

Trends

Is marijuana a harmless drug? It may have some medicinal benefits, but recreational use is dangerous. It can cause memory difficulties, learning problems, increased heart rate, anxiety and most problems associated with tobacco smokers. According to the *National Institute on Drug Abuse* it causes important negative changes in brain chemistry which can take days or weeks to wear off. Long-term users may also develop a dependency that interferes with family life, career, school and social functioning.

—via *Partnership for a Drug-Free America*

I Peter 5:8: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour...”

Sentence Sermons

“I think people need to be educated to the fact that marijuana is not a drug. Marijuana is a flower. God put it here.” —Willie Nelson

Editor: Isn't it interesting that people who pretty much ignore God suddenly conjure Him when they need to justify or rationalize their behavior? Funny how that works.

News & Notes

Please pray for those mentioned in the announcements after services and others listed on the bulletin board in the foyer of the church building.

Please pray for my son and his wife as they seek to start a new congregation in northern Michigan. Please pray Ryan can raise enough support to do this important work.

Please pray for Dawne. She is slowly, but surely, recovering from her eye surgery.

Please pray for Alan Jones. Alan's deep brain stimulation treatment to relieve severe facial pain was unsuccessful. He continues to suffer; please pray for him and his family.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets such a good example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for Hatti and her “new life” in Texas! We wish her only the very best and will miss her “something fierce”!

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people are now back to school. Pray for Zach as he goes away to basic training in the U.S. Army.

There are many needy saints! Can you help?! Let me know.

Words of Life is published by the **Westside Church of Christ** meeting at 1301 N. Enterprise, Bloomington, IN 47404

Times of Service: Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

Editor: Craig Thomas (812-320-9569); craigthomas82000@gmail.com

Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”

John 6:68



Sep. 3,
2017

Vol. 9,
No. 30

“Opening And Alleging”

Larry Ray Hafley

Christians often are criticized for “arguing and debating.” Say our religious adversaries, “**You people just want to stir up a fuss. You’re not interested in anything except causing trouble and running down other churches.**” How shall we respond to this charge?

First, any reply will be seen as evidence of the charge, for to meet it, we must contend against it. So, our answers and arguments against it will be used as proof of their assertion.

Second, shall we say that those who make the accusation are only interested in running down those who run others down? Would that be a fair assessment of them? However, if the fact that we reason and present our position with scriptural arguments proves that we are only interested in “attacking others,” would not their reasoning against us prove that they are only interested in attacking those who attack others?

Third, Jesus often “stirred up a fuss” and created controversy as he taught (Matt. 15:12; Lk. 4:28; 6:11; 13:17; Jn. 7:12, 43). Shall we say that is all he was “interested in”? The same is true with respect to the apostles and prophets of the New Testament (Acts 7; 9:29; 13:50-52; 17:2-10; 18:12; 19:23-29; 1 Thess. 2:2). Were they only seeking to “run down” idolatry and to “pick a fight” with unbelieving Jews?

Fourth, when those who make the charge against us seek to convert evolutionists, Muslims, Jews and other unbelievers, are they “only trying to cause trouble by running down the religion of other people”?

Fifth, many people misunderstand what it means to “argue.” It is assumed that an argument is always a negative thing. That is not necessarily true. Look in the dictionary. Synonyms of argue are “discuss,” and “reason.” Even now, these sentences are “arguing” the case for the meaning of the term, “argue.” When some protest against our arguments, they are arguing against arguing.

Note, in particular, Acts 17:2, 3: “And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, *Opening and alleging*, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead;

and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." The New King James Version says Paul was "explaining and demonstrating." The New International Version says he was "explaining and proving." The New American Standard Bible says he was "explaining and giving evidence." In Acts 17, "Paul was bringing forward passages from 'the Scriptures'...to prove...that the Messiah had to suffer and be resurrected. Only then could he declare effectively that Jesus was really the Messiah" (Ralph Earle, *Word Meanings In The New Testament*, p. 113).

Here Paul was arguing his case. Did he do wrong? Because trouble arose, did Paul do wrong? Who will say he did? Likewise, today, when we "explain and prove," when we "explain and give evidence" for the method and purpose of baptism, or for the true nature and character of the work, worship, and organization of the church, and contrast the Bible order with

that of churches built by men, why are we criticized and condemned for doing essentially what Paul did?

"And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

Acts 17:2, 3

(2 Tim. 4:2). Let us kindly answer our critics when we can, but let us not be deterred from our responsibility to "speak the things which befit sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). "Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you" (Titus 2:15).

"Only If You Dig"

God and I raised a flower bed. He really did the most. We used His soil, His air, His rain, His life, and His sun. My part seemed so trivial that I said, "Lord, you take those bulbs and make them grow right there in the box out in the garage. You don't need me, Lord. You can do it by yourself."

"Oh, no," He said. "I will do my part, but you must do your part also. You'll have to dig the bed, bury the bulbs, and pull the weeds." So I did my feeble part. And God took the bulb, filled it with life, fed it from the soil, showered it with rain, and flooded it with sunshine until we had a beautiful flower bed.

Your life is like a garden, and if you like, God can make it a beautiful thing. He says, "I'll furnish the soil of grace, the sunshine of love, the rains of blessings, and the wonder of life. But you must do the digging."

Some people say, "Lord, you can do it by yourself. You just go ahead and make me what you want me to be. Make me a saint, give me great faith, and fill me with love and good works." "Oh, no," God replies. "You've got to plow up the false teachings, plant my word in your heart, and hoe out

the weeds of evil. I'll make you pure, clean, noble, and useful. But only if you dig."

- I have quoted these thoughts from Bob Benson (quotation slightly adapted; via *Griffith Courier*, 9/30/79).

Many people think God will forgive their sins without any effort on their part, as long as they simply believe that Jesus is the Savior. But the Bible says that Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" - Hebrews 5:9. And again, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth ..." - 1 Peter 1:22.

We are saved by God's power and grace, just as surely as we grow a beautiful flower garden by God's power and grace. But both require effort on our part.

David E. Pratte
gospelway.com

An Anecdote from 'Raccoon' John Smith

Louis Cochran

While passing a Methodist camp meeting one day, pioneer preacher 'Raccoon' John Smith stopped to watch a young Methodist preacher baptize a howling, rebellious infant by sprinkling water on the squirming body. When the service was concluded, he stepped to the front of the crowd and, identifying himself, took the preacher firmly by the arm and attempted to lead him toward the creek a few yards away.

"What are you trying to do, Brother Smith?" the young preacher protested. "Are you out of your mind?"

"What am I trying to do?" John affected deep surprise. "Why, sir, I am going to baptize you by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his commandment."

"But I have no desire for such baptism. I know of you; you are called 'The Dipper.' But you are not going to dip me. I'm a Methodist; let me go!"

John tightened his hold on the man's arm while the crowd watched, some in apprehension, others in amusement. "That is a scoffer's blasphemy of a holy ordinance," John said sternly. "Are you a believer?"

"Of course I'm a believer," the preacher said indignantly. "But I'm not willing to be immersed. It would do no good for you to baptize me against my will. It would be wrong!"

"I don't understand," John said. "Only a few minutes ago you baptized a helpless baby against its will, although it screamed and kicked. Did you get its consent first? Come along, sir, we will have no more of this foolishness."

The crowd broke into open laughter, and John gave the young preacher a quick pull toward the creek, and then as suddenly released him.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Mark 16:16