

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

October 18

2009

Two Deaths

A little over three months ago Julia Manley underwent surgery to remove cancer from her jaw and mouth. Julia never recovered and this past Saturday, October 10, she departed this life. A few weeks ago Martha Martin learned that cancer had returned and had been in the nursing home since then. Monday evening, October 12, Martha's life on this earth came to an end.

Both of these women had much in their lives worthy of imitation. Julia had obeyed the gospel many years ago and after her first husband died she remarried and went with her second husband to a denominational church. A few months ago Julia expressed her desire to repent of that departure from truth and her intent to return to the Lord and to once again serve Him as a member of the Lord's church. Her intent was to undergo the cancer surgery and, upon leaving the hospital, worship with the saints at Belleville. As noted, she never recovered from the surgery. However, we are thankful Julia acknowledged her desire to return to the Lord while she had the opportunity to do so. She was a very kind, loving and giving individual who will be missed by all who knew her. Julia had no immediate family but James and Sherry Boles have taken care of Julia and James was at her bedside when she died.

Martha Martin has been a faithful servant of the Lord for many years. She was such an encouragement to all who knew her. Martha has had several health problems for some time but worshiped with the saints every time she was able to be present and many times when she really was not able to be out. We will miss her here at Belleville. We extend our deepest sympathy to all of her family. (JH)

RELIGIOUS UNITY IS IT POSSIBLE?

That Jesus desires unity of all who believe on Him (John 17:20,21) is a fact that no Bible believer can deny. However, it is readily observed that division exists among those who profess faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Many even look upon such division as a good thing. They say it is good to have all the different churches teaching different doctrines so that each person can "join the church of his or her choice."

Those who promote and encourage such fail to realize that this division is contrary to all that the Bible teaches. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to "*all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you*" (1 Corinthians 1:10). This is the only way unity can exist. As long as you have men teaching and believing different doctrines there will be division.

It is a simple thing to say that the only way we can have unity is for all to speak the same thing. It is another matter for this to become a reality. As noted, some do not even believe that being divided is a bad thing. Others, who recognize that division is bad and unity is to be desired, are convinced that obtaining that unity is an impossibility. Is it possible for all believers to be united? If so, how can this unity be achieved?

Some have determined that the only way unity can be achieved is by everyone agreeing to disagree. This is not the unity Jesus prayed for. This is not the unity Paul besought the Corinthians to have. The unity Jesus prayed for was unity of all who believed on Him through the apostles' word (John 15:20). I read an article several years ago entitled "*Christ's Unanswered Prayer.*" The author of that article noted the existence of all the different religious groups teaching different doctrines as evidence that Christ's prayer for the oneness of all believers had not been answered. I do not believe that Christ's prayer is unanswered. He prayed that all who believe on Him through the apostles' word or doctrine would be one. Division results when men do not believe on Him through the apostles' word.

The early disciples continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42). As a result they were together (Acts 2:44) and were of one accord (Acts 2:46). The same is true today. All who continue in the apostles' doctrine are united with all others who do likewise.

Division results when someone turns from that doctrine.

Some will say, "But you are not going to get everyone to believe the same thing or teach the same thing." This may be true but is it due to it being impossible for all to believe the same thing or is it due to their refusal to believe the same thing? What is taught in the word of God that all can not believe?

The Bible teaches that the disciples were called Christians and that it is in this name we glorify God (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16). Many today are wearing names other than or in addition to the name Christian. As a result men are divided by the name or names they wear. To abide in the word of Christ (John 8:31) we can not wear names not found therein. What about the name you wear in religion? Can it be found in the word of God?

In the first century, when men and women heard, believed and obeyed the teaching of the apostles they received the remission of sins and were added by the Lord to the church. No differing denominations existed. They were Christians and as such, were His church (Acts 11:26). If we today hear the same message they heard, believe the same as they did and obey the same thing they obeyed what will we be? If they could hear, believe and obey the gospel and not become a member of any denomination then why can't we do likewise? In fact, to become a member of any denomination one must believe and obey something other than the Bible. If a person accepts the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice then he must reject all denominational doctrines since they can not be found in the word of God.

Yes, religious unity is possible, but we must be willing to reject the doctrines and commandments of men and put our faith in God and His word. If we will do so we will be speaking the same thing and there will be no division (1 Corinthians 1:10).

✍ James Hahn



HAVE YOU NOTICED?

Have you noticed that some people can get more upset over a scratch on a new car than over a fellow man lost in sin Is it possible we have our priorities out of order? Please read Matthew 16:26 to learn what is of real value. (JH)

Conservative!

To distinguish between brethren who hold to a "thus-saith-the-Lord" and those who are loose in their attitude toward authority, the words liberal and conservative have become quite common. It may be that we come to think of ourselves as "conservative" merely because we oppose human institutions attaching themselves to the Lord's church, refuse to see the Lord's church turned into a social club, and maintain that elders are to oversee "the flock of God among them." But there is a great deal more to being "conservative" – in our attitude toward authority in all aspects of our lives.

Probably the area in which a lack of respect for authority is manifest most on the part of those who claim to be "conservative" is in day-to-day living. Christians who use bad language and tell off-color jokes lack a proper respect for authority no matter what else they oppose, and thus they are not really "conservative."

Those who fail to adorn themselves in modest apparel when they appear in public, do not respect divine authority and, therefore, are not conservative no matter what claims they may make!

Looking for perfection? No, sir, but for people who are trying their best. How much effort do you make to *"let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt?"* How much effort do you make to always appear in public places clothed in such a manner that people are impressed with the fact that you walk with the Lord? How much effort do you make to always tell the truth, never to be dishonest in anyway, to always say what ought to be said about other people?

How "conservative" are you?

✍ Aude McKee

Belleville church of Christ

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www.bellevillechurch.net

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