

One Heart



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Teaching Because We Are Obedient



Graduate of the Elk City School of Preaching; over 36 years of preaching experience; A.S. from SWOSU; B.S. and Ed.D. from OSU; M.S. (1969) UI; author of several books; Director of OKCSBS.

by Marion R. Fox

The most fundamental reason to teach the gospel to others is because of our love for both God and our neighbor (Mt. 22:34-40).¹

Is it possible to do what God says to do, without loving God? The apostle Paul answers this question for us:

Phil. 1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: 16 the one *do it* of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; 17 but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.

By the usage of a contrast, the apostle Paul demonstrates that those who preached Christ "... of envy and strife" were not preaching of love ("... of good will"). I do not see how a person can please God without loving God. These (of Phil. 1:15-17) were doing one thing that God said to do, but were not pleasing to God.

The writer of Hebrews wrote: "and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of

eternal salvation;" (Heb. 5:9). From this I determine that: "All those who obey him" (God) have salvation. Were those of Phil. 1:15-17 merely doing what God told them to do, without obeying God, or were they obeying God? Many people think that obeying is the same as doing what the other person says to do.

Obedience Contrasted With Doing

When most people are asked their definition of obedience they reply "doing what one is told to do." In this article it will be demonstrated that this is not a correct definition. Note how God distinguished between doing and obeying: Deut. 27:10, 30:8, and Jer. 11:4.

Deut. 27:10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of Jehovah thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.

From these passages it is evident that obedience is not the same as doing. Obedience entails placing one's self under subjection to another – it means submission of one's will to that of another. An obedient man is a doing man but not all doers are obedient. The Scriptures establish this point because Paul taught (Eph. 6:5-6 and Col. 3:22) that some are men-pleasers,

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RESTORATION HISTORY

Evangelism in Early American Churches

by *Frank R. Williams*

Can anything be learned from a study of evangelism and the early church in America? Without doubt, this writer answers in the affirmative.

The Power of Personal Work

The earlier churches of Christ in America did grow. They grew through their evangelistic efforts. The earliest efforts to restore New Testament Christianity started with one person talking to another. James O'Kelly was the first of whom we have any evidence of directing people "Back to the Bible." Near the same time two other men are known to advance the same thought. These two men were Elias Smith and Abner Jones. Their efforts rested mostly in person-to-person efforts, followed with house meetings. Thus, the first efforts at evangelism may truly be described as "personal work." The efforts of James O'Kelly resulted in a group of twenty thousand converts according to Dabney Philips (*Restoration Principles and Personalities*, p. 17).

Elias Smith not only advanced this effort by one-on-one evangelism and house-to-house meetings, but he also published the first paper of the "Restoration." His paper was called the "Herald of Gospel Liberty" and had a list of 274 subscriptions. With this, Jones had introduced the printed page to their evangelistic efforts to restore Christianity. The efforts of O'Kelly, Smith, and Jones, rested mostly in that they called people away from denominationalism and toward the New Testament pattern of Christianity. Their efforts were simple but powerful, as they used what they had at the time.

The Power of the Printed Page

Alexander Campbell wrote: "The tongue of the eloquent orator and the pen of the ready writer are the most potent instrumentalities of moral good and moral evil in the world" (ibid, p. 219). The first major effort to clarify Christianity and to separate it from denominational doctrines was Thomas Campbell's

"Declaration and Address;" thus, the printed page was used in the earliest efforts to evangelize the lost. Dabney Philips called Thomas Campbell "the architect of the Restoration movement" (ibid, p. 19) and the reason for such was his "Declaration and Address" which introduced the printed page to evangelism. Yet, Thomas also used the house meetings as a tool in evangelism. These house meetings produced some most interesting periods of debate and learning. In one such meeting Thomas coined the phrase: "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; and where the Bible is silent, we are silent." Upon hearing this, Andrew Munro said: "If we adopt that as a practice, then there is an end to infant baptism." To which Thomas Campbell replied: "If infant baptism is not found in the Scriptures, we can have nothing to do with it." Thomas Acheson followed with: "I hope I may never see the day when my heart will renounce that blessed saying of the Scripture, 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not;'" to which James Foster stated: "In the portion of Scripture you have just quoted there is no reference to infant baptism" (ibid, p. 26). Thus, we are here able to see that these house meetings were not without debate. It was also in one of these house meetings that Campbell said: "In faith, unity; in opinion, liberty; and in all things, charity." Thus, the usefulness of these house meetings was most productive and converts to truth were gained.

If the greatest evangelistic tool in the early years of the churches of Christ in America was the printed page, then it also can be said that no one made better use of the printed page than did Alexander Campbell. Perhaps he saw the power of the printed page in his father's "Declaration and Address." The first issue of the "Christian Baptist" came from the press on July 4, 1823. It was a small paper in which a year's bound volume contained only 300 pages. This paper was read both by members and non-members of the churches of Christ. Campbell expressed the aim of the paper in these words: "The Christian Baptist shall espouse the cause of no religious sect, excepting that sect 'called Christians at Antioch.' Its sole object shall be the eviction of truth, and the exposure of error in

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doctrine and practice.” (Ibid, p. 221) Philips wrote: “It is possible that this publication produced the greatest revolution in religious thought in the nineteenth century.” (Ibid, p. 221) In reading the works on the history of the churches of Christ in America, it is not uncommon to read of seekers of truth who came across a copy of the “Christian Baptist,” who then followed up on what they read, obeyed the gospel, and became a Christian.

Others saw the power of the printed page. Barton W. Stone edited the “Christian Messenger from 1826 – 1845. The theme of Stone’s paper was Christian unity and the nature of the paper “breathed of the gentleness of warmth of the ‘apostle of unity’” (Ibid, p. 227). The paper was filled with words of unity, such as: “We who have taken the Word of God alone for our rule of faith and practice, are the only people that dare speak out fearlessly. We have no name to lose – already it is cast out as evil. We have no salaries at stake – this might be a temptation to be silent. We have no fear of offending our brethren and fellow-sufferers for the kingdom of Christ, while we walk in the truth and keep within the Bible.” (Ibid, p. 228)

A number of those who read these papers obeyed the gospel and became preachers. In these two papers we may learn that both types of writing and preaching are needed in our own efforts to evangelize.

The Power of Preaching

Preaching, the power of the voice proclaiming the truth, was heard throughout the land of this young nation. It may be noted, when it came to preaching, that Barton Stone was regarded as the evangelist, while on the other hand Campbell was the teacher. It is said that Stone appealed to the heart, meaning the emotions, while Campbell provided information for the mind. Stone is quoted as preaching: “The doctrines of the Bible, we believe, have never divided Christians, but human opinions of these doctrines, without charity, have already done the mischief.” (Ibid. p. 95) One of the more unusual preachers of the time was John “Raccoon” Smith. He knew how to get people’s attention. He once said: “Come, friends, and hear what the great Thales thanked the gods for. First, that he was endowed with reason and was not a brute; second, that he was a Greek and not a

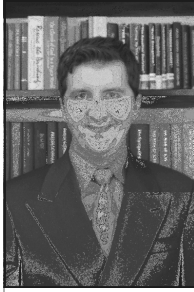
barbarian; and third, that he was a man and not a woman.” (Ibid. p. 118) Indeed, he knew how to get people’s attention. Another preacher was Walter Scott who became known as the “Golden Oracle.” He did much preaching in evangelistic meetings in the “Western Reserve” which reached out into Ohio and Indiana. One of his favorite things to do before starting a gospel meeting was to introduce himself to children in the area and ask them if would like to learn a five finger exercise. He would then have the children to raise their left hand and to begin with their thumbs to repeat, “Faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Ibid. p. 136) These early preachers, proclaimed the gospel in meetings in houses, under trees, in school houses and in meeting houses.

Last but not least, debates were regarded as a great tool in evangelism. Alexander Campbell said: “one debate did more good than a year of preaching.” (Ibid. p. 66) Campbell had five major debates. Truth shines brightest when standing side by side with error.

It is hard to reduce fifty years into a few paragraphs but the early church in America was a very evangelistic church. They walked, rode horseback, and traveled in horse and buggy, but wherever they went, the gospel of Christ went with them. They established churches in the cities, in valleys, and in the mountains. They talked the gospel, they preached the gospel, they wrote the gospel, they debated the gospel, and all the while they lived the gospel. The churches of Christ grew throughout the young nation and yes, if we have a mind to learn, we can learn from their efforts.

The greatest lesson to be learned from the early church in America is that they used what they had. Some men were willing to preach, so they went out and preached. Some men could write, so they printed journals. Some men could debate, so they stood in defense of the gospel. Some men could teach the Bible, so they taught under the shade tree, in the school houses, and in other meetings places. They used what they had to serve the Lord.

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by *Scott Elliott*

Evangelism in the 21st Century

Christians have been evangelizing for hundreds of years, but their methods have not remained the same. Evangelism is one of those areas within the church where God has given us the command, but He has not regulated how we are to fulfill it. God, in His infinite wisdom, knew different cultures and generations would respond differently to various methods. Although methods may vary, the most important thing is that the message remains the same. We must remember that it is not the method that converts, but it is the message. Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation..." Although the message contains the power this does not mean we should ignore the method. One method might be better than another when it comes to getting the message across. For example, you wouldn't give a deaf person audio tapes to listen to. God has not specified how we should evangelize, but He expects us to be wise in our decisions.

The first thing we need to realize is that there is not one magic method available. Different methods will have different results. One method might be successful for some time and then become out of date. If we realize a method is no longer working, we should not cleave to it simply because it was successful in the past. Some church members might be more comfortable using one method over another. Whatever you are using, make sure you are comfortable and familiar with the material. Occasionally people are sold on a program or a method, because it is made to sound easy. No matter what you use you still need to know your Bible and you are still going to have to do some work. Converting souls involves time, study, and patience, but all of it is worth it in the end.

Some of the methods we are using now are not having the same results as they once did. We are not seeing huge numbers of people being converted because of debates, gospel meetings, door to door evangelism, etc. Does this mean we should stop these efforts all together? I don't believe so, but I do think we need to come to grips with their ineffectiveness. We might look for ways to improve all of these efforts. We might continue these efforts along with others that seem to be more successful. We have lots of options. Elders, preachers, and members should openly discuss what is and isn't working within their congregation.¹

One method that has found some success among

several congregations is the publication House to House/Heart to Heart. This publication is sent out to households within your community or near your building. It is sent out every other month and it is a great way to spread the gospel. You should know that House to House/Heart to Heart is designed to get people interested in the gospel. Do not expect this publication to do all of your work for you. Once you receive a contact (This could be someone who visits, calls, or replies by mail) you have to do the work. It is still up to individual members to set up Bible studies and visit those who show an interest in the gospel.

Another effective way to reach the lost is to use the contacts you already have within a congregation. Have members identify friends, family, and neighbors who are not Christians. Encourage each member to work with the contacts they have identified. They can set up Bible studies or invite them to services. A congregation might consider having small Bible studies with several members who invite their contacts. This could be done on a weeknight at an individual's house. In our recent past we have tried to do much of our evangelism within church buildings. There is nothing wrong with this, but we must also understand that there might be some people who are uncomfortable or intimidated by a church building in their current situation. Evangelism should not be something we do just once a year. It should be an everyday part of our life.

I believe the most important thing to remember when it comes to evangelism is to be sincere and genuine. Often times, people come off as salesman when they are trying to evangelize. Most people do not like this. We must let people know that we truly care about them. We must get them to understand that we are not trying to sell them a doctrine, but we want them to know what the Bible says. There are many good methods available and I would encourage everyone to use what works, but the most effective method I have found is to simply sit down with a person along with an open Bible and simply talk. Discuss the Scriptures without getting into a debate or an argument. If a person has an open and honest heart they will see the truth and readily accept it.

¹ - Each congregation is different. What works in one congregation might not work in another. Some congregations might find debates, gospel meetings, door to door evangelism, etc. to still be successful in their area.

Cruciform Preaching

by Hugo McCord (1911-2004)

The word "cruciform" is new to this octogenarian, but I am glad to learn what it means: "cross-shaped," a word that points to the pain and indignity and shame that Jesus endured because, said Paul, he "loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20, NIV).

One can say that Paul defined cruciform preaching as he wrote, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14). "Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2) was all that Paul preached, and all that he wrote about in 13 books. But included in his cruciform preaching was a fiery threat toward those who "do not obey the gospel" (2 Thessalonians 2:7-9). If cruciform preaching is limited to Calvary, all people will be saved, for, "by the grace of God," Jesus died "for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). Since "many," said Jesus, are on "the road that leads to destruction" (Matthew 7:13), cruciform preaching by itself is not enough.

A well-intended preacher thinks "the core" of the gospel, the four gospels, are more important than the rest of the New Testament. Indeed the four gospels are indispensable, but God did not think they were enough; his New Testament consists of 27 books. It is not complimentary for an uninspired man to minimize 23 inspired books, Acts to Revelation. It is shocking to read that the 23 books, Acts-Revelation, are simply "the shadow of the reflection of a ham sandwich," the ham sandwich being Matthew-John.

The core of an apple is indispensable, but useless without the flesh. Kirk Caselman not only does cruciform preaching, but also he preaches the rest of the New Testament. He knows the importance of the core of an apple and the core of the gospel, and he also knows the importance of the flesh of an apple and the

flesh of Christianity, namely, "sound doctrine" (healthful teaching, hugies didaskalia, 2 Timothy 4:3) as found in all 27 books of the New Testament. He writes, "While we are preaching THE CORE GOSPEL, and becoming THE CRUCIFORM CHURCH, we must still identify "false prophets" (Matthew 7:21-23) and straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town (Titus 1:5)!" We need, Kirk says, "THE WHOLE WILL OF GOD".

The apostle who wrote that nothing was in his preaching but Christ and him crucified also wrote that all that he wrote in his 13 books "are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37). It is not possible to preach Christ and him crucified without preaching the commands of Christ: "If you love me," he said, "you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). He who "does not keep his commandments is a liar" (1 John 2:4).

If one only uses the four gospels to tell sinners what to do to be saved, he could please everybody by listing five different plans of salvation: (1) faith only (Luke 7:50); (2) faith of associates (Mark 2:5); (3) charity and restitution (Luke 19:1-10); (4) prayer only (Luke 23:43); and (5) faith and baptism (Mark 16:16). If we do not go beyond the four gospels, we wind up with a do-nothing, powerless group, being told to "tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

As important as is cruciform preaching (and may no man minimize that "core"), it is but a prologue to Christianity. Everything in the four gospels was prior to the "beginning" of Christianity (Luke 24:49; Acts 11:15). ...

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that is one who does what he is told to do, possibly while the master is looking.

Eph. 6:5-6 Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Col. 3:22 Servants, obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord:

These “men-pleasers” were not obedient, or else Paul would not have told them to be obedient.

In some passages the word “doer” is used to describe one who obeys (Jas. 1:22). Every word must be defined by the context, as here the doer is equivalent to one who is obedient. All who obey are doers but not all doers are obedient.

King Saul, is a good example of one who did much of what God said but ultimately was not obedient (1 Sam. 15:1-23). Obedience is more than doing most of what God said to do. If one has yielded his will to the other person, he will do all he is able to do, not just what he likes or what he sees needs to be done. Obedience is better than worship (1 Sam. 15:22). Even something as important as worship is not more important than first obeying (yielding our will to) God.

Obedience Emanates From a Proper Attitude

While many religious people claim that all one needs is a proper attitude, some members of the Lord’s church seem to take the opposite view. Some take the view that all we need to do to please God is to do what He says. The truth lies in the middle rather than in these two extremes. In truth, if one has the proper attitude, he will do whatever God says to do, and it could then be said that his proper attitude saved him. On the other hand, it could be said that doing all that God has said to do will save a person because God has commanded us to love God and our neighbor (Mk. 12:28-31). Obviously, love (the proper attitude) is obedient (Deut. 30:20 and Jn. 14:14-15, and 21-24).

The elder brother (Lk. 15:11-32) is an example of one who did not have a good attitude. The elder brother viewed his service to his father as slavery (Lk. 15:29). In this passage the Greek word for “slave” is used by the elder brother. He viewed his service to his father as slavery, and did not do it with joy. He is like those who give grudgingly (2 Cor. 9:7). Our service to God must be cheerful.

We are blessed if we delight in the law of the Lord (Ps. 112:1-2).

Ps. 112:1 Praise ye Jehovah. Blessed is the man that feareth Jehovah, That delighteth greatly in his commandments. 2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: The generation of the upright shall be blessed.

This blessing is expressed repeatedly (Ps. 1:1-2). Jesus delighted in the Law of God, it was in His heart (Ps. 40:7-8). This is why it is said of the Lord that he obeyed (Heb. 5:8-9).

The Motives for Obedience Are Progressive in Nature

People are motivated to do various things in several different ways. Obedience to God is no different than obedience to man in that several different motives may be present (to varying degrees) in man’s obedience to God.

The Scriptures use the development of a child to depict the growth process of a child of God. As a babe in Christ we may be like babies, that is we may be somewhat self-centered. A babe in Christ may be motivated by one of the most basic reasons to obey, fear (2 Cor. 5:11, Pro. 16:6, Acts 17:30-31, etc.). We may try to teach the lost because we are afraid we will be punished if we do not teach them. Many preachers appeal to this motive to “whip the brethren in line.” Fear should be used on a more carnally minded person (Acts 24:25), but not upon mature Christians (1 Jn. 4:18).

As one develops beyond the babe-in-Christ stage he begins to have more of a desire for reward as his central motive (Mt. 16:27, Phil. 3:14, and Heb. 11:6). He wants to escape Hell and go to Heaven, and this motivates him in his obedience to God. Fear has become less

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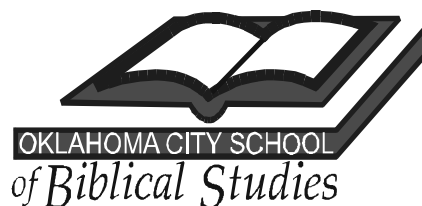
of a motivation for what he does.

The mature Christian will have grown beyond fear and even beyond a desire for reward. He will be motivated by his love for God (1 Jn. 4:17-18). This perfect (mature or full-grown) love casts out fear. Our fear becomes more of a respect for God. Even our desire for reward changes its focus; we cease to think about what we will get out of our service and begin to obey in order to please God. As we progress toward maturity, we will progress from a fear-centered motivation, through a reward-centered motivation, to a love-centered motivation.

1 - In my book, *The Great Commission* (pp. 51-62), I set forth reasons to teach the gospel to both the saved (to edify them) and the lost (to give them reasons to believe and therefore to become obedient to the gospel).

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See page 11 for class schedule.

The Unfaithful Are Lost Too

by Benjamin J. Williams

I recently heard it taught by some self-proclaimed evangelism experts that the gospel needs to be taken to the non-Christian, but the unfaithful Christian has to find his own way home. I was surprised to hear this. However, as I thought about it, I realized that it was not the first time I have heard this taught, though normally it is taught implicitly through a lack of emphasis more than as an explicit doctrine. If you read material being written today on evangelism, it mostly centers on the “unchurched,” those lost souls with no church background. Older material from the restoration preachers emphasized converting people from denominational backgrounds in order to unite all believers in Christ. We should not forget however that each congregation I have ever known has a ripe field for evangelism in bringing back those that have fallen away. Consider this simple command given by Paul:

Gal. 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Evangelism, in the generic sense, is not a need that is unique to those that have never tasted of the grace of God. Spiritually minded Christians should be looking out for our brethren, rather than letting them

fall through the cracks into obscurity.

Are unfaithful members any less lost than others? Truthfully, they may be “more lost!”

II Pet. 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

Do these erring brethren deserve less than our sincerest efforts to restore them? Have we any less duty or commandment to affect their restoration than others?

If love fails us, then perhaps practicality will make the case clearer. In evangelism, some of the most difficult work is in acquiring contacts. With unfaithful members, we already have the contacts! We know their names, addresses, birthdays, and hobbies. They are our families and friends. Why not go to these first and most often, even as the Lord began with the lost sheep of the house of Israel?

I would love to see elders and preachers conducting “restoration” campaigns as often as we knock doors. Perhaps we shy away from this because we hope for meeting a new face that will be easy to convert, rather than laboring to restore a brother.



WORD STUDIES

What Is Evangelism?

by Benjamin J. Williams

When we speak of evangelism, we may have a broad category of concepts in mind, or we may be describing a very specific type of work. Phillip (Acts 21:8) and Timothy (II Timothy 4:5) are both called evangelists, and there is little doubt as to the type of work that they did. It was the work of preaching in the sense that includes a formal role or office as in Ephesians 4:11. From these Biblical examples, we would conclude that the word evangelism may have a specific usage. However, the English dictionary shows that in modern parlance, we do not always have something so specific in mind. Merriam Webster's describes the word as primarily meaning "the winning or revival of personal commitments to Christ," but also includes something so vague as "militant or crusading zeal." Has our modern word bloomed to include more than its Biblical predecessor?

The Greek term (εὐαγγελίζω) that is associated with "evangelism" is also its etymological root. The word is a compound of the prefix εὐ meaning "good" and the term ἀγγελος meaning "messenger" (this is also where we get the English term "angel"). The verb form had the original sense of bringing a good message. As a noun, we can see two forms of the word, one (evangelist, εὐαγγελιστής) emphasizing the messenger and the other (gospel, εὐαγγέλιον) emphasizing the message itself. However, we often see Greek words with a general meaning in extra-Biblical Greek used in a more limited way in the Bible. Baptism for example comes from a generic term meaning "immersion," but no one has any doubt that the sense of the term is limited when Paul defends "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5). Is evangelism limited in this way?

Clearly the term "gospel" takes on a specific meaning. Though translated from the generic εὐαγγέλιον, the gospel is the specific news of Jesus Christ's coming, work, and saving doctrine:

Mark 1:1-2 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

It can be specified further to mean the doctrine of

Christ concerning a specific subject:

Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

As to the means for delivering that message, we may have another example of a limited term. Since the term "evangelist" was formalized, we might expect the verb "evangelize" to be limited in this way as well. Certainly the King James translators believed this. Of the 52 occurrences of εὐαγγελίζω, the KJV renders it into some form of the word "preach" in all but 7 occasions. One of those occasions is Romans 10:15, where the Greek New Testament quotation (and the LXX rendering of Isaiah 52:7) uses a form of this term twice in the same verse. The KJV, as most versions, use the Hebrew text as a guide to distinguish the repeated terms, rather than translating the phrase:

ὡς ωραιοι οἱ ποδες των εὐαγγελιζομενων
ειρηνην των εὐαγγελιζομενων τα αγαθα

as some variation of "How beautiful the feet of the ones preaching peace *and* the ones preaching the good things." Here we can see that the term is used to describe more formal or authoritative "messaging," as it is used here synonymously with κηρύσσω, the formal term for preaching (as discussed in the Word Studies section of the Winter '06 Issue).

Another interesting example of this term is in describing the work of the Apostles in Acts 5:42. The Apostles (the antecedent from v. 40) were described: "they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." To teach (διδάσκω) is a term that the New Testament uses in an exclusive way to describe authoritative teaching, whereas our English term is broader. In what sense are these two terms used here? Were the Apostles handing out tracts and living exemplar lives to teach and preach? Though they undoubtedly lived exemplar lives, this is not at all the sense of these two terms here. The Jewish council had threatened them because of the formalized teaching that they had been doing (see them doing preaching and teaching in Acts

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2 & 3 for example).

Even on the rare occasions where *εὐαγγελίζω* is not translated as a form of “preach,” it often can be understood in that way. The angels were sent to “shew” or “bring” glad tidings (Luke 1:19; 2:10), but surely the tone of the message from an angel of God was not merely conversational. It was a formal declaration that struck both the shepherds and Zacharias with fear (Luke 1:12; 2:9). Jesus evangelized in Luke 8:1, where the term is used in conjunction with “preach” (*κηρύσσω*) again, likely describing the authoritative teaching style of Christ. Paul uses the term when he describes the formalized witnessing of the Apostles (not the vague “witnessing” encouraged by the denominational world) by saying, “we declare unto you glad tidings.” (Acts 13:32). The KJV renders the word as “declared” to capture the divine revelation of God to the prophets (Rev. 10:17).

However, examples can be cited where evangelism may be used in a broad sense. Timothy is said to have “brought us glad tidings,” not of the gospel message, but of the faith and charity of the church in Thessalonica (1 Th. 3:6). While this could have been an authoritative discourse of some kind, it could easily be understood as simply one person speaking conversationally to his brothers in Christ. Luke, who uses this term more often than any other New Testament writer, uses the term to describe the work of the entire dispersed church in Acts 8:4. Most translations render this term as “preaching,” but that is not necessarily the case. Since the term is used of the general number that was scattered, it may have included all types of what we today would call evangelism, ranging from the conversational tone of Timothy’s report to the more authoritative role when appropriate. This is not the only possible interpretation of this verse. It could be that since evangelism is almost exclusively used in the New Testament for the actions of Apostles, preachers, angels, or Christ himself, the term “those who were scattered” only describes the evangelists (etc.) who were scattered. It might be more natural to understand that the evangelists who were scattered were evangelizing than to say that all people who were scattered are doing something that no other passage attributes to them specifically. Further proof might be found in the remainder of the chapter as Philip an evangelist is said to have gone and proclaimed (clearly authoritative preaching, *κηρύσσω*).

He is shown as an example of the preaching of the dispersion. Alternatively, it would not be poor interpretation to say that either all the scattered (men and women) did some type of otherwise undefined generic evangelism (as Priscilla participated in the informal explanation given to Apollos, Acts 18:26), or that all the scattered (men and women) did some type of authoritative teaching or preaching to different groups. The women may have followed the example of Miriam the prophetess who led the women away separately to teach them (Ex. 15:20).

So what of evangelism today? The modern term “evangelism” is far more broad and used to describe every sort of work from tract to blog. While this is not technically the common use of the term in the New Testament, it is not harmful to adopt this generic usage in some respects. Even if handing out a tract is not precisely evangelizing (*εὐαγγελίζω*) in the New Testament sense, any more than it would make you an evangelist (Eph. 4:11, or being old makes you a New Testament elder), it can be accurately described as “evangelistic.” The church today needs to adopt an over all evangelistic attitude. I do cringe sometimes when a youth activity with two hours of pizza and games paired with ten minutes of teaching is called “evangelism,” but it fits into the extremely broad definition of the English term ... those just barely.

Better would be for us to use Bible words in Bible ways. Telling church members that every Christian is an evangelist is just as inaccurate as saying that all members are elders (or even using it for young men like our Mormon neighbors). The term means something, and that meaning should not be diminished or ignored. All members need to be evangelistic in their attitude and character, but not every thing they do is evangelism. When we rope all kinds of generic actions into the category of evangelism, we reduce the meaning of the word and deemphasize the role of serious, formal teaching. Just look at the social programs called evangelistic in the denominational world to see the end result. Most people are first touched by the gospel’s influence through methods other than evangelism. Personal relationships, benevolence, dinner table conversation, or even actions without words (1 Pet. 3:1) may change another person’s life, but only the rigorous, aggressive teaching of the gospel message will save their souls. Let us all support true evangelism and not cringe from bold gospel preaching.

News & Notes

Classes have begun again this fall. It is good to see our students return with a renewed enthusiasm to study the Bible. We picked up a few new students this semester, and once again we did have several of our serious students return to begin on their upper division coursework. We have students this semester from, the Garden Oaks congregation, the Grand Boulevard congregation, the Green Pasture congregation, the Nicoma Park congregation, and of course the Barnes congregation among others.

Once again, our summer campaign has garnered some results. We have seen an increased interest in the school from both within Oklahoma and in other states as well. We have also seen an increase in financial support. We appreciate the response and are

grateful for all of your prayers as well. This region desperately needs a strong preaching/teacher training program, and it is your support that makes it possible.

The Fall courses are going well, and the classes for this Spring look promising, not the least of which will be the Homiletics course that is long overdue. Check the schedule to see if you might be able to attend!

If your congregation is anything like ours, you are probably beginning to work on the 2009 budget. If so, please keep the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies in mind. It is only through the efforts of our brethren in Christ that this important work continues to serve this region. Also, check your own budget for 2009 and see if there is a way **you** can help us to prepare preachers and teachers in Central Oklahoma!

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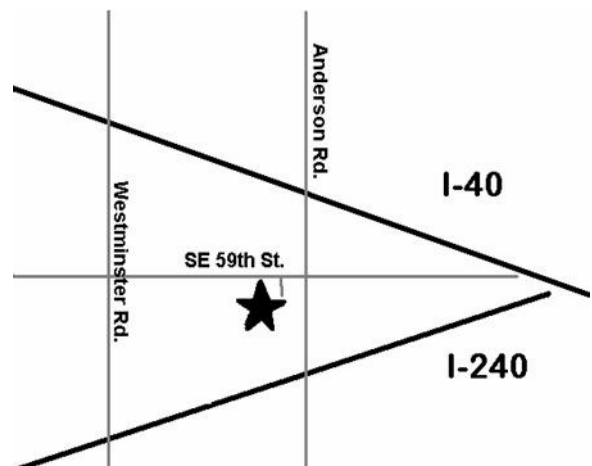
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Course Schedule for Fall '08

FIRST QUARTER August 19 & 21 - October 7 & 9

SECOND QUARTER October 14 & 16 - December 9 & 11

No classes November 25 & 27 for Thanksgiving Holidays

1st Period: 6:30-7:15 PM

2nd Period: 7:30-9:00 PM

Introductory Courses

	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night
1st Period	New Testament Church	
2nd Period	(1st Quarter) Hermeneutics (2nd Quarter) Genesis	

Upper Division Courses

	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night
1st Period	1-3 John	Old Testament Survey: Joshua - Ruth
2nd Period	Acts of the Apostles	Ephesians & Colossians

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