

Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 9, No. 2

February 1998

MARKING FALSE TEACHERS

Dan Goddard

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned; and turn away from them" (Rom. 16:17).

Marking false teachers. The word "mark" means to watch carefully, diligently. If one were in a tower watching the movement of an enemy, he would be marking the enemy (according to the use of this word). Those who are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling are the ones to be marked.

While the word "mark" does not of necessity include the idea of publishing the false teacher, the interest which we have for the church will cause us to do so. Paul knew of certain men who taught false doctrines and he warned others of them so they might be careful (2 Tim. 2:17). So, when one is found to be teaching harmful doctrines, it becomes the duty of him who learns it, to warn others if the false teacher cannot be corrected. But because such public warning may cause some unpleasantness in the church, many refuse to engage in it. These, through pride, have more regard for the good opinion of the community than they have for the purity of the church or the approval of the Lord. Paul says we are to have no fellowship with such, but even reprove them (Eph. 5:11). He who fails to reprove, fails in half his duty to the Lord. Preachers of the gospel and elders of churches cannot escape the responsibility of doing such.

The standard to be used. We are not left to our own opinions as to whom to mark. We are to mark them who are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine of the apostles. Paul says, *"if any man obey not our word by this epistle."* And, again he says we are to "withdraw from all" who do not walk after the traditions received from him (2 Thess. 3:6,14).

"Hold fast the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13). Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to teach certain men not to teach a different doctrine, nor to give heed to fables (1 Tim. 1:3,4). If man or angel preach anything different from what the apostles preached, he shall be anathema (Gal. 1:8,9). Jesus condemned the Jews of His day for departing from the Law of Moses and doing things not commanded, and commanding others to do likewise (Matt. 15:1-9).

We are to be content to preach what is revealed through inspired apostles. Since they were guided into all truth, it follows that anything more or different from what they preached is no part of the truth. That which is not truth is from the devil, for he is the father of lies (John 8:44). To preach that which is not true is to serve the devil, and all who serve him here will have to

spend eternity with him. Hence, the seriousness of failing to preach the truth.

And turn from them. Does this imply concerted church action expressed in withdrawal of fellowship? Or, does it mean for individuals to shun or avoid such characters lest they be contaminated with false teachings? Paul told the Thessalonians to withdraw themselves from all who walk disorderly, and not after the traditions received from him (2 Thess. 3:6). This looks like public condemnation and exclusion from the fellowship of the church. But in another verse he says if any one obeys not his word, *"note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother"* (2 Thess. 3:14,15).

Paul says we are to refuse a factious man after proper admonition (Titus 3:10). A factious man is one given to causing dissensions. But this covers more ground than the Greek word which limits it to causing trouble by teaching false doctrine.

From all we can find on the subject it seems that one who teaches false doctrine should: 1) be corrected,

(Continued on page 7)
Marking False Teachers...



Guest Editorial...

LIBERALISM: BEREFT OF IDEAS AND DEVOID OF CONVICTION

John M. Brown

Liberalism is a philosophy that continues to wreak havoc among many brethren. We do not refer to political liberalism, nor specifically the theological liberalism found in contemporary Protestantism or Catholicism, but rather with reference to the particular liberalism in vogue in certain quarters among us, i.e., members of the Lord's church.

Liberalism manifests itself among churches of Christ in many ways, bearing these characteristics: **the rejection of the New Testament as God's pattern to man for Christianity; the advocacy of fellowship with various and sundry religious denominations; the abandonment of the plea for the restoration of pure, primitive, undenominational Christianity, the repudiation of certain true Bible doctrines and the support of certain untrue ones.** These are all features of the campaign of liberalism currently at work among churches of Christ.

We should not be astounded that liberalism is in our midst, for Jesus taught clearly in the parable of the wheat and tares that our enemy, the devil, would be active, sowing tares among the wheat (Matt. 13:24-30, 37-43). There would be, said our Lord, bad fish among the good (Matt. 13:47-50). Thus, we should expect the seeds of falsehood to be sown among us, and to occasionally take root and sprout. One of the plants is liberalism. It behooves us to be watchful, vigilant, careful, circumspect (see Eph. 5:17; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1).

This article is written to identify the true character of liberalism.

First, liberalism is bereft of ideas! Brethren need to be aware of this lest they be swept into the delusion of thinking the liberal has some new, great, deep, profound insight into Biblical teaching and exegesis. Nothing could be further from the

facts!

Many are, unfortunately, awed when they read the writings of liberals. "Isn't this profound?" some observe, being amazed at the apparent intellectual perception and spiritual depth of the "liberal thinker." But please, abandon all such notions!

The current manifestation of liberalism among us is not generated from new or fresh considerations. It is often either a rehash of the same refuse tossed onto the rubbish pile of Protestant discardings a century ago, or simply the restating of some former hare-brained idea among brethren that has long since been repudiated. The liberal merely reworks and rewords the concept, and some brethren think the liberal has really advanced in his understanding. No, we can identify cud, even when it gets chewed the second time around.

When the ideas of liberalism are advocated, therefore, don't be deluded into thinking that the liberal is an astute thinker or spiritual colossus; he is merely a profuse reader and calculating imitator. For example, some "professional liberals" began the "change-chant" — the church has got to change! change! change!, we were told. Others began to repeat this incantation without ever stopping to think about what was meant. I have, on more than one occasion, contacted a brother who had written a "change article" and inquired of that brother, "What exactly must we change? Would you tell me, and please be specific." My requests, on every occasion, were met with the shattering sounds of silence. They really didn't know what they wanted to change, they only repeated what someone else said. No, liberalism is not the harbinger of stimulating intellectual thought among us; it is in fact, woefully bereft of ideas and but a regurgitator of old and bad notions — con-

cepts long ago abandoned by Bible students.

Second, liberalism is devoid of courage and conviction! The challenge: find a liberal somewhere who will publicly defend what he has stated and/or written under the light of careful scrutiny in public debate! Can you find such a one? Where is he?

If you can find a liberal who will, with courage and conviction, defend his doctrine, publicly and privately, then contact your congressman immediately and have that liberal's name entered on the list of federally protected endangered species, for you have found a rare breed, practically extinct. Are there liberals around? Oh, more than enough — too many in fact! Are there liberals around who will boldly defend their liberalism? Frankly, their number is minuscule. We search generally in vain for that kind of liberal! Liberals will aim and shoot at brethren, the church, the restoration plea — but they are just as quick to cut and run!

One of the characteristics of our brethren in the book of Acts was their boldness — they were men and women of courage and conviction. They stood for truth in the midst of controversy, opposition and persecution. They urged us to so stand as well (see, for example 2 Tim. 1:8; 4:2; 1 Peter 3:15). The brethren in Acts bear little resemblance to the liberals in the church today!

"Stand for something or you'll fall for everything," goes the maxim. I charge liberals with standing for very little and falling for almost every foolishness. I urge brethren not to go with them on their downhill ride into the pit of nothingness. I have heard liberals who spoke profusely and said nothing, who wrote volumes advancing nought. Boldness, courage, and conviction are hallmarks of New Testament Christianity and demonstrate the character of our first century brethren. The lack thereof among some today is an indication of their character as well. The crisp, clear strain of plain, pure Bible teaching is absent from the liberals. Sad!

Liberalism: bereft of ideas and devoid of conviction. Not a sound path to pursue, surely!

P.O. Box 871
Flatwoods, KY 41139

Are The Overseers Asleep Or Spiritually Dead?

Marvin L. Weir

Elders COLUMN

The infamous "change agents" are often allowed to spew forth their deadly poison eloquently and deceitfully from congregation to congregation of the Lord's church. Why? It is either because those who call themselves "elders" have fallen asleep while supposedly guarding the flock or have died spiritually!

The Lord's church has never been in more danger. The danger is as real as the darkness of the night. Many brethren obsessed with modernism have attempted to label as "troublemakers" those who would dare to stand up for Jesus. Please give careful consideration to these words found in the August, 1992 issue of *Wineskins* entitled "Traumatic Winds of Renewal." Mike Cope is the author.

Just as "Rodney King" has stood for gigantic issues bigger than one man, "new hermeneutic" is a code phrase for much of the tension we're feeling in churches of Christ right now; **TENSION** that has brought forth resignations in some of our colleges and churches; **TENSION** that led one editor to invite readers to send in proof of apostasy in their own congregations; **TENSION** that has families in religious conflict, so that some have found it easier not to discuss spiritual concerns ... I believe the winds of change we feel are gusts of spiritual renewal; that the sound we hear is the sound of wineskins expanding from the new wine of the gospel ... Many of us grew up believing that God is just a heavenly prosecutor who winces with pain and anger when Christians veer one iota from some supposed exact pattern of worship ... As Leonard Allen and Richard

Hughes point out in *Illusions of Innocence*, a great irony is that when restoration groups narrow their focus to begin firing upon "the denominations," they tend to become even more denominational.

Whatever happened to Randolph Scott or the Lone Ranger? You could always depend on these guys to foil the enemies' plan! They were on guard protecting honor, decency, and all that is right. Perhaps elders today could learn a lesson from some of those "old westerns."

Far too many "elders" are only concerned about the attendance and the contribution! They deem themselves to be qualified by having a double major in "public relations" and "loving tolerance." What about scriptural qualifications? Are they "apt to teach" the truth (1 Tim. 3:2) — not a chance! Are they "holding to the faithful word" that they "may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers?" Obviously not! It should be noted the Bible warns elders that "there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the new hermeneutic (substitution mine, mlw) whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:10-11).

Brethren, our Lord is being robbed of the glory rightfully His while so-called elders refuse to scripturally "oversee" the congregation! Others have simply fallen asleep while guarding the flock and thus will never be able to sound forth a warning. Regarding those who will

be lost because of such neglect of duty, the Bible says, "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, and thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way; that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand" (Ezek. 33:8).

The wholesale apostasy occurring in the church today is the fault of those who are charged by God with overseeing the flock! Preachers, whose goal it is to completely restructure the church, would not be influencing brethren and leading them astray if congregations had godly elders who took seriously the charge to "exhort in the sound doctrine" and "convict the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9).

What an awesome responsibility to serve as an elder in the Lord's church! Elders are to watch in behalf of souls and will give an account to God of those under their rule (Heb. 13:17). If elders met the qualifications of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1, they would issue an ultimatum to false teachers, "Repent or pack." Refusal to repent would never merit godly elders agreeing to a "politically correct resignation" and a "recommendation" to another congregation!

Overseers who have fallen asleep while on watch and those who are spiritually dead need to be removed and replaced by godly elders who truly love the Lord's church!

5810 Liberty Grove Rd.
Rowlett, TX 75088

The East End Church of Christ in McMinnville, Tenn. is looking for a preacher. You may contact the elders at: 102 Edison St., McMinnville, TN 37110. Only sound preachers need apply.

SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Virgil L. Hale

Do what you need to do NOW while time and opportunity is yours!

The first sin known to man occurred in the garden of Eden. Sin was introduced into the world by Eve and then Adam. The consequences of sin are many and far reaching. Not only is the consequence of sin felt in a great way in this world at the present time, but it will reach into eternity. Paul wrote, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). This makes the matter of great importance, as our very soul and its eternal welfare is at stake. We know that the devil is responsible for causing Eve to sin, and thus Jesus referred to him as the "father" of those who live a sinful life (John 8:44). In that same verse Jesus said, "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

In this study, we will define sin, look at ways we may sin, study something of the nature of sin, the effect of sin and finally the remedy for sin. If we can accomplish these objectives, our study will be profitable to all of us.

WHAT IS SIN?

Let us define sin as the Bible defines it. First, the word **transgression** is going beyond the limits that God has set. In 2 John 9 where the King James Version says, "Whosoever **transgresseth**, and **abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God**," The American Standard Version reads, "Whosoever **goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God**."

Second, the word **sin** means to fall short. This means that one stops short of what God has commanded. The word sin is used this way in Romans 3:23 where Paul wrote, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." I am well aware of the fact that John used the word sin and transgression interchangeably when he wrote, "Whosoever **commiteth sin transgresseth also the law**:"

for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). However, sin is a falling short — a missing the mark. Transgression is going beyond. I am convinced we can better understand the two terms if used in this way and after all, as pointed out above, they are used in this way in the Bible.

A third word to look at is **iniquity**. It carries with it the idea of turning aside from God's way. Isaiah wrote, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). The word iniquity can be used in the sense of turning aside from.

When we have looked at the word **sin** (to fall short), **transgress** (to go beyond) and **iniquity** (a turning aside from), we have covered every possible way that one can violate the will of God. John tells us that "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17). James wrote, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

WAYS ONE CAN SIN

One can sin in *thought* (Isa. 55:7; Matt. 5:27-28). One can sin in *word* (Matt. 12:36-37; James 3). One can sin in *deed* (Gal. 5:19-21). I cannot think of any other way we can violate God's will, can you? We must be on guard every day we live lest we be guilty of sinning in one or more of these ways!

THE NATURE OF SIN

According to James, sin is *enticing* (James 1:13-15). Paul wrote of the *deceptive* nature of sin (Heb. 3:13), and also pointed out that it is pleasant for *only a season* (Heb. 11:25).

THE EFFECT OF SIN

Sin *estranges* one from God. This is made clear in Isaiah 59:1-2. Also,

we are told that God forsakes those who forsake Him (2 Chron. 15:2). Yes, sin separates in life, in death, in the judgment and in eternity.

Sin *enslaves* its victims. People become the servants or slaves of sin (Rom. 6:6,12,14). It literally enslaves a person's thoughts, passions and will.

Sin *brings death* (Rom. 6:23). I am speaking now of eternal death or separation from God (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

REMEDY FOR SIN

How sad it would be if we had to end our study just here, but such is not the case. I am happy to be able to say **there is a remedy for sin!** The remedy is the blood of Christ. We can learn of this remedy in the Word of God (James 1:21), the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21).

When we are obedient to the commands of the Lord, we have the benefits of the Lord's blood (Rev. 22:14). And, as long as we "walk in the light" we have the continual cleansing of the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7).

Have you obeyed the gospel of Christ? As a child of God, are you truly "walking in the light?" Do what you need to do **NOW** while time and opportunity is yours!

4004 Murray Paris Rd.
Hazel, KY 42049

EDITOR'S NOTE: You can obey the gospel by **believing in Christ** as the only begotten Son of God (John 8:24; 3:16; Heb. 11:6), **repenting of your sins** (Luke 3:23; Acts 2:38), **confessing faith in Christ** (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37) and being **baptized** (immersed) in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). This will make you a child of God and you will be added by the Lord to His glorious bride, the church (Acts 2:41,47; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). The church of Christ is the only place salvation is found (Eph. 4:4-5; 5:23; 2 Tim. 2:10).

HERALD OF ERROR

O. B. Porterfield

Brother Jodie Boren of Abilene, Texas sent me a copy of a sermon preached by **Mike Cope** who is the preacher at the Fifth and Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas on April 21, 1996.

While I have neither the space nor the desire to print the entire sermon, the quotes that follow will not be taken out of context, neither will we try to make them say anything that Cope did not intend.

“But the greater problem, in my own mind, was my exposure to other people. You see, if you want to believe that you are the only Christians, you have to be very careful about whom you expose yourself to.

It’s best to go hide in caves, like one group did in the first century. If you hide in caves and don’t get around anybody else then you can hold to that belief — that we are the only ones.

But what are you going to do with all the wonderful Spirit-filled, Jesus-like, prayerful believers who don’t go to church where we go, weren’t baptized like we were baptized, and whose doctrine doesn’t line up exactly like ours.

That was the crisis for me.

As I read church history, I came across people who had given their lives for Jesus Christ. People who had watched their babies be killed rather than recant their belief in Jesus. People

who prayed and wrote books on prayer like Jesus Christ was their closest friend.

And then I started noticing the people who are having an impact on me.

First and foremost, Billy Graham in the fervency of his evangelical message and his integrity.

Richard Foster and his commitment to prayer and holiness.

Tony Campolo and his call for Christian service and resisting the world’s influence.

But the biggest problem of all to me was a man whom many of you don’t know — some of you do, a man named John Stott. As I read more and more works by this Anglican preacher named John Stott, I was a John Stott wannabe.

Still am — in a lot of ways.

And then I got to spend three days with twenty men that included him. The closer I got the more I saw that everything I had seen from a distance was even more true up close. A man of utter holiness. A man in whom the Spirit was powerful. A man of prayer. And yet, on the other hand, a man who didn’t share my understanding of baptism. Full of God’s Spirit. And yet ... I just didn’t know what to do with it.

We could earlier have called this a “James Dobson

problem.” Nearly two decades ago we had churches wanting to use James Dobson’s film strips. But what do we do with James Dobson? Well, I remember in my own city when we had Paul Faulkner film strips, we would say “this is a video series by Christian Psychologist Paul Faulkner”. So Paul that was your title, if you are here today. That was Christian Psychologist Paul Faulkner.

But when we showed Dobson’s videos, we introduced it as a “video series by James Dobson, Psychologist, who writes and speaks from a Christian perspective.”

See the out there. No commitment. We didn’t know quite what to do with this man. A man of deep holiness, and prayer, who is trying to save our families.

Then one day it hit me. I needed to come clean on this. Because I believe these are God’s people, even though they are not a part of my little bunch.

And, it hit me, unity can’t come by uniformity.

We are never going to be united by trying to clone people. By saying: “Okay, you’ve got to have one person’s personality; You’ve to have one person’s preferences; You’ve to have one person’s understanding of scripture.”

We will never get it that way. It gets back to the first lesson in this series, where I pointed out that if you want uniformity, the thing to do is not give everybody a Bible but go get everybody’s Bible and hide it.

The Church at times, in middle ages, had a lot better unity because some person told them, “Here is what we believe.”

But the minute you start

1997 “Seek The Old Paths” Bound Volume

\$5.00 – INCLUDES POSTAGE (1996 Also Available – \$5.00)

'97 Lectureship Book – Colossians – \$5.00

'96 Lectureship Book – The Seven Churches of Asia – \$5.00

'95 Lectureship Book – Corinthians – \$5.00

Please include \$1.50 postage for one book; \$2.25 for 2-3 books.

Order from **Old Paths Publishing** P.O. Box 97, Nettleton, MS 38858

translating that Bible and giving it to every child [and adult] and saying "Read this thing and follow it," then you had better be willing to accept some differences.

This past year, I guess it was after the first of the year — this year — Promise Keepers, the men's movement many of you know about, had the largest gathering of ministers ever in the history of the church, as far as anybody knows about, in Atlanta. I didn't get to go. I heard about it.

One evening Max Lucado, you know Max, minister of the Oak Hills Church of Christ in San Antonio, spoke — and spoke on unity. He called us to quit building walls between denominations, but to let those walls come down. And honor one another and give a witness to the world by the way we treat one another. Quit thinking that we are the only little ones having a game in this Christianity. It was a valiant call for unity.

Afterwards somebody told me they were behind a couple Charismatic preachers. And they were just laughing, laughing, laughing. And one turned to the other and said, "Isn't that just like God? Isn't that just like God? Use a Church of Christ preacher to call us to unity."

That, at best, we in one group committed to the ideal of non-denominational Christianity. Eager to study God's Word and obey it. In humility recognizing that we don't have all truth. In gratitude recognizing that faith in Christ alone is what brings salvation.

Aren't there some lost people out in denominations?, someone might ask. Well, yes, there are, just as there are in this assembly this morning. But there are also Christ followers out there, as well. As the best of our heritage has always

know we can believe this without giving up our deep convictions about scripture, about baptism, and about worship.

My long term dream is that Highland be a part of leading in this. Leading in unity. I tell you, I would love to have a Sunday when Phil Christopher, the minister at First Baptist, and I exchange pulpits. Not just a chance to show that we are progressive. I'm not interested in that. Not as a chance to stick it in somebody's face so that they will be bothered. I'm not interested in that either. But as a opportunity to express our mutual faith to other believers and to witness to unbelievers through the unity of God's people. Think of the power if Highland leads out in calling all believes to unity in Jesus Christ."

If you believe what **Mike Cope** says, the Lord's church is not distinctive. He doesn't believe that doctrine is important. He believes in fellowshiping error. He would endorse James Dobson, a member of the Nazarene Church, to teach in person or on film.

Cope says that, "Unity can't come by uniformity." Isn't it strange that Jesus didn't know that? He says that, "We don't have all truth." Why, I thought that we did. Read 2 Tim. 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:3. He wants us to, "In gratitude recognize[ing] that faith in Christ alone is what brings salvation." It's amazing to me that James would tell us just the opposite in James 2:24.

Did you notice that if he exchanged pulpits with a Baptist minister it wouldn't be for the purpose of "bothering" them? Can you imagine Paul preaching to a group of Baptist people and not having the desire to "bother" them? Read 2 Cor. 5:11.

Brethren we better wake up before it's too late. I can remember when the Highland church in Abilene was loved and respected for the great work that it did with the help of congregations from all over the country. Would you ever have imag-

ined that such false doctrine would spew from its pulpit? I can remember when certain of our Montgomery congregations stood on a rock foundation, but no longer.

Consider the indictment... "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber" (Isa. 56:10). And the admonition, "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14).

Taken from the Seibles Road Church of Christ bulletin, Feb. 23, 1997, 541 Seibles Rd., Montgomery, AL 36116

Mike Cope preaches for the Highland church in Abilene, Texas

CONTRIBUTORS

M/M Malcolm Halford.....	\$25
Anonymous	\$100
M/M Keith Lott.....	\$20
Carroll P. Bennett	\$5
Mack Bennett	\$10
Ector and Cordia Watson	\$100
James L. Shaver	\$15
David M. Dozier.....	\$5
Anonymous	\$50
Myles and Nena Clement	\$100
M/M John H. Brown.....	\$25
Anonymous	\$50
Charles Verkist	\$25
Anonymous	\$150
Roy E. Whitfield	\$25
Martin Bedford.....	\$50
Bethlehem Church of Christ, Baxter, TN	\$100
Elwood Cretsinger.....	\$50
Southwest School of Biblical Studies, Austin, TX.....	\$100
Virginia Wright	\$10
Seibles Road Church of Christ, Montgomery, AL.....	\$300
Anonymous	\$30
Clyde and Wilma Lewis.....	\$10
Danville Church of Christ, Biggersville, MS	\$300
Elizabeth Hamilton, Memorial ...	\$20

We very deeply and sincerely appreciate all who help with the expenses in teaching and admonishing one another through **Seek The Old Paths**.

MEANINGFUL WORSHIP

Chuck Pearson

If worship is somehow boring or uninteresting to us then perhaps it's us who need to change, not our methods for worshipping God! It's up to us to find meaning in simple, God-authorized, New Testament worship!

There seems to be a movement in the Lord's church today to make worship more "meaningful." I recently spoke with a preacher for one of the congregations here in Abilene who said that he would "stand on his head" or do anything else (in the area of theatrics, I suppose!) in order to make worship more "meaningful" for members of the church. I wonder, brethren, is this the attitude which we should have? Can we really make worship more meaningful than what God has authorized in the New Testament?

In John 4:23-24, we are told we are to "worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (v.23). Furthermore, we are told that we "must worship him in spirit and in truth" (v.24). Notice the elements for proper worship: "spirit" and "truth."

To worship in spirit means that we must have the right attitude in worshipping the Father. God does not want our worship to be vain or insincere. Spiritual worship is that which is done from a pure heart, and in accordance with God's will (this is not to be confused with emotion. Just because worship "feels good" doesn't mean it's spiritual!)

To worship in truth means we must worship in a manner that is pleasing to God, doing only the things which he has prescribed! Why is this important? Because we worship a God of truth (John 17:17), a God whom we can know (John 4:22) and whose commandments we can understand (John 8:32).

Is any kind of worship pleasing to God? No, only that which he has authorized! For example, in Leviticus 10, Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, violated the instructions which the Lord had just given to the Israelites regarding the proper way to offer the sacrifice (see Lev. 9). Their intentions may very well have

been good! Perhaps they wanted to make the worship more "meaningful." But it didn't matter. God had told them what to do in order to offer the sacrifice in a manner pleasing to him. Instead, they "offered strange (or unauthorized) fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (v.1). Did God say they could not offer "strange fire?" No, rather he had clearly dictated how the offering was to be done. Anything more or less than that was unauthorized and unacceptable! What happened to Nadab and Abihu on account of their innovation? "And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (v.2).

We see then that right worship (according to God's prescribed pattern) is expected and demanded from God for all who would strive to honor him (today, that means Christians, by means of the commandments for worship given in the New Testament)!

"Meaningful" worship is worship done according to God's will! There is nothing we have to do (either in adding to or taking away from) in order to improve worship. If worship is somehow boring or uninteresting to us then perhaps it's us who need to change, not our methods for worshipping God! It's up to us to find meaning in simple, God-authorized, New Testament worship! It's not difficult: we worship through prayers, taking the Lord's supper, giving of our means (contributing), singing, and hearing the word preached. How can this be made more *meaningful*?

Worship is not for our entertainment, or amusement. It's *commanded* by God (Heb. 10:25) and designed for our edification (1 Cor. 14:26). We are made in God's image (Gen. 1:27). He knows what our needs are (Matt. 6:32). This includes worshipping him! Rather than try to conform worship

to our tastes, let us conform our hearts to God's divine will (Rom. 12:2)!

ACU Box 28193
Abilene, TX 67999

Marking False Teachers...

(Continued from page 1)

if he will take it; 2) be warned to cease his false teaching; 3) be exposed so as to stop him (Titus 1:9-11); and 4) be excluded from the fellowship of the church as a last resort to save him and the church.

False teaching spreads like gangrene (2 Tim. 2:17), so it must not be allowed to continue in the body. Elders have the duty of seeing that it is stopped.

Church discipline is truly in some places the "forgotten commandment."

29511 Bock St.
Garden City, MI 48135

13th
ANNUAL
SEEK THE
OLD PATHS
LECTURESHIP

July 26-30, 1998

THE HOME
East Corinth
Church of Christ



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

...*Albert R. Hutchinson, Lake Park, GA.* "I enjoy reading S.T.O.P. which a friend passes on to me. I want to have a part in your good work. May God bless you" ...*Canelle Threlkeld, Union City, TN.* "I am writing to let you know how much I enjoy receiving and reading your paper" ...*Jean Martin, Olathe, KS.* "From our observations, *Seek The Old Paths* is one of only a handful of brother-hood-wide publications who are defending the faith "once delivered for all." We thank our God for you and keep you in our prayers as you fight the good fight" ...*Martin Bedford, Tucson, AZ.* "We just read the January issue of S.T.O.P. and found it very informative and sound. We are in an area where liberalism is becoming more evident and need good literature to keep us aware of how to combat problems in the church. Would you please put us on your mailing list. We would appreciate it very much" ...*J.D. Houseman, Liberal, KS.* "Your publication has been so meaningful to us over the years. Keep up the good word. To assist in the publication of *Seek The Old Paths* please find the enclosed check" ...*Mark Miller, West Jefferson, NC.* "I appreciate the good work the East Corinth church is doing through S.T.O.P. The paper is informative and handles exposing error with love and concern for the truth and the brethren. Please express my gratitude to the East Corinth eldership and the congregation for the work that is being done. It is not an easy task to speak out in these times of "feel good" religion. So many elderships and ministers ignore the problems in hopes the problems will just disappear. And as most of us know, this is a very foolish position to take. Error must be exposed and truth taught" ...*Mary Lawrence, Fayetteville, GA.* "Please use this contribution to continue the publication, *Seek The Old Paths*" ...*Jim & Laura Parsley, Columbus, NE.* "I would like very much to be placed on your mailing list for S.T.O.P. I am seventy five years old, have been a member of the Lord's church for most of that time. Have served as elder, preacher and teacher. I don't believe I can remember any time in my life when the church needed the material you are providing as much as it is needed now. Keep up the good work. Use the enclosed money to help with mailing" ...*Murray S. Hudgins, Centerville, TN.* "Would you please put my husband on your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*" ...*Miller, Hurricane, WV.* "Please take us off your mailing list" ...*Mrs. Ray Vannoy, Tyler, TX.* "S.T.O.P. has been a great encouragement to me. Earlier, I had written to be put on your mailing list. I look forward to receiving *Seek The Old Paths*" ...*LeeBeth Johnson, Dallas, GA.* "Please take my name off of your mailing list. I have read your paper for the last three years, but would like to take time for other readings and study. Thank you" ...*Rhonda Roberts, Celina, TN.* "We sure do enjoy your paper S.T.O.P." ...*B.H. Darby, Sr., Batesville, MS.* "Please send me your publication *Seek The Old Paths*. I have read several copies and enjoy what I am reading" ...*Larry Wilson, Callahan, FL.*



"Hello, having just started to receive the news article *Seek the Old Paths*, I appreciate the church's efforts to see that the Bible is taught in the way that it should be. The Good News. Having been in the church for a relatively short time (7yrs) and having heard many good lessons from God's Word, I often wonder if we as Christians can be so easily swayed to some of the changes that the world is bringing to us. I am in particular speaking of the *Promise Keepers* that is now making the headlines. The good brother that started having this news article sent to me speaks to our congregation occasionally and is very concerned about the condition of the Lord's body in these times. Once again I appreciate yours and his efforts" ...*Jim Armbruster.* "Just visited your page. Very nice. I will be stealing a few ideas from you for my page. Also, glad to see the latest lecture book. I will be ordering that. You are doing some good work. Keep it up" ...*Jeff Asher, Amarillo, TX.* "Brother, could you add me to your "Seek The Old Paths" mailing list? The congregation where I preach is very small. I know the "Seek The Old Paths" will be beneficial to us in eastern Canada. Many of the people you list (for their errors), are seen as great preachers in Canada. The reason being that, at least where I live, we are far out of contact

"Thank you for the excellent publication, how beautiful are the words of truth that are so badly needed to a world of sinners as we near the twenty-first century. How encouraging to read of brethren who are not afraid or ashamed to stand up for the church which Christ purchased with his blood"

with the main stream of fellowship. We are one of three congregations in this province of Nova Scotia. I recall when I lived in Kansas, going to the Tulsa workshop with my family, twice. The first time bothered me with some of what I heard. The second time I stood up and walked out, having to restrain myself at the error *Jeff Walling* was preaching and that my brethren were swallowing up without realization. It was the last time we went. From that point forward I cautioned everyone regarding their presence at it and the error offered. Thank you" ...*Raymond Wiseman.* "Thanks for all the hard work you put into both the paper and the annual lectureship. May God continue to richly bless you as you stand for Him" ...*Byron Longrier, Muscle Shoals, AL.* "I am the minister for the Stockbridge, MI congregation. I have read some of your work and would like to let you know how much I appreciate brethren such as yourself. I also appreciate your efforts "on-line." I was given your URL by Bro. Dan Goddard of Garden City, MI. Keep up the good work...God bless you and the brethren at East Corinth" ...*John Natiw.* "The web page is really nice. Keep up the good work" ...*Randy Dodson.* "I found a copy of your publication quite by accident. I was very pleased with the soundness of the articles. Please add me to your list" ...*Ken Sullivan, Hinesville, GA.* "I am an Elder in the Lord's Church in Olympia, Washington. I found your page through The Firm Foundation and thus found the free publication page. Due to a recent event in our congregation, I have discovered how far removed from the brotherhood we in the Pacific Northwest are. It is my desire to be in contact with as many congregations that are of sound doctrine as possible in order to stay abreast of those that are trying to destroy the beloved church that Christ died for. I respectfully request that I be added to your mailing list" ...*Bob Bakewell, Olympia, WA.*

If you would like an index of *Seek The Old Paths* for '95 - '97, please send us a stamped (55¢) self-addressed envelope and request it. It is free.

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

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

<http://www.tsixroads.com/~ecorinth>

EAST CORINTH CHURCH OF CHRIST
1801 CRUISE ST.
CORINTH, MS 38834-5108
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 253
Corinth, MS