



Jeff Sweeten

# Thus Saith the Lord

## ACTING CHRISTIAN

By Jeff Sweeten

It is easy to become cynical. It doesn't happen overnight but several factors can combine to render a person suspicious, cautious, or downright cold-hearted. Take, for instance, a phone call to the church's office; and let me say without qualification: the church of our Lord is committed to benevolence. We fully adhere to Paul's admonition, *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith"* (Galatians 6:10).

However, having said all of that, there are exceptions that seem to be escalating with a persistent regularity. Such is the case under consideration. It was obvious that the young lady was distraught and, through sobs and sniffles, managed to convey just enough information to let me know that she was a 15-year-old girl from a low-income, single parent home. It seems to touch us more deeply when children are hurting, so my ears perked up with every intention to do anything humanly possible to assist this young lady. Then, she mumbled incoherently, quiver in her voice, "I need \$99." "Why," I asked. "Because," she slobbered, "Mother won't give me the money for acting lessons."

So, with the now perceptible quiver in my voice, I politely suggested that the fastfood industry was constantly looking for young up-and-comers like herself and the church would likely not be able to help her in this matter. I calmly said good-bye and emptied a ¾-cup of steaming coffee in one gulp... and wondered: what kind of society do we live in where a person's self-esteem, especially one so young, would dip to so low a level as to obliterate all vestiges of shame, asserting that others owe her an acting career? She had to be taught this behavior!

Our governmental welfare system has totally usurped the church's role in benevolence and spawned a generation of insolents who believe someone owes them a free ride... and they have no qualms in expecting it. It has produced a bitter, ambivalent nation, who views the poor as excess baggage to be denigrated and ridiculed. To the degree to which we relegate our responsibilities of kindness, philanthropy, and charity to the government, we diminish our role in benevolence and generate a socialistic society. We stand in danger, politically, economically and spiritually when the bulk of a bum's sustenance is government subsidies and the truly needy suffer.

Bitterness, disappointment, and callousness aside, we must thaw our hearts to the true needs of those who suffer indeed, and be ready to share the bounty with which God has so richly blessed us. Good stewardship demands that we be discerning, certainly, but to say, *"Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"* (James 2:16). We must wrest from governmental hands the responsibility that the Lord has left to the church's charge. Acting "Christian" invites Christ's condemnation (cf. Matthew 26:40-46).

*Thus Saith the Lord*  
is presented by the

## Park Heights Church of Christ

1300 E. Boynton St.  
Hamilton  
254-386-3953

### Schedule of Services

#### SUNDAY

9:30 a.m. Bible Class  
10:25 a.m. Morning Worship  
1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

#### WEDNESDAY

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Please call or email if you  
have a question or comment  
254-386-3953

jeffdsweeten@gmail.com or  
chelejones24@yahoo.com

Website:  
www.parkheightscoc.com