

BULLETIN

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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Otis Q. Sellers, Founder

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JANE SELLERS HANCOCK

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Updates from Rusty Hancock

Board of Directors

Over the past several decades, several families have been ardent supporters of The Word of Truth Ministry. As I was born and raised in Southern California, I had little opportunity to meet most of these families as they were mostly in the Midwest, East Coast, and Great Lakes regions. My grandfather, Otis Q. Sellers (OQS), would tell me of these wonderful people when he would return from his semi-annual Bible Conferences each year. OQS would talk of the warmth, generosity, and fellowship with so many folks across the country. To this day I still receive letters from members of these families, letting me know how influential it was to invite my grandfather into their homes during these road Conferences. They would explain how the studies and teachings of The Word of Truth Ministry (WOTM) have been so profound in their lives.

One family that I have been blessed to know is the Hammond family. Since I was a young boy in the 60s, the Hammond family has been a constant source of study, knowledge, and teaching for the WOTM here in the Los Angeles area. Milton Hammond, Sr., was a constant companion at the side of OQS. And two of his children, Milton Jr. and Robert, were instrumental in continuing the work of the WOTM since the death of my grandfather.

This is why the passing of Robert Hammond this past fall was so profound. His guidance, insight, knowledge, and friendship was vital in his role as a Board Member for the WOTM. But Robert's absence from the Board will not be the end of the Hammond influence on the WOTM. I am pleased to announce that Mark Hammond has been appointed to join the Board of Directors. Mark is the nephew of Robert, and son of Milton Jr. He brings the Hammond spirit, intellect, and passion for the Word to the Board. His knowledge of "things computer" will also be helpful in continuing his uncle's role in maintaining our webpage and keeping it moving forward.

A second new Board member was also selected this past December. Louis Tonetti, a dear friend and student of the Word, asked to step down from the Board due to medical reasons. Louis will be having surgery soon to replace an aortic valve in his heart. I pray for Louis, and also his medical team. May God's grace be upon his doctors and other health care professionals, that they be given

the proper knowledge, wisdom, guidance, and ability to see Louis through this operation.

Louis told me he was reluctant to step down, but did so to concentrate on his pressing health issues. The door is always open for him to return in the future though. Replacing Louis on the Board is a name not too unfamiliar with readers of *More Seed & Bread*, Andrew Brown. Andy has been a constant source of articles for the *Bulletin* and *More Seed & Bread*. He has also been one of my favorite instructors at each of our past four Conferences.

I welcome both Andy and Mark to the Board of Directors for The Word of Truth Ministry.

Fall Conference 2017

The details are still being worked out, but a definite date has been set for the WOTM Fall Conference. On August 26 and 27, 2017, we will hold our Bible Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Please hold that date open and prepare to join us for a weekend of Bible study and fellowship. I will have all the Conference and hotel information available in the next issue of the *Bulletin*. The tentative theme of the conference is "How God wants us to live in the Dispensation of Grace."

This will be our fifth annual Conference. I find it exhilarating to get together with fellow students of the Word. As a community, we are thinly distributed throughout the country. I hope this yearly Conference grows in popularity and attendance. The passion, knowledge, and insight brought to each Conference re-energizes so many in their studies.

Join Us in Los Angeles

I realize that getting to Milwaukee may be burdensome, but if you are planning a visit to the Los Angeles area, join us for a time of Bible study. We are a small group that meets weekly for a two-hour session. We generally meet on Wednesday mornings, but we are flexible. Let us know when you will be in Los Angeles, and we can arrange for a time that accommodates your travel plans.

Enjoy a Bible study in the comfort of one of our homes. And then have a relaxing meal there, or at a local restaurant, to continue the discussion. Fellowship is always good!

I can be reached at either rustywoft@aol.com or P.O. Box 1609, Canyon Country, CA 91386.

The Politics of God

By Robert Juneau

With the election behind us, we need to move on with our lives and let our newly elected politicians govern. The candidates within each party argued, fought, and debated for eighteen months to convince voters that theirs is the best approach to solving our domestic problems as well as dealing with global concerns. With the politics of man it is a matter of personal opinion how to best govern; not so with the politics of God.

It is unfortunate that the concept of the kingdom (Gk. *basileia*), or government of God, became lost to the Christian religion. See **Seed & Bread** Nos. 027, 028, and 029. Before the third century, though their understanding of it was limited, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian are on record as having believed in a literal kingdom on earth. Rather than building on their knowledge, subsequent religious leaders began to lose sight of Biblical eschatology, and the concept of the Kingdom (government) of God began to slip from Christian thought. This was due to many factors including a weak understanding of Scripture, religious bias, and anti-Semitism. This slip began to take place early in the third century as seen in Origen's response to an unbelieving Greek philosopher named Celsus. Origen quoted Celsus: "... that certain Christians and (all) Jews should maintain ... there will descend upon the earth, a certain God or Son of God, who will make the inhabitants of the earth righteous, is a most shameless assertion and one the refutation of which does not need many words." Celsus, quoted by Origen (184-254 AD) *Contra Celsus*, IV, i; *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IV, pg. 497.

Celsus claims that "all Jews" and "certain Christians" *did* believe in a literal earthly kingdom, and that God *would* make the inhabitants righteous. Origen's writing goes on to show that it was the church's ideas of a fiery, destructive, torturous return of Christ that Celsus was deriding. Greek philosophy was highly respected at this time, and Origen refutes this attack on the church's beliefs by setting forth the idea that Christ's return is to be interpreted figuratively. "And if the voices of the prophets say that God 'comes down,' who has said, 'Do I not fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord,' the term is used in a figurative sense. For God 'comes down' from His own height and greatness when He arranges the affairs of men, and especially those of the wicked." Origen (184-254 AD) *Contra Celsus*, IV, xiii; *Ante-Nicene Father*, Vol. IV, pg. 501, 2.

Origen's inability to rightly answer Celsus was partially due to his lack of understanding regarding the Greek words *erchomai* and *parousia* in Matthew 16:28 and 24:37, 39, which are both incorrectly translated "coming." See **Seed & Bread** Nos. 024, 025, and 133. Origen "spiritualized" much of the language that describes God's visible,

literal, and physical presence on earth. Not having fully comprehended these Greek words, he interpreted Christ's "coming" as having already happened.

Shortly after the Edict of Milan (313 A.D.) sanctioned the religion of Christianity within the Roman Empire, Augustine built upon Origen's ideas, teaching that the language in Scripture concerning the Kingdom of God was allegorical. He taught that "the church" in this present world *is* the Kingdom of God. . . . the thousand years stand for all the years of the Christian era. Augustine (354-430) *The City of God*, Book 20, Chapter 7.

From this time on, the Biblical concept of the Kingdom of God was lost, replaced by the idea that "the church" is the kingdom. To this day, the majority of those in Christendom view the growth and prospering of the Christian church as the advancing of the Kingdom of God on earth. Prophetic end-times events have been dumbed-down to be nothing more than God returning to send the righteous to heaven and the wicked to hell.

The first three hundred years of the Reformation saw no change to this "official" interpretation of eschatological events, but almost two centuries ago, these ideas were challenged and truth began to re-surface. In 1827 England, John N. Darby (1800-1882) began to realize that the phrase "the Kingdom of God" could not possibly mean what the Christian church had been teaching for centuries. Despite the fact that dispensational theology has been mostly derided, ridiculed, and rejected, Darby's ideas continued to be built upon over the years, eventually culminating in our present understanding of the Kingdom of God.

I find it odd that so many within Christendom are opposed to, even hostile toward the idea that the Kingdom of God is a literal event that God promises to us all. No matter which side of the aisle one might find themselves concerning the politics of man, the things everyone desires for our world are the *very things the government of God promises*. One need look no further than the book of Psalms to see the picture of how God will take care of the people of this world when His promises are made manifest. I urge you to look up these beautiful passages. Free health care for all: Psalm 41:3, 67:2, 103:3. Wealth/prosperity for all: Psalm 66:12, 112:3. Safe borders/peace: Psalm 4:8, 37:11, 147:14. Justice for evildoers: Psalm 112:10, 119:119. No hunger: Psalm 22:26, 34:10, 104:14. No oppression: Psalm 10:18, 12:5, 103:6, 138:6. No corrupt leaders: Psalm 22:28, 67:4. No orphans/widows: Psalm 68:5-6, 146:9. And a benefit that the politics of man could *never* offer. No more death/Live with God forever: Psalm 16:11, 22:26, 23:6, 30:5, 36:9, 37:28 56:13, 103:4, 125:1.

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We Get Letters

"Thank you [Rusty] for your recent letter . . . I give out . . . tracts to people on the street and at subway stations in New York, but few show any interest in Bible truth and so it is nice to find someone who has such an interest.

"I hope and pray that all is well with you. I was sorry to hear of the recent passing of Bob [Hammond] and Jim [Witt], but look forward to seeing them again in God's . . . coming Kingdom. . . And please give regards to your mom and to all of the California group. And who knows, perhaps the Kingdom [of God] will come sometime in the next year or so."

"Thank you for your continued work! Mr. Sellers and his teachings made such a difference in my life. It is the difference in having hope and not having hope [our expectation in resurrection in Christ's Kingdom] you know."

"Blessings to the Ministry for the New Year!"

"I was saddened to read about the deaths of Bob [Hammond] and the Witt's [Jim and June]. I have many fond memories of them when attending services in Pasadena. . . Take care—the best to you and yours for Christmas and the New Year!"

"I am not a letter writer but always want you to know I love hearing from YOU [The Word of Truth Ministry staff] and so enjoy the **Bulletin** and messages [*More Seed & Breads*] from Mr. Hammond on Cyrus, [and] political replacement from Mr. Brown, a great writer, that Mr. Sellers would agree. . . . You are so blessed to have such great lovers of truth and I have been so blessed with every message. I pray you are all well and God's word will touch the hearts of the hurting during these changing times. I am praying for His Kingdom to come but know His timing will be right on cue.

"I would like to have four of the **One-A-Day Bible Studies** . . . as I have really enjoyed mine. I am the only sibling that continues with the best Ministry ever. Our mom would have loved to see her children know the truth and I would too. I hope you still have these. A lot of truth in each study.

"I love my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He has blessed me in so many ways. Getting older is a challenge but [I am] thankful for each day. Praying for my family who are caught up in the world."

"Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Psalm 29::1-2, NKJV

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The Politics of God

Men politicize and spin the issues to best meet their respective agendas, but they rarely stray far from these common concerns. No matter how long God continues to suspend His Kingdom (government) on earth, these needs and desires of the people will continue to be the subject of the politics of man. It's unfortunate that more of us haven't recognized what the Bible teaches concerning the politics of God. Even though we have almost 2,000 years of misguided thinking working against us, we should ever keep our sights on that which God has promised for this planet and the people upon it.

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Does God Desire to be Honored?

thyself also in Jehovah; and He will give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto Jehovah; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass."

When we are down and out (see 2 Tim. 3:1-17 and 4:1-8), we can rejoice in and praise God with these and other verses which honor Him, such as in Psalm 35:24-28 (AV): "*Judge me, O Jehovah my God, according to Thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me. . . . Let them not say, We have swallowed him up. Let them be put to shame and confounded together that rejoice at my hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonor that magnify themselves against me. Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favor my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Jehovah be magnified, Who hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant. And my tongue shall talk of Thy righteousness and of Thy praise all the day long."*

Consider King David's words of praise and God's coming Kingdom: *My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear Him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek Him: your heart shall live for ever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the governor among the nations. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done this"* (Psalm 22:25-31, KJV).

Does God Desire to be Honored?

By Joanne L.H. Johnson

Why was I born? Why am I here on this Earth? Might it be to honor and glorify God and praise Him? And to trust Him in my life?

There are many examples in the Old Testament of men and women honoring God and doing things pleasing to God. These people were given a distinct purpose: to live their lives praising God and doing whatever He wanted them to do. Some things might have been hard to do. Some things were easier to do. It was up to God to ascertain the level of difficulty whatever He wanted His people to do.

Did God notice that something was missing? Maybe He needed something to reverse the difficulty of following the Law of Moses for His people. So He gave Himself up as the supreme sacrifice for mankind. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the cross did away with the sins of the world, and grants to all a chance of being resurrected from the dead in the future kingdom of God. See John 3:16 (KJV): *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting (eonian) life."*

Today we have no direct word from God to do His will, though we might have a strong premise to do so by being compelled to do "this" or "that"—what God wants us to do, guided by Scripture, and NOT by men. Studying the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15) and believing in Him is all that we can do nowadays. We are living in a period of God's absolute silence, called by the late Otis Q. Sellers "the Dispensation of Grace."

Many descriptions honor God for now and for the future Kingdom of God and this is just one of them: *"Honor and majesty are before Him: strength and gladness are in His place"* (1 Chron. 16:27, AV). And here's a reference to honoring Jesus Christ (a prediction which came true in the New Testament): *"For thou hast made Him but little lower than God ("the angels" in other manuscripts), and crownest Him with glory and honor"* (Psa. 8:5, AV).

Remember how God allowed Job to be tested by Satan to see if Job would still honor God at the end of it? Job's three friends wanted Job to curse God. However, Job complained but didn't charge God with a thing. Instead Job honors God by saying, *"But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth, and at last He will stand up upon the earth"* (Job 19:25, AV).

Let's consider how the Twelve Apostles were loyal to Christ (especially after Judas Iscariot died) before and during the Acts Period. They were obedient and honored God by doing His will as told them by Christ Himself! And they will be doing His will in the future Kingdom of God, similar to what it says in the Lord's Prayer.

Remember that God created man *"in His own image, in the image of God created He . . . them"* (Gen. 1:27). Think—why would God do that? Maybe He wanted created beings to honor Him?

What does God want? Maybe a more righteous Earth for men to live on, like expected in the future Kingdom of God (see 2 Peter 3)? We cannot make it more "righteous" but this is something that God can do at any time in HIS time—NOT our time. Salvation is of God—NOT of men.

Does God answer all your prayers? Refer to the Lord's Prayer for guidance in praying (see *More Seed & Bread* No. 293, *The Lord's Prayer For Today*, by M.B. Hammond). Maybe "yes," or maybe not as you expect. Perhaps you need to honor and praise and glorify Him by thankfully worshiping Him. Maybe you don't get your prayers answered—have you ever thought of thanking God for your life and for the few or many blessings that you do have? You can always speak to Him through the medium of silent prayer in your mind and He will hear you. Maybe God will tell you all the good things that He did for you while you were alive on this Earth in the future Kingdom of God!

More questions: Why did God make the universe? Perhaps He wanted men to observe in heaven those wonderful spaces, like between the sun, moon, stars and planets. And why did He put man on Earth? God prepared it for men, as noted in the creation of the earth in the beginning of Genesis. Is it possible for God to have wanted someone to talk to and walk with, like He did with Adam or Abraham? On the opposite side of things, why does God allow Satan to make men die? We all have an appointment with "death" because of Adam's sin. But thanks be to God for the opportunity to be raised from the dead in the future Kingdom of God on this earth (see *Seed & Bread* No. 27, *The Kingdom of God*, by Otis Q. Sellers).

As it declares in Psalm 71:5-8 (AV): *"For thou art my hope, O Lord Jehovah: Thou art my trust from my youth. By Thee have I been holden up from the womb; Thou art He that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of Thee. I am as a wonder unto many; but Thou art my strong refuge. My mouth shall be filled with Thy praise, and with Thy honor all the day."*

Here are some wonderful ways that we can honor God. Proverbs 3:5-6 (AV) states: *"Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths."* Psalm 37:4-5 (AV) reveals: *"Delight*

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