

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Weak Diets Do Not Make Strong Churches

By L. L. Geiger

By reading some of the church bulletins one would be unable to tell whether or not it came from some digressive church or from a church of Christ were it not for the name on front. As a matter of fact, the absence of a piano or the presence of one as the case may be is about the only difference between some of them anymore. A bulletin before me as I write contains these noteworthy items: “PINK AND BLUE SHOWER: Ladies, you are invited to attend a ... “shower for _____ in the church basement” ... “Fellowship meeting held last Monday night” ... and “Cake Day was last Thursday.”

If these brethren suppose that they can convert sinners and build a strong church on such a flimsy diet they will do well to consider their own record. In the same bulletin it is stated that their Bible study attendance has not grown even for a whole year, and their contributions are going to have to be brought up or they will have to quit some of the work they are now doing. Yet the town has not gone down; the population is more than it was a year ago.

Brethren, the gospel alone will build a strong church and it needs no props under it to hold it up. Sectarian churches must bolster their doctrines with feasts, fairs, fun and foolishness, but the church of the Lord has something that will stand alone. Churches that seek crowds by offering entertainment and suppers admit that they do not think that the gospel is enough; and this is an admission that they themselves are not converted to Christ. When we learn the book and get to work for the Lord, we will find that the church has no basement, that showers are home shows, that fellowship should be built around the Apostles' doctrine, and that “cake days” are among the ones that Paul condemned in Galatians 4:10-11. — *Truth Magazine*, November 1956. ■

THE BIBLE'S AMAZING REVELATIONS

By Jerral Kay

In reading and studying the Bible, questions will arise about the people and their regions, and about the changes they made in history. There's a lot of really interesting stuff to learn about the Bible beyond its core message.

Not being able to have room for all the amazing facts. Here are just a few:

1. The Bible was written in three languages; those languages are Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
2. The Bible is about 611,000 words long.
3. The longest book of the Bible is Jeremiah.
4. The shortest book of the Bible is 3 John.
5. The Bible was written by more than 40 different authors, over a span of about 1500 years. The amazing fact is they didn't know each other, yet never contradicted each other. The reason they could not, can be read in 2 Peter 1:9-21.
6. The Bible was written by people from diverse occupational backgrounds. Parts of the Bible were written by kings, half of Psalms, a good chunk of Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes seem to be penned by royalty. But other parts of the Bible are written by farmers, fishermen, a tentmaker, homeless prophets, a doctor, a professional scribe, vocational musicians, preachers, etc.
7. There are at least 185 songs in the Bible.
8. Some of the “First” and “Second” books were divided after they were written. If the books of 1 & 2 Kings were combined, they would be the longest book of the Bible. I bring that up because 1 & 2 Kings were originally written as one book. The same goes for 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Chronicles.

9. The authorship of the book of Hebrews has remained anonymous.
10. The word “Trinity” is never mentioned in the Bible, but they are identified in Matt 3:16; 28:19; Jude 20-21. God eternally exists in three persons.
11. The Bible was written on three continents Europe, Africa, Asia.
12. Now the most amazing revelation of the Bible. The only book on earth that gives God’s perfect plan of salvation and path to eternal life. Of the zillions of other books, none will get you help, blessings and wisdom for the entire person. This is the only writings that man did not write. Every word was inspired of God and sent down from heaven. It is the only writing that is alive – “The Living Word” (Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12).

That tells me that all in this world better be sure to have different feelings about the Bible, as it is God speaking to the entire human race, until the end of the world (Heb. 1:1-2). Those who obey the words of Christ will never die spiritually (Jn. 8:52). If you want to live on after this life, study and obey the commandments of Jesus. ■

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN NEEDS

By David Gibson

His name was Joseph, but the apostles called him Barnabas – *“son of encouragement”* (Acts 4:36). As we read about what he did, no wonder they named him that!

When the Jerusalem church heard that many Gentiles had become disciples, whom did they send to strengthen them? You guessed it!

The Pattern

“When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose” (Acts 11:23).

Barnabas and Saul (Paul) were selected by the Holy Spirit to go on a mission (Acts 13:1-4). In one city, *“many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God”* (Acts 13:43).

As they revisited some of the churches they had established, they were *“strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God”* (Acts 14:22).

Note the pattern:

- Barnabas *“exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose”* (11:23).
- Barnabas and Paul *“urged them to continue in the grace of God”* (13:43).
- Barnabas and Paul were *“encouraging them to continue in the faith”* (14:22).

And we?

Obviously new Christians need a lot of encouragement to stay faithful. But don’t we all?

But who will do the encouraging? Mutual encouragement is a Christian duty, and this is a major value of our assemblies (Heb. 3:12-14; 10:24-25). Encouraging one another is something we all can and should do.

I don’t recall ever knowing anyone named Barnabas, but I have been greatly blessed by those who encouraged me.

Haven’t you? ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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