

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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PSYCHOLOGIST TO BRING RECONCILIATION AT MADISON

Bob Spurlin

Madison's apostasy typifies what is taking place throughout the brotherhood from coast-to-coast and sea to shining sea. God's divine blueprint for worship and all other identifying marks of the New Testament church must not be altered or changed to suit one's fancy.

Opening up my computer this morning, December 2, 2001, America on Line (AOL) featured the main story: *"Minister healing church's wounds; conflict over worship style causes confrontation."* The Religious Editor of the Nashville paper, Ray Waddle, authored the article. Religious editor or not, the thrust of the article was to show sympathy toward those who were in non-traditional churches. Consequently, the writer of the article suggests the resolution of this matter is the "conflict in worship style." According to him, the tension between those wanting to "hold the line" (or giving strict adherence to the New Testament pattern, 2 Tim. 1:13), could be avoided by merging the "traditional with the contemporary." God's plan of worship is not an optional matter and must not give in to the popular and modern expression of the day. Those of our contemporary age invariably wish to introduce that which is new and modern thus giving way to the "change agents."

The Madison church of Christ,

Madison, Tennessee, has been known throughout the brotherhood as the largest congregation among churches of Christ with 5,000 members. During the last several months, hundreds of families have fled the Madison church due to their departure from the teachings of the Holy Scripture (Gal. 1:8-9; 2 John 9; Eph. 5:11).

The Madison church has been going through serious changes for years and by letting their guard down have fallen victim to the so-called "contemporary expressions." Some of the modern practices include "hands raised in the air during singing, prayer," and the Lord's supper. Those in the Madison church were persuaded that "lifting up holy hands to God" and waving their arms was acceptable. This was to be a spontaneous act as the Holy Spirit moved them. Paul writes, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Beloved, it is the Holy Spirit that mandates the worship through the New Testament and not by some spontaneous emotion of

the moment (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

A former minister on staff at Madison during the 1980s, "Dr." C. Bruce White (a family counselor having a major in psychology and is announced as a veteran minister with skills in reconciliation) has been hired to heal their wounds. He has been the director of Tennessee Children's Home in Spring Hill, TN, recently and prior to that was discharged from the Beltline church of Christ in Decatur, AL. Brother White was given ample opportunity to repudiate his teachings at the Beltline congregation in Decatur for affirming evangelistic authority over the elders.

This preacher-psychologist should reacquaint himself with the words of Paul, *"Obey them (elders or shepherds) that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it*

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Reconciliation At Madison...



Editorial...

CORRECTION!

In the January issue, we printed an article by brother Steven E. Yeatts reviewing a document entitled, “Maury Hills Church of Christ — A Dynamic Vision for Maury County” by Larry Rogers. Below is a correction we need to make regarding inaccurate information in the first paragraph of brother Yeatts’ article. We never intend to print any information that is inaccurate and we are always happy to retract and correct any mistakes. As always, we have no vendetta, intent or “axe to grind” with any personality. Long-time readers of *Seek The Old Paths* know this is the case. We desire to deal with issues and doctrines that affect the Lord’s church and lead to apostasy. We will examine and dissect every teaching or practice that leads away from the Lord Jesus and his salvation. However, since no doctrine can be presented, advanced or practiced without someone promoting or teaching it, the Scriptures demand that we identify who they are. This is clearly set forth in Romans 16:17-18, Ephesians 5:11 and Matthew 23. Other pertinent Scriptures are listed on the back of every issue: Jude 3, II Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and II Peter 1:12. We could not be “balanced” if we ignored these passages. It’s not a pleasant task. I’d rather do something else. But I did not write the Holy Bible, God did. He did not ask me what I’d rather do. He is the loving, all knowing and wise God and He is the one who saw fit to demand His faithful servants to “reprove, rebuke, exhort” (II Tim. 4:2), “rebuke before all” (I Tim. 5:20) and “reprove them” (Eph. 5:11) that advance and foster the unfruitful works of darkness. I wish, I pray, that those who have named the name of Christ would LOVE the TRUTH more than friends and family (Matt. 10:37; Zech. 8:19), would embrace the WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD more than popularity or prestige (Acts 20:20,27) and would seek to PLEASE GOD instead of men (Gal. 1:10). — *Editor*

The corrected information is as follows:

“The information that I received regarding the circumstances regarding Larry Rogers departure from the Highland Church of Christ was erroneous. As per Larry Rogers’ own words in a letter to me, he *“was absolutely fired from Highland Church of Christ.”* Additionally in his letter to me, Larry Rogers states that the Maury Hills church *“did not begin until several weeks later”* [following his departure from Highland]. I take full responsibility for these two errors in that I did not seek additional and more reliable sources to supplement the original information that I received and reported in the opening paragraph of last month’s article. I have contacted Larry Rogers to apologize for my misapprehension and the subsequent recording of it in a public manner. Let me assert, however, that I offer no rescission in regard to the content of my categorical review of the literature that originated with Larry Rogers, entitled, *“Maury Hills Church of Christ — A Dynamic Vision for Maury County.”* I also offer my apology to brother Garland Robinson for my failure to verify more substantively the terms of Larry Rogers’ departure from Highland Church of Christ. I will take extraordinary precautions in the future to insure that such a misconstruction is not a part of future writings by this author.

— *Steven E. Yeatts*

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE CHURCH?

Thirty-five years ago, churches of Christ were listed as the fastest growing religious body in America. New congregations were being planted almost daily. Today, churches of Christ are not growing fast enough to keep up with the increase in population. Congregations in many areas are declining, and some have closed their doors.

Thirty-five years ago, members of churches of Christ were known for their strong, uncompromising stand on the Bible. Preachers were men of the Book who quoted “book, chapter, and verse” for everything they taught. Today in many pulpits, sermons on the fundamentals of the faith such as “The One Church,” “The Plan of Salvation,” “The Two Covenants,” “Why Instrumental Music in Worship Is Wrong,” etc. are seldom, if ever, heard. There is widespread tolerance and even acceptance of denominationalism. Some believe the Lord’s church is a denomination among the denominations.

The elders of the church of Christ in Duluth, Georgia are concerned about what is happening to the church. Under their oversight, material has been prepared to alert our brotherhood to the danger it faces. A twenty-five page booklet, videotape and audio cassette are available to answer the question “What is happening to the church?”

The material is free. It is the aim of the Duluth elders to provide this to churches and interested Christians everywhere. If you would like a copy of the audio or video tape, or several of the booklets to distribute, please write to:

Duluth Church of Christ
3239 Highway 120
Duluth, GA 30096
or call us at 770-476-2159
or e-mail us at
duluthcofc@duluthcofc.org.

The following article is a review of the above material and is written by brother Don Blackwell.

“WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE CHURCH?”

I received in the mail a packet entitled, “What is happening to the Church?” It is being sent out FREE OF CHARGE by the Duluth Church of Christ in Duluth, Georgia to congregations all over the brotherhood. The packet contains a booklet written by Rod Rutherford, and two tapes (one audio and one video) presented by Jim Dearman. The purpose of the packet is to help answer the question, “What is happening to the Church?” The question is answered in a concise, well documented format that is well fortified with scripture and has the character of a Christian gentleman.

I have set out to review this work for the sake of encouraging brethren to order the material and use it in defense of the Body of Christ. The booklet states as its goal, “It is our aim to examine several of the areas that are under attack from change agents within the church today.” It proceeds to lists five areas, which are here listed as the headings which follow.

THE GODHEAD

After a kind and heartfelt introduction discussing the biblical command to oppose false teachers, the booklet begins to discuss the first area attacked by change agents, “the Godhead.” It points out that God is attacked in the area of creation. Evolution is the way of many change agents. Christ is being attacked by the denial of the virgin birth. The Holy Spirit is being held up as some mystical influence working directly on men still today. Documentation for all these is provided.

THE BIBLE

The booklet then documents a second area under attack, and that is the Bible. Change agents refer to it as a “dead Book.” They deny that it is a book of law and undermine its authority. Their cry is for a “new hermeneutic.” An excellent excerpt from Dave Miller’s book, “Piloting the

Strait” shows the fallacy of the New Hermeneutic and concludes this section of the booklet.

THE CHURCH

A significant portion of the Duluth church’s material relates to attacks that are being made on the church. Change agents argue that the church has not been restored. They deny, and seek to undermine, the authority of elders. They seek to remove restrictions relating to the role of women in the church. Those who want to change the church of Christ focus a great deal of their efforts on worship. The booklet cites and discusses specific areas such as choirs and solos, the idea that all of life is worship, the practice of dedicating babies, the use of drama, handclapping in worship, and the push for “contemporary” services. All of these issues are discussed and capably answered from the Scriptures.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

A fourth area discussed is the Change Agent attack on the Plan of Salvation. Those who teach hearing, believing, repenting, confessing and baptism as the steps of the plan of salvation are ridiculed. Among change seekers, grace alone is the way of the day. In addition to this Baptist doctrine, they teach that one does not have to understand that baptism is for the remission of sins. Some have even gone as far as teaching the Billy Graham “sinner’s prayer.” Max Lacado’s doing this is documented and quoted in the booklet.

MARRIAGE

The booklet concludes with a discussion of Marriage. It points to the many errors being taught today among the Lord’s people. It points out that Goebel Music listed twenty-five different erroneous ideas on marriage and divorce being taught by brethren.

This packet is an excellent tool which can serve several functions. It will aid faithful brethren in opening the eyes of those who are being fooled by Change Agents. Secondly, it provides a simple and concise outline to

many of the areas being attacked. Thirdly, these areas of attack are dealt with and answered in the appropriate way — book, chapter, and verse. Fourthly, this booklet is well documented and will provide any defender of the faith with concise documentation for some of the error that is being taught today. The material can be ordered FREE OF CHARGE from Church of Christ, 3239 Highway 120, Duluth, GA, 30096.

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Anonymous	36
Weldon Blake	\$25
Chuck & Nancy Verkist	\$25
Beginning Balance	\$2,765.33
Credits	
Contributions	\$ 1,739.50
Booklet Maker	\$ 0.00
Debits	
Postage	\$ 1,078.52
Ink	\$165.85
Booklet Maker	\$ 300.00
Ending Balance	\$ 2,960.46
Bookletmaker	\$ 13,500
Contributed	\$ 7,145.86
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Reconciliation At Madison...

(Continued from page 9)

with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). Has brother White totally abandoned the simplicity of the New Testament as it declares, "And when they had ordained (appointed) them elders in every church" (Acts 14:23). While Titus was on the isle of Crete, Paul charged the young evangelist, "thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain (appoint) elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5). The casual Bible student knows with certainty that God has vested His authority in the eldership and to question such power would make one wonder why brother White would allow himself to be hired by the Madison elders.

Brother White has said, "They're ready to bury the hatchet," referring to the division within the Madison church, that's what led him to say "OK" to the elders' invitation to assume his new duties. Does this mean that it is "OK" when two entirely different groups meet on the Lord's day at different times and practicing different things? "Unity in diversity" seems to be alive and well with total acceptance with this psychologist.

The Nashville paper quoted brother White as saying, "God called us to war, not a civil war." Using his metaphor, it seems that engagement in "civil war" refers to warring among ourselves and that such should not be permitted. It is true that we are to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). Further, Paul penned, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). Paul did not stick his head in the sand when the multiplicity of problems emerged at Corinth. Paul hit the bulls eye with the words, "Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). There is a time to fight as Jude declared, "ye should earnestly contend for the faith, which

was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). White further stated, "we're all wearing the same uniform," which seems to mean that all sectarians are of the same stripe and the Madison church is following in their footsteps.

According to the Nashville newspaper there is a simmering down and stabilized coexistence with a tradition-style Sunday service at 8:00 AM; and there is a more contemporary-style worship at 10:00 AM for those dissatisfied with the prescribed plan laid out in the New Testament (2 Tim. 1:13; Acts 17:11). Charles Link, one of the Madison elders, stated "we believe he (Bruce White) will get us going." Can one conceive of such a statement coming from one serving as an elder in the Lord's church? Apparently this elder is willing to abdicate his position and relinquish it to the preacher. Please, pray tell where does one have the authority to do such a thing? Bruce White nor any other preacher will "get us going" until the eldership assumes its responsibility to the congregation. Each eldership must fall at the feet of almighty God, humbling themselves in handling aright the word of truth and see that His commands are executed to the last jot and tittle (2 Tim. 2:15; Matt. 5:18).

The raising of hands and other emotional outbursts springs from sectarian bodies and far too many congregations are trying to be like the "nations about us." Ancient Israel had difficulty learning the lesson of rejecting the nations about them. Moses writes the words of the Lord, "drive out the nations from among thee... Seven nations greater and mightier than thou" (Deut. 4:38; 7:1). God made it a practice of purging the unbelieving nations before Israel, but in time gave them the task of removing their enemies making it essential that God's people were required to show their faith in the Creator. Conversely, Israel would know that it was God who gave them their possession (Joshua 6:1-5). However, in time, they grew weary of following God's directions and wanted to be like the heathens about them and cried out to "give us a king like the nations about us" (Deut. 17:1; 1 Sam. 8:19-20).

The principle of Israel maintaining a clear and separate distance from the unbelieving nations was not commanded inadvertently, but was

done to prevent the domination of those nations that would invariably rub off on God's people. Moses by inspiration writes, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exodus 32:2). The very same thing is happening today in the 21st century. The church of the Lord over the last quarter-century has been slowly and deliberately incorporating the practices of denominationalism into the pristine body of Christ (Eph. 5:27). The idea that the Madison elders would allow tradition-style worship at 8 AM and contemporary-style worship at 10 AM to satisfy another group is the epitome of renunciation and desertion of God's will. The old country expression, "he is a fence straddler," seems to be apropos on this occasion as the Madison church attempts to "have their cake and eat it to." Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). As the nation of Israel became corrupt through the practices of intermingling with foreign nations, so it is today when elders have such weakness and lack of conviction to stand-up against the encroachment of error. Paul writes, "now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). The clarity of Paul's words cannot be missed or misunderstood.

Madison's apostasy typifies what is taking place throughout the brotherhood from coast-to-coast and sea to shining sea. Almighty God knows the heart of this writer and nothing would please me more than to see the Madison church and all others repent of such digression. God's divine blueprint for worship and all other identifying marks of the New Testament church must not be altered or changed to suit one's fancy. Digressive churches, of which Madison is one, must either "repent or the candlestick will be removed" (Rev. 2:5; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

I certainly do not criticize brother White due to what he brings to the table, that is to say a psychology background. However, beloved, psychology, sociology and any other practice that is an innovation of man will only bring the church of the Lord to the brink of the abyss. Before the

apostle Paul became converted to Christ he was recognized as Saul of Tarsus, “a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel” (Acts 22:3). Paul’s education was second to none in the religion of Judaism, “circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee” (Phil. 3:5). All of his degrees and capacity of learning was without a peer, yet Paul did not use such, but relied on the message of the cross. The apostle writes, “I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation; to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18, 21-23). Paul did not bring his wisdom of the world to correct the ills of those at Rome, Athens, or elsewhere. He brought the power of the Gospel and it was only through this medium that the spiritual ills, which plague us, could be resolved.

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EDITOR’S NOTE: Brother Spurlin has a new book in its second printing called “*Dail 911: Essentials to Living Life in the 21st Century.*” It was written after the events of September 11 and provides excellent reading and reflection upon one’s soul. It is \$10 plus \$1.50 s/h. The proceeds of this book help offset brother Spurlin’s medical expenses. He suffers from MS and has been bedridden for over seven years. He is no stranger to tragedy and adversity. You would do well to get a copy and read it. You can find more information about it and his other book (*Tackling Life’s Troubles*) at www.bobspurlin.com.

17TH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

Seek The Old Paths

July 28 - Aug. 1, 2002

God’s Divine Authority

(Leadership in the church,
home, government)

WHAT IS IT GOING TO TAKE?

Kevin Rhodes

In the book of Judges we find many accounts concerning the wickedness of the children of Israel following their entrance into the Promised Land. In many instances a large number of people refused to serve Jehovah, but instead chose to serve the gods of the Canaanites with whom they had become acquainted. Their practices grew more and more evil as time went by, but no tribe exceeded the wickedness of the tribe of Benjamin. Unfortunately, the other tribes had not taken the responsibility upon themselves to cleanse the nation and purge out those who were wicked.

In Judges 19, the writer records a situation to describe just how bad matters had deteriorated and what drastic measures it took to make the children of Israel realize what was happening. A Levite man allowed his concubine to be raped and murdered by those of the tribe of Benjamin in order to save his own life. After this, the man considered how to remedy this great evil. He looked for something that would motivate the spiritually slothful children of Israel to take action. “*And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel*” (Judges 19:29). This Levite found that extreme action was necessary to awaken the other tribes to the evil which was being perpetrated. He let each of the tribes know, in the most direct way possible, the abundance of wickedness that then dwelled among the Israelites. The children of Israel were not a true nation at this time because of the manner in which they had been separated

after the conquering of the land, but this action brought them together as a people (Judges 20:11).

The question we should now consider is this: What is it going to take for the churches of Christ to recognize the wickedness which presently abounds in many congregations today? What motivation is needed for each and every Christian to stand up and contend for the faith? Do not allow yourselves to be fooled, brethren. The false doctrines which are being taught in many pulpits of the Lord’s church today are just as grievous and wicked as the rape and murder of the Levite’s concubine, if not more so. Must an act which is as outrageous and terrible as this one be committed before members of Christ’s church will act to stop the parasitic doctrines which have already infiltrated the minds of many Christians? Must we receive evidence of murder through the mail before we do something about the sin and wickedness that some Christians proudly parade not only before the congregation but also before the world? Indeed, we should all be ready to fight the good fight of faith (2 Tim. 4:6-8), even unto death (Rev. 2:10) without fearing the outcome. “*If God be for us, who can be against us*” (Rom. 8:31)?

Brethren, in the Christian life, there are no bench warmers. You are either with God or against Him (Matt. 6:24). Whose side are you on? Must there be ten thousand more crimes of false teaching or sin before we are willing to take action? Brethren, what is it going to take?

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HOW MAY WE ATTAIN THE UNITY THE LORD PRAYED FOR, AND HOW MAY WE MAINTAIN IT?

James E. Farley

That which may truly be called “The Lord’s Prayer” is found in John 17. In this beautiful prayer, our Lord prayed for Himself and for His apostles. He prayed for all who would believe on Him through the words of the apostles (John 17:20-21) — i.e., all who read, understand, and believe the New Testament (compare John 14:26; John 16:13-14; Eph. 3:3-5). He prayed for you and for me. Specifically, He prayed that all who believe would be ONE. The reason for this oneness is so the world may believe that Jesus is who He says He is! Therefore, we can know that denominational division is certainly that with contributes to infidelity and atheism!

How is this unity in Christ to be attained? Can we all understand the Bible alike? The fact is, if we understand the Bible at all we will all understand it alike. The fact that some do not understand it alike is proof only that some misunderstand it! The Word says, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”* (1 Cor. 1:10-13)?

The church at Corinth was a divided church. This is contrary to the Lord’s prayer in John 17:20-21. Some had sectarian spirits — wanting to follow after men rather than the Lord. Paul’s inspired, rhetorical questions make strong arguments against such an attitude. Christ is not divided, so why are you dividing? Paul was not crucified for you, so why are you following Paul? You were not baptized in Paul’s name or by Paul’s authority, so stop following Paul. The apostle later

admonishes these same brethren to follow him, but ONLY as he followed Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). He did not want them to be “Paulites” or “Paulinians.” He wanted them to be Christians!

Paul is very strong in his language to this divided and drifting church. He said they should all speak the same thing, have the same mind and the same judgment and the end result would be *“no divisions among you.”* Simple, isn’t it? All we have to do in order to attain and maintain the unity that Jesus the Christ prayed for is to think and speak the same thing. Can we do this? Well, heaven says we can, so if a man comes along and says we can not, he is wrong! God says we can and must *“speak the same thing.”*

What is it that we are to speak in order to attain to and in order to maintain the unity that our Lord prayed for? Peter wrote, *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”* (1 Peter 4:11).

Now it becomes clearer, doesn’t it? That which we are to speak the same in order to attain to and in order to maintain unity is “the oracles of God” — the Holy Bible! If you speak like the Bible speaks and I speak like the Bible speaks, we will be speaking the same thing, and, according to the inspired apostle Paul, we will be ONE. There will be “no divisions among us.” (By the way, how many divisions is “no divisions”?) But, if you continue to speak as the oracles of God, and I begin to teach from a man-made creed, or manual, or catechism, or discipline book, or confession of faith, or just my “think so,” I will be the one causing the division for I will have then “departed from the faith,” and if I do this, I am no longer “abiding in the doctrine of Christ” (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 John 9-11), but I am abiding in some man’s writings and doctrine. Peter says that if we “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11), it is God who gets the glory. What if we speak as the oracles of Luther or Calvin or Wesley or Spurgeon, who gets the glory then?

This principle is stated clearly again at 1 John 1:5-2:6. Take a minute now and read those 12 verses. The “light” is the Way of God. It is what the Lord referred to as the “strait gate” and the “narrow way” (Matt. 7:13-15). This Way is indeed a lighted way, for it is by the Word of God that we are directed to it, and onto it. The Psalmist wrote, *“Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and alight unto my path”* (Psalm 119:104-105).

We are to *“walk in the light as He is in the light.”* This simply means we are to abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). It means we are to continue in His Word so we can be disciples indeed; so that we can be made free by the Truth (John 8:31-32). It means we are to walk in Truth; to walk after His commandments (2 John 4,6; 3 John 3,4). In fact, the only way we can know that we know Him is to keep His commandments (1 John 2:3-6; Compare Heb. 5:8-9). The way we show the Lord we love Him is to do what He says for us to do (John 14:15; 15:14; 1 John 5:2-3).

First John 1:5-7 teaches that if we “walk in the light” we have fellowship one with another.” That is, we have fellowship with God and with Jesus, and with all who have fellowship with God and with Jesus. But, what if you continue walking in the light (according to God’s Word) and I stop walking after the Truth after His commandments? If I stop walking in the light, my fellowship with God is severed — I no longer “have God” (2 John 9; Compare Isaiah 59:1-2). And, since my fellowship with God is severed, my fellowship with all who are in fellowship with God is severed as well. There can be no unity where there is no agreement in the Truth (Amos 3:3).

OUR SINCERE PLEA

The sincere plea of churches of Christ is for unity based upon what the Bible teaches. We love God. We love Jesus the Christ. We love the church of Christ. We love the Bible, →

ARE YOU “CHURCH OF CHRIST?”

Steven E. Yeatts

One of the things Christians are to be careful of is the usage of our language. We are exhorted to “let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:6). With that profound encouragement in mind, let us consider the way in which we sometimes hear people refer to those who are members of the body of Christ. I have had my brothers and sisters in Christ at times start a conversation about someone they know by saying, “He (or she) is ‘church of Christ,’ or perhaps even more unnerving is to hear one who claims Christianity refer to another in the body of Christ as a ‘church of Christ.’ Sometimes we all are guilty of using terminology that is at best questionable and at worst very poor judgment for the saved of God. In the case of referring to one’s self or others as “church of Christ,” I believe it is a flagrant statement of misunderstanding and that those who use such terminology should choose their words more sensibly.

To say that someone is “church of Christ” is as denominational in its application as saying someone is a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, or filling in the denominational blank. Such language is unscriptural as it pertains to the righteous — those who are bought with the precious blood of Christ. If we claim to be a people who will call “Bible things by Bible names,” then let us do just that. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find individuals who

were “church of Christ.” The church of Christ is the collective body of believers and indicates a plurality of people. As individuals, we are Christians who are members of the church of Christ.

There are many scriptural designations given to define the distinction of New Testament Christianity. After the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius and his household, the Bible records that “the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). Actually before the term “Christian” was used, Ananias referred to members of the church as “saints” (Acts 9:13). The word saint means one who is “blameless, pure, consecrated, and holy.” There are additional terms used in the New Testament describing individual Christians: saved, righteous, holy, kings, priests, fellowlabourer, fellowsoldier, yokefellow, obedient children, elect, members, and faithful (this would apply if individuals were indeed faithful) (Rev. 21:24; 1 Peter 3:12; 4:18; 1:16; Rev. 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5; Philemon 1-2; Phil. 4:3; 1 Peter 1:2; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2). Nowhere in the New Testament can an individual Christian be found referring to himself or other members of the body of Christ as “church of Christ.” In fact, when Paul referred to Phoebe (a sister in Christ), he wrote that she “is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea” (Rom. 16:1). Paul referred to an individual as a part of the collective body, not as the collective body! The body is one and has many members (individuals) according to 1 Corinthians 12:12.

Now let us review some of the designations for the collective body of Christ. The church of the New Testament in a universal sense is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). The Apostle Paul sent greetings to his Roman brethren by stating, “The churches of Christ salute you” (Rom. 16:16). Paul was issuing a congregational salutation that obviously entailed the greetings of more than one person. The church for which Jesus died is also referred to as the “church of God” (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 2:1). The collective body of believers is known as the “church of the firstborn” (Heb.

12:23). The church of Christ is referred to scripturally as the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). We also understand that the collective body of Christ is sometimes referred to in the New Testament based upon the region or city in which it was located. For example, when Paul wrote to the Galatians, he began his letter by stating, “unto the churches of Galatia” (Gal. 1:2). When writing to the Thessalonians, Paul penned at the start of both letters, “unto the church of the Thessalonians” (1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:1).

I trust that our awareness about our terminology has been heightened and that we will strive to avoid lapsing into denominational indicators when we refer to the glorious, blood-bought institution that is the church of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23-25). The next time somebody says that someone is “church of Christ,” please take the time to lovingly correct him or her. And, if you hear yourself saying it, please catch yourself and reconsider your terminology. We sometimes have need to discipline ourselves (and our tongue) so that we change bad habits to good ones (James 3:5). Solomon wrote, “The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips” (Prov. 16:23). Certainly we want to better train our mouths to speak properly in a spiritual sense. In fact, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11). Certainly in keeping with the power of that verse we would not want to be so careless as to utter that which is scripturally indefensible in regard to how we refer to individual members of the body of Christ.

A person who is a Baptist is one who claims allegiance to a Baptist Church, but a Christian claims allegiance to the church of Christ — the only church authorized and taught in the New Testament. An individual person cannot be “church of Christ.” Believing in the oneness of the church and having obeyed the true New Testament plan of salvation does not make one “church of Christ,” it makes him a Christian whom the Lord has added to His church (Acts 2:47).

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that “light” which guides us. And, we love YOU! We want YOU to come to a knowledge of the Truth so you can be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; Compare again John 8:31-32). The Lord is not willing that you should perish, but that you should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Please let us know how we may be of service to you in these most important matters of the soul. Contact us to know more about the salvation of your soul. We are here to serve you in these eternal matters!

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"Please note change of address for my mother-in-law. She continues to enjoy reading the publication from your congregation" **...Danny Lawson, Warren, MI.** "I enjoy the articles. They separate truth from error that goes throughout our brotherhood" **...Paul Williams, Ridgeland, MS.** "I hope you and your family are doing well. *STOP* is still a BIG help to me. Keep up the good work" **...Mike Ray, Fairhope, AL.** "I came across your March, 2001 issue of *Seek the Old Paths* and was favorably impressed with its content. I especially enjoyed the article on "Doctrine." Will you please add me to your mailing list? Please continue to "contend for the faith." May God continue to bless your efforts" **...Doug Parnell, Richlands, VA.** "I want to say thank you to the elders, brethren and everyone involved with the *Seek the Old Paths*. It makes my soul hum! Thank you" **...Tony Grant, Jr., Lyman, ME.** "Thank you for your work to teach the truth of God's Word!" **...Jim Parsley, Columbus, NE.** "I have been reading copies of *Seek the Old Paths* and am agreeing with its words. I would like to receive it each time it is published and would also like to have copies sent to our church" **...Timothy Rawlins, Hopkinsville, KY.** "Still enjoying *S.T.O.P.* Thank you and praise be to God for you for teaching the true Gospel. God bless all of you" **...M/M Rube H. Wilson, Binger, OK.** "Please continue to send me *S.T.O.P.* May God bless you" **...Daniel Ott, Buchanan, MI.** "It is a sad commentary indeed for the Lord's body for a book such as Bro. Chesser's "The Spirit of Liberalism" to have to be written. I have recently dis-associated myself from a congregation such as the one portrayed in the lead article of the December issue of *STOP*. I know first hand how repugnant it is to see leaders and preachers (so called) of the Lord's body treat the church and God's word with utter contempt and disdain. It is gratifying to know that men such as Bro. Chesser and *STOP* are willing to openly condemn liberalism. It appears to me that not only the tenets should be condemned but also the individuals in whose evil minds these anti-Christian doctrines originate should be openly identified and marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17). I speak of such men as Shelly, Lucado, Walling, Atchley, et.al. As long as they are not publicly challenged they will continue in their pernicious activities. I am happy to be able to send the enclosed check to help you continue the great work you doing" **...H.H. Rhode, River Oaks, TX.** "Thanks for all of the good works you are doing" **...Park St. church of Christ, Metropolis, IL.** "Thank you so much for *S.T.O.P!* In this age of pervasive liberalism you are a beacon to all who love the truth. It was amazing and very sad to see so many requests in the last issue to cancel their mailings. To see that several were for entire churches was even more disturbing. It seems that people don't realize that our creator is not only loving and merciful, but also demanding and jealous. May God continue to bless you and the work you're doing to inform and teach the brotherhood" **...Nampa, ID.** "Until about six months ago, a former preacher here got a copy of *Seek the Old Paths* each month and let me read it. I got a lot of good from your paper. With all of the modern ideas wreaking havoc in many churches today, *Seek the Old Paths* should be read more and more. I want to start receiving a copy each month. I realize you would send it free of charge, but printing and mailing papers is costly nowadays, so I am enclosing a check to help with your cost. Keep up the good work! Thanks for your trouble!" **...Everett E. Wittig, Sr., Bisbee, AZ.** "We appreciate your work and stand for the truth" **...M/M Don Noblin, Cardwell, MO.** "I really appreciate your time and effort on *STOP*, it is a very much needed paper. Liberalism is taking over so many congregations. I can remember when I was a teenager you couldn't count the number of faithful congregations on both hands in the Kansas City area. Now you can do it on one. Keep up the good work" **...Pleasant Hill, MO.** "I was introduced to your publication by my brother in law. I enjoyed the articles very much and would like to be included in your mailings. Thanks" **...Grady Atkinson, Jr., Centerville, TN.** "I enjoyed the articles in *Seek The Old Paths* in Jan. 2002. My home town is Centerville, TN. Thanks for the great article by bro. Dan Goddard. He hit the nail on the head" **...Earl Claud, Dover, TN.**

"Thanks brother Robinson for "*Seek The Old Paths.*" Is the "Winterfest" and the "CYC" (Challenge Youth Conference) the same thing? Thanks again for the sound views and comments I always look forward to reading" **...Danny.** [NOTE: I'm not aware of the CYC, but if it has any connection to Winterfest or would endorse Winterfest, it is no good. After looking at their web site and seeing the list of sponsors, I see no good there either. Many of the colleges are listed and the church at Linary in Crossville is a very liberal congregation — gmr]. "I was admiring your newsletter a brother in Christ is receiving. I am a member of the churches of Christ for some 20 years now. I would like to receive a hard copy version of *Seek The Old Paths* also because of the excellent articles" **...David Lee Burris, Groves, TX.** "Enclosed is a check for *Seek the Old Paths* in memory of my good wife Donna. I appreciate so much your good work and the elders which you serve under. So many congregations have left the faith in Middle Tenn. We must continue standing firmly for the Truth and opposing error. I pass out *S.T.O.P.* on Wed. evening and discuss it in my adult class. This helps to inform them on matters of great importance. Keep the faith" **...Paul Curless, Bradyville, TN.** "I've seen a couple issues of "*STOP*" lately and was wondering if I might secure a subscription of my own? I appreciate the fine articles and the unwavering stand for the truth. The good Lord knows we need more dedicated and steadfast publications like this one circulating the brotherhood! I met you a year or so ago when you attended worship at the Blvd. congregation here in Las Vegas, NV. I'm thankful for your work in His kingdom and bid you, your family and all the faithful in Corinth, Godspeed. Brotherly" **...Michael Price, Las Vegas, NV.** "I'm writing to notify you of my new address. I really like *Seek the Old Paths*, it's full of excellent information. It's the kind of booklet everyone needs to subscribe to. Thanks" **...Bryan Pickle, Gatesville, TX.**

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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