



# OAK GROVE ENCOURAGER

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” Hebrews 10:24

JULY 8, 2007

## The Changing of the Guard?

His silhouetted image stretched out on the guardhouse wall as the sun was beginning its descent into the distant horizon as it had every night for the last forty-seven years. The shadow itself could not convey the worn, weathered figure of once a strong virile man. His eyes were not as sharp as they used to be and the cold made his bones ache a little bit more each winter but his assignment was his life. He envisioned a time when he didn't have to rise every morning at 4:00 AM and man his station but instead could enjoy taking

trips to see his family or even the simplest of pleasures, sleeping in a few extra hours.

Yet there he stood, a sentinel for the ages, never bemoaning his assignment, because he truly did love his role. Yet he longed for a time when another man, someone young, filled with enthusiasm like he was so long ago, would assume his charge. But no one came, no one answered the call, so he stood his watch with all the diligence he could muster so that others could rest peacefully at night.

The snow was swirling and the wind biting cold the morning they found him, propped at attention outside the duty shack. They literally had to pry the rifle from his rigid frozen fingers; something they could never had done prior to this time.

People brimmed over at his memorial service. Great accolades were by people from far and near, “he served unselfishly” said one, “he never failed in his mission” uttered another, and other ovations continued well into the night. Yet when one small voice asked who would shoulder the responsibilities of his vacant position, the praises ceased and the stillness was deafening, as quiet as he tomb where he was laid to rest.

There is a weakness in the perimeter of the defense where once this sentry patrolled. An empty spot is waiting for the next tireless soldier who would

occupy the post with the same fire as the previous one.

### APPLICATION FOR TODAY

This story is unfortunately played out more often than we would like to imagine in the church. The old spiritual “War Horses” of yesterday are passing from this life with fewer and fewer willing to heed the call and fill the ranks. The charge to Solomon by his father David to “*show thyself a man*” (1 Kings 2:2) falls on deaf ears the majority of the time. The measure of a man has gone from fearing God to counting notches on his belt. “Real men” need to take the reigns of headship in their family, their communities, and in the churches so that we don't leave our loved ones defenseless “*against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*” (Ephesians 6:12).

All is not dismal and bleak though. We do have bright spots in this world of darkness and those that “*stand in the gap*” (Ezekiel 22:30) and those who “*have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary*” (Revelation 2:3) are to be commended and encouraged to press on.

- Bruce J .Dehut

Oak Grove church of Christ  
9203 Thixton Lane  
Louisville, KY 40291

### Oak Grove

### Church of Christ

(502) 749-9209

#### Sunday

Bible Class: 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship: 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship: 5:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Bible Class: 7:30 PM

#### Evangelist:

Bruce J. Dehut  
Home Bible Studies Available  
Upon Request

[oakgrove.churchofchristonline.org](http://oakgrove.churchofchristonline.org)

## HOW GOD PREPARES A MAN

When God wants to drill a man,  
And thrill a man, and skill a man,  
When God wants to mold a man,  
To play the noblest part;  
When He yearns with all His heart  
To create so great and bold a man,  
That all the world might be amazed,  
Watch His methods; watch His ways.  
How He ruthlessly perfects  
Whom He royally elects!  
How He hammers him and hurts him  
And with mighty blows converts him  
That only God understands;  
While his tortured heart is crying,  
And he lifts beseeching hands!  
How He bends but never breaks  
When His good He undertakes.  
How He uses whom He chooses,  
And with every purpose fuses him;  
But every act induces him  
To try His splendor out--  
God knows what He's about!

- Author Unknown

## NARROW NOAH

There are two standards before which all stand - God and man. Computed by the standard of man, Noah was a very narrow person. I am not sure but what he was also considered **narrow** by the standard of God almighty! The servants of the Lord throughout the annals of history have been branded as narrow by the philosophy and worldly

wisdom of man. Perhaps some consolidation can be derived by analyzing the life of Noah, to determine why people would have called him narrow.

By human standards Noah was **narrow** because he taught and believed his ark was the only one to be saved. Noah preached for years that salvation could be found in his ark **only!** (*Genesis 7:23; 1 Peter 3:20-21*). Today, when one teaches that salvation is found only in **one** church, this brings down the roof of slurs and taunts of worldly men. They usually say, "I have never heard of a person being so narrow as to claim that salvation is in **only** one church." However, on the other hand, the Lord has plainly said that salvation is found only in His church which is His body (*Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:23*). Notice He gave His blood for His church (only) and He is the **Saviour** of His body, the church.

Noah was narrow because he taught **water** as a dividing line between himself and a sin cursed world. He believed and taught that one day God would send water and separate him from the world of sinners. Today, if one wants to receive the smart retorts and insulting gibes of the world all he has to do is to say that **water** has something to do with his salvation. Yet, the grand old Bible plainly says that Noah was saved by **water** and that **baptism** saves us today (*1 Peter 3:20-21*).

Noah, was considered narrow because he taught only a **few** would be saved. Today, when one teaches that only a **few** will be saved he is castigated and considered fit for some mental institution. However, the good Lord taught that **few** would be saved (*Matthew 7:14*). People of the world like to think that

some in all denominations will be saved. In listening to funeral sermons I have observed that some sectarian preachers have never lost a case. They can usually dig up at least **one** good thing a person has done during his life and call it "an experience of grace" and attribute salvation to that deed. The Bible, on the contrary teaches us that failure to keep one commandment can keep us out of heaven (*Mark 10:21*).

Noah, was narrow because he taught what the world would call "ark salvation." He believed and taught that a man had to get on the **inside** of his ark or be lost. This is a very unpopular doctrine. However, God backed up his affirmation by destroying all the "outsiders" (*Genesis 7:22,23*). When we teach that God has "walled in" salvation by placing it within the confines of His blood bought, spirit filled institution called the church, people shout "church salvation!" Please remember that God has "walled in" salvation by putting it inside His body, the church (*Ephesians 5:23*).

Yes, if Noah had lived in our day many would have desired to stone him. He would have received the epithets of a world which seems to move further away from God from day to day. The example of Noah is a faith builder for all Christians today. When we grow weary from the heavy onslaughts of our fellow man we can always lift up our feeble knees by reading about "Narrow Noah" and his plight and deliverance by the omnipotent ruler of the universe. Remember, gentle reader, that one man and God is a majority!  
(**Searching The Scriptures**, Vol. IX, No. 8, August 1968).

- Ward Hogland

## THE LORD'S DAY PRIVILEGE LIST

### Sunday Morning Service

Announcements: **Mike Shepherd**

Song Leader: **Brandon Yates**

Opening Prayer: **Kenny Case**

Lord's Table: **Wayne Runner  
Jr. Stout  
Jim Phelps  
Andy Milliner**

Scripture Reading: **Steve Smith**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Closing Prayer: **Bill Milliner**

### Sunday Evening Service

Announcements: **Mike Shepherd**

Song Leader: **Brandon Yates**

Opening Prayer: **Bruce Dehut**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Lord's Table: **Wayne Runner**

Closing Prayer: **Arvil Young**