

-tion is quite clear that there is to be extensive preaching of God's Word, not superficial presentations of a summarized Gospel. I think also that Bible example of bringing souls to Christ will bear out my conviction. I further believe that if we put our emphasis on preaching the Gospel and not on extracting commitments or professions, we would eliminate 90% of false professions.

#### FAITH IN A HUMAN ACT

In my opinion, the sin of all sins in 'Romans Road' evangelism is a terrible misuse of Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." No more glorious verse has been written in the Bible and certainly not anywhere else. I believe it will all my heart. I do not believe that it means what it is commonly interpreted and used to mean, that being, that man is saved by grace through faith at the point of an act of prayer.

All who pray are not saved. The Pharisee of Luke 18:11 prayed and obviously did so in sincerity. But according to Jesus, he was lost. "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luk 18:14) All who pray in the name of Jesus are not saved. Many sinners have prayed in Jesus' name in a moment of panic and in all fearful sincerity, but the next day were right back in their sin. They prayed because of stark fear, not because of repentance and faith. They were not saved. All who pray sincerely in Jesus' name are not saved. There are people who pray in all sincerity in the name of Jesus who are not saved for they firmly believe that their hope lies in baptism, keeping commandments, etc., and the only faith they have in Jesus is that He was God's Son. Even the devils believe that.

What then does Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" mean? If you will read Romans 10:11-12 you will see. "For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." In Romans 10:13, Paul is basically quoting Joel 2:32, which is a prophesy that Jew and Gentile alike shall have access to God through Jesus Christ. Romans 10:12 states this very thing. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Romans 10:13 is quoted by Paul to show the consistency of his doctrine with Bible prophecy.

The Greek work Epikaleomai means a great deal more than just the utterance of a verbal prayer. It means to invoke for aid or in worship, to look to, or to lean heavily upon. In short, it is dealing with a genuine trust, not just 'praying the sinner's prayer.' The publican of Luke 18:13 was not saved by "the sinner's prayer" and the Lord in no sense implies that he was. He was saved by grace through faith in the blood of Christ which was to be applied to the mercy seat of heaven. His prayer was nothing

more than an outflowing statement of that faith. So it is with us, "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

What comes out of the mouth does not flow into the heart, but rather what comes out of the heart flows through the mouth. Thus a man's confession must be a faith which is already in his heart through which he is already saved by grace. It is thus a confession of his salvation (Rom. 10:10) and not an act of prayer by which he is saved as so many erroneously teach. The conventional use of Romans 10:13 by many Baptist is exactly the same as the conventional use of Acts 2:38 by the "Church of Christ."

#### CAUSE FOR CONFUSION AND DOUBT

I have frequently heard preachers misusing Romans 10:13 say, "Now, this Scripture says call and you'll be saved." "But," says the hesitant 'prospect,' "I don't feel - I don't think - I believe so and so - I don't believe so and so," etc., etc., etc. "But," argues the persistent 'soul winner,' the Bible says call." So after much argument, the defeated 'prospect' 'calls.' "Now," asks the 'soul winner,' "How do you feel?" If the 'convert' says "Ok," "Good," "Better," "Wonderful," or such like, then all is well and they can go on their way rejoicing. If on the other hand, the 'convert' says "I don't feel anything," then the 'soul winner' returns to Romans 10:13 and reminds him that the Bible says if you call, you'll be saved. Now, what does that mean? The doubting but bewildered 'convert' answers timidly, "I'm saved?" "Right!!" answers the zealous 'soul winner,' "and don't let anyone make you doubt it."

Now, beloved, if such a 'convert' has ANY confidence in anything that has happened, he has been led to trust in his act of prayer. Why should he not later question or deny his salvation? He probably has none. After all he was directed not to the Cross of Calvary, but to his act of prayer. If he takes the things of God seriously he could not possibly be either satisfied or secure in his own mind.

#### I HAVE BEEN GUILTY TOO

Please don't think I'm setting myself up as an example of soul winning. I've been guilty of this very practice and I believe many good Christians use it in all sincerity. I also believe that it produces a majority of false professions and untold confusion in those that God saves in spite of blundering presentations of the Gospel.

The answer is so simple: Preach Christ and Him crucified and let, not make, the professions flow out of the work God does through that preaching. Our commission is to preach the Gospel, urge men to receive Christ, baptize those that receive Him, and teach them to observe all things He has commanded. We are not charged either by Bible precept or example to solicit professions or 'commitments.' Please! dear reader, I write from a heart of genuine concern. Search the Scriptures to see if these things be so. AMEN.

# ROMANS ROAD EVANGELISM

Is the commonly used "Romans Road" approach to evangelism a supernaturally blessed plan of God or a super-sales pitch organized by men?

by

Forrest L. Keener

It is with much burden and forethought that I take pen and paper to write this article. This is because I dread to bring the wrath of many brethren down around my neck and when you question the traditional method or practice of Fundamental Baptists, you invariably do precisely that. I fully realize that I will be accused privately if not publicly of everything from being 'non-evangelistic' to being an out and out heretic. I, nevertheless must speak on my own conscience will continue to accuse me of being a "Dumb dog that cannot bark" (Isa 56:10).

#### I AM EVANGELISTIC

First, let me say that I am evangelistic. Nothing is nearer to my heart than evangelism and nothing thrills my heart more and gives me more lasting joy than to feel that I have been instrumental in bringing someone to Christ. In fact, I am writing this article because I am and have for the last few years been fully convinced that the practice with which I shall deal hurts the cause of evangelism even though it may appear helpful. Therefore, it is my prayer and heart's desire that men of good conscience will examine this article for truth with open heart before throwing its admonitions to the winds and branding me a fool.

#### I BELIEVE ROMANS

I further know that the shallow answer that many will give is, "Well, I don't care what Keener says, the Bible says what it means and means what it says, and I'll stand on the Scriptures of the Romans Road." If I have to rate the books of the Bible as to their comprehensiveness and personal blessing to me, they would be Genesis number one and Romans number two. I have spent hundreds of hours studying the book of Romans and believe every single word it says, just as I do all of the Bible. It is God's absolute, inerrant, inspired Word and I believe it with all my heart and soul. I believe and love every single verse contained in the 'Romans Road' and think they are beneficial in bringing men to Christ and I use them all.

#### THE PROBLEM

It is my honest opinion that men of good intention, but with more zeal than spiritual understanding have drawn these verses out of their setting, not necessarily violating context, but neglecting context to an extent, and have manufactured the 'Romans Road.' This presentation is very effective in securing a profession or a commitment. However, I believe with all my heart that in most cases it is not sufficient portion of the Word of God to bring a darkened soul to repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ. Now, some reader may say, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating and I 'win more souls' than you do." Please judge yourself by your own words. Do a huge percentage of your professing converts not fail to give any lasting evidence of the reality of their profession? Might that be the "proof of the pudding?"

#### CONSENT OR CONVICTION

I have attended many soul winning seminars and read hundreds of printed presentations of the 'Plan of Salvation' via the 'Romans Road'. They basically all start with Romans 3:23. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." This is a great and basic truth. The prospective convert is then asked to admit that he (like everyone else) is a sinner according to that verse. He is then led to Romans 6:23 and shown that the wages of sin is death, another great and indispensable truth. Now, by adding his condition (a sinner) to sin's penalty (eternal damnation) he is shown and asked to admit, or confess, or at least to consent that if he died now he would spend eternity in hell.

This, of course, is all very factual, but we are dealing here with much more than fact for not only mental persuasion, but spiritual, heartfelt conviction is an absolute necessity if the soul is to be converted to Christ. A man must be spiritually convicted of sin and his heart must be smitten with godly sorrow over that sin. Repentance toward God of that sin must be wrought in him before he will, in fact, come to Christ. (Luke 13:5). The law of God was given that sin might appear sinful and man might realize (in his heart) his guilt. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom 3:19-20) Consent of sin is not enough, there must be spiritual conviction.

#### A NATURAL CHOICE

Having established that the prospect is a sinner according to Scripture, and that if he or she died right now, he or she would go to hell according to the Scripture, the next question is, "Wouldn't you like to know that you could go to heaven instead of hell?" Now, it doesn't take spiritual concern, conviction, repentance, faith or anything else but a mental opinion that there just might be a heaven and hell to make this choice a foregone conclusion. The 'soul winner' has now completely departed from the Gospel and employed the slickest of sales tactics. ANY unrepentant harlot, dope peddler, thief, drunkard, or whore-monger will choose heaven. It is a natural choice, not the decision of a converted heart. While sitting in a 'Soul Winning Seminar' in 1963 during the question and answer session, I referred back to this point in the presentation, and asked this question: "Do you not speak to the person about the extreme sinfulness of sin and repentance?" The answer was an emphatic, "No! I let the Holy Spirit take care of that." Now, I know that the Holy Spirit must work repentance or there is no salvation. However, if we are to leave repentance to the Holy Spirit without preaching the sinfulness of sin and repentance toward God as Paul said he said in Acts 20:21, shall we not also leave faith toward Jesus Christ strictly to the Holy Spirit aside from the preaching of the positive side of the

Gospel?

The fact is the Bible demand upon the sinner that he abandon sin in his heart is the one thing that will tip the scale in this 'natural choice' and cause him to say, "Well, how about let's wait until tomorrow?" It is this that forces the over zealous 'soul winner' to completely avoid the subject of repentance for it would cut his number of professions to shreds. Such dishonest and shameful tactics should not be used in the name of "soul winning".

#### A WRONG EMPHASIS

It is now that the 'soul winner' moves into some of the most glorious verses in all of God's Holy Word. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10)

He is contextually careless in the use of Romans 5:8, for it in context speaks of what Christ has done for the believer, and certainly should be accompanied by other Scriptures such as John 3:14-16 and Revelation 22:17 to assure the sinner that it is available to whosoever will come.

Moving then to Romans 10:9-10, he passes almost incidentally over the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, which is the Gospel (1Co 15:1-4) and the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). He places all his emphasis upon "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth and believe in thine heart." According to Romans 10:10, the confession is not a human act by which he appropriates Christ's righteousness; but an outflowing of faith (belief) by which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Rom. 4:3) "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Rom. 4:23-24)

Faith is not the resolution of the human heart "I will believe," but the result of spiritual revelation from God through the Word and the Spirit, "I do believe". If any man has come to know Christ in the capacity of Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God"; it must also be said of him, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Mat 16:17)

It is our responsibility to testify to all, repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). Our finesse or sales approach is not to convert, but THE GOSPEL is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16a). The question of Romans 10:14 is "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him in whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" To me the implica-