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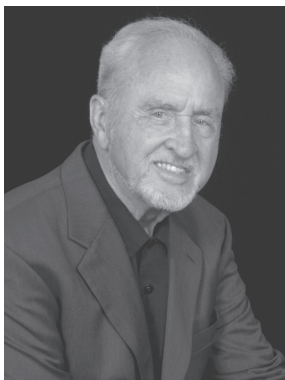
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We, at C.P.R. Ministries would appreciate it very much if you would forward this newsletter to many of your friends. So few today in our churches have ever heard these truths. Allow the Holy Spirit to birth a curiosity in their hearts. Maybe they will join us in getting these truths around the world. "The fields are white already unto harvest; BUT the laborers are few."

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WIDENING HOME PLATE Are we guilty?

By Dr. Joseph A. Webb

In Nashville, Tennessee, during the first week of January, 1996, more than 4,000 baseball coaches descended upon the Opryland Hotel for the 52nd annual ABCA convention. Nineteen times since, many of the same professional, college, high school, youth, and a slew of international coaches from passionate and developing baseball nations have gathered at various convention hotels across the country for two-and-half days of clinic presentations and industry exhibits. Sure, many members of the American Baseball Coaches Association have come and gone in those years; the leadership has been passed, nepotistically, from Dave Keilitz to his son, Craig; and the association — and baseball, in general — has lost some of its greatest coaches, including Rod Dedeaux, Gordie Gillespie, and Chuck "Bobo" Brayton.

I have attended all but three conventions in those nineteen years, and I have enjoyed and benefited from each of them. But '96 was special — not just because it was held in the home of country music, a town I'd always wanted to visit. And not because I was attending my very first convention. Nashville in '96 was special because it was there and then that I learned that baseball — the thing that had brought 4,000 of us together — was merely a metaphor for my own life and those of the players I hoped to impact.

While I waited in line to register with the hotel staff, I heard other more veteran coaches rumbling about the lineup of speakers scheduled to present during the weekend. One name, in particular, kept resurfacing, always with the same sentiment — "John Scolinos is here? Oh man, worth every penny of my airfare."

Who the {in the world} is John Scolinos, I wondered. No matter, I was just happy to be there.

Having sensed the size of the group during check-in, I woke early the next morning in order to ensure myself a good seat near the stage — first chair on the right side of the center isle, third row back — where I sat, alone, for an hour until the audio-visual techs arrived to fine-tune their equipment. The proverbial bee bee in a

Sermon Continued On Page 2

boxcar, I was surrounded by empty chairs in a room as large as a football field. Eventually, I was joined by other, slightly less eager, coaches until the room was filled to capacity. By the time Augie Garrido was introduced to deliver the traditional first presentation from the previous season's College World Series winner, there wasn't an empty chair in the room.

ABCA conventions have a certain party-like quality to them. They provide a wonderful opportunity to re-connect with old friends from a fraternal game that often spreads its coaches all over the country. As such, it is common for coaches to bail out of afternoon clinic sessions in favor of old friends and the bar. As a result, I discovered, the crowd is comparatively sparse after lunch, and I had no trouble getting my seat back, even after grabbing a plastic-wrapped sandwich off the shelf at the Opryland gift shop. I woke early the next morning and once again found myself alone in the massive convention hall, reviewing my notes from the day before: pitching mechanics, hitting philosophy, team practice drills. All technical and typical — important stuff for a young coach, and I was in Heaven. At the end of the morning session, certain that I had accurately scouted the group dynamic and that my seat would again be waiting for me after lunch, I allowed myself a few extra minutes to sit down and enjoy an overpriced sandwich in one of the hotel restaurants. But when I returned to the convention hall thirty minutes before the lunch break ended, not only was my seat not available, barely any seats were available! I managed to find one between two high school coaches, both proudly adorned in their respective team caps and jackets. Disappointed in myself for losing my seat up front, I wondered what had pried all these coaches from their barstools. I found the clinic schedule in my bag: "1 PM John Scolinos, Cal Poly Pomona." It was the man whose name I had heard buzzing around the lobby two days earlier. Could he be the reason that all 4,000

coaches had returned, early, to the convention hall? Wow, I thought, this guy must really be good.

I had no idea.

In 1996, Coach Scolinos was 78 years old and five years retired from a college coaching career that began in 1948. He shuffled to the stage to an impressive standing ovation, wearing dark polyester pants, a light blue shirt, and a string around his neck from which a home plate hung — a full-sized, stark-white home plate.

Seriously, I wondered, who {in the world} is this guy?

After speaking for twenty-five minutes, not once mentioning the prop hanging around his neck, Coach Scolinos appeared to notice the snickering among some of the coaches. Even those who knew Coach Scolinos had to wonder exactly where he was going with this, or if he had simply forgotten about the home plate since he'd gotten on stage.

Then, finally ...

"You're probably all wondering why I'm wearing home plate around my neck. Or maybe you think I escaped from Camarillo State Hospital," he said, his voice growing irascible. I laughed along with the others, acknowledging the possibility. "No," he continued, "I may be old, but I'm not crazy. The reason I stand before you today is to share with you baseball people what I've learned in my life, what I've learned about home plate in my 78 years."

Several hands went up when Scolinos asked how many Little League coaches were in the room. "Do you know how wide home plate is in Little League?" After a pause, someone offered, "Seventeen inches," more question than answer.

"That's right," he said. "How about in Babe Ruth? Any Babe Ruth coaches in the house?"

Another long pause.

"Seventeen inches?" came a guess from another reluctant coach.

"That's right," said Scolinos. "Now, how many high school coaches do we have in the room?" Hundreds of hands shot up, as the pattern began



to appear. "How wide is home plate in high school baseball?"

"Seventeen inches," they said, sounding more confident.

"You're right!" Scolinos barked. "And you college coaches, how wide is home plate in college?"

"Seventeen inches!" we said, in unison.

"Any Minor League coaches here? How wide is home plate in pro ball?"

"Seventeen inches!"

"RIGHT! And in the Major Leagues, how wide home plate is in the Major Leagues?"

"Seventeen inches!"

"SEV-EN-TEEN INCHES!" he confirmed, his voice bellowing off the walls. "And what do they do with a Big League pitcher who can't throw the ball over those seventeen inches?" Pause. "They send him to Pocatello!" he hollered, drawing raucous laughter.

"What they don't do is this: they don't say, 'Ah, that's okay Jimmy; You can't hit a seventeen-inch target, so we'll make it eighteen inches, or nineteen inches. We'll make it twenty inches so you have a better chance of hitting it. If you can't hit that, let us know so we can make it wider still, say twenty-five inches.'"

Pause.

"Coaches ..."

Pause.

"... what do we do when our best player shows up late to practice? When our team rules forbid facial hair and a guy shows up unshaven? What if he gets caught drinking? Do we hold him accountable? Or do we change the rules to fit him, do we widen home plate?"

The chuckles gradually faded as four thousand coaches grew quiet, the fog lifting as the old coach's message began to unfold. He turned the plate toward himself and, using a Sharpie, began to draw something. When he turned it toward the crowd, point up, a house was revealed, complete with a freshly drawn door and two windows. "This is the problem in our homes today. With our marriages, with the way we parent our kids. With our discipline. We don't teach accountability to

our kids, and there is no consequence for failing to meet standards. We widen the plate!"

Pause. Then, to the point at the top of the house he added a small American flag.

"This is the problem in our schools today. The quality of our education is going downhill fast and teachers have been stripped of the tools they need to be successful, and to educate and discipline our young people. We are allowing others to widen home plate! Where is that getting us?"

Silence. He replaced the flag with a Cross.

"And this is the problem in the Church, where powerful people in positions of authority have taken advantage of young children, only to have such an atrocity swept under the rug for years. Our church leaders are widening home plate!"

I was amazed. At a baseball convention where I expected to learn something about curveballs and bunting and how to run better practices, I had learned something far more valuable. From an old man with home plate strung around his neck, I had learned something about life, about myself, about my own weaknesses and about my responsibilities as a leader. I had to hold myself and others accountable to that which I knew to be right, lest our families, our faith, and our society continue down an undesirable path.

"If I am lucky," Coach Scolinos concluded, "you will remember one thing from this old coach today. It is this: if we fail to hold ourselves to a higher standard, a standard of what we know to be right; if we fail to hold our spouses and our children to the same standards, if we are unwilling or unable to provide a consequence when they do not meet the standard; and if our schools and churches and our government fail to hold themselves accountable to those they serve, there is but one thing to look forward to ..."

With that, he held home plate in front of his chest, turned it around, and revealed its dark black backside.

"... dark days ahead."

Coach Scolinos died in 2009 at the age of 91,

but not before touching the lives of hundreds of players and coaches, including mine. Meeting him at my first ABCA convention kept me returning year after year, looking for similar wisdom and inspiration from other coaches. He is the best clinic speaker the ABCA has ever known because he was so much more than a baseball coach.

His message was clear: "Coaches, keep your players — no matter how good they are — your own children, and most of all, keep yourself at seventeen inches."

He was, indeed, worth the airfare.

A clear example of widening the home plate in today's Pentecostal, Charismatic and Holiness Churches:

The Azusa Street Revival was a historic revival meeting that took place in Los Angeles, California, and is the origin of the **Pentecostal movement**.^[1]

This Pentecostal revival was led by William J. Seymour, an African American preacher. It began with a meeting on April 9, 1906, and continued until roughly 1915. The revival was characterized by ecstatic spiritual experiences accompanied by claims of physical healing miracles, ^[2] dramatic worship services, speaking in tongues, and inter-racial mingling. The participants were criticized by the secular media and Christian theologians for behaviors considered to be outrageous and unorthodox, especially at the time. **Today, the revival is considered by historians to be the primary catalyst for the spread of Pentecostalism in the 20th century.**

By the year 2000, the spiritual heirs of Seymour, the Pentecostals, charismatics, and many Holiness churches numbered over 500 million adherents, making it the second largest family of Christians in the world. Today, **practically all Pentecostal and charismatic movements can trace their roots directly or indirectly to the humble mission on Azusa Street and its pastor.**

What you or I believe concerning this

doctrine is not the issue in this illustration. **The important lesson is how the movement started; how it grew; and how it's followers have proceeded to "widen the home plate" when it comes to the permanence of the covenant marriage law.**

Today, divorce and remarriage is rampant in this body of believers, and any suggestion to return to the core values taught by its originators is met with charges of: "legalism and bondage." Consequently, the followers of this movement have widened their Homeplate on this issue to "almost anything goes." Present day constituents; whether they be pastors; bishops; evangelists or members: **the remarriage issue is mute.** The board of directors of a Pentecostal college read Dr. Joseph Webb's books and stated: "What he says is scripturally indisputable, but we wouldn't dare teach it here, or we would lose at least 80% of our support." Only God knows how big their official Homeplate has become. How large is yours?

William Seymour and The Azusa Street leaders held to the earliest Christian position as their official teaching on Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage and Adultery.

Found at:

<http://www.danielrjennings.org/ThisHistoryOfChristianThoughtOnMarriageDivorceAndRemarriage.pdf> Accessed on 12/12/2016

In 1906 a series of religious meetings began on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. This series of meetings is regarded as the movement that gave birth to Pentecostalism and many Holiness churches. The leaders of the Azusa Street meetings decided to adopt the early Christian position as their official teaching upon Divorce and Remarriage.¹²⁷

Here is the footnote 127

127 "I. To marry a second companion while a former lives is adultery--sin--and is forbidden (*Mark 7:2,3; 10:11,12*).

II. To marry a person who has a living companion is adultery--sin--and is forbidden (*Matt. 5:23; Luke 16:18; 1 John 3:4*). 1. The above is the law of Christ, and sin is the transgression of the law (*1 John 3:4*)...



III. Men who have a knowledge of the teachings of Christ's law regarding marriage, and then with that knowledge marry a second living companion, or a divorced wife or husband while their former companion lives, willfully from that point transgress the law and are guilty before God of sin--adultery--and must forsake their sin (**1 John 1:9; 3:4**). If we confess our sins He will pardon us. All such unscriptural marriages must be dissolved to get clear from the sinful state of adultery (**Prov. 28:13; Isa. 1:16, 17; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10**).

IV. If men entered the unscriptural marriages, even though ignorant of the written law, yet condemned by the law of their conscience, such are not clear before God (**Rom. 2:12, 14-16**)...Under the New Testament, no court on earth should dissolve the marriage relation (**Mark 10:2-9; Matt. 19:5-6**).

6. Under the New Testament, husband and wife are bound together for life. Death alone severs the marriage tie.

7. Under the New Testament, there is but one cause for which a man can put away his wife.

8. After a man has lawfully put away his wife, or a wife has lawfully put away her husband, they are positively forbidden to marry again until the former companion is dead (**Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2, 3**)" In William J. Seymour The Doctrines And Discipline Of The Azusa Street Apostolic Faith Mission Of Los Angeles (The Complete Azusa Street Library), Marriage And Family: Unscriptural Marriage, Separation Larry Edward Martin, ed. (Joplin, MO: Christian Life Books, 2000), p.119-122.

NOTE: This was the official doctrinal position of the founders of this movement that resulted in a mighty move of God the Holy Spirit, birthing one of the greatest revivals in the history of our nation. If this was the eternal truth the Holy Spirit planted into the hearts of these men of God back then: and the Lord sent a revival; If the present day leadership have renounced it: GUESS WHO MOVED. (God doesn't change).

I totally believe this is why the Lord sent a revival at that time. Revival demands repentance, and obedience to the known will of God.

In Revelation 3. Our Lord Jesus wrote a letter to the "Church of Sardis," He warned them of the same problem; leaving what they originally believed. Listen to the sternness of Our Lord to this church.

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis, write; These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art DEAD. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy words perfect before God. REMEMBER therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and REPENT. (NOTE: Another translation says it this way: "GO BACK to what you heard and believed AT FIRST; hold to it firmly and turn to me again. UNLESS YOU DO, I will come suddenly upon you, unespected as a thief, AND PUNISH YOU.") King James Version: "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

These very churches have widened the home plate to where one can hardly believe they could possibly have been a part of such a holy beginning. What is even worse, these same church leaders are now calling the very teaching that birthed them: "legalism, bondage, and phariseism." May God have mercy on them and bring genuine N.T. revival. They need to restore the 17" home plate! AMEN?

For those of you who have been belittled, humiliated, and told to leave the churches; remember; this is the way ALL of God's TRUE PROPHETS were treated. *Therefore; "Be steadfast, UNMOVEABLE, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foreasmuch as you know your labor is not in vain in the Lord."*

I just felt the Lord told me to remind each of us to reexamine our own hearts, to make sure our Homeplate is still 17". **Malachi 3:6;** *"For I am the Lord, I CHANGE NOT."* **Malachi 2:16;** *"For the Lord, the God of Israel, sayeth that HE HATES DIVORCE."*

Praise Reports

For the first time ever, our last newsletter, placed on the Internet, recorded 72% of the readers were first time readers. The letter was read in ten different nations of the world. The result has been more ministry materials being downloaded than ever before! Please keep praying!

LATEST PRAISE REPORT FROM PANAMA: Tammy

Please continue to pray for open doors. The commercial about the Spanish version of our books will be on all radio and television stations around the world. I have personally been able to share the commercial with some television and radio stations in the U.S.A..

After distributing the Spanish version of our books throughout Panama and Costa Rica, we are following up, by getting the commercial broadcast worldwide!

Please, also pray: The Lord is restoring my marriage! Please pray for my covenant husband as he studies the covenant marriage message. We just spent a weekend of travel together and enjoyed a family outing.

Thank you for your prayers for our marriage and for our outreach in Central and South America.

Tammy Carroll

LATEST PRAISE REPORT FROM BECKY, IN COLUMBIA:

Many exciting things have been happening in Columbia!

Sadly, I am almost out of your two books. We have considered them to be pure gold!

This past week, a call came for 140 books from a church in Medellin, the second most important city of Columbia. When people in Columbia catch the truth of this message, they REALLY get it! That is evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Another church here in Bogata called me, asking me to come and share on the subject of divorce and remarriage in their morning service-THE FULL HOUR! This was totally unexpected. The pastor and I have never met, but he had read the book. How many pastors would do that? Later on the congregation eagerly bought up 50 books! Again, the work of the Holy Spirit!

In another pastor's meeting of about 20 pastors and church leaders, I was able to give out copies to each of the pastors.

I am invited to another pastor's gathering where about 60 pastors and leaders will gather. A large percentage of them are personally involved in non-covenant relationships themselves. Because of this, their sheep are drastically and negatively affected, and the structure of this society continues to unravel.

Some Columbian villiages, who declare themselves to be "Christian," consider sexual sin to be normal. I hve been told that ALL the children in the village have been abused at some time. At the same time, the leaders of those villages come together at 4:00 AM to pray, blatantly hiding this and many other sins. They need to be made aware of Prov. 28:13: "He that covers his sin shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy." & Psalm 66:18; "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Please pray the Lord will open eyes to truth!

I have an enduring debt to Pastor Webb, for having such a large part in opening my eyes some three years ago, when I thought it was OK to divorce and remarry, in this day and age. I have found God's word never fails, and we must "let God be true, and every man a liar."

On the battlefield and rejoicing.

Becky Phillips
P.S. Maybe someone will be led by the Lord to supply Becky with 250 of each book to help her be able to continue to impact the lives of Christian leaders in Columbia. C.P.R. is out of the Spanish version, but they can be "printed on demand" Online, and shipped within five days. If you would like to have a part in this project, let us know and we will help you facilitate the process. You will be giving directly into the hands of Comumbia's present and future Church leadership!

THOUGHTS to PONDER

A hypocrite is NOT someone who isn't who they know they should be, but rather one who knowingly, and willfully, walk in disobedience to God's known will, and profess righteousness

Quotes by

Leonard Ravenhill: Evangelist 1907-1994

1. There's one thing we need above everything else; it's something we don't talk about these days. We need a mighty avalanche of conviction of sin.
2. We're living in an unprecedented day (when) evil is no longer evil. We've changed the terminology- - Iniquity is now infirmity; wickedness is now weakness; devilry is now deficiency.
3. Jesus did not come into the world to make bad men good. He came into the world to make dead men live!
4. Someone asked me, "Do you pray for the dead?" I said, "No, I preach to them!" I think every pew in every church is death row. Think about that! They're dead! They sing about God; they talk about God, but they're dead! They have no relationship (with God).
5. The early church was married to poverty, prisons and persecutions. Today, the church is married to prosperity, personality, and popularity.
6. Fifty years ago, you never heard of a divorce in the Christian church. You never (even) heard of marriage counseling in the church... We're putting up with sin in the church.
7. I believe every church is either supernatural or superficial. I don't believe there's any middle ground.
8. The Church is supposed to do what? To stop corruption? Is the church doing that? No! The world is corrupting the Church.



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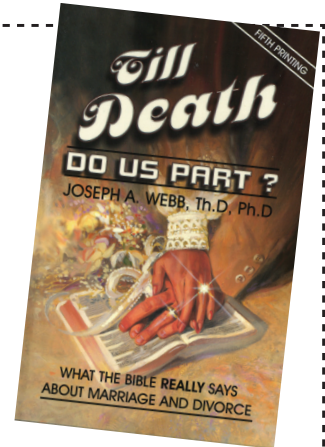
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