

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 LOVE LETTER TO NON-CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Brad Harrub

Dear friend, I have been contemplating this letter for a long time, and have only now gotten up the courage to write it. Even as I pen these words, my stomach churns in nervous anticipation. The reason for it is quite simple. I want you to know about the very best thing that has ever happened in my life. I want to make sure before I die that I introduce you to my "first love." You often comment that I seem so happy all the time. Allow me a few minutes to explain why. But before I explain, let me share with you why it has taken me so long to write this letter.

Our relationship stretches back through many smiles and many tears, and throughout that time I knew that you were someone I could count on. Each one of those smiles and tears represents a lifetime of cherished memories. You know my favorite foods, that I love lasagna and don't like liver. You stood by my side on several occasions when it seemed like the entire world was against me. You have lifted my hand high as we celebrated victories and held my hand through my defeats. In many ways we are like two peas in a pod. And, it's this relationship that has kept me from writing this letter. I cherish our relationship so much that I don't ever want anything to jeopardize it or see it falter. So I beg you to read the remainder of this letter full of love, compassion, and an

open mind — knowing that it was written out of my love for you.

You and I have a tremendous amount in common — always have, and probably always will. However, there is one thing that we don't have in common. A while back I made a decision in my life that started me down a different pathway — a pathway on which I desperately want you to join me. Some time ago I began studying the Bible, and I soon realized that I was only "playing" Christian. I was a "member" of a strong local church that had many members, and was there almost every time the door was opened. However, it became evident fairly quickly that the church that I was attending was doing things that were not described in the Bible. Sure, we met each Sunday for worship, and we sang songs of praise, but a great deal of the service was devoted to traditions that men had incorporated into the worship service. In fact, a large part of the worship service could be classified as entertainment. As I read through the New Testament, I quickly discovered that entertainment, and these traditions of men, were not a part of the original church that Christ established.

You and I both know that religions are a dime a dozen these days. Seems like there is a church building on almost every street corner. But I began to ask myself if all of these religious groups were the **same** in

God's eyes. After looking through the Scriptures I realized they were not. Even though many of them do very altruistic acts for the needy, and even though they have many sincere people in their pews, they still were not carrying out Christianity the way God Himself ordained. They are sincere — but they are sincerely wrong according to the Scriptures.

So, here's what I did (and what I encourage/beg you to do). I began looking in the Bible for examples of the church that Jesus built. In Matthew 16:18, Christ told the apostle Peter that "upon this rock" (the rock of truth that He was the Son of God), He would build His church. So I began investigating the details about His church. I read in Acts chapter 2 where it was started in Jerusalem. I continued reading in Acts to see how those early Christians worshipped and how others became Christians. And, I began to see a divine pattern. I quickly realized that many of the books in the New Testament were written to different congregations of the church that Christ had founded. In fact, many of the books in the New Testament were letters written by Paul to various churches that were scattered abroad. In each of those letters, there are instructions and commands of things that we should and should not

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A Love Letter...



God uses three methods to express His will in the Bible: 1) a direct statement, 2) an approved example, 3) an implication or logical conclusion. Let's notice how these principles apply to some of the current practices among us today

MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC

We are continuing to hear of both brethren and congregations all over the brotherhood who do not respect God's word on this devilish error! I heard of one place that tried out 13 preachers and not one of them believed instrumental music was sinful! I heard of a certain meeting of preachers in which the majority did not believe it was sinful. Where is the Bible authority for mechanical instruments of music? Where's the Scripture that authorizes them? It is not there! It cannot be found!

The Bible only authorizes SINGING. There are two passages that especially address the subject: Ephesians 5:19, "*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" Colossians 3:16, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*"

Certain ones may fuss and whine that it does not matter to God whether mechanical instruments of music are used or not, but they cannot do so with God's approval. Some argue that sincerity and devotion of heart is what really counts and what outward acts (such as using instruments) one does is not that big a deal. Such tripe may deceive the hearts of the simple (cf. Rom. 16:18), but it won't suffice in God ordained worship.

The Scriptures demand that

what we do and say is done with a "thus saith the Lord," i.e., by the Lord's authority (Col. 3:17; Rev. 22:18-19; Rom. 14:23). But, instruments of music cannot be used with the Lord's authority! Isn't it interesting that the church in the New Testament (and for hundreds of years afterwards) never used mechanical instruments of music?

No one can point to a single passage that authorizes mechanical music to be used in conjunction with the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs! It's not there.

FELLOWSHIPING DENOMINATIONS

God has given no authority for us to **fellowship denominations** and/or otherwise **encourage them** in their error. So-called unity meetings have been doing exactly that for years! There are scores across this land and the world who are supporting error and compromise with the denominations. Joint services are becoming a common occurrence. More and more preachers who are members of the church of Christ are participating in Lent and Easter services, memorials or other such events with denominations.

The command of Scripture is the opposite of what many are doing. "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*" (Eph. 5:11). "*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them*" (Rom. 16:17). "*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. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds*" (2

John 9:11). "*Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils*" (1 Cor. 10:21). "*...Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light*" (Rom. 13:12).

None of these things can be done with a "thus saith the Lord." No verse can be pointed to in support of denominations, yet many are flocking to roost with them just the same.

BAPTISM ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION

Just a few short years ago I was very confident in thinking that in my lifetime, no one in the Lord's church would reject baptism for the remission of sins and its essentiality for salvation. I would have never believed it then, but, it has become a reality now. Many are claiming the "all grace and no law" denominational error. Some are saying that baptism is important in doing what the Lord says, but is not essential for salvation.

Such a doctrine cannot be supported from God's divine Word. Human reasoning and thinking has replaced a "thus saith the Lord." If salvation comes at the point of "faith," then clear, precise, contextual evidence must be shown to support it. But, it cannot be done. Instead, many plain passages glare at us from the book that will be used as the standard in the judgment day. Many Scriptures tell us "faith alone" will not save and that obedience is essential. "*But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? ... Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. ... For as the body without works is dead, so faith without works is dead also*" (James 2:20,24,26). "*Not every one 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*" (Matt. 7:21). "*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed*" (John 8:31). "*And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*" (Heb. 5:9).

Salvation at the point of **baptism** is authorized. Jesus said, "*He*

that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16). "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ... Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. ... But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:3-4,6,17-18). "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

GIMMICKS, GADGETS, ENTERTAINMENT

There is no authority for the church to **use gimmicks, gadgets and entertainment** to draw a crowd

and promote its cause. Some have instituted "Gymnastics to the glory of God." Some build gymnasiums, have ball teams, parties, prizes, movies, festivals. I once heard of a "don't talk with your mouthful ministry!" In many congregations, one has to be a combination magician, joke teller, puppeteer, musician and master of ceremonies.

The way of the Lord is through the drawing power of the Gospel! "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Rom. 1:16). "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ... It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:18-21). We are told to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). A preacher is a "herald of the king." He preaches the king's message.

ALL POSITIVE INSPIRING LESSONS

God has given no authority to **preach all positive inspiring lessons** and make sure that we **leave off the negative**. Many preachers are doing this. I've heard them say so with their own mouth! Whole congregations are saying, "Don't be negative, you'll run people off." Preach on love, fellowship, be positive.

Notice these passages: "reprove, rebuke, exhort" (2 Tim. 4:2), "them that sin rebuke before all..." (1 Tim. 5:20), "rebuke them sharply..." (Titus

1:9-13), "mark them..." (Rom. 16:17-18). Every book in the New Testament was written to correct some false doctrine or problem (with perhaps the exception of Philippians).

What is positive preaching anyway? It is preaching those things God has commanded. When I faithfully proclaim his whole counsel, then I am positively doing that which God has commanded. When I refuse to preach His whole counsel, I have become a negative preacher, I refuse to do what God said! Consider what is written in Philippians 1:7,17 and Acts 20:20,26-27.

STRICT WARNING AGAINST TAMPERING WITH GOD'S WORD

Jesus has all authority (Matt. 7:28-29; 28:18; 17:1-5). Jesus placed that authority in His written word (John 12:48-50). He is the judge. We will not be judged by opinions, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, the pastor or preacher, church, manual, catechism, creed, or whatever. The Word that has been given is all sufficient (John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). God demands we respect His Word (1 Peter 4:11; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19; Matt. 15:7-9).

AUTHORITY is the most important lesson to observe in pleasing God! Does the Bible authorize what you are doing? Does the church you attend meet with God's authority?

FELLOWSHIPING SECTARIANS

Bob Spurlin

The word "fellowship" comes from the Greek word *koinonia* meaning, "Communion, fellowship, sharing in common, or joint participation" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). Fellowship with God comes when man is in full compliance to the will of God (Acts 2:42). Walking with God in the cool of the evening is a wonderful illustration of the companionship that existed between Adam and Eve (Gen. 1-2). To enjoy the sharing and joint participation with God must have been an unspeakable

delight, until sin entered paradise. Fellowship with God is the deepest bond known to man, not only in this life, but the life that is yet to come. In short, our fellowship with God is the difference between eternal bliss in heaven and banishment to eternal destruction. John writes, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John. 1:7).

This subject is at the heart of our

spiritual link with the Father in heaven. It decides our final destination. Preserving our fellowship with God is exclusive and complete; therefore, having an alliance with sectarians is going beyond the teaching of Christ (2 John 9). For the last quarter century or so, there has been a permissive attitude toward denominationalism (sectarians). A "speak softly" and "tread lightly" disposition prevails among many who had rather have the preacher remain silent about such things. Some have

gone so far to join openly in sectarian services as preachers in churches of Christ exchanging pulpits with sectarian churches. Their purpose of which is promoting their false doctrine while mutually introducing such in the church of the Lord.

Ministers in churches of Christ are now openly exchanging pulpits with denominational bodies. This is merely another symptom of the ever-deepening apostasy that is among us. Years ago, churches of Christ became known for their strong stand for Truth and opposition to sectarian error (Eph. 5:11; 1 Cor. 1:10-17). Yet today, the distinction between the church and denominationalism is becoming more difficult to see. We cannot miss the clear and obvious differences between the church and sectarianism in Holy Writ. If we examine the New Testament closely, we will recognize a spiritual line of demarcation between the church of Christ and sectarianism with great clarity. Paul the apostle said, *“Wherefore, come ye out from them and be ye separate saith the Lord”* (2 Cor. 6:17). Today, many in the church are like the generation of Samuel who cried out to the prophet, *“give us a king like the nations about us”* (1 Sam. 8:5). God’s people during Samuel’s day craved the appealing practices of other nations. The pomp and ceremony of having a king like other heathen nations was an attraction so gripping that dismissing God’s form of leadership became a trivial matter.

Some have stated the association with denominations would lend itself in building better relations. In fact, it will only serve to undermine and compromise the cause of Christ (2 Tim. 1:13-14; Amos 3:3). Fraternizing with error will always be harmful to the cause of Christ much like Israel of old substituting the teachings of God for an attraction of the world. Many become enthralled with the shiny, glitzy, and attention-grabbing practices of the sectarian world. Yet, such fellowship will bring certain destruction to those surrendering to their error (2 Peter 3:17; Matt. 7:21-23).

Following the loss of the shuttle Columbia and the death of six astronauts, an outpouring of sympathy and memorial services occurred all across the country. One of the more recognizable preachers among

churches of Christ, in Huntsville, AL, took part in an ecumenical service for the fallen astronauts. Huntsville is the home of NASA, which has been on the cutting edge of the space program. The memorial service in Huntsville included remarks of a Catholic, Hindu, Jew, and a preacher of the church of Christ. Each praised the fallen heroes as meeting God face-to-face. This “gospel” preacher echoed the comments of those clergy, who rejected the doctrine/teaching of Christ. The conduct of this preacher is unconscionable as he became a “partaker of the evil deed” placing him in defiance to the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11).

Periodically, a friend or relative will invite us to attend a sectarian service, thus, we urge them to respond in kind by attending one of our worship services. Many use this rationale to do something “good.” Beloved, can we do this with God’s blessing? The New Testament declares the law of worship in John 4:23-24 and clearly expresses how we are to worship God. The Bible teaches how we are to worship in singing praises to God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). The time, the place, and with whom does not alter the divine injunction, nor is there any concession for a mechanical instrument. It would be no more sin for me to use the instrument in the Sunday morning services where we regularly worship than in a sectarian meeting. When expressly taught in Holy Scripture about the plan of worship, it is a presumptuous sin for me to “add to” or “take away” from God’s will (Rev. 22:18-19; Col. 3:17).

We cannot invite a sectarian visitor to lead a song or lead a prayer in our worship without implying to him that he is in a right association with God! Further, going with a friend to encourage or bid them Godspeed in their worship, we are sending a clear message that we are extending our fellowship. Beloved, soft and compromising attitudes usher in apostasy. The Psalmist David said, *“Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven”* (Psalm 119:89); therefore, the church must not compromise God’s firm truth if it desires to preserve its identity. John said, *“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that*

biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 10-11).

Dear friend, let us not encourage those in their error, but rather open the word of God and *“...expound to him the way of God more accurately”* (Acts 18:26). This was the approach Priscilla and Aquila took when Apollos was preaching error. Christians of the first century never considered compromising the way of righteousness, but followed the procedure of *“speaking the truth in love”* (Eph. 4:15). We can be equally successful by avoiding fellowship with sectarians. We will sharply lessen the digressive movement if we would follow the pattern of the New Testament.

2101 Glenwood Dr. SW
Hartselle, AL 35640

CONTRIBUTIONS

Bill Trees.....	\$20
Ernest E. Armstrong.....	\$50
J. R. & Barbara Ford.....	\$25
Westport Rd. church of Christ, Cleveland, OK.....	\$50
Chuck & Nancy Verkist.....	\$25
Ronald H. Allen.....	\$30
John H. Brown.....	\$25
Floyd Roe.....	\$10
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Bob & Beverly Spurlin.....	\$10
Paul & Betty Curless.....	\$100
E. F. Glenn, Jr.....	\$100
Anonymous.....	\$40
Robert Price (booklet maker).....	\$200
Anonymous.....	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$160
Anonymous.....	\$300
William E. Hainline.....	\$25
Charlene Tedford.....	\$20
Corazon G. Santiago.....	\$10
Bill Willard.....	\$10
Evans church of Christ, Evans, GA.....	\$50
M/M Ronald H. Allen.....	\$30
Roy C. Clark.....	\$25
Katheryn Reeves Jean.....	\$100
Lucille Krantz.....	\$25
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WHY WOULD PAUL REJOICE WHEN HE KNEW PEOPLE PREACHED THE GOSPEL “IN PRETENSE?”

Roger Campbell

Jesus rebuked those that “for a pretense” made long prayers (Matt. 23:14; cf. Mark 12:40). A second New Testament verse that makes mention of doing something in pretense often arouses people’s attention and interest. It is Philippians 1:18, which reads, “*What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*” Since “pretense” is defined as “a deceptive and false action or appearance; a false purpose” [Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus], many have wondered: how could Paul rejoice when folks were preaching in a deceptive manner or with the wrong attitude?

To get a feel for the context of Paul’s statement about pretense, consider the verses that precede it: “*But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice*” (Phil. 1:12-18).

The theme of this section deals with the circumstances under which the Gospel was preached in Rome while Paul was a prisoner there. This section deals with both bad and good news. A portion of the bad news is the fact that Paul was still in bonds when he wrote this epistle. The good news, though, is that despite the apostle’s

hardships, the Gospel was still being preached. “*But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel*” (1:12).

As we try to analyze the message of these verses, some basic questions are helpful.

1) Who had been preaching when Paul wrote this epistle? A: “Many of the brethren in the Lord” (1:14).

2) How had these brothers preached? A: On one hand, they had preached boldly — the preachers were “much more bold to speak the word without fear” (1:14).

3) What message were these brethren preaching? A: “The gospel” (1:12,17), “the word” (1:14), the “Christ” (1:15,16,18). How many messages were these brothers preaching? Were they preaching one message, or three different ones? A: One. From Acts 8:4,5,12,25,35 we learn that to preach the word is the same as preaching the Christ, which is the same as preaching the Gospel. Thus, when Philippians 1:15-16 says the brethren preached the Gospel or the Christ, it means they were preaching the right message (Mark 16:15).

4) How does the Holy Spirit describe the two groups of saints that preached in Rome when Paul was in bonds there? A: Notice the words or terms associated with one group: “envy and strife” (v.15), “contention” (v.16), “not sincerely” (v.16), desiring to add to Paul’s affliction (v.16), “in pretense” (v.18). The ones who made up a second group are described as preaching “of good will” (v.15), “of love” (v.17), and “in truth” (v.18). What a contrast between them and the other group!

It is sometimes suggested that in view of the inspired message of Philippians one, when religious error is taught, we ought to just leave that error and those who teach it alone.

After all, Paul did rejoice, didn’t he? There are two facts we must not overlook. First, the brethren about whom Paul writes in this section taught the truth, not error. Second, the conclusion that we should be silent when religious error is propagated contradicts other clear Bible statements and thus is an incorrect view.

The Spirit charged Timothy to “reprove” and “rebuke” as he preached the word (2 Tim. 4:2). And, did not our Lord plainly speak of the errors of the Pharisees and scribes of His day? Indeed, He did (Matt. 15,23).

No, Philippians 1:18 does not teach we should ignore erroneous religious teaching. With these thoughts in mind, we again ask: why in the world would Paul rejoice when he knew that some of those who were preaching did so with the wrong motive and spirit? It is an undeniable fact that Paul did rejoice (v.18). But why rejoice? Wasn’t the pitiful attitude of some of the preachers cause for sadness and weeping rather than joy? By no means did Paul praise anyone for using deception or having an improper motive. The Spirit’s message about love that is recorded in 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 shows the necessity of having genuine love. On another occasion, Paul wrote of the need to preach the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

No, the apostle could never praise impure motives or the wrong spirit. What about those people that heard the preaching of the envy-strife-contention-pretense brethren? It is possible that such hearers did not know or detect the motive of the ones that preached to them. Remember, even the ones whom Paul mentions as preaching “in pretense” preached the right message (the word, the Gospel, the Christ). Thus, those who heard them preach heard the truth of the Lord. If the hearers

responded to that truth by believing and obeying it, they would be saved from their sins, regardless of the attitude or motive of the one(s) that preached to them. That is, the salvation of the obedient hearers did not depend on the attitude of the preachers.

It was the continuous preaching of the Gospel and salvation of souls that caused Paul to rejoice, not the improper spirit or motive of some who preached. We realize that if one came to understand and then obeyed the Gospel through the assistance of one of the “in pretense” saints and afterwards got caught up in and supported one of these factious groups, his soul would be in jeopardy just like those that preached in pretense. About this, there can be no doubt.

Concerning Paul’s joy, we note that he could never rejoice over strife and envy, because these will keep people out of the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:20,21). The apostle to the Gentiles also told the saints in Philippi that he wept over the enemies of the cross of the Christ (Phil. 3:18,19). Paul was, however, delighted that souls were being saved by obeying the Gospel that they heard (1:18; Rom. 6:17,18).

May God help us to rejoice when souls are saved. At the same time, may we ever be on guard against unholy motives and attitudes that might crop up, both in ourselves and in others.

A Love Letter...

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be doing.

For instance, I know that in many churches you officially “join” the church, or they vote you in. But I never found this process in my study of the New Testament. In fact, the New Testament is very specific that God is the one who adds people to the church (Acts 2:47). However, He only adds those who have complied with His will. And dear friend, it is with a humble and compassionate heart that I admit that I am scared that maybe you have not complied with His commands. For instance, the Bible instructs that we must **hear** the Gospel (Rom. 10:14-17; James

1:21-25), and we must **believe** in Jesus Christ (John 8:24; Mark 16:16). And, while many people have done these steps, relatively few have taken the next steps of **repenting** of their past sins (Acts 3:19; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30) and **confessing** the name of Jesus Christ (Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:36-38). After someone has done this, they are ready to be buried with Christ in **baptism** so that past sins can be forgiven. This act of baptism, for the remission of sins, is mentioned throughout the book of Acts (see chapters 2, 8, 9, 10, 16, 22). The importance of being immersed can be identified by the words of Jesus found in Mark 16:16 when He declared: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

In Matthew 16:18, Christ said he would found one church — “my church.” In Ephesians 1:22-23 we read where the church is called the *body* (with Christ being the head). A few chapters later, in Ephesians 4:4, we are told there is only *one body*. My plea with you today is that you will do whatever it takes to make sure you are in that one body, and ensure that God has added you to the church (Acts 2:47). Read through the New Testament and see for yourself what the Bible says regarding the church, and then ask yourself this simple question: Am I a member of the church that Christ purchased with His blood? If not, why not?

It’s funny that I can talk to total strangers about this — and have done so many times in the past and yet I remain silent around those to whom I am closest. I never talked to you about heaven and eternity because I didn’t want to mess up what we had here on Earth. But see, I realize that this earthly relationship is temporary. One day the memories that you and I share will fade away. And, I don’t want to leave this life without telling you about Christ and how He changed my life. Therefore, I am penning this letter in hopes of extending our friendship into eternity.

Please allow me to paint a picture so that you can understand the genuine urgency of this letter. Suppose you were sitting in the first class section of a luxury Boeing 747. There you are sipping on a drink, relaxing, reading a magazine, when

all of a sudden someone comes up, and tosses a parachute into your lap without saying a word. You might become a little agitated that someone would toss a bulky parachute into your lap, and then just walk on by. You might even decide to push it aside or onto the floor so that you could return to your drink and magazine. That parachute would be nothing more than a nuisance. And, after a while you might even resent the person that tossed it in your lap. Now, suppose the person who had given you that parachute also took the time to tell you the airplane was going to crash. How different would your attitude be towards that parachute and the person who gave it to you? Well dear friend, one day soon, our plane will go down. Hebrews 9:27 states very plainly that “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” I simply want to make sure you have a parachute that will save you from destruction. Don’t resent me for delivering the message. Please understand that I am simply wanting to do what I can while I still have the chance.

While the world around us thinks the majority of people will end up in heaven, this is not what Jesus Christ Himself told us. In Matthew 7:13-14, He cautioned us to: *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it”* (emp. added).

Please do not be mad at me. Please do not shy away from me. Please do not despise me. For this letter was not written to drive a wedge into our relationship. But rather it was written out of love and compassion, hoping that we can stand hand-in-hand before Almighty God. Yes, I am a happy person — because I know and love my Savior, and He is my best friend. Please consider what I’ve said. Look through the Scriptures on your own. Examine where you stand. I want nothing more than to introduce my earthly best friend to my spiritual best friend and savior Jesus Christ. Thank you for allowing me this short opportunity to tell you about Him.

Sincerely, Your friend
(brad@apologeticspress.org)

News Brief...

ANOTHER DISAPPOINTMENT BY LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY

Just wanted to make you aware of another worldly influence indulged in by our brethren at Lipscomb. On April 12, 2003, Lipscomb University had its name and logo placed on a racecar at a race in Nashville, TN. It was very prominent on the hood, side, and rear of the car. The name of the event was the Pepsi 300 in a racing series called the Nascar Busch series. Yes brother, the same Busch as in Busch beer made by Anheiser-Busch. It really saddens me to see a university that claims close association to the church of our Lord involved with an event put on by a beer company. I know that several of the youth in our congregation have attended and are attending Lipscomb because of the Christian influence. How sad it is that the parents of these youths shrug off when things such as this are brought to their attention.

G. David England, assistant vice president for marketing and public relations at Lipscomb said, "This has just been a wonderful experience for us and we are very appreciative to Gary and Brad for their willingness to carry our logo."

A link to the Lipscomb site tells about the excitement the university had having their logo on the car. <http://news.lipscomb.edu/content.asp?CID=2988>

received from a reader of STOP

Each summer in Red River, New Mexico there is a "Family Encampment" conducted by apostates who call themselves members of "Churches of Christ." This five-day encampment is conducted in a large tent where "worshippers" come in their shorts, T-shirts, and ball caps and stand and clap and carry on. Since this gathering is more akin to a circus than the worship of the Living God and a reverent study of His word, it is appropriate that it is held in a tent. I know, because I have been there and observed it.

Many churches in Oklahoma promote this travesty, despite the fact that false teachers are used and false doctrine is taught. Among those who spoke when I observed were Harold Hazelip, Stanley Shipp and Joe Beam. Among Oklahoma churches supporting this gathering of apostates is the church in Sayre, Oklahoma which carried an announcement of the encampment in their bulletin, the "Sayre Salute," January 19, 2003.

After my visit in 1996, I wrote an

article that can be read on the website of Seek The Old Paths (August, 1996) — www.eastcorinth.org/stop896.htm#BUT. The article is titled "Baling Up The Liberals." Nothing much has changed since then.

Their program listed for June 21-25, 2003 announced the 17th Red River Family Encampment Theme: "I Know Whom I Have Believed" — Studies in Romans 8." Some of the speakers include: Jim McGuiggan, Holywood, N. Ireland; Richard Jones, Madill, Oklahoma; Steve Flatt, Nashville, TN; Kent Allen, Edmond, OK; Harold Redd, Memphis, TN; Joe Barnett, Lubbock, TX; Kurt Picker, Cumming, GA; Prentice Meador, Dallas, TX; Bill Humble, Abilene, TX; David Mahan, Athens, TX; John W. Smith, Huntsville, AL; David Bennett, Portales, NM; Dan Rodriguez, Newbury Park, CA; Willard Tate, Abilene, TX; Robert Oglesby, Jr., Abilene, TX; Bob Shepard, Canyon, TX; Will Herring, Prestoncrest, Dallas, TX

www.gospelpreceptor.com
Jerry Brewer

• • • •

This is an excerpt from one of seven resolutions passed by the American Council of Christian Churches meeting in Monett, MO, Oct. 22-24: "WHEREAS confusion abounds over the way of salvation among mainline Protestant churches, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roman Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists and others, and WHEREAS religious pluralism is widely accepted (the belief that 'all roads eventually lead to heaven,' and that the majority of people believe that we all worship the same God and must work our way to heaven), THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the ACCC...declares the exclusive message of Christianity found in the Bible (Acts 4:12, I Tim. 2:5, John 3:36 and 14:6). There are no alternatives; there is but One Way of Salvation according to the Bible. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-10). BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the ACCC call upon all Bible-believing Christians to beware of distortions of the Gospel and to proclaim the one way of salvation through Jesus Christ." (The Calvary Contender, 11/18/02)

(They got most of it right. Unfortunately, they still want to believe in faith only. One cannot be saved unless one obeys the commandments of God. It is good to see them take this stance against growing ecumenicalism. Now if they would come out against denominationalism we would be truly happy.)

Mark McWhorter

18TH ANNUAL SEEK THE OLD PATHS LECTURESHIP

*What God Has Joined Together
Let Not Man Put Asunder*

SUNDAY, JULY 27

9:30 *Garland Robinson* — What God has Joined Together, let not Man Put Asunder
10:30 *Garland Robinson* — Baptism & Salvation
7:00 *Roger Campbell* — Christ & Doctrine
8:00 *Gilbert Gough* — Death, Resurrection & Judgment

MONDAY, JULY 28

9:00 *Don Tate* — One Heart and One Soul
10:00 *Ed Casteel* — Jesus: the Lion & the Lamb
11:00 *Alan Adams* — Explicit and Implicit Commands
1:30 *Hayes Grady* — Weeping & Rejoicing
2:30 *Randy Kea* — Deed & Truth
7:00 *Victor Eskew* — Christ & the Church
8:00 *Terry Joe Kee* — Husband & Wife

TUESDAY, JULY 29

9:00 *Paul Evins* — Worship: In Spirit & In Truth
10:00 *Jimmy Young* — The Vine & the Branches
11:00 *Jimmy Bates* — Faith & Works
1:30 *Jeff Bates* — The Old Testament & New Testament
2:30 *Paul Curless* — Grace & Law
7:00 *Gary McDade* — The Broad Way & Destruction
8:00 *Ken Bureson* — The Narrow Way & Life

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

9:00 *Johnny Burkhart* — Types and Anti-types
10:00 *Ed Ballard* — Prayer & God's Will
11:00 *Walter Pigg* — Spreading the Gospel & Defending it
1:30 *Richard Guill* — Teaching the Lost & Strengthening the Saved
2:30 *Tom Snyder* — Sin & Death
7:00 *Tom House* — Seek the Kingdom & His Righteousness
8:00 *Charles Blair* — The Goodness & Severity of God

THURSDAY, JULY 31

9:00 *John Cotham* — Ask, Seek & Knock
10:00 *Melvin Sapp* — Prophecy & Fulfillment
11:00 *Ronald Choate* — Love & Commandment Keeping
1:30 *G. W. Childs* — Body, Soul & Spirit
2:30 *Scott Klaff* — Service & Sacrifice
7:00 *Dwight Fuqua* — Faithful Children and Proper Training
8:00 *Steven Yeatts* — Go and Teach

East Corinth church of Christ

1801 Cruise St.
Corinth, MS 38834
Ph: 662-286-2040 or 286-6575
www.eastcorinth.org/lect2003.htm



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

eralism road is getting longer and so many churches are choosing to follow it! May the new year see your mailing list continue to grow and your year be healthy and safe" ...**Name Withheld**. "I wish to thank you for sending us *STOP*. We are pleased to know you are steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord!" ...**Cecil Crawford, Walnut Hill, FL**. "We just read your bulletin for the first time. We enjoyed it very much. It is so refreshing to hear just the plain ole truth about the Scripture. We need more encouragement from our brothers and sisters to keep to the truth. Thank you in his love and service" ...**James & Patsy Crow, Flint, MI**. "Thank you for your stand for the truth! God bless you as you seek to serve Him faithfully. I pray that my home congregation will be steered the right way. Thank you for sending this publication" ...**C. Fulcher**. "I would like to have a subscription to *STOP*. Thank you very much, and I look forward to receiving the edifying material contained therein" ...**Lee Moses, Mount Pleasant, TX**. "*Seek the Old Paths* is my paper, I enjoy it so very much. I get 5 papers, only 2 of them teach the truth as the Bible teaches" ...**Gertrude Peacock, New Albany, MS**. "I ask you to please accept my small contribution to your work in defending the faith. I am praying for this work" ...**Name Withheld**. "Keep up the good work. I appreciate the work you are doing. Keep sending it" ...**Ray Swanson, Wauneta, NE**. "Thank you so very much for sending the *STOP* publication to the church that meets in Allenhurst, GA. Please accept the enclosed check to be used in whatever way you deem best in publication and distribution of this outstanding publication. Keep up the good work. May God continue to bless your efforts" ...**Bob Miller, Allenhurst, GA**. "We appreciate you sending us *Seek the Old Paths*. Thank you" ...**Francis E. Davis, Neenah, WI**. "Thanks for the great work you are doing! We are proud to help you spread the word" ...**Donald Ginn, Saks church of Christ, Anniston, AL**. "Thank you so much for your dedication for the truth and for revealing the much-troubled problems that are facing us in the church today. Please continue to seek the old paths because so many are falling away" ...**Art Harris, Bowling Green, KY**. "Keep up the good work" ...**Floyd Roe, Cushing, OK**. "Christian greetings in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior! May the grace and peace of our heavenly Father through our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Happy New Year! I am happy to write you again, brother. Thank you very much for helping my ministry through your paper that I received last year. It is very useful in my work of preaching and teaching of the Word of God. You can visit the Philippines to know the spiritual and physical condition of the churches of our Lord, especially in the provinces. I cannot still afford to pay my subscription, so I request again my renewal to it to be free. I thanked you for continue helping my ministry in this country through your paper. As an evangelist, my works are: to evangelize and to edify churches by setting them in order, by straightening them up that are out of order, and by training laborers. I need your assistance in order to accomplish my works. I need your prayers for my works, health, and family. I need some reading materials for free distribution that will and can be used for Sunday Schools. Christian books on various doctrines of the church, and bibles (especially KJV) are needed. Video and audio tapes on evangelism, worship, and holiness are needed also. If you can financially support my ministry in this country, it is very much appreciated. Yes, I visit to edify churches by preaching and teaching the pure Gospel for God's glory. I invite you to visit the churches where I visit and preach the Word. I pray to our heavenly Father to continue bless you and to give you the heavenly wisdom and good health in order for you to continue doing His will in your area and out" ...**Serafin M. Calixto, Batangas, Philippines**. "I have returned to full-time work and relocated in Eastern Ohio. I have always appreciated you and your loyalty to our Lord and His church. Please place me on the mailing list of *STOP*. Also, my son-in-law and daughter. Thank you so much!" ...**Jack Openshaw, Hanoverton, OH**. "We are a small congregation in need of good gospel literature such as you provide. We would all appreciate being placed on your mailing list. Thank you!!" ...**Crossroads church of Christ, Lynn, AL**. "My husband is deceased but I would like to continue to receive your paper. Enclosed you will find a small contribution. Please use it where needed. Thank you so much for the work you are

"The **Northside church in Meridian, Mississippi is in need of a sound preacher**. Those interested can contact: Don Potts (601-485-4673) or Ken Williams (601-681-8156)" ...**Alan Adams, Pensacola, FL**. "Thank you for another year of Old Paths lessons and keeping us informed of what is going on in the brotherhood. It is so sad that the lib-

doing" ...**Margaret Wittig, Bizbee, AZ**. "You are doing a great job writing *Seek the Old Paths*. Keep up the good work. I am thankful for your keeping us informed. God bless. Thanks" ...**Charles Maxwell, Cookeville, TN**. "We appreciate your stamina and persistence in proclaiming the truth. God bless you in your efforts" ...**Donald White, Purcell, OK**. "Enclosed is a check to help in teaching God's word. Enjoy the paper very much and the sound articles you print. Wish all of the bulletins by other people could be this sound. May God's blessing always be with you in your efforts to teach his word as it is written" ...**Thresa Weir, Sulphur Springs, TX**. "Please stop all mailing to this address. Thank you" ...**Oliver Seat, Batesville, AR**. "I am a member of the Harmony Church of Christ in Saratoga, AR. I read one of your mailouts and it was a joy to read after being told so many times that we are outdated and should change, but God's word has not changed and I am proud to see someone that stands on that principle. If possible, I would like to have 10 copies for our members" ...**Harmony Church of Christ, James Vaughn, Saratoga, AR**. "We were recently given several copies of this paper and were certainly impressed with each article's clarity and truthfulness always giving Scripture to uphold the truth of God's Word. Please include us on your mailing list. We received Jan. 2003, and would like Feb. 2003 issue. May God bless you in this good work" ...**Charles Nicks, Hayesville, NC**. "Would you please add me to your mailing list? I recently was handed a copy of *Seek the Old Paths* and found it very enjoyable. I would appreciate receiving it on a regular basis" ...**Jesse A. Baird, Jr., Jacksonville, FL**. "I would appreciate being put on the mailing list for *STOP*. You all are doing a good work with this sound teaching" ...**Matt Harrell, Murfreesboro, TN**. "The April 2003 issue of *STOP* was an exceptionally good one. Jim and I enjoy reading this publication every month. Thank you for keeping it as an informative work. More Christians need to be reading this type of paper. May God bless you and your family" ...**Ginny Green, Columbia, TN**.

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.seektheoldpaths.org>

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