

unbiblical to elevate a church leader to the position of someone whom we are afraid to promptly correct, confront or question. Also, relying on commentaries and other outside sources is very likely to perpetuate error just as the catechisms in Catholicism have helped Rome to perpetuate her false doctrines that are so contrary to scripture. For more information on the subject of Bible interpretation, please check out the articles on *Hermeneutics* on our web site\*.

### **3. Ecclesiology - How do you properly 'do' church? ...**

Most local churches just do church the way the leadership or the denomination has always done it even if there is no biblical pattern for what is being done and even if there are biblical patterns for doing things entirely differently. Much of what is done is based on non-biblical traditions, including many carry-overs from Catholicism, the most significant being the practice of meeting in large buildings rather than in homes. Burdening the local congregation with the expense of maintaining large special purpose buildings with rows and rows of pews that inhibit people from interacting is unbiblical and spiritually unhealthy. For more information on this subject, please check out the articles on *Doing Church* on our web site\*.

### **4. Calvinism - What exactly are the doctrines of grace? ...**

This essential area of doctrine is an issue that most churches either don't care enough about or don't teach correctly. Many professing Christians, including pastors, think that people who believe in Calvinism are people who never want to share the Gospel because they believe God is going to save people no matter what a Christian does or doesn't do to share the Gospel. However, this thinking represents *hyper-Calvinism*, not Calvinism. The Bible clearly teaches that God elects certain individuals to be saved from before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4-11), precisely because if He did not convert their hearts, they would continue to reject His gift of eternal life. We cannot and do not accept Christ and His lordship until and unless He gives us a new heart and a new spirit (see Ezekiel 36:25-27). The Bible clearly says that unsaved man

is dead in his sins (Eph 2:1) and a slave to sin and does not have a "free" will capable of accepting Christ. As Romans 3:11 says "there is none that seeketh after God". For more on this subject, please check out the *Predestination* articles on our web site.

### **5. Christian Education - Whose job is it to educate children? ...**

Most churches would rather not touch this subject, unless perhaps they operate a Christian school, in which case they would lean towards having the local church educating children. But what does the Bible say? We see many biblical statements regarding the responsibility of parents to teach their children but very rarely is any mention made of outsiders teaching someone's children. Samuel is one of the rare exceptions. His mother turned him over to the temple priests at a very young age. However, this practice is certainly not the educational norm in the Bible. In addition, Samuel was not the responsibility of the civil government (as is the case with public education) but rather religious leaders. For more on this subject, please check out the article *Educating Children - Whose Job Is It?* on our web site\*.

#### **Some good news for the weary Christian pilgrim:**

At the *Acts 4:13* web site\* you will find information to help you study the above issues yourself - and not have to wait 'til the cows come home to find out about these things. I also hope you will learn not to blindly trust seminaries and the people who graduate from them. The Bereans of Acts chapter 17 did not even trust Paul, and he commended them for that! Shouldn't that tell you something? Also, please remember that the Bible commands YOU to study to show YOURSELF approved (2Tim 2:15). If you are a true child of God, you do not have the option of sitting back in a pew each Sunday and letting someone else spoon feed you some doctrine. Crack open your Bible and dig deep... Discuss biblical issues with Christian friends during the week and may the Good Lord richly bless you as you *earnestly* contend for the faith!

In Christ's Service,  
*brother Ray*

For more info visit: [cominginthecLOUDS.org](http://cominginthecLOUDS.org)

## **What Most Churches Don't Teach Their Members**

After more than 12 years of attending "Bible-believing" churches and after being a member of a couple of these churches, I have come to the realization that most conventional churches (from the leadership on down) are not aware of what it means to make disciples. There are some very basic, fundamental issues that all believers should be taught and yet most churches do a very poor job of teaching - if they even teach these things at all. "Why is that?" you may wonder. Perhaps they think that these fundamental issues are really just the concern of the leadership or perhaps they are just ignorant of these issues. My exposure to various seminary graduates has shown me that many church leaders are mistaught or not taught these things by the seminaries they've attended. Also, in the interest of fairness, I would have to say that many members of congregations are pitifully ignorant of various important biblical issues and could certainly do a much better job of learning biblical truths if they wanted to.

### **What are these fundamental subjects? Simply:**

#### **1. Bible Versions - Where is the Word of God?**

A believer can't make a disciple if they don't know whether or not they really have the Word of God. They need to have confidence in the accuracy and inerrancy of the Bible that they use. They need to be able to tell others if any of the Bibles we have today represent the literal, inerrant Word of God, not that they just 'contain' the Word of God. They need to know whether or not the Greek text that the King James is based upon is a corrupt text that contains extra words or if there are words missing from the Greek text that the modern Bibles are based upon.

#### **2. Hermeneutics - How do you properly interpret the Word of God?**

Once you know where to find the Word of God, how do you find out what a passage really means considering how many different ways people interpret things? How do you find out which interpretation is the right interpretation that God

intended for us to know? Is it OK to go to secular historical writings to interpret the Bible or will I be led astray? Does the Bible tell us how we are to interpret it?

**3. Ecclesiology - How do you properly 'do' church?**

A Christian needs to know how a Sunday church meeting should be conducted. Should people interact during a service and how much and when? What role should women have? Should one person do all the talking? How do we encourage everyone to use their spiritual gifts? Why do we usually meet in large buildings instead of in people's homes? Why do we sit in rows? Why do we have communion only once a month? Is tithing a mandatory biblical practice for the New Testament Church? Are sermons the best or only way to teach or are interactive Bible studies more effective? What are the biblical patterns for how we should run a church meeting? How important is fellowship or prayer in a Sunday church meeting? Didn't the early church eat a meal together at every Lord's day church meeting and if so, why is that practice almost unheard of today?

**4. Calvinism - What exactly are the doctrines of grace?**

Does an unsaved person really have a "free" will to choose or "accept" Christ as their Savior and Lord? Did Jesus die for everyone or only for the elect? If Jesus died for everyone then why do most people end up in Hell? Are people predestined to be saved because God knew they would accept Christ or because God chose them from before the foundation of the world according to His good pleasure? If Jesus died only for the elect, then a Christian cannot randomly say to strangers that Jesus died for them. If God hates the workers of iniquity like the Bible says in Psalm 5 and Psalm 11, then a Christian cannot honestly say that Jesus only hates the sin but not the sinner. So these issues surrounding the doctrines of Grace are not trivial matters to be left for the "bible scholars" to worry about.

**5. Christian Education - Whose job is it to educate children?**

Is it OK for the government to educate children? Is it the job of the local church? OR is it first and foremost the responsibility of the parents? A student of the Bible surely needs to know what the Bible teaches about this subject.

**How do most churches address these fundamental subjects? ...**

Well, this is basically what I have seen:

**1. Bible Versions - Where is the word of God? ...**

Sadly, church leaders don't always consider this to be a critical issue. However, they often believe that the NASB is the most accurate English translation because that is what the seminaries say is the most accurate. Some church leaders have done their own independent studies of this issue but even those studies are likely to be biased because many of those studies rely on research done by people who were trained in a seminary environment where, like it or not, they have probably been influenced by liberal ideas of unsaved liberal scholars - scholars who are either teachers at seminaries or authors of books used in seminaries. When it comes to studying the original texts of the Bible, we need to be very concerned about the modern Bible societies and the translators and editors who are associated with them. Many people put far too much trust in those folks and their manuscript research and yet what is the fruit of all their research other than confusion and uncertainty?

The number of English translations in use today is causing confusion in churches and Bible studies in a way not unlike God's curse on the builders of the tower of Babel... "MY Bible says this."... "Well, that's not what MY Bible says!"... "So let's all use the NASB. After all, that's what the scholars recommend." ... If people do rely on the NAS Bible (the 1995 version of course) and the underlying Hort-Wescott Greek text, they simply cannot say they have the preserved Word of God. They can only say that what they have **contains** the Word of God, but they cannot be sure what parts are the Word of God because their Greek text keeps changing. The text editors are currently up to the 27th edition of their Hort-Wescott Greek text, known as the

"Nestle/Aland 27" or NA27 for short. Next year, perhaps they will find more of the Word of God somewhere or will determine that some words in the NA27 need to be removed, resulting in the need for the NA28 version of the Greek. Until you have time to do your own research on this matter (which I would urge you to do eventually), I would recommend using the KJV or the Modern KJV (not the New KJV) and find a church whose leadership teaches from one of these versions so that when they read the Bible in your church meetings you don't have to wonder if something was changed or left out. For more information on this subject, please check out the articles on *Bible Versions* on our web site\*.

**2. Hermeneutics - How do you properly interpret the Word of God? ...**

Churches usually never teach you how to interpret the Bible properly - or even improperly. It seems as though they expect you to leave that to the pastor to worry about when he prepares his sermons. Pastors and church teachers typically use commentaries, history books, contemporary studies guides, and denomination-oriented reference materials (among other things), rather than just sticking to scripture alone to interpret scripture. They expect you to simply listen to what they say the Bible means and will not take kindly to you asking them questions while they are giving their sermons. Much of this one-way communication is a carry over from the churches of the reformers and even from Roman Catholicism. When we look at the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, it is quite clear that much of the teaching that Jesus did and NT church leaders did was very interactive and was focused on the scriptures (the law and the prophets - i.e. Old Testament), not on extrabiblical writings. One-way communication in the form of "preaching" was typically used in giving evangelistic messages (such as when Paul preached in synagogues and on Mars Hill) and was not meant to be the primary method of discipling the saints. Interactive teaching is essential for the health of the local church because it ensures that error is corrected, correctly promptly, and corrected in the hearing of all those who heard the erroneous teaching. It is extremely dangerous and