

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

April 26

2009

Editor's Note: I wrote the following article nearly seven years ago in response to an article that appeared in a Lexington, Kentucky newspaper. As we see more and more acceptance of the sinful conduct discussed in the article I thought it beneficial to reprint the article here. (JH)

“Traditional and Christian” Values

The June 23, 2002 edition of the *“The Lexington Herald-Leader”* devotes much of the front page to a story about two homosexuals who got a woman to be a surrogate so they could have a baby through invitro fertilization. This story tells much more about our society than it does about this specific story.

It is so sad that such ungodly behavior takes place, but it is even sadder when such behavior is praised and “merits” front page status of a newspaper. It is also a sad commentary on the newspaper and its editors when such a story is given such praise and attention.

The story states that *“the surrogate mother was initially pregnant with quintuplets.”* The decision was made to abort (kill) one of the babies to help the chances of the other four’s surviving. This killing is referred to by one of the men as a “reduction.”

The most disgusting aspect of the whole story is the affirmation of the men in saying *“they can provide the babies with a loving home and with values they describe as traditional and Christian.”* One of the men said he *“looked to God for guidance”* and had asked, *“Why can’t people like us have children?”* and now he is asking, *“God, why did you pick us for these babies?”* Such statements are nothing short of blasphemy.

If the men were wanting guidance from God then why not go to God’s word and follow His directions. We do read in the Bible of the “values” described in this article. Paul has much to say about such in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans. Paul described the conduct discussed in this article in Romans 1:26,27. He said, *“For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due.”* Let’s look at some of the terms Paul uses to describe such behavior and see how it compares to the glorified account given in the newspaper account. Paul calls such “ungodliness and unrighteousness” (v. 18), “uncleanness” (v. 24, “a lie” (v. 25), “vile passions” (v. 26), “against nature” (v. 26) and “things which are not fitting” (v. 28).

Many other passages could be cited to show God’s attitude toward such conduct. However, Satan continues to use the same methods he has used from the very beginning. When he was able to get Eve to look upon that which was condemned by God as something good and to be desired (see Gen. 3:6) she did eat. Today he is succeeding in getting men to look upon that which is an abomination to God (homosexuality and killing innocent babies) as just an “alternate lifestyle” or a “woman’s choice” or, as stated in this article, a “reduction.”

What is the real cause of such conduct? Paul gives us the answer. He said, *“they refused to have God in their knowledge”* (Rom. 1:28). Since they refused to have God in their knowledge Paul says *“God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness”* (v. 24) and *“God gave them up unto vile passions”* (v. 26) and *“God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting”* (v. 28). This is just another way of saying that God allows them to suffer the consequences of their own decisions and actions.

Another sad aspect to this story is that there are going to be four innocent babies who (if they live) will be brought up in an environment where they, too, will be taught that things which are an abomination unto God are to be accepted.

It may be too late to change the thinking of many in our society

but I plead with all who love and respect God and His word to speak out against such ungodliness and unrighteousness.

✍ James Hahn



Another Reprint: The following article was also written several years ago, but just recently I have heard remarks from some who ridicule the idea that our preaching needs to be distinctive. One of Satan's most effective weapons through the years is the appeal to compromise with those who reject truth that peace may exist. The peace we need to be concerned about is peace with God. This can only be accomplished by holding fast to the truth and refusing to compromise (Proverbs 23:23). *(JH)*

DISTINCTIVE PREACHING

For some time I, and others, have expressed concern about the kind of preaching that is being done in many places today. In expressing this concern I have frequently said that much of the preaching that is being done today could be done in any denominational church without any change and it would be accepted.

Some have interpreted this concern as saying that our "difference from denominations" is the measuring stick for our preaching. No one that I know who has expressed this concern over the lack of distinctive preaching has suggested that this is the measuring stick for our preaching nor have they lamented over the lack of "church of Christ" doctrine in the preaching being done. In fact, the men I have heard expressing concern over the kind of preaching being done have been the ones who have spoken out against the denominational concept of the church and are the ones who emphasize the distinctive message of God's word. They are the ones insisting that the word of God is the only standard of authority and that we must respect that authority. When this kind of preaching is done on a regular basis you will be teaching men and women what they must do to be saved; that Christ is THE way and that He is the Saviour of THE church (Acts 2:38; John 14:6; Eph. 5:25). We are not talking about lessons from time to time that may deal with some Bible character or lessons from his life. We are talking about a compromising spirit on the part of far too many who will not preach what the word of God teaches on the plan of salvation, the church, the work of the church, the worship of

the church, the organization of the church or the truth on many other moral and doctrinal issues.

I am ready to affirm that when we preach the gospel in its purity and completeness that teaching will not be accepted by denominationalists, not because we have sought to "offend the denominations", but because it is the truth. Brethren, don't be deceived into thinking that the willingness of denominations to accept certain lessons you may preach is an indication of their "closeness to the truth." That acceptance is based on the fact that the particular lesson may be something with which they agree. For example, I could go to a Baptist Church and preach a lesson showing from the scriptures that baptism is immersion and every word I say be true and be accepted by them but that would not mean they were "close to the truth" on what the Bible teaches concerning baptism. They still deny the truth on baptism and its purpose.

We need to realize that when we seem to be closer to the denominations than we used to be it is not due to the denominations coming closer to the truth; it is due to our leaving the truth. It is a shame when men are criticized and misrepresented when they make an appeal to get back to preaching that will convict men and women of their sins and teach them what they must do to be saved. This kind of preaching will not be accepted by the denominations but it will be pleasing to God and that's what is of real importance.

✍ James Hahn

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sun. Bible Study... 9:30 a.m.
Sun. Morning Worship... 10:30 a.m.
Sun. Evening Worship... 5:00 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study... 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Charles Carpenter... (317) 839-3873
James Hahn... (317) 745-1507

Deacons

Leon Nevins... (317) 272-2966
Don Perry... (765) 676-5825
Alvin Stanley... (317) 831-3514

Evangelist

James Hahn... (317) 745-1507