



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

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

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TEXTS FOR THE SELF-CONSTITUTION THEORY

By J. C. Settlemaier

PART III AND CONCLUSION

CHRIST IN THE MIDST

This text [Mt 18:20] has nothing to say about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in every believer [although that is a fact] but it does speak of the Spirit's corporate in-dwelling because Christ promises to be there, by His Spirit. What is here being discussed is the corporate meeting of a number of disciples in gospel order, who meet in Christ's name and under His authority. And it is the presence of Christ Himself that is desired by them and here promised and the place of His presence is specific, not general. He will be in

the midst of them, that is, in the assembly—and this makes them a church in reality. This is a special blessing given to each assembly of His. Nor are we to think that this text refers to the random meeting of two or three disciples, for Christ has never promised to be in the midst of them in this sense. There is a difference between **with** and **in the midst of**. He is with every believer, always and to the end of the world, [He 13:5]. But this presence in the text is not that common gift to all believers, (for why then would He mention it) but to a special and distinct presence in the midst of those who are

WRESTLING EVIL SPIRITS IN THE JUNGLES OF THAILAND

By Wayne Camp

TEXT: Ephesians 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

I consulted three of my favorite commentaries on this text and all of them point out that the expression “**spiritual wickedness**” can correctly be translated “**wicked spirits**.” One translation has it “**the spiritual powers of evil**.” Two have it, “**the spiritual forces of evil**.” Yet another says, “**wicked spirits**” in

agreement with the commentators.

When Lucifer the archangel was cast out of heaven, he drew a third part of the angels with him. Peter makes reference to these fallen angels. **2 Peter 2:4** *For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.*

Jude also speaks of these evil spirits being in chains of darkness until the time of their judgment. **Jude 6** *And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own (See WRESTLING, Continued P. 6, Left Col.)*

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subject to Him in all essential commands and (See CONSTITUTION, Cont. Page 2, Left Col.) (CONSTITUTION, Continued from Page 1) desire voluntarily to compose a church and it is that **midst** which is spoken of in Re 1:13; 2:1 ***"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle."***

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; these things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in

the midst of the seven golden candlesticks..."

As the Lord was in the midst of the bush, He is in the midst of His assemblies, Exod 3:2 ***"And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."***

It was from the midst of the cloud that God called to Moses: Ex 24:16

"And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud."

It was in the midst of the tabernacle that cherubim wing touched wing, I King 6:27.

"And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house."

It was in the midst of Zion that the Lord promised to dwell, Zech 2:10

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD."

It is in the midst of Jerusalem where the Lord will dwell in a future time, Zech 8:3

"Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain."

After His resurrection He physically appeared in the midst of them just as He Spiritually meets in the midst of every one of His churches: Luke 24:36

"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

It was in the midst of the church He promised to meet and did meet, Heb 2:12

"Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."

As Christ was seen to be in the midst of the throne of God, so He is in the midst of his

churches: Rev 5:6

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”

BUT WHY IS “CHURCH” NOT MENTIONED IN Mt 18:20

Nor should anyone object and say because the word church is not here expressly used, that this passage is not speaking of the church. Scripture often refers to the NT Assembly where the word church is not used. Take for example, the text-word *gather together* [synago]. It is also used in Acts 4:31:

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

This refers to the church just as does the word *own company* [idois] in Acts 4:23. Again in Acts 15:6 this same word is used as it is in 15:30, which all refer to the meetings of a church, though *ekkleesia* is not specifically mentioned. It is a compound form of this very word [episunagoge, epi +synago], translated *assembling* which is used in He 10:25 rebuking those who were absent from the meeting of the church, but the word church is not found. Also to *come together* [sunerchomai], is sometimes used of the gathering of the church, Cf. I Cor 11:17-18, 33-34; 14:23, 26. 1 Pe 2:5,9, refers to church members and the church but the word is not used. We can be certain, then, that the word *church* is not necessarily used at all times when an *assembly* of Christ meets together. This is the case in Mt 18:20.

SELF-CONSTITUTION AN ACT OF FAITH

Furthermore it is most important for us to understand this little meeting here so patiently described by our Lord himself [Mt 18:20] manifests a large degree of faith on their part to accept His Word on such an important matter as the constitution of a church. It therefore brings Him much honor when they bow to His simple teaching on this subject. He does not despise the day of small things and His disciples' *faith* is

His Word for their beginning as a church and for their preservation to the end. They are, therefore, to put no stock in any church or any man, yea, in no group of men, nor are they to seek authority from them. It is idolatry to look to any historical record of church-to-church succession as drawn up and circulated by some churches. Rather, these disciples beseech the throne of grace and walk by faith into this meeting, recognizing the word of their Lord who called them and follow His will in constituting a church, ***“For we walk by faith, not by sight”, [2 Cor 5:7].*** On the other hand, when anyone insists upon an authority which is not stated in the Word of God they are pushing a perishable doctrine, ***“(Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men” [Col 2:22].*** These stones have **man-made-marks** and consequently they are polluted, [Exod 20:25] ***“Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” [Mark 7:7].***

Lest the reader think these are novel views I will give a few quotes.

“...Which church is a company of visible saints, called and separated from the world by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of faith of the gospel, being baptized into that faith and joined to the Lord and each other by mutual agreement...”— Baptist Confession, 1643, quoted with approval by J.R. Graves, *Intercommunion*, p. 107

Yet this is not all. This gathering together is essentially a covenantal meeting and this is the way Baptists have organized churches from the beginning.

“It [the covenant—JC] means that agreement between saved individuals by which they associate themselves into a local church, setting forth their mutual engagements as members of one body... (Need source here).

What is a church of Jesus Christ?

“A local congregation of baptized believers in Christ united in the belief of His doctrines and covenanting to do what He has commanded.”— [B.H. Carroll, *Christ and His Church*, p. 245].

We can see this over and over in our history. Baptists believed and still believe that we

covenant together to form a church and this is the essential doctrine of church constitution as taught by Mt 18:20 and supported by other passages and demonstrated by Baptist History. Baptist usage proves this is how our people always constituted churches! The church covenant of the church in Horse Fair, Stony Bucks, England, in 1790 reads as follows:

"Upon looking into the sacred Scripture, we find it was common in the first ages of Christianity for such as professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, voluntarily to unite together in Christian societies called churches. Their ends in so doing were to honor God and promote their own spiritual edification."

"Having searched the written Word, in order that we may know how to act, as well as what to believe, and sought unto God by prayer for divine direction, we heartily approve of, and mean to follow their example. With a view to this, we now solemnly, in presence of the all-seeing and heart-searching God, do mutually covenant and agree, in manner and form following."

You find the same thing stated in our own church covenant, which is found in *Pendleton's Manual*. I never saw a church covenant that did not, in essence, state this same thing. Thus every time the authority brethren read their church covenant, it warns them they are holding a tradition in the constitution of churches which they cannot sustain by Scripture, History, confession or covenant! Instead of Scripture support, they bring in a late tradition.

CHURCHES CANNOT LEGISLATE

If the authority theory is correct then it necessarily follows that a church has the power to legislate for they can determine that another group cannot become a church, even though the group desires to be a church! This is authority which Christ never gave to a church. [Editor's note: I might add that no church can vote another church into existence. I have known of situations where a church had a "mission" that was as large in number as the "mother church." The pastor and church wanted them to organize. But, in two cases, the pastors of the missions did not want to organize for each was afraid from things that had been said that the new church would not call him as pastor. Thus, he was refusing to go along

with organizing the new church to protect himself. The "mother church" cannot organize a church. The folks in the "mission" must covenant together in order to become a church. Without that covenant, no "mother" has the authority to vote her "daughter" into a "sister" church.]

"We learn that all our church rights, privileges, and franchises are limited to the particular church of which we are members, as those of a citizen are limited to the State of which he is a citizen. Nor can one church constitutionally extend her franchises or privileges to persons without and beyond her jurisdiction, any more than one State can extend her franchises to citizens of other States."—[Intercommunion, by JRG, p. 161]. As no church can ordain a man who is not a member so no church can constitute another church. Nor can a church appoint a pastor for another church. No church can transact business for another church and no church can authorize the existence of another church. These are acts which are beyond the jurisdiction of "church authority," it goes without saying. But this absurdity of overreaching is frequently done by these churches which maintain they have authority to constitute. One of these churches sent a letter to a church they had authorized and mothered according to this theory and admonished them to "listen to their mother"! And why not, if the theory is correct?

TEXTS FOR THE SELF-CONSTITUTION THEORY

PART IV

CHURCH AUTHORITY IS SPECIFIC, NOT GENERAL

My brother, in his article does to church authority what the religious world does to the church— they both press for universality! Most denominations elevate the church from its Scriptural plane of locality to a universal church which includes all the saved of the world. The authority brethren do precisely the same thing with church authority. They elevate it to the plane where it covers everything and anything. Church authority is universal and there is nothing that they cannot sweep under this rug. This is the old error of Catholicism dug up

again. The Catholics teach that everything comes through the church because the church has universal authority. In their view the church controls the calling of grace in salvation, it controls the calling to the ministry, it controls governments, setting up and deposing kings because they maintain the authority was given to the church. They even pretend they control those who are dead, releasing from or retaining in Purgatory because the authority belongs to the church.

This is wrong. Why? Because **only some authority** was given to the church, not all authority!

My brother says in *The Voice*, "It is mind boggling to me that the Lord would give only His church authority over the observance of the Lord's Supper, and over the administration of baptism, and over discipline in the church, and even over the choosing of the seven deacons, and yet he would leave the organization of the church itself up to the whims of a few men without any church involvement." [p. 67].

The problem is in the mind of my brother.

Let me point out what every one of the authority brethren must admit.

Take for example the salvation of the lost.

Salvation is not under church authority, [Acts 11:12-18]. Salvation is under the sovereign discretion of God the Holy Spirit, [Jn 3:8]. The Lord did not commit salvation to the church! [Acts 13:48]. It does not come through the church, [Acts 5:14], even though the gospel is committed to the church and the church proclaims the gospel, salvation does not depend on the church, [Acts 8:1-6]. If it did, no one outside a church could be saved! Thus the authority of the church is not universal.

Again take the call to the ministry.

The call to the ministry is not under church authority, but is a sovereign act of the Lord and the church has no authority over it. All the church does is to recognize what the Lord has done, [Acts 13:16]! What belongs to the church must be proclaimed and defended but it is a great error to say that because the Lord gave the great commission, baptism, the supper, and discipline (to name a few things) to the church, that the ministry, marriage, setting up kings and the constitution of churches and

anything and everything else under Heaven belongs to the church. The authority that rests in a church is specific, not general, not universal. Only what is specifically designated as belonging to the church is in the hands of the church, ***"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations," [Re 2:26].***

Again ordination belongs to the church where the candidate is a member.

No church can ordain a man who is not a member for that is something that only a church can do for itself. Churches may assist in these services but they have no authority in the act itself. They cannot ordain a deacon, pastor or missionary for another church. These are acts that only those who compose the church can carry out. It is the same in the constitution of churches. Other churches may attend. They may assist. They may recommend. They may take part in the services but cannot constitute the new group a church.

This matter is essential to Baptists polity. No church has any authority outside of its own membership. The church cannot authorize a church constitution because the authority of the church does not extend beyond her own confines.

Get this straight and the authority theory dies on the vine.

FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER

"This union of saints in a church state, is signified by their being joined and as it were glued together see Acts 5:13 9:26.... c.) This union between them is made by voluntary consent and agreement; a Christian society, or a church of Christ, is like all civil societies, founded on agreement and by consent; thus it is with societies from the highest to the lowest; kingdoms and states were originally formed on this plan; every body corporate, as a city, is founded on the same plan; in which there are privileges to be enjoyed, and duties to be performed; and no man has a right to the one, without consenting to the other: and in lower societies, no man can be admitted into them, nor receive any benefit from them, unless he assents

to the rules and articles on which the society is founded. All civil relations, except the natural relation of parents and children, which arises from the law of nature, are by consent and covenant; as that of magistrates and subjects, and of masters and servants, and of husband and wife; which latter, as it is by compact and agreement, may serve to illustrate the relation between a church and its members added to it, and the manner in which they be, by consent; see Isaiah 62:5."— [Jn Gill, Body of Divinity, p. 623].

CONCLUSION

These things were once clearly understood. They were taught, practiced and believed. Yet, in time, we have a doctrine, a landmark which cannot be found in history and certainly not in the Bible. This means some have removed an Old Landmark and have put in its place the authority theory! This is exactly how infant baptism came in. This is how sprinkling came in. This is how baptismal regeneration came in. This is how sacraments came in and this is how the authority theory came in. Someone put a false marker up and claimed it was an Old Landmark. Men followed this tradition and contended it was Scriptural. They contended it was in History. They contend it is what Landmark Baptists believe today. They call us

Neo-Landmarkers, Apostate Landmarkers, and other such names. But when we go back to the Scriptures, Lo, it is not there! When we go to history, Lo, it is not there. When we ask these old Landmark leaders about this pseudo-landmark, they not only deny it but point us to the **Christ-set, Bible-fixed, Spirit-taught Landmark**, which accords with History and with the books and records of the Old Landmark leaders themselves and it is very simply this—churches are self-constituted! This is the original Landmark on this subject. What my brethren have done by their theory amounts to removing an old Landmark and trying to establish a pseudo landmark in its place. But as with all counterfeits, it cannot stand up when compared with the real thing.

Christ himself promises to be in the midst of every self-constituted church—when it is constituted in His Name! Whenever baptized believers purpose to follow the teachings of Christ and His Word and covenant together then you have a Scriptural assembly. Nothing else is. But when you go to another church and get out dusty old records and begin to look for mothers and grand mothers, and great, great, great grandmothers, then you have entered into the realm of traditionalism. This is not the method of true Landmark Baptists now and it never was, but it is a tradition put in the place of a doctrine. Christ calls us back to His Word, back to His

(WRESTLING, Cont. from Page 1)
habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Of this fall, Jesus said, *"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."* Isaiah wrote of this fall. **Isaiah 14:12** *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*

Any student of the Scriptures is aware that during the ministry of Christ there was much demon possession. The Lord and the Apostles often cast out these wicked spirits.

People whom the evil spirits possessed were sometimes driven to insanity. The possessed often harmed themselves and others. **Mark 5:3-5** *Who had his dwelling among the tombs;*

and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: 4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. 5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

Most of our readers are probably familiar with the young woman in Philippi who was possessed by evil spirits. **Acts 16:16-18** *And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which*

shew unto us the way of salvation. 18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Evil spirits are real and they are worshipped. In March last year when I preached at the church in Pa Tong Eh, a young married man presented himself for baptism. Later in the month we were there for a camp meeting (Bible conference) and he asked us to come to his house and pray and read Scripture because his wife worshipped evil spirits and he wanted us to drive them out of the house. It was after the evening service and dark. There is no electricity in Pa Tong Eh (we used generators for services) so the light was from candles and a flashlight. We simply read Scripture and prayed.

I cannot say how much of the worship of evil spirits is superstition and how much of it is real. I do know that these wicked spirits do exist and we all come in contact with them at times. I once visited a man in Alabama that I have not the slightest doubt was demon possessed. It was eerie just being in a room with him trying to witness to him.

Once, several years ago, I was preaching a series of sermons on Demonism and have no doubt that evil spirits tried to lead me away from that. One of the ways that demons tempt people is to get them into such things as ESP—Extra Sensory Perception. While I was preparing a message in which I was dealing with this, I thought to myself, “I need to call Bro. _____ in Saint Louis.” The thought had hardly passed through my mind when the phone rang and it was the brother I had thought about needing to call. I paid little attention but the next day, I thought, “I need to call Bro. _____ in Michigan.” About that time the phone rang and it was that Brother calling me. There was a real temptation to experiment and see if I could do it again but my study of demonic possession caused me to draw back from any experimentation.

WICKED SPIRITS WORSHIPPED

Among the Hill Tribes of Thailand with whom we are working and among whom Bro. Anond Phoothaptim works, the worship of evil spirits is

common. And, the leaders of those who worship them can cause a good deal of trouble in a village. On one occasion Bro. Anond went to a village to preach the gospel but was run out of the village and his life was threatened if he returned. As we drive through the jungle we often see small white flags on long bamboo poles. These white flags indicate that the house over which they fly is the home of a worshipper of evil spirits.

While the church at Pa Koe was building the building about which I wrote in the October **GP&P** they encountered some trouble from a worshipper of evil spirits. He tried to stop the work on the building by various means. But, the Lord intervened. The man took some medicine that was for a sick dog because it contained some drug on which he thought he could get high. It threw him into a fit of insanity and the Thai police came to the village to arrest him and ended up killing him. They arrested two of his cohorts and they were banished from the village. The opposition pretty much ended and the building was completed and dedicated in October, 2001.

When we negotiated for the land on which Bethel Baptist Church built their building, we wanted to buy all the way to the village street. But, we had to go about 40 feet back from the street because the man from whom we were buying the land had a spirit house located on the corner and he was afraid to disturb the spirit house and was fearful that if he sold us the land on which the house was located the evil spirits would do “bad things” to him and his family.



Spirit House

Spirit worshippers build or buy spirit houses such as the one the previous page. Some of them are very elaborate though this one is rather simple. They place little dishes on the porch and put little offerings of food in them. They also burn incense at times. They may also leave little bouquets of flowers for the enjoyment



of the wicked spirits.

BURNING A SPIRIT HOUSE IN NA LOA MAI

Na Loa Mai is a Li Su village located high in the mountainous jungle of Northern Thailand. When you enter this village evidences of spirit worship are very apparent. A major drug dealer also lives in this village in the only non-bamboo house there. He does homage to the evil spirits also.

But, in Na Loa Mai, there is a very dedicated group of Christians who, under the leadership of Bro. Anond, have constituted a church. As I have mentioned in other articles, the church at Pa Sak sends him out to work among the tribes as the Lord leads. I will, in some future issue, write about the church in Na Loa Mai.

The lady in the picture above is a Christian and member of the church in Na Loa Mai. Her father, who was a worshipper of evil spirits, recently died. He had a spirit house and this dear lady wanted it out of her house but she was afraid to touch it. Actually She asked Bro. Anond and Bro. Lee if they would be willing to remove the house. They took the house out to a place where all the neighbors could see what they were doing. There they broke it up and burned it in full-view of the neighbors. To those

of you who read this, this may seem like a trivial thing. But, to those villagers who worship evil spirits, it is a powerful witness for our people there. It is also a powerful witness to the power of Christ over demon spirits. I thought it very commendable that, after the house was removed and broken up, that this dear Christian lady is right there helping Bro. Bill Lee and Bro. Anond burn the wood from which the house was built. I thought of Colossians 1:13 when I saw this picture. **Colossians 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.** God, in his marvelous grace, has reached into this jungle village in a pagan land and has translated this dear lady out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of his dear son. She is a trophy of sovereign saving grace. It truly blessed my heart to hear what happened and to see this picture.



MORE SPIRIT HOUSES DESTROYED IN CHIANG MAI

In Chiang Mai, which is the city where we stay while in Thailand, a couple asked if the group would come to their home and remove three spirit houses. The one in the picture above was made of concrete. It seems from the picture that Bro. Jackie Duplechain (far left) is keeping a safe distance. ☺ Bro. Bill Lee and Bro. Tommy Lee are in the middle getting ready to carry out one of the wooden houses. The man and his wife are also in the picture, she on the left and he on the right.

The Brethren broke the concrete house up



and hauled the rubble away. They also removed two houses made of wood and took them to a place and burned them.

This spirit house which brethren Bill and Tommy Lee are carrying to the truck is more ornate than the one pictured first. It was apparently on a pedestal of some sort. Notice the little ladder that the spirits could use to climb up and down to enter and leave the house. I wish I were able to print this picture in color and full size so that you could see the decorative style of the house and the ornaments and figures on it. Folks, these are not dollhouses nor playhouses, they are houses at which evil spirits are worshipped.

These pictures will be posted on our WebSite. If you have Internet access and will go to this URL (<<http://gpp.camps-computer.com/graceproclamator/gppindex.htm>>) you can find a listing of the papers that are on the site. In the table near the top of the page, click on December, 2001, and it will take you to a link that will take you to the paper. There you will



find links on which you can click to see these pictures in full color and size.

Outside the city of Chiang Mai two more spirit houses go up in smoke. As I write this I am reminded of a passage in Acts. **Acts 19:13-20** *Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*

I ask you to pray that the word of God will continue to prevail in Thailand. Pray for Bro. Anond and the pastors of all the churches that they may be supplied their needs according to God's riches in glory.

The Lord willing Bro. Bill Lee, Sis. Janice Lee, Sis. Ruth Camp and Bro. Wayne Camp will be going to Thailand March 4, 2002. We will once again be preaching in many of the villages and spending as much time as possible in teaching sessions with the pastors there. As on our previous trips, we will be carrying medicine to the various villages and treating all of those who have needs. We will also purchase both Lahu and Lisu Bibles to be distributed in Thailand and Burma. There is a great need to purchase land for churches and also to complete building projects that are now underway. Sis. Camp is raising money to buy each child in the children's center a new outfit of clothes. And as usual, many other unexpected needs will be found during this trip. The needs are always great and our resources are always limited. If you would like to help on this

THE KIND OF OLD LANDMARKER I AM

(Thirteenth in a Series)

EDITORIAL

Due to other material being used, I have not written on this series since the August issue of *The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator*. Through that issue we had called thirteen witnesses whose testimonies affirm that a true New Testament type of ecclesia is an organized assembly of scripturally baptized believers who regularly assemble for worship and service in one locality.

OUR WITNESSES REVIEWED

As in previous editorials, I want to review the testimony of the witnesses called thus far:

WITNESS 1: James Robinson Graves

"The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place."

WITNESS 2: Elton Wilson

"How local is the local church? IT IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO ASSEMBLE. How local is the local church? IT IS LOCAL ENOUGH TO OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER."

WITNESS 3: H. Boyce Taylor

"Our first reason for contending that the word ecclesia never means any thing but an organized and an assembling church is that the Lord Jesus, who is the author of the Book of Revelation, uses the word ecclesia 20 times in Revelation and every time He uses it, He refers to a local organized and assembling church."

WITNESS 4: Eld. Milburn Cockrell

"In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time."

WITNESS 5: ELDER CURTIS PUGH

"New Testament usage, secular usage and the Septuagint usage of the word "ecclesia" indicate it was only and always used of an organized, congregating body of people in a given locality."

WITNESS 6: ELDER BUEL H. KAZEE

Just *one church in one locality* sent some messengers to *another church in another locality*....

WITNESS 7: ELDER BRUCE ALLEN

". . . ecclesia . . . in its Christian application . . . means an assembly of believers *called out to worship in one place together.*"

WITNESS 8: Elder Joe Wilson

These three things: 1. Locality. 2. Visibility. 3. Organized for a purpose inhere in the meaning of the word. A true "ecclesia" cannot exist that does not have these three ingredients.

WITNESS 9: Elder Ben M. Bogard

"A CONGREGATION is just as local as the wife is . . . "Remember the word CHURCH always means CONGREGATION, never anything else. A congregation is necessarily LOCAL. It would not be a congregation if it were not LOCAL."

WITNESS 10: Eld. C. D. Cole

The N. T. never speaks of one particular assembly or church as a part of the whole, but of each assembly as "the whole church."

WITNESS 11: Elder B. H. Carroll

Locality inheres in Ecclesia. There can be no assembly now or hereafter without a place to meet.

WITNESS 12: Elder Jarrel E. Huffman

"The church is a local organization, a single congregation." (*The Berea Baptist Banner*, January 5, 1987)

"Each local EKKLESIA has tangibility, reality, locality, and can and does assemble." (Unpublished Book on the Church).

WITNESS 13: Eld. Hezekiah Harvey

Bro. Hezekiah Harvey wrote concerning the word *ecclesia*,

"Its ordinary use in the New Testament is to designate a specific, local assembly of Christians, organized for the maintenance of the worship, the doctrines, the ordinances, and the discipline of the gospel, and united, under special covenant, with Christ and with one another; as, 'the church at Jerusalem,' 'the churches of Galatia' " (*THE CHURCH*, Hezekiah Harvey, p. 27, 1879 edition,

From *The Baptist Examiner*, May 14, 1977).

Editor's note: This quotation is also found on page 27 of the 1982 reprint of this book.)

Bro. Harvey wrote,

The fact is, moreover, everywhere obvious that the charge of a primitive bishop was, not over a diocese as now understood, but over a single church or congregation. This is shown by undoubted authorities. Campbell, an eminent Episcopalian historian, after quoting many Fathers of the second and third centuries, among others Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Cyprian, concludes: "Now, from the writings of these Fathers it is evident that the whole flock assembled in the same place, *epi to auto*, with their bishop and presbyters . . ."

Now I will call

WITNESS 14: Eld. Tom Ross

Bro. Tom Ross has written and published at least two books that are very good. One has to do with the doctrine of free and sovereign grace and the other with the local church. He has also written many articles that were published in *The Berea Baptist Banner*. Bro. Ross is our next witness. In one of his books, he makes several statements that affirm the **Old Landmark** doctrine that a New Testament type of assembly is a group of baptized believers covenanted together in church relationship that meet or assemble in one specific locality. He wrote,

As previously stated, the etymology and usage of the Word, *ekklēsia* suggests that a church is a local, visible, called-out assembly of baptized believers. (*Teachings on the Local Church*, Tom Ross, Providence Baptist Church, 1993, P. 30).

Again Bro. Ross says,

If Paul believed in a universal, invisible church or even in a provincial church he would have said that "the Church of Christ" or "the Church of Asia" salutes you. Yet Paul recognized each congregation of baptized believers existing in a specific place as a body of Christ. The fact that he uses the word "churches" proves that there were more than one existing in Asia! When Jesus wanted to communicate to the seven churches of Asia, He didn't inspire John to write to the universal, invisible church of Asia. Rather, the Scripture reads: "John to the SEVEN CHURCHES

which are in Asia" (Rev. 1:4). In Revelation 2 and 3 the location of each church is given. (*Ibid.*, P. 32).

In the paragraph above, let me call your attention to these words especially, "Paul recognized each congregation of baptized believers existing in a specific place as a body of Christ." Is it not true that Bro. Ross is affirming that a true New Testament type of ecclesia is one that exists and assembles in a specific place as a body of Christ? I don't believe he ever, in his discussion of the nature of the New Testament type of ecclesia, gives any other definition of a local assembly.

Again Bro. Ross wisely observed, *Eighteen times the word church is employed in the singular, referring to a congregation in a specific location. (Ibid., P. 33).*

According to Bro. Ross, the word ecclesia refers "to a congregation in a specific location." To this I agree the words of many Old Landmarkers such as J. R. Graves. To this I fully agree. The New Testament type of assembly is a group of baptized, organized believers, a congregation in a specific location, not in two or more locations.

Once more, Bro. Ross says, *Three times the word "church" is used in reference to the believers coming together or assembling in one place. This usage strongly suggests and demonstrates the local nature of the church. The universal, invisible church has never come together in one place, yet the churches of the New Testament did it quite frequently. Note again the reference to "believers coming together or assembling in one place."*

Where does Bro. Ross say that a true New Testament type of ecclesia assembles. Does he say that one ecclesia may regularly assemble in two or more places, in two or more cities, or in two or more states, or in two or more countries? Absolutely not! He says that the New Testament kind of ecclesia assembles in one place. One place! One location! One body in one locality! That is the New Testament type of ecclesia.

We have now presented the testimony of fourteen witnesses. In addition, these fourteen witnesses have themselves called witnesses whom we have quoted. I regularly find additional witnesses that I will call when time and space allow. Just this week I read testimony from Benjamin Keach, Benjamin Griffith, The Charleston Association, J. L. Reynolds, P. H. Mell, and W. B. Johnson that supports this Old Landmark

of the Baptist faith.

In addition to these, I have at least 30 witnesses that I had already planned to use. As it stands now, by the time I finish this series I will have called at least 50 witnesses that sustain the notion that I advanced in my first article. "I am the kind of *Old Landmarker* who believes in a truly local church and only in the local church. I believe that to be truly local, a church must assemble in *one place*." To paraphrase one of our witnesses, Bro. Milburn Cockrell, I must stand upon this truth even if most of the world calls me a 'misguided fanatic'. I may be called an idiot because of the stand I am taking. I may be accused of prejudice, willful blindness, or lacking in mental ability but I will still stand on this doctrine.

If I declare that the nature of the church is local only, and I do, I am only being consistent with that doctrine when I insist that to be a truly local New Testament type of ecclesia, the congregation must regularly assemble in one place. Those who claim to hold to the "local church only" view and yet have members that regularly assemble in two, three, or more localities in two, three, or more assemblies, in two, three, or more cities, states, countries, or continents are not and cannot be consistent with their "local church only" view. Such a church, depending

on where these different groups of members assemble, is either an intercity, interstate, international, or intercontinental church—it is not local no matter how loudly and adamantly it insists that it is.

If you will please review our witnesses, you will see that each of them has confirmed what I have just said. Like Bro. J. R. Graves, our very first witness, they have confirmed that "The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place." Like Bro. Milburn Cockrell they have confirmed that "In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time." And, like Bro. Curtis Pugh they have affirmed that "New Testament usage, secular usage and the Septuagint usage of the word "ecclesia" indicate it was only and always used of an organized, congregating body of people in a given locality." And like Bro. Tom Ross, our latest witness, who declared, "*Paul recognized each congregation of baptized believers existing in a specific place as a body of Christ.*"

And, Dear Reader, let me avow again "THAT IS THE KIND OF OLD LANDMARKER I AM!"

—Wayne Camp, Editor—

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**NEW DIRECTORY OF SOVEREIGN GRACE
LANDMARK BAPTIST CHURCHES BEING
PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION**

The editor and his wife are working to publish a new directory of Sovereign Grace Landmark Baptist Churches. We do not want to put it into print until we have it as correct as possible.

I have posted a copy of what we have compiled on the Internet at this URL:

http://gpp.camps-computer.com/directory_churches.htm

We need your help. If you have Internet access would you please go to the site and check your listing and any others on which you might information. If corrections, additions, or deletions need to be made, please send them to us at the addresses provided on the page.

Your timely attendance to this matter will be deeply appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you. Wayne Camp, Editor