

RELIGION

"Compromise & Holiness Never Kissed"

BY KEIJO HUNTER

It seems that we live in a time that is full of compromise. Individuals go to college to attain a degree in order to get a high paid, high pace job which calls them to give up nights of quality time with those for whom they are working to support.

Compromise. It is no longer in style for children to keep their virginity. It is not so shocking, anymore, to see a twelve or thirteen year olds pregnant. It is not so surprising, anymore, to see a young boy running around making sexual conquests out of the beautiful temples that God has ordained to be set apart for him. Boys will be boys.

Compromise.

Even the world has noticed that the pendulum of time appears to be embarking on a new era. The popular music group, Luvert, made a song a couple of years ago called the 'Good 'Ol Days! The song reminisced of a simpler time when the biggest problem in school was popping gum instead of shooting guns.

Yes, everyone seems to be on the road to destruction fueled by the gas of compromise.

While their is a plague of destruction roaming the land, what lies at the heart of the issue is not only compromise but a blatant disregard for holiness. 2 Timothy 3:1 says,

"but realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness although they have denied its power" Indeed, the prophecy has come true.

The world has distorted the meaning of holiness. When people speak of a "holy church", some once cheerful countenances turn into gri-

maces of displeasure of disdain. But the church is not to be defined by the world but rather is here to be used by God in order to transform those who are in it.

Holiness is derived from the root word holy. Holy means to be set apart by God. The word tells us that Christians are a people of God's own possession. (Peter 2:9)

We have been set apart by God and are to be holy. The word commands it. "Be Holy for I am Holy." (Lev. 11:44)

So what is the problem? The problem comes when we illegitimately put self on the throne when it is a position that can only

legitimately be filled by God. We truly become lovers of self and maintain a form of godliness denying the power thereof. (2 Tim. 3:1)

Acts 1:8 says that we shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. That means power to say no to every filthy sin that rises up against the knowledge of God. That means power to say no to ever temptation that presents itself.

We do not have to compromise the name of the Lord with the things of this world. "Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4(b))

We do not have to resolve ourselves to a less than victorious life of

sippin' and dippin' when we serve the very one called Victory.

Christ came that we might have life and it abundantly. (John 10:10). We deny ourselves the blessings of God when we compromise his name for our own, or anyone else's, sake. Compromise is not always something that is large - scale, visual or immediately recognizable to the human eye.

It can also be "small", seemingly minute things that are used to create deep wedges in our spiritual armor. Count the costs before you think to compromise. You could be letting down much more than yourself.

BISHOP FOSTER CELEBRATES 90TH BIRTHDAY

Area residents are cordially invited to celebrate the 90th birthday of Bishop J.C. Foster, pastor of the St. Paul Church of God in Christ.

Foster has led the Portland church for 50 years and is the oldest African American Bishop in Oregon. He also serves as the State Bishop of Oregon, Jurisdiction No. 2, for the Church of God in Christ.

A special celebration honoring this great and wonderful man of God will be held Sunday at 4 p.m. at Matt Dishman Community Center, 77 N.E. Knott.

Everyone is invited to join in with the congregation of St. Paul, family and friends in rejoicing and giving tribute to such a deserving servant of God.

Bishop Foster is a living legend. His generosity and love have been a true demonstration of God's word.

The celebration will consist of a small program and refreshments. Yvonne Richmond is the event coordinator. She can be reached at 283-5474.

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Baptist Leader's Accusers Must Pay

Those who challenged Henry Lyons' election as president of National Baptist Convention must repay his expenses from the nine-month battle.

BY JENNIFER S. THOMAS, TIMES STAFF WRITER

The Rev. Henry J. Lyons, president of the nation's largest African-American religious organization, was vindicated when a D.C. Superior Court Judge ruled that rivals who alleged vote fraud must pay him \$150,000 plus attorneys' fees and other legal expenses.

Attorneys for Lyons were notified of the final action late Tuesday night. The ruling marks the end of a nine-month legal odyssey and a bid to prevent Lyons from taking the reins of the National Baptist Convention USA. Secretaries, wives and even the mother of one of Lyons' rivals were involved in the scheme to block his takeover.

"This court has never witnessed and hopes never again to witness the kind of fraud perpetrated on this court as well as the despicable, conscious and collusive conduct demonstrated by the plaintiffs, the defendants and



Rev. Henry J. Lyons

their respective counsel in this case-at-bar," Judge Zinora M. Mitchell-Rankin wrote in her decision.

Lyons, head of Bethel Metropolitan Baptist Church in St. Petersburg, won the leadership post at a Sept. 8 meeting in New Orleans. He defeated the outgoing president's hand-picked successor, and that perhaps is where the troubles began.

A month later, Lyons was prevented from formally taking the reins

of the 8-million-member National Baptist Convention when a group of Alabama church members obtained a court order freezing church business, alleging voting irregularities in the Lyons election. To get the court order, the Alabama group produced signed legal affidavits from 44 church members who said they had been denied the right to vote in the election.

The tides turned in October when Lyons produced some of the individuals whose names appeared on affidavits.

Many told Mitchell-Rankin that they had not signed the affidavits. Some had actually voted. Some weren't eligible to vote. Some had not even attended the New Orleans convention.

At that point, Mitchell-Rankin lifted the freeze on church business, allowing Lyons to assume the duties of his office, and ordered attorneys to

determine how many of the affidavits were faked.

"We went down to Alabama to interview some of these people and we were just dumbfounded by what we found," said Jim Regan, an attorney for Lyons.

Ms. Harveta Jackson, an Alabama pastor's secretary, conceded she signed an affidavit knowing full well she wasn't eligible to vote. Betty Merrifield, the wife of an Anniston minister, admitted that she had in fact voted.

Ruthie Mae Kimber, the mother of the campaign manager for Lyons' chief presidential rival, said she persuaded a notary to validate the affidavits after falsely informing him that she had seen the individuals sign them.

"I've never seen anything quite like it," Regan said, referring to the pervasiveness of the fraud.

Regan said the award of at-

torneys fees and legal expenses should be substantially larger than the \$150,000 punitive award, since it includes the costs of transportation and lodging for every witness who testified or

participated in the case.

Lyons' predecessor, the Rev. T.J. Jemison, and attorneys for the Alabama plaintiffs did not respond to phone calls Wednesday.

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And I Will Give You Rest. Take My Yoke Upon You
And Learn Of Me." Matt. 11:28-29

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