



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## You Can Make A Difference!

Kevan O'Banion

A 6000-year-old Egyptian tomb bears this inscription: "We live in a decadent age. Young people no longer respect their parents. They are rude and impatient. They inhabit taverns and have no self-control." The philosopher Plato agreed. "The youth are rebellious, pleasure-seeking, and irresponsible," he wrote. "They have no respect for their elders." Socrates complained, "Children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority. They show disrespect for elders, and love chatter." And Martin Luther wrote in the sixteenth century "The young people of today are utterly dissolute and disorderly..."

Well, I don't agree with their assessment. The fact is, every generation has its share of "rebellious, pleasure-seeking and irresponsible" individuals. "Bad manners" and "contempt for authority" do not end when one receives that significant insurance reduction at age 25. But the next time you think young people today are going from bad to worse, remember that God has always had a rich handful of young heroes ready to make a difference in the world. The Bible tells us of Joseph the dreamer, Ruth the young daughter-in-law to Naomi, David the giant-killer, Daniel in Babylon, Mary the mother of Jesus and the young preacher Timothy.

Throughout the centuries, there have been young people who were ready and willing to make a difference in their generation. Take, for example, some of the hymns that we sing.

Many of our favorite hymns were written by young adults. Isaac Watts wrote some of his most memorable hymns at about the age of nineteen. "We're Marching to Zion," "and "Alas and Did My Savior Bleed" were just two of the many hymns this young man composed. The hymn, "Work for the Night Is Coming," was written by an eighteen-year-old. And the hymn of deep devotion, "My Jesus, I Love Thee," was written by William R. Featherston at age sixteen! Little else is known about the origin of the hymn or its author, but that's all right. It's enough just to know that God can change the world through anyone, regardless of age, who will say...

My Jesus, I Love Thee; I know Thou art mine.  
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign.  
My gracious Redeemer, My Savior art Thou.  
If ever I loved Thee, My Jesus, 'tis now.

The words of this young man and other young songwriters have had such an impact on the lives of many. Now you may not be a giant-killer, a young evangelist, or a song-writer, but you can make a difference in the lives of those who are around you as well. You have talents and abilities that God can use to His glory.

After he had tried all that this life could offer, Solomon's advice was to "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth" (Eccl 12:1). So the next time the pressure is on and your friends are bowing down to the various gods of intoxication, immorality, and immodesty you can say, as did the young men in Daniel 3:18, "Let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." Perhaps your example will be just what someone needs to make a real difference in their life!

# Baptism and the Blood

- by T. Doy Moyer

The blood of Jesus saves us from our sins: the blood was "*shed for many for the remission of sins*" (Matthew 26:28). What does baptism have to do with the blood?

Peter preached, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 2:38). Note that the expression "*for remission of sins*" is the same as in Matthew 26:28. Jesus shed His blood for the remission of sins. How can both be true?

The answer is in Romans 6:3-4: "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" This tells us that when we are baptized into Christ we are baptized into His death. We contact Christ's blood when we obey the gospel and are baptized into Christ. What saves us? The blood of Jesus. How do we avail ourselves of the blood? Through baptism into Christ. Is baptism a work of our own merit? No. We simply must submit to the will of God. Now, how can anyone deny the necessity of baptism?

# Unstructured Worship

Robert F. Turner

UNSTRUCTURED worship is "in" **again**. Someone awakens to the need for something more "spiritual" and "truly worshipful" than the traditional three songs and a prayer; and sets out to unstructure the "service." If strongly into the "Spirit thing" (as one reformer put it) we may be told genuine worship must spring spontaneously from each individual's heart — so if any "hath a psalm," "hath a doctrine," let him speak forth. Paul missed a golden opportunity to encourage such (1 Cor. 14:26-40) when he actually commanded some **order** in the public worship — even among those who truly had miraculous spiritual gifts.

We frequently write on public worship (See V.10, N.3, p.4-5; 15-2-7; 16-11-4) and acknowledge the error of ritualistic, sacramental, liturgical "services" — which we may unwittingly approach by rigidly traditional patterns of song, prayer, preach, etc. Changing the order of our services may help avoid these errors: have the Lord's Supper **before** preaching, or after, if this is a change. We may have more songs, less songs, change the time of contribution, change even the emphasis of some services (make a genuine **prayer** service, for example); BUT — change for change's sake is gendered by the same wrong concept that makes ritual an error. AND — no amount of **changing order** can produce true spirituality or make the gathering more "worshipful." Frequently — and I do mean **frequently** — changes made without full preparation of the worshipers, and without their being well informed of the why and wherefore, will confuse, disorientate, and will **destroy** the worship once there.

We have no right to say members do not sincerely worship in their familiar three songs and a prayer; and it is rank folly to think that jolting them with a prayer and two songs will prostrate their hearts before God. A reformer may have adequate knowledge of God's word but abysmal ignorance of human nature, and the patient nurture and instructions necessary to lead people to new and better ways.

No doubt there **are** new and better ways of implementing public worship and work — expedients wholly within scriptural authority. We **do** tend to follow traditional patterns — which **may be the best way**, long tested. But such changes as we make must be with the consent of the worshipers, must be thoroughly understood so all can follow without confusion, must "be done decently and in order." Attempts to "organize an unorganized service-structure an unstructured worship" become mechanical devices, manipulating the people **outside**, but doing no good for the **heart** where it really counts.

