

TWO CHURCHES WANT TO GROW (continued from page 2)

the elders may succumb to the pressures and ease up on its teaching. **The second church** faces no such pressure, for in its concern for the spiritual wellbeing of people, there is desire for truth on every subject vital to salvation.

The emphasis of **the first church** is organizational and institutional; the emphasis of the second is spiritual and heavenly.

We commend **the second church** to our readers. Serious problems can result when churches see growth as their primary purpose. If goals are to be set and goals can serve a good purpose let them focus on the number to be taught rather than the number to be baptized. If new approaches are needed, let them be conceived only if they are compatible with God's wisdom in efforts to reach others, let all determine to know nothing "except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When churches thus become really serious about saving souls, God will give the increase and growth will take care of itself.

— Bill Hall

Navarre News and Notes

Remember Those On Our Sick List: Joyce Barrett recovering from surgery for a broken arm, Shelby Durfee, Jim Wetzstein, Francis Mansfield, Starr Wilkins, Carrie Hare, Gerry Wiemert. **Remember in your prayers:** Houston Perry who will be home for a visit soon.

We meet on James M Harvell Rd next to the public library in Navarre. Call us for directions and more information (850) 939-8109



Navarre church of Christ
8490 James M Harvell Rd
Navarre, FL 32566

Place
Stamp
Here

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday
Bible Class for all ages.....9:00 AM
Morning Worship Service.....10:00 AM
Evening Worship Service 6:00 PM

Wednesday
Bible Class for all ages.....7:00 PM

VISITORS ARE WELCOME!

If you know of someone who would like to receive this publication, please let us know.

For a free Bible correspondence course by mail, call us.

Navarre Messenger



"Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." Matthew 11:1

Volume 3 Issue 1

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Thought To Ponder

Live today as you will wish you had lived when you stand before God.



2 Corinthians 5:10
Romans 14:10
1 John 4:17
Matthew 25:31-46

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Jim Bell
Evangelist & Editor

A MIXED UP WORLD

Human wisdom has rejected the Bible as the word of God and has decided that man evolved from lower animals, therefore they do not want to kill animals, but many of the same people have no respect for human life, therefore advocate unrestricted abortion. It is really a mixed up world!

Some do not want to wear any article of clothing made of fur, or any other kind of animal products, use animals for research or eat meat. According to the doctrine of reincarnation, they may be harming a relative!

What does the Bible say about this? First, if it is a sin to wear animal skins, then God sinned in the garden of Eden, when he "made tunics of skin" and clothed Adam and Eve (**Gen. 3:21**). When Noah came out of the ark, God said "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with the life, that is, the blood" (**Gen. 9:2,3**). God did not know that it was "cruelty to animals" to eat meat. Paul said that one doctrine of those who departed from the truth would be "commanding to abstain from

foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (**1 Tim. 4:4,5**).

John Clayton commented: "Is nature cruel? Do animals possess a sense of self that makes death a personal tragedy? The evidence suggests that the answer is No! The fact that males will frequently kill their own offspring and that many forms of life will eat a member of their group that has died suggests that there are other forces at work. Predation (preying on other animals) is not a wanton and cruel act..."

"If we recognize that living things are not unevolved men but products of a design which ensures survival of the species and are programmed to fit the design, we will be better equipped to manage our world and also will be able to understand acts in nature that many interpret as blatant unwarranted cruelty" (Does God Exist? 1990).

The theory of evolution and the Eastern religion's doctrine of reincarnation have influenced us more than most may realize. When men reject God's revelation, they get values confused and even reversed. In short, if vegetarianism is mandatory, the Bible is false! — Frank Jamerson

Check us out on the internet: www.navarrechurchofchrist.net

TWO CHURCHES WANT TO GROW

Two churches want to grow, but their attitudes toward growth differ greatly.

The first church looks upon growth as its primary purpose. Goals are placed before the membership: "We want to double our membership within the next three years," for instance. Success (or failure) is judged almost entirely on the basis of that congregation's numerical growth.

The second church looks upon the saving of souls as its primary purpose and any growth in membership is just a natural result of that primary purpose. Members of the second church are infused with the value of immortal souls rather than a sense of congregational pride.

Members of **the first church** become eager to get people to the water. Baptism is the point at which people are added to the membership list; consequently, it's going to take so many baptisms to keep pace with their goal of doubling their membership. They must not only get them to the water, they must get them there within the time period that has been arbitrarily set by their leaders.

Members of **the second church** are far more eager to get people to repent. Their concern is for additions to the Lord's body rather than additions to a membership list. Their approach is to bring sinners to a consciousness of their sin and the consequences of remaining in sin. If they can do this in one study, great! But if considerable time is required to uproot false concepts and to plant the true seed of the gospel, they patiently accept this. Their only sense of urgency grows out of the uncertainty of life and its duration. But they know that shortcuts are not the answer; that baptism without repentance is worthless; and that once people are brought to true repentance, having been properly taught, baptism for the remission of sins will follow. So they wait with longsuffering until the gospel brings about its desired effect in the hearts of those whom they are teaching.

Members of **the first church** will be tempted to use questionable tactics in their approach to people. The old methods and approaches don't seem to be effective any more. New and more positive approaches must be found. So the members of the first church make their appeal to the pride of people. They persuade them of their self-worth; they build their self-image; they tell them how valuable they would be to the congregation.

"We need you," they tell their prospects. They might also extol the virtues of the congregation, persuading their prospects of the value of being a part of such a vibrant, growing group of people. So, people "become members," and they conform to the rules that are placed before them for acceptance within the group, but there may have been little grief over sin; in fact, they might even still believe they were Christians before they "became members."

The members of **the second church** recognize that the gospel never makes its appeal to the pride of people. They bring people to see their spiritual bankruptcy; that they have "nothing to pay"; that their true worth is not to be found in self, but in Christ; that they must humble themselves and look to Christ for their exaltation; that they are sinners in desperate need of salvation; that their only hope is to be found in Christ.

They would bring them to say, in the words of Mrs. C.H. Morris:

*Nearer, still nearer, nothing I bring,
Naught as an offering to Jesus my King,
Only my sinful, now contrite heart;
Grant me the cleansing Thy blood doth impart.*

The first church may become compromising in its teachings. Its elders intend to maintain doctrinal soundness, but there is the pressure to produce, to maintain the growth rate set before the congregation. When doctrinal soundness becomes an obstacle to that purpose, the elders

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JESUS BELIEVED IN BIBLE AUTHORITY

The seed of error is born from the rejection of a need for authority. When men choose to establish worship upon their own feelings and notions while rejecting the word of God - apostasy begins. Eve disobeyed God because the devil gave her reason to question the authority of God. The law of God was simple to understand: (Genesis 2:16,17). A small child can understand these instructions. When the devil came to the woman, the first thing he said was: "Has God indeed said?" (Genesis 3:1).

The worship of God has always been challenged with these words and when men answer the question as Eve did, error begins. The children of Israel knew it was wrong to bow down to idols as the Law plainly taught but teachings as commandments the doctrines of men, they became worshippers of the creature rather than the Creator. The warning given by Paul in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 shows how men would turn from the authority of God to their own desires: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."

Jesus believed in the authority of the word of God. The tempter came to Jesus and sought to destroy him as he did Eve in the garden with the three elements of temptation: (1 John 2:16). Notice how Jesus dealt with each temptation - "It is written" (Matthew 4:4,7,10). It mattered not what Jesus thought nor what Jesus would say but only what the Father had established in His word. His condemnation of the religious world in His day was taken from the prophet Isaiah: "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain

they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8,9).

Our worship and service to God can only be based upon the authority of the word of God. We may proclaim that "we preach the word" but when we allow the doctrines of men to creep in among us and declare those things not found within the word of God, we stand in jeopardy of the same condemnation given to those Jews in Jesus time.

In churches throughout the country, women are leading in prayer and taking a more public role in the worship. Because the teachings of men have so long directed the affairs of man in worship to God, nothing is seen wrong with this kind of activity. What would Jesus say to such things? He would begin by saying, "It Is Written Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (1 Corinthians 14:34; 11:3 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14).

Bible authority means that what we have given ourselves to do is to follow only - ONLY - what is found in the word of God. If it cannot be established with a "thus saith the Lord" then the 'saith' will not be of the Lord but of men. When men begin to envelop themselves with the pride of life they begin to teach doctrine contrary to the will of God. Stand fast on the word of God and the word of God alone!
Kent E. Heaton
-In *Gospel Power*, Anderson, AL

