



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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“THE GOSPEL”

By Pastor Bill Lee

Preached at Central Baptist Church

Let's look in our Bibles this evening to the Book of Ephesians, Chapter 1. I would like for us to read verses 1 through 14. Our subject this evening is **“The Gospel”**—the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, or as it is called in our reading this evening, “The Gospel of your Salvation”. **“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.”**

Let me stop here. I always like to read and to consider verse 1. I like to notice that Paul's life was one that manifested the sovereignty of his God. It just came out of Paul, whether he meant it on purpose or not, it just came out of him because that belief was in him. I note in verse 1

he said, **“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God”**. Let me ask you a question. Do you think it was Saul of Tarsus' will that he become an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ? I don't think so. It was by the will of God, and he acknowledged that here.

Verse 2, **“Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be [See THE GOSPEL Continued, P. 3, Rt. Col.]**

FEEDING SHEEP OR AMUSING GOATS?

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834 - 1892)

An evil is in the professed camp of the Lord, so gross in its impudence, that the most shortsighted can hardly fail to notice it during the past few years. It has developed at an abnormal rate, even for evil. It has worked like leaven until the whole lump ferments. The devil has seldom done a cleverer thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them.

From speaking out as the Puritans did, the church has gradually toned down her testimony, then winked at and excused the frivolities of the day. Then she tolerated them in her borders. Now she has adopted them under the plea of

reaching the masses.

My first contention is that providing amusement for the people is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as a function of the church. If it is a Christian work, why did not Christ speak of it? “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). That is clear enough. So it would have been if He had added, “and provide amusement for those who do not relish the gospel.” No such words, however, are to be found. It did not seem to occur to him.

Then again, “He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers .., for the work of

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the ministry" (Eph. 4:11-12). Where do entertainers come in? The Holy Spirit is silent concerning them. Were the prophets persecuted because they amused the people or because they refused? The concert has no martyr roll.

Again, providing amusement is in direct antagonism to the teaching and life of Christ and all his apostles. What was the attitude of the church to the world? Ye are the salt" (Matt. 5:13), not the sugar candy—something the world will spit out not swallow. Short and sharp was the utterance, "Let the dead bury their

dead" (Matt. 8:22) He was in awful earnestness.

Had Christ introduced more of the bright and pleasant elements into his mission, he would have been more popular when they went back, because of the searching nature of His teaching. I do not hear him say, "Run after these people Peter and tell them we will have a different style of service tomorrow, something short and attractive with little preaching. We will have a pleasant evening for the people. Tell them they will be sure to enjoy it. Be quick Peter, we must get the people somehow." Jesus pitied sinners, sighed and wept over them, but never sought to amuse them.

In vain will the Epistles be searched to find any trace of this gospel of amusement! Their message is, "Come out, keep out, keep clean out!" Anything approaching fooling is conspicuous by its absence. They had boundless confidence in the gospel and employed no other weapon.

After Peter and John were locked up for preaching, the church had a prayer meeting but they did not pray, "Lord grant unto thy servants that by a wise and discriminating use of innocent recreation we may show these people how happy we are." If they ceased not from preaching Christ, they had not time for arranging entertainments. Scattered by persecution, they went everywhere preaching the gospel. They turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). That is the only difference! Lord, clear the church of all the rot and rubbish the devil has imposed on her, and bring us back to apostolic methods.

Lastly, the mission of amusement fails to effect the end desired. It works havoc among young converts. Let the careless and scoffers, who thank God because the church met them halfway, speak and testify. Let the heavy laden who found peace through the concert not keep silent! Let the drunkard to whom the dramatic entertainment has been God's link in the chain of the conversion, stand up! There are none to answer. The mission of amusement produces no converts. The need of the hour for today's ministry is believing scholarship joined with earnest spirituality, the one springing from the other as fruit from the root. The need is biblical doctrine, so understood and felt, that it sets men on fire.

Biography of Elmer Stacy

Elmer Lendol Stacy, 100, of Davenport went to be with his Lord on Tuesday, April 8, 2008, at his daughter's home in Davenport. Funeral services will be Friday, April 11, 2008 at 11:30 AM at The Runge Mortuary. Visitation will be Thursday from 4:30 until 7 PM at the mortuary. Burial will be in Davenport Memorial Park.

Elmer was born in Madison County, MO, on October 3, 1907 to Lemuel B. & Rosa Belle (Kennedy) Stacy. He walked from Southeastern Missouri to Iowa in 1937 to find work to support his family. He was united in marriage to Viola Ellison on her 17th birthday on January 18, 1931 in Buffalo. They were married for 75 ½ years until her death on June 29, 2006. They had three sons, Richard, Robert and Keith who all preceded him in death, and a daughter, Theresa with whom he had lived the last two years.

He spent most of his working years at Dewey Portland Cement Company in Buffalo, IA.

Elmer was born again as a very young man and was baptized and served the Lord faithfully. He was a member of Landmark Missionary Baptist Church in Buffalo, IA, where he had served as Deacon and a Sunday school teacher.

Those left to honor his memory include his daughter, Theresa (LeRoy) Benson, Davenport, 10 grandchildren, 19 great grandchildren, 7 great-great grandchildren, sisters, Ora Stacy, FL, Roxie (Lewis) Turner, GA, Wanda Holland, MO, and a brother, Murel Stacy, IL. He was preceded in death by his parents, great grandson, Daniel Uhlmeier, sisters: Janette, Helen, Edna and a brother, Clifford.

Elmer loved his family and friends and we loved him. He will be greatly missed.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: It is not my purpose to begin publishing obituaries in *The GP&P* but this one is of special significance. Bro. Elmer Stacy was a friend of mine and he possessed a library that would be the envy of any Baptist Preacher whom I know. Not more than five years ago I had the opportunity to sit down with him in his library and fellowship for a while. I recall Bro. Mark Maddox telling me how much Bro. Elmer helped him get his feet on solid

doctrinal footing when he started preaching. Bro. Mark had a deep respect for this man. I first met Bro. Elmer about 35 years ago and saw him off and on during those 35 years but I only had that one time (mentioned above) to sit down in his study and fellowship with him. That same week he also took his grandson, Ryan, and me out to eat and we fellowshiped over a leisurely lunch.]

[THE GOSPEL Continued from Page 1]
holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; (8) Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; (9) Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (10) That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: (11) In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (12) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (13) In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, (14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

What a great theological text we have in Ephesians in Chapter 1. There is enough here to last us until the Lord comes back, and we would never, never exhaust what is written. The Apostle Paul carries us in the doctrine of salvation from time, back into eternity. I know these are probably not the correct words to use here, but I don't know how you would explain

some things in eternity. There was this point in eternity, before the foundation of the world, when God chose us in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And as verse 5 says, ***“predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,”***

It is amazing that in the writings of the Apostle Paul he does not say very much about the free will of man. We hear much about the free will of man in pulpits today, but Paul seems to be silent on the matter. But he exalts the Sovereign will of our God. In verse 6, ***“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”***

Paul goes immediately to the Lord Jesus Christ and blood redemption in verse 7, and the results being the forgiveness of sins ***“according to the riches of his grace . . .”*** Again, there is just so much that Paul has in these words in Ephesians in Chapter 1. I want us to go to verse 13. And again, this is an amazing passage of Scripture, as it gives a detailed outline, in chronological order, of what happened to you in the matter of salvation. It is just laid down step by step by step in the Word of God. Verse 13, ***“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”*** This is Bible order. This is the way God saves sinners.

I want us to look this evening at the importance of the Gospel. The importance of the Gospel! I am convinced the greatest need of any individual upon this earth is to hear the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have often wondered; if you were able to pass out some kind of questionnaire to all the citizens of the United States and ask them what the greatest need of the individual was, just what kind of responses you would get. Just ask people what is the greatest need of individuals. And I can just imagine in my mind many of the responses that would come from our nation. I just wonder how many would even include in their list the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I wonder beyond that, how many would have it at the top of their list. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! There is nothing any more important for an

individual than to hear the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me say this, the Gospel as you know, and I hope you know, is not an invitation, nor is it a provocation for sinners to accept anything or anyone, or for them to do anything. The Gospel is a declaration of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul would say, ***“I declare unto you the Gospel.”*** And that is what the Gospel really is. It is not an invitation for sinners to receive anything. It is just a bold and plain statement that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. That is the Gospel!

And I will remind you of this – dead sinners cannot receive anything. Dead sinners cannot believe anything. Dead sinners cannot accept anything. Look in your Bible, to 1st Corinthians, and we have gone over this several times, but I want us to be reminded of this. In 1st Corinthians, in Chapter 2 and in verse 14, the Bible says, ***“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.”*** Now, that is pretty plain language. It should be easily understood. Maybe some people do not realize the gospel is a part of the things of the Spirit of God, and the natural man cannot receive it. All of the things in verse 14 that are of the Spirit of God are foolishness unto the natural man. It is an impossibility, according to verse 14, for the natural man to know them, and the reason is stated: the things of the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned. You must be a spiritual being. You must have spiritual life. You must have spiritual discernment to know and understand the things of the Spirit of God. Again, it is a declaration.

And I will quickly add this; the gospel is the message of the Lord's Church. We have only one message, the gospel of Jesus Christ. We do not have varied messages. We do not have multiple messages. We have one singular message. It is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the message of the Lord's Church. And when I make that kind of statement, in my mind I have a two-fold meaning. I do believe the gospel is our only message. But, when I say that the Gospel is the message of the Church, I am also saying that it belongs to them and no one else. No one else is authorized by the Lord to carry His Word into

this world. No one else is authorized to preach the Gospel, other than the Lord's Churches. Others may be doing it, but they have no authority from God. They have no authority at all. The Gospel belongs to the Lord's Churches. It does not belong to civic organizations. It does not belong to ministerial associations. It does not belong to conventions and associations. It belongs to the Lord's Churches.

This concept of the gospel being the message of the Lord's churches is foreign today in religion. Somehow, Baptist churches have failed to stand and boldly state: "That's our message and everyone else should leave it alone." It belongs to the Lord's Churches. He entrusted His Word to His Church. He is the one that commanded His Church to go into the world and preach the Gospel. Look in Mark Chapter 16. In Mark 16:15, Jesus said, "**Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**" Now, the meaning here is this—He is actually saying, "**As you are going, preach the gospel**". His words presupposed the going of the Church. And the wording actually means, "As you go, don't just go to be going...as you go, preach!" And He also included what we are to preach – The Gospel! Not philosophy, not psychology, not any kind of social gospel. It is the pure Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I say that the Gospel is the only message of the Lord's Church, many times people say – "Well, there are a lot of other things in the Bible other than the Gospel, and shouldn't we also be preaching them?" Let me tell you, if you find something in the Bible that is not associated with the Gospel, you have a Bible different than mine. I am convinced everything in this Bible is somehow associated with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want to preach on the doctrine of creation, and you can't find "Christ" in creation, you had better leave creation alone. If you want to preach on "Prophecy", and you can't find "Christ" in prophecy, you had better leave prophecy alone. If you want to preach on the types and shadows in the Old Testament, and you don't see "Christ" in the types and shadows, you better leave these alone. You'll find out you will have very little to preach, if you don't preach the Gospel.

You cannot honestly preach the Doctrines of

Grace without preaching Jesus Christ. You cannot truthfully preach the Doctrine of the Church without preaching the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel. You cannot preach on the Resurrection or the Judgment to come without preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "**Preach the Gospel!**" I am reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul. He said, "**But we preach Christ**". "**The Jews require a sign, the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified**". Others can do as they will, but the Lord willing, we will just preach Christ. And we will preach Him crucified. There is a great danger in minimizing the importance of the Gospel. We need to really guard ourselves against that!

In 1st Corinthians, Chapter 1 and in verse 21, the Apostle wrote, "**For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God**". This just needs to soak in to a lot of people. "**In the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God**". How is it that the sinners of the world may come to know God? How is it that any one may come to believe in Him and His Son Jesus Christ? Look at the verse 21. It says, "**It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.**" Now, that is what pleased God. And since it pleased God, that's just the way it is. Simply because it pleased God, if for no other reason! "**It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching,**"

And I will make this statement, I guess, almost every time I read this statement. This statement does not refer to "foolish preaching". I hear a lot of foolish preaching. I don't believe God blesses foolish preaching. It is the thing that is preached. As Paul says, "**We preach Christ**". "**It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe**". There are many that object to that statement in 1st Corinthians, Chapter 1, and verse 21. I preached one time from this verse in a meeting, and two preachers came to me after the service, labeled me as an Arminian, and they used the term—the first time I had ever heard it—I have heard it many times since then. They said, "You must be one of those Gospel regenerators". I've noticed over the years that those who oppose truth will coin phrases and label those with

whom they disagree. They do this to divert peoples' attention away from their biblically weak position. But, I do not believe in Gospel regeneration. I believe it is the Spirit that quickeneth. I also believe that God uses the Gospel in the salvation of His people. People can put whatever label on me they would like, but I believe it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Again, if for no other reason, it just pleased God to do it that way.

Another preacher, one time, asked me, "Well Brother Lee, don't you believe that God can save people without their hearing the Gospel?" That is another one of those "trap" questions. Similar to a "trick" question, this is a "trap" question. I told him, "You are not asking the correct question". The question really is not "can God save people any other way", the question is - "Has He ever saved anyone any other way?" You can search this Bible and you cannot find one person ever saved without hearing the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. You can examine your own experience. You have never met one person who is saved that has never heard the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and believed it. It just pleased God that that is the way it is.

In the Book of James and in Chapter 1, and in verse 18, The Bible says, "**Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.**" Notice this, "**of his own will**". I told you that it just pleased God to do it that way. "**Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth**"! If you look back in 1st Corinthians, and in Chapter 4, and in verse 15, the Apostle says, "**For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.**" God just uses the Gospel in the salvation of His people.

In our text in Ephesians, and in Chapter 1, verse 13, "**In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:**" Let me ask you a question:

When was it that you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? I can tell you when everyone here believed. I may not know the day and the time, month or year, but I still know **when!** It was after that ye heard the Word of Truth – The Gospel of your salvation. Notice in verse 13, it says, "**In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.**" Those words "**in whom**" are referring to Christ. Again, when did you believe? After that ye heard the word of truth. Look at that phrase again—"**after that ye heard**".

There is a hearing here that goes beyond human capability. You have to have an ear to hear this. That is what Jesus said over and over again. "**He that hath and ear to hear let him hear**". Everyone does not have an ear to hear! Some hear the words, but never hear the gospel. There are people who have been in churches all of their lives, and have heard the words, but have never heard the gospel.

Let me tell you, when you hear the Gospel, you will know you have heard some Good News! That is exactly what the Gospel is! But, the natural man, the sinner, is deaf to the Gospel. He cannot hear it. Again, he can hear the words. There were some that accompanied Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, and they could hear the sound, but they could not distinguish the words. There was nothing wrong with their physical ear, but they could not hear what Saul of Tarsus heard. They were there in the same locality. They heard the same sound, but they could not hear what Saul heard. That is what I mean when people can hear the words.

I read to you this morning, and let's look back there again, in 1st Thessalonians, and in Chapter 1—verse 4. Paul said "**Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. (5) For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance.**" Some can hear the words, but they cannot hear the Gospel. Not until the Holy Spirit accompanies those words of the Gospel in power. Quickening Power—Life-giving Power—Regenerating Power. Let me mention this—we were singing a moment ago, "**Down at the Cross where my Savior Died**". And the words were something like "There to my heart was the blood applied." I

think I understand the meaning of the songwriter, and I don't want us to stop singing this hymn, but the words are not just right. The blood was not applied to my heart at the cross; it was applied to my heart the day the Holy Spirit quickened me. It was applied to my heart in regeneration. It was applied in time during my life, when the Lord saved me. That was the application of the blood. It did not happen at Calvary for me, it happened in my lifetime. It happened the day I heard the Gospel, and the gospel became more than just words to me. The Holy Spirit of God applied the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to my heart, and I heard the Gospel, and I believed it, and I have never doubted it since. That is the application of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 2nd Thessalonians and in Chapter 2, and in verse 13, ***“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”*** Notice verse 14. ***“Whereunto he called you by our gospel.”*** Isn't it amazing? In 1st Thessalonians in Chapter 1, when Paul speaks of their election of God, he says ***“the gospel came to you in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance.”*** Here in verse 13, when he speaks of their election of God again, in verse 14, he has the Gospel associated with their election again.

“Whereunto he called you by our gospel.” I heard a preacher one time object to the wording here. He said, “Paul had no business calling it his Gospel.” He made a big point ...it is the Gospel of Christ, it was not Paul's Gospel”. Let me tell you it was Paul's gospel because Paul said ***“God committed it unto my trust”***. It is my Gospel. It is your Gospel. It is the Gospel that God has given unto us, as His churches, to carry into this world. We need to view it in that manner. ***“Whereunto he called you by our gospel”***.

And He called you ***“to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** And that is what we are called unto, and we are called by the Gospel. I believe in the effectual call of our God. I believe the call is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as surely as I believe in

particular redemption, I believe in particular calling. I believe the Gospel is to be preached to every creature...just as our Lord said that it should. But, I know as we seek to do that—to preach it to every creature without distinction—I know it is only effectual to those to whom the Holy Spirit carries it in power. The Holy Spirit is what makes the difference in who believes and who does not believe. For Salvation is of the Lord, it is not up to the decision of the sinner. It is in the hands of a sovereign God. It is a sovereign God who determines to whom the Holy Spirit is going to give ears to hear. It is the Power of God.

I just detest that so-called gospel of our day that seeks to rob God of His glory. It robs God of really being God, and exalts the sinner, and the sinner's will, even above God and His sovereign will. I detest that! There is something about it that I just abhor. I don't like to hear it. I don't like to be around it, because it belittles my God. It is a denial of the Word of God.

Look back in our text again in Ephesians 1 and verse 13. Notice this phrase—***“the gospel of your salvation.”*** The idea of a general atonement sounds good to a lot of people, but I tell you “particular redemption” is what I like to hear. You know, I really believe deep down everyone that is saved loves to hear about particular redemption—whether they will admit it or not is another thing, but I really believe they like to hear it. By that I mean they like to believe and know that “Jesus died particularly for me!” Now, if you don't believe that, you are just not saved. That is particular redemption. He died particularly for me! And that is good news to me. When I heard that Christ died for me, it was good news! That was, as the verse says, ***“The gospel of your salvation”***. I knew then, this is the Gospel of my salvation! And whether it was the Gospel of anyone else's salvation, it did not matter to me that day. It was the Gospel of my salvation. That is particular as you can get in verse 13. ***The gospel of your salvation.***

Then Paul adds, ***“ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.”*** Preserved! Preserved! Country people should not have a problem understanding this! When you want to preserve something, you seal it, do you not? Do you remember how those canning lids popped?

When the lid on that fruit jar popped, you knew it was sealed. You knew it was going to be safe and secure. If that lid does not pop, you have a problem. If you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, your lid has popped! You are sealed. Nothing is going to get to you. You are preserved in Christ Jesus!" That is what Jude said in Jude 1. ***"preserved in Jesus Christ"***.

I know that is putting it very simple, but the Gospel is simple. Christ died for me. He died for my sins; therefore, I am not going to die for them. They are already paid for! The Bible says that after I believed, I was sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise and in verse 14 this sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise ***"is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession"***. I have been bought with a price! Jesus Christ is going to get what He paid for. That is pretty simple. He is going to get what He paid for. I just do not believe that Satan and all of his forces are powerful enough to rob Jesus of what He paid for. He is going to get it. And we have already received the earnest! The down payment, if you would. We already have the sealing of the Holy Spirit of God, which is the earnest of our inheritance. What all is in that inheritance, I do not know. We've have already got part of it, though. That was the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

We have that, in verse 14, until the redemption of the purchased possession. When is that going to be? When the Lord Jesus Christ comes back to receive us unto Himself! And He will do that. I know He will because He said He would! He said, "If I go away I will come again and receive you unto myself!" And I believe He will. Let's read verses 12 and 13 again. ***"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (13) In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."*** What a great passage of Scripture!

There can be no grace when there is no sovereignty. Deny God's right to **choose** whom He will and you deny His right to save whom He will. Deny His right to save whom He will, and you deny that salvation is of grace. If salvation is made to hinge upon any desert or fitness in man, seen or foreseen, grace is at an end.—Horatius Bonar

SOME PROBLEMS FACED BY THE SOVEREIGN GRACE INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THAILAND

By Wayne Camp

Recently, some questions were asked of Bro. Bill Lee and this writer concerning the Mae Sot Baptist Church which is located near the border between Thailand and Burma. This church is composed primarily, if not entirely, of Burmese people. It is an example of some of the several problems the churches with which we work face in Thailand. These problems are the subject of this article. It will explain why we are in constant need of teaching the pastors and churches about Baptist polity and doctrine.

Most of the churches (Baptists included) in Thailand work under some umbrella organization and are neither independent nor very Baptist in their doctrine and practice. A good example of this is to be found in the following excerpt from a letter I received a few years ago.

The very first sentence of the letter illustrates one of the problems we face. "On behalf of Thailand Lahu Christian Churches, I would like to greet brothers and sisters of Landmark Baptist church in the United States of America." Some how and some where this gentleman got the mistaken idea that the Landmark Baptist Church in the USA is one church, made up of many congregations.

Someone might make the argument that that is just a problem in translation. But, another statement from the same letter reveals otherwise. Mr. Marting Chaisuriya, the writer of the letter, later says, "Thailand Lahu Christian Church is a congregation, which consists of 28 local churches. All of the churches belong to a hill tribal group called Lahu. Most of the local churches are scattered through out the provinces of Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai. Some churches in Tak province. There are about 3,000 members in these churches. For the purpose of being legally under the Thai government law, TLCC is being

under the district 6 of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). The CCT is one of the five main Christian organizations that recognized by the Thai government. However, the Thailand Lahu Christian Church also has a plan to register as its own district in nearly future."

Note that he says that "Thailand Lahu Christian Church is a **CONGREGATION** [Emp. Mine, RWC], which consists of 28 local churches." The word "congregation", according to my Merriam-Webster Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary which gives two definitions that pertain to religious congregations, clearly cannot be made up of several churches. First my dictionary says, "an assembly of persons met for worship and religious instruction." The second is, "an organized body of believers in a particular locality."

Now Mr. Marting Chaisuriya declares that he is Chairperson of Thailand Lahu Christian Church. If he is smart enough to be the Chairperson of this group, he should certainly be smart enough to know that you cannot have "a (single) congregation that consists of 28 local churches" that are located in three provinces in Thailand. The Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai provinces extend a pretty good distance and cover a good number of square miles. The Chiang Rai province joins the Chiang Mai province on the south and reaches the Mae Khong River to the north and borders on both Myanmar and Laos. The Tak province is located on the western border of Northern Thailand and shares a border with Burma. The city of Mae Sot is located in the Tak province near the Burma border. There is absolutely no way that these scattered churches can make up a single congregation as the Chairperson says they do.

But this is just one of the many errors to be found among the churches of Thailand. I should also point out that Mr. Chaisuriya never mentions in his letter that any or all of these churches are Baptist Churches. The churches are Thailand Christian churches.

Another statement which the Chairperson makes is, "For the purpose of being legally under the Thai government law, TLCC is being under the

district 6 of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). The CCT is one of the five main Christian organizations that recognized by the Thai government." He makes no bones about the fact that the Thailand Lahu Christian Churches are legally under the Thai government law. In order to accomplish this, these churches have placed themselves under [Emp. Mine, RWC] the Church of Christ of Thailand. "TLCC is being under the district 6 of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT)."

For the purpose of clarity, I should point out that this Church of Christ of Thailand is not like the so-called Church of Christ here in the USA. It is an amalgamation of Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Nazarenes, Baptists, and others that escape my mind at the moment. This group has repeatedly told us that the churches cannot be independent; they must come under one of these umbrella organizations. After about 11 years, our churches (the ones with which we work, they are the Lord's churches) are still independent and have one of the most accepted prison ministries in Thailand. We have had no interference from the government. Any trouble our churches have had has come from other churches and individuals from other churches.

The Christian Church of Thailand requires that all member churches contribute 10% of their offerings to the organization. That is one of the very first things churches are told when they seek to work with the organization. It is not a voluntary matter, it is an absolute requirement. That comes before paying a pastor, taking care of the church property, or giving to missions. Of course, an organization such as the Thailand Lahu Christian Church of Thailand, of which Mr. Marting Chaisuriya is the Chairperson of Thailand Lahu Christian Church, also expects their Chairperson and his team to be paid and for this a second tax is exacted on the churches. I know of one group that has three men who draw salaries as leaders. When asked by Bro. Bill Lee why the group needed them the chairperson replied, "Somebody has to tell the churches what to do."

To our knowledge, the Landmark Baptist Churches of Thailand with whom Bro. Anond works are the **ONLY** churches that do not have

some kind of board that oversees the work of the churches.

In 1997 one of the officials of the Thailand Lahu Baptist Convention board sought to explain why the Lahu Baptist churches needed a board to tell them what to do. [Picture]



In June, 2002, I wrote, "Recently three of the pastors decided to leave and join one of the "board Baptist" groups. Two have repented and returned to working with Bro. Anond. Both have asked his and the other pastors' forgiveness for leaving. They have also been received back at their churches that did not leave with them. Of the "board Baptists" they said, "Doctrine not good." They also said that the first thing they were told is that their churches must give the board that oversees the churches 10% of their tithes and offerings to maintain the office and pay the salaries of the board (I even found this requirement on a Website of one of these boards. RWC). The third pastor who left has not returned at this point but has indicated in a letter to Bro. Anond that he may return also." (Since the above paragraph was written, this Brother did return and has remained faithful).

Mae Sot Baptist Church

As I researched the Mae Sot Baptist Church, I learned several interesting things about it. First, I found that the church is affiliated with BIMl, an organization founded by the late Lee Roberson. This made me suspicious about their doctrinal stand. I read the doctrinal statement of BIMl and was pretty certain the churches connected with this organization would be

Arminian as relates to salvation. But, to be certain, I wrote to the overseer of these churches, Mr. Philip Pope. I wrote, "Dear Friend, Can you supply me with information about the Mae Sot Baptist Church, a Burmese congregation on the border of Thailand and Burma."

Mr. Pope responded,

"The MaeSot Baptist Church is an independent Baptist church started in 1985 by BIMl missionary Ken Ingalls. The church is associated with BIMl and I currently have responsibility for this church. The church is non-Calvinistic and non-charismatic."

Philip Pope

If the reader will notice the full content of my letter to Mr. Pope that is above you will see that I made no inquiry of their being Calvinistic or not. I simply ask him if he could give me some information about the church. He informed me that it was started in 1985 by a BIMl missionary by the name of Ken Ingalls. He declared rather emphatically, "I currently have responsibility for this church." That is the case even though another man, *Joseph Shwe*, is the pastor of this congregation. Other churches for which Mr. Pope is responsible can be found at the following site on the World Wide Web.

<http://thaipope.org/churches.html>.

Mr. Pope was also emphatic about the fact that the church was non-Calvinistic and non-Charismatic. I have just read the doctrinal statement of BIMl (Baptist International Missions, Inc.) again and it is definitely Arminian. There is also a link on their Web Site to a tract that is called ***God's Simple Plan of Salvation*** that is decidedly Arminian. Here is an excerpt from that tract.

"Surely, you realize you are a sinner. Right now, wherever you are, repenting, lift your heart to God in prayer.

In Luke 18:13, the sinner prayed: "God be merciful to me a sinner." Just pray: "Oh God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus was my substitute when He died on the Cross. I believe His shed blood, death, burial, and resurrection were for me. I now receive Him as my Savior. I thank You for the forgiveness of my sins, the gift

of salvation and everlasting life, because of Your merciful grace. Amen."

Just take God at His word and claim His salvation by faith. Believe, and you will be saved. No church, no lodge, no good works can save you. Remember, God does the saving. All of it!

God's simple plan of salvation is: You are a sinner. Therefore, unless you believe on Jesus Who died in your place, you will spend eternity in Hell. If you believe on Him as your crucified, buried, and risen Savior, you receive forgiveness for all of your sins and **His gift of eternal salvation by faith."**

Notice this especially. "Therefore, unless you believe on Jesus Who died in your place, you will spend eternity in Hell." According to this there will be folks in hell in whose place Christ died. Is that not Arminian? A similar statement is found in the BMI confession of faith. It reads, "Through acceptance of Christ's sacrifice (the death that He died in our place), all persons can be set free from their spiritual prison of death and the penalty of sin."

HIRELING PREACHERS AND RICE CHRISTIANS

Another serious problem faced in Thailand is that of **hireling preachers and rice Christians**. I wrote an article about hireling preachers while in Thailand that was published in the April 1, 2008, issue of **The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator**. Please refer back to the April issue for that article and a discussion of hireling preachers. For the sake of any who may not have the paper from April at hand here is a portion of what I said in that article. "... my wife and I were having dinner at a local restaurant here in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Two "missionaries" from the United States were eating at a table very close to us. One of them was telling the other, "We can hire these native (Hill Tribe) preachers for about \$100 per month and let them do the work." Clearly, they had no conscience about using hireling preachers in their mission work.

Last night I was walking over to the store to pick up something to eat for supper and I met a man that I have had conversations with on a couple of occasions. He and his wife are Presbyterians who are visiting over here for a few weeks. He told me he had had several conversations with preachers from the U. S. A. who are just over here golfing and doing other such things while they hire native preachers to do the work.

Today Ruth was told that the Nazarene preachers who come here from the US follow the same pattern. They hire native preachers to do the work and they head to the golf court as often as possible."

Some preachers and churches with whom we have had experience cannot understand why we do not do the same thing. We are not paying any pastors at this time. If their churches do not support them they are not supported. The churches have a tendency to want foreigners to support their pastors so that they can spend their money on other things, and often on non-essential things. Hireling preachers often come and want to work with us but when they learn we are not **hiring preachers** they move on somewhere else.

What do I mean by **Rice Christians**? There are many people who will confess to believe on Christ and submit to baptism if they are promised a bag of rice, or some other such item. It may be clothing, blankets, and other things. One of our churches lost some members this past year because they did not get new blankets this year. We had given them blankets before but they either sold them or used them for something that made them unusable for covering at night. When we were not immediately forthcoming with blankets another church promised them blankets if they would come and join with them and off they went.

NOT ALL IS BAD

I am happy to report that we are greatly encouraged with the pastors and churches with whom we are working. More and more they are seeing the importance and joy that comes when

they take responsibility for their pastor and for their needs. Most of the members of the churches have learned the joy of tithing. Some not only pay their pastors with cash money but several have adopted the practice of giving rice to their pastors each month. When the lady of the house fixes a meal, she has a bag close by into which she puts one cup of rice. This usually amounts to three cups of rice per day. This accumulates for a month and on the designated day she and her husband take the bag of rice and give it to the pastor.

The people are amazed at what they can do for the pastor and church when they give a tithe of their income to the Lord. Most churches have a Sunday set aside for everyone to bring their tithe. I remember when I taught the preachers for about two weeks on giving tithes and offerings. Immediately, I was asked by one pastor to come and teach his church and the church set aside a Sunday in which they would bring their tithes. They take other offerings every service and everyone just about gives a little in that offering. They do not all handle the tithing in the same manner but it is amazing how quickly they can raise enough money to build a church building and pay for it themselves.

God is blessing. He is adding to the churches and increasing the number of churches. Hardly a month goes by that there is not a pastor contacting Bro. Anond wanting to bring his church to work with ours. Sometimes when they learn what we believe they do not come.

One of the things that is very attractive to the other Baptist churches is the independence that these Sovereign Grace Landmark Independent Baptist Churches enjoy. There is no organization over them that is demanding 10% of their offerings and no board of three or more men, and in some cases women, who are also demanding salaries and office expense so that they can tell the churches what they must do.

Your support for this work—Bro. Anond Phoothaptim, this writer, the Sovereign Grace Independent Baptist School of Theology, and the Hill Tribes Children's Center and other aspects of the work is so very important and so greatly appreciated. Pray that God will continue to add to the churches and add churches to the work and bless all of the work in general. Thank

you for your prayers and support. Fruit is abounding to your account, I assure you. ***Philippians 4:17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.***

NOTICE TO THE READER

This paper was prepared before I found out that I had to have open-heart surgery. Consequently, some articles are somewhat out of date. But, to conserve time, I have printed them anyway.

I am still recovering and it is somewhat of an effort to get out a paper. Most of the articles are timely and not affected by the date.

Next month I plan to publish the second installment of Bro. Settlemoir's "**CRITIQUE.**" I also hope to publish one of these article each month since they are so needed.

I also hope to get back to visiting some churches in the next couple of weeks. I have preached one time since surgery and made it fine.

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