

YOKEFELLOW

Vol. 30, No. 11

A Publication of the Memphis School of Preaching

November, 2003

Co-Editor's Column

SINGING, HUMMING,
WHISTLING?

Garland Elkins



Just a few years ago no member of the church known to me would have contended that humming would be acceptable in Christian worship. Yet, some time ago I received a phone call from a preacher in another state; and during our conversation, he stated that he was disturbed that a well known song director had recently visited in his section of the country, and while there participated in a worship service, during which he sang a solo while the entire congregation hummed. How long will it be before we hear of some song leader singing a solo while the congregation accompanies him with whistling? Can anyone show why humming is any more scriptural in New Testament worship than whistling? Would anyone like to try his hand on this matter? Humming and whistling are both vocal, are they not? The Lord did not authorize merely vocal music, but rather He authorized a certain type of vocal music, that is, singing. The New Testament teaches that we are to "sing" (Heb. 2:12; I Cor. 14:15). In singing we engage in "speaking" and "teaching" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Humming and whistling do not meet these requirements! Doubtless many reasons could be produced to show that humming and whistling are unscriptural. However, the following will suffice: A man who had been summoned to appear in court did not make his appearance. The judge was understandably upset. He asked, "Does anyone know any reason as to why this man has failed to appear in my court?" A gentleman replied, "Yes, your Honor, I can give one thousand reasons." The judge instructed him to state them. He said, "The first reason is that he is dead." The judge replied, "You may dispense with the additional nine hundred and ninety-nine reasons. The one you have given is quite sufficient." In like fashion, regardless of the numerous reasons as to why humming and whistling are not to be used in Christian worship, one is quite sufficient. Namely, there is absolutely no New Testament authority for their use!



From The Director

SHOULD
DENOMINATIONAL
PEOPLE BE ACCEPTED....?

(cont'd) THE ISSUE TO BE DISCUSSED

The burden of this work is, Are God's people by the authority of the Scriptures (Col. 3:17) to accept denominational people for membership into the Lord's church (the church one reads about in the New Testament, established by Jesus Christ on Pentecost of Acts 2) without their repenting of error and obeying the gospel? It goes without saying, incidentally, that we cannot "accept for membership into the church" those whom the Lord does not accept into [does not add to] His church (I John 1:3-7). Paul bemoaned the fact that some had "not obeyed the gospel" (Rom. 10:16). What does it mean to "obey the gospel"? One is directed to the Book of Acts (rightly called the "book of conversions") to see what inspired men (apostles and others on whom the apostles had laid hands) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit commanded lost souls to do in order to be saved and thus be added to the church Jesus built. After many thousands had obeyed the gospel, Luke was inspired by the Holy Spirit in recording a number of accounts of conversion as examples for all time to come. Thus, those commands and examples passed twice under the oversight of the Spirit; and, they cannot be wrong! Therefore, dear reader, if what you or I did to "be saved" is what they did, then we are right; however, if what you or I did is not what those folks were commanded to do and did under the teaching of inspired men, then we are that much wrong and, consequently, were not forgiven of our sins and added to the Lord's church. We need to be honest with ourselves in this matter, for our immortal souls are at stake (Matt. 16:26). When we make a thorough study of the examples of conversion in the Book of Acts (Pentecostians, Acts 2; Samaritans, 8:4-13; Ethiopian Eunuch, 8:26-39; Cornelius, 10:1-48; 11:14; Lydia and her household, 16:14,15; Philippian Jailor, 16:16-34; Corinthians, 18:1-8; Saul of Tarsus, chapters 9,22,26), we learn that they had to be told about Christ in order to believe (Rom. 10:17); this included preaching about His authority and about the kingdom He built (Acts 8:5,12). It included the necessity to believe (Acts 16:30,31; Heb. 11:6; John 8:24,21), and, it included the command to repent (Acts 2:38; 16:33; Luke 13:1-

(Continued on Page 2)

Memphis School Of Preaching

N. B. Hardeman Library
Completed • Great Benefit To All



Residence Apartments
Construction To Begin Soon

Yokefellow

Forest Hill Church of Christ
3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Germantown, TN,.....

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit
U S POSTAGE
PAID
GERMANTOWN, TN
PERMIT #94



Curtis A. Cates
Director



Keith Mosher
Dean of Academics



Billy Bland
Dean of Students



Garland Elkins
Dean of Public Relations



Bobby Liddell
Associate Director



Dan Cates
Instructor



Barry Gridler
Instructor



Annette B. Cates
Librarian



David B. Jones
Instructor



Jerry L. Martin
Instructor

NEWSLETTER from MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

Under the Oversight of the ELDERS
FOREST HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST

(901) 751-2242

www.msop.org
msop@msop.org

ELDERS
Anthony D. Callahan
Floyd M. Hayes
Harold Mangrum
Leonard Watson

DIRECTOR
Curtis A. Cates
CO-EDITORS
Curtis A. Cates
Garland Elkins

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Intensive Two-year Collegiate Program Of Strong Bible Emphasis Under A Qualified Faculty
- Recognized For Educational Excellence In Pulpit, Local Work, and World Evangelism
- 54 Courses, 164 Semester Hours, 2,960 Clock Hours, Two Full Years Of Transferable College Credit
- Established In 1966--Oldest School Of Preaching East Of The Mississippi
- Classes For Wives (Diplomas Awarded), Third Year Graduate Program
- New, State Of The Art Facility On 15 Acre Campus, N. B. Hardeman Library Building On Campus, Residence Halls Planned To Be Ready Soon
- No Tuition Or Fees, Scholarships And Housing Assistance Available.
- Approved For V. A. Benefits
- Accepting Applications Now. Write Or Call For Catalog And Application

Attend The Annual

MSOP LECTURES

Which Begin the Last Sunday of March and Continue Through the Following Thursday.

March 28-April 1, 2004 ••• Theme: "Sin And Salvation"

5; Acts 17:31). Further, it included the necessity of confessing Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:35-37; I Tim. 6:12,13; Rom 10:9,10; Matt. 10:32,33). Still further, preaching Christ included the command to be baptized in water for the remission of sins, born into the family of God (Acts 2:38,40,41; 8:12,38,39; 10:48; 16:15,34; 18:8; 22:16; cf. Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; John 3:3,5; I Pet 3:21; et al.), by which act the Lord adds the penitent believer to His church (Acts 2:47). Some would like to be accepted into the membership of the church Jesus built on the basis of their membership in denominations planted by men (Matt. 15:13). And, there are some who are going along with this request (increasingly so, it seems). Do we have the authority of the Lord to do that, brethren (Col. 3:17)? Does “our” accepting them for membership mean that the Lord has accepted them into the Lamb’s book of life (Exod. 32:32,33; Rev. 20:12-15; 3:5; 22:19; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 13:8)? Question: Can one’s name be added to the book of life by a different way from being added to the Lord’s church, His family, dear reader (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38-40, 47)? We must realize that even some “baptisms” are unscriptural. For example, John’s baptism administered after the cross was unauthorized and had no efficacy (Acts 19:1-5). What, then, about a “baptism” after one thinks he was saved or was taught he was saved at the point of faith alone (Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:8,9; Jas 2:24-26), before and without water baptism (Mark 16:16), or the person who prays the so-called “sinner’s prayer,” which is foreign to the Scriptures, or the person who confessed that “God for Christ’s sake has already pardoned me of my sins” [the wrong confession for a number of reasons], or the person who was “baptized” to enter a denomination, or the person who was voted on to become a member, or the person who was taught he was “saved” by a supernatural, miraculous working of the Holy Spirit or baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the person who was “baptized” supposedly “for the remission of sins” but into a denomination such as The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints [Mormons], or the Pentecostal Church, or the Catholic Church, or some such? There is but one baptism (Eph. 4:4). Will the Lord allow those things to be substituted for His specific, authorized, inspired, clearly commanded steps of obedience? Even the Lord cannot violate His Last Will and Testament, by which we will all be judged (John 12:48); the apostles bound and loosed what had already been bound and loosed in the mind of God, according to His eternal purpose regarding redemption and the church (Eph. 3:8-12; John 17:7,8; Matt. 16:18,19; 18:18; 19:28; et al.). That Word is unchangeable! IF “ACCEPTED FOR MEMBERSHIP,” WHAT? Some congregations at times have accepted denominational people into fellowship with the Lord’s church without repentance and obedience to the gospel. But, that act has some implications, consequences, and contradictions with teachings of Holy Writ. The writer recalls hearing brother Stoy Pate, outstanding preacher, relate an incident which happened at a service of a congregation in Memphis, in which a woman was accepted into membership of the congregation on her denominational baptism. He went up to the person after the service and told her what constituted scriptural baptism and how it contrasted with what she had done; being noticed by an elder, he was strongly rebuked for talking to, “confusing” her, and questioning what the preacher had done in accepting her as a member. Such acceptance is not a rare and isolated incident but is what the writer has heard more and more of recently. Brother Pate was keenly aware of the truth and was genuinely concerned about the lady’s soul. If persons are accepted for membership

on the basis of their denominational affiliation and/or baptism, they are being: 1. Accepted in spite of the fact that they have not “called upon the name of the Lord,” as commanded in Romans 10:13-17. Saul of Tarsus became a Christian when he arose, was baptized, and washed away his sins “calling upon the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). 2. Accepted in spite of the fact that they did not “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17), which means by His authority and teaching (Acts 4:7). 3. Accepted in spite of the fact that they had not subjected themselves to apostolic teaching and inspired, apostolic doctrine, to which all people are amenable (Matt. 19:28; 16:18,19; Acts 2:38-42; Matt. 28:19,20). 4. Accepted in spite of not having submitted to the headship of Christ (Col. 1:18, Eph. 1:22,23) and Who has all authority (Matt. 28:18). 5. Accepted in spite of the fact that they did not demonstrate Bible faith. The Greek word translated “believeth” in John 3:16 means “joyful trust in Christ. . .conjoined with obedience” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon). See also James 2:24-26; Mark 16:15,16; etc.

6. Accepted in spite of not being added to the church Jesus built, as were the Pentecostians (and others) who were baptized for remission of sins (Acts. 2:40,41,47). Since Christ is “himself the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:22) and since the body is the church (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18), then they have “membership” without being saved, for they were not added to the saved by baptism. 7. Accepted in spite of failing to make the good confession of God’s Son, Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9,10; Acts 8:37). If one can omit confession of Christ as the Son of God, why not leave off faith or repentance? Confession that “God for Christ’s sake has pardoned me of my sin” does not qualify, according to the Scriptures. 8. Accepted in spite of not entering God’s family, His household (I Tim. 3:14,15), through the new birth of water (baptism) led by the Spirit through the Word (John 3:3-5). Thus, one would hold “membership” in a congregation without holding membership in God’s family roll in heaven. 9. Accepted in spite of the fact that they are not married to Christ, the bridegroom, not sanctified, not “cleansed by the washing of water with the word,” as is the church, “that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27). God’s people would be and are married to Christ (Isa. 62:5; Rom. 7:4). 10. Accepted in spite of the fact that they have not been cleansed, purified, forgiven by the blood of Christ (Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13,14; Rev. 1:5). Christ’s blood was shed in His death (John 19:34); the blood must be contacted by being baptized “into death” (Rom. 6:3,4). Thus, one not scripturally baptized does not contact His blood and is not forgiven. No unclean person can pass over “The way of holiness” (Isa. 35:8; cf. John 14:6; Acts 24:14). 11. Accepted in spite of the fact that they are not in God’s house, the kingdom of God, where the great spiritual supper is prepared (Luke 14:15-24), wherein are salvation and all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). People cannot say, “I will stay where I am; Bring me a plate.” As noted above, one is baptized into God’s kingdom (John 3:3-5). 12. Accepted in spite of the fact that they were a party to the dividing of those who claim to follow Jesus and in strict violation of Christ’s prayer for unity (John 17:17-23). 13. Accepted in spite of believing and obeying denominational teaching and in spite of having thought they were saved by denominational doctrine, which is vain according to our Lord (Matt. 15:9; cf. Col. 2:8). 14. Accepted in spite of their never having been “delivered. . .out of the power of darkness, and translated. . .into the kingdom of the Son of his

love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13,14). Anyone can see that a person not translated from the world and not having been redeemed, forgiven, is still in Satan’s kingdom (Matt. 12:30). Dear reader, it is not a matter of our not loving these folks or of our not wanting them to be saved; it is a matter of whether they have done what the Word commands, is it not? The only way to change that is for us to love them enough to plead with them to obey the gospel. 15. Accepted in spite of their holding membership in a religious group planted by men; Christ, clearly talking about humanly established religious bodies, warned, “Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13). Are we authorized by God (Col. 3:17) to accept into membership without repentance and obedience to Christ those whom the Lord did not plant (Luke 8:11) and will not accept, come judgment day; is not the result of that very action to confirm them in their sin and rebellion and to give them false hope? Why is that not cruelty in the extreme, parallel to permitting and encouraging one in imminent danger to remain in a burning building? Is it valid and loving to make the excuse that we do not want to disturb or offend anyone? Is that not one of the innate characteristics of the Word, to disturb people who are living in the world to bring them to repentance (Acts 24:25; II Cor. 5:11; Heb. 10:31)? Thanks be to God that there are some who still believe in “telling you the truth” (Gal. 4:16) and in “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15)! See John 8:32; 17:17. 16. Accepted in spite of the fact that their sins have not been remitted and they are still in their sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Pet. 3:21). Whereas sins separate from God (Isa. 59: 1,2; Hab. 1:13) and cannot be in fellowship with God (I John 1:5-7), some persons arbitrarily attempt to “force” God and His people to accept into fellowship those who do not submit to the commands of Christ, for whatever “reason.” 17. Accepted in spite of the fact that they will not die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13) and will not be presented to Christ holy, sanctified at the day of judgment (Eph. 5:25-27). It is the person who has been baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26,27), who has been baptized into the one body (I Cor. 12:13), who is in Christ who has salvation (II Tim. 2:10), and who is a new creature (II Cor. 5:17, and who has been reconciled to God (II Cor. 5:19). One who does not submit by faith to water baptism into Christ does not have the hope of dying in the Lord, as every accountable must do in order to be saved eternally. 18. Accepted in spite of the fact that they are not priests and thus cannot worship God acceptably. When a person is baptized and thus enters into Christ, he thereby becomes a priest. The Lord’s church is a royal priesthood; every Christian is a priest (I Pet. 2:5,9). Dear reader, can you picture a priest without a sacrifice? See the book of Leviticus, and make a study on priesthood and sacrifice. Can we with God’s approval accept for membership one who has not died to sin and been baptized into Christ, thereby presenting himself “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Rom. 12:1,2), one not qualified to “offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name” (Heb. 13:15)? That one must be a priest in order to offer acceptable worship to God is made abundantly clear in the record of II Chronicles 26:16-21, wherein Uzziah the king “went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense.” However, he was withstood by eighty valiant priests, who said to the king, “It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto Jehovah, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense.” This prideful man, who was

not a priest but who insisted on burning incense anyway, was stricken with leprosy and died a leper. Christians are priests officiating under Christ, the High Priest (Heb. 9:11-28), and must offer up sacrifices in God’s house, the spiritual tabernacle, the church (cf. Heb. 10:19-25). “. . .and he made us to be a kingdom [those cleansed by His blood, Rev. 1:5], to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever” (Rev. 1:6). Thus, the person not cleansed by the blood of Christ and not in His kingdom by baptism is not qualified to offer the sacrifice of worship, cannot serve as a priest--not even such as a king. 19. Accepted in spite of not having been “called out” of the world into the “temple of the living God” (II Cor. 6:16-7:1), though the Lord’s church is the ekklesia, the “called out” ones (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23; et al.). 20. Accepted into the Lord’s army without having been “enrolled as a soldier” (II Tim. 2:4), accepted into the Christian race without having entered the race track (I Cor. 9:23-28), accepted to fellowship with workers in God’s vineyard without having been hired (Matt. 20:116). How sad to have “striven” and not be given the reward for having fought the good fight, the crown reserved for those completing the race, the pay for those having labored in the vineyard (II Tim. 2:6-8)! 21. Accepted in spite of being still at enmity with God, whereas reconciliation is possible only in the “one body unto God through the cross” (Eph. 2:16), into which one must be baptized (I Cor. 12:13). CONCLUSION Dear reader, our earnest, deep desire is that every accountable soul obey the gospel of Christ and be saved through God’s grace. The penitent believer, upon making the good confession that Christ is the Son of God, is baptized into Christ for the remission of sins, and is thus and thereby added to the Lord’s church. The one who is willing to submit to the authority of King Jesus and who realizes the value of his or her immortal soul will not trust in the commandments and institutions of men; that person will humble himself or herself before the Savior and submit to His will. Heaven is too magnificent and hell is too horrible to place one’s precious soul in imminent jeopardy by a refusal to comply with abundantly clear commands of God. Finally, how deeply sad it is for some to give those who wish to “please the Lord” the false hope that one can be saved and redeemed by having submitted to the doctrines of and having affiliated with the institutions (“churches”) established by men. Our Lord’s description of that situation is that “they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into a pit” (Matt. 15:14; cf. vs 13). Rather, one’s attitude should be, like that of Cornelius, “Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord” (Acts 10:33). The Ethiopian pleaded, when hearing Jesus preached, “. . .what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36).

INSTRUCTOR RICHARD L. CURRY PASSES TO HIS REWARD Brother Richard L. Curry, greatly beloved, highly respected, and gifted teacher in the Memphis School of Preaching for some three decades, as well as an outstanding gospel preacher, passed away on Monday, October 27, 2003. A special issue of the Yokefellow will be forthcoming, devoted to brother Curry.