

Northeast Church of Christ

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From the Pen of Paul: *Have You Met the "Tator" Family?*

Are you acquainted with the Tators? They have relatives in most every congregation. Let me introduce you to some of them.

First, there is Spec Tator. Spec is always watching, but he doesn't take a very active part in the work of the church. He just looks on. He can even point out every mistake made by those who are actively involved. "Spec" is even found observing occasionally in the New Testament. He appears as a priest and as a Levite in Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan. And do you remember the one-talent man in Jesus' parable in Matthew 25? That's right; that was another appearance of Mr. "Spec" Tator. What if all of our missionaries, preachers, teachers, elders, and deacons decided to just look on like "Spec" does?

Spec's older brother is Agi Tator. Agi is never satisfied with peace; he is bent on disturbing. Paul must have known "Agi" because he wrote about him in Romans 16:17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Some of Agi's kind were always pursuing Paul to stir up trouble. While at Lystra preaching the Gospel, we are informed that "there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead" (Acts 14:19). Elders will do well to watch diligently to prevent "Agi" from having his way.

Agi also has a twin brother; his name is Devas Tator. He never builds; he always is tearing down. He is against every project and every effort made by the church for good. In fact, he can do a lot of harm in a short time. He likes to "bite and devour" with his sharp tongue (Gal. 5:15). Together these twins can cause a lot of havoc.

And then there is Lamén Tator. He is always expressing grief and hard times; he seems

depressed much of the time. He likes to mourn and bewail about the work of the church. If you haven't met Lamén, he is the one who laments over the preacher preaching on giving; he believes that the preacher should ease up in his preaching. Obadiah is an example of one of Lamén Tator's kind. When approached by Elijah and asked to "go tell thy Lord, Behold, Elijah is here," he began his lamentations. You can read them in I Kings 18:9-18. Job is an example of the opposite spirit. James must have been acquainted with "Lamén" for he wrote, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit?" (James 2:15-16). Lamén is always crying about the plight of those in need, but he never does anything to help.

Another one of the Tator bunch is Dick Tator. Dick has torn up many congregations with his "rule or ruin" philosophy; he must have his way or he is sure to cause trouble. A couple of examples of his kind is Elymas the sorcerer Paul encountered at Paphos (Acts 13:8), and Diotrephes, whom John described as one "who loveth to have the preeminence" (III John 9). Ole Dick Tator often manages to get appointed to the eldership and, in direct opposition to Peter's instruction, he will attempt to "Lord it over God's heritage" (I Pet. 5:3).

Dick Tator's younger brother is Comment Tator. He is always full of advice, comments, and criticism. He can tell you just how every one should do his work; he often has "preacher-soup" mixed with "elder and deacon seasoning" for lunch on Sunday. He has the answer for everything. It has been noted that not many of Comment's family are faithful in the church.

Medi Tator is another of the Tator clan. Meditating is good (Psalm 1:1-2). But Medi

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“When your husband or wife has sex with an unmarried person, does this break the vows for life? Some say that a marriage vow broken cannot be mended.”

When two people who are biblically qualified to be married are married, this is to be for a lifetime. God never intended for men and women to have a multiplicity of mates living at the same time.

God did permit men to have a multiplicity of wives in the Old Testament (Matt. 19:4-8). There are only two reasons for remarriage under the Christian age, which is for now and will last forever (Matt. 28:20). The first reason is physical death (Rom. 7:1-5). The second reason is for fornication or sexual intercourse with one outside of wedlock (Matt. 19:9). The word “fornication” in Matthew 19:9 includes homosexuality and lesbianism.

I realize that there are those who do believe that one cannot marry again even though their married partner committed fornication. Some say that Matthew 19:9 had to do with the Old Testament or the law of Moses. This cannot be the case because Moses said they could have several wives if they wished (Matt. 19:4-8).

Some have said that this could not be for the church since it was given before the church was established. This will not hold water because Matthew 18:15-17 was given before the church was established and we know that it was given to the church because the passage says “take it to the church.”

Jesus said that we must stay with our mate for a lifetime except it be for fornication (Matt. 19:9). If Christ did not mean *except* in Matthew 19:9, we may conclude that He did

not mean *except* in John 3:3, 5. If I should say that all men will be shot except those who are six feet and over, does this mean that if they are six feet and over they will be shot anyway? Of course not! These people who want to bind where Christ has not bound are in the wrong business and will give an account for such.

However, let me be swift to say that those who marry and remarry for any and every cause, except fornication or physical death, will also give an account. God intended for married people to stay together for a lifetime (Matt. 19:6). To divorce and remarry for any other cause than fornication is but to live in the state of adultery (Matt. 19:9; Rom. 7:3). Some deny that one can live in the state of adultery. They say one commits adultery. If this is true, then what about lying? Is one a liar only when lying or is he a liar until he repents and stops lying? Is one a thief only when stealing or is he a thief until he repents and quits stealing? One is in the state of adultery until he repents and gets out of it. People living in adultery cannot go to heaven so long as they live in that state (Gal. 5:19-21). Churches that harbor such and permit such to remain in their fellowship are unfaithful churches. I am deeply sorry for those who find themselves living in the state of adultery, and wish I could help them in some way, but the truth of God must stand in all things (Rom. 3:4).

—Malcolm L. Hill

doesn't do anything but meditate; he never gets around to doing. Paul knew him and wrote to Timothy about him, describing him as “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (II Tim. 3:7). His kind are always “studying” the issues; but they never arrive at a conclusion.

And finally, there is Hesi Tator. He can never choose—never decide. He never plans or purposes. Agrippa and Felix were of his type (Acts 24 & 26). Hesi is going to become a Christian some day, or so he says, but he continues to

hesitate. One day it will be too late! So watch out for the Tator Family. They can cause a lot of harm.

—Paul M. Wilmoth

Note: The thoughts for this article were taken from a sermon outline of my father, Perry Wilmoth, who preached the Gospel for over 40 years. I don't know where he got it or if it was original with him, but it does have some things to think about.