

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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RESPONSE TO AN INQUIRY ABOUT THE USE OF MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Roger D. Campbell

From time to time, preachers receive responses to articles, tracts, or other materials they have written. Not long ago I received an e-mail message that began with these words, "I read your comments on instrumental music." From there this inquirer, with whom I was not previously acquainted, went on to make a number of statements and raise some questions. Because this person's sentiments and reasoning are not that uncommon when it comes to the question of mechanical instruments of music in worship, I decided to share my response to her.

Dear _____:

Thank you for your e-mail regarding some material that I wrote about using mechanical instruments of music in worship to God. In the outset of your letter you stated, "I have a question and I'd appreciate anything you have to say on the subject." From this statement I conclude that this subject is a point of interest or concern to you. I will try my best to answer your questions and statements about this topic. I realize that in my response I must answer with a spirit of "meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15) and I must answer according to "the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). For the sake of clarity, I am going to "divide up" and number some of your

questions and statements. My quotes from your letter will be in italics and quotation marks. I will try to deal with them one at a time. This makes it easier for me to respond to them, and hopefully this will make my answers clearer.

1. *"Nowhere in the Bible does God say to use microphones in worship. But you use them."*

My answer: Yes, I have used microphones in my preaching in many places. However, for the first twenty years of my preaching, I preached the great majority of times in situations where no microphone was used in the worship assembly. Thus, it would be incorrect to assume that microphones are used in every place where people assemble to worship. Yet, our using them or not using them in no way proves that using mechanical instruments of music in worship is pleasing or not pleasing to God.

2. *"Nowhere in the Bible does God say to use a light bulb in church, yet every single church uses them."*

My answer: I have not traveled to every meeting place of every religious group on the planet, but I would think that there are probably some groups meeting "out in the bushes" that do not have electricity, and thus do not use light bulbs.

Again, even if it were true that "every single church uses" light bulbs, that would not prove that the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God is in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament.

3. Your later stated, *"Why not give sermons 'in truth' without the aid of illumination or microphone? God never said that you could use those things, yet they're used. So, why pick just the music aspect of the 'truth' to focus on?"*

My answer: I think this question really hits at the heart of your appeal, which basically is this: if everybody uses lights and microphones and these items are acceptable, though they are not mentioned in the Bible, then mechanical instruments of music in worship must also be acceptable.

We are commanded to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). When we add lighting (electric, gas, oil, or whatever kind) to the command to preach, what do we get as a result? Answer: We have preaching. Preaching God's word + lighting = Preaching God's word. The lighting adds nothing to the worship, and thus the lighting is simply an aid in carrying out the

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Response To An Inquiry...



Editorial...

RESPECTING THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES #1

The Bible is “silent” about many things. That is, it does not specifically mention certain things. Therefore, can Bible doctrine be based on the “silence of the Scriptures” — i.e., what the Bible does not specifically say? Can we stake our souls on what the Bible does not say? Is it really that important or serious? Is the silence of the Scriptures to be respected or ignored? These are serious questions and demand a Bible answer.

Two prominent Reformation leaders held opposite views on this subject. **Martin Luther** stated, “*What is not against Scripture is for Scripture, and Scripture for it.*” He believed authority from the Bible was unnecessary and would therefore practice or allow anything the Bible did not specifically forbid. On the other hand, **Ulrich Zwingli** stated that whatever was “*not enjoined or taught in the New Testament should be unconditionally rejected.*” Zwingli would only practice or allow that which the Bible authorized.

An oft quoted slogan from the Restoration movement said, “*We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent.*” What this means is: we will do only those things the Bible sanctions and/or authorizes and when the Bible does not address or speak on a subject, we will not act on the Bible’s silence (in the absence of authority). This is a time tested and true principle: not because it was used in the Restoration movement, but because it is true with what the Bible teaches. The point is this: we must only do those things the Bible authorizes us to do. If we can’t give a “thus saith the Lord” for our practices, then we must abandon them. This is made clear in Colossians 3:17, “*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...*” (i.e., by His authority). Many make light of this principle and dismiss it with

nothing more than a wave of the hand. Since they can’t answer it Biblically, what more could they do?

THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD ARGUES FROM SILENCE

The Bible’s silence on matters makes a world of difference and is extremely important! The silence of the Scriptures is not a man-made doctrine. God himself makes this clear in His Holy Word. The “silence of the Scriptures” has to do with Bible authority.

Simply because the Bible does not address or speak concerning a particular matter or subject, does not give us liberty to act or practice something in the Bible’s silence. Liberal-minded thinkers have no respect for the authority of the Scriptures and will proceed full steam ahead in matters for which they have no “thus saith the Lord.” The Bible DOES NOT authorize by its silence!

The Holy Spirit gives an inspired example of the use of “silence” in Hebrews 7:12-14. “*For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.*” These verses prove that the “silence of the Scriptures” argument is not man-made. It is not borrowed from the Restoration period. It is not simply tradition. It has to do with what God wants his people to do. It is a question of AUTHORITY.

God revealed to Moses his will regarding the priesthood. Moses revealed God’s will to the children of Israel. Aaron and his descendants would be priests before the Lord. They were of the tribe of Levi. Hebrews 7:13 says no man ever served before the altar that was not a

Levite. The fact that Jesus (from the tribe of Judah) now serves as high priest (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15) demands that the priesthood has changed. And, the priesthood being changed demanded also a change of the law for the Law of Moses would not allow anyone who was not from the tribe of Levi to be a priest. The important point to see in this is the fact that the Law of Moses NEVER FORBID (in any specific verse) anyone to serve that was from a tribe other than Levi. It simply told who was to serve — not who was not to serve. Exodus 27:21—28:1 shows that Aaron and his sons were to serve. The law of Moses was silent on the subject of someone serving who was from a tribe other than Levi! Heaven argues this point of silence so effectively.

We must honor and respect God’s use of “silence” in every respect of our lives today. We must not presume to act in areas the Bible does not authorize us to act. God tells us “what” to do (and often “how” to do) and we must not go beyond his word and do more or less (cf. 2 John 9-11).

OTHER EXAMPLES OF THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Noah and the ark — Gen. 6:14-16. God gave Noah specific instructions on building the ark. It was to be made of gopher wood, 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high. It was to have one window, one door and three decks. Did Noah have to build the ark exactly as God said, or could he alter or change God’s instructions? What if oak or pine or poplar was more plentiful or easier to work with? God did not say Noah could not use other kinds of wood. Did Noah have the liberty to change its size? God did not say he couldn’t. What if the women decided they wanted more windows. Where did God say they couldn’t have more than one window? God’s silence on these matters did not authorize changes. Gen. 6:22 says, “*Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.*” Noah altered nothing. He did not have the liberty to! He was bound to do only that which God had specified him to do. God’s silence on other points did not give Noah the right to act as he chose in changing God’s specific instruc-

tions.

Nadab and Abihu and their strange fire – Lev. 10:1-2; Num. 3:4; 26:61; 1 Chron. 24:2. *“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.”* “Strange fire” was fire that did not come from the altar — the place where God said to get the fire (Lev. 16:12; Num. 16:46). The text plainly says that God had not commanded them to use the fire they used — v.2 “which he commanded them not.” They used fire from another source than what God had commanded. God did not say they could not use fire from another source. But, His silence on the subject did not give them the authority or liberty to use fire from any source other than from the altar. Their presumption to do as they pleased was not a little matter. It cost them their lives! They acted without authority from God.

The ark of the covenant — 2 Sam. 6:1-7; 1 Chron. 13:10. *“And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. ... And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.”* What appears to be an innocent act, one performed in good faith, with the best of intentions, ended in tragedy for Uzzah. Simply as a reflex, Uzzah grabbed hold of the ark to keep it from falling off the cart and God killed him. Uzzah was not authorized to touch the ark. God (in the Scriptures) had authorized the tribe of Levi to carry the ark on their shoulders (Deut. 10:8; 31:9,25; Josh. 3:3,6; 1 Chron. 15:2,15). It was to be carried on poles passed through rings on the sides of the ark (Exodus 25:10-15). No where did the Lord say it could not be carried on a cart. God’s silence concerning others transporting the ark eliminated all but the tribe of

Levi. When Uzzah violated God’s instructions, he paid for it with his life. King David would later say, *“...we sought him not after the due order”* (1 Chron. 15:13). They had not followed God’s instructions. Centuries earlier, God had told them how to transport the ark and they did not do it God’s prescribed way.

King Saul’s sacrifice – 1 Sam. 13:5-14. *“And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; ... And...said, What hast thou done? ... thou hast done foolishly...”* Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, was not authorized to offer a sacrifice. That was done by priests of the tribe of Levi (Exodus 28:1; 28:43; 29:1; Num. 18:21,26; Heb. 5:1). Where did the Lord ever say no others could offer sacrifices? No where! cf. Heb. 7:14. The Lord’s silence on the matter eliminated all other possibilities. No doubt Saul meant well.

He was worshipping God. What could possibly be wrong with that? It was wrong because he had no authority to officiate or preside over burnt offerings.

CONCLUSION

When men and women today go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 John 9), they act without authority from the Scriptures. Simply because God has not specifically forbidden certain things, does not give anyone the right to do those things. God’s silence on matters makes a great deal of difference!

Whatever we DO or whatever we SAY must be backed up with book, chapter and verse. When called upon to answer for our deeds, we must be able to point to the Scriptures and say, “this is why we teach and practice what we do.”

In the next issue we will examine some practical applications of this principle.

Response To An Inquiry...

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command to preach.

In the same way, when we add a microphone to the command to preach, what do we get as a result? Answer: We have preaching. Preaching God’s word + a microphone = Preaching God’s word. The microphone adds no new element into the worship. It serves as a true aid in the sense that it makes the voice of the preacher heard. That is important when the preaching is done in a large indoor facility or someplace where it is difficult to hear the speaker, because if the listeners are unable to clearly hear the message preached, then they cannot be edified (1 Cor. 14:15-17). Adding volume by using a microphone helps to do things “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). Also, Jesus said, *“If any man have ears to hear, let him hear...Take heed what ye hear...”* (Mark 4:23,24). A microphone or sound system can be helpful to listeners that seek to take heed to what they hear. Again, the microphone simply serves as an aid to the hearer, helping him understand clearly that which he hears.

When mechanical instruments of music are introduced into the worship of God, that is an entirely different situation than what we have with lights and microphones. Here is why: when mechanical instruments of music are introduced into the worship of God, that is an addition of a new and separate kind of music. New and separate from what? New and separate from the kind of music authorized in the New Testament. The music that the New Testament authorizes in worship to God is singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Any other type of music, including whistling, humming, yodeling, or mechanical instruments of music, is unauthorized. In summary of this point, when we add mechanical instruments of music to the worship of the Lord, what do we get as a result? Answer: We get two kinds of music. Singing (God-authorized) + mechanical instruments of music (man-authorized) = two kinds of music. God authorized only one type in worship, and that is singing.

4. *“Why not return to services held outside, without the comfort of air conditioning, of microphones, of public restrooms? After all, they aren’t the truth. There are no exam-*

ples in the New Testament to their use.”

My answer: Scripturally speaking, it would be acceptable to worship outside. Many have done so before, and because it was done “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24) it was just as Scriptural, just as God-pleasing, and just as uplifting as any indoor worship in which people might engage. The Bible commands Christians to not forsake the assemblies of the saints (Heb. 10:24). The fact that God calls for saints to assemble implies there must be a place to assemble. The Bible does not specify where such assemblies must take place, so it is a matter of expediency, that is, one that is left to the wisdom of each local congregation’s leaders.

Early saints gathered in the temple (Acts 2:46), prayed in private homes (Acts 12:12), taught the Gospel outdoors and in the marketplace (Acts 16:13,14; 17:17), and even sang praises to God and prayed in prison (Acts 16:24,25).

Your point is well taken that there is no New Testament example of church buildings that had air conditioning, microphones, or public restrooms. In fact, there is no New Testament example of any congregation of the Lord’s church having its own building, period. However, possessing, building, renting, or using such a facility that we call a “church building” is certainly authorized by the New Testament. Again, it is authorized by the command to assemble and worship (Heb. 10:24; 1 Cor. 11:20,24,25). The command to assemble to worship God requires a place to worship. When it comes to the physical items that are to be used in a “church building” for man’s comfort and convenience, the New Testament says nothing about these matters. However, adding air conditioning, microphones, and other modern conveniences do not add any new elements to the actual worship that God has authorized in the New Testament.

I noted your statement, “There are no examples in the New Testament to their use.” It is important to recognize that the God-approved examples about which we read in the New Testament are one way of learning what the Lord authorizes. However, New Testament examples are not the only way of learning what is

authorized by God. Direct statements, commands, and implications also demonstrate what the Lord authorizes. See again what I wrote above about “church buildings” being authorized, though there is no New Testament example of such. There is no New Testament example of a congregation meeting for worship at 9:30 on Sunday morning. Yet, such is authorized by the general command to assemble on the first day of the week.

5. *“You say using a piano would make one vain. Why do you use microphones? To project someone’s voice. Isn’t that a form of vanity?”*

My answer: I do not recall ever writing about a person being vain because of his/her worship. In one tract on mechanical instruments of music in worship to God I did write about vain worship. In that place I wrote these words: “Jesus also said, ‘Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men’ (Mark 7:7). Thus, it is possible for worship to be in vain, i.e., not achieving the desired goal, which is pleasing God.” Since worshipping God with mechanical instruments of music is according to the commandments of men, then “vain worship” is an appropriate description of their use in worship.

“Why do you use microphones? To project someone’s voice. Isn’t that a form of vanity?”

My answer: I have already discussed the purpose and authority for using microphones. *Is it a form of vanity?* There may be those that relish the thought of being praised by men for their words, and for them, perhaps the microphone could add to their vanity. However, there is no reason to identify as proud or “vain” every single person that speaks a message through a microphone.

6. *“How do you compare someone who uses a piano to worship God to someone who literally spits out God from their lives? Do you REALLY believe that God is going to condemn someone because they used a piano to worship him? Do you really believe that? Because if you do, then, frankly, I don’t want to worship with you. Because I don’t believe God is like that.”*

My answer: It is possible for people to refuse to walk with the Lord, which would be the same as your

“spit out God” from their lives. Some disciples of Jesus turned away from Him and walked no more with Him (John 6:66). It is important to note that one who refuses to abide by the commands of Christ cannot truthfully call Jesus the Lord of his life. “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)? One that does not remain in or go by the teaching of Jesus Christ does not have God. The Bible says so (2 John 9).

Please consider two examples from the Old Testament that clearly show that unauthorized worship is unacceptable to the Lord: the unauthorized worship of Nadab and Abihu that resulted in their death (Lev. 10:1,2), and the unauthorized worship of King Uzziah that resulted in him being a leper until he died (2 Chron. 26:16-21). Unauthorized worship is sinful and unacceptable to God. Those who engage in unauthorized worship stand condemned before Him. The use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God is a form of unauthorized worship.

7. *“I think God cares about the things he preached about. Love, Faith, Charity. Jesus didn’t give sermons on the mountain tops about No Pianos.”*

My answer: In the Bible’s record of Jesus’ “sermons on the mountain tops” there is no mention of the need to partake of the communion or Lord’s supper. Yet, elsewhere in the New Testament we learn of such a command (1 Cor. 11:24,25). In the Bible’s record of Jesus’ “sermons on the mountain tops,” there is no mention of baptism, yet elsewhere in the New Testament we learn of such a command (Acts 22:16). In view of this, we must not limit our eyes and thoughts to the recorded words of Jesus that He spoke on mountain tops. Also, and this is very much to the point of our subject, there is no Bible record that in His mountain top preaching Jesus mentioned “music” of any type in worship to God. But elsewhere in the New Testament we read that God, indeed, does want His children to praise Him with music. The question is, what “kind” of music has the Lord authorized for the worship of His church? The Bible’s answer: Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

8. “I guess I’m just coming from a place where I do not understand all the obsession with the piano thing when there are much, much bigger issues and problems facing churches.”

My answer: I cannot deny that religious groups who believe in Jesus face a number of issues and problems. Many of these issues and problems they bring on themselves by failing to respect the authority of God’s word. I personally can think of no issue that is more important than the issue of doing things by the authority of God’s word. That is the whole issue with the question of using mechanical instruments of music in worship to God: they are unauthorized by the New Testament. We are charged to obey all things that Jesus the Christ has commanded (Matt. 28:18,20). Jesus taught that we express our love for Him by keeping His commands (John 14:15). Thus, it is the case that in worship and life we can properly praise and love Him only when we do that which the New Testament of Christ authorizes. There is no issue in life more important than this one, for the person that stays within/abides by the teaching of Christ has both the Father and the Son, but the one who does not stay within the teachings of Christ has no fellowship with the Godhead (2 John 9).

The whole tone of your message was definitely one that supported the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. I want you to notice one item that really stands out in what you wrote. Your letter consisted of twelve paragraphs and approximately 410 words. Yet in that entire message of some 400 words you did not offer one Scripture from the Bible to defend the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. Not one.

Your message started with this appeal: “I have a question and I’d appreciate anything you have to say on the subject.” I have sincerely tried my best to answer your inquiry and express what the Bible teaches on this subject. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider it.

4865 Bates Pike SE
Cleveland, TN 373232

MAN — NO LONGER ENDOWED BY A CREATOR?

Brad Harrub

“**I**n the beginning was matter, which begat the amoeba, which begat the worm, which begat the fish, which begat the amphibian, which begat the reptile, which begat the lower mammal, which begat the lemur, which begat the monkey, which begat man, who imagined God.” This, according to atheist Charles Smith, is the genealogy of man. Sadly, he is far from being alone in his views of man’s origin. In fact, a vast majority of modern-day scientists cling vehemently to this Darwinist view of origins as “gospel” on the matter. It has become the light under which all new data is examined. It has become their religion — one for which they will fight for in order to secure its place in academia. And, it appears they are winning.

While you may find the concept of men evolving from some primordial slime repulsive or sickening, the reality of the current political climate is far worse. For in our country, the **only** theory about man’s origins allowed in the classroom is this fallacious concept of organic evolution: amoeba to man. And, although our country declared its independence with these words: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are **created** equal, that they are **endowed by their Creator** with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (emp. added), we now live in a land where we can no longer discuss that Creator in the classroom. When Thomas Jefferson penned those famous words, he illustrated that from the very beginning, America recognized human rights as a gift of God, not something created by government.

Yet, science and “political correctness” have accelerated the complete renunciation of God from public affairs. Displays of the Ten Commandments [which we are no longer under-BH] have been banned from public schools, courthouses, and other public property. Religious clubs have been denied equal access to public

school grounds. Valedictorians risk losing their position if they make reference to God in speeches, or offer voluntary prayers at graduation ceremonies. And recently, a court in California found the words “One nation, under God” in our nation’s pledge of allegiance **unconstitutional**.

Individuals who support these court decisions claim to be acting in defense of “the freedom of religion.” Yet, they are systematically tearing away the very foundation of that freedom — and abolishing any reference to an Almighty Creator. God has become a “bacteria” in our culture that must be expunged and eradicated at all costs. At some point however, we must ask our politically correct society, without a Creator, what can “endowed by their Creator” possibly mean?

This war to erase God has taken place in every form of media. If this movement had a special forces unit — such as the Navy Seals or Army Rangers — it would most surely be called evolution or neo-Darwinism. The belief of a special creation has been discounted in magazines, on television, and has now fallen under attack within the church. The atheists and agnostics of the world have been effective at casting doubt on the very first verse of the Bible, where it clearly states: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). These words are no longer viewed as the words of Almighty God, but rather as a nice introduction to a fable or myth. Day-after-day our children sit at the feet of professors who, using fancy words and scientific theories, teach that man’s origins are the result of some Big Bang or Punctuated Equilibrium. And thus we find ourselves in a nation that has outlawed God from the classroom, and who now believes their own origin can be explained by some cosmological accident. But that is not the most heartrending part. The truly tragic part is that Christians are now clinging to this fictitious theory of how man arrived on

the Earth. People who have confessed the name of Christ are suddenly giving more credence to a CNN news report, than to the inspired, God-breathed, Holy Bible. They, too, are willing to toss aside those powerful words, "In the beginning God created..." in favor of man's latest scientific theory. Sadly, in the process of discounting the first few chapters of Genesis, these Christians are undermining the very foundation of their own religion. If they question the way the Bible explains how man arrived on this earth, then what makes them think they can believe what it says regarding salvation and the afterlife? If God did not do it the way He said He did, then why should we believe He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins? Have Christians not realized the embodiment of all they are compromising when they buy into evolution and the idea of a six billion year old earth?

THE MIRACLE BEFORE ALL OTHER MIRACLES!

"If we cannot measure it with our five senses, then it must not be real." This is the central dogma of science. The scientific method is concerned only with those things that can be measured, tested, and observed (which is extremely ironic given that evolution itself has never been measured or observed, and cannot be tested). Anything that falls outside of this scientific method is called into question. Thus, our society has been trained to discount and discredit ideas or theories that cannot be measured, tested, and observed. This mantra is repeated over and over by evolutionists who claim special creation is nothing more than smoke and mirrors. After all, it relies on supernatural miracles — something that scientists are quick to point out are unscientific in nature. And sadly, many Christians find themselves trying to defend their faith by excising miracles out of the Bible. They do not want to appear unlearned, so they stick to verses that are far-removed from miraculous events.

This, however, is not what God intended when He said: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). We

should not be scared to discuss miracles — for their main purpose was to point back to our Almighty Creator. Throughout past human history, God has performed many wonderful miracles for man. He caused the burning bush not to be consumed in speaking to Moses (Exodus 3). He parted the Red Sea so Moses and the Israelites could escape from Egypt's army (Exodus 14). He caused Balaam's donkey to speak (Numbers 22), and brought the walls of Jericho crumbling down without anyone ever laying a hand on them (Joshua 6). He caused the Sun to stand still so the Israelites could win a battle against their enemies (Joshua 10). He even raised His Son, Jesus, from the dead three days after He was crucified (Acts 10:40).

But none of these miracles would have been possible had it not been for a significant miracle that occurred many years before. When Moses wrote in Genesis 1:1 that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," he summarized in a single sentence one of the most important miracles of all — the miracle of creation. In a period of six literal days, God brought into existence a Universe full of galaxies, solar systems, planets, stars, and the first inhabitants of the earth. The writer of Hebrews said: "We understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (11:3). When God created, He did not use matter and energy that already were in existence. Rather, He spoke them into existence "by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3). The psalmist wrote: "*Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast*" (Psalm 33:8-9). This is the Bible's way of letting us know that God did not use natural processes to bring the Universe, the earth, plants, animals, and humans into existence. Instead, He used a great miracle — the miracle of creation! One that we should neither neglect nor be afraid to defend.

Christ is given credit for healing the lame, walking on water, and feeding the five thousand. To Christians, those miracles are demonstrations of the power of God. We readily accept and believe them along with the res-

urrection of Jesus following His crucifixion. Yet we question God's ability to create the Universe and the earth on which we live. Scientists have inundated society with their scientific method and the belief that it would be impossible. "Six literal days? It would break all the known laws of science. It would be a Herculean task just to create one animal, much less all of them in just 48-hours. After all, with all of our knowledge and wisdom, we still cannot produce life from non-life." And yet that is the whole point — it was **miraculous!** It was Herculean! God was able not only to break the laws of science, but He also then shaped those laws and put them into place. Have we forgotten that God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient? If we are to believe and protect the rest of the Bible, then we must be ready to believe and defend that God did it the way He said He did — in six literal days.

brad@apologeticspress.org

CONTRIBUTORS

Frank P. Allen	\$100
Sharon Kay Higginson	\$25
Gene Butler	\$40
Frankie Lou Bailey	\$40
Westport Rd church of Christ, Cleveland, OK	\$50
M/M Ronald H. Allen	\$30
Jim & Laurel Parsley	\$30
M/M John H. Brown	\$25
Chuck & Nancy Verkist	\$25
Pernell church of Christ, Elmore City, OK	\$50
Harold E. Wood	\$50
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Anonymous	\$60
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Jack & Anita Cato	\$100
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Ernest Armstrong	\$50
Duluth church of Christ, Duluth, MN	\$100
William Schwegler	\$25
Howard Gray	\$100
Carroll P. Bennett	\$25
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Anonymous	\$300
Anonymous	\$5
Drew B. Allen	\$10
Robert Price (booklet Maker)	\$100
Beginning Balance	\$ 3,285.19
Credits	
Contributions	3,570.00
Booklet Maker	100.00
Debits	
Postage	1,337.68
Supplies, paper, etc	838.22
Booklet Maker	300.00
Repair on equipment	716.71
Ending Balance	3,762.58
Booklet Maker	\$13,500.00
Contributed	9,575.00
Remaining	3,925.00

"IS IT NOTHING TO YOU, ALL YE THAT PASS BY" (Lamentations 1:12)

Jerry C. Brewer

Much of the culpability for the apathy and indifference toward publicly proclaimed error rests on the shoulders of elders who have been too busy functioning as boards of directors rather than shepherds of the Lord's flock.

Sometimes people's attitude and philosophy are more clearly expressed by what they don't say than by what they do say. This may be the case in the wake of the concert produced Nov. 17th at the Tornado Dome by the "Church of Christ" in Clinton, Oklahoma. After mailing out 40 some letters to area churches in Oklahoma and Texas (including the Clinton elders) there has not been a single reply in defense of that shameless spectacle performed by Seventh Day Adventists, Mennonites and members of "The Church of Christ." Yes, some of the people the "Clinton Church of Christ" hired for the performance were members of denominations. That is confirmed by an email message from a member of the group Vocal Union. I received the following message after visiting the website of Vocal Union and asking singer Steve Camping about the members' religious affiliation.

"Jerry,

"Thanks for checking out the website! Hope you liked the music on there, we are constantly out touring the country, keep your eye on the tour schedule...we may get to your neighborhood soon. As for your question on my church. I live in Reno, NV and go to a small non-denominational community church here. To tell you the truth, we have a rather diverse church background amongst our members, we have Church of Christ, Seventh Day Adventist, CMA, Christian Reformed....its amazing what God is doing in our group and the harmony we

continually find in Him. I hope this answers your questions. Keep God the main focus of your life and you will never go wrong!

In Him,

Steve C" (Email message from Steve Camping, steve-camping@hotmail.com) sent Wed., Nov. 6, 2002)

But that pales into insignificance when one considers the number of elders, preachers and brethren in western Oklahoma who fancy themselves "sound in the faith" but who apparently suffer from spiritual lock-jaw. Their silence, so far, says a great deal more about their alleged "soundness" than anything they could shout from the rooftops.

Fifty years ago faithful brethren in our area would have been up in arms about this disgraceful embrace of denominationalism. Sadly, brethren have become so hardened through the years by the tiny, step-by-step departures away from the old Jerusalem Gospel that this atrocity committed against the Bride of Christ is nothing to them.

In the 1960s and 70s there were a few — very few — voices raised that, in the light of history, saw this apostasy coming. But brethren in rural areas like ours didn't believe it would ever affect us country folks. Those things, they thought, happened in the "big city" churches like those in Abilene, Dallas, Nashville, or Houston. They had a false sense of security because of our rural situation and largely ignored the warnings. Now it is too late. Those warning voices of 30 and 40 years ago are being vindicated and apostasy's chickens have come home to roost in

rural western Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle. And the saddest part is that few seem to care or even recognize apostasy's presence. And, those of us who dare to speak up are censured for pointing out that the emperor is naked.

Much of the culpability for the apathy and indifference toward publicly proclaimed error rests on the shoulders of elders who have been too busy functioning as boards of directors rather than shepherds of the Lord's flock. Elders have turned over their responsibilities to preachers and allowed them to spew whatever they've imbibed from their college professors and denominational textbooks, and even so-called "sound" preachers have been too concerned by their need for "job security" to speak up. After all, the pay is better than that provided to any preacher in previous generations. One area preacher refused to speak up when Joe Beam came to Weatherford in 1997, but assured me he was supportive of the two of us who did speak out. That man is a hireling who has no business claiming to be a Gospel preacher. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:30). Neutrality in Christ's service puts one squarely in the devil's camp.

I am no prophet, nor the son of one, but I can foresee a time in the not-too-distant future when the faithful must recognize the ties of fellowship that have already been severed by apostasy. This was the case in North America in 1906 and it has been 40 years in coming to our own generation.

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by" (Jer. 1:12)?

*308 South Oklahoma
Elk City, OK 73644*



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

gregation for the lord's work. The information that you publish will help them in their work there. Thanks for all the hard work that you and those who help you to put out a great paper. I know that you have helped a great many Christians to have a better understanding of God's word and what these change agents are doing to the church. Thank you" ...**Robert Schultz, Burton, MI.** "I am a subscriber to *Seek the Old Paths* and enjoy the publication very much" ...**Stewart Gillespie, Casa Grande, AZ.** "Please send me the book on the *Seek the Old Paths* lectureship. I am sure I will gain much knowledge from this book. May God continue to bless in this work. Thank you" ...**Georgia Dashner, Verona, MO.** "Please send me the 17th Annual *Seek the Old Paths* Lectureship book, *Divine Authority (Leadership in the Church, Home, Government)*. Director - Garland M. Robinson. Wish I could be there" ...**Thomas Holiday, Cherokee, AL.** "I enjoy reading *Seek the Old Paths*. Keep up the good work" ...**Winnie Hightower, Lindsay, OK.** "Keep up your wonderful *S.T.O.P.* paper" ...**James L. Shaver, Flint, MI.** "I very much appreciate your publication *Seek the Old Paths* and very much want to continue to receive it" ...**Bill Noblin, Hartville, MO.** "I really appreciated the invitation to speak on the lectureship this year. It was nice to see some brethren I had not seen in many years. As usual, the lectureship was outstanding. Please keep up the good work" ...**Douglas Hoff, Effingham, IL.** "Thanks for such a wonderful lectureship. I learned so much" ...**Marilyn Lawson, Taneyville, MO.** "We enjoy your paper so much. Please use the enclosed check to help with expenses in publishing *Seek the Old Paths*" ...**LuAnn Thompson, South Charleston, WV.** "I just wanted to drop a note and let you know that I really enjoyed the last issue of *S.T.O.P.* As so many have said, we just must continue to do all that we can to stop the liberals and their false teaching. Today, too many people want their 'ears tickled' by being told that everything is alright with them when in fact they are lost if they do not change" ...**Bobby Crowell, Amory, MS.** "Thanks so much for your publication of the East Corinth church of Christ. I have enjoyed reading it very much. But I would appreciate it if you would discontinue it" ...**Jerry Gooch, Mt. Juliet, TN.** "Please put me on the mailing list for *S.T.O.P.* Thank you" ...**Helen Hash, Lubbock, TX.** "Thank you very much for your stand for the truth. Please continue our subscription to *Seek the Old Paths*. Also, please add our son to the mailing list. He is away for college, and he would also like to receive *Seek the Old Paths*" ...**Steve Daugherty, Valdosta, GA.** "I wanted you to know how very much I enjoy and appreciate your *S.T.O.P.* paper. It is such a blessing, and so rewarding to know that there are still Christians who stand up for the truth and refute those that are in error of the truth. Thank you so very much for *S.T.O.P.* and may God continue to bless you in your work" ...**Gail Nelson, Elkins, WV.** "I enjoyed reading an article on "Battling Baptist Baptism" in your August 2002 issue that I received from a friend. I would like to be put on your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Wayne Kearley, Talladega, AL.** "Thank you for the most wonderful lectureship. Our thanks to all for the many thoughtful things you did for us and our friend Helen Sloan. We pray for you and your good works there in Corinth" ...**Bob & Betty Lacy, Dunnellon, FL.** "I am found reading all the magazines mailed to me. I received it up to date of Aug. 02. Thank you, God bless you. It is always helpful. Please do not relent, keep up the good work" ...**Amos Ohisegun, Nigeria, West Africa.** "We want to help in a small way to continue your stand for the truth. We picked up your publication at a Gospel meeting and have been receiving it ever since. Continue to uphold God's word" ...**M/M Floyd Roe, Cushing, OK.** "With this letter please receive a cordial greeting from your brother in the faith. I want to tell you that I received the bundle of *Seek the Old Paths* May and June issue package. Many thanks and may the Lord reward you for all you have done. Most of the church members now have a copy of their own and they are thankful so much for sending us such kind of sound and scriptural publication in the time of need to encourage every member in the truth. I would like to request you another great favour of remember us sending the 17th Annual Lectureship tapes and mailing 10 copies of *S.T.O.P.* regularly. It will greatly help us to stand

"Once again, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the work being accomplished through the church at East Corinth via the monthly periodical and the lectureship. My only wish is that I could be there in person" ...**Michael Wilk, State College, PA.** "These brethren in Michigan would like very much to receive *S.T.O.P.* This is a strong con-

gregation for the lord's work. We wonder it very much that some members of the Lord's church are easily swift away by the liberalism doctrine. Books written by Rubel, Buddy and Cecil are freely distributed or sent freely by some missionaries to the church members in Manipur, India. Through their literature compromising campaign is very strong here in Manipur, Imphal. We are the only congregation who fought and stood fast to uphold the sound doctrine. Most of the congregations are influenced by this liberalism theory. There is a great delusion in the church and there was division in the church. We need a periodical in the local language to be published with such sound and biblical doctrines and teaching. Literature is one of the effective services spreading the Gospel. We need a local periodical to educate the public and encourage the members in the truth. May God bless your ministry" ...**T. Ngulhopao, Manipur, India.** "Please send your bulletin *Seek the Old Paths*. Thanks for proclaiming the truth" ...**David Brink, Lake Worth, FL.** "This is a gift for *Seek the Old Paths*. Please use the money any way it is needed. I appreciate the paper very much. I hope that it continues to thrive for many years. May God bless your efforts in the kingdom for many years to come. Tell everyone at the church there hello. We pray for their continued stand for the truth. The church there is doing so much for the cause of Christ" ...**Victor M. Eskew, Brookland, AR.** "I have very much enjoyed receiving your publication for the last 5 years. I enjoy it and use it in teaching and preaching" ...**Bill Trees, Sioux Falls, SD.** "Thanks for your good work!" ...**Donald Ginn, Anniston, AL.** "I want to thank you for sending *Seek the Old Paths* to the Piedmont congregation. We appreciate seeing articles by Bob Spurlin. It's good to see someone doing what he can in spite of adverse circumstances" ...**B. Dean Beard, Piedmont, AL.** "Thank you, especially for the fine editorial "Misleading Use of Scripture?" in the September issue of *Seek the Old Paths*. How sad that the blind refuse to see, but at least we must keep trying to help folks out of the eternally condemning sin of addition in worship and otherwise" ...**Gary Colley, McMinnville, TN.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East Corinth Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed **FREE** upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless otherwise noted. Articles are also welcomed.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson** / Associate Editor: **Jimmy Bates**

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