

# THE BULLETIN

## ... IS NO LONGER A SIN

"Living in sin," announces a report by the Board of Social Responsibility in the Church of England, "is no longer a sin." Noting that four in five couple by the year 2000 will live together before marriage, bishop Alan Morgan declares that "the phrase 'living in sin' stigmatizes and isn't helpful." The report also urges a "ready welcome" for homosexuals in the church, noting that "many homosexuals have high quality, living relationships" (Los Angeles Times, June 1995).

Ah, what a brave new world this would be, if we could learn to tolerate all life styles, where no one presumed to judge another's behavior. That way society could tolerate practically every person on earth except of course, the "intolerant". Can't tolerate them!

Biblically speaking, we all have sinned (Romans 3:23). Those whose lives are overcome with arrogance or hatred are also "living in sin." Of course, the fact that all of us are sinner does not make adultery any less sinful!

The article reminds us that society changes British morals have "come a long way" since Victorian days! Christians must constantly evaluate their understanding of morals, in a changing world, by some criteria. What fascinates me is the criteria used by the Church of England in this case. The church reevaluates its stand on adulterous relations, and homosexuality because a majority of people in society now approve, tolerate, or have adopted that life style? By that reasons, I suppose, we could also justify the church's acceptance of cheating in business, racial hatred, and pornography. Many people in society do it; and the church must keep up with the times!

Let's make some points clear. In a democracy, everyone has the right to express an opinion. But that is not the same thing as saying that every opinion is equally valid. But aren't religious people supposed to be taking their marching orders from a higher source than either public opinion or current practice? Sadly, the Church of England erred long before it decided that "living in sin" wasn't sin anymore; it erred first when it exchanged a "thus saith the Lord for the vastly inferior "decree of the church". By this decision it made itself into a denominational body instead of staying with the New Testament pattern for the Lord's church.

The authority concerning moral rights and wrongs, cannot be society, for it is shiftless and selfish. Neither can the authority come from the church, for however well intended, its leadership is composed of humans. Nor can the authority come from secular government for it also reflects the changing virtues and values of the populace. The authority cannot even be my interpretation of Scriptures. That would be a tyranny of its own.

Listen to what God's word has to say on the subject of sexual immorality and such sins: Matthew 5:27-30; Romans 1:26,27; Revelation 21:8.

Isaiah 55:8, 9 ""For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts."

Stan Michell  
edited to fit this space

## The Manchester church of Christ

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### Our Minister:

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### Our Elders:

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Mike Moser 429-9487

### Our Deacons:

Tony Casella- Finance  
Fred Hillhouse- Facilities  
Doug Paul- Education  
Stuart Peacock- Worship  
Pete Steffensen- Facilities  
David Skerry- Benevolence & Outreach

Ezekiel 18:29 "But the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Are My ways not right, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are not right?"

# Our Family News

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household," Ephesians 2:19, NAS95.

**If you're a visitor to our church, welcome!** If you have questions, we welcome them; please don't hesitate to ask Park Linscomb our minister (the really tall guy) or any other church member.

**VBS Excitement!** Tomorrow is Vacation Bible School—August 11-13. We're studying the Wilderness Wandering of the Israelites! All we need now is KIDS to sign up. Not only do we want our own kids to show up, we'd like as many of your community kids to show up as possible—your kids' friends, kids from your neighborhood, your nieces' or nephews' kids, etc. Some registration cards will be handed out starting today; please take a few and do your part to make this VBS the best ever!



**Algie Beard**—passed away last week. There will be a memorial service for him August 18, 1:00 PM, at the Concord church building (141 Fisherville Rd., Concord NH),

followed by a burial of his ashes in the veterans' cemetery in Boscawen. Please pray for his family's comfort.

**Baptism**—Benji Peacock was baptized at Gander Brook last Sunday. Rejoice! Congratulate and encourage our new brother. We look



forward to great things from you, brother Benji.

**Third Sunday Fellowship Luncheon** is next Sunday. Bring a little something to share and join the wonderful fellowship we enjoy together! IF you forget to bring something, stay anyway; we always seem to have enough.



**Fall Retreats**

Well, the regular camping season at

Gander Brook is now over, but there are still other opportunities to camp and be spiritually upbuilt at Gander Brook. One great way to grow in faith and fellowship is the annual Gander Brook retreat season beginning late summer and going through early fall. Here's a list for your calendar...

*Manchester's Congregational Retreat* is August 22-24. See Stuart Peacock or Dick Potter to "register".

*The Gander Brook Labor Day Christian Encampment* is Labor Day weekend from Friday through Monday. You can contact Leo Woodman ([leo.woodman@gmail.com](mailto:leo.woodman@gmail.com)) for more info or to register.

*The Manchester Teen Retreat* is September 5-7 at Gander Brook. More details will follow soon.

*The Gander Brook Women's Retreat* is September 11-13. Info is online at [ganderbrook.org](http://ganderbrook.org)

*The Gander Brook Men's Retreat* will be 18-20 and will feature Howard

Norton as speaker! Info is online at [ganderbrook.org](http://ganderbrook.org)

**Have you visited** our church website recently? It carries a lot of the most recent news updates for our church family, and the minister's podium has a lot of new and informative material that you or your friends might find useful.

**Prayer List:**

*Evangelism:* VBS, Bible studies in progress, our website, MNFM, food pantry, Brethren who have forsaken the assembly

*Our college students*

*Health:* David Paul, Peggy Mailloux, Deb Dlutowski, Gary Chase Jr., Gary Cottrell, Curtis Winstead, Jean Cadet, Lynn Millette, Mary Jane, Dave Sequin, Barbara Ann, Jim Kenison, David Lovering

*Struggles:* Mark Brown & Emma, Linda Tetrault, Jim Kenison.

*Leadership:* Ministers, Elders, Deacons, Teachers, Parents



Our Statistics for the week from August 2-9, 2014	
Sunday morning worship	116
Wednesday evening Bible classes	c.80
Contribution	\$3779.75
Budget	\$3800

## BUT FIRST WE MUST RUN AGROUND

Last Sunday I preached from Acts 27:25, where Paul tells the crew and other passengers on his storm-embattled ship that he had received a message from God that everyone on board would be saved—and he believed God. What a blessing, through all the challenges of the Christian life, to have God's sure and steadfast promises!

But we didn't pay too much attention to the next verse, (Acts 27:26) "But we must run aground on a certain island," and there's an important lesson here for us, too. In almost every case the path to blessing is challenge, hard work, patience, and sticking faithfully to God's plan. This is not what most of us would prefer, of course. We'd much prefer something like a Christmas-morning sort of promise fulfillment—everything's there, no work involved, "no assembly required". There's a "but first" involved in almost everything. It wasn't what the sailors or passengers on board wanted to hear, but the way to safety was through the scary path of running the ship aground.

For example, to Abraham God said, you'll be a great nation and the whole world will be blessed by you...but first you must be childless for 25 years, and first you must come right up to the edge of offering your only son in sacrifice to Me.

To Israel God said, you're going to inherit Canaan, the land of promise...but first you must cross the Red Sea; first you must learn My commands of My covenant; first you must cross the wilderness, and first you must cross the Jordan River.

To Jesus God said, You will be the King of Kings, You will be Savior and Redeemer of mankind, You will be the Firstborn of many brethren...but first You must become a man, but first You must suffer all things that they suffer, but first You must die unjustly on a cross for their many, many sins. Then the promises were fulfilled.

And so it goes with us. God promises to answer to prayer, for example...but first we must pray in faith (that is, act as if we already have received it—Mark 11:24), first we must ask according to His will (1 John 5:14), first we need to ask in Jesus' name (John 14:13). Then fulfillment.

God promises to rescue His people from their tribulations...but first we love our enemies (Matt. 5:44), first we must abandon thoughts of revenge (Rom. 12:19), first we need to be patient and wait (Isa. 40:31), first we must remain faithful to God even to the point of death (Rev. 2:10). Then fulfillment.

God's promises to provide for our needs (Matt. 6:26ff) ...but first we need to put the Kingdom of God first (Matt. 6:33), first we must work (2 Thess. 3:10), first we must be good stewards (Matt. 24:46-51), first we must be content with needs (1 Tim. 6:8). Then fulfillment.

God promises to lift us up and free us from the slavery to sins that seem to have us firmly in its grip...but first we must hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:6), first we need to die to ourselves (Gal. 2:20), first we need to be truly obedient to what we hear (Matt. 7:24ff), first we need to renew our minds (Romans 12:1,2), first we need to grow in knowledge of His word (2 Tim. 3:16,17), first we need to find companions to encourage us to do right and leave behind the wrong (Heb. 10:25,26), first we need to develop and establish new habits (Eph. 4:17ff), first we must struggle. Then fulfillment.

Regarding mankind's salvation, God is saying, I will redeem you, give you eternal life, and Heaven...but first you need to believe in and obey Jesus (John 3:16), first you must follow Him faithfully through hardship or worldly opposition (Matt. 10:24ff), first you must die to yourself and let Christ live in you (Matt. 10:38,39). Then fulfillment.

God promises better families...but first we need to follow His rules for marital roles; first we must discipline our children lovingly, consistently, and properly; first we must submit to husbands, love wives, and honor parents; first we must be shining examples of Christianity—Eph 5:22-6:4. Then the promises are fulfilled.

God promises that our church can grow, be a light to our community, and be filled with earnest and zealous disciples of Jesus...but first we must seek first His kingdom; first we must actively share the good news with others; first we must give generously of time, treasure, and energy; first we must step out in faith on some matters; first we practice sincere love for one another; first we must stay faithful to His pattern. Then fulfillment.

Paul, by inspiration, wrote, (2 Corinthians 1:19, 20) "For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us--by me and Silvanus and Timothy--was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us." The reason that the promises are sometimes left unfulfilled has nothing to do with God, but everything to do with us—we are unwilling to follow the path that leads to the fulfillment. Let us claim the promises of the Lord realizing that He is faithful to them all...but first...

Park Linscomb

Our Congregational Calendar for August 10 through 23						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10 Worship 9:30 Bible class 11am PM Small groups	11 <b>VBS, 9-11:30</b>	12	13 VBS Open House	14	15	16
17 Worship 9:30 Bible class 11am <b>Fellowship luncheon</b>	18 Algie Beard's memorial at 1PM at Concord church bldg.	19 Teen "Chill"	20 Bible class 7PM	21	22	23



Wasn't the end of Gander Brook awesome?! Be sure to warmly congratulate Benji Peacock who was baptized at camp last Sunday.

You need to be planning on being at the teen retreat at Gander Brook the weekend after Labor Day, Sept. 5-7. It's our traditional kick-off of the youth program year: incorporating new kids, growing closer to each other, getting closer to the Lord, setting the theme and direction of the group for the following year, and—well—just having a great time. Tell you parents now; make plans to come.

SERVICE	SUNDAY, JULY 13	WEDNESDAY, JULY 16
<i>Call to worship</i>	Gerry Millette	
<i>Songleading</i>	Doug Paul	Stewart Peacock
<i>Scripture reading</i>	David Skerry	
<i>Communion</i>	Fred Hillhouse	
<i>Devo thought</i>		Barry Fogal
<i>Closing prayer</i>	Mike Moser	
<i>Coordinator</i>	Stuart Peacock	

Ecclesiastes 12:1 "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them";"

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