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- Two Full Years Of Transferable College Credit
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Bobby Liddell, Editor
FOREST HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST
Under the Oversight of the ELDERS
NEWSLETTER FROM MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

CONTRIBUTE TO HELP GBN AND MSOP

As we come to the close of 2011, we reflect upon the many opportunities afforded us in this last year. One that promises great blessing is the announced move of the Gospel Broadcasting Network to Memphis. On land adjacent to the Forest Hill campus, home of MSOP, GBN plans to erect a building that will serve as their offices and studio. They have very graciously offered for MSOP to utilize this facility in training our students in media work and broadcasting.

We are very much excited about the wonderful benefits afforded to the godly men who attend MSOP, as they now will have the availability of learning technology and methods that will enable them to reach potentially millions of souls.

Without the generous, timely contributions of those who believe in the need for both MSOP and GBN, this opportunity will never be realized. **We need all who can to respond quickly to this plea.** Congregations and individuals, across our great brotherhood, can join together with us in reaching the lost with the saving gospel of Christ, proclaiming our Lord, and exalting His name. Please respond today. Send your generous contributions to:

Gospel Broadcasting Network, Inc.
3969 Cloud Springs Road
Ringgold, GA 30736

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“MY GENERATION LOVES CHRIST”

Some have publicly stated: “The older generation loved the church, but **my generation** loves Christ.” What should we conclude from this statement?

First, although probably not intentionally, the statement falsely implies there is a difference between loving the church and loving Christ. Christ “loved the church” (Eph. 5:25). We should love what Christ loved, and Christ was not wrong for loving the church. Does loving the church mean NOT loving Christ? If one loves the church, according to biblical teaching, He does so BECAUSE he loves Christ. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments” (1 John 5:1-2). If we love Christ, we will love the church, for “the children of God” are the church (1 Cor. 12:12ff). If we do not love the church, we do not really love Christ, for the church is His body, of which Christ is the Head (Col. 1:18). The false teachings of “The Man, not the Plan,” and “Relationship, not Religion,” condemn those who do not love the church, for Christ “loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25).

Second, the statement under consideration indicates we need a history lesson. For most, there would not be a pulpit in which to stand, a building in which to meet, or a congregation with which to work (and by which the preacher is paid) were it not for the sacrifices of the “older generation.” Some preachers, who denigrate older brethren, would not have the education and training (freely given to them) that enabled them to be preachers were it not for the toil, sacrifice, and steadfast commitment to Christ, AND His church, of the older generation – to whom they should be forever thankful. They may not even have had the opportunity to know Christ, to hear the Gospel, believe it, and be in the church, were it not for the older generation. We owe much to those who have gone before us, who have fought the battles, and paid the price. Upon their shoulders we stand, and we would do well to learn from their successful efforts to bring the lost to Christ and to exalt Him by building up His church.

Third, such a claim may give the impression of a “holier than thou” attitude (Luke 18:9). Shall we disparage the spirituality of brothers and sisters because of their age? My experience has been that age (when indicating years of faithful service) has greatly enhanced the

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spirituality of brethren (2 Cor. 4:16). Shall we malign a generation just for being “older,” or, for their loving the church? Shall we vilify them for their diligent labors, ridicule them for their seasoned viewpoints, or dismiss them for their imperfections? Is the Christ, Whom we love, pleased when we sow seeds of discord by falsely defining generational values, encouraging distrust of brethren because of their age? And...have we considered that we may be old one day?

Fourth, this statement makes an error by generalization; that is, by being far too broad in its scope. Unless our knowledge is inclusive of what every member of the older, and younger, generations of Christians believes and practices, we have no ability to make such a statement. We might well ask, “Where is the proof for the assumption?” Regrettably, many are more likely to generalize, very confidently, about how extremely wrong others are, while comforting themselves in the assumption that their own goodness has neither limit, nor fallibility, when in fact we should all exclaim our need for God’s mercy (cf. Luke 18:9ff). If it were true that older brethren truly do not love Christ, those who do “love Christ” should have no fellowship with them.

Fifth, the statement above indicates a need to study what God’s Word says about loving Christ (John 14:15; 1 John 3-5). Those who love Christ respect His authority (Mat. 28:18; John 12:48), respect others (Mat. 7:12; 25:40), and humbly submit themselves in service to both. Those who love Christ will study the Bible, and will by practicing what they learn from the Word of God, manifest increasing maturity and ability to: display godly behavior, demonstrate love for the saved and the lost, devoutly worship God, discern truth from error, determine the correct course to follow (individually and congregationally), discuss biblical topics accurately and intelligently, and defend the truth about Christ and His church. If someone wants to show a generation’s spiritual excellence, let him look to these characteristics as proof. Without these, what will prevent ingratitude, ignorance, and immaturity from becoming the new man made standard for “loving Christ”?

Sixth, the statement means we need more Bible teaching concerning respect for our elders (1 Tim. 5:1ff), humility (1 Pet. 5:5), sober mindedness (Tit. 2:6), and love for one another (John 13:34-35). The statement under consideration could easily be construed, whether intended, or not, to be a sign of egotistical elitism (a supposed superior self-importance), and self-promotion. In other words, it could be taken to indicate an ungodly, haughty attitude. Surely, we dare not dismiss a generation of

brethren, in order to push them out of our way, that we might elevate ourselves, gain control, and impose our wills upon them. This is not the way to show love for Christ, nor is this the way to build up the church.

Seventh, it means we need to be careful what we say, and to work to be clear in how we say it. It is indeed possible for brethren, of all ages, to have misconceptions of Christ and the church. It is possible that some brethren may go to one extreme, while others go to another, but we need to weigh our words, and be sure we are stating the truth, and that we do so with the right purpose of heart. Otherwise, we may do harm, instead of good. If brethren have missed the truth concerning Christ and the church, would not love for Christ demand a humble, loving approach in seeking to teach them better (Gal. 6:1-2)?

We need to remember that one’s attitude toward the church is his attitude toward Christ. When Saul “made havoc of the church,” in that “beyond measure [he] persecuted the church of God, and wasted it,” the Christ took Saul’s attacks personally, saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 8:3; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Acts 9:4). If we are wise, we will do our best to work with all our brothers and sisters, in order to promote the unity of the church, and to exalt the Christ. **If we are Christians, we will love Christ AND the church** (Eph. 4:1ff).

Bobby Liddell

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (I)

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

I am not aware of a “perfect” English translation of the Bible but the standards I use are the King James (revised since 1611) and the 1901 American Standard. There exists a multitude of modern versions, of which number are some which are biased by the theological positions of the translators. Because of the foregoing problem, I am often asked about which version to use and lately I have been asked about the English Standard Version which was first published in 2001 by Crossway Bibles which is a division of Good News Publishers.

The stated intent of the English Standard version translators was to publish a Bible which followed the tradition of Tyndale’s work and of the efforts of the King James translators. However one Mark L. Strauss presented a paper at the 2008 Evangelical Theological Society entitled, “Why the English Standard Version

Should Not Become the Standard English Version.” Strauss (who is not fond of literal translations) argued that the ESV is “awkward, obscure, and ‘Biblish.’” Biblish is a term used to describe translations that fail to reproduce the original language without consideration of how people actually speak. A Greek expert, William D. Mounce counter-argued (Mounce was on the ESV translating committee) that since Strauss was not in the translation committee meetings that Strauss’ arguments were simply ad hominem and not factual. (Mounce even stated that there is not a “right way” to translate a verse.)

The ESV is a revision of the 1971 edition of the Revised Standard Version and carries some of the doctrinal biases of the original 1945 Revised Standard. (Bible students may recall that the latter version eliminated virgin from Isaiah 7:14 and made several other attempts to denigrate the deity of the Christ. The ESV committee, to its credit, put back the term virgin in the foregoing verse.) The general editor of the translating committee of the ESV was J. I. Packer who worked closely with the very liberal National Council of Churches in receiving permission to revise the 1971 edition of the RSV. There is also a January, 2009 edition of the ESV, not from the original committee, but from Oxford University Press that incorporated the inter-testament Apocrypha and the pseudepigrapha of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Old Testament. The ESV has been growing in popularity among seminarians and it should be noted that the non-canonical books were included in this latest edition for use by seminaries and schools of divinity for academic study purposes. (Note, this latter reason seems to mean that the publishers are trying to find ways to sell this Bible.)

The text of the ESV is based on the Masoretic Hebrew Bible in the Old Testament, as are the Old Testaments of the KJV and the ASV. The Greek text chosen for the New Testament work was the United Bible Societies’ fourth (corrected) edition from 1993 and the Novum Testamentum of 1993 edited by Nestle and Aland. There have been three editions of the ESV from the original committee since 2001—one in 2007 and one this year which revisions are not known to me yet. *(To be continued.)*

MSOP STUDENTS WORK IN CAMPAIGNS

Jesus instructed the apostles to go “into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). At the Memphis School of Preaching, we emphasize to our students the necessity of teaching the lost. Consequently, they participate in evangelistic campaigns each Spring and Fall. October 30 through November 3, groups of students worked in campaigns with the **Cleveland Church of Christ** (Bankston, AL), **East Hill Church of Christ** (Pulaski, TN), **Hwy 69 Church of Christ** (Columbus, MS) and the **Trenton Church of Christ** (Trenton, MO).

In the Cleveland campaign, workers knocked on 1,028 doors, resulting in 5 Bible studies, and 1 correspondence course. **Larry Fife** (MSOP 2009) is the local evangelist. **Jerry Martin** (Dean of Students, Instructor, and MSOP 1979 graduate) preached in the nightly meetings.

In Pulaski, students invited the community to hear a special series, (presented the next week) by **Dave Miller**: “America’s Most Pressing Concern.” This was a unique opportunity for the church, as atheists (outside Pulaski) had opposed one of the local school’s having a prayer led by Robert Hatfield. The community was ripe for lessons on this topic. **Paul Sain** (Honorary Alumnus, MSOP 1995) and **Robert Hatfield** serve as the capable and faithful preachers for the East Hill congregation.

Curtis A. Cates, Sr. (Director Emeritus) preached in the campaign in Columbus. Campaign workers knocked on 1,659 doors, resulting in 21 Bible Studies, and 69 correspondence courses. **Brian Adkins** (MSOP 1984) preaches for the Hwy 69 congregation.

Gary Colley (evangelist for the Getwell congregation, Instructor, and Honorary Alumnus, MSOP 2010) preached in the Trenton campaign. 1,800 doors knocked resulted in 3 Bible Studies, 5 correspondence courses, and 1 baptism. **Dustin Wilson** (MSOP 2008) is the preacher for the Trenton Church of Christ.

We thank God for the opportunity for our students to sow the seed (Luke 8:11) in these campaigns. Christians have the responsibility to plant and water, and it is God Who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:9). *Billy Bland*