

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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WHAT "A MESS"

The above title is a copy of the Out Front column of the front page of the Religion section of the *Abilene Reporter News* (Saturday, October 2, 1999). One of our members brought their paper to me on Sunday asking if I had seen the announcement (I had overlooked it). I went to Abilene (Texas) Tuesday to see a brother at the hospital and decided to go to this meeting at the **Highland Church of Christ**.

I arrived at the building at 6:15p.m. and really had no idea what to expect. I have had some experience with the "**Walk to Emmaus**" and knew it was an attempt to "connect" with the Spirit (over a weekend retreat). This program originated in the Methodist church.

I feared the Highland congregation might play taped instrumental music during the service. I was wrong on this. They did not play taped music, they had the real thing. That's right, a full blown band. Four women singers who sang and played a variety of instruments for the duration of the service. I walked into the auditorium and right into a concert. These women also led the singing (with the instruments) during the "service part" of the gathering.

They showed the Emmaus instructional video as advertised. The thrust of the video was consistent with what I have been told by those who have gone on the "walks" namely, that on these retreats the Spirit reveals Himself in a variety of ways and guides (directly) those who seek His presence. The video is basi-

cally a collection of "testimonials," geared to convince the audience that something (the Holy Spirit) is missing and this "walk" can get you connected.

After the video, the all girl band played and led the audience in more songs. All the songs were sung as the audience stood and swayed with hands in the air (in true Pentecostal fashion). Brethren, only the fact that I had not eaten since breakfast kept me from getting physically ill during all this vain worship (Matt. 15:7-9). During this segment of song the plate was also passed to help sponsor more and more Emmaus events.

I was sure by this time that I could not be surprised by anything else that was to happen, but I was sadly mistaken. **Eddie Sharp** (ACU instructor and the pulpit minister for the University congregation in Abilene) approached the stage. He read (after stating that the Spirit had been stirred) the "liturgy." I don't know what other word to use for it. He asked the audience to get out their "purple book" (some Emmaus creed book, or some such thing). He would read certain sections or passages from the "purple book" (not the Bible, nor were the passages scriptures) and the audience would repeat the lines. In others, he would read a certain part and they would finish by reading the rest and say amen etc... It was just like watching the Catholics doing their "liturgy."

He then led them in a confessional type prayer where the whole crowd confessed to several sins (collectively) and asked to be forgiven.

This segment was reminiscent of the group crying and mass repentance of the Promise Keepers. It was a written prayer that was read, very little feeling, just vain repetitions (Matt. 6).

After a few more songs, Eddie Sharp took the stage again and presented the message of the hour. He began by running down the church. In fact, his introductory comment was that as a church of Christ preacher he wasn't used to preaching to a crowd where everyone was invited. This is a blatant attempt to paint the church in a negative light. (I'm sure Jesus was impressed with this smart-alec man running down and making light of His bride, the body He heads and died for (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23-25). Since when have we not "invited" everyone to come and study God's word with us. This is a lie, and a disgraceful attempt to taint the reputation of members who have labored for years in evangelistic efforts sacrificing and working tirelessly to fund and build both the building at Highland as well as the university where he draws his pay check.

Other snide comments were made at the expense of the church as well. He then went on to laud the "Emmaus Movement" (He clearly holds it in much higher regard than the Lord's church). He plainly and specifically taught that it does not matter where you worship or what "tradition of faith" you're in, just serve Jesus. He said we are to follow

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What A "Mess"...



Editorial...

MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH #2

It is a misconception that the church of Christ does not believe the Old Testament. On the contrary, Romans 15:4 clearly teaches the Old Testament was written for our learning. We profit from it by learning that when men obeyed God, they were blessed and when they disobeyed God, they were punished. *“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known”* (Deut. 11:26-28).

All the great stories and events of the Old Testament illustrate the great Truth of the New Testament. New Testament preachers constantly referred to it! *“All Scripture is inspired of God”* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). With a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, the New Testament is easier to understand. The Old complements the New.

The Truth is, we (the church of Christ, the church of the New Testament) do not follow the Old Testament in respect to learning and knowing how to worship God today. It was for another people (Israel) at another time (before Christ). Jesus died in order to take the Old Testament out of the way (Col. 2:14). He took away the first (Old Testament) that he might establish the second (New Testament) (Heb. 10:9-10). Even when given it was temporary and would last only until Christ came (Gal. 3:19,16). People are no longer under it, i.e. obligated to observe its commandments (Gal. 3:24). Men today will be judged by the words of Jesus and his apostles and inspired writers (John 12:48; cf. James 1:21; Rev. 20:12), not the Old

Testament.

It is a misconception that the church is made up of all the various denominations. Most people believe that one church is as good as another — one denomination is as good as another. John 15:1-8 is used in support of this belief where Jesus tells about the vine and the branches. They consider all the denominations to be branches on the vine (Christ). Therefore to them, it matters not what a religious group believes or teaches, because “we’re all branches on the vine” and, consequently, members of every group will be in heaven (according to them).

Men’s beliefs have always been contrary to inspired Truth. It’s not what men believe, but what the Bible says that matters. Notice the use of personal pronouns in John 15:1-8. “He,” “him,” “ye,” “a man” are all words that refer to individuals, not groups of people or denominational bodies. Jesus is the vine and each individual person who has obeyed the Gospel are branches on the vine. If “a” person does not abide in the Lord’s Word, he will be cut off from the vine and will be gathered with all others like him and they all will be burned.

The truth is: “one denomination is just as good as another.” Not even one denomination is supported by the Bible! None existed in the first century. They all were founded by men centuries after the Lord established His church. The New Testament speaks of **ONLY ONE CHURCH**. Jesus said, *“I will build my church,”* not churches (Matt. 16:18). Ephesians 4:4-5 says *“there is one body, one faith.”* Jesus will only save His body (Eph. 5:23) and no other. Denominations do not belong to the Lord and will be “rooted up” in the last day (Matt. 15:13). This makes our task of evangelism

much more urgent.

“Good moral people” (according to our standards) are lost in denominationalism. It is beyond my comprehension how so many are now joining hands with denominations in joint services. The devil could not be happier. Denominational churches are the offspring of the devil, not Christ. They are enemies of the Lord, not friends (cf. Matt. 12:3).

It is a misconception that the church is a social organization and is to provide for the social needs of its members. The idea of “fun and games” is the concept many have. People see the church as healing the physical and social needs of the public. Many programs sponsored by liberal churches are geared to furnish and satisfy the physical and social needs of its members! Gymnasiums (called family life centers, multipurpose buildings), ball teams, recreational events, entertainment bonanzas, “Gymnastics to the glory of God,” “Annual fishing tournaments,” skating parties, Opryland trips, and fun and games, is the order of the day. The work and purpose of the church is not found in any of these things!

The drawing power of God is not “fun and games” and a full stomach. It is the Word of God (Mark 16:15-16; John 6:44-45). The Gospel is the *“power of God unto salvation”* (Rom. 1:16). Without the Gospel, God is powerless. Men are called by the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14). If it takes candy to get people to church this week, it will take a Big Mac next week. If it takes a ball team to get people to church in the summer it will take hunting trips and basketball in the winter. BUT, when people are drawn to the Lord’s church by the Gospel (God’s power unto salvation), they will be there every time the doors open! They will be truly converted.

Christians can certainly have fun, and do have fun. They are the most fun-loving people around. But, there is a time and place for recreation and social activities in our personal lives. But, these things are not the work of the church. They are works of individuals, of families, not the church. When the church gets into this business, they are in the wrong business and have missed the whole point of righteousness.

What A “Mess”...*(Continued from page 9)*

the fight of Jesus wherever it leads us. If it leads us to stay in our current church, fine, if it leads us to change churches then we should do just that.

The Bible doesn't give us a smorgasbord of churches to choose from. Ephesians 4:4ff makes it clear there is only one body. In Matthew 16:13-18, Jesus promised to build one church. Eddie Sharp needs to put away his “purple book” and pick up his Bible and read it.

You cannot go to heaven and not be a member of the Lord's church. Acts 2:47 says that God adds the saved to the church. Eddie Sharp and his ACU buddies can scream and holler ecumenicalism and denominationalism as often and loudly as they like, but it is still a damnable doctrine that will cost them their souls (John 14:6; Matt. 7:21-23). There is no multiplicity of churches in the Bible.

Perhaps the saddest phrase of the entire speech came during Sharp's introduction when he informed the audience that He had delivered the material we were about to hear to his class at ACU earlier in the day. What a crying shame. Teaching our youth that they are part of a denomination that is just like the man-made self-seeking bodies that have no regard for the Bible at all. Brethren, we send our children off to a “Christian” school to be prepared to fight against the doc-

trines of Satan, yet Satan has infiltrated the very classrooms we, the church, have built. Our unsuspecting youth is often-times turned over to these men and women who are bent on turning the church into a denomination. It is high time many of us woke up to what is happening around us. Sticking our head in the sand is not going to help. Refusing to see and listen to warnings will only allow those who have no love for the church to do more to defile as many of her children as possible.

After the “Sermon from Hell” (my title, not his, ML) Sharp announced that we were about to have communion (the Lord's Supper) yes, that's right it was Tuesday night (I stress again, these people don't care what the Bible says about the Lord's Supper or anything else. They will, and are, doing anything and everything they want to). He was kind enough to mention that he realized many people were not used to this, and if we didn't feel comfortable doing it then we could abstain (mighty nice of him).

He then discussed the manner in which it would be taken (I don't know why it mattered at this juncture). He said that it would be taken by “inction.” That's how he spelled it. He then stated that he really thought the “Emmausians” just made it (inction) up. He said that “inction” was taking the piece of bread and dipping it into the juice then (after the bread soaked up the juice) it was to be taken all at once. I know, Jesus and the apostles partook of them separately (Matt. 26) as

did the early church (1 Cor. 11), but our brethren at Highland and Eddie Sharp aren't impressed with that, they would rather please their denominational harlots, and do what feels good to them than stay true to God's way (James 4:4).

The communion itself was also very Catholic in its order. Brother Sharp took a large piece of bread (a loaf, I couldn't tell if it was leaven or unleaven, but again I know it doesn't matter to them one way or the other) and stood down front (with his Emmaus cross around his neck) and broke off small pieces and gave it to the laity (people) as they passed by. He said something to them (it looked just like a Catholic priest blessing the Sacrament) and they would pass from him to another man who held a large goblet of juice. They would then dip the bread into the juice and take it. This fiasco concluded the service, and the crowd went out to the foyer where the “host” congregation (Highland) had prepared quite a spread of snacks.

Over-all it was a sickening night. I could not help but think of the changes in that congregation since it's formation in 1948. It should stand as a warning to us all to “contend for the faith” (Jude 3), for if we don't, the truth will be lost. (I audio taped the entire event so as to have documentation of what happened)

— Michael Light

Borrowed from *The Plumbline*,
Dec. 1999

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FALSE TEACHERS

Steve Miller

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn

down, and cast into the tire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:15-20).

The words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ give warning of false teachers who would lead the flock of God astray. He revealed their identifying mark — we will be able to know they are false teachers by their fruit (teaching, doctrine). Jesus also warned, “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many...For there shall arise false

christ, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt. 24:11,24).

The inspired Peter predicted, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.” The sad

result of their false teaching is that *“many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of”* (2 Peter 2:1-2).

John Laurence Mosheim, in a work titled *An Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern*, wrote the following reflecting on the heresies which the Bible reveals to us.

The Christian church was scarcely formed, when, in different places, there started up certain pretended reformers, who, not satisfied with the simplicity of that religion which was taught by the apostles, meditated changes of doctrine and worship, and set up a new religion, drawn from their own licentious imaginations. This we learn from the writings of the apostles, and particularly from the epistles of St. Paul, where we find, that some were inclined to force the doctrines of Christianity into a conformity with the philosophical systems they had adopted, while others were as studious to blend with these doctrines the opinions, customs, and traditions of the Jews. Several of these are mentioned by the apostles, such as Hymenaeus, Alexander, Philetus, Hermogenes, Demas, and Diotrephes; though the four last are rather to be considered as apostates from the truth, than as corrupters of it (Volume 1. p.46).

The Lord's church has had plenty of false, deceiving, corrupt teachers arising from the inside. We have been plagued with supporters of false doctrines that have divided the body of Christ. More damage and destruction is often accomplished when men arise out of our own midst speaking perverse things. We will always have the burden of false prophets and teachers preaching and teaching soul damning doctrines which lead men astray. The results of traveling down the broad way, engaged in sin, will be destruction in eternal hell (cf. Matt. 7:13-14).

How are we to react when false teachers are found in our midst aiming deceit at brethren? The apostles show us how to deal with Satan's servants. The apostle John wrote, *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”* (1 John 4:1). What does it mean to “try the spirits?” Brother Guy N. Woods

states that they were able to test the spirits “either by exercising miraculous power in the discernment of spirits (1 Cor. 12:4-11), or by comparing the claims of these men with the known teaching of the Holy Spirit through properly accredited representatives” (*Peter, John, Jude, Gospel Advocate*, p.287). Albert Barnes states plainly the reason for testing or proving the spirits.

“It is more probable, as he addressed this command to Christians in general, that he refers to the ability of doing this by a comparison of the doctrines which they professed to hold with what was revealed, and by the fruits of their doctrines in their lives. If they taught what God had taught in his word, and if their lives corresponded with his requirements, and if their doctrines agreed with what had been inculcated by those who were admitted to be true apostles (v.6), they were to receive them as what they professed to be. If not, they were to reject them, and hold them to be impostors.” (*Barnes Notes, Hebrews To Jude*, p.327)

Brethren, the teachings we hear and read must be tested, examined, proved, and checked by the Word of Almighty God.

If one's teachings are not in accordance with the inspired Word of God, then we cannot have fellowship with those promoting the false teachings. The apostle Paul revealed by direct revelation from Jesus Christ, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple”* (Rom. 16:17-18). The apostle tells us to “mark” them which divide the church of our Lord. “The word ‘mark,’ the Greek word *skopeo*, ‘to look at, watch, behold, fix one's eyes upon, direct attention to’ (*Fellowship*, Goebel Music, p.5). Faithful Christians are to fix their attention upon those who cause division contrary to the doctrine of Christ. After this, we are to turn away from them, because, 1) they do not serve Jesus Christ, 2) they serve their own belly, 3) and by smooth/fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.

Christians are to mark these people and turn away from them.

We cannot fellowship false doctrine and the people who spread it! We must not tolerate it, put up with it, compromise it, or in any way have fellowship with it!

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**15TH ANNUAL
“SEEK THE OLD
PATHS”
LECTURESHIP
THEME:
DANGERS FACING
THE CHURCH
(Changing Views)
JULY 23-27, 2000**

“THY SPEECH BETRAYETH THEE”

Jerry C. Brewer

Through the length and breadth of the land, members of churches of Christ have made spiritual alliances with the denominational world and adopted the nomenclature and speech that betrays their spiritually adulterous hearts.

In the evening of my memory, when sights and sounds of the past come filtering through the din of modern religious madness, I can hear faithful brethren, now long gone, who once thundered the message of salvation from pulpits across our little corner of western Oklahoma. One clarion message that echoes through the canyons and corridors of my consciousness is that God’s people “call Bible things by Bible names;” that it isn’t “my church,” or “our church,” but “Christ’s church,” and it isn’t “our kingdom,” but “God’s kingdom” and I hear the Saviour say, “out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh” (Matt. 12:34). But as I emerge from those moments of earliest memory, a cacophony of Ashdod greets me from within the Body of Christ. The language of the ancient Gospel has been cast aside for a new one that betrays hearts filled with denominational notions, and strange words assault my hearing.

Words are vehicles of thought. Paul says the things of God have been revealed in words chosen by the Holy Spirit and given to inspired men (1 Cor. 2:9-13). God did not allow mortal men to express His thoughts in words of their own selection. They were incapable of doing so. “...*The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God*” (1 Cor. 2:11). Right words betray right thoughts, and God has always demanded doctrinally pure speech. His thoughts are not ours (Isa. 55:8-9), and His truths cannot be rightly expressed in words other than those divinely revealed. The same is true with man. His words express thoughts that are either sound or corrupt.

Nehemiah observed a corruption of speech among the remnant of Jews which had remained in the land during the Babylonian captivi-

ty, and this corruption had its source in unholy alliances with their heathen neighbors. “*In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves*” (Neh. 13:23-25).

In a lustful desire for acceptance, respectability, and good will from the world, many of God’s children have listened to the siren song of heathen neighbors to embrace their ways and express those ways in their own language — the ways and language of their religious neighbors. Through the length and breadth of the land, members of churches of Christ have made spiritual alliances with the denominational world and adopted the nomenclature and speech that betrays their spiritually adulterous hearts.

By far, the most popular of the current “buzz” terms of Ashdod is, “My Church Family.” Zeroing in on Paul’s statement to Timothy that the church is the “house of God” (1 Tim. 2:15), change agents and their blind followers have adopted this term describing the church, almost to the exclusion of all others. In so doing, they have appropriated it as a shibboleth of the “New Hermeneutic” which turns its focus inward to meet the “felt-needs” (i.e. “desires”) of its members.

There is no more scriptural authority for referring to the church for which Jesus died as “my church family,” than calling it “my church,” or “my kingdom.” While we are

members of the house of God, it remains His house. This practice is an attempt to supplant the sound speech of Titus 2:8 with the corruptions of a modern Ashdod, and springs from embracing every denominational error that change agents foist upon us. It betrays a kind of spiritual humanism that places man and his desires at the center of Christianity. Supplanting God, and revoking Christ’s injunction to deny self (Matt. 16:24), liberalism focuses on man. Thus, instead of looking outward at the fields that are white unto harvest, they turn inward to “Family Life Centers,” volleyball leagues, “Food, Fun, and Fellowship,” ski trips, pizza parties, small group therapy, and other accoutrements of the social gospel. Hence, the church is transformed from God’s vehicle for the salvation of souls, into “My Church Family” whose total mission is to cater to “my” carnal desires for temporal entertainment, diversion, and “feel-good” religion.

The house of God, which is the church of the Living God, is also the kingdom of God, the body of Christ, the Lord’s vineyard, and the temple of God. It is no more “My Church Family” than it is my church, my body, my kingdom, my vineyard, or my temple. The phrase, “My Church Family,” belongs to Ashdod. It is an affront to the God who created us anew in Christ Jesus, and to Him who redeemed the church with His own blood. Let those who love the Lord know that the phrase, “My Church Family,” betrays a blind ignorance of the exalted station of the church for which Jesus died (Acts 20:28). Let us repudiate the modern language of Ashdod and return to “*sound speech that cannot be condemned*” (Titus 2:8).

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WINTERFEST CORPORATION AND JEFF WALLING

The above named corporate body has its headquarters in Edmond, Oklahoma and is known as the “Winterfest Group.” According to its website report (See www.winterfest.org) its officers are Greg Anderson of the Western Hills

Church in Nashville, Dudley Chancey, Oklahoma Christian University and Johnny Markum of the College Street Church in Lebanon, Tennessee.

This para-church organization is no part of the church, but they annu-

ally feature their “Fallfest” or “Winterfest” programs to draw the youth of the church into their web of deceit. Just a few clicks of your mouse will reveal much about how this group which not only uses sectarians as a part of their program but features “contemporary Christian” performers using instrumental music with songs of praise and worship. You may listen to a block of this type music from the website. Here is a quote concerning one of the “contemporary” groups called, “Solomon’s Wish” which will be on the program of Winterfest 2000 in Gatlinburg in February.

“Mike Hurst, Scott Roberts and Kevin “Toby” Tobias wrap their pop sensibilities and intricate vocals around themes such as feeling lack of direction (“Circle in the Sand”) and living for Christ (“Easier Said than Done”) while creating contemporary praise with songs like “Waterfall” and “God is Alive.” Drawing from personal experiences, study times and often pastors sermons, all three are heavily involved in the song writing process for Solomon’s Wish. Scott laughs — “I always pay attention when someone wiser than me is talking — there’s always material!”

“With Scott on percussion as Mike and Toby complement the Solomon’s Wish sound with acoustic guitar, the trio is as dynamic in live performance as their songs demand. All three have been involved in some aspect of church ministry, most specifically in youth ministry, where the threesome have felt called to work with teens. But for Solomon’s Wish, performing a concert for a youth group is more than just doing their best on stage — it is spending time with the kids before and after the show.”

Jeff Walling will also be featured on the “Winterfest” 2000 at Gatlinburg in February. This brother over the last two decades has done as much as anyone to persuade the youth of the church of Christ that instrumental music in worship is “a matter of opinion...a gray area” (See

A QUESTION CONCERNING “RESPONSIVE READING”

First, reading in the assembly is not wrong. Colossians 4:16, “*And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.*” Timothy was told to give attendance to reading (1 Tim 4:13).

Second, reading in the assembly is an activity that involves all of the worshippers. Listening to the Bible being read, silently, humbly, meditatively, contemplatively is just as much worship as being the one up in front doing the reading.

Third, for all that we do in worship we must have authority (Col. 3:17). The idea that we can do anything that the Bible does not explicitly condemn is a false idea. Not only is it false, it is patently absurd. The Bible does not explicitly condemn animal sacrifices during our worship. If we start practicing or tolerating things without authority, there is no stopping place. John 4:24 demands that our worship be ordained by God (truth).

Fourth, there is no Bible authority for responsive reading. Some might try to say that it is no different than responsive (antiphonal) singing, but this is faulty reasoning. Singing and reading are not equal things. Singing teaches the Word, but it is not the same as reading the Word. Singing is not the same as preaching the Word, if it were, why would we need to do both? Why not just sing, or just preach? There is an obvious difference between these things. We have clear Bible authority for singing as a group. We have clear Bible authority for one man reading or speaking to us the Word of God. Where is the Bible authority for us in unison to read the Bible aloud as a group? A parallel argument: could we with God’s approval write down a prayer, and during our service have all worshippers say that prayer aloud in unison? Only if we can find Biblical authority for such an action. And, I have not yet found it.

Fifth, responsive reading is not wrong just because Catholics or others practice it. Yes, we need to be careful not to mimic denominations, for we should allow the Word of God to lead us into what God wants in our worship. We don’t want to start climbing in and out of the window because the Catholics use the door. Our argument against responsive reading should not rest on the fact that Catholics or others do it, it should rest on the question of authority.

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Bulletin Briefs, May 1998 and *Behold the Pattern*, Goebel Music, 5114 Montclair, Colleyville, TX 76034, pp. 198-223). In many other ways, Walling continues to seek to change the church of our Lord into a carbon copy of protestant denominationalism. As evidence of this please note the following: In the Woodmont Hills Newsletter of September 29, 1999 (See www.woodmont.org), Rubel Shelly announced that he was going to be a “General Committee Member” on behalf of the June 2000 Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville. About one month later Walling

announced (Providence Road Bulletin, Vol. XXVI, No. 21, Oct. 26, 1999) that Shelly would be their guest speaker for the Providence Road church for both services on November 7. Here is clear evidence that these two brothers are working together to restructure the church of Christ. In plain language their work with each other and the support for Billy Graham is such evidence. If not, why not?

Let me entreat in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ all elders to warn (1 Thess. 5:14) those under your care (Acts 20:28) against such

programs of compromise as “Winterfest.” Men who have been placed as elders over God’s flock are required to stop the mouths of those “*who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain*” (Titus 1:11). And, if you do not think these “Fallfests” and “Winterfests” are a money making operation for those involved, you just ask the young people or their parents what the costs are to see the sideshows to the “religious” segment.

— Jim E. Waldron

WHAT SHALL THE PREACHER DO?

The job of the Gospel preacher is to proclaim God’s Word. He is to “preach the word, being urgent in and out of season; reproving, rebuking, and exhorting, with all longsuffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). He is to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim. 4:5). He is to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), the things which befit sound doctrine, the gospel, the truth — the Bible (Titus 2:1). He is to condemn sin, expose error, and exhort the brethren to live faithful Christian lives with strength, courage and conviction (Eph. 5:11). He is to be a herald of God’s Gospel among men both in public and private; both to the Christian and the non-Christian, yea, to “every creature” in every place (Mark 16:15-16)! He is to preach! Preach! Preach! He is to unceasingly preach the truth in love (Eph. 4:15)!

God’s preachers within the New Testament were not politicians with a message on economics. Their mission was not one of counseling by utilizing psychological methods to rid the guilt of people’s sins without God’s forgiveness. They were not recreational superintendents full of fun and games. Nor were they entertainers or comedians full of jokes and pulpit clownery. But now days, some brethren think that if the preacher doesn’t start off his sermon with a good knee-slapping joke or some

funny “attention-getter,” then he is boring and uninteresting. And, then some brethren think the preacher is to be nothing more than a social anchorman with an unending knowledge of all the latest news and town gossip. Bah! Brethren, away with such thoughts!

The older pioneer preachers that have gone on before us have indeed set a true example of what a Gospel preacher is to be and do. They were true, hardy men. They were not weaklings, sissies, namby-pambys, and cowards like so many of the softshell preachers of today. But they, John-the-Baptist-like, were men of boldness, courage, faith, and conviction; having committed the Bible to memory, they were full of the knowledge of God’s word; being unintimidated, unashamed, and making no apologies for the pure simple Gospel they fought “tooth and nail” for the purity of the church; and in public oral debates everywhere they plowed up denominational error root and branch! But now, it seems, that so many of our preachers are most concerned about their “speaking voice” and their “public image” before the community. Challenging the religious errors of the day and contending fervently for the once delivered faith is to them the least of their worries!

The preacher is not to be a one-man “pastor” over the church

like the denominations have it. He is not to be called a “Father” as the Catholics are known to do (Matt. 23:8-10). He is not anybody’s “Reverend.” Nor is he any more a “priest” than any other Christian. But he is simply to be a herald of God’s truth among men. He is not at liberty to substitute God’s message for little feel-good sermonettes from the pulpit. He is not to be afraid of “stepping on toes.” Nor is he to be guilty of preaching a soft-soaped Gospel in order to make secure his weekly paycheck. In short, he is not to degenerate into tickling and scratching the ears of lukewarm and weak brethren with some soft, mushy, ooy-goohy, compromising after-dinner speeches. This type of watered-down preaching does nothing but rob the Gospel of its saving power and lowers the esteem and dignity of being a preacher in God’s behalf. And, I am truly ashamed for those so-called Gospel preachers who are guilty of such!

The preacher must realize that he has the most urgent, the most serious, and the most important job on earth—that of proclaiming salvation from sin through God’s Son to a lost and dying human race! So, preachers, let us be about the task!

—Stephen Wiggins
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MAILBAG



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

ters on the bottom of the sign “church of Christ.” Is this so? Do you know what direction they are going? I do know that this was a church following the truth at one time. Is this “Family” thing something that is making its way through and now we are no longer a congregation but a Family? Is this a play on words or am I missing the point? Again thanks for the good work” ...**Carl Clayton**. [Editor’s Note: Yes, it is true that the Carriage Hills Church of Christ in Montgomery changed its name several years ago to the **Family of God**. When they first changed their sign, the words “Carriage Hills Church Of Christ” was VERY small at the bottom of the sign as if they were ashamed to put it on there. They received a lot of criticism from within and without and made those letters a little larger though the emphasis by a large degree is on “The Family of God.” I believe the logo they use is the same as Rubel Shelly’s Church. Their sign has advertized a Methodist minister who was speaking there as well as participating in some event with the Baptists. It’s pretty sad that they have long since left the faith.] “My husband and I receive your publication “*Seek ye the Old Paths*” and consider it to be outstanding. We know you and your congregation are Christians who strive to do exactly what God wants and who strive to teach exactly what God wants us to do no matter how it steps on others’ toes or hurts others’ feelings. We think that is remarkable” ...**Kim Combs, Lexington, TN**. “Please take me off your mailing list. Thanks” ...**Billy Kline, Branson, MO**. “Please remove our name from the mailing list of *S.T.O.P.* Thanks” ...**Everett & Maxine Foster, Taylor, MI**. “At last I have found somebody in the brotherhood who has had an experience with **responsive reading**!! I was raised a Catholic and this was a part of that worship service, it really upsets me to see that happen in the Lord’s church but no one but my self and one other person has seen any danger in this activity and that is because they were raised Catholic also! Is it possible if you have done a study on this very topic and why it is not scriptural during worship and if I am wrong then explain why it is alright. Please straighten me out if I am incorrect or please send supporting scriptures and information if I am right, I need your help. Thank you and God Bless for being there for the body of Christ, and keep up the great work on this web site!!” ...**Name withheld**. [EDITOR’S NOTE: Responsive reading is when the whole congregation reads outloud in the assembly. A short answer on the question of “responsive reading” appears in this issue on page 14] “Thank you for adding my name to your mailing list. It is gratifying to know there is a publication still contending for the faith” ...**Lu Fallier, Arkansas City, KS**. “Dear brother, all the brothers and sisters here are grateful for all your hard work in writing and for those who send *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Charli Johnson, MI**. “Thanks for always staying outspoken in the faith, and keep up the good work with *Seek the Old Paths*. I look forward to it every month. I also wanted to mention that attending the *S.T.O.P.* lectureship was like the high point of my Christianity thus far. I listened to our singing and it was all I could do to hold back the tears. I hope to see you, Lord willing, next year” ...**Scott Klaft, Dresden, TN**. “This is a good source of information. Thanks” ...**George Cribbs, Pikeville, NC**. “Thanks, for the web-site and all you are doing in the Lord’s Kingdom. Thanks and God Bless” ...**Mack Bennett, Bluff City, TN**. “My mother signed me up a couple of years ago and I enjoy them greatly. Thanks” ...**Dolli Girdham, Hillsdale, MI**. “Would it be possible to get a bundle of *Seek the Old Paths* for the church or does each member have to subscribe individually? Please let us know, we don’t want to miss a single article. In Christ” ...**Anita Hogan, Lynn, AL**. [NOTE: We mail bundles in multiples of 10. You may have as many as you need.] “Thank you very much for adding me to the list. The information contained therein is essential for all preachers of the Gospel. Thanks” ...**Danny Eldridge, Henderson, TN**. “Would you please put me back on the mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*. I have missed getting it. I neglected to send in our new address when we changed to the street names, etc. Hope all goes well with the church there in Corinth. I hope to get back up there to visit with you all again. Thank you for your good work for the brotherhood. In Christian Love” ...**Betty and Glenn Strickland, Moul-**

trie, GA. “Please keep up the good work” ...**Vic Sicard, Jr., Lebanon, MO**. “We appreciate your strength and boldness in spreading the Gospel” ...**Laura Belew, Ocean Springs, MS**. “Please place me on the mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*! Keep up the GREAT WORK! 2 Tim. 2:4” ...**David M. Franklin, Greenwood, MS**. “Keep up the good work. We are in a “major” battle with liberalism and sadly they seem to be winning” ...**V. Glenn McCoy, Yorba Linda, CA**. “Thanks for sending us your publication in 1999. Enclosed is a donation to help with the cost” ...**Memorial Parkway Church of Christ, Huntsville, AL**. “Thank you for the good work and I have enjoyed reading the publication” ...**Nelson Luster, Jr., Memphis, TN**. “Thank you for *Seek The Old Paths* which you have been mailing to our congregation here at Post Oak. We appreciate very much the effort put forth by those involved in this endeavor” ...**Doyle Griffiths, Rockwood, TN**. “Keep up the good work” ...**Roy E. Whitfield, Canute, OK**. “We are enjoying reading your publication and are gaining much information from it. Thank you” ...**M/M Earl Hickey, Roseville, MI**. “I was visiting when I attended the church of Christ and got your interesting *S.T.O.P.* I read the articles. Some of the churches of Christ are indeed leaving the Old Paths. The church is becoming more and more denominational in their practices. It is a shame! Please, please put me on your mailing list” ...**Willie Mae Hickson, Atlanta, GA**. “A friend of mine gave me her copy of *Seek The Old Paths* and I was really pleased with it. Please put me on your mailing list. Thank you” ...**Imogene Mardis, Bastrop, LA**. “I would greatly appreciate it if you would put me on your mailing list for the publication of *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Kathy Burgess, Rayville, LA**. “Keep up the GREAT work of *Seek The Old Paths*. When I read this publication I feel I am sitting before one of the old scriptural greats and hearing God’s word in its simplicity and truth. Keep up the work of teaching and preaching God’s word no matter WHO is in the wrong. God will surely bless you in this work” ...**Duane & Louise Burger, North Pole, AK**.

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.

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