

may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1f)

# The Carriage Drive Messenger



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NEWSWORTHY NOTES:

This section removed to preserve member's privacy

Make Sure to Write Our  
**Gospel Meeting**  
on Your Calendar

**October 18 - 23**

Our Speaker Will Be J.R. Bronger

**Radio Program: WJLS 99.5FM every Sunday at 9:00AM**

**Website: [www.beckleychurch.com](http://www.beckleychurch.com)**

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## TIMES OF SERVICES

**Sunday:** Bible Study 10:00am  
Morning Worship 10:50am  
Evening Worship 6:00pm

**Wednesday:** Bible Study 7:30pm

## SPECIAL DEDICATION CEREMONY by Bob Pulliam

No, this is not an announcement about a dedication ceremony. It's not even about a specific ceremony I heard about. Instead, it is about such in general. Of course, we have no concern regarding the secular world's practice of such. I am totally indifferent in that regard. I could care less whether a bridge does or does not have a ceremony.

I have wondered, through the years, why many religions have special dedication ceremonies. They do it for buildings, parking lots, annexes, pianos, organs, baptismal fonts, etc... And some of our own brethren, who have strayed into sectarian religion, have gone in for these ceremonies too!

Now I know why the secular world does it. It's all about publicity. The officials take bows and get applause for their activities. It helps people remember when it comes election time; and doesn't do any harm to egos either. But surely religion hasn't gotten involved in such self seeking activity! Surely their motives are pure, and Bible oriented.

*In Their Defense...*

Allow me to defend religions (and even our own brethren) who go in for special dedication ceremonies. It is evident that they do not conduct these out of foolish vanity. They must be conducting them out of a sincere desire to give what they have built or purchased to the Lord. Be not

contrary over their ceremony when it is clear that nothing in their service to God belongs to Him unless they have a special event to dedicate it.

This means that when you give, the money that goes into the plate is not dedicated to the Lord unless it purchases something that is later dedicated by a special ceremony. And here there is a profound irony. They would only dedicate certain items/aspects of their service to God with a special ceremony; and, in truth, only certain items/aspects are acceptable by the authority of God. Yes, it is a grand admission that whate'er they do in word or deed is *not* done in the name of the Lord (Col 3:17). Instead, only certain aspects are done in the name of the Lord, and the rest is their whim and invention.

In their defense, I must plead "ignorance".

And let me address a charge that some of our own brethren make in ignorance. Some of them would claim that we believe the building to be sacred, and for that reason will not eat therein. Not only are they ignorant on that point (for we do not condemn eating in the building), but many of them are hypocrites in their accusations. Who is it that has a special dedication ceremony for the new building? Aren't they professing their belief that the "building is sacred"? If the building is so sacred that it needs a special dedication ceremony, then shouldn't they ban every other activity on sacred property?

#### *But Solomon Did It...*

Modern man calls what Solomon did in I Kings 8 a dedication ceremony. They offered burnt offerings (which they do not do today, unless it's the dinner that occurs afterward), and prayer to the Lord. It was the first use of the temple after Solomon built it, but it was just as much the Lord's before the ceremony as it was after (whether in truth, or in the minds of the people). It was the first use of *the* singular location commanded by God for His worship (tabernacle/temple). *All* Israel had to come to this location, even without a "dedication ceremony".

I suppose what gets in the way of truth is the word "dedication". It is true that all Israel gathered at the temple's first use; but the prayer of Solomon (I Kgs 8:23 - 53) does not indicate a dedication of the *temple* to Jehovah. His speech dealt with the dedication of the people to the Lord. All earthly things are the Lord's, and any dedicating we do is empty ceremony; nothing more.

But our hearts are a different matter. Some make a "ceremony" out of dedicating their hearts to the Lord, by an outward pouring of human emotion. The true dedication of the heart to God is called "sanctification" in the New Testament. Such is seen in the practice of one's life, not in the

ceremonies performed for the benefit of others.

Now here is another profound irony. The only "dedication ceremony" offered in the New Testament is generally rejected by the religious world!

#### *The True "Dedication Ceremony"...*

Confession and baptism are the outward signs commanded of God for one who wishes to become a Christian. They are the closest one comes to a dedication ceremony in the New Testament. And they are rejected by the religious world.

"But the religions have people confess!" Oh yes, they confess; but not what the eunuch confessed in Acts 8:37. It is not what Paul said one must confess (Romans 10:9). The world confesses what they believe about what God has done (*i.e.* "I believe that God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins..."). Such is a confession for doctrine's sake rather than exaltation of Christ.

"But the religions baptize people!" They certainly get them wet. And while it may be what Mr. Webster defines as "baptism", it is not what we have described in the New Testament. There, people were buried in water (Rom 6:4). Baptism required much water (Jn 3:23). And people had to go down into the water (Acts 8:38f). Sprinkling water on the head does not do it. And burying in water does not suffice when it is *not* done for the reason God commanded it. Baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); washes away sins (Acts 22:16); and saves (I Pt 3:20f). Most baptize for admission into their denomination.

In short, while the religious world may ask you to confess and be baptized, they do not dedicate you to the Lord. They do them in the wrong way and for the wrong reason.

#### *Conclusion...*

Special dedication ceremonies are rooted in the wisdom of this world. The dedication of one's self to God takes place in obedience to Him. It is not really a dedication ceremony, for this process that begins with faith, repentance, confession and baptism, continues through the entire life. If the entire life is not dedicated to God, then any amount of ceremony will do no good.

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you*