

Seek The Old Paths

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

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THE WORK OF THE CHURCH #1

Roger D. Campbell

In the church of our Lord, laziness must not characterize God's people. The very concept of the church being a "vineyard" carries with it the idea that we are to be working.

The work and activity of the church ought to be the center of the life of every Christian. That is true this year, just as it is in every other year.

When we speak of "the church," we have reference to that organization which is made up of those people who accepted the call of God through the Gospel and have entered into Christ and His light (Col. 1:13,14; 1 Peter 2:9). "The church" is the "one body" of Christ (Eph. 4:4), of which Jesus is the Builder (Matt. 16:18), the Head (Eph. 1:22,23), the Savior (Eph. 5:23), and that which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

The church exists. It has been in existence since the first day of Pentecost after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven (Acts 2).

What is the God-given work the church should be doing? Webster says the word "work" is: "a specific task, duty, function, or assignment." Thus, when we consider the work of the church, we must think of those things that the Lord has given to the church as its task, duty, function, or assignment.

**THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY
SOME ACTIVITIES WHICH
ARE NOT A PART OF THE WORK
OF THE CHURCH**

We should not think that everything under the sun can be classified as a work of the church. Simply calling something "the work of the church" does not make it so. We must also be careful that we do not make earthly, emotional appeals in discussing the work of the church. Simply because we have always done a thing does not automatically make it a work of the church. Furthermore, something is not made a work of the church simply because prominent preachers promote it or well-known congregations practice it. And, something is not a work of the church simply because we want it to be.

The question of the work of the church is one of authority. When we ask about what work the church ought to be doing, we are asking about what God has authorized the church to do. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:18-20). At least a couple of things about the authority of Christ are clear from this text. First, all authority is in the hands of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we have to appeal to Christ, that is, to His standard, in order to have

authority from God to carry out the work He has given to us. That is the concept that is found in Colossians 3:17 - "do all in the name of the Lord." Second, men/women must observe or obey "all things whatsoever" Jesus commands (28:20). This involves not only the first four books of the New Testament, it involves the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit to inspired apostles and prophets throughout the New Testament (Eph. 3:5). The apostle Paul wrote, "...the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). The Bible's message about "the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9) is plain. We must let the doctrine or teaching of Christ be the standard by which we determine the work in which the church should be engaged.

It is tragic that some today do not have their thinking about the work of the church "in tune" with what the Bible says. More and more we see and hear of congregations providing entertainment, fun and games for its members and the public, with the church footing the bill for such activities. There is simply no authority in the New Testament for such. What about a congregation operating a secular school? Same answer. And,

(Continued on page 13)

Work Of The Church...



Editorial...

HOLDING FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS

Garland M. Robinson

The world in which we live is plagued with problems. Whenever men live, there is sin — the transgression of God's law. "As it is written, *There is none righteous, no, not one*" (Rom. 3:10). Sin exists even in the Lord's church — dishonesty and lying (Acts 5), immorality (1 Cor. 5), prejudice (James 2), division (1 Cor. 1), and false teachers (1 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Peter 2; Acts 20:28-32).

The penalty of sin is death, both physical and spiritual. "*The wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23). "...*When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*" (James 1:15). Compare Rom. 6:16.

The church today faces the same kind of problems that has plagued it through the centuries: binding where God has not bound and loosing where God has not loosed — i.e. making laws where God made none and ignoring laws that God made.

The greatest threat to the Lord's body is from within our own ranks. So many men and women are seeking to be free from God's law. "Set us free from the shackles of the strict adherence to God's word" is the cry of multitudes. Sound, wholesome words of truth are despised by such people. However, 2 Timothy 1:13 sounds forth these sobering words: "**Hold fast the form of sound words...**" This is so BECAUSE...

The living word of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation. Without the WORD there is no faith (Rom. 10:17), and without faith one cannot please God (Heb. 11:6). Paul said the Gospel of Christ is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18-21). Without the Gospel, God cannot save. He is powerless to save. His word penetrates to the very soul of man (Heb. 4:12-13). It convicts of sin (Titus 1:9; Jude 1:15).

The **living Word** is to be preached around the world (Mark 16:15-16). It will be used to judge us

(John 12:48). It is urgent that it be proclaimed.

The word of Christ is the only guide, direction, or beacon that can direct men to heaven. If corrupted, it loses its power. God expects his people to preach the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth! He expects us to live the truth and stand fast in it. Any time we forget who we are, who we represent, who we proclaim, the devil will claim our soul as he has the rest of the world!

If we walk in the "old paths" (Jer. 6:16) and "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11), we will be blessed above all people of the earth. God is on our side! The words of the Savior in the end will be, "*well done thou good and faithful servant.*"

The tentacles of liberalism and modernism have attached themselves to the church perhaps more than at any other time in recent history. People's attitude toward the Bible and respect for the words of Christ is waning more and more. The Bible tells us this is the way it always is! "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*" (2 Tim 4:3-4; cf. Matt. 24:11-12). "*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron...*" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

When Jesus said false prophets would come in sheep's clothing, he was not just taking up space. He said, "*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves*" (Matt. 7:15). False prophets in the Old Testament preached lies as though it was God's word (Jer. 14:14).

People were not to listen then and they are not to listen now. Those who do so are made vain (Jer. 23:14,16).

Contending for the faith (Jude 3) and demanding a "*thus saith the Lord*" (as the prophets of old) is not popular in our day. All kinds of ridicule and scorn is thrown at God's loving warriors who care more for God's praise than man's praise. The love of so many has run cold (Matt. 24:12). The cry is to "tone down" the preaching — you can't win people with doctrine, they say. We are told our business is to "win friends and influence people," but for what purpose and to what end? Our job is to proclaim the Gospel in its entirety, expose sin for what it is, rebuke the erring, proclaim salvation through faithful obedience to God and not man (Matt. 7:21). This is what Paul commanded Timothy. "*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*" (2 Tim. 4:2).

Those who preach the whole counsel of God must set their forehead strong against opposition and not be discouraged by the rebellious who don't love the truth (Ezek. 3:8-9; Jer. 1:7,17-18; Micah 3:8). Isaiah said, "*...therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed*" (Isa. 50:7). The command of the Lord to him was, "*cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins*" (Isa. 58:1).

It's high time for the faithful to **stand up and be counted!** We are at WAR! We are in a desperate battle for the souls of men. It's time we draw forth the "sword of the Spirit" and throw the scabbard away! It's time we keep the sword bloody by constant use against wickedness, evil doing and false teaching until the Lord removes it from our grasp in death. If we do not, the church will continue its head-long rush into apostasy. It will continue to split and splinter and be unrecognizable in comparison to the first century church.

The greater portion of the problem today lies at the **feet of elders** who have not "overseen" the flock as God demands! God knew this would be (Acts 20:28-30). Elders are to take heed to themselves — to their quali-

fications, life, family, their ability to do the work. That is where the responsibility begins. Many believe that “once an elder always an elder.” Such is not so. Being an elder is a work, not simply a position. When one is not doing the work, he ceases to be qualified to be an elder. It’s time he repents or step aside.

Many have said it only takes *one generation* for the church to go into apostasy. In many cases it doesn’t even take that long!! You get an eldership in a congregation that does not demand “sound words” and a preacher that has jelly for a backbone and they can apostatize in less than 5 years! It takes a God fearing Gospel preacher to stand up and “rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:13).

The answer to the problem of digression is to “hold fast the form of sound words.” Notice these many verses that say so. “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 1:13). “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Prov 23:23). “*Hold-ing fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers*” (Titus 1:9). “*But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine*” (Titus 2:1). “*If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness...*” (1 Tim. 6:3). “*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle*” (2 Thess. 2:15). “*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good*” (1 Thess. 5:21). “*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*” (Heb. 10:23). “*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).

Paul declared he had preached the **whole counsel of God**. “*Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*” (Acts 20:26-27). The only way we can be free from the blood of all men is to do the same thing. The most **loving,**

kind, considerate thing we could do is to “preach the word” and lay sin bare! God’s people are to not only hold fast to sound words, but **refute error** as well. This involves “contending for the faith” (Jude 3). It involves “marking” teachers of error (Rom. 16:17-18). They think they serve Christ, but in reality they serve themselves. Their “...good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” Don’t be deceived! Paul said he did not tolerate false brethren even for an hour (Gal. 2:4-5). He fought the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12). Elders are to do likewise. That’s their job (Titus 1:9).

The devil can and will deceive people (2 Cor. 11:3). “*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great*

thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:13-15). “*Let no man deceive you by any means...*” (2 Thess. 2:3; Col. 2:18). Many do not have the love of the truth and are willing to be deceived (2 Thess. 2:9-12). “*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*” (2 Tim. 3:13; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

Sound words are the words of God — the words that proceed from God. They are the “words of life.” Jesus said, “...*the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*” (John 6:63). Only the Lord Jesus has “...*the words of eternal life*” (John 6:68). If men do not hold to the pattern of sound words, the soul saving Gospel will not be heard. Will you let it have free course in your life?

Are There Any False Teachers?

The Bible warns of false prophets. Those who pretend to be preachers of righteousness, but are actually agents of the devil. “*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works*” (2 Cor. 11:13-15). John warned, “*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world*” (1 John 4:1). However, in spite of these warnings, many today act as though there are few, or no, false teachers in the world. They will give their general approval to almost any man (or woman) who says he is preaching the Gospel.

In contrast to the general feeling among religious people, the Bible teaches that false prophets abound. John said “many” have gone out into the world. Is it any different today? Right after Jesus stated that few would make it to heaven while many will go to hell, He warned us about false teachers (Matt. 7:13-10). Do you suppose there is any connection? Many false teachers will deceive many people. Few teachers of righteousness will persuade few people.

Instead of endorsing everyone who is a “preacher” and accepting his teaching, we are to examine, test, and try what he says by the Scripture (1 Thess. 5:21; Acts 17:11). When it is true, accept it and live by it. When it is false, reject it and him (Gal. 1:8-9). When a man will not affirm that Jesus is the Christ, reject him (Matt. 16:16). When a man will not teach that salvation is offered to all men of all races, reject him (Mark 16:15). When a man will not advocate the words of the Lord, that baptism is for salvation, reject him (Mark 16:16; cf. Acts 2:38).

Please, dear friend, understand that there are false teachers in the world. Use some discernment. If what we teach is false, reject it. Only follow the Word of God! Yet, if what we teach is true according to God’s revelation, receive it and abide in it. We want to go to heaven and want you to also.

— Steven F. Deaton

THE “TREADMILL OF TRYING HARD” IS GOOD EXERCISE

Rusty Stark

In recent years, through a combination of pop-psychology and Calvinistic thought, the Lord's church has been told by wool-covered wolves that works are not the answer; they are the problem. A man recently told me about the many people he knew who had been 'beat up,' discouraged, disheartened, and generally damaged by thinking that they had to perform in order to be accepted by God. Many are attempting to 'set us free' from the idea that our works determine our destiny, and they say that the very idea that salvation is conditional on our works is a no-win situation.

It is hard to try hard. Trying hard often involves self-control, self-sacrifice and self-denial. These three are opposites and enemies of selfishness, and selfishness makes our world go 'round. Since our world is dedicated to avoiding pain and unpleasantness, they have set forth a myth that working hard and struggling to do right is bad for us.

Many have accepted this myth as truth. Like buying swampland or the Brooklyn bridge, many brethren have bought stock in the idea that 'performance-based religion' is the enemy of our souls and detrimental to our joy and peace. Consider two simple Bible truths:

God put us on the 'treadmill of trying hard.' Whether we think it is good or bad, frustrating or encouraging, regardless of our thoughts on the matter at all, Hebrews 5:8-9 still says that Jesus will save those who obey. Matthew 7:21 still says that we must obey in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. 2 Peter 1:5 teaches us to try hard (giving all diligence) to add various virtues to our character. 2 Peter 1:10 says we must try hard (give diligence) to make our calling and election sure, and teaches that whether or not we fall is a matter of our efforts.

Man often sees great wisdom in rejecting plain Bible truth, but such wisdom is foolishness to God (1 Cor. 1:18-31). Whatever else we say, we should first admit that God wants us to work in order to receive and maintain the salvation he has offered us. Salvation is by grace, apart from the works of the old law, and apart from works of merit, but it is by grace (God's part) through faith (man's response) that we are saved (Eph.

2:8-9). God has provided salvation, and has set the conditions we must meet in order to accept his gift. The fact that salvation is conditional puts us on the 'treadmill of trying hard.'

God teaches that this treadmill is good for us. First and foremost because it allows us to appropriate the gift of salvation, but also because the 'treadmill of trying hard' is good exercise.

Solomon understood that God had given work to the sons of men to be exercised by it (Eccl. 3:10). Paul claimed that his rejoicing was found in his service: *"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward"* (2 Cor. 1:12). He admonished that peace was to be found in obedience, doing the things we know to be right. *"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you"* (Phil. 4:9).

All of life testifies to the truth that challenge, hard work, set-backs, and pain carry a blessing with them. We need to be exercised by the treadmill of trying hard.

Ours is a world that frowns on giving failing grades to those who fail for fear of damaging their self-esteem, rather than seeing failure now as a learning process leading to future success. Our world frowns on punishment. Our world is more willing to 'lower the bar' than to take the chance of frustrating someone by setting the bar too high.

In such a world, we have a choice. We can buy into our world's viewpoint and twist the Scriptures to support that position or we can accept the truth of God's word. The first road is a broad, easy road, with many traveling on it because it takes so little effort. Self-control is difficult, and many will reject salvation if it depends on struggle and overcoming. Strength is needed to walk the narrow, restrictive road.

Hard work is not only involved in our salvation, it is essential. Jesus says we must strive to enter in by this gate (Luke 13:24). The word "strive" means to agonize — there is pain and effort

involved. But this difficult way is not only good exercise for us, it is the only way that leads to life.

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Work Of The Church...

(Continued from page 9)

what about the church using funds from first-day-of-the-week collections to sponsor a “church ball team” in a “church league?” Again, there is no Bible authority for it.

The list of unauthorized activities that some, including elders and preachers, are trying to pass off as the work of the church, is a lengthy one. Not all activities practiced by congregations are a part of the work of the church. The bottom line is this: if something is going to properly fit into the category of “the work of the church,” then it must be authorized by the New Testament. This may sound so basic, and yet it is the foundational truth upon which any study of the work of Christ’s church must be based. As with any other topic, the question must be, “What does the Bible say?”

GOD EXPECTS THE CHURCH TO WORK!

If there really is such a thing as “the work of the church,” then the Lord expects us to do just that – He expects us to work! In our society there are those who are perfectly satisfied and content to go through life, not working at all, or working just as little as possible, though they have the physical and mental capacity to work. They simply want to get by doing as little as possible, and they apparently are perfectly content to reach out their hand and take from private or public organizations whatever they can get. We call that lazy, slothful!

The Bible condemns laziness. In speaking about his own people, one man said the Cretians are “*slow bellies*” (“lazy gluttons”). The Holy Spirit said of such a saying, “*This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith*” (Titus 1:12,13). Those who are lazy need to repent and get to work!

In the church of our Lord, laziness must not characterize God’s people. The very concept of the church being a “vineyard” carries with it the idea that we are to be working. Matthew 20:1-16 records the Parable of the Laborers in the

Vineyard. The owner of the vineyard went to the market place to hire laborers. What was it he hired them to do? To work. Where? In his vineyard. The fact that God has called us out of the world and into His vineyard indicates we need to be working in it.

We should not try to avoid work in the kingdom of Christ. We ought not try to “skim by” by doing as little work as possible. Working for the Lord is not an undesirable thing! In Nehemiah 4:6 it is written that the Jews of Nehemiah’s day successfully rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem to the halfway point because “*the people had a mind to work.*” That is the type of mindset and heart WE need to have in the Lord’s work, rather than say, “Let somebody else do it.” When we talk about the Lord’s work, it is not “their work,” but “our work.”

Jesus said, “*I (“we,” ASV) must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work*” (John 9:4). Jesus was speaking of the need for Him to fulfill the Father’s will when He had the opportunity to do so. We sing about that when we sing “Work For The Night Is Coming,” “We’ll Work ‘Til Jesus Comes,” and “I Want To Be A Worker For The Lord.” When we sing such spiritual songs we teach and admonish one another to work. What about after the singing of such hymns, what should we do? We must go out and put the words of the songs into practice in our lives – go to work for the Lord!

How powerful the army of Christ could be, and how effective the work of the church could be, if every member of the church would seriously take to heart the message of 1 Corinthians 15:58, “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*” I remember as a child watching the old Brylcreem commercials. Remember the punch line? “A little dab will do ya.” I suppose they did not have Brylcreem in the apostle Paul’s day, but when he spoke about the work of the church, Paul was certainly not a Brylcreem man. He did not have the concept that in the work of the church we ought to try and get by doing just as little as possible, or take the Brylcreem approach to the

Lord’s work by thinking, “A little dab will do ya.”

Notice, again, the words of the text of 1 Corinthians 15:58, “*ALWAYS ABOUNDING in the work of the Lord.*” That is what God wants from every one of us — every Christian! A Christian that is too busy to be involved in the Lord’s work is just that – he/she is too busy! Such a problem needs to be “fixed.”

A number of young Christian couples are in a hurry to have their own house and possess the nice things in life they see mom and dad have. Of course, mom and dad had to work and scratch for decades to get what they now have, but today’s young married couples often want to have nice material blessings “right now.” So, they go to the bank and borrow enormous amounts of money to build a new house on several acres of land for which they also borrow a big chunk of money. They want to have two cars, a jeep, a pickup, a boat, jet skis, snowmobiles, one computer for every family member, a TV and VCR in every bedroom, and who knows what else. Somebody has to pay for all this stuff. So, both husband and wife get themselves a full time job. He might have to work seventy hours a week to help pay the bills, or maybe even take on a second job, but it is all worth it (so they think) so they can have these material blessings.

In the midst of all this, along comes an elder or a preacher and asks the husband, “I need someone to go with me to make some visits this week, reckon you’d be able to go with me?” His answer is a truthful one: “No, I’m too busy. I just don’t seem to have any time to do anything.” I wonder why?! I wonder why he’s “too busy.” Who made those choices in his life? He did. “Well, when my kids get grown, come and talk to me then, I ought to have more time to do some church work.” Brethren, the Holy Spirit did not say, “In the future when your kids are grown up, then you can do some work for the Lord.” What He said was “*always abounding in the work of the Lord*” – that means right now, not ten years from now!

We would be quick to point out that there is nothing wrong with possessing material blessings, even nice ones. But, we must all strive to keep our priorities straight (Col. 3:1,2). If

the Lord's cause is really first in our hearts, then we need to give serious consideration to what our self-imposed financial debts and possible subsequent extra time on the job will do to our opportunity to help in the Lord's work. How wise is it for Christians to saddle themselves with tremendous financial burdens and/or jobs that will severely limit their time and availability to assist in the work of the church? We need to seriously weigh the consequences of our actions, and ask ourselves if it is really worth it to take on certain things in our lives if they will hinder us

from actively participating in the Lord's work.

Elders in the church that are too busy with other affairs in life to shepherd the flock are elders in name only. Deacons in the church that are too busy to serve the church are deacons in name only. Preachers that are too busy to teach and work in the kingdom are preachers in name only. And, Christians who are too busy with their own affairs to work in the kingdom are Christians in name only. These conclusions may not sound pleasant, but most of us know deep down inside that the words of

this paragraph are words of truth.

We have emphasized to this point, 1) what we do in the work of the Lord must be authorized by the New Testament of Jesus Christ, and 2) if something really is the work of the church, then let us "get in there and do it."

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16th Annual
"Seek The Old Paths" Lectures
July 22-26, 2001
Traditions of Men, Vain Religion

"CHRISTIAN MUSIC LIGHTS UP LIPSCOMB"

Nashville Tennessean, Oct. 12, 2000

"David Lipscomb University's Collins Alumni Auditorium is the site of a notable contemporary Christian show (open to Christians and non, contemporary and old-school) tonight. The concert features Caedmon's Call, a seven piece band that blends Rootsy rock, Hootified ball-cap guitar pop and even a few urban flourishes into a lively mix that fits nicely with lyrics of wonders both worldly and deified.

Equally intriguing is Nichole Nordeman, whose

This Mystery is a beautifully sung, pop song set, a brave album that calls into question the validity of narrowly framed religion and doctrines as a means of understanding divinity (sounds like a bit of a drag when I put it that way, but the album is actually pretty fun). Justin McRoberts is also on the bill. Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door, and available at Lifeway Christian stores or by phone at 251-2500. 8p.m. is the start time."

LIPSCOMB AND ROOTSY ROCK

The article above makes it clear that Lipscomb is promoting vain "Christian music" and charging for it. This is prima-facie evidence that Steve Flatt and the Lipscomb board are willing for Christians all over the country to send their offspring to Lipscomb and have them exposed to "rootsy rock, Hootified ball-cap guitar pop — with lyrics of wonder both worldly and deified." This is sanctioned on campus while these men send glowing reports to families all across the nation proclaiming: "Lipscomb University, a distinctly Christian university. All faculty and staff members are faithful Christians active in local congregations."

Here is a clear example of men saying one thing while promoting another. The Lord Jesus spoke of such, "*Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you saying: These people draw near to me with their mouths and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship me teaching for doctrine the commandments of men*" (Matt. 15:7-9).

Brother David Lipscomb was the founder of the Nashville Bible School, which has grown into David Lipscomb University and some might say he would turn over in his grave if he knew such "concerts" were being held on his old farm property. But that is not true, such cannot happen. What is true is that he will rise up in the resurrection with this generation of Lip-

scomb bureaucrats (cf. Matt. 12:41-42), and condemn this promotion of vain philosophy that questions "the validity of narrowly framed religion and doctrine as a means of understanding divinity..." Was it not Jesus Christ Himself who "narrowly framed" His religion when He said, "enter in by the narrow gate" (Matt. 7:13)? Was it not the Holy Spirit who said, "whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God" (2 John 9)?

Some will rationalize saying, "this was not a worship service." Can a person call on the name of God or Jesus Christ in a meaningless way? How does designating it "not worship" keep it from being a violation of Exodus 20:7? The Tennessean said the "concert" was to be held in Collins Alumni Auditorium. As an alumnus I want every Christian in the United States, and the world for that matter, to know that I protest such among our young people. Parents must ask themselves if they want to spend \$15,000 a year for their child to attend DLU and have them exposed to "rootsy rock" religion. As I said before, the people in the state universities are worldly minded, but at least you know who the enemy is.

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Hebrews 7:14 Teaches About The Silence Of The Scriptures

Dustin Forthun

In his argument that Jesus cannot be a priest on earth, the writer of Hebrews not only appeals to what is stated in the Scriptures but also to what is **not** stated in the Scriptures. The inspired author wrote: “*For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah: of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood*” (Heb. 7:14). In earlier verses of Hebrews (1:1,2; 2:1-3; 3:7-11; 6:13-18) the writer firmly establishes that there is absolute importance in what the Lord has spoken, but in Hebrews 7:14 he makes known the importance of the Lord’s silence as well. Since the Lord, through His servant Moses, was silent about any of Judah’s members’ becoming a priest, it is clear that no member of the tribe of Judah was authorized to become a priest. Having stated that the tribe of Levi would yield God’s earthly priests (Num. 3:12), there was no need for the Lord to further prohibit descendants from any of the other tribes from serving as priests. God had already given authorization to the ones who should fill this role, and thus His silence excluded everyone else.

THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES DOES NOT AUTHORIZE!

This fact accepted by the Hebrews writer and his recipients is sadly being rejected by more and more brethren today. A new science of studying the Bible (or hermeneutic) is now threatening to detour many from the old paths. One of the aspects of this New Hermeneutic (loved by all the liberals) essentially states that where the Bible does not specifically condemn it must therefore permit. As can be imagined, when brethren bent on change interpret silence as permission, all sorts of damage occurs: elders charged to protect the flock drop their guard against evil, fellowship lines are expanded, the instrument is wheeled into some of our own congregations, and many more monstrosities take place. The very sight of such change must make Satan sit back in comfort as a willing witness to what he expects will be a rebellion against

God likened to the ones about which we read in the pages of the Bible (Gen. 6; Exodus 32; Num. 14; etc.).

The only thing that can come to the aid of the Lord’s Bride (that is being badly battered by proponents of the New Hermeneutic) is a renewed dedication to obeying the Lord’s Word without adding to or taking from His Message (Rev. 22:18-19). This determination should begin with a proper understanding of Bible silence. The silence of the Scriptures must be properly respected as a limitation, not recklessly disregarded as a license.

Silence in general is respected by most everyone. How many of us have entered a door on which we find the words “Authorized Personnel Only,” reasoning that since the sign does not explicitly state that we cannot enter that such silence must be permission for us to enter? Or, how many of us, when stopped for speeding, have used as our excuse that there was no sign stating that one may not drive 90 mph, and therefore such silence must be permission for us to travel at such break-neck speeds? Chances are that most of us would be embarrassed to give such foolish explanations for our actions with a straight face. But, when it comes to religious matters, individuals are not embarrassed at all (they do not even blush, Jer. 6:15). Instead, it seems as if pride fills their hearts because they were able to preach an error-filled sermon, write a digressive article for a weak paper, or publish a liberal book before anyone else of their sort. The actions of some brethren are surely reminiscent of the Athenians who “spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing” (Acts 17:21).

Like many brethren today, king Saul was one who unashamedly approved of a new approach to worship. Though commanded to smite the city of Amalek and to destroy everything in it, Saul interpreted this command with a new hermeneutic of his own and spared Agag, the king, and the best of the sheep, oxen, fatlings, and lambs to offer to the Lord (1 Sam. 15:3,9,15). When the prophet Samuel approached Saul with news of the king’s sin, Saul excused his actions by

explaining that he had merely intended to worship God in a way different from the way in which God had instructed him (1 Sam. 15:15). For his hermeneutical mishap the king would pay dearly. Samuel’s sober message was that the king’s “different approach” caused him to sin, and for his rejection of God’s law, God would reject Saul from being king over Israel (1 Sam. 15:22,23). The prophet made known to the perpetrator that God’s silence must not be turned into a license of acceptance.

While clothed in human robes, Jesus sought to stress that the silence of the Scriptures does not authorize. When He was tempted of the deceiver, Jesus was propositioned to fall down and worship the devil (Matt. 4:9). Jesus’ answer to this temptation is particularly significant; He said: “*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*” (Matt. 4:10). This response differs from its reference, Deuteronomy 6:13, in just one respect. In Deuteronomy 6:13, God does not explicitly state that He is the only Being to be worshipped. In fact the word “only” is omitted or italicized in most English translations. The point is that Jesus did not take such an omission (or silence) as authority to worship the devil. It would have been an unnecessary exercise for the Lord to announce a decree stating: “Thou shalt not worship Satan.” Similarly, it would have been just as unnecessary for God to tell Noah not to use oak, pine, maple, cedar, or any other wood to build the ark. In both cases, God clearly stated what the authorized activity was and everything contrary to this authorized activity was, therefore, unauthorized.

Jeremiah said it best: “*O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*” (Jer. 10:23). The way most men study the Bible is to assume authority in the Lord’s silence, but all must learn that the silence of the Scripture does not authorize. Such is plainly taught by God’s precious precepts.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

ber me and my family in your prayers" **...Pattabi Manohar Babu, Andhra Pradesh, India.** "This publication was sent to me unsolicited & unwanted by someone who has and had no permission to give my name and address to anyone. I'm sure you have a fine magazine but I'll never know because of the one who sent you my name. Do not send any more as they go straight to the garbage can and I'm sure you can use this stamp to send one to someone else" **...Mrs. Earl H. White, Lake Village, AR.** "We are still enjoying reading your paper *Seek the Old Paths* very much" **...Jo Alice Bradford, Rayville, LA.** "I would like to receive your paper *Seek the Old Paths*. Our teacher at church told us of it" **...M/M John Akers, Prichard, WV.** "Please add me to your mailing list for *Seek the Old Paths*. I picked one up at the Benton, KY, congregation and really enjoyed it. It was very enlightening (Oct. 2000 issue)" **...Iris Oden, Benton, KY.** "I read a copy of *Seek the Old Paths* from a friend and I was impressed by the biblical truth of all the articles. Please put me in your mailing list and God will bless you for preaching His word as per the Great Commission. I am an evangelist with the Jambo church of Christ here in Karatina, Central Kenya and would use the material to teach and evangelize to other people. God bless you!" **...Geoffrey N. Nderitu, Karatina, Kenya, Africa.** "I like the articles in *S.T.O.P.*" **...Dean Buchanan, Hendersonville, NC.** "I enjoy reading *Seek the Old Paths* very much" **...Gary W. Hill, Lake City, AR.** "Look forward to receiving *Old Paths*. Keep up the good work" **...Harold Cregor, Wellston, OH.** "I receive this fine paper and want to commend you for this good work. You are helping to fill a great need. Keep up the good work" **...Gerald Sockwell, Tuscumbia, AL.** "I read your monthly publication *Seek the Old Paths* and I enjoyed it. You really teach and uphold the truth. May the good Lord bless you as you always share with us from His book" **...Benjamin B. Nzima, Malawi, Central Africa.** "We appreciate your publication and your stand for the truth. You are certainly doing a great work!" **...Betty W. Hendrix, Arab, AL.** "I receive *S.T.O.P.* through my congregation and just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate what you're doing. The last several issues have helped me tremendously. Keep up the good work! May God bless your work" **...Name withheld, TX.** "You may add my name to your list of subscribers. I picked up a copy of the Oct. issue at the Bethlehem Lecture-ship and want to receive it regularly" **...A. C. Carpenter, Murfreesboro, TN.** "I appreciate the timely and sound-in-the-faith articles" **...Name withheld, IA.** "Keep up the good work" **...George LeHew, Washington CH, OH.** "I appreciate and enjoy reading *S.T.O.P.* publication. My wish that everyone in the Lord's church would have the same zeal to seek to be as the church was in the first century" **...Joe Gibbins, Cabot, AR.** "I just want to take this time to thank you for putting me on your mailing list to receive your publication. I appreciate the veracity of your magazine. Others try to sugar coat or water down His Word. But, you tell it like it is! I was baptized into Christ and added to His church in August, 1993, on this prison unit. I have many brothers here who attend the church of Christ services every Sunday. We always share good publications such as yours, so be assured many others will be blessed also with your magazine. Thank you again. And may God bless you richly in all that you put your hands to do" **...Anthony Hromadka, Snyder, TX.** "You do a wonderful work" **...Oxford, MS.** "A friend gave me the Oct. 2000, 'The Community Church.' Please add me to your mailing list" **...Harland White, Fort Walton Beach, FL.** "I've been reading a friend's paper, *Seek the Old Paths*. I enjoy it very much and would love to be put on the mailing list" **...Lura Jones, Lindsay, OK.** "I still want to continue getting *STOP* because it is the issue that cannot be refuted in its all teaching and publication. Its authors and preachers are well most educative and organized. Through this I helped much more in spreading the Gospel to the lost world to be converted as well as in Christ so that we should all STOP to 'Stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein.' Lastly, I pray that God has continued to bless you in your work and in everything" **...Francisco Chilua Mphombo, Central Africa.** "Thank you so much for your good work" **...Earl Claude, Dover, TN.** "Just a note to tell you

"I just finished reading your October issue of *Seek the Old Paths*, which I enjoyed and thank you for such a timely article. I would appreciate being added to your mail list" **...Gene Collums, Pontotoc, MS.** "Recently, I received your publication, *Seek the Old Paths*. Words cannot adequately express my gratitude to you. God bless you. Remem-

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