

# Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 20, No. 1

January 2009

## WHAT COULD DENOMINATIONALISM NEVER DO?

Roger D. Campbell

*Few devices of the devil have been as successful in blinding the eyes of men and women as denominationalism has.*

Denominationalism, as it is generally presented in our society, is the concept that the spiritual body of the Lord Jesus is made up of a number of different religious groups/churches, with those different groups having different identities and different organizational structures, believing different and contradictory doctrines, teaching different and contradictory doctrines, following different and contradictory doctrines, and worshipping in different ways. Each denominational group is counted as one slice of the whole "pie," with the general agreement being that no denomination has the right to count itself as the exclusive church of the Bible. This divide-em-up slicing of the "pie" into distinct, no-two-alike pieces, is supposed to constitute God's church and be His idea of unity in Jesus.

Denominationalism has been a part of the United States of America since our nation's official inception in 1776. Denominationalism's history in Europe goes back hundreds of years before that, with Roman Catholicism having its beginning in the early part of the 7th century A.D. Some would suggest that it started much earlier.

All Americans grow up hearing about and observing denominationalism in action. I was raised in a denominational environment. I observed it, endorsed it, and was sprinkled into it. As far as religion was concerned, it was all that I knew at the time. Later, like many of you, I

was blessed to have people teach me what the Bible says about the church of the living God and His way of salvation. The New Testament's teaching about His church is as far removed from modern denominationalism as night is from day.

There are some things that denominationalism could never do.

ONE, **denominationalism could never find Bible authority for its existence.** There is no denying the fact that denominationalism exists. The question that must be faced honestly is this one: Is denominationalism "from heaven, or of men" (Matt. 21:25)? If it truly is from heaven, then it is from God. If it is from God, you know what that means, right? It means we can read about it in the Bible. The truth is, the Bible knows no such thing as denominationalism! There is no Bible verse that commands it, gives an example of it, or implies that it is part of God's will. Friends, there is no Bible authority for denominationalism to exist. It is a man-made arrangement — always has been and always will be. Denominations exist because men want them to exist! In contrast to that, the Bible teaches that God's Son has all authority, and He charges us to do all things by His commands (Matt. 28:18,20).

TWO, **denominationalism could never trace its existence back to the first century.** The Lord Jesus promised to build His church

(Matt. 16:18). He bought that church with His blood (Acts 20:28), and it was founded in the first century with Him as its Head (Eph. 5:23). In the Book of Acts, we read about the beginning of Jesus' church in the first half of the first century. In contrast to the Lord's church, denominationalism was never promised by Jesus, He did not pay for it with His blood, He did not have one iota to do with its establishment, He is not its Head, and we do not read about it anywhere in the New Testament. Yes, as we have already noted, denominationalism has been on the scene for a long time — but not long enough, since it was not around when the church of the Christ began way back in the first century.

THREE, **denominationalism could never prove that it is the body of the Christ about which we read in the New Testament.** "But I have always heard that the one universal body of Christ is made up of all the different denominations, with each different denomination being a member of that body, like 1 Corinthians 12 says." In 1 Corinthians 12:20 it is written, "But now are they many members, yet but one body." Who or what are the "members" about which Paul wrote? Was he speaking about denominations or disciples? He could not have been saying that the first-century body of

*(Continued on page 4)*

**Denominationalism...**



Editorial...

## Answering Questions On Salvation #5

Garland M. Robinson

This is the last part of a review of passages set forth by “faith only” advocates in an effort to refute what the Bible teaches concerning faith and obedience. The verses below are used to support their man-made doctrine of “faith alone.” Please refer to the earlier four parts to get a more complete answer to their assertions.

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**I John 5:1,** “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”

Yes, believing in Jesus is essential to being born of God. Jesus told Nicodemus that without being born again, no one could see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). And then in verse 5, he tells him what is involved in being born again. It is a birth (one birth, not two) that is made up of two elements: water and the Spirit. The only water we read of in the New Testament that is connected with the kingdom of God is the water in baptism. This is shown in Acts 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 16, 18, 19, 22, Romans 6, I Corinthians 12, Galatians 3, Colossians 1-2, I Peter 3.

The word “believeth” is not followed by the word “alone.” This verse does not say that those who believe only (with nothing more involved) are born of God. Those who are born of God are those who believe Jesus AND obey his will. This is made clear in Luke 6:46, Matt. 7:21, Heb. 5:8-9. Faith only is dead and useless.

**I John 5:11-13,** “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

“Belief” sums up all that is involved in being saved. This is faith, repentance, confession and baptism. “Faith” is put for the whole. All that one does in obeying the Lord’s commands is done in faith. Otherwise, all that we do is vain, useless.

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I remind the reader that what follows below was written in answer to a gentleman who had asked us about the many passages he listed in his letter. His point was that since all the verses he listed speak of “faith”, then “faith alone” is all that is required for salvation.

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I wonder why you (the person who wrote the letter) have searched fervently in order to list every passage that says anything about faith and ignore all other passages? Surely you’re not trying to weigh some scriptures against other scriptures. If you were to find 100 verses on faith and only 10 on baptism, would that mean the 100 outweighs the 10? The Bible teaches that ALL scripture is inspired of God (II Tim. 3:16-17). Not one single verse is more important than another. No verse contradicts another. The Bible is in perfect harmony. Every verse compliments every other verse. Some verses explain other verses. Some verses give more detail than other verses. But every single one fits in with all the others. It is handling the word of God deceitfully to try to make some verses contradict or counteract other verses.

FAITH sums up the entire process of one’s salvation. Without faith, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). For a sinner to be saved, every act a man does is done in faith or otherwise a sinner cannot be saved. No one can have forgiveness of sins without REPENTING of their sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19; Luke 13:3,5). But, one must repent “in faith” or his repentance is invalid. No one can

have forgiveness of sins without CONFESSING that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:10). But, one must confess “in faith” or his confession is invalid. No one can have forgiveness of sins without being BAPTIZED into water (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; I Peter 3:21). But, without “faith,” one’s baptism is invalid and useless. One cannot have continual forgiveness of sins without LIVING A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN LIFE (I John 1:7-10). But, living according to God’s word is invalid unless it is lived in and by “faith.”

I wonder why you did not list Mark 16:16? It certainly requires believing (faith) in order to be saved. But, I suspect why? It also requires baptism to be saved. And, baptism does not fit your agenda. I’m not going to argue with the Lord and tell him he got it wrong in Mark 16:16. According to YOUR doctrine, you would have the Lord say, “He that believeth and is NOT baptized shall be saved.” Genesis 3:4 says the devil added the word NOT to God’s Word when he said “ye shall NOT surely die.” I’m not going to be in his company. Why do you want to be there?

You ask me the question that “if baptism is essential to salvation, then why is it not mentioned in all the verses you listed?” (He is referring to a letter I had written to him earlier). I can ask you the same question in regards to repentance. If repentance is essential for salvation (and it is), then why is it not mentioned in all the verses you listed? If confession is essential to salvation (and it is), then why is it not mentioned in all the verses you listed? Repentance, confession and baptism is implied and included in the word “faith.” Faith is only a saving faith WHEN it OBEYS, WORKS, ACTS. We read of repentance, confession and water baptism being essential to salvation in other verses such as: Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30; II Peter 3:9; Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21.

You ask that “if a man must be baptized to be saved, then why do all these verses fail to say so? For example, in Acts 10:43 why didn’t Peter say, ‘whosoever believeth in Him and is baptized shall receive remission (forgiveness) of sins?’” I call your attention to Acts 2:38 where water bap-

tism is included for the remission of sins. Does that mean that Acts 2:38 contradicts Acts 10:43? Certainly not. Shall I hold on to Acts 2:38 and dismiss Acts 10:43 because I like the one and despise the other? Certainly not. I must “rightly divide the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15). I must let the Bible tell me what is right. I must learn what God’s word says. To properly understand God’s word I must take ALL it says on a subject. I, nor you, can take just one verse and ignore other verses on the same subject. God does not give us the privilege to pick and choose the verses we like and ignore others.

When searching the subject of salvation (which by necessity involves receiving the forgiveness of sins), there is no ONE VERSE that tells us everything that is necessary to be saved. For example, in **John 8:24** we learn that unless I BELIEVE in Jesus I will die in my sins. If that is all the Bible said on the subject, then that is all one has to do. But, there are other verses on the subject. We must accept them too.

Jesus said in **Luke 13:3,5** that unless one REPENTS of their sins, he will perish. If that is all the Bible said on the subject, then that is all one has to do. But, there are other verses on the subject. We must accept them too.

Jesus said in **Matthew 10:32** that unless one CONFESSES Him, He will deny him before the Father. If that is all the Bible said on the subject, then that is all one has to do. But, there are other verses on the subject. We must accept them too.

In **Mark 16:16**, Jesus said that one must BELIEVE and be BAPTIZED to be saved. If that is all the Bible said on the subject, then that is all one has to do. But, there are other verses on the subject. We must accept them too.

When we look at ALL that Jesus said on the subject of salvation (the forgiveness of sins), we learn that **one must BELIEVE (John 8:24), REPENT (Luke 13:3,5), CONFESS (Matt. 10:31) and be BAPTIZED (Mark 16:16)**. We can’t take one passage and ignore the others. That is handling the word of God deceitfully. Why do you fight so hard against the words of the Lord Jesus? Why won’t you believe what Jesus said about salvation?

You mention again and again that if baptism were essential to salvation, you would expect all these passages on faith to include it. But, since they do not, then your conclusion is that baptism is not essential to salvation. If we follow your conclusions, when we read Hebrews 5:9, where we learn that Jesus will save those who OBEY him, we would expect it to say that Jesus is the author of salvation to all those who have FAITH ALONE. Following your conclusions, we need to rewrite Hebrews 5:9. But, we can’t rewrite it. God said what he meant. Hebrews 5:9 contradicts the doctrine of “faith alone” because it requires obedience to be saved. “Faith alone” won’t allow obedience, if it did, it would not be “faith alone.” “Faith alone” excludes everything else.

Jesus taught in Matthew 7:21 that he would save those who OBEY him. Why didn’t he say that he would save those who BELIEVE in him without anything more (faith alone)? These multitudes had “faith”, and even more than faith alone. They even did many wonderful works in Jesus’ name, but they were not saved. Why? According to verse 21, they had not obeyed him. They had not complied with ALL that Jesus required. They stopped short (took from) or went beyond (added to) obeying him. Obedience is not compatible with faith alone. Yet, obedience is essential to being saved according to Matthew 7:21 and Hebrews 5:9.

Ephesians 2:8 says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Your question about this verse is, “*why is there no mention made of baptism? Why didn’t Paul say, for by grace are ye saved through faith and baptism?*” You fail to understand that saving faith (New Testament faith) includes baptism. It includes repentance. It includes confession as well. FAITH sums up man’s response (reaction) to God’s requirements.

You claim that “*water baptism is a WORK (something that man does to please God), and yet the Bible teaches again and again that a person is not saved by works.*” Using your definition of “work” being “anything that man does to please God,” then salva-

tion cannot be by “faith.” Notice this simple point according to your explanation: 1) Everything that man does in order to please God is a work and men are not saved by works; 2) Faith is something that man does to please God; 3) Therefore, salvation cannot be by faith.

Faith itself is a work. A person has to do it. It is a deliberate action taken by an individual. Faith is not done “to” us, it is done “by” us. John 6:29 even tells us that faith is a work. It is a work God commands men to do. So, when a man believes, when he does the work God has commanded him to do, has he earned his salvation? Certainly not!

Any action man does requires activity on his part. Something as simple as faith requires activity. It is something that man DOES. So, faith is a work. But, man did not design it. Man does not earn salvation by having faith, even though it is something he DOES to please God.

You and I both believe that man cannot earn salvation. As a matter of fact, I have never talked to anyone who believed they could earn salvation. Man cannot do anything to obligate God and say God owes salvation to him. But, at the same time, God has placed stipulations (conditions, demands) upon receiving salvation. Let me illustrate it this way. Let’s say it takes me an hour to mow my yard. If I said I would give you ten million dollars to mow my yard, and you mowed it, could you say you had earned ten million dollars? Certainly not! You could say you did what I required to receive the ten million dollars, but you could not say you had earned it. No man could mow anyone’s yard and say they had earned ten million dollars for doing so. The point is this, God extends salvation to sinful man. He says he will give eternal life to those who believe AND obey him (John 3:16; Mark 16:16; Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:9). What then does one have to do? What is involved in obeying him? The first step is **faith** — believing he is who he claims to be and that he will do as he promised. Is that it? Is that all? Is there nothing more? According to you that is all. According to you, anything more is only done in gratitude for already having received eternal life. That would be nice if you could read that in the New Testament, but it’s not there. Jesus



says that a living faith includes repenting of sins (Luke 13:3), confessing him as the Son of God (Matt. 10:32) and being baptized (Mark 16:16). When all these things have been done, in faith, can one say he has earned salvation? No, not at all. Has he even tried to earn it? No. In obedience, individuals simply have met the conditions God placed upon sinners to be a recipient of salvation.

Every act of obedience that God requires is a work that GOD designed and requires man to do. It's not man's work, it's God's work. It's the work God requires of man.

You say that *“salvation is not DOING something, it is KNOWING someone.”* You don't believe your own statement because you say that one must believe to be saved. Friend, when one “believes” in Jesus he is DOING something. That's not hard to understand. I either believe or I don't believe. I must decide whether to believe in Jesus or not. When I decide to believe, I have DONE something. When I decide to repent, I have DONE something. When I decide to confess, I have DONE something. When I decide to be baptized, I have DONE something.

Salvation does not come by simply knowing someone. It comes by BELIEVING in him and OBEYING his word. I Peter 1:22 says “ye have purified your souls in OBEYING THE TRUTH...” If “faith only” were true, why doesn't this verse say we have purified our souls in faith only, and then later we can obey the truth?

Romans 6:17-18 tells us that we become the servants of God by obey-

ing that “form of doctrine which was delivered you.” That form of doctrine is water baptism that is discussed in verses 3-6. It is THEN that we become servants of righteousness. This does not override faith's role. It includes it and completes it.

Being saved involves being “born again,” for without it, no man shall see or enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5). But being born again (the new birth) does not come at the point of faith, it comes in the act of water baptism. There's no birth in faith? There's nothing remotely connected with birth in the action of faith. However, the new birth is connected with baptism in Romans 6:1-18. The “old man” is buried and a “new man” arises from the waters of baptism (v.6). The new man arises to “walk a newness of life” (v.4). He thereby is dead to sin (v.7). “Being THEN made free from sin” (vs.17-18) one becomes a servant of righteousness. This is what Saul of Tarsus did in becoming free from his sins. They were washed away in the blood of Jesus when he was baptized (Acts 22:16). This is what those in Acts 2:38-41 did. They were baptized FOR the remission of sins.

Isn't it interesting that in EVERY example of conversion in the book of acts, baptism is always mentioned? You don't always read about repentance or confession, but you do water baptism. That does not mean that repentance or confession was not present (done). When we read of someone being converted, it is IMPLIED that the person repented and confessed, because they are essential

in being saved. If baptism is not essential, then why it is mentioned in every case?

If *repentance* is essential in being saved, then salvation is not by faith alone.

If *confession* is essential in being saved, then salvation is not by faith alone.

Saving faith is an active, obedient faith. It is a faith that trusts in God, not ourselves.

As you can see, I have taken considerable time in looking at every verse you have listed. I've honestly and sincerely considered every word you have written. All I ask of you is that you do the same. The beautiful picture of salvation is seen in the New Testament. It is in perfect harmony with itself. The Devil is sly and crafty. Let neither one of us fall into his trap. Our goal is to please the Lord and no one else. He is the judge. He is the one before whom we will one day stand to be judged. Let's honor him by “rightly dividing” his word (II Tim. 2:15).

Remember, the ONLY time you find the words “faith only” in the Bible is in James 2:24 and there they are preceded with the word “NOT.” James 2:24 says, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and NOT BY FAITH ONLY.” The “works” are works of obedience, the works God devised and commands that we do.

I plead with you to BELIEVE the truth and OBEY it before it's too late.

## Denominationalism...

(Continued from page 1)

the Christ was made up of different denominations, because there were none that existed then! In verse 27 we read, “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually” (NKJV). By the Spirit, Paul told some people that they were “members” of the body. To whom was the Book of First Corinthians originally addressed? Answer: “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth” (I Cor. 1:2). So, not different denominations, but the individual members of God's church, they are the ones that made

up the Lord's body.

What do we expect to see in a human? Is it not one head with one body, and one body with one head? Remember, the Lord's body is His church (Eph. 1:22,23). God's arrangement is for Jesus to serve as the one Head of His one church/body (Eph. 5:23). Denominationalism may try to claim Jesus as its head, but no human being from the past, present, or future could ever prove from the New Testament that Jesus has any connection to the man-made and divisive setup known as denominationalism.

**FOUR, denominationalism could never rightfully claim that**

**it helps people become saved and get prepared for heaven.** Denominations are active. Through their teaching and benevolent programs, they influence multitudes. Some of them raise large sums of money and draw huge crowds. We believe that the Bible teaches that the Lord wants His people to be active, teaching, and benevolent. He does not mind His church raising big amounts of money and having large crowds, as long as it is all done in a scriptural fashion.

But, it is God's truth that can set men free from sin (John 8:32), not the commandments of men that turn people from the truth (Titus 1:14). In

order to be saved from past sins, a lost person must *believe in Jesus as the Son of God, repent of his sins, confess faith in Jesus, and be baptized for the remission of sins.* That is a far cry from “pray the Sinner’s Prayer,” which is the traditional denominational answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” Advocates of denominationalism encourage people to “Join the church of your choice.” The Bible teaches no such thing. The Bible’s message is that God has made His choice: salvation is available in the blood-purchased church of His Son (Col. 1:13,14).

Denominationalism propagates and supports man-made messages, none of which are of eternal spiritual benefit to any human being. Hearing, accepting, and obeying the teaching of brand X denomination will make a person a member of brand X denomination. On the other hand, when one hears, believes, and “obeys the gospel” unto the salvation of his/her soul (II Thess. 1:7-9), God adds such a saved person to His church (Acts 2:47), of which Jesus is the Savior (Eph. 5:23).

Few devices of the devil have been as successful in blinding the eyes of men and women as denominationalism has. I hate abortion. I abhor the ideas of homosexuality and same-sex marriages. In the same way and at least to the same degree, though I love the precious people that are caught up in its error, I detest denominationalism and all of its evil consequences.

Biblically speaking, there are many things that denominationalism could never do. We have observed a few of them in this article. Denominationalism, because it is not of God, is from Satan. It is appropriate to point out the pitfalls of all forms of spiritual darkness, including denominationalism. However, in addition to showing from the Bible what is amiss in the religious world, we must also make a diligent effort to present positively the Light of the world and His gospel of light (II Cor. 4:4).

The apostle Paul was prepared to teach God’s soul-saving Gospel (Rom. 1:15,16). Are we ready to do the same?

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# MUST WE PERSONALLY GO TO FALSE TEACHERS BEFORE REBUKING THEIR ERROR?

*Douglas Hoff*

In today’s world when false teachers are left alone, they can literally propagate error around the world in a short period of time. This puts countless souls in jeopardy of losing their souls. By “false teacher” we mean one whose doctrine is contrary to God’s word. This person may have been challenged regarding his beliefs and practices but then again he may have never been confronted. Admittedly, everyone makes mistakes. There is however a recognizable difference between a man who is sound in faith who is mistaken on a small point and one whose core beliefs are wrong. The faithful Gospel preacher will readily admit his mistake and correct it. Hopefully, the one teaching outright error will graciously receive correction. When the faithful approach a false teacher, it should be in the spirit of meekness and with the desire to see this soul saved. The correction should never be done in a mean spirit. Additionally, one should be sure of the facts in the case.

Over the years, some brethren have misunderstood and/or misapplied the Lord’s instruction on how to go about rebuking those in error. A common idea is that before exposing a false teacher and his doctrine, we must first personally address the man. It is affirmed that failing to do so is actually sinful. Where does such thinking originate? Usually, it is based on Matthew 18:15-17 which states: “*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*” Notice, however, that this is not dealing with one publicly teaching error. Instead, it is

dealing with a personal transgression between two brothers.

While this passage does not deal with false teachers, its principle can be applied. That is, if possible, it is always a good idea to personally address one who is in error. Recall that Paul withstood Peter to his face and even in the presence of all the brethren (Gal. 2:11,14). While this encounter was personal in nature it surely was not done privately. Was Paul sinning by doing so? Certainly not. Jesus on several occasions exposed the error of the Pharisees to their faces (e.g., Luke 11:38-45). However, he also did so when they were not present (Matt. 16:5-12).

While it is a good idea to address these concerns personally, there are numerous examples where correction was offered from afar. Paul was not able to go to Corinth upon first hearing about the number of doctrinal and moral problems within that congregation. However, this did not stop him from writing a letter to those Christians telling them to make much needed correction. John was not able to personally confront Diotrephes yet he still warned the brethren about this man’s sinful conduct (III John 9). Paul warned Timothy about the danger Hymenaeus and Philetus posed because of their false teaching. The apostle publicized their foolishness and made no apology for doing so. He put it in writing that “*...their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some*” (II Tim. 2:17-18).

Because false teaching can overthrow the faith of some, it is imperative that error is exposed when first detected. This is what Paul wrote about in Romans 16:17,18. Take the time to read it.

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*Voices from the past...*

## THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

*B. C. Goodpasture (deceased)*

Everything which God has made in creation and redemption has a mission. Nothing walks with aimless feet in the economy of God. The church is a divine institution — it is of divine origin. It, therefore, has a mission.

The building of the church was an expensive undertaking. The Lord could create the heavens and the earth without the shedding of a single drop of blood, but without shedding of his own blood he could not establish the church. “Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for it” (Eph. 5:25). He purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). Even before his death, Jesus sacrificed for the church. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). He was rich in terms of heavenly and eternal values, yet he became poor, “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:7,8). Surely Christ would not have made such sacrifices for the church unless it was to have a mission in some measure worthy of its cost. What, then, is the mission of the church?

The question can be answered both negatively and positively. **It is not the mission of the church to furnish amusement for the world or even for its own members.** Innocent amusement in proper proportion has its place in the life of all normal persons, but it is not the business of the church to furnish it. The church would come off a poor second if it undertook to compete with institutions established for the express purpose of entertaining people. It would make itself ridiculous if it entered into such competition. Again, it is not the responsibility of the church as such to furnish recreation for its members. A certain amount of recreation is necessary to the health and

happiness of the individual. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, it is said, and rightly said; but it is not the function of the church to furnish the play. The church was not established to feature athletics. Rather it emphasizes the principle that “bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8). Sometimes one would conclude, from the emphasis given to recreation, that godliness is profitable for a little, and that bodily exercise is profitable for all things.

For the church to turn aside from its divine work to furnish amusement and recreation is to pervert its mission. It is to degrade its mission. Amusement and recreation should stem from the home rather than the church. The church, like Nehemiah, has a great work to do; and it should not come down on the plains of Ono to amuse and entertain. As the church turns its attention to amusement and recreation, it will be shorn of its power as Samson was when his hair was cut. Only as the church becomes worldly, as it pillows its head on the lap of Delilah, will it want to turn from its wonted course to relatively unimportant matters. Imagine Paul selecting and training a group of brethren to compete in the Isthmian games! Of his work at Corinth, he said: “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). What then, is the work of the church?

On the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the church, we find it **preaching the gospel.** It is reasonable to expect the church, under the leadership of the apostles, to be engaged in its divinely-assigned work. Christ, before his ascension, had laid upon his disciples, his church, the grave and momentous responsibility of preaching the Gospel to every creature in every age of the world (Mark 16:15,16). During the lifetime of the apostles, the church was busily

engaged in preaching the Gospel to the remote ends of the earth. In his first epistle to Timothy, Paul said, “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (3:14,15). The church is the “pillar and ground of the truth” — not truth in general, but rather truth in particular. The church must support and preach the Gospel always as a part of its divine mission.

Further, the church in Jerusalem **“continued stedfastly in the apostles’ teaching.”** In addition to preaching the Gospel to alien sinners, the church taught and built up its own members that they might “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). The Lord has made ample provisions for the edification of his people, the church. “He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error” (Eph. 4:11-14). It is, therefore, the work of the church to promote the growth and development of its members.

Finally, the church in Jerusalem **ministered to the material needs of its worthy poor** (Acts 4:32-37; 6:1-6). The Gentile churches sent help to the brethren in Judea (Acts 11:29,30; Rom. 15:25,26). Paul said that he was always ready to help those in need (Gal. 2:10). It is a part of the work of the church to help those who are in need, but the church



is under no obligation to help those who will not help themselves. “If any will not work,” said Paul, “neither let him eat” (2 Thess. 3:10).

If the church will discharge its duty in preaching the gospel, in edifying its members, and in helping the worthy poor, it will not have desire or

time merely to amuse and entertain. (*Gospel Advocate*, May 20, 1948)

## BABY STEPS

Roger A. Scully, Jr.

As children are born into our homes, we understand that the process ahead is a long one which will take great patience and understanding. We learn that certain things cannot be helped, such as waking at all hours of the night for feeding and changing diapers. We take special care in the formula we use, the environment in which we place our little ones, and the things to which they are exposed. As they grow, we are patient with them as they learn to walk, begin to eat solid foods, and the most difficult act of all, potty training.

We watch our children grow with joy, continually loving them, helping them to correct their mistakes, making sure they are growing properly, and being incredibly patient as they learn the manners of life. Sometimes we cry, most times we laugh, we often get excited, but through it all we know that life is not easy and that the process of growth is a long one. Living the Christian life, dear reader, is no different.

Jesus explains entering the family of God as being a new birth in John 3:3-5. Christians are born of water and the Spirit. Seeing as how water baptism is the only water connected with the church and salvation, then we can easily determine that the new birth about which Jesus speaks being of water, is baptism for the remission of sins (cf. Rom. 6:3,4; Acts 2:38). Being born of the Spirit speaks of complying with the Spirit’s revealed terms. The Holy Spirit has revealed the Word to us (I Cor. 2:9-13; Eph. 3:3,4). Jesus says we are born of the Spirit (John 3:5). Peter writes that we are “born again...by the word of God” (I Peter 1:23). Thus, it becomes clear that the Spirit, by means of the word, begets Christians when they comply with the terms therein revealed, being baptized into the family of God (Acts 2:41,47; I Cor. 12:13).

When one is “born again” he is described as being a “babe” in Christ (Heb. 5:13; I Peter 2:2). It is now time to begin the growth process. A Christian’s growth is guided by our heavenly Father through the pattern of His word (Heb. 8:5; II Tim. 3:16,17). Our Father, then, watches with patience as we grow into adulthood, realizing the difficulties we face, and the present need to be loved and chastened, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Heb. 12:6).

As we grow, we sometimes fall, “for all have sinned” (Rom. 3:23; cf. I John 1:8), but we get up, wipe the sinful dust from our body by repenting, and we continue to press forward by “walking in the light” (I John 1:7,9). Sometimes we make mistakes, sometimes we cause heartbreak, and other times we simply act stubbornly, yet through it all we are not separated from the love of God or from the love of our brothers and sisters (Rom. 8:35,39). Finally, after many struggles and discouragements, we become “of full age” and are able to eat strong meat (Heb. 5:14). It is then that we look to our “younger” brothers and sisters, those who are but babes, and with patience help them grow, laughing with them, crying with them, and even becoming aggravated with them. But we remember that we ourselves were once but babes, in need of milk, and even now, as those who are full grown, we still make mistakes and are in need of being chastised.

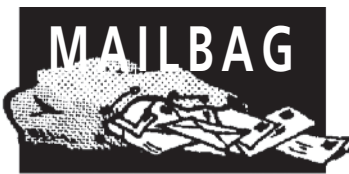
The next time you see your brethren falling short of God’s glory, remember the weakness of their flesh, remember the patience and love that has been expressed toward us, remember your struggles through this burdensome life, and, above all, remember that we are to help one another, not despise, reject, and shun

one another. Sure, there are times when the withdrawal of fellowship is necessary (Eph. 5:11; II Thess. 3:6; I Cor. 5), but this is not that about which I am writing. I am writing about our brothers and sisters who are trying to be faithful with each step, yet are often hindered by the bumps in the road. Remember, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom. 5:8,9).

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

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Anonymous .....	\$50
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Ruby York .....	\$180
Pollyanna Garrison .....	\$50
Teddy & Juanita Medlen.....	\$25
Anonymous .....	\$100
Patsy Queen.....	\$10
Bobby & Mary Lawrence.....	\$75
Chuck & Nancy Verkist.....	\$25
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Central C/C, Denison, TX .....	\$20
M. S. Rooker.....	\$100
East End C/C, McMinnville, TN .....	\$275
Beginning Balance.....	\$21,814.20
Contributions .....	\$1,705.00
Debits	
Postage .....	\$1,498.72
Supplies .....	\$192.93
Ending Balance .....	\$21,827.55



## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"Thanks for a truthful paper" ...**Wilma Donaldson, Dickson, TN.** "My name was sent in by a friend. I received the October 2008 issue and enjoyed it so much. You are doing a wonderful work. The church is really drifting. I would like for you to send a copy to each of these names. Thanks" ...**Vivian Dorman, Risan, AR.**

"I would very much like to receive your monthly publication" ...**Joan Hulse, Ravenden, AR.** "I note a message in your October 2008 MailBag which I quote a part, 'For many years I have received 10 copies of Seek The Old Paths each month. I have given them to neighbors and other friends.' The message was signed by Arnold Whisenant, Jacksonville, Florida. I told you years ago that a friend had given me a copy of *Seek The Old Paths* (issue September 1997) which moved me immediately from a local liberal church. That neighbor and friend was Arnold Whisenant. As I said before, you never know when a written article will surface, where it will surface and how much good a written article can do, perhaps years later. God is THE Audience. I greatly appreciate *Seek The Old Paths* and the great benefit it has been to me" ...**Robert Price, Jacksonville, FL.** "This has been a VERY GOOD day for our household. I quite by accidental searching for acappella singing, found your website. We have listened all day and into the evening. I am anxious to tell my brethren at Stiversville Church of Christ of my find. This indeed is a treasure to any Christian who has the internet. Bless you" ...**Larry Benderman, Elder, Stiversville Church of Christ, Maury Co. TN.** [NOTE: Listen to our 24/7 radio broadcast at [wsoj.net](http://wsoj.net) or [pioneerpreachers.com](http://pioneerpreachers.com). Search for a certain subject or speaker, or simply click on the LISTEN button.]

"Thank you. Keep up the good work" ...**Anonymous, Union City, TN.** "Dear Brethren, I always look forward to receiving STOP each month. I'm sending a small donation to help with the printing and expenses of STOP. May the Lord give you all strength and courage to keep teaching the truth of the Bible with love" ...**Lorene Wilson, Binger, OK.** "Dear Mr. Robinson, Thank you for your monthly publication of STOP. I look forward to reading it each month. Enclosed is a contribution toward your expenses. My family and I are home worshipping right now because we have not found a faithful church of Christ in our area. They seem to be doing their own thing and drifting away from the truth. We live in the South Jersey area. May God continue to bless you and the work you are doing" ...**Steve & Sue Siligato, Millville, NJ.** "Please remove me from your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Debbie Vickers, Tuckerman, AR.** "Could you please send 30 copies every month for my congregation? We are a very small membership and it would help. I love your paper. I'm sending a small check to help. Thank you" ...**Patsy Queen, Summerville, GA.** "Bro. Garland, We all at the Bolivar Church of Christ in Cleveland, Mississippi, enjoy getting and reading *Seek The Old Paths*. I especially enjoyed the article by Victor M. Eskew, 'Liberation Theology.' Thanks for any help and thank you very much for the paper. Our only hope for this country is the Bible. Your paper is getting better and better. When someone asks for their name to be removed they are just throwing up a flag telling whoever reads it that they are on the Devil's side. No two ways about it" ...**Roy Boone, Cleveland, MS.**

"Enclosed is a check as an anonymous gift for *Seek The Old Paths*, really an excellent paper!" ...**Name withheld, Oxford, MS.** "Please remove my name from your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Frances Cooper, Newport, AR.** "Dear Brother Robinson, I really appreciate the publication. It is very interesting and good articles. It exposes error and brings out the truth, which we need so badly. In Christian Love" ...**Elsie Coleman, Poplar Bluff, MO.** "Dear Sir, Please send *Seek the Old Paths* to my friend. Enclosed is a small donation to help with expenses and mailing of your great publication. God Bless" ...**Teddy Medlen, Jonesville, MI.** "Thank you for using one of my articles. Keep up the good work" ...**Earl Claud, Dover, TN.**

## Nobel Prize Winner Says Man Is Divine Creation

Romans 1:20, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." When he was 17, medical student John Eccles began asking questions about the nature of man, what is thought, and what is the meaning of life? Fifty years later, after he had become one of the world's greatest experts on the human brain, had become Sir John Eccles and had received the Nobel Prize, he felt free enough to speak out about his studies. Sir John made it perfectly clear that the purely materialistic and evolutionary definition of man simply isn't supported by science. He pointed out that his research has helped us describe in great detail what happens in the brain, nerves, and muscles when you decide to move your finger. But, he says, there is no material event that describes how this complex sequence of actions gets started. Man, he concludes, is more than tissue. Man has a non-material mind. He thinks scientists who say that man can be fully explained by materialistic principles are spreading a modern form of superstition. He adds, "Their beliefs are worn out, they lead us nowhere. Materialism gives you a hopeless, empty life, one without values." Sir John concluded, "Each of us is a unique, conscious being, a divine creation...it is the only view consistent with all the evidence." At least to this last one point we say a hearty, Amen! References: Jennifer Boeth. A Scientific God. Dallas Times Herald, Feb. 3, 1983. pgs. 1 & 8 (Creation Moment email service).

**Seek The Old Paths** is a monthly publication of the **East End 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.

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