

REMINDER

Volume XV

June 14, 2009

Number 24



IN DEFENSE OF BIBLICAL, HISTORICAL CHRISTIANITY

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There is much confusion today caused by reading histories of Christianity that were written from decidedly different perspectives. It seems that many historians have written very biased histories of those early Christians that were considered enemies of the historian's "Church." These biased "histories" have caused much confusion regarding the true doctrines that were held by our Christian forebears.

The following is a defense of our forebears gleaned, not from the biased writings of their enemies, but from their own writings.

Most of the names used to identify these early Christians were given to them by their detractors in an attempt to identify them with men, rather than with the Lord Jesus Christ. It must be understood that all who went by the names below were not always orthodox, but within the ranks of these historical movements, the true churches of Jesus Christ were present, and the "faith once delivered unto the saints" was preserved for us today.

THE MONTANISTS

The second century of the Christian era saw the rise of a group of Christians called *Montanists*. In most church histories the Montanists are classed as heretics (as were all groups that tended to hold doctrines that did not agree with the writer of the history book, most of which were either Catholic, or liberal Protestant). However, a careful study of their beliefs and practices reveal they were orthodox, and a part of our Baptist heritage. Montanism was the first general stand against the drift away from church purity and spirituality.

The Montanists were named because of the preaching of a man named *Montanus*. He had been a priest of the pagan cult of Cybele, but was converted to Christ about 150 A.D. Montanism began in central Phrygia (now called Asia Minor) in a town called Ardabau, but its teachings quickly spread to Europe and Africa. Montanism was found in Rome, and Lyons, France, in 177 A.D.

Montanus began preaching in 156 A.D., and gathered many followers, including two women of prominence, Maximilla and Priscilla.

Soon after the apostolic age, great changes began to occur in many of the churches. Some of these changes were: a drift toward ritualism; the rise of a clergy class; a lack of spirituality, and a developing laxity in discipline and church membership standards. Montanism was in reality a crusade to restore churches to their spiritual simplicity - to get them

(continued inside)

back to the New Testament basics. The Montanists were sarcastically called "Spirituals." Montanus laid great emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers and the churches, and declared that the clergy had no franchise on the Gospel. He was an enemy of worldly philosophy and religion.

Apart from emphasizing the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Montanists held the following beliefs and practices: a regenerate church membership; believers baptism, by immersion only, and re-baptized those who came to them from the "established" churches; holiness of life, opposing second marriages, laxity in fastings, and flight in persecution; church discipline, their creed stated, "Against a mortal sin the church should defend itself by rightly excluding him who committed it, for the holiness of the church was simply the holiness of its members." They believed in Trinitarian theology; the complete Word of God, accepting all the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments; premillennial eschatology, looking for the soon return of Christ to set up His millennial kingdom on earth. These chiliastic views were also held by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian.

It may be that the unpopularity of the Montanists contributed to the demise of premillennialism in the early years of the church. The Montanist churches were not popular with the "established" churches, so, much of what was said about them was unkind, to say the least. Recent historians in general have sided with the opponents of Montanism, and several charges have been laid against them. The most common charge was that the Montanists were "ancient holy-rollers."

It is claimed that Montanus said he was the Paraclete, and that his followers claimed extra-Biblical revelations. Unfortunately there is no proof to support these charges. The spirituality and life of Montanist churches so contrasted with the formality and deadness of the main-stream churches, that such conclusions may easily have been drawn. If a Roman Catholic or High Anglican came to a Bible-believing Baptist church today, he would probably think it was very emotional too, what with strong preaching, and an invitation at the end!

The Lutheran historian Mosheim accuses Montanus of calling himself the Paraclete, but the translator of his history, McLean, adds the following footnote: "*Those are undoubtedly mistaken who have asserted that Montanus gave himself out that he was the Holy Ghost*" (Church History, Mosheim, Vol. I, Page 188).

Armitage concludes, "*For this reason Montanus was charged with assuming to be the Holy Spirit, which was simply a slander*" (Armitage, T.; A History of the Baptists, page 175).

W. A. Jarrell cites Tertullian's explanation of an "ecstasy" and concludes that he probably meant nothing more than what David said - "My cup runneth over."

Tertullian, referring to visions and extra-Biblical revelations said: "*But truly according as the Scriptures are read, or Psalms are sung, or addresses are given, or prayers are offered, thence, from that medium are materials by which we are assisted by*

visions." The context of this statement clearly indicates what we would call "illumination" today. Nothing "extra-Biblical" about that! It is generally admitted that the Montanist churches accepted the received doctrines of the "established" church - their only differences being that of emphasis and practice.

It is possible, but not conclusively proven, that some Montanist churches did hold to questionable or unscriptural practices, such as ordination of women. Some churches may have allowed women to preach because of their belief that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are dispensed to Christians of every condition and sex, without distinction.

Triune immersion may have been practiced in some Montanist churches.

Some of the Montanist Pastors may have remained celibate, but no conclusive statement to that effect can be found, however, it may have been the more practical precaution in time of persecution according to I Corinthians 7:26-29 (compare to verses 8 and 9).

They were accused of practicing harsh asceticism by those who lived very liberal life styles, and that they practiced harsh church discipline. It should be noted that each of these practices, even if true, are not unknown in some Baptist churches today.

The preaching of the Montanists had far ranging results. Tertullian was a noted convert to Montanist ideals, who helped to refine those teachings and left a legacy in North Africa (Tertullianists) which would later give rise to the Donatists.

Several church councils were called against the Montanist movement, and it was finally officially condemned by the "established" churches. The influence of this movement may be seen in the Novatian schism, the Donatus schism, and through its contacts in Armenia and the rise of the Paulicians.

Several defenders among historians may be found for the Montanists, some of whom are cited here:

1. The conclusion of an early historian, Dr. William R. Williams, is that it was hard to find doctrinal errors in their teaching. Their emotionalism stemmed from their belief that a true experience of grace is evident in the believers life, as many other teachers have stressed in much later periods of reform.

2. Dr. Dorner wrote of their movement that it was a democratic reaction of the church members against the movement to install church leaders as overlords in the church body.

3. Moller, contributor to the Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia, wrote, "*But Montanism was, nevertheless, not a new form of Christianity; nor were the Montanists a new sect. On the contrary, Montanism was, simply a reaction of the old, the primitive church, against the obvious tendency of the day, to strike a bargain with the world and arrange herself comfortably in it.*" (Quoted from : Griffith, J. W., A Manual of Church History: Volume II, page 36).

(more next week)

BE PLANNING NOW TO BRING SOMEONE TO MEET -

"Children are a heritage of the Lord..."
- Psalms 127:3

The **Duggar**
Family



Rescheduled Date -

Sunday Morning
August 2, 2009

- Duggar-family Musicians Will Play and Sing For Our Service!*
- Jim Bob Duggar Will Be Speaking In The Morning Service!*
- Michelle Duggar To Give Devotional At Rebekah White's Baby Shower At 1:30 p.m.*

PLAN NOW TO BE HERE!



**FINANCIAL
FREEDOM
CLASS
CONTINUES
TODAY!**

***Learn Biblical Principles For Finances
That Will Free You From The
Bondage Of Debt!***

This class, though designed for our young adults and teens, is open to all from high school age and upward. Every Christian needs to learn how to handle their finances God's way!

***Our class begins promptly at 9:45 each
Sunday morning in the Conference Room.***

Please be on time.



Read Your Bible Every Day



***FELLOWSHIP DINNER
FOLLOWING THE
MORNING SERVICE
TODAY!***

***Celebrating the Twenty-seventh Wedding
Anniversary Of Pastor and Shirley White!***

Everyone is encouraged to attend.

NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Charity Crawford
 Cradle Roll 2: Andrea Hooper
 6:00 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Janet Bridges
 Cradle Roll 2: Bertha Segebarth
 Wed. Eve. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Shirley White
 Cradle Roll 2: LeAnna White

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of June 7, 2009

Sunday School ----- 28
 Sunday Morning Service ----- 44
 Sunday Evening Service ----- 31
 Wed. Eve. Service, 06/10/09 ----- 22

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of June 7, 2009

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,485.00
 New Hymnals Fund ----- \$ 10.00
Total Received for Week of 06/07/09: \$ 1,495.00

*Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed
 to operate the church
 EACH WEEK,
 as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00* 📄

FUND DRIVE REPORTS

NEW HYMNAL FUND

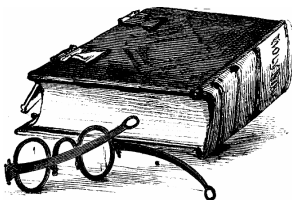
Offerings Received To Date: \$ 1,416.00

NEW PIANO FUND

Offerings Received To Date: \$ 570.00

PARSONAGE RENOVATION FUND

Total Received, To Date: \$ 335.00



**Study to show
 thyself approved
 unto God...**

- 11 Timothy 2:15

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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. *Admit that you are a sinner.*
2. *Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.*
3. *Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.*
4. *You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).*
5. *By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.*



Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go *up*. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start *today* - **OK?** Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
 Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist
 Dickie Eberle ----- Greeter, Custodian
 Larry Mathews, Caryn Quinnelly, Todd W. White ----- S.S. Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars, Brian & Charity Crawford,
 Nathaniel & Rebekah White ----- Outreach
 Flowers ----- Hannah and Shirley White