"Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way"** (Rom. 14:13, NKJV).



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**We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.**

● Let us know if you have any questions.