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The Enquiry

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Volume 10, Number 3

October 31, 1973

SIX OFFICERS ELECTED
TO STUDENT COUNCIL

Six new officers met for the first time with the Student Council recently as a result of their election to office.

Voting was extremely light.

In the M.Div. Junior Class, Randy Gibson defeated Jim Brown 17 to 7; Mike Macon defeated Lou Ann Hendricks 14 to 4; and Martha Wellman defeated Bill Yates 13 to 9.

Tom Poole received 11 votes over Milt Lewis' 10 to become representative for the M.Div. Middler Class.

Kay Smith defeated Margaret Buchanan 8 to 1 in the MRE class representative race.

John Perkins was elected as representative for the Certificate class.

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STUDENT COUNCIL MEETS

Meeting off-campus needs and publication of voting totals were among matters considered when the Student Council met last week.

Larry Padgett, off-campus representative, said his committee has helped develop a community program designed to work

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COUNCIL (cont.)

More work is under way to handle drug overdose cases. Padgett called on students to support the tutoring program at nearby Wake Forest Elementary School, presently in need of more volunteer workers to work a brief time each week.

Dr. Robert Richardson Jr., of the Field Education office, addressed the council on the matter of meeting off-campus needs. Most requests come through his office, he said, and observed that the seminary is a virtual storehouse of resources for meeting local needs.

He cited the tremendous need for the tutoring program at the elementary school, and said, "I'd like to see the Student Council make these needs known to the students." He said it is the responsibility of students to meet these needs and to make the needs known.

President Mike Moore expressed appreciation to Dr. Richardson for his remarks, and affirmed that such service is one of the key ways we can make Christianity known in the local area.

In other matters, Arlene Westbrook of the Election Committee asked the council for opinions on whether voting totals of the recent election should be made public. She said she favored making the figures available for public view on request, but not posting them or releasing them to The ENQUIRY. The contest was, almost a popularity contest indicating that 50 more votes meant 50 more friends. She likened the election to a deacon's election in which figures are not released. She said she had been asked not to publish the figures.

Mike Creswell, ENQUIRY editor, told the council he would have to ask for publication of the voting totals for the newspaper. Publication of such totals is part of the democratic process, and obscuring them sets a dangerous precedent for the future, he said. If feelings are going to be hurt by an election, in the first place we have come a long way from being a seminary, and in the second place we have come a long way from the democratic process, for such is one result of the process that must be accepted.

Bill Davis said it appeared to be a case of "If you can't stand the heat stay out of the kitchen."

The council then voted to release the voting totals.

In committee reports, Bill Davis reported a play, "Dust of the Road," will be presented Nov. 7 and 8 at 7:30 p.m., and Nov. 9 at 10 a.m. Davis will direct it. Randy Cash, Lee Tooten, Jack Peacock and Mrs. Trip May will star.

Eric Rowland reported on the crisis closet started by the Student Welfare Committee, noting it is for seminary family only. A fairly active closet is operated by Wake Forest Baptist Church for town residents, he said.

OPINIONopinionOPINIONopinion

LET'S FIX OUR SIDEWALKS!

Form, it would appear, is best when it meets a particular need and performs its intended function.

A flower arrangement generally can be displayed for appearance alone, for appearance is a valid function. If, however, the arrangement is given the task of covering a heating grill, this special task must be performed by the arrangement in addition to achieving a particular function.

Form and function probably are best when wed into a unit (A Coca-Cola bottle, considered classic in its form and appearance by designers, also is convenient to hold: a good example of wedding form and function.), but form or appearance should not take precedence over the intended task or function of an object.

A staircase may wind or descend straight; it may have rails delicately sculpted or starkly Spartan, but one should be able to walk up and down easily on it, for the main purpose of a staircase is to help one move up and down.

The same thinking applies to sidewalks. Sidewalks should be united in form and function ideally, but since the main function of a sidewalk is to provide a convenient walking surface, function should take precedence over form.

When sidewalks are curved so as not to provide the most direct path between two points, someone is saying that the appearance of the sidewalks is more important than providing a convenient walking surface: an idea that is silly.

Design forgot function in the areas between Appleby and Stealey and between Stealey and the library. Worn paths through the grass at these points show it is nonsense to expect the average person (and one hopes ministers are above average) to walk in such un-natural curves, and it is quite dis-functional not to have sidewalks where people generally tend to walk. The alternative of insisting that all walk on the curving sidewalks, either by rules or signs or fences, still would present the idea that it is more important to have sidewalks with delicate arches than to have convenient walking surfaces--the most basic function of a sidewalk still would not be served.

Sidewalks should be installed in these areas of heavy thoroughfare along the paths that indicate where the majority of persons walk--in more-or-less straight lines between points.

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SIDEWALKS (cont.)

Southeastern's beautiful bricked sidewalks are old and very much part of this campus. Their stately appearance is appreciated--except in the mentioned areas where form forgot function.

This is not a call for a concrete campus. It is not a call to have sidewalks criss-crossing the campus as a cherry pie. But the minor addition of some sidewalks which would better unite form and function in the areas mentioned would result in a more beautiful and more convenient campus, and would remove some of the ugliest patches of bare dirt extant within the rock walls.

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-m.c.

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OPINION~~opinion~~OPINION

(One of several articles planned to increase media awareness.)

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MINISTERS AND MASS MEDIA:
MUZZLING THE MONSTER
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The effects of television toward shaping attitudes and influencing opinions of the public have been documented thoroughly, and perhaps no individual needs more to be aware of this than the minister.

The question is not whether television shall be Christian, for the churches cannot expect television to do its work for them in propagating the Gospel. (Though we can do much more in this area: "Spring Street" is one example.) When television presents blatantly un-Christian and inhumane programming that can have a tendency to alter attitudes and the unconsciousness of persons, however, the churches have a real responsibility to off-set the results of such subtle influences.

A myriad of instances come to mind which indicate some aspects of television are a real force to be fought. A case in point is the new show "Coffee, Tea or Me" that deals with an airline stewardess who is married to two husbands--one in England and one in America--and she commutes between the two. Out of this basic premise flows the situation "comedy" of the show. It is interesting to speculate on the subtle influence such a show can have when viewed over a period of years. The influence on attitudes towards marriage?

A woman who complained of difficulty in teaching her children on the evils of liquor recently blamed television's

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MEDIA (cont.)

convincingly positive portrayal of liquor as a big factor in their liquor-approving attitude. "How can they think it is bad when everyone on television drinks it like water?" she asked. And indeed, if any television star has a disturbing experience, he or she immediately is offered a drink--"Here, this'll fix ya right up!" Even on the usually good "Waltons" recently a show involved snatching a spot of Grandpa's hard stuff hidden in a drawer so that a cake recipe would have an added attraction. Such a free-and-easy attitude towards liquor presented so consistently by television is much more successful at creating a positive attitude towards liquor in general than any advertising by the liquor industry could possibly be--and they spend half a billion dollars each year extolling the virtues of their liquid poison. Liquor is just a very visible example, but one could list guns and many other items here.

On the average Mannix/Barnaby Jones/Cannon/Rookies/Police Story/Toma/Griff/Dragnet/Hawaii Five-O/Streets of San Francisco-type show (the list is endless, but plots severely limited), one finds little discussion of human problems, emotions or situations. Violence usually over-shadows less flamboyant issues. A recent episode of "The Rookies" involved the problems of a black Army veteran faced upon returning home, a topic rich in possibilities for answering some probing questions and presenting some possible answers. But after the violence and the plot had been presented, one found the whole question but mildly touched, and then lost completely before the show concluded.

The picture is not completely bad, of course. Some documentaries and specials are notable, and some shows are not all bad. "The Waltons," a true high-water mark in quality programming, makes its mark not by violence, but weaves its story and its appeal and its rating out of the rich texture of human emotions and problems. The show simply towers over most others. But examples of good television shows are few and far between.

In the area of talking to humans about their situations and where they are, it is the highest irony that "Kung Fu" is so successful. Here is a gut-level show that focuses on age-old questions religion usually tries to answer (Who am I? What is life all about? How should I treat my fellow man?) The irony is the fact that such a show has as its star a Buddhist priest, yet more Christian virtues are displayed here perhaps than on any show this side of "The Waltons."

The picture is not completely bad also, because of the way Americans feel about television. A recent TV Guide nationwide survey found two-thirds of Americans think television has too much violence; almost 40 per cent think television is a lot more open and frank than it should be; and 41 per cent think too much time is devoted to shows dealing with sexual topics.

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MEDIA (cont.)

So what is the minister to do? Where does he stand? If he cares and if he's concerned, what does he do?

The first thing he does, oddly enough, is stand up for a free press and other free media as being basic to the constitution and the United States' form of government. A restless, probing press is the only hope of keeping government half-way fair and decent--this has been proven again and again, and most recently in Washington, again. Agnew called for the muzzling of the press, but Agnew called for the press to be silenced, but Agnew is off the scene now, and one wonders at his earlier motivation. Nixon now is calling for the same silencing, and one wonders at his motivation.

If the minister stands up for the very thing that is causing some of the problems, where does that leave him? The minister has a responsibility to be aware of what is being distributed over the media, television especially, so that he can point out the subtle influences, the inconsistencies and the problems in the views that are being presented. ("What does Paul say about persons such as that stewardess?") He must be sure he draws on his illustrations from the media very carefully, and must be sure his own views are not affected by the more subtle influences. The perceptive minister must be aware of how his people are reacting to the media so that he can react to it: merely pointing out the problem is a good part of its solution.

Ideas from television and other media are distributed, according to the two-step theory of communications, first to community leaders, and from them to other persons in the community. The leaders help distribute the ideas to those who did not experience the original release, and to reinforce the ideas upon those who heard the original.

The same theory would work in reverse. If the minister helps stop the distribution of some of the ideas, or lessens their impact, he has performed a real ministry.

A perceptive minister is one who meets his people where they are. For today's society, rich in mass media and reeling with the impact of images and information, their location may be in the shadow of of a printed page or a glass eye in their living room. It is the inherent nature of the Gospel that men should be led forth from all shadows, mental or otherwise.

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-m.c.

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Disagree? Let us hear from you. If you have other opinion, let us hear from you.

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AUTUMN PRAISE
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To be in the midst of fall is to
be in the midst of fire and flames. A thousand
sunny days on instant replay. What flowers
delicately whispered earlier is now proclaimed
in a visual shout:

"O LORD MY GOD, THOU ART VERY GREAT, THOU ART CLOTHED
WITH HONOR AND MAJESTY..."

Round about me in the brilliance
each tree and each leaf points me to its
Maker, and I know this Maker is the One

"...WHO COVEREST THYSELF WITH LIGHT AS WITH A GARMENT, WHO
HAST STRETCHED OUT THE HEAVENS LIKE A TENT, WHO HAS LAID
THE BEAMS OF THY CHAMBERS ON THE WATERS, WHO MAKEST THE
CLOUDS THY CHARIOT, WHO RIDEST ON THE WINGS OF THE WIND, WHO
MAKEST THE WINDS THY MESSENGERS, FIRE AND FLAME THY MINISTERS."

Amidst the fire and flame of fall, I
stand in the ministry of God.

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-m.c.

LOST AND FOUND
DEPARTMENT FOUND

An informal lost-and-found department is being
operated by switchboard operator Mrs. Linda Blackwood
in Stealey Hall. Check there on lost or found items.

FOUND: A BIBLE. Collins edition. Black. Signed Presented to "Gladys" by
"Charles" and "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Nov. 9, '62."
Check at switchboard if it sounds familiar.

Lost-and-found items also will be run in The ENQUIRY.

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STUDENT RECRUITING:
STUDENTS CAN HELP

A Student Council request last year that students be involved in recruiting other students has led to a list of ways students can help.

Mike Moore, president of the student body, said he has learned of several ways students can help in recruitment after talking to Jerry Niswonger, who directs recruitment for the seminary. Professors take part in the recruitment program each year, mainly in October through mid-November and to a lesser extent in February and March. They work mainly with Baptist colleges or with colleges that have a strong BSU program, or to a lesser extent with other denominational colleges.

While it would be highly impractical for students to take part in the very complicated and extensive recruitment program, Southeastern students can do several things.

-Students can talk to professors who are going to visit a school, and mention prospective students to them.

-Students can write to friends on their old campus, and tell them about Southeastern.

-Students can contact BSU chaplains and religion professors and tell them about the school.

-Students can tell these chaplains and religion professors to write them here so they can share their views of seminary.

-Students can tell prospective students who might be visiting Southeastern to contact Jerry Niswonger so he can set up appointments for the visitors with the Field Education office, the Business Office and arrange housing and meals.

-Students who visit their old campuses during holidays can keep contacts with students open, and be aware of prospective students.

Moore said the Student Council, the faculty, the administration and the student body all are interested in students becoming more deeply involved in student recruiting, and these suggestions are a result of this interest.

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The ENQUIRY: Mike Creswell, editor
Bob Nelson, Doug Baltzegar, associate editors

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AN OPEN LETTER * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

TO THE BODY OF CHRIST: GOD'S WILL* * * * * * * * * * *

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AND A THEOLOGY OF THE MEDIAN

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by Willie White * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

(written last spring)

It has been suggested by a seminary colleague that the will of God in our lives is no more than our response to the situations in which we find ourselves, and we are readily able to see that herein lies a profound spiritual and theological truth. At the same time, however, we recognize just as quickly that inherent in this profound truth are certain dangers which must be guarded against.

Karl Barth has asserted that the revelation of God is Wholly Other, and that this Wholly Otherness of the revelation of God comes upon us like a bolt of lightning from the blue. And we contend here that when one talks about the will of God he must of necessity agree that that concept is inclusive in the concept of God's revelation per se.

It cannot be asserted on the other hand, however, that Barth's concept of revelation must be taken in its totality, for when one does that he simply swings the pendulum to the other extreme, and the latter purely otherness case is no better than the former, purely subjective, if indeed it is not somewhat worse.

This leads us to the assertion then than the revelation of God, and thus God's will for us, is neither totally subjective nor totally objective. Rather, His will is primarily objective, yet secondarily subjective; it is primarily Other, yet it is secondarily non-other.

For us to argue that the will of God is entirely our emotional and physical responses to a given situation (i.e., the subjective approach) is for us to deny entirely the Otherness and sovereignty of God and to put a limit upon Him in the face of an elevated humanism. It is to deny to God the prerogatives of sovereign Creator and place Him at the mercy of man--and that is ultimately to say that man is God and God is something less than God. It is, of course, the affirmation of the Judeo-Christian tradition that God is moved and influenced by man because of His nature as Love. Yet, this is by God's own will and is far from the concept of God's being "put" at man's mercy.

But the danger with holding that the will of God is totally objective is perhaps most apparent in the fact that it is

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THEOLOGY OF MEDIAN, (cont.)

evident that we find ourselves confronted with the difficult tasks of trying, in spite of our finiteness, to make **decisions** which have infinite consequences. And those of the Christian faith who have been confronted by such tasks know with certainty that the will and revelation of God did not (always) come upon them like a bolt of lightning from the blue, to rescue them from the task of making their decision in the light of what they had already discerned of God's will.

And again, when the will of God has become fully and unqualifiedly objectivized, we find destroyed the whole concept of man's moral freedom and his prerogatives as a moral agent with the fiber inherent within himself by which to make moral decisions for which he is morally responsible. And further, it must be doubted that mortal man is able to stand as a free agent with the power to obey or disobey when he is confronted by the totally subjective will of God--for to be confronted by the totality of God's will is tantamount to beholding His glory, i.e., it is tantamount to standing face-to-face with Him. God's will, totally objectivized, crushing down upon mortal man would seem to require one of two things: man's total annihilation, or his being elevated to the level of God.

Perhaps this is the truth we find being affirmed in the narratives concerning Moses in the Old Testament at the site of the burning bush and again when Israel sees the back side of God at Sinai and when the cloud and smoke cover the mountain. And again, Hebrew tradition warns us further of the danger in what Barth affirms, for we note that when Moses comes down from the Mountain of God the theological affirmation is that his face shone with such glory that Israel could not look upon him. It would seem that the theologian here is affirming that Moses, perhaps more than any other man, came within the proximity of the objective, Wholly Otherness of God's revelation (and thus, His will) as it came as a bolt from the blue.

But while we use the traditions associated with Moses to argue against the view that God's will and revelation is to be understood as being totally objective, we note too that it is a warning against those who would totally subjectivize the will of God. We say this in the context that the first response of Moses (that of killing the Egyptian) to the situation in which he found himself did not yield the results which he obviously thought would have been the will of God. And we must further note that, though Moses was obviously wrong about the will of God as it related to the method of the liberation of God's people, God Himself was still to effect the liberation of Israel. What we see here then, is a clear, Biblical theological affirmation that God's will is not bound by man; rather, it is ultimately executed, and most often in ways far beyond man's comprehension and in spite of his subjective, miscalculations which are based upon his false presupposition that his responses, i.e., his decisions, are one and the same with the decisions of God.

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THEOLOGY OF MEDIAN (cont.)

Obviously then, what we are advocating here is total recognition of the fact that there is in the Christian experience a tension which serves to force the church to develop what is in fact a theology of the median. It is as if we were walking down the median of a free-way with full knowledge that if we move too much to the right we will find ourselves in a stream of traffic which will destroy us from behind; while on the other hand, if we move to the left we will meet all sorts of destruction head-on. This is what the church has always recognized in the main. The fact of this recognition is apparent in the controversies over Monarchianism, Trinitarianism and other doctrinal disputes in the history of the church.

Further still, this tension was recognized by the apostles, as is evident when we contrast Paul's teaching of faith with James' emphasis upon works. And when Paul himself asks if we are to sin that grace may abound, it would seem that he has recognized and is here wrestling with the tension which is inherent in the question of faith and work in his own teachings.

In the discussion which is before us now we recognize that in the face of our rising age of scientificism we face a growing danger of becoming gods unto ourselves. Thus we no longer recognize that--in spite of John A.T. Robinson's honest-to-God God, and both the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith" still are, still will be, and indeed, still must be, in so many ways, "out there." Put the first step in our becoming gods unto ourselves is that of our ceasing to recognize the Otherness, the out-thereness of God, as we are related to Him. The age of Scientificism tends to deny that we are subject to any Otherness, especially the Otherness of God, and existentialism would have us subject only to ourselves. So God to us, i.e., His will for us, becomes totally subjective as opposed to totally objective.

The cathedral in Kafka's Trial became empty because men, K. included, ceased to recognize its claim over their lives. By the same token, the age of scientificism would have the Otherness of God and the objective claim of His will upon our lives to likewise become empty. Thus, scientificism and existentialism shall have triumphed and man shall have become God.

We should note in closing, however, that, though the cathedral was empty because man had rejected its claim over his life, the cathedral itself still stood, bathed in the awareness that soon temporal man would again cease to think himself sufficient unto himself, i.e., God.

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POINT: HEAR O ISRAEL by Doug Baltzegar

Pay close attention to what is going on in the Middle East. Read Ezekiel 36:6-37 in the context of Israel today.

"...because you have suffered the reproach of the nations...I swear that the nations that are round about you shall themselves suffer reproach..."

"...and I will multiply men upon you... and I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times..."

"...For I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land...a new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you..."

"...on the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt..."

"...Then the nations that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places, and replanted that which was desolate: I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it."

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Pray for Israel and our government and our leaders. (I Tim. 2:1&2)

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COUNTER-POINT: GET BUSY O ISRAEL by Mike Creswell

One of the most interesting side-effects of the tragedy of war in the Middle East is the speculation that the events really are just fulfillment of prophecy. This is heard in churches from church members and in the seminary from some students. The general attitude is one of "I told you so" and "Let's wait to see what happens next."

If we assume these indeed are the last days-- what should be the response of Christians? Should we really sit around and cast a wary eye towards the sky while we keep one thumb resting under an appropriate passage of Scripture?

Several times religious groups have gathered on mountain tops to await the Second Coming. At least one sect group pegs the last days as beginning in 1914. Interest in the subject probably is higher among Baptists right now, also. What should be our response if we believe these are the last days?

In the 24th chapter of Matthew and the 12th chapter of Luke is a story telling how a servant must not sleep while the master is gone. "You also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

The parable seems to be a warning to religious leaders not to shirk their responsibilities, their trust, they have been given while the master is away.

We in the church have been given a great trust of proclaiming the Gospel and serving as agents of reconciliation in the world. Should we not be found very, very busy at these tasks--and not on a mountain top of piety in static waiting when Christ returns?

We need to say to our members who say these are the last days--"So what? What are you going to do about it?" And get them busy in the great tasks that lie before us. Perhaps our attitude might best be described as a quick look over our shoulder towards the sky every now and then even as we labor in the Kingdom.

For those who want to rest on mountain tops, and proclaim His coming is near, our response should be, "So what? I have things to do!" Our task is even more urgent if the time is short.

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LET'S OPEN SOME WINDOWS by Bob Nelson
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OPINION opinion OPINION

At my house, when the first signs of Spring bring thoughts of summer to one's mind, my mother used to open the windows of the house so that some fresh air might be able to come through. Having been shut up all winter, the air was indeed stale and the fresh spring breeze was welcomed. However, when a storm came up, those windows were closed regardless of how warm it was outside. The reason: there was a storm raging!

Today, in the state of North Carolina, there is a storm raging with some clouds, once small, beginning to grow in intensity. To me, the church leaders seem to thrive on controversy because if there is no controversy, they will invent one. (No controversy--what about racism, injustice, war, etc.?)

However, this is not the case today. There is a controversy raging today. It is not a new one. It has been around ever since the time of Christ. I sometimes think that the greatest mistake Jesus made was in allowing Himself to be baptized, and then leaving indefinite teaching about it. Look at all the controversy that has developed over it.

Now, don't get me wrong, I am convinced that baptism by immersion is the proper mode. However, I am not so convinced that all this controversy about who is to belong to what church and what association and what convention is worth the hassle. All that it is doing is presenting to the world, which is needful of the Gospel, a divided look in the church today.

Paul dealt with the problem at Corinth. I refer you to I Cor. 1:10-17. Especially notice the words beginning in verse 17:

"For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Gospel."

To me, we have perverted the demands of the Gospel when we allow our doctrinal differences to become of greater concern than our mission to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is a small wonder that no more people are coming into the churches today, look at the dissension in the churches.

Let's open some windows; it's getting stuffy in here!

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The issue of baptism and church membership probably will be an important issue at the N.C. State Convention meeting this year. How do you feel about it? Why? What is the feeling in your church? Let us hear from you!