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CHRISTIAN ARRAY

RESTORING THE RESTORATION
IN OUR GENERATION

AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION IN SUPPORT OF STRICT CONSTRUCTIONIST BIBLICAL TEACHINGS

NUMBER 13

JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1991

GOD'S MAN IN AFRICA - ELDRED ECHOLS

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When I first saw him, he was wearing a red leather hunter's cap to cover his thinning hair. Even then in his thirties, his pre-occupation could be maddening! Ask him a question and he would be no more responsive than a "tobacco store Indian". Long after you had forgotten the question, he would answer. When he walked, he waddled...Yet I never suspected that under that apparently uninspiring exterior was a great student of God's word! I should have guessed since it was he who brought me to Christ. We have long been two kindred spirits, though we hail from different countries and different years.

If you ever sat on the banks of the Shashi River and watched the crocodiles basking in the sunshine...if you ever landed at Jan Smuts Airport and happily turned your watch back twenty years...if you ever heard the Zulu's spiritual harmonies resounding in a tiny, mud-brick church building in the early evening...if you ever saw the misty tablecloth spread over Cape Town's Table Mountain...if you ever smelled the spices of Durban's Indian Market...if you ever experienced the sun setting over Stellenbosch or the fearsome majesty of a highveld thunderstorm...if you ever ate curry or experienced and outdoor braai (barbeque)...then you will know something of the magnetism...of the mystique...of that great continent called AFRICA.

Is it any wonder that Africa has crept into the soul of Eldred Echols and keeps him bound to her pounding heart with chords too strong to ever be severed? So there is that part of man that returns home again. You can take the man out of Africa but you can never take Africa out of the man. The pull of Africa is like an incurable disease that draws one inexplicable back to her feverish bosom. It is the call of the wild and will not be denied.

The mission that brought Eldred Echols to Africa was a noble one. Heaven had decreed that men encounter a Saviour and come to terms with Him. Heaven would not be ignored so man, the creature, made peace with his creator through Jesus Christ the Lord. but it is not enough to save the treasure for yourself. For to hoard it is to lose it. To keep it, one has to share it! So with hungry eyes, our man surveyed a world gripped under Satan's iron dominion. "Who will set the captives free?" "Who will tell them a Saviour has died?" "Who will tell them that death has no dominion?" So spoke the voice of divine injunction ringing through the

corridors of time. The cry was disturbing. It momentarily caused men to become restless in their slumber. To one the haunting refrain left him without peace. He wanted to remain silent. He wanted to fade into the shadows with mind-stretching volumes, but the voice would not be denied. So he finally cried, "Here I am, send me".

The task was arduous. Some have to go and some have to send. The man with the mission senses the urgency. The man with the money is distracted by its acquisition. The two must be brought to interact, or the bewildered masses of a lost world will never know peace. "Whom shall we send and who will go for us?" "Here I am -- Send me". Brethren said, "Let us go up at once to the mountain for we are well able to possess it". so the dream became the reality. God's plan for redeeming man once again was active and operative. The country didn't matter, just so long as it was Africa. The nation didn't matter...just so long as they were seeking escape from their despair. One thing did matter...the urgency...the clock was marching away the precious hours with alarming consistency. The tick, tick of the clock was like the quick, quick of the beckoning grave.

What is the solution? What can be done? Who has the answer? Why, the Master does!! Did He not take twelve and train them? Did He not instruct them for three years? Did He not give them a divine demonstration? Did He not lay out before them the role model? That MUST be the solution, so preacher-training schools were envisioned and Southern Africa Bible School was born.

Eldred Echols knew he was only one man. He knew the task was greater than he could single-handedly accomplish. Reinforcements must be called. New recruits must be trained. Deserters must be restored. Sinners must be saved so he made a 13-year commitment to SABS. Thirteen is an unlucky number for some. Jesus and the twelve numbered thirteen. That's when He was betrayed so "13" has entered the halls of infamy. Thirteen years -- yes, that was unlucky, too, but unlucky for the Devil. Many were recruited and trained to resist the Devil. Souls were given a new lease on life.

So what have we here? Who saw the pain? Who came to the rescue? Why, it was GOD'S MAN IN AFRICA. God had Eldred. Africa had Eldred. so it was a natural as matrimony -- to be God's man in Africa.

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Thanks to Eldred Echols for caring about Africa. The timid continent. The shy continent. The continent that the limelight avoids. The maligned continent. The crying continent. The lost of Africa are often forgotten and overlooked. They are so primitive, so third-world, so unsophisticated ...yet so precious to God that Jesus died for all the children...Africa's children...red and yellow, black and white. Black and white, did we say? That is a description of South Africa. So, Eldred said, "Here I am -- send me".

When we think about SABS, we think about a work he helped start. Don't let it die!

Make sure it survives to help heal the wounds of the new South Africa. Be gracious in your generosity. Give till it hurts because you can never give enough. After all, all you might be giving is money, but some, like Eldred, are giving their lives. Of John the Baptist, it is said, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John". There was a man sent from God to Africa whose name was Eldred.

(If you would like to help keep this work, which Eldred co-founded, vital and alive, make out your check to "Memorial Church of Christ-SABS Fund" and send it to P O Box 19263, Houston, TX 77224).

SABS REPLY COUPON

YES, I want to join you in training men and women for life and service through the SOUTHERN AFRICA BIBLE SCHOOL.

Enclosed is our gift of:

[] \$10.00 [] \$25.00 [] \$50.00 [] \$100.00 Other \$ _____

NAME _____ PHONE(_____) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY / STATE _____ ZIP _____

Make checks payable to MEMORIAL CHURCH OF CHRIST
Please return this card with your gift. Thank you for your support.

FRESHMAN ORIENTATION OR COLLEGE ORIENTATION?

At state schools it is often said to freshmen "Look at the students in this class on each side of you. One of them will not be here at the end of the semester". The realization quickly comes on the students that they are personally on the right of one student and the left of another. He or she may be the one that the cold professor is talking about.

At Christian colleges it is often said to freshmen "Look at the students around you. Some of them will be your friends for the rest of your life. You may well marry one of them".

The Second Annual Christian College Day will be November 24. We hope that you will take time to encourage your high school friends and acquaintances to attend.

WHAT DO YOU TEACH?

The Baptist that baptism is not for the remission of sins.

The Bible teaches that you are to "be baptized for the remission of sins". (Acts 2:38)

What do you teach?

WHAT IS LORDING?

I have heard several elders grumble that they don't have control of members like they have of employees at their jobs.

I Peter 5:2-3 teaches that elders should not be "lording it over those allotted to your charge" and that they should shepherd "not under compulsion".

Webster defines "lord" as one having power and authority over others. (Gives lording as archaic).

Would not lording over the brethren be trying to treat them as if you had power and authority over them, desiring to treat them as you treat employees at work?

I Peter 5:2-3 also says how elders should shepherd the flock - voluntary, according to the will of God, proving to be an example. Clearly the church is to be on a different wavelength from the workplace.

If this was a problem within 30 years of the beginning of the church, wouldn't it likely be a problem 200 years after the beginning of the restoration movement. Would it not be logical according to human nature that we would have the problems again?

Do we have acceptable forms of lording which are merely assimilated into the normal operations of some congregations?

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THE CHURCH GROWTH CARAVAN

The Board of the Assistance Club in Houston decided to rent 15 Recreation Vehicles (RVs) to transport the club members to Denver Colorado to assist in a 1 week public service program.

They appointed one member to drive the lead RV and called him the Leader. They appointed 14 other members to drive the other RVs and called them Drivers. They also designated other members as cooks on each RV, and in fact several of the Board Members assumed positions as cooks on the trip.

There are alternate acceptable routes to get to Denver from Houston. You can head out I-10 West thru San Antonio or you can head out I-45 North thru Dallas and reasonably get to Denver. The choice is a matter of personal preference.

On the appointed time if the leader heads out one of the likely routes for Denver, the club will make progress toward the goal of reaching Denver.

In like manner, if the Board is considered to be the elders of the church, the Leader the pulpit minister, and the Drivers as middle management (Committee Chairmen, Deacons, Associate Ministers), and the church has a goal and is moving toward it; there will probably be a sense of harmony in the church.

Now, assume that the Board has instructed the Leader to "lead us to Denver", but didn't specify the route or the schedule for travel. Then assume that the Leader heads out I-10 East toward New Orleans and he and the Board perceive that they are heading in the proper direction.

Soon most of the Drivers, Cooks, and other members will recognize that they are not making reasonable progress toward their goal and in fact are getting further from it. If a change is not made which results in making progress toward the goal, members will become disheartened and stop participating in the trip. They will report their perceptions of the situation (complain) to the Leader and the Board. They may well be told that the Leader and Board perceive that they are going in the right direction and so the members should do their jobs and work on their perceptions (attitudes).

Again in the church, earnest elders and ministers have worked hard in efforts which they perceive are correct, but the church is declining relative to service area population. Are they justified by earnest nonproductive efforts?

What can various members of the club do to get the caravan on the right path to the goal?

The individual members, Drivers, and Cooks are limited to (1.) personal appeal to the Leader and/or Board to change the direction

of the caravan, (2.) to encourage other members to be patient and do their respective jobs until the direction problems are straightened out, (3) or to quit the journey. Any attempt at club wide efforts to change the direction of the caravan or decisions to turn an individual RV around are not authorized and are therefore wrong.

In the absence of specific routes or schedules, the Leader can establish a route and schedule within the operational guidelines of the Board. In other words, the Leader is authorized to turn the caravan around if it does not go against specific Board instructions.

The Board can recognize that it does little good for the Board members to cook if they are going in the wrong direction. They can pay first attention to insuring that a proper plan, direction, and schedule are laid out for the caravan and then cook if there is additional time. They can instruct the Leader to follow the plan, or appoint another Leader who can and will follow the plan. The Board can turn the caravan around.

It is not required that both the Leader and the Board be strong goal oriented persons, only that one is and the other is supportive. No other member in the caravan can make the plan and effect the changes required to move the caravan in the proper direction.

The comparison to this is that in the typical church situation, the elders and the pulpit minister have the position and authority to directly affect church policy, goals, and overall attitudes to therefore promote or discourage church growth. No other person or group has the position or authority to have substantial impact on the overall church. Literally a year of the best efforts on any other member can be negated by a single act or statement by the pulpit minister or elders.

Further, the influence and morale of the Committee Chairmen, deacons, and associate ministers will deteriorate quickly in church situations which they perceive are not conducive to church growth. They are obligated to maintain individual morale, but life demonstrates that many will fail in unfavorable circumstances.

For these reasons, I the primary authority (and therefore responsibility) for church growth lies in the hands of the elders and pulpit minister.

Further, sincere efforts which do not produce results over the long haul will not justify men who occupy the positions of authority. This authority comes with the responsibility to produce results.

No work on the earth is more important or critical. If a member is not willing or

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cannot make the decisions required to move toward appropriate goals, he will probably be more fulfilled in a position of different responsibility. The thought of being given charge of a church which has ten talents and returning only nine talents to the Lord should have no appeal to any member of the church.

If you accept the concept that the primary authority and therefore responsibility for church growth lies with those with church wide authority, then it becomes apparent where the adjustments need to begin if a nongrowing church situation is to be changed into a growing situation. The acceptability of actions is ultimately determined by the results which are produced, not simply by the sincerity of the actions.

Further, extreme caution must be used when the pulpit or the authority of the elders is used to criticize other member's attitude or involvement when it is effectively a sin for the other members to respond to the allegations.

HUG A DREAMER!

"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Proverbs 29:18

Dreamers do not typically make good managers. On the other hand, managers do not typically make good dreamers. For a congregation to grow, the must have a vision (dream) of where they want to go and they must control the events (manage) to get there.

If you are in a leadership position of a congregation, find a dreamer and use his/her talents to compliment yours. Together you can do much more than either of you can do alone.

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Published by
BCE Publications
14626 Oak Bend
Houston, Texas 77079
Phone (713) 497-6042
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ADDRESS CORRECTIONS REQUESTED

Information within this news letter may be freely copied by anyone at any time.

Subscriptions: \$5.00/year

EXPENSIVE WHISTLES

When Franklin was seven years old, a visitor gave him some small change. Later, seeing another boy playing with a whistle, young Benjamin gave the boy all his money for it. He played the whistle all over the house, enjoying it until he discovered that he'd paid four times as much as the whistle was worth. Instantly, the whistle lost its charm.

As he grew older, Franklin generalized this principle. When he saw a man neglecting his family or business for political popularity, or a miser giving up friendships for the sake of accumulating wealth, he'd say, "He pays too much for his whistle."

From The Man Who Dared the Lightning: A New Look at Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Fleming (Morrow)

EVENTS CALENDAR:

AREA WIDE YOUTH EVENTS:

BIG THREE BIBLE BOWL AT ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, April 13, 1991

BIG THREE BIBLE BOWL AT HARDING UNIVERSITY
April 27, 1991

SECOND ANNUAL CHRISTIAN COLLEGE DAY
Presentations of Christian education by
Christian colleges
11-24-91 @ 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Memorial, 900 Echo Lane, 464-0271

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