

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

February 1

2009

WHOLE-HEARTED SERVICE

In Deuteronomy 6:5 we read, *"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."* This describes the only service with which God has ever accepted. God, through the prophet Isaiah, condemned Israel of old by saying, *"Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me"* (Isaiah 29:13). Jesus quoted this statement of Isaiah and applied it to the Jews of His day (Matthew 15:8).

I have often said that there is no such thing as putting God second in one's life. He is either first or not at all. That is why people who seek to offer half-hearted service unto God are only deceiving themselves if they think God will accept such.

Jesus said, *"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"* (Matthew 6:24). Also, *"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad"* (Matthew 12:30). Both statements emphasize the fact that there is no middle ground when it comes to serving the Lord. We are either serving Him with all our heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22:37) or we are not serving Him at all.

Let each one honestly examine himself or herself and ask the question, "Can I truthfully say I am rendering whole-hearted service unto the Lord?" What if you allow just any little thing to prevent you from assembling with the saints? What if you never put forth any

effort to teach those who are lost? What if you use profane or foul language? What if you tell or listen to obscene or dirty jokes? One who engages in such activities can not truthfully say they are wholeheartedly serving the Lord.

Paul said, *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"* (Colossians 3:2). When we do this we will then render whole-hearted service unto Him.

✍ James Hahn



THY SPEECH BETRAYETH THEE

One morning, a few months ago, a middle-aged man knocked at my door. When I opened the door he politely bowed and quickly introduced himself as a "member of the church of Christ" in a certain northern town. He informed me of his terrible predicament. He looked the part he was portraying — a helpless, poor, neglected and destitute man who had no family or friends on earth. Before he had finished his story he had told me three times he was a "member of the church of Christ," and on one occasion that he was a "faithful member" back home. I did not favor him with the help he requested because I knew he was lying about being a member of the church of my Lord, hence about some of the other things, probably.

You may inquire, How do you know he was lying about being a member of the church of Christ? I answer, Because he used strange language that showed a complete lack of Bible knowledge. Any man or woman must have more knowledge of the Bible than he had before he or she could become a Christian. He used these expressions frequently: "Reverend," "your denomination," "I used to sing in the choir," "I was christened when a child," and "when I got religion."

Christians who have been "faithful" in the "church of Christ" as long as he said he had been a member would know better than to call a gospel preacher — or anyone else for that matter — a "Reverend." A Christian would know that the Lord's church is in no sense "a denomination," and that "christening" does not have any place in New Testament practice. When I informed that man of his mistakes in language his reactions further indicated that he was lying about being a Christian. At first he turned red in the face and began to accuse me of not wanting to help poor people. He then tried to correct his

mistakes by completely reversing his story and telling me he wanted to "test me" to see if I was really a gospel preacher. Needless to say, he soon left without my aid. When one will lie about his religious life for the sake of money he has something to hide that makes him unworthy of anybody's help.

Now what is the principle to be learned in this experience? We must learn how to use language that will indicate what we really are — Christians. Peter said, *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"* (1 Peter 4:11). Again, *"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man"* (Colossians 4:6). We are coining phrases every day in expressing a Christian's activity and relationship that are nearly as wrong as the language of the man just referred to. We are calling the meeting house the "church" with such regularity that our children think that is really the church. We talk about "church" weddings, "church" funerals, "church" picnics, "church" showers, etc. We talk about the preacher in a way that he becomes the HEAD of the local congregation. "Our preacher said," "our preacher does," "our preacher approves," etc. Then we talk about "The church of Christ doctrine," "the church of Christ preacher," "the church of Christ people," etc. This is not Bible language, and does not display the knowledge of God's word that we should have.

We are involved with organizations that call for terms unheard of in the word of God. "Captains," "chairman," "superintendent," "circles," (yes, he have a few of them), "committees," "youth clubs," etc. What place do these terms have in the simple organization of the Lord's church? We talk about "mission points," "brotherhood work," "sponsoring agency," "central point," etc. These are not scriptural terms. We are either practicing something that we ought not to practice, or we are calling a thing something that it ought not to be called. Let us speak as the Word speaks and we will stay on the right track and speak in right language.

✍ H. E. Phillips



“A-Rod: Affairs Not Relevant”

That’s according to an *Associated Press* story in the *Port Huron Times-Herald* (8/1/08, 2B). Alex Rodriguez (“A-Rod”) is the baseball superstar who plays for the *New York Yankees*. Unfortunately A-Rod and his wife of

five years, Cynthia, are getting a divorce. In court documents Mr. Rodriguez contends his affairs are “immaterial and impertinent.”

His adultery may be “immaterial and impertinent” to Mr. Rodriguez and even to Mrs. Rodriguez. However, such is not the case with God! Long ago Job said: *“For this [adultery] is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.”* (Job 31:11) Adultery remains a “heinous crime” and sadly a crime that’s more and more common in our society. Sexual immorality, of which adultery is a form thereof, remains the only reason for which God allows divorce (Matt. 19:9). According to God’s word Mr. and Mrs. Rodriguez should both be concerned about A-Rod’s affairs; they are “material and pertinent”! They should be “material and pertinent” to Mr. Rodriguez since *“those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Gal. 5:21), and according to Matthew 19:9 if he divorces he has no permission from God to ever remarry! The affairs should also be “material and pertinent” to Mrs. Rodriguez since *“sexual immorality”* on her husband’s part offers the only reason whereby she may divorce and then subsequently remarry with God’s approval.

Unfortunately I doubt whether either Mr. or Mrs. Rodriguez really cares about the spiritual ramifications of their impending divorce. But some day they will... *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* (2 Cor. 5:10) If we truly love God we’ll obey all His commands (1 Jn. 2:3-5; Lk. 6:46; Jn. 14:15), no matter how difficult we perceive them to be (1 Jn. 5:3).

✍ Craig Thomas

Belleville church of Christ	
5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258	
www.bellevillechurch.net	
Schedule of Services	Elders
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.	
Evangelist	Deacons
James Hahn. (317) 745-1507	Leon Nevins (317) 272-2966
	Don Perry..... (765) 676-5825
	Alvin Stanley. (317) 831-3514