

# 2006 Proclaimer

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" -Isa.61:1-2*

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A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608

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## **TAKE THE HIGH GROUND**

*by John Waddy*

As we engage those whose mission is to capture, reshape and redirect the church we love, we must beware of certain pitfalls that can keep us from the victory. Anyone can win a war, but only the noble can win justly and bring about peace.

We must not only be against their unauthorized innovations, we must be for those positive aspects of Christianity that are the heart of our faith. Jesus put a high premium on justice, mercy and faith (**Matt. 23:23**). Those who only know how to oppose something will never succeed to building up the kingdom of God.

We must be disciples guided by love (**Eph. 5:2**): love for the Cause of Christ; love for our fellow-Christians; love for those who are our opponents in this struggle for the heart of the church. Our goal should be to snatch from the fire those who have turned away from the holy Word (**Jude 23**).

We must be kind (**Eph. 4:32**), considerate and courteous (**I Pet. 3:8 KJV**) when dealing with those whom we must confront.

We must be soldiers of high honor, integrity, honesty and truthfulness in dealing with the proponents of change (**Phil. 4:8**). We cannot operate on the principle that all is fair in war, nor can we ever assume that the end justifies the means. We want to prevail, but only in an honorable way.

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We must be strong in faith, prayer, holiness, devotion and good works. Ours is a spiritual war. It will only be won by spiritual men and women of great faith and piety (**Eph. 6:17-18**).

We must look to God for the victory. It is his church that is under attack; his word being questioned and distorted; his Son being dishonored. Victory will be won, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith Jehovah" (**Zech. 4:6**). "The battle is Jehovah's" (**I Sam. 17:47**). "If God is for us who is against us?" (**Rom. 8:31**). Victory will not be won because we are smarter, better educated, tougher soldiers, or because we can hit harder. Nor will shouting, bullying or any other expressions of physical strength turn the tide.

We must not be consumed with opposing error. Where preachers fall into this trap their congregations wither and die, even as they make war on error. We must be busy in evangelism, reclaiming the fallen and edifying the church, even as we are confronting those who are opposing the way of truth (**II Tim. 4:1-2**).

We must be willing to hear and evaluate the criticisms the change agents raise against our practices. No one with an open and honest mind would argue that we have perfectly restored every aspect of Christianity to its original basis. We have not measured up in zeal, devotion, purity, generosity and outreach. Rather than plugging our ears and taking offense at such criticisms, we must face and acknowledge them where needed and work to right them.

We must take the offensive without being offensive. Without doubt, the ugly, harsh, abrasive attitude of many conservative preachers has made the liberal success possible. Brethren have been turned off and some alienated by the way many have chosen to wage their warfare.

If we should succeed in routing the enemy; if we refute their every error and see them gone, what will we have at the end? If we are left a narrow, bitter band who do nothing but fight church folks, we will have a hollow victory. The survivors will soon bite and destroy one another (**Gal. 5:15**). Let's fight the good fight of faith (**I Tim. 6:12**), but let's remember to be "good soldiers of Christ Jesus" (**II Tim. 2:3**), whose code is fidelity, honor and service.

**John Wadley**

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## "MEMBER OR PARTNER?"

by Andy Wall  
Conejo Valley Church of Christ  
Thousand Oaks, CA

What do you think of when you hear the word "membership"? In my mind, I recall the slogan of American Express - - "membership has its privileges." I also think of phrases such as "members only" and "member in good standing." In Webster's Dictionary, membership is defined as "the state or status of being a member." As a general rule in our culture, when one is a member of an organization, he or she expects privileges or benefits as a result of that membership. This is becoming true in churches today as well.

I must confess that I do use the terms "member" and "membership" often in relation to those who are committed to our congregation. However, I wonder if the connotation of the word "membership" has not grown too passive and privileged to serve us well when we speak of those who are to be actively engaged in the life of the local church. I'm concerned that being a "member" of a church means little more than "*I now have the right to expect the church to meet my various*

needs and to complain about it when it doesn't." I worry that others have come to understand being a "member" of a church as the full extent of God's call upon their life, as if the church is more like a cruise-ship than a battleship.

What if we employed a different word to describe our involvement in the local church? What if instead of calling ourselves "**members**" of the church, we called ourselves "**partners**" in Christ's service? Being a "partner" connotes making an investment, having a shared stake in the outcome, feeling a deep sense of ownership, and sharing a commitment to the cause. When Paul wrote about the Christians with whom he ministered, he used phrases such as "fellow worker," "faithful servant," "fellow soldier," "yokefellow," "devoted to the service of the saints," "ones who work hard among you," and of course "partners in the gospel." Paul also did write about Christians being "members" of the body of Christ, but his analogy made the point that each member is an active and functioning part of the whole, not an appendix tagging along for the ride.

I challenge all of us who are part of our church family to view ourselves as partners with each other in the service of Christ, rather than privileged members of a nice little club. I challenge us to start behaving more as partners in the Gospel, rather than church connoisseurs. I challenge us to take more of an active part in the ministries of the church.

**So what'll it be? "Member" or "Partner"?** "30"

## THOSE NEEDING PRAYERS

**Frank & Tina Ayers**  
**Lucille Erickson**  
 (3529 Walnut, Rm 206A, Carmichael)  
**Betty Gardner** (Loomis)  
**Helen Gray**  
**Margaret Holcomb**  
 (improving)  
**Chuck House**  
 (heart & cancer)  
**Cameron Johnson** (in a coma)  
**Catherine Kay** (Escalon)  
**Jean McCarty**  
**Stan & Therenia Mellor** (Wash.)  
**Jeffry Pennant**  
**Kaye Pennant**  
**Irma Rapier**  
 (+ sister Doris & niece Robin Shockley)  
**Sven Raven** (in Sun Bridge on Fair Oaks)  
**Rosa Reagan** (Bremerton)  
**Caleb & Jacob Robertson**  
**Taylor Romine**  
**Tom & Boots Royston** (Folsom)  
**Mike Rude** (Missouri)  
**Bill & Rena Schultz**  
**Geneva Shelton**  
**Shawna Shuck**  
**Ken Sterling**  
**Ola Thornburg**  
**Nancy Valine**  
**Donna Williams** (Carol's Sis)  
**Ellie Williams**  
**Gordon & Glenda Wilson**

### TRAVELING IN THEIR WORK

**Rick Rittenhouse**  
**Brad Rusk**  
**Aaron Robertson**

### IN THE MILITARY

**Jason Anderson**  
**David Lovett**  
**Michael Mendez**  
**Aaron Robertson**

Please remember these people when you pray, knowing that *"the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous person availeth much!"*

# **LIMITING GOD**

*[Impugning God's power & love & mercy!]*

## **Psalm 78:41**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. The text relates to Israel's rebellion at the borders of Canaan when the spies returned.
  - 1. The incident is recorded in Num 14:1-4. The negative report of the ten spies had a depressing and pessimistic effect on the entire congregation!
  - 2. In addition, it ALSO ended up having a rebellious effect that separated them from a good relationship with God!
  - 3. Give brief account of the report of the spies and the result on the people.
- B. The Bible says that they "**LIMITED GOD**"! They "rebelled" & wouldn't allow HIS GRACE!
  - 1. Many today may even be trying to LIMIT GOD by our rebellious attitudes.
  - 2. To "limit" is to set bounds. It is to confine to a specific area of operation or function!
- C. Today, we want to address SOME WAYS IN WHICH MEN LIMIT GOD!

### **I. ARE WE GUILTY TODAY OF LIMITING GOD'S "MERCY"?**

- A. Understanding of God's plans and promises were felt to be totally physical, not spiritual!
  - 1. The Jews of Jesus' day couldn't conceive God being merciful to publicans and sinners!
  - 2. Ananias and early church were leery of Saul's conversion! Acts 9:11-14; 9:26
- B. It IS TRUE TODAY that many DO wall in God's mercy!
  - 1. To perceive this, just consider our own personal attitudes toward "*sinners*"!
  - 2. What kind of love and mercy do you show those who've forsaken us in God's work?
- C. God's MERCY is conditional. Isa 59:1-2
  - 1. Are YOU limiting God's MERCY to yourself, or others? Matt 9:29
  - 2. THINK: by YOUR personal efforts, where does God's mercy extend? Eph 2:10

### **II. MANY TODAY STILL LIMIT GOD'S POWER AND WILLINGNESS TO SAVE!**

- A. God's power isn't minimized by the length of our neglect or the degradation of our wickedness!
  - 1. "I've sinned so long..." or, "My sins are so great, that..."
  - 2. God is not controlled by HUMAN conceptions or prejudices or limitations!
- B. Such relegates GOD to flesh and bones limitations! 2 Pet 3:9; Isa 1:18; Matt 11:28-30
  - 1. By LIMITING GOD, sinners put themselves beyond the hope for salvation.
  - 2. God will save any sinner who is willing to be saved! 1 Tim 1:15

### **III. SOME ARE EVEN LIMITING GOD'S JUSTICE.**

- A. True justice is impartial. Deut 1:16-17
- B. Many would LIMIT, or reduce, God's Justice to mere sentiment.

### **IV. LIMITING GOD DENIGRATES THE LOVE & POWER & GRACE OF GOD**

- A. It brings God down to the imperfect standard of man.
  - 1. It is presumptuous to put the measure of our limitations on God!
  - 2. God and His ways are incomparable! Isa 55:8-9
- B. LIMITING GOD is a manifestation of unbelief in God's power and providence! Eph 3:20; Gen 18:12-14; Matt 19:26
  - 1. Unbelief withdraws His hand from us, and turns away His face!
  - 2. "Limiting God" excluded Israel from Canaan, & will exclude US from HEAVEN!

### **IN SUMMARY:**

- A. WE TODAY must honor God in careful obedience.
- B. FALLING SHORT means we're guilty of this sin of the Israelites in today's study.