

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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A RESPONSE TO, "CHURCHES OF CHRIST DROP ISOLATIONIST VIEW, WORK WITH OTHER FAITHS"

Marlin Kilpatrick

There are only two kinds of people in this world — those who obey God and those who do not obey God

In the January 31, 2010, issue of *The Tennessean* (a Nashville, Tennessee newspaper), an article was published, written by Bob Smietana. The "views" expressed in Smietana's article definitely DO NOT represent the majority of faithful churches of Christ. A response to these misrepresentations is in order.

According to Smietana, **Doug Sanders**, associate minister with the **Otter Creek Church** in Brentwood, Tennessee, learned in his early years "there were two kinds of people in the world. Those who belonged to the ...churches of Christ, who were going to heaven. And those who didn't, who were going to hell." Such a quote is highly prejudicial at best. Churches of Christ do not set themselves as judges of anyone. We plead with all people to study their bibles and follow only that for which there is scriptural authority. The need for having biblical authority for all we do is set out in Colossians 3:17. Jesus Christ will be the Judge of all, and he has told us the standard by which he will judge mankind. The standard is His word (John 12:48). In reality, there are only two kinds of people in this world — those who obey God and those who do not obey God. Jesus spoke of this reality in Matthew 7:21-23. At the final day of judgment there

will be two groups of people: those who obeyed God and those who will wish they had.

Another of Sanders' claims is, "*In the Church of Christ we had all the answers, and if we had the answers, that meant everyone else didn't. It's kind of embarrassing to admit it, but that's the way it was.*" If Sander's grew up with this perception, he was definitely wrong. Friends, the bible is right and any church that practices only that which the bible authorizes cannot be wrong. The truth is, Sanders' claim is nothing more than an effort on his part to justify his liberal theology. Such "justification" will be useless at the last day.

It was claimed by the author that "*Since the late 1800's, Churches of Christ...have believed their approach to church — singing without instruments in worship, interpreting the Bible literally, taking Communion weekly and banning women from church leadership — was God's way.*" Well, let's see. Smietana is almost 1800 years late with his assessment. The Lord's church began in Jerusalem ca. A.D.33 (Acts 2). Let Mr. Smietana find the New Testament (the law to which all men are now amenable) passage that authorizes the use of instruments of music in Christian worship. Friend, there is

no such passage!

It is misleading to claim that churches of Christ believe in interpreting the Bible literally, as Mr. Smietana claimed. There are many, many passages that require a figurative interpretation. Jesus said, "I am the door..." (John 10:9). Was he a literal door? If so, of what material was he made? Oak? Pine? Obviously, Jesus was speaking of his being "the way" into which all must enter to be saved. No, churches of Christ DO NOT interpret the Bible literally in all passages and/or places. We do believe that God meant what he said, and it is what he said in his word that we literally believe.

Communion (the Lord's supper) was observed by the first century church every Lord's day (Acts 20:7). The issue of the *role of women* in the church was settled by the apostle Paul (1 Tim. 2:11,12). And, all who respect the authority of the scriptures have no problem with following that which is authorized by the scriptures. The feminist movement in our country has had an impact on some churches. Those who reject what the scriptures teach face a woeful judgment at the last day.

(Continued on page 27)
A Response...



Editorial...

WHAT CHRISTIANS HAVE THE WORLD DOES NOT

Garland M. Robinson

There are only two classes of people in the world: Christians and non-Christians, the saved and the lost (Matt. 7:13-14). There are no other possibilities! One day, all the dead will be raised either to eternal life or eternal damnation (John 5:28-29; Matt. 25:46). So, what does the Christian have the non-Christian does not? Everything that counts!

Christians have God as their Father (John 20:17). God is called our heavenly Father in Matthew 6:26,32. Christians are “the called of Jesus Christ...beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father” (Rom. 1:6-7). “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19).

Those in the world have *Satan as their father*. “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He...abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him...he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).

Christians have Christ as their savior (2 Peter 1:1). “Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). “Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). He died so that all might be saved (Heb. 2:9).

Those in the world have *Satan as their adversary*. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Christians have a sure foundation. “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his” (2 Tim. 2:19).

Those in the world have a *foundation of sand*. “And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and

doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matt. 7:26-27).

Christians have peace with God. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Christ is our peace (Eph. 2:14-16).

Those in the world are *enemies of God*. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

Christians have access to God. Through Christ “we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph. 2:18-19; 3:12). Through Christ we can “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16; 10:19-22).

Those in the world are *aliens to God*. They “walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ” (Eph. 4:17-20).

Christians have hope. There is one hope (Eph. 4:4). We are saved by hope (Rom. 8:24). “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an

oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast” (Heb. 6:17-19).

Those in the world have *no hope*. Before one becomes a Christian, he is “...without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12).

Christians have eternal life. “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2). God, “according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you...ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5). Eternal life is in Christ (1 John 5:11-13).

Those in the world have *eternal damnation to look forward to*. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thess. 1:7-9). They will be in a lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

Become a Christian today. Don't delay. Study and learn what you must do to be saved. *Hear* and listen to the Gospel (Rom. 10:17; John 6:44-45), *Believe* the Gospel and in Jesus the Son of God (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6), *Repent* of your sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30), *Confess* faith in Jesus as the Savior and Son of God (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10), be *Baptized* in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16), *live faithful* the rest of your life (Matt. 10:22; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10).

If we can assist you, please contact us today.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

A Response...

(Continued from page 25)

The article continues, *“In recent years, congregations like Otter Creek have adopted a more progressive view of their faith. They’ve added instruments to church services on Sunday nights and during the week. And they’ve begun cooperating with other faith groups, especially on charitable projects.”* How sad, but true! Yes, they have “adopted a more progressive view” and they have “added” that for which there is not the least bit of scriptural authority. The Bible says those who so do are guilty of sin (2 John 9-11). The fact that they have “added instruments to church services on Sunday nights and during the week,” shows they have gone beyond the things (the scriptures) which are written — the very thing the apostle Paul warned against (1 Cor. 4:6). Why limit the use of instruments to Sunday night and week nights? Worship is not limited to Sunday morning! Could this be an effort to “appease” those who object to the use of instrumental music in worship? According to Smietana, *“Sanders and others say this approach is faithful to their traditions and to the Bible.”* All faithful Christians know “this approach” is definitely NOT FAITHFUL TO THE BIBLE. Let “Sanders and others” step forward with the scriptures that authorize “this approach.” Friends, it cannot be done!

Mr. Smietana says, *“To understand what’s happening in Churches of Christ, it helps to look at the Bible.”* Yes, indeed! When one looks at the Bible it becomes readily apparent that what’s happening in churches of Christ is without scriptural warrant. If those who “look at the Bible” would accept what the Bible teaches rather than following the doctrines of men, we wouldn’t be in the mess we’re in today.

A gross misrepresentation of the Campbells, Barton W. Stone and the Restoration Movement appears in the article under review. It is claimed, *“The Campbells and Stone believed churches of their day had split into too many denominations. Those denominations bred hostility between Christians.”* And, *“So the Campbells and Stone wanted to go*

back to the Bible and create a simpler kind of church that could unite all denominations.” The fact is, Campbell and Stone recognized the hostility that existed among the denominations, and the only way to solve this problem was for all to go back to the Bible and practice only that which is taught therein. They coined the slogan, “Where the Bible speaks, we speak. Where the Bible is silent, we are silent.” In principle, this is what the apostle Peter taught — “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Peter 4:11). The Campbells and Stone never desired to “create a church that could unite all denominations.” They recognized the sinfulness of sectarianism and they fought it “tooth and nail.” The Scriptures still teach that there is but one church, the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4). Christ is the head of his church (Col. 1:18). He adds the saved to his church (Acts 2:47). There are no saved persons outside of Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). Only those who obey the Gospel of Christ and live the Christian life faithfully will be eternally saved (Rev. 2:10; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

In referring to instrumental music in worship, Mr. Smietana says, *“But churches disagree on why they sing a cappella. Some congregations do because that’s the way they’ve always done it. Others say that it remains the biblical model and that to use instruments in church is a sin.”* It is likely that some members of the church of Christ can give no better reason for singing a cappella than “that’s the way we’ve always done it.” Friends, ignorance of the Scriptures is not limited to denominational churches. After almost 46 years of preaching, I am convinced that many church members are scripturally illiterate. But the fact that a practice is done because “that’s the way we’ve always done it,” hardly justifies the practice. One may do many things, for many years, and still be wrong in his practice. We sing a cappella because that is the only way we are authorized to worship God in song. It is a matter of having scriptural authority for all we do (Col. 3:17).

Dan Chambers, pulpit minister at **Concord Road Church of Christ**, is quoted as saying, *“We do it out of conviction...we believe it’s the kind of worship God wants in the church.”* While what brother Cham-

bers says is true, his statement is inadequate. Most people in the denominational churches do what they do out of conviction, but the difference between them and ourselves is this: We have scriptural authority for our practice, but they do not. It was because of this “conviction” brother Chambers said he’s reluctant to work with people of other faiths. I have the same “conviction” but I’ll tell you what my “conviction” is based upon. I hold this “conviction” because of what the apostle Paul said. Hear him, **“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”** (Eph. 5:11). Though they may mean well and may be very sincere, people who are in denominationalism are in spiritual darkness. **Denominationalism is a work of spiritual darkness.** Only those people who have obeyed the Gospel of Christ and thereby have been translated into the kingdom of his dear Son, are walking in the light of God’s word (Col. 1:13,14; 1 John 1:7).

Doug Sanders claims that over the past two years he has worked with *“Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Jews, Catholics and other local believers.”* No doubt he has, but that does not justify what the Scriptures condemn. He claims that *“cooperating with other faiths, especially on charitable projects, makes sense.”* It may make sense to Sanders, but do you think it “makes sense” to the Lord, when his word condemns such? I think not!

Now let’s look at a statement by **“Lee Camp, who teaches theology and ethics at Lipscomb University.”** According to Camp, Alexander Campbell started out with good intentions but a faulty assumption. Camp said, *“He assumed that one could simply read the Bible and everyone would come to the same conclusions.”* Brethren, it is little wonder why so many of our young people leave the church when we have a professor on a college faculty who knows no more than this about Alexander Campbell and his teaching. To accuse Campbell of such a simplistic approach to the Bible and a proper understanding of God’s word is ludicrous. Campbell never held any such “assumption.”

Campbell spent the greater part of his life teaching people the truth

as he understood it revealed in the Bible. Why would he have done this if he thought that all who just read their Bible will come to the same conclusion? After saying, *"It wasn't quite so simple,"* Camp continued, saying, *"Instead, followers of Stone and the Campbells began to split. Those in the north eventually formed two distinct groups — the Independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Most in the south became Churches of Christ group."* That there eventually was a split among brethren is not denied. It would have been helpful if Camp would have told us why the split occurred. The split occurred, not over the instrument, per se, but over how to ascertain Bible authority. Those who favored the use of the instrument in worship held that *whatever is not specifically forbidden by Scripture may be used*, while those who held to the biblical view of Scriptural authority, held that *only that which is authorized in the Scriptures may be practiced (without sinning)*. Those who wanted the instrument in worship held that since its use is not specifically forbidden, then its use is allowed. Well, neither is adding ham and eggs to the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine (grape juice) on the Lord's table forbidden. The same "authority" which allows the use of instrumental music in worship, will also allow ham and eggs in the Lord's supper. If not, why not? Once the gate of biblical authority is thrown open, the liberals among us have a field day!

Finally, let's look at a few observations made by various individuals. **"Glenn Carson, president of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society in Nashville, said that congregations like Otter Creek are creating a fourth stream of the Restoration movement, distinct from Churches of Christ and other groups."** Sad, yes, but true. *"One of the first so-called progressive congregations was Woodmont Hills in Nashville. Another is Richland Hills Church of Christ, near Fort Worth, Texas."* True, but not only are they **"progressive,"** they are also **digressive**. They have digressed from the New Testament pattern for the church. Camp is concerned *"congregations like Otter Creek could lose their distinctive nature."* Truth is, they have

ALREADY lost their distinctive nature! Following the New Testament will make any group distinctive, but departing from it will cause any group to lose its distinctiveness.

Brother Dan Chambers said that even though he's reluctant to cooperate with other faith groups, he doesn't criticize churches of Christ that do. Well, Dan, what happened to consistency? Either what they are doing is right or it's wrong! If the practice is wrong, then the practice must be criticized. If the practice is right, then we ought to all join in and help. Brethren, if there is anything Jesus does not condone, it's the fellow that tries to straddle the fence. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30).

Smietana wrote, *"There's at least one danger in the progressive movement, Camp said, He's concerned that congregations like Otter Creek could lose their distinctive nature. 'We could just become plain vanilla evangelicals,' he said. Instead, he'd like to see other Christian denominations learn from Churches of Christ, especially when it comes to the weekly Communion. Other Protestants take the Lord's Supper far less often, sometimes once a month, sometimes quarterly. That means they are missing out on an important part of worship."*

In reality there is no such thing as "other Christian denominations." The word "other" implies that we (churches of Christ) are denominational. So long as we remain faithful to God's word, in doctrine and practice, we are NOT DENOMINATIONAL. If we depart from God's word, we lose our identity and, therefore, we become just another denomination among many. If we use biblical terminology, there is no such thing as a "Christian denomination." Christ died to purchase his church (Acts 20:28). He did not die for any denomination. Just before he died, Jesus prayed for unity among all who follow him (John 17:20,21). Denominationalism exists in direct opposition to that for which our Lord died.

Brethren, as far as this world is concerned, we are isolationists. We are neither to "love the world," nor are we to be "conformed to this world" (1 John 2:15-17; Rom. 12:2). When we cease to be isolationists, we enter into apostasy.

Brethren, I fear in some cases we are making too much out of the so-called "Restoration Movement." It's not unusual to hear some brethren refer to what they call our "restoration heritage." Surely, men such as Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone and James O'Kelly are to be commended for their efforts to restore primitive New Testament Christianity. However, we should remember, Alexander Campbell did not build the church of Christ, nor purchase her with his shed blood, but Christ did (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28). We are not Campbellites. We are Christians. I do not appeal to Campbell for my religious convictions. I appeal to the Bible.

When churches of Christ follow only that which is authorized in the Bible, they are not descendants of the Restoration Movement. Jesus said, "...the seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). When the "seed" is planted in an honest heart, it will produce only a Christian and where Christians assemble, the church of Christ exists. **The Bible only, makes Christians only, and the only Christians.** How else can we account for the fact that there were churches of Christ in America long before the Campbells arrived on its shores. Alexander Campbell did not start the church of Christ as Baptists and other such denominations have long claimed.

This article by Bob Smietana basically does three things: 1) It misrepresents the stand faithful churches of Christ take relative to the Scriptures. 2) It misrepresents Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone and the Restoration movement in several areas. 3) Unfortunately, it shows the sad departure from the faith the Lord's church has experienced in so many places.

Brethren, it's later than we think!

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Jesus came to this world and lived among men without ever sinning. He gives us a perfect example to follow. He requires that we live for him in faith and obedience. Only then can we be saved (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:9).

OLD WAY ISN'T THE ONLY WAY

*As Some Churches Of Christ Cling To Tradition,
A Few Drop Their Isolationist View And Work With Other Faiths, They Say:*

This news article appeared on the front page of the Nashville, *Tennessean* on Sunday, January 31, 2010, written by Bob Smetana. It fits perfectly with the progressive agenda of the Nashville, *Tennessean* newspaper. Progressives despise anyone who holds to established principals such as the Constitution, Bill of Rights or God's Holy and inspired word. They, with their superior attitude, would render such documents as subject to change at the whim of those who are wiser than man or God. They look down on those who hold to objective absolutes as unlearned and narrow minded.

Count this writer as one who believes that God's word is the perfect, final, complete and unchangeable revelation of God to mankind (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 13:10; Heb. 1:1-2). Count me as one who believes that no man is able to improve upon God's word. All will be judged one day based upon the teaching of Jesus Christ (John 12:48). It all comes down to whether or not we believe God's word. Love for God and mankind is found in truth and obedience. Jesus taught that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15). "And being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9). Adam and Eve lost paradise and life eternal because they went beyond God's commandments. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9). If the only place we can find authority for a thing is in the creeds and doctrines of men, then one has gone beyond "the doctrine of Christ."

There is no salvation in the doctrines of men. Man can not save Himself. Jeremiah 10:23 says, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Men write their creeds which teach that salvation is

"by faith only," but God's word does not so teach. Men write that salvation is "by grace only," but God's word does not so teach. Men sprinkle a few drops of water on an infant and call it baptism, but God's word does not so teach. Men teach that a Pope is the earthly head of the church, but the scriptures do not so teach. The list is almost endless of what men teach as their creed or doctrine, but God is not bound by what men believe and teach. Any person or group may decide to start their own church and write their own rules of faith, but only a fool would believe that God is bound by the creeds and doctrines of men.

The Old Testament has many examples of mankind turning their backs upon God and His instructions. God destroyed the entire world with the exception of those aboard the ark. Without exception disobedience leads to disaster. God is immutable, and is no respecter of persons. We are told that he is the author of salvation to all who obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9). Since obedience is essential to salvation, then it follows that man is capable of understanding the Lord's instructions. However, man is often arrogant and self willed and desires salvation on his own terms. This is the basis for men establishing their own churches and writing their own creeds, doctrines, manuals, confessions of faith, catechisms, and such like.

Jesus taught, "If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Note that Jesus said ye shall know "the" truth, not 'a' truth or 'some' truth. Does it require some time and effort to know the truth? Yes indeed, Paul instructed Timothy to "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Are many people just too lazy to put forth the time and effort to know the truth? Yes. Do many blind-

ly follow some preacher or teacher, some human creed or doctrine? Yes. No person will be judged based upon a human creed, doctrine or philosophy, for they are from men and not from God. Man cannot save himself and yet he has over and over attempted to do so. Soul a Savior you are needing!

The newspaper article begins with quotes from **Doug Sanders** who stated "When he was growing up he learned there were two kinds of people in the world. Those who belonged to the a capella Churches of Christ who were going to heaven, and those who didn't were going to hell." "In the church of Christ we had all the answers," said Sanders associate minister at **Otter Creek church in Brentwood**. "And if we had the answers, that meant everyone else didn't. It's kind of embarrassing to admit it but that's the way it was." If Doug had paid attention to what the Bible and his father taught, it would be that those who believe and obey God will be saved and that those who refuse to do so will be lost (Matt. 7:21). Doug, unlike the apostle Paul, is ashamed of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16).

Just who is this **Doug Sanders** who attempts to speak for what members of the Lord's church believe and teach? He is the son of the late Joe and Evelyn Sanders. The husband of the late Lady Frank Ezell Sanders. I have known Doug from a child and he by no means has the ability to state accurately what members of the church of Christ believe and teach. He is not only a poor student of the Bible but also falsely claims to know what knowledgeable Christians believe.

His father, Joe Sanders, never taught what Doug claims the church of Christ believes and teaches. When Doug was a child his father Joe Sanders and I were co-teachers of an adult Bible class. It was his father that asked me to preach in his place at the Stewart Creek church of Christ when he had a conflict of

schedule. It was one of the first sermons I preached.

Joe Sanders, the father of Doug, was a knowledgeable and faithful preacher of God's word and I refuse to allow his son to falsify what he and the church of Christ taught and believes. Joe and other faithful Gospel preachers only teach what the Bible teaches. In the New Testament (which records the early history of the Lord's church), the command of God is without exception to sing. Not one hint, not one mention of employing instruments of music in the worship of the New Testament church. Secular history teaches that it was hundreds of years later when men added instruments in worship services. Instruments are therefore a clear violation of God's warning that we are not to add to or take from His word. The introduction of instruments of music was not done to please God, but man. It is a symptom of progressivism and without exception, will in time, lead to further departures. History proves this to be true. Israel, God's chosen people in the Old Testament, departed so far with their progressivism that they embraced idolatry. No Doug, I was there when you were growing up and heard what your father and other faithful Christians taught and you have mis-characterized what was and is believed and taught. Would you (or anyone else) be so foolish as to teach that one may disobey the Lord and remain in His favor?

Doug, it is not a matter of "if we have the answers," but does God have the answers and the ability to make them understandable? The false concept held by "progressives" is that there are no clear and absolute answers and that whatever one believes is acceptable (cf. John 8:32).

The restoration movement was not designed to establish a new denomination, or one at all. It was to have those who had written their own creeds and doctrines to cast them aside and to allow God's word to be the authority for everything believed, taught and practiced. Multitudes made that transition and the Lord's church was restored to its original purity of faith and practice. We are told, "And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Col. 3:17).

God's word teaches nothing about denominations. Christ built His church and purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). How dare any man counterfeit the blood purchased church of the Lamb of God? It is to the church established by Christ that He adds the saved when they have complied with His commands of **faith, repentance, confession and baptism by immersion in water for the remission of past sins** (Acts 2:41-47). Then one must continue in the teaching of Jesus Christ (John 8:31-32).

Departures from the instructions of God are nothing new. The Bible records that such has occurred throughout time. It is still taking place today as men refuse to abide in the teaching of God. Hear the words of Jesus. "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:21-23).

Just who do you suppose were those who Jesus said he didn't know? They were those who did not abide in the doctrine of Christ. They went beyond His authority: just as Nadab and Abihu when they offered unauthorized fire (Lev. 10:1-2), just as King Saul lost favor with God when he brought back king Agag and the animals for sacrifice. There are many examples of those who refused to abide within the confines of God's instructions and as a result perished. But some people simply never learn.

Since God did not authorize instruments of music in the worship of the Lord's church, why would they be any more acceptable than the self-willed actions of Nadab, Abihu, king Saul and a host of other examples of self-will that are recorded for our learning (Rom. 15:4)? Perhaps you should read (2 Tim. 3:1-9) once again.

It appears Doug, that you as a progressive, find fellowship with other progressives but you heap insult upon those who hold true to the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). My prayer for you and the once faithful **Otter Creek** church is

that you will repent and return to God's favor — abiding within the doctrine of Christ.

*In Christian love, Lloyd Gale
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Patricia A. Chadwell	\$20
Beginning Balance.....	\$10,869.42
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Elder's COLUMN

PREACHERITIS AND UNPREACHERITIS

David Dalton

Preacheritis and unpreacheritis are two sad diseases which have become predominant in the church. Both of these diseases center around how congregations and individual Christians look at preachers. These diseases cause congregations to build around the preacher instead of the congregation being built around Jesus Christ. These diseases also can cause congregations to disintegrate because of the preacher instead of being unified because of Christ. Because of these diseases, many Christians either recommend a congregation or complain about a congregation in terms of the preacher.

Preacheritis infects the church in a variety of ways. Frequently it is heard that one should come to a particular congregation to hear the preacher. It is never the preacher that needs to be heard; instead, it is the message or Gospel of Christ that needs to be heard (Rom. 10:10-17). Instead of inviting individuals to come and hear the preacher, they should be invited to come and hear about Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:28-30).

Frequently it is said that preachers should be heard because of the delivery of their sermons. Some are bragged about because they can quote scriptures and preach without notes. Some are bragged about because they interlace their sermons with a variety of stories that attract attention. Some are deemed to be worthy of hearing because they are known because of their media work on television, radio or in publications. Others are said to be exceptional because they use graphs, charts or computer presentations during their lessons. When the preacheritis is stripped away, only one thing really matters. Did the preacher, to the best

of his ability, deliver the message of the Gospel that needed to be delivered in a way that was pleasing to God? The apostle Paul wrote, *“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel”* (1 Cor. 9:16).

Unpreacheritis is the open expression that one simply does not care for a preacher and desires his demise. Unpreacheritis is as damaging to the church as preacheritis is. Unpreacheritis believes that because a certain preacher does not meet one’s personal perceptions of a preacher, he should be removed. Preachers are as different as other people are different. It is sad however that often a preacher’s work is hurt because members fail to allow for personal differences. Instead of accepting the preacher for the abilities and good qualities that he has, he is frequently compared to the last five preachers that preached for a particular congregation. He does not have the personality of preacher four, he does not have the compassion of preacher two, he does not visit like preacher three, and he does not know the members like preacher one. How can any individual survive being expected to follow the patterns, habits, and expectations of so many different people?

In the attitudes of unpreacheritis, preachers have not been hired or have been fired because they did not golf, throw a football with young people, know about hockey, or understand local customs pertaining to showers, weddings and funerals. Preachers have been rejected because they did not use computers, understand internet and web sites or have a pleasant preacher’s voice. Ironically, preachers have been

rejected because they are too young, middle aged or too old. They have been rejected because they were not married, were married, had children or did not have children. Preachers are rejected because they do not have a degree, they have a degree, they use too much scripture, they move too slowly or too fast in class or simply because the congregation needs a change and changing the preacher is the easiest change to make.

No congregation can be what God wants it to be until preacheritis and unpreacheritis are removed from their thinking and practices. A preacher is just a fellow laborer in the wonderful work of Jesus Christ. He is a man that has strengths and weaknesses. He is a man that stands before the judgement of God for every action he does and every word he speaks. He is a man that will be judged for his successes and failures alike. He is a man that needs God’s grace and forgiveness. He is a man that loves brethren and needs brotherly love. He is a man that does well and makes mistakes. He is a man that needs man’s forgiveness and needs to be forgiving of men. Simply, he is just like you.

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THE PURPOSE OF PREACHING

- To declare good news. Rom. 10:15; Luke 2:10-11
- To present the Truth. Gal. 4:16; John 8:31-32;
- To inform the listener. Acts 2:40-41; Mark 16:15-16; 1 Cor. 1:18-21
- To show the consequences of sin. Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:27; Isa. 59:2
- To produce faith. Rom. 10:13-17; Acts 15:7; John 6:44-45
- To condemn error and rebuke the erring. 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Tim. 5:20; Eph. 5:11
- To restore the erring. James 5:16,19-20; Gal. 6:1; Matt. 18:12-13
- To edify the hearer. 1 Thess. 5:11; Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 14:12
- To encourage Christian living. 2 Peter 1:5-11; Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Peter 2:9
- To comfort those in sorrow. Rom. 12:15; 15:4; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; John 14:1-3,27



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"We enjoy receiving *Seek the Old Paths* each month and want to help in a small way with postage expenses. Keep up the good work. God bless you all" **...Roy & Sandy Ingram, Crane, MO.** "Dear brother Robinson, Enclosed is a check for the ministry of God's work. Keep it up as many are so lost. In Christ" **...Name Withheld by request,**

Gallipolis, OH. "I am sending a copy of our church bulletin to let you know how much you help us daily. Good work. Thank you" **...Dry Fork church of Christ, Austin, KY.** "Dear Elders and brother Robinson, Due to some things happening in my life, I have not been able to help with your great work for many months. First of all, my health has suffered a great decline in the past year, increasing medical expenses and leaving me home bound. Then, because of our 'broken economy' some of my family have lost homes, jobs and health and need help. I've tried to help them as much as I could with my limited funds (I believe the Bible teaches this). But I have not forgotten the great work you are doing for one minute and have continued to remember all of you and your readers in my prayers. I hope I can continue now to help from time to time. I've not been able to attend church services for several months and I really miss that. I continue to enjoy reading your wonderful paper from cover to cover and I pray that God blesses all of you who work on its publication for many years to come. Please use my small contribution where and how most needed, the STOP and/or brother Garland's other project. A sister in Christ" **...Murriel Windham, Las Vegas, NV.** "Thank you for sending me the publication *Seek the Old Paths*" **...William & Susan Trees, Sioux Falls, SD.** "Dear Brother Garland, I have enjoyed *Seek the Old Paths* for many years, thank you. I am now 87 years old and I am loosing my eyesight and do not drive anymore so I must ask you to take me off your mailing list. I have been a member of our Lord's Church for 64 years. Your brother in Him" **...Archie Ristine, Ellensburg, WA.** "Dear Sir, I don't know how you got my address but I'm glad I get your little paper about the church. I will send something every time I can. Thank God for the church of Christ. Love to the brothers and sisters" **...Emily Lewis, Jahleguah, OH.** "Dear brother Garland, I appreciate you and the effort of publishing *Seek the Old Paths*. I have received *Seek the Old Paths* probably for 15 or 20 years and appreciate the bundle for the Gardendale Church. Best wishes" **...Ed Armstrong, Pecos, TX.** "To the Eldership at the East End church of Christ, I'm committed to giving \$\$ a month in support of the periodical" **...Jamie Hampton, member of South Phoenix church of Christ, Phoenix, AZ.** "Dear brother Robinson, Enclosed is a small contribution. I look forward to each edition of *Seek the Old Paths*. In Him we serve" **...Corrine Young, Columbia, MO.** "Enclosed is a check as an anonymous gift to help in the publication of the paper. I really enjoy receiving it. Thanks" **...Anonymous, Oxford, MS.** "Dear Sirs, Thank you so much for sending me the *Seek the Old Paths*." I love receiving it and it helps me a lot. I love to get it. Thanks again" **...Hester Riffe, Suffolk, VA.** "Dear Brethren, We appreciate *Seek the Old Paths* very much and for your faithfulness to preach and teach God's Holy Word. It is necessary for us to drive seventy miles a trip to meet with a faithful congregation and we are blessed to be a part of that group of God's people. Keep up the good work and we pray God will bless you all" **...Orville & Jewell Spears, Okmulgee, OK.** "I enjoy your Old Paths. We all need to "Seek It" **...Anonymous, Kemp, TX.** "Dear brethren, it is so wonderful to sit and read *Seek the Old Paths* in the midst of what has happened to churches that for many lifetimes wore church of Christ on their buildings. Sometimes entire local denominational churches were converted by the truth. Now it seems 'the tide has turned'. Do they ever read II Peter 2:20-22? It's a chilling thought. We've known a couple for forty years who started down the broad road to liberalism. They now attend the huge church in Fort Worth, go to 'church' on Saturday, have instruments and communion. Vain worship it is. Here in the Treasure Valley, the true church is hard to find. Thanks be to God for all of you and for all those still seeking the old paths. There was one way paid for by the death of Christ, and there is one way now and till the end of time. It's strange that people love old homes and antiques but won't accept the 'old time religion.' We've had a rough year with sickness (me), what's happening in our country, etc. May that bring

people back to God before it's too late. We're talking about the U.S. in the past tense. Now the politicians are working to make Washington, DC a state! It's already passed in the senate and no one is talking about it. Our government is so corrupt, it's hard to believe. We had a very traumatic experience months ago. We had a letter stating that our investments were 'on hold' because the company was being investigated for fraud. If anything happens to my husband I would have no income, so we have to have investments. It also gave us back-up security to be able to make donations to churches and worthy charities. We've heard nothing to update the situation and would appreciate your prayers. We know God cares and knows the needs of his children. You are in our prayers always. May God bless you in many more years of work in his Kingdom. Sincerely" **...Name withheld by request, ID.** "Dear brethren, Greetings from the church that meets in Allenhurst, GA! Thank you so much for the work you are doing in publishing *Seek the Old Paths*. It is certainly a blessing to have your sound publication that all can read and find Bible truth. We have been receiving your publication for some years. We request that you continue to send us a bundle of twenty copies each month. Please accept the enclosed check and use it in whatever way you deem best for the publishing and distribution of this good work. May God continue to bless you in this noble effort. In His service" **...church of Christ at Allenhurst, Bob Miller, Secretary, Allenhurst, GA.** "I have only recently been receiving your paper and I appreciate it so much. It is so good to know that there are other sound people out there. I am enclosing a small check to help with the paper. Please send it to these addresses" **...Name withheld by request, TN.** "Please put me on your STOP mailing list. I came into contact with this publication while sitting with my husband in the hospital. Thanks" **...Georg A. Fields, Pikeville, KY.** "Please send a copy of the most recent publication. Thanks" **...Kay Williams.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **East End 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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<http://www.seektheoldpaths.org>

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