

# View

*A Publication of the Folsom Point church of Christ, 900 E. Natoma, Folsom, CA*

October 7, 2007

## “The Traditional Party Line”

*By Warren Berkeley*

Years ago, a man from a neighboring church came to the city where I was located, walked into my office and immediately said, “OK, what is your position on the marriage question?” I said, “...whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” His response? “Yeah, the traditional party line!”

I said, “Wait a minute. All I did was quote Matthew 19:9; I’ve just repeated the words of Christ!” He said, “Well, but is that all the truth?” Almost as he said that, he heard what he had said! “I mean ... I mean, I know Jesus taught the truth ...” His words had already betrayed him. Rather than submit to the clear teaching of Jesus he had chosen to hurl an accusation that impugned my beliefs. But what did he mean by the phrase “traditional party line?” Behind this charge may be at least one of four attitudes:

1. I don't like what you teach, won't accept it so I'll distract you from discussing the Bible by making this charge. This was certainly the case with the man above. If I spent time defending myself and why I believed what I believed that was time not spent discussing what Matthew 19:9 means. Clever tactic, yes? If I have close friends or relatives who want to marry,

naturally I don't like to hear someone teach something that would question that union. And without any doubt, if I am contemplating a relationship, and you tell me I shouldn't, I won't like that. But instead of just saying, “I don't like what you are teaching,” it is much easier (and sometimes more effective) to charge “Well, you are just repeating the traditional party line.”

“... THE FACT THAT A TEACHING HAS BEEN HELD FOR YEARS DOES NOT NECESSARILY PROVE IT IS WRONG. BEING TRADITIONAL IS NOT ALWAYS BAD.”

2. There are many others who have taught this for many years. So what? The fact that a teaching has been held for years does not necessarily prove it is wrong. Being traditional is not always bad. 2 Thessalonians urges us to hold the traditions of the apostles. There are thousands of brethren who have taught the necessity of repentance and baptism for many generations. This says nothing about the validity of repentance and baptism. The number of preachers and/or writers who have taught a proposition does not minimize its validity, or prove it. Likewise, the number of years something has been taught neither diminishes its truthfulness, nor makes it true.

3. You haven't really studied, and you don't really have your own convictions; you have blindly accepted the word of others. I would guess this is what is behind the “traditional party line” charge most of time. The charge then is a way of saying that I can read your heart and know your motives. It also says that I know that you are not sincere, nor a truth seeker. The only person qualified to make such a charge is the one who is able not only to know what

we teach, but why we teach it. If you are able to know (have real evidence) that someone has put himself under the dominion of others; if you are certain that a man prefers "popular brotherhood thought" (whatever that is) to personal Bible study, then perhaps you are equipped to make this charge.

4. I don't have any real arguments or response to what you are teaching. Here is the real problem the man described above had. He had nothing to say in response to Matthew 19:9, knew what he was doing was wrong, but wanted to do it anyway. So, he threw charges around to try to save face. When I tell people my belief that the only man (with a living mate) free to remarry is the one who has put away his spouse for fornication I want them show me the error of my position (if it is error). Don't make mindless charges - come to the scriptures and teach me the truth. Help me to see where I've been deceived or made a mistake in my study. Lead me through the passages that pertain to this. Give me something substantial instead of just charging me as a slave to human opinion or party pressure. Often, though, when a disputant makes the charge of "traditional party line," he is reacting in frustration over his or her lack of substantial biblical arguments.

I am not prepared to ignore a real danger here. There is a temptation to preach what others are preaching; there is the sin of listening to men and ignoring God; and there is such a thing as a Pharisaic, party-spirit mentality. But when you teach what the Lord said in Matthew 19:9, or anywhere else, because you believe in the Lord and want to stand where He stands, don't be intimidated by the charge of submitting to the "party line." And the fact that 95% of the preachers you know and respect teach the same thing is never a reason to throw it out. What do you think?

My good friend Harold Turner wrote about this a few years ago in a journal. His conclusion fits well here: "Personally, I don't give two hoots about traditional or nontraditional in the whole thing, and would like to make an appeal to anyone who might be feeling the pressure of the nontraditional use of the word traditional these days. Don't be too quick to apologize for preaching and teaching that which has characteristically been taught, for there is at least an outside chance that the reason that bit of teaching is traditional is because it is so."

## We Can Know

*by Brock Hartwigsen*

There are some in the church today who have come to know a false doctrine. They have come to know that no man can know anything. They know that man can have his opinions but he cannot know. I know that this concept contradicts plain simple teaching in the Scriptures.

In the short book of 1 John the Holy Spirit makes it very plain that man can know. Notice what he says we can know:

We can know Jesus (2:3; 5:20).

We can know that we know Jesus (2:3).

We can know we are in Jesus (2:5; 5:20).

We can know it is the last times (2:18).

We can know all things (2:20).

We can know the truth (2:21).

We can know that Jesus is righteous (2:29).

We can know that everyone that does righteousness is born of God (2:29).

We can know that when Jesus appears we shall be like him (3:2).

We can know that Jesus was manifested to take away sins (3:5).

We can know that we have passed from death unto life (3: 14).

We can know that no murderer has eternal life (3:15).

We can know that we are of the truth (3:19).

We can know that God dwells in us (3:24; 4:13).

We can know who has the Spirit of God (4:2).

We can know God (4:6).

We can know that we dwell in God (4:13).

We can know when we love the children of God (5:2).

We can know that we have eternal life (5:13).

We can know that God hears us (5:15).

We can know that God will answer our prayers (5:15).

We can know that we are of God (5:19).

We can know that Jesus has come (5:20).

If man cannot know, then the Holy Spirit and John did not know, because they wrote 26 times that man can know 23 different things. God who knows everything instead of a man who claims to know nothing.

*Via North Charlottesville (VA) Beacon*

# Agenda

## The Lord's Day, October 7, 2007

9:30 AM: Worship: Singing, Lord's Supper, Preaching

Sermon: "The Story: Raiders of the Real Ark"

☪ Preaching: David Posey

5:00 PM: Lord's Supper, Singing, Preaching

☪ Sermon: David Posey

5:30 PM: Bible Classes

## Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Bible Classes for Ages 18 mos. and Up

See class assignment board for location of classes.

### Adult Classes

Room 11-12: Seedsowers

Auditorium: Deuteronomy

(See below for descriptions)

# Gospel Meeting

Monday through Wednesday  
October 8-10

*"Thinking Inside the Box about  
Restoring New Testament  
Christianity"*

**Ed Harrell**

Jacksonville, Florida

## Adult Classes

### The Seedsowers Class. Sunday nights, Room 11-12. Dennis Wade and Adam Cain.

This quarter, the Seedsowers class will focus on two major themes:

Curriculum for home evangelism classes: We'll learn how to develop a study for a non-believer and a study for a believer. In-class group exercises will help participants to tailor content to specific needs of various types of non-Christians.

The best methods for responding to various situations: We will take time in each class for participants to pose questions to the class on how to best handle specific situations. For example, Donna Thompson recently asked the class about how to handle an opportunity with a woman she met at her health club. Discussion will be recorded and published in the Seed Sowers' materials.

We have plenty of room for those who may be interested.

Dennis Wade

### A Study of Deuteronomy. Sunday and Wednesday, Auditorium. David Posey, Sr. and several others.

The Book of Deuteronomy gave the foundation and motivation for the new generation of God's people to appropriate and live in the land of promise by focusing on these themes:

1. the nature and character of God,
2. the covenant relationship,
3. the response of God's people in faith,
4. the concept of sin and its effects.

Deuteronomy centers on the loyal love of God for His people by recounting His wondrous, mighty acts. God's loving and purposeful direction of history for His people is one of the unique aspects of Israelite religion. The most startling aspect of Israel's faith appears in the "Shema" (6:4). God is unique, the sole God of the universe. All the gods of the nations are fakes. Only Yahweh, the God of Israel, is God. The one true, invisible God does not allow physical representations to be made of Him. He demands the total devotion of His people—they shall have no other gods but Him. God's holiness and righteousness are reflected in the moral order set forth in the Law.

[Source: Disciples Study Bible]

Our main objective in this class is to encourage obedience to God through careful attention to His word. We will discuss the various issues that arise from the texts, giving special emphasis to those passages that are quoted in the New Testament. We also want to take note of common, repeated themes throughout (such as "put away from your midst") and draw some conclusions about God's character and expectations for the church.

David Posey, Sr