

# Seek The Old Paths

*"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."*  
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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## THE WINTERFEST CORPORATION

*Jim E. Waldron*

***The Winterfest Group ... is a commercial corporation  
that is in business to sell compromise in the form of religion to our young people.***

The Winterfest Group, as they call themselves, has its headquarters at 14301 Middleberry Rd., Edmond, OK 73013. During the early winter of the new year they will sponsor two "Winterfests" — one at Arlington, TX (January 19-21) and one at Gatlinburg, TN (February 16-18). Just a few clicks of your mouse on their website ([www.winterfest.org](http://www.winterfest.org)) will enable you to see that denominational music groups and false teachers from within the church are being used to desensitize our youth against instruments of music in Christian worship and other compromises with denominationalism.

One of the groups that is featured in Arlington is called, *The Phalanges*. This is a percussion band that uses "junk" to pour out a religious beat. As one admirer wrote, "Their instruments and sets may be discarded junk to some but in their hands these pieces of wood, metal and plastic can sing" (Sarah Vangier, St. Louis Post Dispatch). Another quote on their internet site is from one Greg Dolezal: "...it's great to see someone taking the stage in the name of Jesus." In their "History" they write, "Our first performances were in our respective churches." Another quote, "some kids in my youth group...were totally turned on to Christianity because...they saw you play." Beloved, is this what you want your son or daughter to learn — that it is okay to use denomina-

tional "percussion bands" to play religious music to convert young people? Convert them to what? Some will say, "Oh, it wasn't a worship service." Then what is the purpose of calling on God and the name of Jesus in such band productions? Are such just vain uses of the names of the Father and the Son? Is not such use in violation of Exodus 20:7?

**Jeff Walling** of the Providence Road church in Charlotte, NC is on the program at both locations. This brother has for years been trying to convince our young people that instruments in Christian worship are just "a matter of opinion...a gray area." This he did during a panel discussion at the young people's meeting at the Andover Road Church of Christ in Andover, KS in 1981 (See *Bulletin Briefs*, May 1998, PO Box 123, Dunlap, TN 37327). He has continued to advocate such through the years. See Goebel Music's *Behold the Pattern*, 5114 Montclair, Colleyville, TX. In January, 1999, brother Jon Gary Williams of LaVergne, TN (near Nashville) documented how Walling had spoken at the 1998 *Jubilee* and "belittled the Lord's church. Often having the audience in laughter." Williams continued, "He had a woman give a public testimony which turned into a sermon — in clear violation of 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12-15. He cleverly promoted the direct operation of the Holy Spirit" (See *Bulletin Briefs*, January 1999).

Other speakers on the Winterfest programs include **Jimmy Sites** (who preached for the Madison, TN church until last month), **Patrick Mead**, **Jerome Williams** and **Greg Anderson**, who preaches for the Western Hills Church near Nashville and is one of the officers of the Winterfest Corporation. When I wrote last January that Winterfest was a "money making operation" one of the officers asked me why I had written that. I replied, "because you charge for the sideshows" (they call them concerts). That officer replied, "we charge for everything." And they do, as I learned from their website. It costs \$18 for the general registration. Thirty-two dollars pays for registration, the concerts and a T-shirt. So if 1000 attend, the corporation has \$32,000 to provide for itself and costs. The guests provide their own lodging and food.

The Winterfest Group is not the church or any part of the church. It is a commercial corporation that is in business to sell compromise in the form of religion to our young people. Elders who have youth ministers who want to take their young people to such should remember that the church's overseers have the obligation to stop the mouths of those who "subvert whole households teaching things which they ought not for the sake of dishonest gain" (Titus 1:11).

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Guest Editorial

## WITHDRAWAL OF FELLOWSHIP

Roger D. Campbell

**“W**herefore to him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). This and other similar warnings in the Bible plainly show it is possible for a child of God to fall from grace. Just what action should the church take when one of its members becomes unfaithful? As noted in the December issue: 1) The church must first be certain that a person is truly living in sin before taking steps to try to restore him/her. 2) The church must maintain a proper attitude toward those who have fallen, and through it all, it must determine to give its greatest efforts to bring them back to Christ.

The third step is that someone needs to go to this brother, express concern and love for his soul, and show him from the Scriptures in what way his life is not in accordance with the will of the Lord. While showing him his error, it may be necessary to teach him more perfectly the way of the Lord (Acts 18:26). Sometimes Christians make mistakes out of ignorance, but if they have a good and honest heart (Luke 8:15) they will receive the truth about their sin if we show it to them from the word of God.

If a member of the church who is living in sin does not seem prepared to receive the truth, then it is appropriate to point out to them the consequences of continuing to live in sin without repentance. *“For the wages of sin is death...”* (Rom. 6:23). Along with this, we should exhort them to repent, as Jesus did the church in Ephesus: *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent”* (Rev. 2:5). This verse has a warning in it. Jesus plainly pointed out what would happen if they did not repent. Sometimes

strong warnings can be very helpful: *“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly...”* (1 Thess. 5:14).

Depending on the circumstances, if our brother in sin has still not shown he is ready to repent, we need to rebuke him. Jesus said, *“If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him”* (Luke 17:3). We realize Jesus is talking about a specific case in which there is a personal problem or conflict between two of His disciples, but the principle would apply when any brother is living in sin. What did Jesus say? *“Rebuke him.”* Paul charged Timothy, *“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear”* (1 Tim. 5:20).

Let us add this word of caution. If it is necessary to rebuke a brother or sister in Christ, we must make sure we do so with the right motive. We should not rebuke others with the idea that we are better than they are. The proper motivation for rebuking those in sin is found in Titus 1:12,13: *“...rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith”* — that they might repent and live pleasing to God.

It is sad for a child of God to leave the safety of Christ’s flock. However, it is equally tragic when the other sheep (Christians) see that one has fallen away, but they do not do anything to restore him! We thank God there are many Christians who work diligently in an effort to help restore those who have left the truth. But even when we do all we can, there are times our fallen brothers and sisters refuse to repent. If we have visited such brethren, have expressed our love and concern for them, have taught them what their mistake is, have exhorted them, warned them, rebuked them, and plainly shown them the eternal consequences if they do not repent and

return to their first love, then is there anything else we can or must do?

We would surely want to pray for them, not that God would forgive them before they truly repent, but that they might have a change of heart and return to their loving Savior. After warning and rebuking them, just how long should we wait before taking further action? The Bible does not give a specific answer, so it is a matter of wisdom as to what the elders (leaders) of the church might think best in a specific case. However, from the Lord’s example we see that there should be a period of time in which those in sin have an opportunity to repent. Speaking of Jezebel, Christ said, *“And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not”* (Rev. 2:21).

When all of the church’s efforts to restore an erring member have not succeeded in bringing about repentance, then the church must withdraw its fellowship from him. The Lord commands us to do this (1 Cor. 5). When Paul wrote about a brother in the church at Corinth who was a fornicator, he charged the other members to deliver this brother unto Satan (5:4). He told them to have no company with this brother (5:9), not to eat with him (5:11), and to put him away from among them (5:13). This fornicator was still a member of the church and still a brother in Christ, however since he had become an unfaithful brother, the church could not support him in his sin by continuing to fellowship him.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:6 we read, *“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”* The Lord commands us to withdraw from those members of the church who walk disorderly, that is, who do not live according to the teaching of Jesus Christ. In verses 14-15 it is written: *“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”* Some do not agree with what the Holy Spirit commanded in these verses or think that withdrawing fellowship is either out-of-date or too drastic. However, Scripture still says, *“withdraw your-*

*selves from every brother that walketh disorderly.” Love demands obedience. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). Brothren, if we love God and the souls of fallen saints, then we will obey what God commands us to do and withdraw from them if they refuse to repent. We admit that it is not pleasant to cease having fellowship with those whom we love with all of our heart, but if that is what the Lord tells us to do, then we must do it, and we must do it willingly.*

From whom should a congregation withdraw its fellowship? From all who do not walk in harmony with the teachings of Christ and refuse to repent (2 Thess. 3:6,14). This includes those who are lazy and do not work but is not limited to them (3:10-12). The church is to have no fellowship with its members who are fornicators, covetous, extortioners, idolaters, railers, or drunkards (1 Cor. 5:10,11). The church is to have no fellowship with those brethren who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ. *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11).* The church is to have no fellowship with those who are heretics or who cause division in the body of Christ (Titus 3:10,11). If a child of God does not obey the inspired teaching of the New Testament, then the church is obligated to *“note that man and have no company with him” (2 Thess. 3:14).* This is not some man’s personal opinion, it is simply what the Bible commands.

Why should the church withdraw from those members who have fallen away?

**1) To please the Lord.** He commanded us to do it (2 Thess. 3:6,14). So, if we want to please Him, then we must obey Him in this matter.

**2) To try to save their souls.** That is our motivation: *“... that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. 5:5).* Paul also said we are to withdraw from erring members so that they may be

ashamed (2 Thess. 3:14). Hopefully, their shame will lead them to repentance unto the salvation of their souls (2 Cor. 7:10).

**3) To keep the church pure.** When a person has a terrible disease in his foot which could spread to the rest of the body and eventually cause death, it is sometimes necessary to remove the foot with the desire of saving the person’s life. So it is in the church. It is necessary to remove an evil influence that is dangerous to the spiritual health of the church. In the case of the brother in Corinth who was a fornicator, Paul wrote, *“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened...” (1 Cor. 5:6,7).*

**4) To show the world the church will not tolerate sin in its midst.** The church must have and maintain a good moral reputation in the community. It will lose this if the world sees that the church allows sin to continue in the lives of its members without the church taking action to discipline those who are walking disorderly.

**5) To serve as a warning to other Christians.** Members are warned that unfaithful living is not acceptable! When the Lord killed Ananias and Sapphira for lying we read, *“And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things” (Acts 5:11).* Withdrawing from unfaithful saints causes other Christians to seriously examine themselves (2 Cor. 13:5).

If the elders (or brothers in the absence of elders) of the congregation of which I am a member decide the church must withdraw from certain members who have left the faith, then it is the responsibility of *me and every other brother and sister* to support that decision! We support that decision by not defending or encouraging them in their sin and by keeping no company with them that would cause them to think that we in any way condone their lifestyle (1 Cor. 5:9-11). Those brothers and sisters who continue to have fellowship with those from whom the church has withdrawn are themselves sinning and need to repent or otherwise, they are subjects of withdrawal also.

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# DENOMINATIONS AND APOSTATE CHURCHES

Steve Miller

***We have a unique fellowship. Only those who have obeyed the Gospel plan of salvation (as revealed in the New Testament), who are worshiping God in “spirit and in truth” who abide in the “Doctrine of Christ,” and who have a “thus saith the Lord” for every practice and belief, can enjoy this fellowship together.***

Christians who strive to walk in the light by obeying God’s will and staying faithful to it are in a class by themselves. Christian fellowship is limited to those who abide in the doctrine of Christ.

Hear the apostle John, *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son”* (2 John 9). The doctrine of Christ is the boundary line, or circumference, within which our fellowship is with God and Christ. He who abides within this circle enjoys fellowship. He that transgresseth and goes beyond the teaching of Christ does not have that fellowship. Verses 10 and 11 reveal what should happen when false teachers come along. *“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”* Truth and false doctrine have no fellowship with each other.

The doctrine of Christ includes ALL the teaching of Jesus Christ. The teaching of Christ is the body of truth, the whole New Testament. The “gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16), “the faith once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), the word of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18), “the truth” (John 8:32), and “the faithful word” (Titus 1:9) are just a few of the terms that reveal the teaching of Christ. The doctrine of Christ is the whole Christian system — all its facts, warnings, commands, and promises.

The New Testament church is the only body that is truly IN the doctrine of Christ. The body is unique because it is the only one that Jesus built (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4). The body of Christ, church of Christ, can have no fellowship with those who

are in error and promoting false doctrine.

## DENOMINATIONS

The New Testament Christian can have no fellowship with the denominations. Paul writes to the churches of Galatia, *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed”* (Gal. 1:68). The apostle reveals these Christians were being misled by false teachers who were teaching they needed to go back to the law of Moses to be justified. Paul says they perverted the Gospel of Christ. Anyone who “adds to” or “takes from” the Gospel of Christ is a perverter of the Gospel and will be damned for doing so.

The denominations preach, teach, and live a perverted Gospel. They are against the teachings of Jesus Christ and against the teaching of the apostles given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (1 Cor. 1:10). Denominationalism is contrary to Christianity. We can have no fellowship with the denominations because: 1) they exist without divine authority, 2) we are to have no fellowship with those who are not in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11), 3) they are against the prayer of Jesus (John 17), all the teaching of God’s

Word, and 4) they are corrupt in teaching, including worship, work, organization, name, plan of salvation, and lifestyle.

We can only have fellowship with those who are in the body of Christ. The church of Christ was planned by God and established and paid for by his Son Jesus Christ (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 2:2; Acts 2). Our fellowship is limited to those in the body of Christ because they are the only ones who are saved. The Lord adds one to his church when he obeys the Gospel plan of salvation as taught in the New Testament (Rom. 10:17; Luke 13:3; Acts 8:37; 2:47; Gal. 3:27). Men and women attain Christian fellowship with one another when each one of them attains fellowship with God. *“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”* (1 John 1:3). What did the apostles see and hear? The Gospel of Christ! It should be clear that no child of God can scripturally extend Christian fellowship to anyone who has not been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

The apostle Paul warned against sects, parties and divisions which equal denominations. In the midst of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5, Paul lists *“...fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like...”* (5:19-21, ASV). He reveals that those who practice such *“shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Christians can have no fellowship with the denominations because the denominations do not abide, nor do they preach the whole truth of the Gospel of Christ. Brother F. D. Sryg-

ley has written that “no denomination embodies all religious truth, nor is any denomination without some truth mixed with a considerable quantity of error” (*The New Testament Church*, McQuiddy Printing Company, 1910. p.37). The truth, which is the word of God, has no fellowship or association with error. Brother Srygley summarizes why the body of Christ has limited fellowship. “The same process which makes a man a Christian constitutes him a member of the church. Those who are not members of the church are out of Christ, for the reason that the church is the body of Christ (Col. 1:18,24; Eph. 1:22-23).

...No one can be a child of God without belonging to the household or family of God, which is the church.

...A child does not have to join the family; it is born into the family. Just so a man does not have to join the church; he is born into the church. ‘Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God’ (John 3:5)” (p.53-54).

We are not to have any association with the denominations which are man-made and sinful. “...*Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*” (Eph. 5:25,28).

## APOSTATE CONGREGATIONS

The Bible declares that children of God, Christians, can have fellowship with each other. The apostle John revealed, “*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*” (1 John 1:3). We learn from this passage that: 1) John and the apostles were declaring what they received from the Holy Spirit, 2) they were revealing it to Christians, 3) they had fellowship with people of the “one faith” and 4) our fellowship is with God the Father and Christ the Son.

We are heirs to eternal salvation together through Jesus Christ. “*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so*

*be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together*” (Rom. 8:16-17). We have a unique fellowship. Only those who have obeyed the Gospel plan of salvation (as revealed in the New Testament), who are worshiping God in “spirit and in truth,” who abide in the “Doctrine of Christ,” and who have a “thus saith the Lord” for every practice and belief, can enjoy this fellowship together.

These people, known as Christians, saints, members, make up the church of Christ. Only the saved are part of this body and only those who are members of this body will be saved. Christians make up individual congregations who are governed separately. The Bible provides examples of congregations fellowshipping each other in various good works (1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8; 9; 3 John 5). Since congregations can fellowship each other in good works, by implication, a congregation can withdraw fellowship from a congregation that is out of line with the doctrine of Christ. This must be accomplished with a loving spirit for the congregation that is departing. The reason for withdrawal is to warn and admonish the sister congregation to come back to the doctrine of Christ.

What if a local church of Christ went into apostasy? For example: a congregation introduces a choir to their worship assembly or merges with a denomination such as the Christian Church. Would other churches of Christ have need to publicly disassociate themselves from such a congregation? Yes! The faithful churches of Christ should make an effort to help the apostate congregation back to the path of truth. If this fails, then, the faithful church should make it known to the community that even though both congregations have the name “church of Christ” on their sign, they are not the same!

Does God disfellowship individual churches of Christ? Yes! Revelation 2 and 3 threaten such action if repentance was not forthcoming. To the church at Ephesus: “*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent*” (Rev. 2:5). The basic teaching of the seven letters to the churches was, if repen-

tance were not forthcoming, their lampstand would be removed. This represented that God would sever His affiliation with them and they would no longer be considered a faithful church of Christ. God gave them a chance to straighten up, we should do likewise and encourage a church that is on the road to apostasy, to come back to the truth.

Though each congregation is autonomous and independent by divine design, every Christian and local church is a part of the universal body of Christ. We have a common bond as brothers and sisters in Christ. What we do as a local church affects and reflects upon every other church of Christ. It does make a difference what our neighbor is teaching and practicing. I have had elders tell me that it didn’t matter that a local church of Christ had a choir. They revealed to me that we should not worry about what other congregations are doing. That attitude shows a lack of concern for the souls of those involved. Choirs, instrumental music, and everything else that is not authorized by Christ, is sinful in the worship of God!

Brethren, let us not overlook 2 John 11 concerning fellowship with apostates. “*For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*” When a local congregation has gone off into apostasy, we can have no fellowship with them. Romans 16:17 also gives us authority to mark those who have departed from the faith. “*Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*” One who causes division must be marked, whoever he is or wherever he is located. “Them” might be fifty or five hundred persons who may be marked. If not, why not?

Christian fellowship is limited to only those who are in Christ and walking in the light. Our study has shown us that we cannot, with God’s approval, fellowship the denominations, apostate congregations, false teachers, or the immoral. The Lord limits fellowship, should we do any less than our Lord and Savior? Let us enjoy true Christian fellowship and practice discipline in separating from those in darkness.

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# TRUTH IS NOT FOR SALE

Marvin L. Weir

*The Bible purposely avoids the political correctness that the majority now craves and endorses, and reveals the absolute truth that so many spurn and hate. Although truth is not for sale, most folks will sell truth in a heartbeat when it comes to family, friends or self.*

**W**e live in a society that has a growing disdain for truth. Those who are graduates of the school of worldly wisdom, pride themselves in practicing the art of deception. From the president of the United States to the teenage student one has come to expect a dishonest answer.

The Bible, God's word of truth, has been ridiculed and ignored ever since the Holy Spirit revealed it. For decades modern man has been an advocate of the theory of evolution. It matters not that science **cannot** prove the theory! Neither does it matter to most that God's word says, *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* In fact, worldly wisdom will seek to convince folks that neither God nor the Bible is to be taken too seriously.

**Who** or **what** do we take seriously? Should we accept as absolute truth that which is spoken by a judge or president that is motivated and driven by the "politically correct" agenda? Can we rely upon the newspapers and the tabloids to present absolute truth? The answers to the above questions are more than obvious to all who are not blinded by their love for the world (cf. 1 John 2:15-17).

The Bible declares that God's word **"is** truth" (John 17:17, emph. MLW) and that *"the truth of Jehovah endureth forever"* (Psa. 117:2). Surely one who is honest and noble would never declare that we cannot know the meaning of "is". Solomon, speaking by inspiration, said, *"Buy the truth, and sell it not; Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding"* (Prov. 23:23).

The Bible purposely avoids the political correctness that the majority now craves and endorses, and reveals the absolute truth that so many spurn and hate. Although truth is not for sale, most folks will sell truth in a heartbeat when it comes to family, friends or self. People need to begin doing some serious thinking and wean themselves from being "spoon fed" by those who covet their unprovable theories and personal agendas.

The selling of religious truth has been popular in every dispensation – Patriarchal, Mosaical, and Christian. God told Adam and Eve if they ate or touched the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden they would die (Gen. 3:3). The couple chose, however, to sell truth and believe Satan's lie that they would not die from touching and eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:4). Nadab and Abihu knew the type of fire required by God in making sacrifices, but chose instead to offer "strange fire before Jehovah" (Lev. 10:1). They sold truth in offering what was **not commanded** and it cost them their lives. Ananias and Sapphira chose to sell truth and lie to the apostle Peter regarding the amount of the transaction. A high price was again paid for the selling of truth as it cost Ananias and Sapphira their lives (Acts 5:1ff).

Today there are many congregations of the Lord's people who are in the process of selling the truth. As truth is being sold, multitudes of members sit silently, thereby giving their consent. But why is truth for sale? It is because the liberal change-agents know that truth

must be sold (discarded) before they can implement man-made innovations and denominational practices. You see, even the liberals know that God's truth will **expose** their scheme to restructure the church. Thus, truth must be sold **before** they can accomplish their devilish goal.

There is an article being circulated among some churches of Christ in the Dallas-Forth Worth, Texas area entitled "Behold the Pattern" that seeks to compare a man-made dress pattern to God's pattern for the church. Brethren, **design** and **intent** keep such a comparison from being valid. A dress pattern is designed to be adapted to satisfy certain needs. God's singular pattern for His church was not intended to be adapted to accommodate man's whims and wishes.

The article further suggests that Jesus and not the New Testament church is our pattern. Is not Christ the head of the church, which is his body (Eph. 1:22-23)? Are we to understand there is a pattern for the head but not for the body? Efforts have been made for years to sever Christ from the church but such cannot be done. The results of a "patternless" body is a "have it my way" religion. Such is the goal of those who are anxious to sell the truth. But truth is **not** for sale!

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# PENTECOSTALISM IN WINESKINS

Victor M. Eskew

*How long? Just how long will it be  
until brethren wake up to the real meaning of the teachings  
of the false brethren who are among us?  
And, how long will it be until elderships and preachers  
make a bold stand against the heresy that is being proclaimed?*

The most recent issue of *Wineskins* (Volume Five, Number One), edited by **Mike Cope** and **Rubel Shelly**, fully supports the doctrines of Pentecostalism with regard to Holy Spirit baptism. The evidence is found in an article written by **Edward Fudge** entitled, "Immersion in the Holy Spirit."

Mr. Fudge begins the article with this brief paragraph: "Almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ made atonement for sin and ascended to heaven to be exalted at God's right hand. Based on Jesus' accomplishments, God began to pour out the Holy Spirit on Jesus' followers on earth. This gift, promised by God through the ancient prophets and again through Jesus, was nothing other than immersion in the very Presence and power of God and of his exalted Christ. Careful Bible study reveals the same blessing is available to every believer in Jesus today who will seek, ask, and knock" (p.12).

Throughout the article, Mr. Fudge sets forth the same arguments of the Pentecostals with regard to Holy Spirit baptism. His effort is to convince his readers that all believers can experience and have the same powerful, overwhelming, wonder-producing manifestations of Holy Spirit baptism as those of the first century. He writes: "Pentecost marked the beginning — not the end — of the time when God would pour out his Spirit on all flesh. No New Testament writer suggests that the immersion of the Holy Spirit or any of its manifestations were temporary, or that they were intended to end with some period or event now ancient to us" (p.14).

On page 13, Mr. Fudge reveals to us just how far he (and *Wineskins*) is willing to go with the effects of Holy Spirit baptism. He states: "The Book of Acts also reports great diversity in the effects of immersion in the Holy Spirit. Luke mentions at least a dozen different manifestations of that experience:

- Wind and fire (2:2-3).
- Spiritual praise in language naturally unknown to the speaker (2:4-8; 10:46; 19:6). Even at Pentecost, those who speak in other tongues are 'declaring the wonders of God,' not preaching the gospel as such (2:4,11 NIV). Similarly, the Cornelius household was 'exalting God' (10:46).
- Signs and wonders (2:43; 6:8).
- The house was shaken (4:31).
- A vision of heaven and of the ascended Lord Jesus (7:55).
- An overwhelming sense of awe (2:43).
- An extraordinary spirit of sharing and generosity (2:44-46; 4:32).
- Gladness and joy (2:46; 13:52).
- A praise-filled life (2:47).
- Bold proclamation about Jesus as Savior and Lord (2:14ff; 4:8-12; 5:31-32; 6:8-10).
- Wonderful Cleansing of the soul (15:9).
- Prophecy, or supernaturally delivering a message from God (2:17-18; 19:6).

After listing the various manifestations, the writer makes the following conclusions: "This scriptural diversity makes two things clear. First, that when someone is immersed in the Holy Spirit, we may expect any of these manifestations,

or any others which may please God who is sovereign and who gives the Spirit. Second, that we must not require any particular manifestation on any given occasion, or judge the experience to be inauthentic solely by the absence of any particular biblical effect."

Dear reader, Mr. Fudge's message is clear, plain, and explicit. He believes that all believers receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit today. This baptism, he asserts, empowers them for service. It can involve numerous manifestations of the Spirit. Some of these could be miraculous, that is, supernatural in nature. One might even be able to heal the sick and raise the dead just as they did in the first century.

How long? Just how long will it be until brethren wake up to the real meaning of the teachings of the false brethren who are among us? And, how long will it be until elderships and preachers make a bold stand against the heresy that is being proclaimed? Wake up brethren! *Wineskins*, its editors, writers, and supporters are leading us into the depths of Pentecostalism. Mark, and avoid them as the inspired Paul demanded (Rom. 16:17-18).

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"Keep up the good work with *S.T.O.P.* and may God continue to make you to prosper in His kingdom!" ...**Carlos Patterson, Snyder, TX.** "I am a regular reader of *Seek the Old Paths* since the last three years back and working as a preacher of Imphal Church of Christ in Imphal. Your publication *S.T.O.P.* was a great blessing for me

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