

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“...Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian,’”

—Acts 26:28 NKJV

**Servants during February:**

Songleader: Stanley (1), Larry (8),
Dwight (15), Stanley (22)

Reading: Larry

Announcements: Marty

Table: Stanley, Marty, Mike

Wednesday Lesson: Stanley (4), Kris (11),
Larry (18), Stanley (25)

Area Meetings:

Eastside, 2/15-17, Scott Smelser;

Oakland, 2/21-25, Stephen Rouse;

Pepper Road, 2/21-25, Jesse Flowers

Hays Mill church of Christ

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Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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Persuasion and the Gospel

By Gary Henry

On the occasion when the apostle Paul presented the gospel of Christ to King Herod Agrippa II, the memorable reply of Agrippa was: “You almost persuade me to become a Christian,” Acts 26:28. It is difficult to know for sure whether the king was sincere when he made this statement. He may have been sarcastic. In either case, his remark about being almost persuaded to become a Christian suggests some interesting lines of thought.

To begin with, being a Christian does require becoming one. No one ever unconsciously (or even subconsciously) underwent the transformation involved in becoming a Christian, such that he awoke one day to the realization that he had evolved into a disciple of Christ. To the contrary, every person who has ever become a Christian has decided to become such—he has done some definite things that are required. The gospel is a message of salvation which must be obeyed, Acts 6:7; 2 Thess 1:8; Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 4:17; etc.

In some circles one gets the

impression that becoming a Christian is thought of primarily as an emotional experience. The truth is, however, becoming a Christian results from a conversion of the intellect and the will, as well as the emotions. To move from the realm of not being a Christian to the realm of being one—one must learn particular truths and exercise their will to respond to those truths in ways that are specified in the gospel itself, Mk 16:16; Acts 3:19; Rom 10:9,10. No one ever became a Christian without an act of the will.

“Persuasion” is the moving of the will by the giving of compelling reasons. And since becoming a Christian involves an act of the will, there can be no real conversion to Christ without this thing called “persuasion.” A person has to be given sufficient reasons to do the things that have to be done, or else they will not do what they must to obey the gospel. Evidently, Agrippa supposed Paul had given reasons that were “almost” sufficient to move his will to obey Christ. Those who have chosen to become Christians would say Agrippa underestimated the weight of the reasons

given him, but it seems that Agrippa understood, to some degree, that becoming a Christian requires being persuaded to act in that direction.

The Scriptures consistently emphasize that both belief in the gospel and obedience to it grow out of evidence that the gospel is true. John said, "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name," Jn 20:31. And Paul wrote that being saved requires coming "to the knowledge of the truth," 1 Tim 2:4; cf 2 Tim 2:25. One does not obey the gospel unless they have been persuaded to believe it is true and persuaded to act on the basis of his belief. Convictions about the gospel, and the conduct that grows out of those convictions, are always the result of persuasion, Rom 10:14-17.

It is amazing, when one thinks about it, that God has chosen to depend on persuasion, rather than coercion, to bring men and women back to Himself. He reveals Himself to us through the medium of language—words that can be understood and acted upon, Eph 3:3,4. And Paul spoke with gratitude for the willingness of some to be moved by the gospel: "We also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the

word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe," 1 Thess 2:13.

The apostles of Christ were not just communicators and persuaders; they were the authoritative communicators of the words by which God seeks to persuade mankind. Paul wrote, "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation," 2 Cor 5:18,19.

Through the words of the apostles, then, God's purpose is to persuade us to accept reconciliation to Him through Jesus Christ. Speaking of himself and his fellow apostles, Paul said, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God," 2 Cor 5:19,20. God gives us reasons to choose to accept reconciliation in the gospel of His Son. But mark it well: heaven will be populated by those that are altogether persuaded—not the almost!



A Christian Prays! Do You?

By Robert F. Turner

A Christian prays—and prays—and prays. But many church members scarcely know the meaning of the word once they leave the church building and the stilted "audience conscious" phrases

that pass for prayer there. "Pray without ceasing," 1 Thess 5:17, makes no apparent impression.

It is a tragedy that God is considered so inaccessible. To many He is far away,

locked in an inner office; with an alert guard of clergymen, forms and format to protect Him from the "ordinary" caller. The idea is wholly foreign to the truth.

"Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly," Mt 6:6. Thus Jesus describes the close intimate relation that exists between the petitioner and his Creator. This does not negate public prayer (the contrast is with hypocritical showoffs); in fact this touches the vitals of all acceptable prayer. When intimate communion with God is missing, public prayer becomes a farce.

Prayer is a Christian's privilege; made real and earnest—meaningful—because a Christian (and only a Christian) truly appreciates such characteristics of God as the following.

God is near! He is "not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being," Acts 17:27,28. A Christian lives close to God. His Maker is ever-present, all-about; ready to be contacted upon a moment's notice. This nearness comforts the Christian—"in the valley of the shadow... thou art with me," Psa 23:4.

God cares! The Christian casts all his cares upon God, "for He careth for you," 1 Pet 5:7. Our Father is concerned—His interest is genuine. He who takes note of

the sparrow's fall, watches over all His children.

God hears! His eyes "are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers," 1 Pet 3:12. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," Heb 4:13b. And hearing, he understands our frailties—"the feeling of our infirmities," Heb 4:15,16, so we may come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy.

And God gives! "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," Mt 7:7-11. Ask! Seek! Knock! These are imperatives, in the Greek present tense. They say, "Ask" and keep on asking; "seek" and continue to seek; "knock" again and again. The thought is akin to Mt 6:33—"seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

A Christian believes that God is near, that God cares, that God hears, and that God give. He is conscious of his dependence upon God, and leans upon Him without hesitation. So he prays; when he awakes—as he goes to work—when he partakes of God's rich blessings—when he feels the weight of sorrow and cares—as he lays him down to sleep. A Christian prays; and what about you??

—via Plain Talk, June 1966

Remember in Prayer

Betty is doing well, but will still need to have her dialysis port relocated. **Billy** and **Marie's** son **Freddy** has been released from the hospital. Please continue to pray

for **Carolyn**; **Deborah** and **Serenity**; **Hazel**; **John**, **Sylvia**, and **Paige Pollard**; **Joshua** and **Kayla V**; **Pam B**, **Kaylee**, **Julie** and **Violet**; and **Pam McNatt**.