

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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A Few Make History

By Robert Turner

Some brethren assume the continuity of a faithful, visible, functioning church, from the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection until now. It must be "assumed" — it can not be proven — nor do I believe either is essential. But on that assumption, there is a "necessary inference" that should shake us up a bit.

If there has always been a "faithful few" it is because there has always been a few who acted independently of the majority — who thought for themselves — who refused to go along with the elders or the preacher "for the sake of peace." History is filled with proof of continual change which constituted apostasy from the divinely ordained standard. Such changes (we do not refer to changes of no scriptural consequences) had to be resisted — by people who knew the difference in essentials and non-essentials, and who refused to accept as a matter of faith or standard for fellowship anything for which there was no divine authority.

In every generation there had to be a few who endured the name "Anti" or its equivalent, and went about the business of maintaining a small (minority) scriptural church regardless of how this affected their secular business and social relations.

The key was, of course, independent Bible study, which directed dedication to Christ rather than to the "party" or popular opinion. The faithful few knew both who and what they believed (**2 Tim. 1:12-14**), and on this basis they both spoke and acted (**2 Cor. 4:13**). They had convictions — vital, personal, motivating convictions.

But the folk today who rest their hope upon party affiliation, and seem most anxious to assume the historic continuity

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of such a party; are often the least informed, and less likely to have strong convictions based upon independent Bible study.

Had you lived in the "dark ages," would you have been among the "faithful few"? We all like to think that we would have been; but the truth can be read in our present day record. Do we stand with the "faithful few" today, regardless of consequences?

The Booing Spectators

By Bill Hall

Have you ever noticed who does the booing at a ball game? It's not the players on the field. They make their own mistakes and they are not inclined to boo their fellow player when he makes his. They are pulling for one another, encouraging, helpful. They play as a team, win or lose as a team. It is the spectators who boo. So it is in every walk of life: it is the spectators who, as a rule, do the criticizing, not the participants.

Unfortunately, in every congregation, there are the spectators and the participants. The spectators never teach a Bible class, preach, lead singing, or preside at the table; they really don't get that much involved in the worship itself. But more often than not, they are the very ones who are found criticizing the preacher or song leader or Bible class teacher. They are the ones who are so embarrassed and incensed when someone inadvertently commits an "error" in his efforts to lead the group. They come wanting to hear something that is interesting and that will make the time fly by. If they hear it, they "cheer"; if not, they "boo."

Not so with the true participants, those who are really involved in the Lord's work. They are the ones "cheering on" that "rookie" who is preaching his first sermon or leading his first song. When a brother attempts to teach his first Bible class, they are looking for ways to be helpful. They are sympathetic; they rejoice in the success of others; they mourn over the sorrows of others; they feel for the one who has failed, make allowances for him, encourage him to try again, and assure him that he will do better next time. They rejoice especially in the development of the young men and women in the Lord's work. They are just as nervous and excited when the young people make their first attempt at presiding at the table or teaching a class as they would be if it were their own children.

How many preachers have decided to move because of the booing spectators, right at the time when the participants were enjoying

their greatest spiritual growth? How many elders have planned the work around the demands of the spectators rather than the needs of the participants?

Spectators need to become participants and find out what it's like out there "on the field." Participants need to keep on doing their best, ignoring the "boos" while looking to their all-seeing and understanding "Manager" for approval. All need to be preparing for judgment, where it will be the "doers of the word," not the critics, who will be saved. "Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous" (**I Peter 3:8**).

Christians, like ball players, make a sad mistake when they listen too closely to the "boo-birds."

Sirs, What Must I Do To Be Saved?

You must **hear** the gospel, God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16; 1 Peter 1:22-25; James 1:18, 21). "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

You must **believe** Jesus is the Christ (John 3:16; Hebrews 11:6). "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24).

You must **confess** Jesus as the Christ (Luke 12:8, 9; Acts 8:36-38). "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

You must **repent** of your sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38). "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

You must **be baptized** for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 1

Peter 3:21). "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

When you follow the gospel plan of salvation, the Lord will add you to His body, the church (Acts 2:38-47; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:16).