

# A "THERAPIST" THEORY

By Keith Greer

Since I began preaching the gospel, I have always tried to be open minded in listening to the "**other side**" of any issue. I was invited to attend a "**Parenting Workshop**" by another Church of Christ evangelist while I was laboring in Las Vegas. On a particular Saturday morning at 9:00a.m two other brethren and I went to this "workshop."

The speaker was Dr. Gayle Napier, a family life minister at the Harpeth Hills Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee. My first question was where is the Bible authority for a church, with the Lord's money, to have a "family life minister" on the payroll? How does this fit into the work of the church?

Mr. Napier has been under fire recently for some comments he made at the Lipscomb Lectures in 1991. "We've so distorted the concept of "headship" and "submission" that we've produced a pathological family model. ... The more conservative the church, the more incest you have in the families." No wonder he is under fire, and rightfully so!

Following the lecture, I asked Dr. Napier for the facts to back up this statement! Four of us were in this discussion. His answer was just as distressing as his statement!

"Since I had just recently moved to Tennessee my use of the word "conservative" was ill advised. By that word I meant the legalistic, rigid, and conservative thinkers like Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Baker. "**Come again?**" Would anyone consider Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Baker in such terms? NOT! If my brother considers these men "conservative", what does he consider "liberal"? I'm afraid to ask!

In his discussion he told us what churches were growing and why. "**The churches that have drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs were number one. Second, were the churches with good Youth Ministers.**" My question was simple. "Where then is the emphasis placed?" He replied, "**The church needs to be a place where people can get help.**" While I'm in full agreement that the church is in the business to "help" folks, but what kind of help should the Lord's church provide? What does the Scriptures say?

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, /I {Ephesians 4: 11,12} Where do these social services fit into the picture? I'm in agreement the church needs to be a place of "help." Spiritual help" is where the emphasis must be placed in any church that is acting on seeking to accomplish the Lord's work! What is man's greatest need? His soul's salvation!

Please mark this down. **Whenever the church begins to change the focus of its work, it will cease to be the Lord's church!** "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." {Acts 20:28} Did the Lord shed His blood for a "social services agency"?

My understanding of the scriptures tells me the only "magnet" to draw man is the gospel of Christ. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also for the Greek." {Romans 1:16}

Rest assured we need to be compassionate towards all mankind. These agencies may make the church grow, but will the "**end justify the means used**"? Unfortunately, what the churches of men have sought to do for decades, change the true mission of the church into the social realm, is now being seen as attractive to some of our brethren.

One preacher once said, "**Whatever you do to get them, you have to continue to do to keep them.**" If we used the word of God to "get them", then the gospel will keep them! \*\*\*