

Christian-up!

(Commentary by David R. Padecky, Monica J. Fox editor)

Defining etiquette

Question: If Christians believe the Bible is truth, then how can so many Christians choose to live their daily lives in disregard to the truth? The world has a tendency to enjoy looking at Christians as hypocrites, so the world can justify its unrighteous ways. God knows all and will judge us according to our hearts and actions.

Luke 16:13-15 (NIV) "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, 'You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.'"

Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NIV) "For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing whether it is good or evil."

Acts 17:30-31 (NIV) "In the past, God overlooked such ignorance, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent. For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead."

James 3:13 (NIV) "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom."

Revelation 3:4-5 (NIV) "Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and His angels."

I never thought I would ever write a commentary for anyone, especially for the whole world to read. However, there are times in a person's life that he or she, at one time or another, hopes they may be able to make a slight difference in the lives of others, if they can express their opinion in such a way that others will listen.

Now I realize that everyone has an opinion, and most are not afraid to express theirs, sometimes far too often. But I'm not writing this commentary to merely express my opinion. There is a major problem in the Church of our Lord Jesus, and I, hopefully, along with other Christians, will be able to address this problem with Biblical truth and deep concern through the grace of our God.

I know most of you must already know where I'm going just by reading the heading of the commentary. But, just in case for some reason any of you are wondering, I'll tell you. The problem we face in the United States and throughout the world is a major lack of Christian etiquette. I'm sure there are a few different dictionaries out there, but the one I have close by at the moment is the *Microsoft Encarta College Dictionary*. The definition of "etiquette" in the dictionary states: "The rules and conventions governing correct or polite behavior in society in general or in a particular social or professional group or situation." Question: Are Christians a society? I think we are! According to one of the definitions regarding a "society" in this dictionary, it states: "structured community of people, a structured community of people bound together by similar traditions, institutions, or nationality." So far, I believe it looks like Christians are qualifying as a society. Let's take a look at how this dictionary defines a "Christian." It says, "believer in Jesus Christ as Savior, a believer in the historical and divine significance of Jesus Christ and follower of His teaching and example." Did you read the last six words of the definition? It said, "follower of His teaching and example."

Those who covet shall reap consequences

by Walter Soderstrom

There are many examples of covetousness, and the resultant consequences thereof, recorded in the Bible. In this issue, I would like to call attention to another situation which had serious consequences. In Numbers, chapter 16, we are told the story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. In verses 2 and 3, the Bible tells us that they rose up before Moses with certain of the children of Israel, (Actually adults, but called "children of Israel" probably because they were descendants of Jacob, also known as Israel. [see Genesis 32:28 and 35:10]) 250 princes of the assembly, men of renown. And they gathered themselves against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift you up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

As had happened various times previously, Moses was very frustrated with the attitude of many of the Israelites, and as the story shows, so was God. Moses said that they would allow God to decide who was chosen to lead the Israelites. Actually, in Exodus 3:10, we are told that God specifically called Moses to lead the Israelites from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. Because of an incident which occurred on the way, (Numbers 20:7-17) Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land, but he was allowed to see it, according to Deuteronomy 34:1-6.

As a conclusion to the story, the earth opened up (probably as with an earthquake) and swallowed them up, and their houses or tents, and all their goods (verses 31-33) and, as verse 35 tells us, a fire from the Lord came down and consumed the 250 men who joined themselves to Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

All this occurred because they coveted the position God had given to Moses and Aaron. In Matthew 19:30, Jesus said, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."•

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So let me get this straight. Basically, it's saying, "To be a Christian is to be Christ-like." Okay, now in my mind and heart, I feel in everything we have just gone over, it means that as Christians we are supposed to set an example for the rest of the world. The only way that we can accomplish this "setting an example" thing is by being Christ-like. Believe me, I do not want to make any enemies. However, I do know from life's experiences that I will most likely receive some varying opinions regarding this subject. I am positive that at times I am going to hit a little too close for comfort in some individual's thinking, and that person is not going to be happy with me. You know what? It's okay if they feel the need to fire back at me. It's usually the Christians who feel somewhat offended, because, in reality, they feel somewhat convicted in regards to their walk with Jesus.

As long as I and other Christians speak Biblical truth from the heart so we can possibly help our Christian brothers and sisters who are struggling with Christian etiquette, it's okay. Offending or hurting our Christian siblings' feelings is not my (or any other Christian's) purpose in writing the commentaries. In order for all of us as Christians to stay focused on following the narrow path our Lord Jesus directs us to follow, we must abide by the truth of the scriptures. Otherwise we will look as if we are hypocrites to other Christians and non-Christians alike. We must help Christians who are spiritually weaker than others, so they, in turn, will hopefully learn to set a better example for other Christians and the rest of the world.

Paul confronted Peter about Peter's getting off track regarding his ministry. Without getting too deeply into this biblical incident (read Galatians 2), Peter was directed to minister to the Jews, and Paul was directed to minister to the gentiles. In essence, Peter started hanging out too much with the more financially comfortable gentiles, and Paul confronted him about it to help keep Peter focused and on track. Accountability, right?

In the world in which we live, it is extremely hard at times to exercise good Christian etiquette. Please remember that we are all born in sin, and none that have walked or are walking on this earth, except Jesus, is perfect. But that does not mean it's all right to allow our foolish pride, wants, over-exaggerated needs, and the ways of the world to convince us that we're okay in our actions. As Christians, we are obligated to look at ourselves throughout the day, evening, and night at the way we are representing our Lord Jesus. We have no excuse whatsoever at any time to say that our actions are justified in any given situation, unless we are acting to the best of our ability in the fashion that our Lord and Savior, Jesus, acted.

Well, I guess this is the end of the "beginning commentary." As we get going, we will get deeper into the subject of Christian etiquette. Always remember that Christian etiquette is the correct way to show our love for others, and especially our Lord Jesus. Which brings me to the phrase, "Christian-up." As a Christian, always run to win the race by stepping it up a notch: Christian-up in everything you do.

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NIV) "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scoring its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

www.christianupwithsaved.com•

God and the firefly

by Reverend R.A. Shackles

One of the delights of a summer night is sitting in the darkness and watching the flashes of fireflies here and there. In the darkness, their tiny God-created light is clearly seen — though not easily followed, since they turn it on and off and just about the moment you think you have one, it disappears, only to blink anew either beside or behind you! Still, in the night, their light is easily visible.

But what of high noon? Whether or not fireflies fly in the daytime is irrelevant. If they did, what then? We are thinking here, of course, of high noon with the sun out at its meridian brightest. If, in that moment, the firefly blinked on its mysterious light, who would see it? The answer, we suggest, is no one! Its effect would be as strong as at night, but the brilliance of the sun would make it virtually invisible to our eyes.

That is the difference between living to ourselves or living to Christ, of letting "our light" so shine in witness to the Christ-Light, that others may be led to glorify God. The one who lives to himself in this life is like the firefly, if there were no other light, he would seem to be worth seeing, clearly visible — no matter how "dark" his works may be, or his motives. The thief in the night sees to his nefarious work by using a flashlight. But if the police officer uses a spotlight, the thief is caught out.

The point is, the brighter the light of Christ in our lives, the lesser the light of the humanistic "firefly" of the night! That is the work of the Church, and the intention of Creation: To so live in the meridian light of Christ that all life is as living in the brightest sunlight. Thus darkness — Sin — is overcome. There, the works of self-contemplation (or worse) are eclipsed. There, in the brilliant high noon of Christ's Light, the evil works of sinful men are seen for what they really are: Of no comparison, not even visible in the overpowering shining of God-Light. That is our calling as Christians: To so live in the Light of Christ that we eclipse the firefly glimmers of evil and draw people to desire that brilliance of the high-noon clarity of Christ, in our own faith and works proclaiming His redemptive love. Each of us must ask ourselves: Am I a firefly in the night? or a brightly shining beam celebrating Christ in God's noon-day, meridian light?•



Friend or tyrant?

by Rev. William Randall

A religious war is being waged

by Reverend William Randall

We just observed the 8th anniversary of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. It seems in addition to sorrow and remembrance of that horrific day, we need to be on guard against propaganda that makes terrorist attacks appear to be docile. The Bible admonishes us to "Beware of false Christs." We, of course, need to be careful any time a person supports his authority with the phrase, "God told me." Many are not aware of the fact that Islam and many of its public leaders are actively engaged in a religious war with the west. They call their followers to a holy war.

According to Shiite tradition, the 12 Imams, descendants of the prophet Muhammed's cousin and son-in-law Ai Ibn Abi Taleb, were endowed with divine qualities that enabled them to lead and to function as Allah's emissaries on earth. However, when the 12th Imam, Muhammed Al-Mahdi, disappeared in 941 A.D., his connection with the Shiite believers was severed. Since then, the Shiites are commanded to await his return at any time, just as Christians await the return of Christ.

Iran's leader, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, publicly asserts his belief that Mahdi will soon return. He is making his leadership appear to be religious in nature. He claims to have a connection with God. He assured his followers that God would support them in their just struggle for nuclear technology. When addressing the U.N. General Assembly in 2005, he claimed that he felt himself "surrounded by a halo of light." That sounded rather messianic. In May, 2007, he said, "We have a mission to turn Iran into the country of the Hidden Imam." He is evangelistic in his efforts. He said, "The Mahdi belongs to the world."

With Ahmadinejad's religious fervor, whether real or pretended, one can see that he could justify the killing of those who protested when his victory at the polls was contested. His intentions for the destruction of Israel has also been blatantly declared. In light of this, America should continue to call for sanctions against Iran as they continue their program of nuclear development. It is America's responsibility to stand by Israel, our ally in the Middle East. America needs to also keep in mind the covenant God made with Abraham, especially the phrase, "I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee." (Genesis 12:3)•

Abortion, breast cancer link confirmed again

(Reprinted from OneNewsNow)

"Another study confirms a link between abortion and breast cancer.

"The latest research was done in Turkey and is widely available on the internet, according to Karen Malec of the Coalition on Abortion-Breast Cancer.

"This study found that...Turkish women who have abortions...have a statistically significant 66 percent increase in breast cancer risk," she notes.

"Malec was asked how that compares to previous studies in the U.S. and abroad.

"Most of the studies on abortion [and] breast cancer link show that women who have abortions put themselves at risk for breast cancer later on in life," she adds.

"There are now 75 to 80 studies that have been completed over five decades. Malec says about 80 percent of them are reporting cancer risk increases for women who have abortions. Animal and biological research also confirms the link, yet Malec contends there have been numerous attempts by the federal government's National Cancer Institute to suppress the findings."•

Fruitport Area News

This paper's purpose for existence is to be beneficial to this community in any way it can. FAN publishes 8,000 copies six times a year and copies are mailed to all of the 6,000 plus households in Fruitport and Sullivan townships plus additional copies mailed to subscribers and businesses in surrounding areas.

(231) 865-3135
420 N. Third Ave., Fruitport, MI 49415
Publisher, Fruitport Area News, Inc.

Editor	Ron Cooper
Copy Editor	Mary Weimer
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Papers available (\$1) at:	Sales
Copies & More, Fruitport	Marilee Beck
Orchard Market, Fruitport	Stasia Fielstra
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	Subscription \$6.00 Per Year