

On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

Would A Harley Davidson By Any Other Name Be A Wheel-Barrow?

By Linus A. Mathis III

What would happen if you put your wheel-barrow (assuming you own one) in your garage (another supposition) and called it a Harley Davidson? What if you began to call your Harley Davidson a wheel-barrow? Would either be changed? This sounds silly to us because we accept words as an accurate means of communication. We are accustomed to referring to things as they are. In fact, most of us give a good deal of thought to the names we give things and the terms we use to describe them. Like naming your pet. Or choosing the right name for that new baby. We take the latter quite seriously. Don't we?

The purpose of language is to convey ideas, concepts or feelings to others. The desired result being, the other party understands. This is why grammar and syntax are so important. Of course, inflection and body language also aid effectively in communicating, but nothing is quite as precise as words. This is why we assign meanings to words and do so with the intent that they are retained. Once a word is given a meaning the two should remain inseparable. Great caution should be exercised before words are re-defined as this plays havoc with the transmission of ideas and confusion results. A corrupted language soon becomes useless (or at the very best, far less effective) as a means of

communication. One great example of this is slang. What was once bad is now considered good and what formally was cool is hot. Slang, however, is not the choice (or shouldn't be) of leaders and educators. These are people who must strive to maintain the integrity and continuity of language and the rules of grammar which govern it.

By this time you are probably thinking about a prominent individual's mishandling of a commonly used being verb. What I would like you to consider is even more pernicious. Notwithstanding, before we continue, let's consider the definition of *PARSING*: To give a grammatical description of a word or a group of words - Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary - principal copyright 1973. Please note that nowhere is the notion of "changing" the grammatical description in mention.

You see, God chose words as a means of making Himself known. Which is absolutely awesome considering His use of the finite to describe and communicate the infinite.

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

They, God and His Word, are inseparable. Consequently, you cannot know God without knowing His Word. And to change His Word, or use terms to describe God which are unscriptural would be to corrupt the Message. You may think this is

not a problem, but it's all too common in the average church. That is, the use of unscriptural language in reference to God and the things of God. Which may cause one to question the godliness of the items described by said "jargon."

John 1:14,18

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate communication of God. The WORD in the flesh!

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [to draw out in narrative, i.e. made known] *him*.

To know God you must know Jesus Christ and to know Jesus Christ, you must know the Scriptures. You see, the preached or spoken Word makes known the written Word which in turn makes known Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ makes known God. Got it?

John 14:6-11

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Folks will argue this point. They'll say that you can know God via the environment or whatever. What amuses me is how they quote Bible verses to validate their point. The truth is, you simply cannot know God apart from His Word. Let me ask you, where in the creation do you learn about Jesus Christ? Or salvation? Where did you learn how to pray or that you should? You may know there is a God from the creation, but if you want to know anything about Him, it MUST come from His Word. Therefore, it's absolutely VITAL that we use Biblical terms when communicating anything about God and the things of God. You do not have the luxury or license to redefine that which God has spoken.

Psalms 138:2

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

God puts an extremely high value upon His Word. He has MAGNIFIED His Word above all His name! His name includes the creation and everything in it. This is His Word, not mine. He said this, not me. I am not the author of His Word, nor is any other man. Therefore, none of us have the right to "parse" or make up definitions of unscriptural origin. We would be more well advised to allow the Word to speak for Itself and stick with Biblical definitions. To manipulate language so as to further our own agendas or dogmas is a loathsome and dishonest practice.

In William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" we find a phrase which is bandied about with little or no thought as to its origin. Here's the discourse:

Juliet:

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy, Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.

What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,

Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part

Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!

What's in a name? that which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet,

So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,

Retain that dear perfection which he owes

Without [beyond] that title. Romeo, doff [strip, put off] thy name,

And for that name which is no part of thee

Take all myself.

Romeo:

I take thee at thy word:

Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I will never be Romeo.

Juliet was looking for a reason to change his name. Her family and his were bitter enemies. But, she was in love and wished that the circumstances were different. Thus her remarks about his name. People twist language to advantage themselves and further their own purposes. But this practice in no way changes the truth. That being the case, why would anyone sincerely desiring the furtherance of the Gospel wish to reinvent God's Word? It can only be that agendas estranged from God's are underfoot.

You and I should desire the purity of God's Word above all else. We should disdain the words of men when they are in opposition to God's. We should not cling to unbiblical terminology when discussing spiritual matters. Rather, we should respond to God as Romeo did to Juliet:

"I TAKE THEE AT THY WORD"

This we will do if we are as in love with Him as we should be. And we should be!

The Counselor's Corner

With Rev. Linus A. Mathis III

The Father Of The Fatherless

America's health is being stripped from her by a malignant evil. This hideous gargoyle has many faces, but doesn't show them. Many names yet lingers nameless. It is simply too brutal and callous for us to contemplate. Something this

treacherous shouldn't be allowed to exist. We cannot bear to admit it, so we deny its reality. Despite our denials, it thrives. We call it the "Absentee Father Syndrome." And it's considered by many to be our most urgent social problem. That we must call it a "syndrome" is sad testimony to the low state of affairs in our culture. Nevertheless, the problem is with us and growing steadily. There are an increasing number of dead-beat dads, single moms and step families. In some areas it almost seems the norm rather than the exception. Whether we choose to concern ourselves with this or not, a "Fatherless America" is fast becoming our heritage. A legacy of this sort is a breeding ground for violence and crime. (I loath to sicken you with statistics, but for those interested they are readily obtained.) As if that weren't bad enough, since one generation begets the next, this dilemma will be with us for a quite a while. If this sounds dismal to you it's because it is. Which is all the more reason to perk up your ears and roll up your sleeves. The problem doesn't exist that can defy solution among those intent upon solving it. And God is both willing and able to aid us in acquiring a resolution.

What we must realize, however, is that the roots of this problem go much deeper than the woes our culture reveals. You see, the very *ideal* of fatherhood is under siege, promising devastation for society as we know it. What ever one's social concerns are, this problem lies at the base of all the others. We cannot expect a rise in integrity, honesty, decency and respect among our youth if we ignore the culprit.

Our society is now host to a number

of organizations which contribute to the problem rather than its solution. They hold the notion that re-insertion of traditional family values would give a husband license to beat and rape his wife and children. They maintain that Christians who discipline their children are beating them into submission. Use of the rod of correction in an appropriate Biblical fashion is NOT child abuse. Those who allege otherwise are the actual periphery factor. Any child who does not submit to his parent's authority is on the road to serious trouble. I too am diametrically opposed to any and all who brutalize children. But the Christian who does so is a very rare individual indeed. Those who believe otherwise mustn't know very many Christians. As for fathers being the "abusers," factually speaking, the children most at risk are those who have been separated from their biological father. Most male administered abuse comes by way of mom's boyfriend, a stepfather, or a family member. Not from dad!

Courts and government agencies continue to place men in situations which help them fit the description of dead-beat. Without a doubt there are those who don't care about their children, but why develop a machine to produce them? Most men when asked why they work so hard will take out their wallet and show you photos of their kids. Fathers need support as much as mothers and children do.

We must build upon the belief of an intact family and do everything within our power to support it. In addition to that we must strive to re-parent those who have been abandoned. This would be in keeping with God's Word.

Psalms 68:5,6

A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, *is* God in his holy habitation.

God setteth the solitary in families; he bringeth out those which are bound with chains; but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.

He is a father of the fatherless. Furthermore, Jesus Christ gave assurance that we would not be left comfortless (orphaned, fatherless). He promised another Comforter, the spirit of truth, holy spirit.

John 14:15-21,26,27

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

I will not leave you comfortless [*orphanos* - bereft of teacher, guardian, guide, i.e. orphaned]: I will come to you.

Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and

I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

But the *Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

We must help people to receive the new birth (Romans 10:9,10, I Peter 1:23-25) so that they can become children of God and have Him as their true Father.

I John 3:1-3

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Today it seems secular humanism is the religion of choice in our culture. What does God's Word have to say about religion?

James 1:27

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit (to look upon in order to

help or benefit, to extend mercy) the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

-The Counselor's Corner also appears in Alaska Parenting Magazine in an edited version-
