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THE OVERFLOW

ARE YOU A CHAMELEON CHRISTIAN?

No, that's not the name of a new religion that's popped up in Beloit. However, the next time you can't think of anything to do, toddle on down to your local pet shop and watch a chameleon. You'll find this little member of the lizard family difficult to locate. As he moves from one place to another he changes his color from green to brown, and occasionally, almost white, according to his surroundings. God gave this little creepy crawler this ability as a protective device. If you've ever watched a chameleon perform this trick, you couldn't help but be amazed.

There is a way in which people change color too; not in their appearance but in their attitude. There are Christians, or at least, professing Christians, who seem to fit in conveniently with their surroundings wherever they are. If they are in church, they join in the worship service and sing louder than almost anyone. They seem quite reverent during the prayers and even thank the minister for a good message. Some of these people are Sunday School teachers and choir members, while others serve on the church board and some just occupy a pew. Around their Christian friends, they talk like they think a Christian should talk and act as though Jesus was their best friend. But when they leave the environment of the church and their Christian friends and get back with their godless friends or business associates, they change colors and think nothing of using profanity or sipping a cocktail. They might laugh at dirty jokes or even tell a few.

Don't these people remind you of our friend, the chameleon? They change quickly, easily and often. In the chameleon's case, the change is remarkable. But for the one who says he is a Christian, it's downright cowardly.

You can't help but wonder about people who change like that. Are they really born-again? If they say they are, that's a matter between them and God. If they are true believers, they obviously have never recognized the importance of taking a stand for Christ.

Many times the Scriptures tell us to take a stand: "Stand fast in the faith." (1 Cor. 16:13). "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." (Gal. 5:1) "Stand fast in one spirit." (Philippians 1:27). "Stand fast in the Lord." (Philippians 4:1).

What does it mean to "Stand fast"? It means to hang on to the truth of God's Word and be a testimony for Him. The person who changes colors like the chameleon not only disobeys the Word of God, he has no testimony for God. He is a detriment to the cause of Christ, a stumbling block and hinders others from coming to Christ. If one belongs to the Lord, he should be a living witness all of the time - wherever he is.

Are you a businessman who is afraid of hindering your business by being a witness for the Lord? Jesus is worth far more than your business anyway and any believer who takes a faithful stand for the Lord can be sure that He will take care of him.

What a difference it would make in this world of darkness if everyone who called themselves by Christ's name would stand up and be counted for Him. There is such inconsistency among many who say they belong to Christ but mention it only when it is convenient.

Possibly, you are thinking, "What a narrow-minded attitude." You're right! It is. But, I can't help but think of what Jesus said in Matthew 7:14: "Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." Christ's way is narrow.

Have you come to God by way of Christ? If so, are you a consistent witness for him? Are you taking opportunities to witness about the living Christ? Or have you grown cold and left your first love? Have you become so occupied with "things" that you forget about the one who saved you? God wants you to come to Him and settle this matter now. If you have never really taken a stand for Christ, there will never be a better time.

Or are you trying to find a substitute for God? We've found substitutes for just about everything else- sugar, salt, synthetic this and artificial that. Where did it all begin? Somewhere along the way, man began to lose his belief in God as a decider of his fate, a personal being, ultimate judge of his actions. The idea that God created man became old fashioned; we just evolved. The concept of Hell was colorful but no longer compelling. Life began to be regarded as more or less accidental. Sin became a relative sociological matter. Like a son who decides he doesn't need to depend on his father any longer, man set out to make his own way, independent of God.

He still knew right from wrong, but he no longer believed he had offended God or that sin demands payment. There's a big difference in living this way and trying to live righteous before God because He commands it. A man could do anything he wanted, subject only to the laws of the land and his own judgement, which isn't too good at times. So what once was an offense against God becomes a behaviour problem, a criminal offense or an illness. Church attendance becomes something that is done for the sake of tradition.

And so man leaves his father's house to live on his own. But is he mature enough to handle it? Is he finding happiness or is he plagued with troubles and an emptiness he can't describe? Does his way work or does it bring another dilemma? What about the child of a parent who is still in possession of his faith that God knows, watches, and punishes? Then his child growing up in today's world is being alienated from him. The child cannot help seeing what others are doing. He cannot help but absorb the outlook and values (or lack of them) of a secular society. Parochial school, confirmation vows, the threat of Hell, these might delay the moral decline, but it won't prevent it.

Meanwhile, the non-religious parent or one content with a form of religion, has no way to influence his child. He can hardly hold up his own life as a model with one foot in materialism and the other in old fashioned morality. What's a parent to do? How can he teach a child to do right, if he can't justify the right?

This parent is in a worse fix when he tries to answer the first question that religion used to answer: What is the meaning of man's existence? If we no longer believe that God created man, why is human life sacred? If a parent doesn't know his purpose for existence and his own life has no meaning, how can he tell his child that he shouldn't take drugs? In fact, how can he convince him that he shouldn't waste his life or commit suicide? What reasons can he give for staying alive and making it?

Ask any rebellious young person why he does things that the older generation regards as depraved, irresponsible and self-destructive and over and over again you will hear, "Why not?" Answer that one if you don't know how to hold your own life together. The young rebel's "Why not?" has at least two meanings: not only "what's to stop me?" but "Give me a reason I can accept." For the young person wants, needs, is in fact, desperate to believe in something. He is constantly searching for it in mind-bending drugs, the occult, cults, philosophies and theories, anything but his parents' isms which he sees as false and very shallow.

The experience of learning that an entire civilization appears to be founded on nothing morally solid, is shot through and through with what he sees as hypocrisy and double-

standards; that he finds nothing to give life meaning is a real shocker that has left him unable to cope.

Meanwhile, man finds it very difficult to create for himself a life that satisfies his Spirit. The traditional religious institutions offer little. Houses of worship have become bingo parlors and places to serve wedding dinners.

When man no longer needs to beg God for enough food and protection from the elements because he has become so self-sufficient, he forgets God. Perhaps that could help explain all of the shortages we are experiencing along with the simple fact of man's abuse of God's land. God doesn't have any shortages but man needs to remember from whom all things come.

And yet questions remain. Anyone who can contemplate the eye of a housefly, the mechanics of a human finger, the camouflage of a moth, the building of every kind of matter from various arrangements of protons and electrons and then maintain that all this design just happened without a designer, by sheer, blind accident- such a person believes in a miracle far greater than any in the Bible. To regard man with his complex brain and his many capabilities, as merely a form of life somewhat higher on the evolutionary ladder than the others, is to create questions more profound than those answered. In freeing himself from the terror of Hell, man gives up his hope of Heaven- you live, you die, that's it! Is that really all there is to life?

Your forefathers had the tremendous expectation of a life everlasting. You still hope somehow that it may turn out to be true after all; but your children are without hope except for what they can get out of life materialistically. Our materialism is so shallow based on assumptions that are hardly more than guesswork, unsatisfying, incomplete and yet arrogant. My God deserves a better substitute, but you can search the world over and you will never find one. Why not put an end to that searching and accept Jesus as YOUR substitute. He died in your place, you know.

PROGRESS REPORT

PRAISE THE LORD! We don't know how He does it and we'll never figure out how He manages everything. But He does it so much better than we do that we're glad He's in charge of this project and not us. He sends along some terrific people with willing hands, big hearts, a variety of talents, strong backs and beautiful attitudes. He's blessed us with some carpenters and people who can help keep things moving during daytime hours so that means less time that's unproductive.

You are probably aware that we have been waiting on the Lord to bring us someone for the position of Vice-President on our board of Directors. As the time for our annual directors' meeting was fast approaching, we became somewhat puzzled since no one seemed to be available with the qualifications we had in mind. We wanted someone who shared our vision for the ministry, someone who would take the responsibility of keeping things going should the Lord lead us in other directions; someone committed to making disciples with definite goals in mind as well as someone who would share in the nitty-gritty and seek direction from the Lord for the ministry. We asked the Lord many times to show us who He would have and one day, out of frustration, we told the Lord "If this person is right under our nose, please show us who it is. You know we have a deadline to meet with the State of Wisconsin". Sure enough - the person was right under our nose. As a matter of fact, he was usually under the sink or a pile of insulation. Anyway, we feel that Dean Barker has all of the necessary qualifications and we feel God would have him fill that position.

Please remember all of us as you pray. It's that prayer power in behalf of our ministry and its needs that keeps us going in the right direction and we need our prayer warriors as much as we need everyone else who has a part in the Lord's work at the Cup. It's prayer that moves the hand of God and therefore provides a firm foundation for us to build on.

We are looking forward to Spring with great feelings of expectancy of what the Lord has planned for his followers. We hope you will get in on the blessings. PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW!

See you next month!

DAVE AND PAT FOGDERUD, Directors

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