

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 Larger Community of Believers"

Gary McDade

Only the ones obeying the Gospel as Peter preached on Pentecost, "...Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" were added to the church (Acts 2:38,47).

Those added to the church were believers.

The belief that the church of which one is a member is a part of "the larger community of believers" would be expected among people who think of the church as sectarian or denominational. But, when it appears in a college catalogue from a graduate school preparing men for pulpits in churches of Christ, it should signal the need to take corrective action. Beneath the heading on "Identity," the context in which this phrase appears, states, "...We encourage the open and honest pursuit of truth through past and present resources in the context of historic Christian faith.

"Within the context of these commitments that are shared with the larger community of believers, the Graduate School is particularly committed to providing integrated training for ministry among churches of Christ. These churches embrace the concept of restoration as a theological principle."^[1]

"Harding University Graduate School of Religion is a branch school of Harding University in Searcy, Ark."^[2] Dr. Evertt W. Huffard is Dean/Executive Director.^[3] The campus is located at 1000 Cherry Road, Memphis, TN 38117.

The President of Harding Uni-

versity is Dr. David B. Burks. The position taken in the 2001-2002 General Catalogue of the graduate school over which he serves as President stands contrasted against what he wrote in January of 2000. He wrote,

"Christ's church is distinctive. The new century may bring more questions than answers concerning the identity of the church. But we are the bride of Christ, and as such we have an obligation to know who we are and whose we are: We are the one church Paul speaks of in Ephesians 4:4. This strong sense of identity spurs us to truthfully proclaim all aspects of Christ's church, including a cappella music in worship, the autonomy of the local congregation, the weekly observance of the Lord's supper, and the role of men and women in and out of the worship assembly."^[4]

Lamentably, the "branch school" in Memphis does not share the view of its president.

Dean Huffard has played a leadership role in the formation and furtherance of the five Community Church Movement-type churches in the Memphis area.^[5] Chameleon-like, the organization and administration of these churches variously is referenced as MCPM (Memphis

Church Planting Ministry, cf. *Mission Memphis*, Spring 1998, vol. 2, pp.1-2), MUM (Memphis Urban Ministry, *The Acts of Highland Street*, 20:49 (Dec. 21, 2000), pp.185,188) and City Missions (*Server*, 48:13, March 28, 2001, p.2). The graduate school website says Dean Huffard served as the "Chairman of Steering Committee (1991-1997)" for MUM www.hugsr.edu/CVs/cv_huff.htm. The *Harding* magazine reported Dean Huffard was "the impetus behind the forming" of the Downtown Church, and stated, "He has spent the last two years directly involved with the church's planting...."^[6] The so called contemporary worship consisting of the use of a praise team, hand clapping, testimonials, and the use of religious art in worship (a 25-foot mural of Jesus Christ on the cross) are all presented in the *Harding* magazine article. The source from which such contemptible practices originated is now well known, the Willow Creek Community Church. In his installment address September 30, 1999, the new Dean said, "Over the past six years, we have been blessed to see the growth

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Believers...



Editorial...

A YOUNG MAN'S LETTER

I am a student at Lipscomb University. I grew up in a very difficult church (and having escaped it without too many psychological and emotional scars), I feel that it is my duty to describe to you the state of the Church in regard to those my age. We are as men caught in a severe rainstorm, who find that they will get soaked to the bone no matter what they do. We do not necessarily agree with the older generations in all things, yet we are willing to work toward the greater good when we can actually see it before us. Most people my age are very turned off by rules and dogma that seem to do nothing more than restrict. The root of all our problems, the reason for the swelling number of abortions, rapes, murders, instances of drug use, and all other manner of evil is the attitudes of the church members. While our generation appears to you to be lost, it is not the result of actions taken by those with whom you disagree, but rather the actions of yourselves, and those whom you have programmed to hate, loath, and despise anyone who disagrees with you. This is evidenced time and time again by the hateful way that you "write up" anyone who does something you don't like. I urge you brothers to walk the path instead of talking about it and pushing others off of it. You are walking down a road of pride and arrogance, believing that you and your denomination (yes it is a denomination, whatever semantics you use to describe it) are the only ones going to Heaven. I urge you to stop lashing out at your brothers and sisters in Christ before you stand before God in judgment. Had you, in your younger days, simply ceased to damn all those who disagreed with you, there are millions of infants who would be alive today. It is in following my heart that I have ceased to attend a Church at all. All I ever see in the church is bickering, hatred, and bitterness. Seeking to insulate myself from these, I simply

study my Bible at home and pray on my own. I deal with all manner of bickering and politics, all done in the name of religion, 5 days a week. I find that I can no longer worship God with any sincerity in my heart when I find myself elbow to elbow with those who are theological brutes throughout the rest of the week. I write this to you, because I hope and pray that some sanity will return to your souls.

REPLY...

Let me make a few brief comments regarding different things you have stated. It appears you are fighting a "straw man." From what you have said, you have met some folks with very poor attitudes and practices. I certainly do not encourage, endorse, promote or condone any wrong doing as you have suggested. My job, and what I do, is simply call people to the one Gospel for which Jesus our blessed Lord died. I found long ago that you cannot make people do anything and it wouldn't do any good if you could. Faithfulness — obedience — has to be from the heart.

We must remember that "youth" have always had their problems and often reject the counsel of the wise, older, generation. Rehoboam did this in I Kings 12. He rejected the wise counsel of the old men, accepted the counsel of the young men his age, and ended up dividing the kingdom.

It is nothing new that people are turned off by rules and regulations. Eve didn't like them either. People love to be "foot loose and fancy free." No child, or adult for that matter, likes to be told "no." However, God made this world and all that is in it. He made man after his own likeness. God, therefore, has every right to tell us what is right and what is wrong — what he accepts and what he rejects. While most people reject God's "rules and regulations," His commandments are really "admonitions of

love." God didn't have to provide a means of escape from the penalty of our sins. Jesus didn't have to come to this sinful world and live among men. But, in God's great love and mercy, he gives us his "rules and regulations" because they are good for us. He knows what's best for us and what will make us truly happy. Parents do not love their children when they let them run wild with no restraints. Eli was condemned for not restraining his sons (1 Samuel 3:13). God loves us enough to provide us his "rules and regulations." He didn't have to do that. But these "rules and regulations" (commandments) are his LOVE, not his hatefulness, harshness, pride or arrogance. God is not trying to see how difficult he can make it for us. His commandments are his LOVE (1 John 2:3,4,7,8; 3:22-24).

God has His own way and He will have it His way or people will be lost. I don't have a way. Nobody has to do things "my way." I don't look for people to follow me or us. I look for people to follow the Lord and the only way they can do that is by following His "rules and dogma" (John 14:15; 15:14). God doesn't allow people to "have it their own way." But, I'm afraid most people feel as though God is a little dog that patiently waits at the foot of the dinner table for any crumb that those who feast is willing to toss him. People somehow feel like God will accept anything they offer and be glad to get it. But, God didn't accept Cain's sacrifice (Gen. 4:5), nor did He accept the offering of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2). Their sacrifices and offerings were not what God had ordered (commanded, rules, regulations, dogmas, etc.) and therefore, rejected them. God was not happy with just anything, even if it was offered in sincerity.

You are intent on thinking that someone, somewhere, is standing around with a whip attempting to make people do what they want them to do. I have never run across that. ALL we can do, as the Lord's servants, is tell people what is right and what is wrong and exhort them to do it. The people have the choice to do it or not. However, if the wayward are Christians, local congregations have the obligation (responsibility, duty) to rebuke them and if they do not

repent, they are to withdraw fellowship from them (1 Thess. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5). Though unpleasant, this action is an act of love. It is love for both the soul of the wayward and the other members of the church. A little leaven, leavens the whole lump (1 Cor. 5:6). Faithful brethren also have the obligation to expose (Eph. 5:11), warn (1 Thess. 5:14), mark and avoid — call attention to (Rom. 16:17) — those who do not walk uprightly (Gal. 2:14).

The root of all the problems in the world is sin, not church members. Wickedness, evil, falsehood, is sin. Sin separates from God (Isa. 59:2). Sin brings death and destruction, not church members. The rules and regulations of God bring people out of sin, not plunge them into it.

Anyone who would teach to hate, loathe, or despise anyone, is not of God. Those who hate, loathe or despise the commandments of God, his rules and dogma, are not of God. We are told to hate, loathe and despise sin, but certainly not the person who commits it. We hate the sin, but love the sinner. We love them enough to tell them God's will for them. We, therefore, tell them what God hates and what God loves. We tell them God loves those who obey His commandments (1 John 5:2-3; John 15:14).

People who loathe, detest and despise the commandments of God are those who abort, drink, drugs, etc. etc. I haven't forced them into it, I'm simply the messenger of God — which message they hate. People today, many church members, are telling elders and preachers, "*preach not unto us right things, preach smooth things, preach deceit*" (Isa. 30:10). That is what you are advocating, not me. If we love God, we would love His word. If we would be a friend to Jesus, we would love His word (John 14:15; 15:14), not despise it.

Since when did it become pride to know the truth, believe the truth, love the truth and obey the truth? Jesus said we can know the truth (John 8:32). You make it appear that nobody can really know the truth or know that they know the truth. Did God leave us His saving word and yet reveal it in such fashion that nobody can know it? We can know the truth and know that we know the truth (John 8:32; Eph. 3:4). That is not

pride or arrogance. The only way we know about sin and its remedy is by God's inspired word. Can we trust it? If no one can really know it or understand it, then how are we going to know if someone has done what God required them to do to be saved?

I wish, desire and pray for you to sincerely obey the Gospel and return to your first love. Love the Truth and obey the Truth that you might be saved. Yes, there are hypocrites in the church. There were in the first century (Acts 5). But, we do not condone them nor support them. When they are discovered, they are to be dealt with (2 Thess. 3:6). But in the

mean time, you must make your own calling and election sure. You can't do that by sitting at home. It is a sin to forsake the assembling of the church (Heb. 10:25). I didn't make that rule, God did. Am I an evil doer by calling your attention to it? Am I lifted up with pride and arrogance by telling people about that verse? All the prophets through the ages had the problem of their hearers hating them and dismissing their words. This generation is no different.

I pray you will change your heart and turn to the Lord in humble obedience before it's too late.

IN THE NEWS...

The Weatherford, Oklahoma "Church of Christ" collected a special contribution (Feb. 17) for the Western Oklahoma Pregnancy Care Center. This is a social service organization that is supported by denominations and individuals in Weatherford. Here's what their current bulletin says about the effort:

"The Pregnancy Care Center (PCC) is a local effort to save preborn babies from the abortion mill by giving their mothers the information and encouragement they need to allow their babies to be born."

"In addition, the PCC hosts classes on prenatal care and parenting. It helps provide young mothers with maternity clothes, baby clothes, formula, diapers, cribs, strollers et al.

"Last year, about 150 girls and young women from our community came to the PCC for help. The PCC is still in its beginning stages and as its reputation grows, we expect that number to grow."

"For the last two years, the Agape Clinic has allowed the PCC to share its facility; but — PRAISE GOD! — the PCC has grown to the point that it needs its own facility; so, it has begun to raise the money needed to meet that need."

"The new facility will cost about \$61,000. So far, local churches and individuals have given about \$16,000 toward that end; more has been given during the Sanctity of Human Life initiative of the last few weeks and more is expected."

"Our elders have chosen 'this! Sunday' as an opportunity for 'us' to have a part in our community's effort to build the new facility." (Weatherford Church of Christ Newsletter, Issue 02-6, Feb. 17, 2002, p.1).

Now, lest any think that I object to saving unborn children, I do not. Abortion is the shedding of innocent blood, as much so as Herod's ghastly murder of the innocents of Bethlehem. My point is that neither support nor operation of social service agencies is the work of the church. I applaud the fact that this agency saves innocent lives, but Paul taught that the end never justifies the means (Romans 3:8).

Particularly incongruous is the statement that says, "praise God! — the PCC has grown to the point that it needs its own facility...." By what stretch of the imagination can God be credited and praised for growth of a facility that exists in large part because of fornication? The church ought to be preaching the truth in an effort to 'reduce' the need for such

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In The News...

THE SIN OF DENOMINATIONALISM

H. Leo Boles

Nothing is taught more clearly and emphatically in the New Testament than that Christians, disciples of Christ, should be united. Jesus, before he established his church, prayed that his disciples should be one. “*And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one*” (John 17:22-23). The Holy Spirit through Paul exhorted Christians to “*be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (1 Cor. 1:10). Again Paul wrote by the Holy Spirit to the church at Philippi “that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Phil. 2:2); and again the Holy Spirit taught through Peter that God’s people should be “*all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humble-minded*” (1 Peter 3:8). Scriptural quotations could be multiplied which emphasize the fact that God’s people should be united. Not only do the Scriptures clearly teach that the disciples of Christ should be united, but division among the people of God is condemned. The church at Corinth was instructed to speak the same thing, “*And that there be no divisions among you.*” The New Testament is as clear in condemning division as it is in emphasizing that God’s people should be united.

One of the vital questions of our day is that of bringing together all of the professed followers of Jesus. The question is frequently asked: “How shall the followers of Christ, now ranged under different banners, be rallied and united under one standard, when party names shall be known no more?” The desire of many is that the distinctions which are represented by party names pass away and the reproach of division be removed. Many earnest and honest hearts are pondering the difficult solution of uniting the believers in the Lord. They feel keenly that such divisions as now exist are condemned by the New Testament. At the same time they see no satisfactory conclu-

sion of the present divided conditions; they know that no power can force people to unite; they know that the union must be wholehearted on the part of everyone. The heads of the denominational bodies know that they cannot compel the members of the different denominations to disband and merge into one large body of believers. No one denomination today will claim to have all the truth, and each denomination will admit that the other denominations have some truth. It is an impossible task to unite the present denominations. **A uniting of all the denominations into one large denomination is not the unity for which Christ prayed and which the New Testament teaches.**

The union of believers in Christ cannot be had by the different denominations “agreeing to disagree;” there is no such thing as uniting these different religious bodies by getting them to ignore the differences that separate them into different bodies; neither will they be brought together into one body by agreeing to differ with each other, and yet maintain their distinct organizations. It is impossible to form a confederation of the denominations and have so many “wheels within a wheel.” Any theory of unity that assumes and makes provision for the perpetuation of denominationalism is doomed to failure. Many fatal objections can be urged against it, and no wise leader among them is bold enough to urge such a thing. The efforts that have been made toward union on such grounds have resulted in still more confusion, and as a result we have “confusion more confounded.” As a result of such efforts, denominations have multiplied and subdivisions have been the result of the different methods and theories urged for the union of religious people. Some have concluded that it is impossible for believers in Christ to be united. God requires all of his children to be of the same mind. If all cannot be of the same mind and be united, then God requires an impossibility of believers, or believers are

condemned for not being of the same mind, united in Christ.

The Bible nowhere intimates that the perpetuity of denominations shall continue. They did not exist in the early days of Christianity; neither were they provided for in the New Testament; their origin, organization and perpetuation are condemned in the New Testament. There is not a single intimation that God endorses them or that the Holy Spirit guides their different activities. If Paul censured the dissensions and party feelings in the church at Corinth, how much more reprehensible must be the ripened fruit of such schisms in religion today? They are antagonistic to and destructive of the spirit of unity. There is nothing in the New Testament that can be fairly construed to give any justification of denominationalism. Such divisions among the followers of Christ were not only unknown in apostolic times, but are by explicit apostolic teachings condemned for all time. And since denominations had their origin since the days of the apostles, they must certainly pass away before “*we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God*” (Eph. 4:13).

Some who have advocated denominationalism have ceased to do so and are now excusing it by saying that there was a time for denominations, but now the time has come for them to cease and all come together in one great body and form one new gigantic denomination. Such a claim betrays ignorance of Bible teachings. **There is as much authority for two hundred denominations as there is for one; there is absolutely no authority for the existence of any of them.** If denominations are to remain, union is impossible. There is no reason that can justify such organizations from New Testament teaching. Those who may be set for the defense of denominationalism must understand that they are opposed to New Testament teaching. No one can be right with God and in harmony with his truth and at the same time justify division

among the believers in Christ. A denomination has not the authority of Jesus Christ for its existence; hence, it has no mission divinely guided, neither has it any work that is ordained of God. Moreover, he has not promised to bless anyone for loyalty to or service in any denomination. If they are perpetuated, it must be by the will of man and in opposition to the will of God.

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WHO IS AMENABLE TO THE LAW OF CHRIST?

Dan Sikes

The answer to the question: "Who is amenable to the law of Christ?" may be found in one verse of Scripture. "*And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent*" (Acts 17:30). These words were spoken by the apostle Paul to the inhabitants of the city of Athens who were idolatrous and pagan in their worship of false gods. They did not know about the true and living God who made the heavens and the earth nor did they know how to worship Him acceptably. Though the Grecians were considered to be "civilized" and educated for their time, they were uninformed and unlearned when it came to their soul's salvation. Paul said there was a time when God "winked" at (endured) such ignorance, but now he required repentance from "**all men everywhere.**" That means that no one, regardless of who or where they are, how educated or uneducated they may be, whether they live in a civilized country or a third world nation, **NO ONE** is exempt, excused or released from his obligation to Christ and his Word. Jesus himself said, "*he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words; hath one that judgeth him: the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48).

Were all men everywhere not amenable to the law of Christ, it would make little or no sense to take the Great Commission seriously. Jesus instructed the disciples to, "*Go...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: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen*" (Matt. 28:18-20).

Reason tells us that if those who have never heard the Gospel are "safe" in their unlearned state, it would be detrimental to their souls to take the chance of preaching the Gospel to them and then having them reject it. Under such circumstances they would undoubtedly be lost, making it better to leave them alone in their unknowing condition rather than preach the saving Gospel to them. Those who taught them the truth would become responsible for their being lost.

Jesus died on the cross and gave the Great Commission because all men are sinners (Rom. 3:23), and in a lost condition (Rom. 6:23). The only hope of man is redemption through the blood of Christ which is contacted in obedience to the Gospel in baptism (Rom. 6:3-4). Those who have become Christians have an urgent obligation to reach as many lost souls as possible before they die in sin.

It should be pointed out in view of this discussion, that young children who are incapable of hearing (Rom. 10:17), believing (John 8:24; Acts 8:37), and obeying (Heb. 5:8,9) are not counted as "men" by God. These are not chargeable for their actions and therefore not responsible before God until they reach an age (state) of accountability. Infants are not born with original sin, nor do they inherit sin from their parents in conception (Ezek. 18:20). In addition, those who are mentally impaired from birth to the extent they, for all intents and purposes, are "babes" would not be judged as men. Those who lose their mental faculties at some time after adulthood would obviously be amenable for their actions before they became incognizant.

If you are capable of understanding this article **you are amenable to the law of Christ!** If you are not a Christian you need to become one (Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38). If you are one, you must teach others using whatever talents and abilities God has given you (1 Tim. 2:2). May He say to you and me, "*well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter ye into the joy of the Lord*" (Matt. 25:21).

There is No “I” in Church!

Earl Gieseke

Many congregations have been rent asunder by men who put their egos above the welfare of the body of Christ... men who are like John's enemy, Diotrephes, still love to have preeminence among brethren.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). And Jesus said: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

One stone does not make a building. One lively (living) stone does not make the church. But, Jesus said that it takes two or three, or more, to make an assembly of the church. One person does not qualify as a church of Christ. We live in a society which promotes “individualism” as being the ultimate, when in reality, that is one of the many problems in society, the church of our Lord, and religion in general.

What is “individualism” except selfishness, for the most part? That is part of the message of Paul when he penned: “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). Saints is the emphasis in many of the writings of Paul. He rebuked the church of God at Corinth due to the promotion of individuals, to the detriment of the unity required in the body of Christ. He emphasized that neither the arm nor the leg can make up the body, so the individual does not make up the church. It is only when there is the correct number of hands, feet, eyes, etc., all doing their individual responsibilities, that you have the Lord’s church in the true sense.

In Ephesians 4:12, Paul shows that the church has a work of “the ministry.” It follows, then, that the work of “the ministry” of the church is accomplished only when the total ministries of the individuals are carried out according to the Pattern given only in the doctrine of our Lord. All saints are ministers (no big

M ministers) according to our several abilities. We each have a number of things we COULD be doing for the ministry of the church.

From whence have most false teachers come? From the idealizing and the promotion of the individual. We are also promoting this to some degree in some of our own announcements of lectureships, meetings, mastheads, and other things. I read of a group of speakers some time ago where some were listed as “doctors,” while others were given no titles. Of course, no one should be given any special titles in our announcements. One place listed their several elders, with one of them being listed as “doctor.” I expect he is (was) a medical doctor; but, what is the purpose of promoting him above the other elders by listing him in the masthead of the stationary and the bulletin as, “doctor.” The local members would know it, and probably no one else would care.

Where have men like Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and others arisen in modern religion? By promotion of men to the level of deity! Although contrary to what is taught in the Bible, men have given men the title which belongs only to God: “He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name” (Psa. 111:9). What is the difference in calling a man “doctor,” in a religious sense, and in calling a man (or woman) “reverend?” Billy Graham is an icon among the Protestants, and, in my opinion, has probably taught more error to more people than any other false teacher in history. However, some of our own brethren in the Nashville area embraced him and all of his false doctrines, because you cannot accept just one or two errors taught, while not accepting the others.

The Woodmont “elders” personally invited the “Protestant pope” to come to Nashville to preach in a campaign. Many members of the churches of Christ actually participated in the Billy Graham campaign! Can you believe it? Yet, how many congregations in the Nashville area who purport to be sound have marked those at Woodmont and other congregations and their false doctrines and practices?

Some time ago, the *Gospel Advocate* invited area congregations in and around Nashville to dismiss their Sunday evening services in order to come to come to their worship service where they served the Lord’s supper in a public building. Where does a retail religious book store get its authority to hold a worship service mimicking the church of Christ? Of course, some “ministers” and “elders” went along with this effort. The president of the *Gospel Advocate* surely must have a big ego to take this upon himself. It makes one wonder if there is anything that some would refuse to support in the Nashville area. When I came into the church the Nashville area was generally considered to be a stronghold of the truth. There ought to be a lesson there for us.

Further, for several years, brother Shelly, one of the ministers at Woodmont, was held by all who knew him to be a sound and effective Gospel preacher. He preached the Gospel, debated false teachers and wrote good articles for a number of papers. This just goes to show that it does not take a long time for churches or an individual to embrace error. Woodmont, Madison and other congregations promoted the so-called, Jubilee, in Nashville for several years. It has been reported that the Jubilee is dead, but not before bringing many false teachers to that area,

and duping many spiritually weak disciples into that quagmire of sin. People with "I" trouble have always been the root of religious problems.

Many congregations have been rent asunder by men who put their egos above the welfare of the body of Christ. "Loose cannons" in business meetings have done irreparable damage in many places. The reason they are able to do this is that no one is willing to stand against them, allowing sound preachers to be run off who refuse to "knuckle under" to these men who are like John's enemy, Diotrephes, still love to have preeminence among brethren.

Where did popery come from? The promoting of one bishop (elder, pastor) over the others, until one was finally given the title of Lord God the pope. The Catholic Church, like digressive churches of Christ today, came about gradually as they quit following the Pattern given in the New Testament. Men would never elevate themselves, or allow others to elevate them, if they realized that there is no "I" in church.

17TH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

Seek The Old Paths

July 28 - Aug. 1, 2002

God's Divine Authority

(Leadership in the church,
home, government)

In The News...

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a thing, rather than praising God for its growth. This clinic treats the symptoms of moral degradation. Preaching the gospel to change hearts treats the cause. That's what the church must do.

Also, for those who follow the continuing saga of western Oklahoma's premiere liberal church at Weatherford, one of their elders recently responded to the invitation "asking us to pray for him to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit in his life." (ibid)

Jerry Brewer
www.gospelpreceptor.com

Believers...

(Continued from page 17)

of an urban ministry apprenticeship in Memphis that has helped start five churches in the city, mostly in poorer neighborhoods. I would like to see this apprenticeship expand to involve our older established churches and the suburban churches...."[7] Frayser Mission Church reported, "Two ministry apprenticeships are created and filled by students at Harding Graduate School." [8] Dean Huffard's continuing involvement is confirmed from the White Station church bulletin where he is an elder. Leon Sanderson wrote that once each quarter Dean Huffard serves City Missions, which supports MUM and the Downtown Church, as one of the "Executive Consultants." [9] All of these sources linking Dean Huffard to these five Community Church Movement-type churches are unprejudiced and share a common interest in their advancement.

Dean Huffard is well aware that Dr. John Mark Hicks, a faculty member at HUGSR and minister of education at Woodmont Hills Family of God in Nashville with Rubel Shelly, planted "The Cordova Community Church, a church of Christ," April 12, 1998. He co-authored "A Theological and Strategic Statement for a New Church Planting" dated October 5, 1997, which was drafted right from Rick Warren's *Purpose Driven Church*. On pages 5-6 he wrote that God may act through miracles today and instrumental music in worship is not a salvation issue.

Further, February 7, 2002, in concert with the Student Association, Dean Huffard brought Dr. Jeff W. Childers to Memphis to lecture on *The Crux of the Matter*. He, too, supports the view of a "larger community of believers" than is represented by the churches of Christ. *The Crux*, page 151 reads, "By getting rid of the notion that we have to be the best or the only Christians to be legitimate Christians, we will be free to reexamine ourselves and our teachings seriously without the nagging fear that we might end up losing our identity. Without the burden of believing ourselves to be the only true Christians, we will be able to participate in and contribute substantially to the larger

conversation among all followers of Christ and learn some things from it without feelings of betrayal." [10]

The "community of believers" cannot be larger than the churches of Christ, and here is why. Believers are "added to the Lord" (Acts 5:14). Only the ones obeying the Gospel as Peter preached on Pentecost, "...Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" were added to the church (Acts 2:38,47). Those added to the church were believers. Therefore, while some outside the church may believe certain aspects of Gospel truth, by biblical demonstration they are not considered believers until they have been added to the church by the Lord. There is no "larger community of believers."

ENDNOTES

1 Harding University Graduate School of Religion General Catalogue 2001-2002, p.8.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., p.1.

4 Dr. David B. Burks, "From the President," *Harding* magazine, 8:1 (winter 2000), p.2.

5 Since he recently has denied involvement in some places he has visited as guest speaker and to the author at the W.B. West, Jr. Lectures on the campus of the graduate school February 7, 2002, a review of some of the primary sources exposing him is in order (Rom. 16:17-18).

6 Scott Morris, "The Church in the Hood," *Harding* magazine, 3:3 (summer 1995), p.19. Some of those mentioned in this article have written a book titled *Embracing the Poor*, and in the "acknowledgements" they recognize Dean Huffard as their "mentor" in urban missions.

7 Dr. Everett W. Huffard, "Meeting the Challenge of Ministry in the 21st Century," *The Bridge*, 40:6 (November 1999), p.1.

8 Ron Cook, "Frayser Mission Church Turns Two," *The Acts of Highland Street*, 20:20 (May 18, 2001), p.79.

9 *Server*, 48:13 (March 28, 2001), p.2.

10 Jeff W. Childers, Douglas A. Foster, and Jack R. Reese, *The Crux of the Matter* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 2001), p.151. The Quince Road Church of Christ where Dean Huffard served as an associate minister (1988-1995) currently is using this book as a class book on Sunday morning (*Family Matters*, January 2002, p.3).



THE OLD PATHS

every Christian home in the brotherhood. In Christian love" ...**Mary Winstead, Crestview, FL.** "Thanks to each of you for defending the true word of God. May God bless each and everyone of you, for proclaiming the true word of God. Thank you for the good work you are doing. May the Lord's blessings be in abundance over all your endeavors. I am a church of Christ member in Ghana and I enjoyed reading *Seek the Old Paths* articles. I was introduced by one of my church elders called Francis Bukroh. In fact, it has motivated me especially in the growth in faith. The whole church enjoying from your materials. Keep on preach and teaching the true work of God which a lot of people have missed the track of the truth. It is my prayer that these works will bear much good fruits for Christ. Please, kindly add my name to your mailing list. *Seek the Old Paths* has done a lot for me especially it has helped out some misrepresentation of some verses in the bible for me. Keep the good work you are doing. I end here with my regards and asking God's blessing over your good work you have been doing" ...**Francis Aboagye Nkrumah, Ghana, West Africa.**

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