

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

November 23

2008

"Have No Fellowship"

The apostle Paul declared, *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."* (Ephesians 5:11. To obey this commandment demands that certain judgments and decisions must be exercised. When a teaching or practice is examined in the light of God's word and found to be contrary thereto then we must have no fellowship with those who teach and/or practice the thing in question.

Through the years there have been various doctrines and practices introduced by men that resulted in division among brethren. One thing that all of these have had in common is that those who introduced the false teaching or practice accused those who opposed their teaching or practice as being the ones who "made it a matter of fellowship."

When mechanical instruments of music were introduced into the worship of the church those who used the instrument were very quick to point out that they would not refuse fellowship to those who refused to use the instrument. When brethren noted that the use of the instrument was without Bible authority and that they could *"have no fellowship with"* those who insisted on its use those who used the instrument accused them of being responsible for the break in fellowship. The truth being that those who insisted on the use of the instrument were responsible for the division.

Years ago when I left a group which taught the false doctrine of

premillennialism the preacher from that group came to me and expressed his disappointment over my leaving and said, "James, we should not let the fact that we have differences over the events surrounding the second coming of Christ prevent us from having fellowship with one another." The fact that he could continue to fellowship me did not change the fact that I could not uphold the false doctrine of premillennialism by extending fellowship to those who taught such.

Sometimes men may refuse fellowship to one who is in fellowship with God. When Paul returned to Jerusalem following his conversion Luke tells us, *"he assayed to join himself to the disciples"* (Acts 9:26). At first they were afraid to receive him. Their fear was based upon their knowledge of what Paul had been when he left Jerusalem. When they learned from Barnabas of his conversion they then received him.

This example does show us that such decisions (to receive or not to receive) are based upon our understanding of what the truth is on any particular subject. Those who use instrumental music in worship believe that we are wrong for refusing to extend fellowship to them. I know from personal experience that those who teach the false doctrine of premillennialism believe we are wrong for refusing to receive them. However, if I am convinced that someone is teaching or practicing something that is contrary to the teaching of Christ I cannot bid that one "God speed" without becoming a partaker of his false teaching or practice (2 John 9-11). He may accuse me of "drawing the lines of fellowship" but no one (including that person) can have fellowship with those he sincerely believes to be in error.

✍ James Hahn



"Can I Get An Amen?"

The true story is told of a Bible class teacher who was speaking to a group of four year olds about prayer. When she asked the class what "Amen" meant, one of the boys immediately replied, "That's easy. 'Amen' means over and out!" Don't you just love kids?

Unfortunately, "over and out" may be the answer most adults

would give. It seems like you only hear an “Amen” at the end of public prayers these days and the person leading the prayer is the only one who said it. It’s as if the only reason we have to say “Amen” is to let God know that our prayer is over and all who may be listening can now open their eyes.

Maybe we would hear more “Amen’s” in our assemblies if we had a better understanding of what it means.

The English word "amen" is a transliteration (It is represented by corresponding letters in another alphabet). Amen comes from the original Hebrew word AMHN, derived from *aman*, which means "to be firm, steady, trustworthy, faithful."

Common translations of the word include "So be it, Let it be, It is true, Right on, I agree, I concur, Verily, verily, or Assuredly."

When we say "Amen" we are affirming something as the truth. It is more than just agreeing to a statement. It is affirming God Himself. (Heb. 11:6).

- **We should say "Amen" for what he as done.** *“Blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen”* (Psalm 72:19).
- **We should say "Amen" for what we know God can do.** *“The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen”* (2 Timothy 4:18).
- **Most importantly we must recognize Him as “the Amen”** and the Affirmation of Truth. (Revelation 3:14)

God encouraged His people to say “Amen” for many reasons in the Old Testament. A woman accused of being unfaithful had to take an oath that she will be cursed if guilty, and she would agree to the terms with "Amen" or “so be it" (Numbers 5:22). The entire nation said "Amen" when they were read the terms of the curses pronounced in Deuteronomy 27:15-26. Those who were charging excessive interest to their fellow Jews agreed to repent with an "Amen" and *"did according to this promise."* (Nehemiah 5:13). When David returned the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem all the people said, “Amen!” as they praised the Lord (1 Chronicles 16:36). When Ezra

read every word of the Law and blessed the Lord all of the people answered “Amen, Amen!” (Ezra 8:6).

In the New Testament, Jesus often used the term as a means of emphasis or affirmation (Matthew 6:2, 10; 16). He concluded His parables about judgment and hell with a “so be it” (Matthew 13:40, 49).

It was apparently commonplace to hear “Amen” in first century churches. In 1 Corinthians 14:16, we see that those who were listening to the blessings or “giving thanks” would say “Amen.” It is also noted in the context of this verse that no one should share their affirmation if they did not understand what was being said. This suggests that an “Amen” should not be used flippantly or in a habitual way.

Ultimately, we need to understand that “Amen" does not suggest the end of the matter, but the beginning! It is acknowledging that Truth has been given and we believe it. It must be affirmed by God’s people. As one writer wrote, “Amen is not just a word we say but a decision we make.” May we be people who can say with full conviction and without fear “Amen!”

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”
(Revelation 22:21)

✍️ Phil Robertson

<h2>Belleville church of Christ</h2> <p>5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258 www.bellevillechurch.net</p>	
<h3>Schedule of Services</h3>	<h3>Elders</h3>
Sun. Bible Study... 9:30 a.m.	Charles Carpenter... (317) 839-3873
Sun. Morning Worship... 10:30 a.m.	James Hahn. (317) 745-1507
Sun. Evening Worship. 5:00 p.m.	
Wed. Bible Study... 7:00 p.m.	
<h3>Evangelist</h3>	<h3>Deacons</h3>
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507	Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
	Don Perry. (765) 676-5825
	Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514