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"SAVED AS BY FIRE!" 1 CORINTHIANS 3:15

By Gordon F. Nelson

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." 1 Corinthians 3:15.

"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Corinthians 5:5.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthian church, gives instruction to the church. *"It is reported commonly (possibly even in the newspapers) that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles (the heathen dogs), that one should have his father's wife." 1 Corinthians 5:1.*

Paul has received different reports from several sources (not just one reliable source) that in the church that he had established in Corinth, a member (possibly a deacon) in good standing is having an affair with his father's wife, which ordinarily would be his mother. To be true to the text, however, his father probably remarried after the deacon's mother died.

The entire Corinthian church is conscious of one of their deacons, defaming his own father's name, by having fornication with his father's wife. Instead of sorrowing over such an outrageous sin that even the heathen dogs (Gentiles) wouldn't do, they are "puffed up"! *"And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you (excommunicated)." 1 Corinthians 5:2. Kick such an one out of the church! "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" 1 Corinthians 5:6. Leaven is indicative of that which is evil.*

I have already judged, *"as though I were present, concerning him (this deacon) that hath so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together... to deliver such an one unto Satan... that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Corinthians 5:3-5.*

Do you believe a person such as Paul is describing, that was a member of the church at Corinth, is saved? A Christian fornicator of the worst kind; with his own father's wife? If he were saved, all his works would be burnt, and he would *"be saved; yet so as by fire." 1 Corinthians 3:15.*

Now the Baptists and "eternal securitists" cop out on this one! They simply state that such a one, to commit such a heinous crime against society, was "never saved" in the first place. Easy way out of a tough theological question--everyone that backslides never ever knew God. It is a cop out and a lie.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12. The Bible speaks of "imputed sin" as a result of Adam and Eve's transgression, "but sin is not imputed when there is no law." Romans 5:13. "For as by one

man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Romans 5:19. The church is in total agreement that man was born a sinner, "*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" Psalm 51:5. "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (the law).*" Romans 3:23. The church has no qualms that all you sinners that haven't been born again are headed directly for a devil's hell!

The argument that rages in the church is, What about "sinning saints"? Are they going to the same hell? A favorite scripture when this subject is broached is that God merely "winked" his eye at it, and forgot it. "*And the times of this ignorance (idolatry; idols as in the Catholic church) God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.*" Acts 17:30. It is true we are judged according to the light we have received. God in his great understanding will "wink" at a baby Christian still on pabulum. But the winking stops as we mature in Christ.

Father God deals with us as children. As a parent, you possess much more tolerance with your "young-uns" when they're babies. But, this "winking" at your children's conduct soon stops as they mature. You expect growth! God requires the same from us. What you got away with as a two-year old in the Lord, don't try now! You will be severely reprimanded, and the Bible calls this a blessing. "*Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth, O LORD, and teacheth him his law.*" Psalm 94:12. Some of the best lessons we will ever learn about God are while attending "Hard Knocks College".

I'll tell you how to tell who is a Christian. Try for starters, "to rob God." If you can get away with not paying tithes, you are in real serious trouble spiritually. "*But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.*" Hebrews 12:8. This scripture says "all are partakers". We all need to be spanked on our bottoms. If it never happens to you, "you're a bastard" and none of His.

Some of the things God has a Christian to do may look ridiculous in the eyes of a bastard. We learn (often the hard way), "*it is more blessed to give than to receive.*" Acts 20:35. Sir, that thin dime out of every dollar does not belong to you! You're a thief if you steal it.

As a young man I became a close friend of an Assemblies of God evangelist, Lloyd Smith. His brother, John Smith, an ex-pugilist, was the song leader for this evangelistic team. John Smith was the second pastor I had since my conversion. He baptized me in Lake Michigan and my right leg was miraculously healed as I came up out of that "watery grave" into "newness of life." Romans 6:4. I was Pastor John Smith's shadow during these formidable years of "growing in grace". We came to California together. He and I were introduced to C. Thomas Patten at the same time. At this first meeting with C. (for Cash) Thomas Patten, I told him how I was unable to cope with sin in the church. "One can be a crook in the world and that is no concern of mine; but if I find a crook in the church, I'll have him thrown in jail." That is how I arrived from Evanston, Illinois, along with my Assemblies of God pastor.

That night in the service, "The Kingfish", a nickname C. Thomas Patten enjoyed, stated from the pulpit, "A couple of 'Chicargo' (Chicago) hoodlums have just rolled into town." Little did I dream that five years later, I would be the instrument God would use to send "The Kingfish" to San Quentin prison, serving a 5-50 year sentence on five counts of grand theft.

John's brother was a famous Evangelist in Assemblies of God circles. He was stricken with a rare skin disease. I have never seen or read anything like it. He reminded one of Job as he lay inches deep in skin flakes that fell from his body overnight. He could not rent a place to live for fear his affliction may be contagious. My father owned an apartment house in Oakland. He was a Christian, so we were not afraid of the "devil's disease".

It was amazing to see the finances come in to provide for this preacher, lying flat on his back, unable to take care of himself. God miraculously met his every need. It pays-- *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."* 1 Corinthians 15:58. This Evangelist ministered to others in their need to find Christ. Now, to see their faithfulness in remembering him in his hour of need, was a source of rejoicing.

I said all that, to say this! This famous Evangelist's wife had a niece come to visit them. Naturally, they introduced her to me! I noticed first off that her skirts were too high, so I requested she lower them. In obedience to me, she did.

I was determined that I would marry a virgin, so as we dated invariably I would be pointing my long bony finger at her, "And if you ever lie to me!" We had set the date to marry, and the famous Evangelist was so happy, he even promised to take us "on the field" with him. What an opportunity was being presented to a young upstart of a preacher!

"On the field", you could travel from church to church across America with the famous Assemblies of God Evangelist. I was thrilled at such an "open door" being presented. But, I must marry this girl to bring my fondest dreams to reality.

In the course of our dating, and as the set date of our wedding drew nearer, my bony finger would go pointing at her more frequently. "And if you ever lie to me!" Finally, after such a grueling courtship, she confessed what no woman ever discloses, "I slept with a married man", she said.

I was a virgin and determined that I would marry a virgin, if God were to use me in His kingdom. So, I asked her, "Was it after you were saved?" She said, "Yes." "Was it after you were baptized in water?" She said, "Yes." Finally, I asked her, "Was it after you received the baptism in the Holy Ghost and spoke in other tongues?" She answered, "Yes." Then, I told her, "Bye, bye, baby."

She went crying and telling the famous Evangelist of my decision. Evangelist Lloyd Smith told me how ridiculous were my views on chastity. "Why, you can't expect to marry a virgin in this day and time!" That was as close to "the field" as I ever got.

I would like to ask similar questions of this deacon living in fornication in Corinth with his father's wife.

Was it after he was born again?

Was it after he was baptized in water?

Was it after he had received the baptism in the Holy Ghost, evidenced by 'glossolalia'?

No one really knows. The Bible doesn't say, but a most unsatisfactory answer to all this is to say the deacon was never saved because he fell into sin (to protect Calvinistic theology).

“To deliver one unto Satan”, is merely to kick him out of the church and have the church call him a “fornicator”. After this formal church declaration, no member is to have anything to do with him, he is excommunicated. *“But now I have written unto you (Corinthians) not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I (as an Apostle) to do to judge them that are without?”* 1 Corinthians 5:11-12.

“I (Apostle John) wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth.” 3 John 9-10. The Apostle’s hands were full “judging” them that are “without”, can’t you lighten the load by judging them that are “within”?

The Apostles were spiritual, therefore had the right and authority “to judge all things”. *“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.”* 1 Corinthians 2:15. The Apostle Peter even judged Ananias for “keeping back a part of the price.” He had pledged in church “to give it all”, when he sold his valuable piece of property. How greedy can Apostle Peter be, to demand it all? You better be careful what you promise to pay before God and man, as a witness. *“Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.”* Acts 5:4-5. We need some deaths to create a fear of God.

Capital Christian Center in Sacramento, CA, is a church like Paul’s church at Corinth. It has membership! You cannot exercise “excommunication” unless they are first members. This “deacon of Corinth” was a member of the church. Only then can a church exercise any authority over the membership.

The power of “excommunication” is never vested in one man unless he is an Apostle, as in the case of Peter and Ananias. It is never considered a church, biblically, unless there are a minimum of two or three ruling elders present.

If you read Matthew 18:15-20 in context, you will discover it is speaking of church discipline. *“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.”* To whom in the church do you tell it? You mean you stand up in church on a Sunday morning yelling out some member’s sin against you? Well, of course not! you say. Then to whom do you make your plea? The deacons, the pastor in private?

This is the reason for going, “two by two” and *“ordain elders (plural) in every city, as I had appointed thee.”* Titus 1:5. Deacons were chosen to “wait tables” and relieve the care of the widows and orphans off the Apostles. They are basically servers, and in the Greek deacon means, “to run errands”. Their qualifications are similar to that of the “ruling elder”, except for “apt to teach”.

“But if he neglect to hear the church (“Biblical Eldership”), let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Matthew 18:17. The entire church stands 100% behind the decision of these two or three elders who rule the church collectively. God in heaven backs up the decision. *“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye (all male body of elders) shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven...Again I say unto you, That if two (elders) shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three (elders) are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* Matthew 18:18-20.

Truthfully, you have no promise of having Jesus Christ in your midst with merely a Senior Pastor (one elder) overseeing the flock of God. You wonder why church is so dead and uninviting unless they present a “stage production”.

Our country, the United States of America, is a nation without a king. There is a reason for that. Our Founding Fathers only recognized one king; the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords! However, that which we would never permit in our politics, prevails in our churches.

The Presbyterian Church takes its name from the Greek word for elders, “presbuterous”. This particular order of elders in a local assembly is the “presbytery”. At one time, every elder in the Presbyterian church had to be an ordained minister. So, it is no new truth, but like in the days of Samuel, it is more popular to have a king. *“And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.”* 1 Samuel 9:7.

In Pentecost we have progressed through all three stages of growth commencing with the “hireling”, thus producing “the lord”. Is it any wonder we have “little gods”? Our ministers have “duped” the people into this thing for a long time, and “the people love it so.” *“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means (they own the churches and television stations); and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?”* Jeremiah 5:31. A very good question--“no fruit remains”. Where is A.A. Allen’s “Miracle Valley” ranch in Arizona today? or O.L. Jagger’s “World Church”?

The Mormon Church has the best government, but the lousiest message on earth. Pentecostalism is just the opposite: the lousiest government and the best message ever given to mankind. We are forever trying to put the wine (revival) in an old bottle (hireling, lord, or little god government) and *“it doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled”* (Mark 2:22) and runs over into newspaper headlines! The children of Israel could have reached the promised land in eleven days. We could set up the church of Jesus Christ in less time than that, but have been wandering in the wilderness for almost ninety years. You are going to die in that wilderness if you don’t repent! This thing is not going away! *“But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?”* Hebrews 3:17. Did these “dead carcasses” go to heaven?

The Bible says this story of “dead carcasses” was written for us as a warning. *“Now all these things happened unto them for examples (Gk.-example, pattern): and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”* 1 Corinthians 10:11. Why would God have these “dead

carcasses” as a key reminder for an end time people? Because God knew a “Calvinistic lie” would prevail, and the unconditional eternal securitist cannot handle these “dead carcasses”. They ignore what they can’t explain theologically. It ends with this admonition, *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”* They all fell in the wilderness, save Joshua, Caleb, and the children of the “dead carcasses”.

To bring this to a final synopsis, my famous Evangelist, Lloyd Smith, was miraculously healed after thousands of prayers from well-wishers failed. No part of his body could grow skin, only flakes that would fall off. This guy looked worse than Jonah when he first was spit out of the whale’s belly. Jonah instructed the deckhands, *“Take me up and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.”* Jonah 1:12. Who knows what to do with a preacher? Final conclusion was to put Lloyd up behind a pulpit. He looked like Lazarus! Wow! He began to preach, and in the process of preaching God healed my famous Evangelist. Isn’t God awesome?!

My refusal to marry his wife’s niece prevented my experience of being “on the field”. But, I learned something through the experience. The desire to marry a virgin was implanted into my spirit by the Holy Ghost. I became so discouraged that I would fall to my knees crying out to God, confessing my inability to choose a mate.

That same night, God gave me a dream. He showed me who to marry. I asked her to marry me, and we never had a date. In twenty-five years of married life, my oldest daughter reminded me that we had never had a fight! That was a miracle! Perhaps my three children kept me too busy reprimanding them. My wife died prematurely of “myasthenia-gravis”, a rare muscle disease.

Walter Martin only recommended one book on the subject--Marriage and Divorce, by Guy Duty. In this book, Guy Duty recognizes marriage as a “contract”. In a court of law, any “pertinent facts” that are withheld before the signing of the contract, makes the contract “null and void”.

A “pertinent fact”, particularly in marrying a preacher, is whether or not this female is a virgin. The female is placed in a strange position. She already knows the dedication of the prospective husband along these lines, and hence there would be no wedding. Failure to disclose all “pertinent information” prior to the signing of a contract constitutes a breach of contract and is declared “null and void”. In Jesus’ day, 100% of all divorce was initiated by the male. Today, 98% is initiated by women. He could give her a “writing of divorcement” for every and any reason. Jesus put an end to men divorcing “for every cause”. *“It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife (for any reason), let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, SAVING FOR THE CAUSE OF FORNICATION...”* Matthew 5:31-32.

This fornication is the act of a single person. After marriage it is termed adultery. You discover “after marriage” your mate is not a virgin-- this is the fornication the Bible speaks of. In the Old Testament they were stoned until dead.

The Jews recognized the sanctity of marriage. But for a marriage to be valid, you must have a necessary ingredient--a virgin. A specific requirement of the sons of Levi, *"Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD. And he shall take a wife in her virginity."* Leviticus 21:12-13.

There was money that a father paid called *"the dowry of virgins."* Exodus 22:17. So much went into a Jewish wedding attesting to the fact that a virgin was involved. No virgin--No dowry! A Jewish soldier was given one year's leave of absence from the army, with pay, to make love to his virgin bride.

Jesus inserted "fornication" as a way out for the groom when he first discovers his bride is not a virgin. Let this be a warning to all men anticipating marriage. Only a virgin will love you and your children equally. The love for her husband will eventually wane and is transferred to the children. In the process, two worlds are thus created and communication ceases, often ending in divorce. None of it intentional. *"If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God."* John 7:17. It is in obeying God that we discover "his doctrine".

By my obeying the dream God gave me, and forgetting about "my virgin", is why I am able to share this wisdom with you today. *"The husbandman that laboreth must first be partaker of the fruits."* 2 Timothy 2:6. We can't teach beyond our experience with God.

Next to choosing Jesus as your Savior, the second most important decision you will ever make in this life is your mate. To rely upon your "eye" and the "chemistry of the body" in making this selection can prove disastrous. One needs to inquire of God.

The Lord said to Hosea, *"Go take unto thee a wife of whoredoms...for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD."* Hosea 1:2. The Lord was using that marriage to preach a sermon to Israel. *"My ways are not your ways, saith the LORD."* Isaiah 55:8. Obedience is the principal thing. *"To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed better than the sacrifice of rams."* 1 Samuel 15:22.

To obtain what your eye lusts after in this instance you could live to regret. You're not buying a car, but a "help, meet" (Heb.-support, aid, surround) that God created for you.

PROFESSOR TEACHES ON ABSOLUTES?

Craig Rogers, senior psychology student, has filed a \$2.5 million sexual harassment suit against the California State University and Professor Joanne Marrow. Rogers will test the courts to see if Joanne Marrow, a doctor of psychology, can teach the absolute "joys and benefits of female masturbation" in a mixed gender undergraduate psychology classroom.

"Marrow, a fully tenured professor at CSU Sacramento, has been teaching human sexuality since 1974. Her teaching methods are unorthodox--former students say she burns incense in class, has them bring rubber mats to lie on during her lectures and is graphic in her descriptions and slide presentations." *Sacramento Bee*, 3/12/1995

Marrow says that birthing children is self-mutilation of the female body.

If students were granted a leave of absence from the classroom over prayer, a teacher leading such a

class in reciting the Lord's Prayer would be fired on the grounds of unconstitutionality. The National Board of Education would uphold that dismissal.

Marrow said she had never met Rogers or spoken to him, and her feelings for him are formed by her interests in Tibetan Buddhism.

Marrow spent 16 years in Catholic schools, she said, but no longer practices Catholicism. "My spirituality has evolved and transformed into something much more universal", she said. "Masturbation is a normal, healthy practice that most people enjoy", Marrow added. For example, she said, she shared with her psychology class stories about her and her three sisters exploring one another's bodies as children and about buying sexual devices for them as presents when they are adults.

Rogers was disturbed by Marrow's lesbian "male bashing" remarks about penis size. Marrow is openly lesbian. An avowed feminist, she helped establish "Women Escaping a Violent Environment", Sacramento shelter for battered women.

Marrow said she has been contacted by the Geraldo Rivera show, "Prime Time Live", and the British Broadcasting Corporation, and dozens of other media outlets around the world in recent days. She is working on a book, "Paths of Passion; Mapping the Territory of Women's Sexuality", for which she has interviewed more than 200 women about their sex lives, she said.

Sacramento Bee 3/11/95

One of the lesbian objectives is to teach the female her total independence from the male. "I can handle this job (with my toys) all by myself." The female body is then turned into a weapon to entice the male for exploitation. Whenever the male makes a pass, he is then sued for "sexual harassment". A lesbian is not interested in marrying a male, and has learned the art of conquest through reading the professor's book, Paths of Passion and her classroom instructions.

"She was fired from CSU Long Beach a decade ago after Fundamentalist Christian groups complained about her being a lesbian. She and several other lesbian professors ended up winning a lawsuit against CSU.

Meanwhile Fundamentalist Christian leaders have rallied to Roger's cause. The Reverend Lou Sheldon, of the Orange County based Traditional Values Coalition, said the Marrow complaint turns the tables on professors who, in his view, force "politically correct" speech in classrooms."

Sacramento Bee, 3/12/1995

The Bible says, "*When sin doth abound, grace much more abounds.*" Romans 5:20. In the first generation, Satan deceived Eve and they were driven from the Garden. Through the craftiness and deception of the serpent, Eve learned the art. Jesus knows all about this! Many a young man, in taking the vows of matrimony, would never have taken them had he known his wife was not a virgin. The woman who was deceived in the Garden has now become the deceiver.

"*Except for fornication*" was added as an escape clause to protect man from the wily ways of a woman to deceive in the nuptial vows. Jesus never meant for a Jewish boy to be deprived of "his virgin". If on the honeymoon night he discovers the deception or lie, like a fish one catches that doesn't measure up to standards, Jesus told these Jews it was permissible to throw it back into the water, and like any fisherman, try again for "his virgin". It was unthinkable in those days that man would attempt

such a “leap in the dark” as marriage unto death without the ingredient of a virgin which was assured by the father’s “dowry”.

It is to this chaste virgin bride that Paul commands in Ephesians 5:25, *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.”* Women who marry and have already forfeited their chastity come under an entirely different law when they marry; not the law of Christ in Matthew 5:32, which is addressed to the chaste, but the law of her husband.

Many a woman, and the preacher siding in with her, cries, “He didn’t love me as Christ loved the church,” as she files for divorce and steals his children. Honey, you would have been surprised how that husband would have responded if you hadn’t given away freely “the gift of God”, your chastity.

Adultery has never been a ground for divorce. Simply by the withholding of the body (again, using it as a weapon) you can cause your mate to commit adultery. Fornication is that which is committed out of wedlock as a single person.

“But if the unbelieving (husband) depart (put asunder, abandon), let him depart.” 1 Corinthians 7:15. Even though a remarriage is permissible (in the Lord) the question of your chastity is no longer an issue. Therefore, you are married unto what I term the “Law of thy husband”.

Also, if the wife discovers on her honeymoon her husband has a venereal disease or AIDS--throw the fish back in the water, and try again! You women can now throw the fish back and marry again (only in the Lord). A scriptural divorce always means the license to remarry.

When it comes to the question of “divorce and remarriage”, we Protestants are like the professor and her toys. We handle the job all by ourselves, much to our discredit!

We need to re-read Matthew 16:18-19, *“Thou art Peter...And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven (the keys here represent the authority over marriage and divorce): and whatsoever thou shalt bind (in holy matrimony) on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose (divorce) on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

Jesus healed the leper, but to be declared clean he straightly charged him *“Go thy way, show thyself to the priest!”* You can divorce your mate, but you are not “clean” until the hierarchy of your church sanctifies what you have done.

I knew a woman who, as a new convert with no instruction in the word, divorced her husband. Now that she was a Christian, she reasoned, she no longer had to put up with that sinner! She could now be free to set her sights on a Christian man in the church. The guilt of that divorce is ever on her countenance, as though she had been guilty of murder.

We must instruct our parishioners to seek out the “men of God”, not for counseling, but for sanction to “loose” their marriage.

“Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded.” Mark 1:44. What did Moses command? The guilty party in a marriage to be stoned until

dead, and the innocent party to go free and marry whomsoever they will (only in the Lord). The guilty one is to be excommunicated from the church.

This is *"the judgment that must begin at the house of God."* 1 Peter 4:17. *"Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"* 1 Corinthians 6:3. That word "judge" scares a little puritanical Protestant plum to death! Honey, you are not doing the judging: Paul is talking about the hierarchy of the local church. *"But he that is spiritual judgeth (Gk.-judge, discern or search) all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."* 1 Corinthians 2:15.

The Apostle Paul alludes to this "binding and loosing" of marriage vows vested in the church to the Corinthians. *"Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed (divorced) from a wife? seek not a wife."* 1 Corinthians 7:27. If we don't repent, the church becomes like "the running of the wolves", and even turn on their own when unable to keep pace with the pack.

"For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband." Galatians 4:27. The church's very foundation is being shaken by the number of divorced in the church. Numerically, they often outnumber those that are legitimately married. They can be likened unto the children of Israel living in the land of Goshen. *"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we."* Exodus 1:8,9.

Suddenly, with this "one member, one vote" membership in the local assembly, we are faced with the largest group in the church-- "The Singles". On numerics alone, those securely married feel threatened by those that have "loosed themselves" from marriage after an Oprah Winfrey show, or whatever, and then join the church.

My former pastor, Paul Trulin of the Trinity Church in Sacramento, once predicted, "I don't know what is wrong with all these singles Bible classes, but I do know that one day we will have to give an answer to God for them." These singles, unless contained in their own colony pose a threat to the rest of the church when running loose in a church where love is.

I'll never forget that sermon Dr. Paul Trulin preached that Sunday morning some years ago on Del Paso Boulevard. His frank admission that he couldn't figure it out, posed a challenge to me! Do you know why he had no answer to this important question? He was hired as our preacher. Hirelings never are taught in seminary how to deal with the wolf! Only to run. John 10:12.

Excommunication will backfire on a single elder. It can be conducted only by the presbytery--two or three elders, or the hierarchy of the local assembly. *"Take heed, therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost (not the District Superintendent) hath made you OVERSEERS (plural, never singular), to feed the flock of God, which he has purchased with his own blood."* Acts 20:28.

Today, Doctor Trulin is a "lord", hence he cannot run, he owns the church. A single elder is helpless--he must run from the wolf--unless he is a lord, which is the 1/2-way mark to becoming a "little god", like Kenneth Copeland.