

Noteworthy

Prayer Requests: Jim Abram, Reagan Cunningham, Kelly Cochran, Kurt Dickey, Betty Eubanks, Charles Goodall, Linda James, Rowenna Lawson (*has had some complications with her pregnancy*), Paul Lloyd (*At the time of this article's publishing, Paul was at LPMC after experiencing a very rapid heart rate. He is recovering well, though*) Kirk Marschall, Butch Morgan, Dottie Reynolds, Wayne Ryland, Suzette Stevens, Arlene Turner, the Wisdom family (*Larry's mother passed away last week*), and Jeremy Whitehead.

Our friends and family: Susan Bebbly (*Bucky Day's sister diagnosed with cancer*) Joe Brown, Diane Anderson (*Linda's sister*), Elnora Bennet (*Moses Stevens' sister*), Mildred Church (*shut-in*), Jim Fields (*Keri Rice's dad will have knee replacement surgery tomorrow*), Brian James (*cancer has reappeared, and he is considering treatment options*) Shelby Sprott (*doing much better*), Ardis Tucker, Bobbie Walker (*Marian Church's daughter; also, Marian's sister-in-law*).

Ladies' Bible Class: The next ladies' Bible class is going to be on January 11th at Christine Ryland's home (7PM). In preparation, please study lesson number XII (12) that begins on page # 78 in the book, "Some Do's and Don'ts for the Christian". (See the sign-up sheet in the foyer)

Afternoon Singing: Our next afternoon sing will be on January 10th at 5pm.

Kid's Review Class: January 10th, shortly after the evening worship service in room # 7.

Out of Town: Larry & Cindy Hicks will be traveling this week, as are the Rice family.

Group Meeting: Group (2) meets tonight after worship.

Great News: Chet and Danielle Sheffield have been blessed greatly (*Ps. 127:3-5*), with the arrival of their firstborn daughter. Violet Nicole Sheffield, 7lbs., 13oz., 21.5in., was born on December 16, 2015! Congratulations to them, and prayers for them to be successful godly parents are in order.

Assignments for Worship Service

Wednesday Night: 12/23/15

Song Leader: Colby Sadler
 Opening Prayer: David Williams
 Invitation: Clay Sadler
 Announcements: Mike Sadler
 Closing Prayer: Trent Stevens
 Parking Lot: Leon Miller
 Recordings: Keith Marschall
 Usher: Leon Miller

Sunday Evening: 12/27/15

Song Leader: Eddie Lawson
 Opening Prayer: Jim Elliot
 Lord's Table: Bucky Day
 Announcements: Bob Marschall
 Closing Prayer: Paul Lloyd
 Parking Lot: Larry Hicks
 Recordings: Nick Ross
 Usher: Larry Hicks

Sunday Morning: 12/27/15

Lord's Table: Bucky Day (B)
 Jerry Williams (C)
 Serving: Trent Stevens
 Jordan Lawson
 Song Leader: Jeremy Wharton
 Opening Prayer: Colby Sadler

Announcements: Bob Marschall
 Closing Prayer: Wayne Ryland
 Parking Lot: (9:00) Norm Blackburn
 (9:50) Mike Sadler
 Recordings: Nick Ross
 Usher: Mike Sadler



**Lakeland Hills
 Leader**

LAKELAND HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST

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ELDERS

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SERVICES

Sunday
 Bible Study 9:00 A.M.
 Morning Services 9:50 A.M.
 Evening Services 6:00 P.M.
 Wednesday
 Bible Study 7:30 P.M.

DEACONS:

Robert Marschall
 Charles Rawdon
 Michael Sadler
 Moses Stevens
 David Williams

EVANGELIST:

Ian Rice (863) 213-9795

“Should We Observe Christmas as a Religious Holiday?”

During this time of year, there are many positive feelings invoked with the buildup to the giving of gifts, eating delicious turkey dinners, and spending quality time with our family & loved ones. While I enjoy the sentiments expressed through the observance of the upcoming *secular* holiday (December 25th), should I do so in connection with any type of *religious* observance? Some of our friends advocate (with good intentions) the idea of "keeping Christ in Christmas", but is that something we should really concern ourselves with?

Christ's birth did indeed fulfill prophecy, and is mentioned in the gospel accounts (Matthew 2 and Luke 2). Therefore, we should study those Scriptures. But we must also realize that Jesus was not simply born to live on this earth forever as a perpetual babe in a manger. Jesus Christ was born to grow and live the life that we can pattern ourselves after (1 Peter 2:21). Jesus also was born (ultimately) to die for our sins. *“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).*

We must remember that all religious practices, especially worship, must be done according to truth, as Jesus Himself stated *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* (**John 4:24**). Truth originates itself from the word of God, as Jesus prayed to the Father concerning believers, *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."* (**John 17:17**). Furthermore, Jesus denounced the binding of religious practices upon others that did not originate with the father as a vain religion, *"And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."* (**Matthew 15:9**) As Christians, everything that we do in the name of religion must be in accordance with the doctrine of Christ, as Paul wrote *"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."* (**Colossians 3:17**). There is no mention of observing the birth of Jesus as a religious rite in the New Testament. And since Christ never taught that we should observe the day of His birth as a religious holiday, nor did his apostles; and since there are no examples of the early disciples doing so found in the N.T. Scriptures, then no Bible authority can be established for such. Therefore, such practices can only have originated with man. Hence, it is a vain religious practice. This is why Christians are not to observe December 25th as a

"sacred" or "holy" day, as the beginnings of such did not originate from God.

Various sources can be studied with regard to the origin and history of "Christmas". There are (as well) all sorts of materials that can enlighten us with regard to the various customs associated with the holiday too (such as the tree, the lights, the ornaments, etc.) The intent of this article is not to delve into those particular matters, nor with the subject of "personal liberties" associated with secular-themed decorations & the giving of gifts. Rather, the aim is to stress that God alone authorizes worship, both publicly and privately (*See Leviticus 20:26 and 1Peter 1:13-18 in connection with the verses provided above*). We simply have no authority to observe the day of Christ's birth as a religious holiday.

I do hope that you enjoy this week. I also pray that you will observe *the Lord's death* today in a worthy manner—just as Jesus commanded, just as the apostles taught, and just as we have example to do so upon *every first day* of the week during the year (**Luke 22:14-21; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34; Acts 20:7**). If you have any questions about the content of this short article, I extend the invitation for us to study these things further. Until then, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Ian Rice

Why Are They Going Out From Us?

The Lord's church is going through a great apostasy throughout this nation. Many are going out from us because they are not of us, ". . . for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us". (I John 2:19 ASV)

Those who are going out from us are manifesting they are not of us in that they do not have the attitude toward divine authority that we have. They do not have the same spirit of obedience. This attitude is manifest in their preaching and private conversations. They preach on subjects as, "WHERE THERE IS NO PATTERN", and make statements such as, " We do many things for which we have no Bible authority", and "the Bible does not say not to have it." They have no scruples against presuming on the silence of the scriptures. The attitudes possessing our brethren who are going out from us are the same attitudes possessed by all sectarian people. We are witnessing the formation of a new denomination. At the rate they are going now, the modernism that will possess this body of people in years to come will be paralleled only by the liberal wing of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Those who are going out from us do not have the same attitude toward the church and her mission that we have. They look upon the church as a "RED CROSS, BABY SIT-

TING, FUN AND FROLIC, BANQUET HALL, MONEY-RAISING" organization to be used as a tool in the hands of men to further all the philanthropic endeavors that "do-gooders" can dream up to better man in this life. The emphasis is on man in this life, a social concept of the church and the gospel.

The spirituality that many of these people once had is almost gone. The loose concept of the authority of Christ in matters doctrinal is having its effect in their thinking morally. Sins that would have been met with Bible discipline a few years ago are tolerated and winked at among them. I think a point we may have overlooked somewhat is that immorality is one of the marks of apostasy.

When these brethren think of church action, they do not think of local congregations acting separate and independent of each other, but of church-universal action, local churches acting jointly through a central organization.

They are going out from us because there is not compatibility between us. Our attitudes toward authority are entirely different. We can do nothing without divine authority. When apostasies and factions come, the God of heaven uses them to manifest the approved (I Cor. 11:19).

Brother or sister, are you among the approved or disapproved of the Lord? (I Cor. 11:19; I John 2:19).

- Donald Townsley