

Faith Of Our Youth

October 1995

"The Voice of Young Christian Faith"

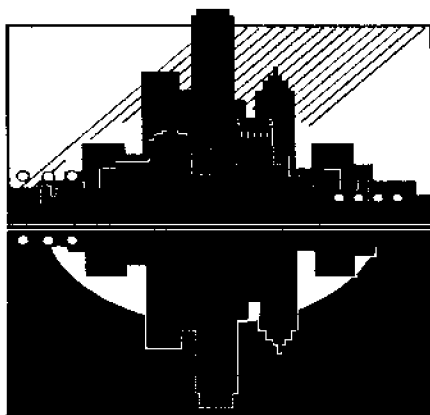
Volume 2 Issue 3

Modern Sodom

by Phillip Reynolds

You've heard the old saying, "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions?" In the United States and most of the western world, we could put a contemporary slant on that bit of sage wisdom, re-phrasing it to say, "The road to Hell is paved with political correctness." Young Christians today face a new problem in the battle against Satan, a problem that is crafty in its inconspicuous nature. I'm referring to the constant pressure on young Christians today to passively accept certain sinful practices, all in the worldly cause to "be open-minded" and to "promote loving peace." We should be wary of such rhetoric. Christ tells us that he "did not come to bring peace, but a sword (Matt. 10:34)," and we are warned in Colossians 2:8 to "see to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition . . . rather than on Christ."

Recently, the one sin that I see being promoted in this country more heavily than any other is the acceptance, support, tolerance or indulgence of homosexuality. Young people today—Christians included—are encouraged more and more to view homosexuality as a "lifestyle" to which one is "born." The growing influence of gays as a constituency should be obvious when we consider that our current President, when elected in 1992 by a country wracked with socio-economic problems,



"For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." --Gen. 18:32--

chose to put first on his agenda the effort to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military.

The heated fervor generated by the President's actions and the media's sensationalistic presentation of the opposing viewpoints regarding this issue reveal a basic ignorance and general lack of level-headedness on both ends of the spectrum. Just what is the nature of homosexuality? Is it biological or psychological in origin? First, I want to address the Scriptural/Moral side of this issue, specifically, what the Bible says concerning the gay "lifestyle", and how Christians should look upon the practice.

Perhaps the most alarming trend concerning this issue is not the obviously growing acceptance of homosexu-

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Melodies In our Hearts

by Louis Garbi

The heading of this article is also the name of a project, a project to bring together a collection of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs that have been written by our brothers and sisters in Christ...songs from our spiritual family. I am thankful that a part of this project will include a continuing series of articles in Faith of Our Youth. In each article, I will try to provide some information and encouragement for you to think about singing, and composing your own hymns. But I think the best feature of these articles will be the presentation of songs that you have written.

These songs will be offered to give a sample of what is coming in for the project, and to make them immediately available for your singing pleasure. Feel free to xerox them and to share them with others.

One objective of the "Melodies.." project is to encourage music that is meaningful to the times we live in. While the Word of God and it's message

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"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

—Eph 5:19—

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CHRISTIAN JUDGMENT

by Rich Miller

Matthew 7:1 is a passage that is well documented among Christians. It says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." This passage and others pertaining to this subject throughout the Bible give us a simple, but powerful, message. That message is this: "God is the Judge."

In some situations, we must judge our fellow man because we have no choice in the matter. The American concept of giving offenders of the law a fair trial by a jury of our peers is an example of that. However, we must always be careful not to make judgments out of jealousy, anger, etc.. Those are the type of judgments that Matthew 7:1 refers to. Those judgments are usually related to our eternal fate in some way, and are not up to us to decide. Besides, there might be a whole lot more there than we can see at the surface. I'd like to touch on some types of judgments we should avoid, mainly because they can have long-lasting effects on a person's reputation as well as jeopardize our spiritual welfare:

1) **Fault finding**- From time to time, we have run into people who are down on life and seem to do nothing but complain. As is most often the case, these people feel "short-changed" by life, and this is how they take out their frustrations. When we are supposed to judge someone, we must look at all he/she has to offer, not just the faults and shortcomings. If we look only at the bad, we become nothing more than a "merchant of doom" and become a burden to others.

2) **Gossip**- This is like a cancer that has spread all through the body. A little rumor comes to the surface, then it gets larger and spreads out of control. As a result, the person's reputation is irreparably damaged, just like a human body's organs are destroyed by cancer. 1 Timothy 6: 3-5 refers to this as "evil surmisings." If we ever go public with the information, we should be absolutely sure we have all the facts and know exactly what they are.

3) **Self-righteousness**- This is more commonly referred to as being conceited, cocky, etc.. We can find a prime example of this in Luke 18:9-14. While praying, the Pharisee openly boasted about all of his works, while the Publican simply asked for forgiveness of his sins. As a result, the Publican found favor with God rather than the Pharisee. The Beatitudes teach us, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth." When we judge we should not put others down by trying to boast about all that

we have done. We, as Christians, should make every effort to project a humble attitude.

4) **Hypocrisy**- We are warned about the evils of hypocrisy in Matthew 7:5 and Romans 2:1-4. We shouldn't make someone look like an outcast for doing something bad, then go ahead and do it ourselves once we are out of view of our brothers and sisters in Christ. For example, if I warned my home congregation during public exhortation about the evils of gambling, then played poker with friends not long after church let out, what kind of picture would that present to some unsaved soul who is seeking the Lord? We must always practice what we preach!

Considering the above, one might ask, "How can we make judgments that God approves of and won't condemn?" Usually, if we follow some basic guidelines and apply Christian principles to the situation, we can make proper judgments without great difficulty. Consider the following:

1) **Get all the facts**- This is perhaps the most important thing to consider when making a judgment call. A misinformed or uninformed person who judges another is risking damage to their own reputation as well as the person he/she is talking about. We should read the words of Jesus in John 7:24, and heed what he has to say.

2) **Use the right standard**- Quite simply, this standard is God's word. It is infallible. When God makes judgments it's not out of strife and envy. He does it because He loves us and it's for our own good. We should always remember to apply God's word to every situation so we CAN make proper judgments.

3) **Consider the circumstances**- Some circumstances dictate that we do things differently than what we normally do in order, for instances, to be on time for work, get through hard times, or even survive. If we see a member of our Christian brethren doing something different than that which their personality dictates, or something contrary to their Christian beliefs, we should make every effort to look into the matter and find out for sure what's going on.

4) **Have the right attitude**- Galatians 6:1 says that we should show meekness. We must also show love, as documented in John 15:12. Consider when a congregation has to discipline one of its members. If we show a GENUINE concern for the member's spiritual welfare, and follow the model of church

discipline that Paul laid out for the Corinthians, the member will most likely realize that the church is looking out for him/her, and will often times work harder to clear up the disagreement or problem. If we show no concern or only half-hearted concern for the member's plight, he/she will be unreceptive and push Christ out of his/her life. We must always use the utmost concern in this area.

In conclusion, we should remember that although God is the supreme judge, he is also a fair and righteous judge, and we should try to follow his example to the best of our ability. God is no respecter of persons, and we shouldn't be either when it comes to judgment. Remember, God will respond to each and every unnecessary judgment in kind when our eternal judgment comes to pass. May God always grant us the wisdom to effectively judge our fellow man.

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My Best Friend

by Sara McCleave

He is my best friend
In Him I can confide.
I can trust the things He says
For I know He's never lied.

A friend who will always be there
For the good and for the bad.
A friend above all others
Who lifts me up when I am sad.

I will always try to be like Him
When I am tempted and tried.
I know He will always love me
If I'm serving at His side.

A love too deep to describe
Will always keep me near,
To my precious Savior
The one I love so dear.

Sara McCleave is 14 years old. She is a member of the Church of Christ in Nixa, Missouri.

