

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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"SPECIAL SUNDAY COMMUNION"

Jack Simons

The above title was the heading of an announcement of a "SPECIAL" activity planned by the **Skyway Hills Church of Christ in Pearl, Mississippi**, as it appeared in **HEART MATTERS**, their bulletin, April 28, 2002 issue. The announcement read as follows:

"Sunday, May 5 we will have a special opportunity to experience the Lord's supper shared in the setting of a common meal. Those who wish to participate in this 'table setting' must sign up by Sunday, April 28. Communion will be served as always during worship. Participants in the meal setting will partake again in the fellowship building during lunch. We are thinking the meal will cost around \$5.00 per person."

In a phone conversation with Yale Canfield, the minister of this congregation, I got more information concerning what this "Special Sunday Communion" would entail. After asking him many times exactly what this activity would involve, he finally explained to me that immediately following their regular morning service they would have a BAR-B-Q catered fellowship meal during which they would experience the Lord's supper in a setting that hopefully would better enhance its meaning to those participating. As they ate the common meal they would

have leaders discuss the meaning of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine and they would partake of it — all of this as they also ate their common meal! He also said that after this they would have those present who wished, tell how Jesus and God had been a positive force in their lives. I asked him to confirm the \$5.00 charge for participating and he did, explaining it was to defray the cost of the catered BAR-B-Q meal.

Summarizing what this "Special Sunday Communion," involved as gleaned from their bulletin announcement and my conversation with their minister, here is what they did:

1. They observed the Lord's supper twice — that is, those who partook during the regular morning service and chose to pay the cost and attend the common meal "table setting" that would follow immediately after their morning service took it again in a seemingly more enhanced atmosphere. It would seem the first was somehow inadequate!! If not why have it again?!

2. They observed the Lord's supper in conjunction with, along with, and during the eating of a common catered BAR-B-Q meal. They came together as the church in one place to do both in conjunction with each other.

3. They signed up prior to, and paid \$5.00 per person to have the privilege of doing this! This comes close to having a closed communion, and at the very least extends it to a

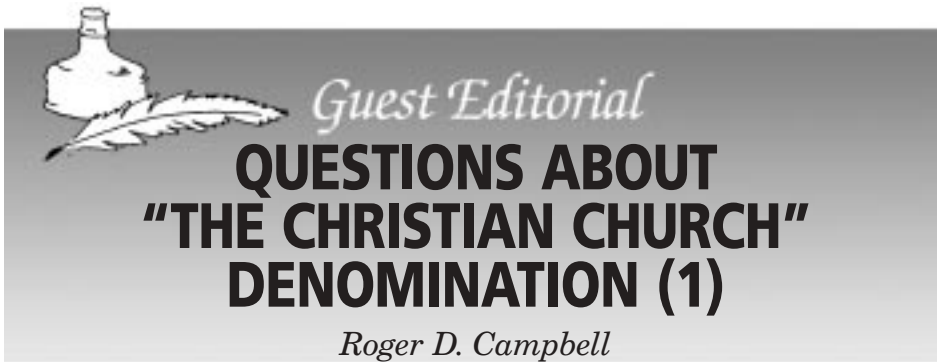
"Special" few! If it was a "Special" activity, then those participating had to be "Special!" Their mandating a sign up prior to expressly shows the distinct selectiveness of this activity.

4. After the meal, those who wished were given an opportunity to do some so-called personal witnessing and testifying (though brother Canfield did not call it that) how Jesus was a positive force in their lives. I assume this would also include women testifying along with the men since it was open to anyone who wished to participate.

At the end of my phone conversation with Yale Canfield, I suggested he read 1 Corinthians 11 before proceeding further with this activity! Why refer him to 1 Corinthians 11, especially verses 17-34? Because it addresses a similar situation in the church at Corinth — AND CONDEMNNS IT!! The Christians at Corinth had profaned the Lord's supper BY MAKING A COMMON MEAL OF IT! They had come together in one place as the church to observe the Lord's supper (vs.18-20), but profaned it by making a common meal of it (vs.21-22)! Paul referred to such practice as, "heresies among you" (v.19). He told them they were "come together not for the better, but for the worse" (v.17). He also denounced such activity as divisive (v.18). He concluded, "*What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and*

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Special Sunday Communion...



Once taught a class on “Denominational Doctrines.” One of the religious groups about which we studied was the “Christian Church” denomination. Having very little written information about it, I turned for assistance to brother Kent Bailey, who preaches for the Lord’s church in Lenoir City, TN. My reason for seeking out brother Kent for assistance is quite simple: before obeying the Gospel, he preached for the Christian Church for five years in the 1970s. Since that time he has kept up with its activities. In short, he knows well the teaching and practices of this denomination.

Let me at this point insert a personal note. I have an uncle who for a long time served as an elder in the Christian Church, another uncle who served as a deacon, a cousin who presently is a deacon, and a number of other relatives who are, or have been, connected with the Christian Church. I want to make it plain that I have no ill will toward any member of the Christian Church. With this in mind, let us now consider the teachings and practices of this denomination.

I asked brother Bailey a number of questions about the Christian Church. Those questions are numbered below, with Kent’s answer in each case coming after the “A:”. In this first part, we are simply printing sixteen of those questions and answers. Lord willing, in next month’s issue we will print the remaining questions and answers, then make some observations about what brother Bailey’s answers reveal.

1. *What is the difference between the “Independent Christian Church,” the “Disciples of Christ,” and other groups that call themselves “Christian Church?”* A: The basic difference between the Independent Christian

Church (ICC) and the Disciples would be that the Disciples have gone further into Modernism. Many of the Disciples deny the Deity of Christ, His virgin birth, plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible, etc. They also claim full denominational status with an international convention that controls their congregations. The ICC for the most part rejects such, but they are not far behind. They have a convention known as the North American Christian Convention that does not extend direct control over their congregations; however, it does place a great deal of political pressure on congregations as far as doctrine is concerned. Both have Missionary Societies.

2. *Are there still some groups in the northern part of the United States that call themselves a “Church of Christ,” but they are really the Christian Church?* A: Some of the Independent congregations refer to themselves as “Churches of Christ.” There have been a few small splinter groups that have disassociated themselves from the mainstream of the Independent Christian Churches and wear the designation “Church of Christ.” A very few of these conservative congregations still remain, however the majority of even these have either converted to the truth, died out, or have re-connected to the mainstream of the ICC.

3. *What schools or publishing houses are associated with the Christian Church?* A: The mainstream of the ICC has a number of colleges. In Tennessee they have Johnson Bible College in Knoxville, plus Milligan College and Emmanuel School of Religion in Elizabethton. The two most prominent schools are Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio and Lincoln Christian College and Seminary in Lincoln, Illinois. Ozark Christian College in

Joplin, Missouri is also a popular school. One conservative splinter group has a Bible college in Ottumwa, Iowa known as Midwestern School of Evangelism. The mainstream of the ICC has individual owned publishers. The most popular are: Standard Publishing Company in Cincinnati, Ohio; College Press and also One Body Publications in Joplin, Missouri.

4. *To what point in time do they trace their history, i.e., when do they say the Christian Church began?* A: For the most part the mainstream of the ICC identify the origin of their group with the beginning of the Restoration Movement in the U.S. A very few conservative congregations seek to claim identity with Pentecost in Acts 2.

5. *Regarding the organization of the Christian Church: 1) What are the rulers of a local church called?* A: In the mainstream ICC there is what is known as a board of Elders and Deacons. Often the deacons have just as much authority in their “vote.” 2) *In congregations where there are elders, is there always a plurality of elders?* A: Generally speaking there are always elders, but not necessarily a plurality. 3) *Do they have women elders?* A: Some have women serving as elders and deacons; others oppose such. 4) *Do they have any organization that is larger than the local church (such as a district, conference, state leaders)?* A: The few (almost non-existent) splinter groups oppose the board approach. They have a plurality of elders overseeing the congregations and also have deacons. Both the ICC and splinter groups are local and autonomous, however the ICC in the mainstream has a great deal of “political” interference from their Brotherhood Lectureship known as the North American Christian Convention.

6. *Do they have women preachers?* A: Some have women preachers, others do not. The majority of the ICC mainstream have women song leaders and allow women to usurp control over men, such as teaching men in Bible classes.

7. *Do they call their preachers “Reverend” or use other religious titles?* A: Some use religious titles such as “Reverend”, while others do not. The few conservative splinter groups oppose such.

8. *What is their attitude toward denominationalism?* A: The mainstream of the ICC takes the Rubel Shelly approach to fellowship and will virtually accept just about any one. What few conservative splinter groups remain oppose such.

9. *Do they have fellowship with denominations?* A: The ICC mainstream fellowships the denominations.

10. *Do they accept one into their fellowship that has been baptized into a denomination?* A: The ICC mainstream accepts denominational baptism, whereas the few minority conservative splinter groups rebaptize those coming from the denominations.

11. *Do their preachers participate in preachers' alliances/work together with denominational preachers in special causes?* A: The mainstream of the ICC cooperate with all sorts on

inter-denominational alliances, whereas the few minority splinter groups do not.

12. *What is their attitude toward/concept of the church of Christ?* A: The ICC mainstream has no more of a concept of the Lord's church than any other denominational group does. The few conservative splinter groups have a correct concept of the nature, identity, organization, and work of the New Testament church. However they teach fatally false doctrine about worship.

13. *Do they partake of the Lord's supper each first day of the week?* A: All of the ICC partakes of the Lord's supper every first day of the week.

14. *Do they ever on special occasions partake of the Lord's supper on any other days of the week?* A: The mainstream of the ICC partakes of the Lord's supper on "special days" and even during wedding cere-

monies. The few splinter groups oppose such.

15. *Do they observe religious holidays, such as "Christmas" and "Easter?"* A: The mainstream of the ICC observes religious holidays such as Christmas and Easter. The few splinter groups oppose such, but even a few of them are beginning to observe these religious holidays as well.

16. *Do they have youth church in which young people serve as "elders," etc.?* A: The mainstream of the ICC has the divided assembly, especially "Junior Church" or "Youth Worship." Some have "junior elders" while others oppose the practice. For the most part the few splinter groups oppose both. However, inroads are being made within their movement on "the divided assembly" as well.

part 2 printed next month
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Special Sunday Communion...

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shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not" (v.22). He then explained to them how to observe the Lord's supper as instituted by our Lord and the manner in which they were to go about it warning them that, "whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ... For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (vs.27,29).

This passage condemns the very thing the Skyway Hills congregation did! First, they divided the church making the activity something to be engaged in by a willing few who had to sign up by a certain time and pay the fee for the privilege. What of those who may not have had the \$5.00 and were too humbled to ask if they could come anyway?! Would this not have "shamed them that have not" (1 Cor. 11:22)? Seeing that attendance required signing up ("MUST sign up by Sunday, April 28"), it became selective and divisive. It divided the willing few from the unwilling or unable many! 1

Corinthians 11:18 condemned this for what it is — divisive! See also 1 Cor. 1:10.

Second, they profaned the LORD'S SUPPER by making it a common fellowship meal — catered BAR-B-Q none-the-less! They were coming together to worship, but profaned it by making it a common meal. They were doing the wrong thing in the wrong place! God's house is for worshiping God! Our homes are for common meals! We are not speaking of "eating in the building." We are speaking of profaning the worship assembly of the saints! What they did was combine worship with common human activity! This profanes worship and blasphemes God by detracting from its purpose which, first and foremost, is to worship God (Matt. 4:10). They were come together as the church, but profaned the purpose for doing so — to worship God (Acts 20:7). 1 Corinthians 11:18,20-22 condemns this very thing, therefore it becomes heresy to do it — heresy meaning to do that which is at variance with divine command!

Third, they partook in an unworthy manner, "not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:27-29). It must surely be difficult to appreciate the unleavened bread with BAR-B-Q in your mouth and the fruit of the

vine with 7-UP (or what ever) running down your throat! Jesus did not intend for HIS SUPPER to be turned into a common meal! Paul made that very clear in 1 Corinthians 11. In this passage, Paul denounces what they did as heresy and refuses to praise them for such actions. Neither should we praise them! They ate and drank damnation to themselves and no matter how piously they attempted to "witness" how Jesus is a positive force in their lives, they denounce it by their actions and declare Satan to be that force! Paul's denunciation of the Corinthian Christians in 1 Corinthians 11:30 applies to those who acted in a similar way at Skyway Hills — "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." In doing this they manifest that they are sick, weak and some even spiritually dead!

It is unbelievable to me that the elders of any congregation would allow such a thing! It is unbelievable to me that a preacher of 30 years, as Brother Canfield claims to be, could promote and encourage such a thing! It is beyond my comprehension based on biblical precept (Especially 1 Cor. 11) how knowledgeable members of the Lord's church could engage in such an activity!

These people display despite for

the church of God in what they did (1 Cor. 11:22)! They also show either ignorance or despite for the scriptures, especially the Gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 11), the only power of God to save all men (Rom. 1:16)! And, they show despite for God as they blaspheme His holy name with their actions (Col. 3:17). Blasphemy, simply defined, involves showing disrespect for God or anything pertaining to God! That is exactly what they did

when they relegated the Lord's supper into a common meal? They did, just as the Corinthian Christians did in the first century, and they are denounced by the Holy Spirit in the word of God for their actions just as He denounced the Corinthian Christians for theirs (1 Cor. 11 again)!

Ephesians 3:21 declares, "*Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*" The primary

reason for the existence of the church is to glorify God, not invent activities and practices that placate men or make them feel good (Gal. 1:10)! The Skyway Hills congregation seems to have misplaced their priorities and forgotten this! May we never!

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THE ONE BODY

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People often make amazing decisions based purely upon biased or prejudiced feelings. The Bible clearly reveals that the church of the Lord is **one body**. A human body with two or more heads is abnormal. The same would be true of a human head having two or more bodies. The human body is used in the Scriptures as a metaphor of the church or the body of Christ.

The church of our Lord is one body. The apostle Paul says, "*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular*" (1 Cor. 12:27). There is only **one** body, but many members of the one body. Paul likewise taught the brethren at Rome saying, "*So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*" (Rom. 12:5).

In our world there are many different religious bodies all claiming Christ as the one head. Such surely is the wistful thinking of man because many different bodies cannot be found in the word of God! Christ promised to build only one church — his church (Matt. 16:18). He never promised one belonging to someone else. The church and the body are terms that refer to the same thing (Eph. 1:22-23). There is only **one body** for which Christ died (Eph. 4:4; Acts 20:28) and only **one body** he has promised to save (Eph. 5:23).

The act of baptism puts one into the one body of Christ. Paul proclaims, "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made*

to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). The same apostle taught the Galatians, "*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Gal. 3:27). Peter commanded those on Pentecost to "*...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...*" (Acts 2:38). Baptism is a **burial** and not a **sprinkling** as is evidenced by studying the fourth verse of the sixth chapter of Romans.

All people are to be members of the same body. It matters not whether one is young or old, rich or poor, or educated or uneducated — all who obey God's word are members of the same body. To the Galatians Paul said, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*" (Gal. 3:28-29).

Each member of the one body is important. "*And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you*" (1 Cor. 12:21). All members of the body are to work together for the glory of God. What one member does or does not do can have an effect on the rest of the body. It is also easy for folks to see that one leg does not travel in one direction while the other leg travels in the opposite direction and yet they both end up at the same destination. Such is the clam of many religious groups who contend that although they take

different routes (doctrines and worship) they will all arrive at the same destination (heaven).

Jesus taught, "*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. Many will say to 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 I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity*" (Matt. 7:21-23).

There is to be no division in the one body of the Lord. The plea of the inspired Scriptures is that members of the body are to give diligence "*to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Eph. 4:3). Please note this is not some man-made, man-agreed upon unity, but rather the "unity of the Spirit." Religious division is sinful and contrary to the will of Christ. It is not the church of man's choice but rather the church which Christ built (Matt. 16:18) that people should give their allegiance to.

Pride will stand between many people and their obedience to the Gospel. Bias and prejudice will cause multitudes to reject the simple truth found in God's word. How horrible it will be for those who had every opportunity to see, yet chose to remain blind!

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WHAT IS A FALSE TEACHER?

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P*seudodidaskalos* is the Greek term translated as “false teacher” in 2 Peter 2:1. It is a compound word from *pseudo* meaning false, and *didaskalos* meaning teacher.

Some would contend that in order for a teacher to be false, he must be a person of bad character. The person must have evil motives for why and what he teaches. Essentially they want to defer to his conduct rather than the content of his teaching.

The problem here is that we do not simply have a noun (teacher) modified by an adjective (false). Rather, what we have is a compound noun. From numerous lexicons (Greek Dictionaries) we see the following definitions: “one who inculcates false doctrines,” “one who teaches what is not true,” “a teacher of false doctrines,” “one who teaches falsehoods,” “a spurious teacher, that is, a propagator of erroneous Christian doctrine.”

Teachers teach the teaching. False teachers teach false teaching. The use of “teaching(-s)” here is the same as doctrine. Therefore, false teachers teach false doctrine. This has nothing necessarily to do with his character or his motive, but primarily the content of what he is teaching. He may be honestly mistaken, but still a false teacher. If he is in fact honest in his character, then he will readily admit his error and change accordingly.

While many passages in the New Testament refer to our subject in a variety of ways, only 2 Peter 2:1 actually has our term. “*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*” (NOTE: The phrase “damnable heresies” can also be “destructive opinions” which is not just grouping into parties or sects, but rather the ideas contrary to what is written.”)

Titus 2:3 uses the term *kalodidaskalos* and is translated as “teachers of good things” rather than as “good teachers.” This shows that the emphasis is not on the character of the teacher (although important), but rather the content or character of what they were teaching (i.e., doctrine). In a similar style *pseudodidaskalos* could be translated “teachers

of what is false.”

Jesus is called “good master” (or, teacher) in Matthew 19:16. The phrase used here, however, is *didaskale agathe*. In this form we have both the noun (teacher) and its modifying adjective (good). This construction does refer to the character of the teacher himself rather than the content of his doctrine. The parallel accounts of Mark 10:17 and Luke 18:18 use the same word construction.

If the Holy Spirit had intended for us to understand that he was referring to the false character of a false teacher rather than the false doctrine, he could have done so. There is an adjective form which could have possibly been constructed as such, *didaskale pseude*, BUT it is not used.

What we have then are some folks who are uncomfortable with being called false teachers. They then are trying to invent a new definition for the term so as to point the finger away from themselves. This is self-justifying and points to a character issue. This then may reveal that not only are they teachers of what is false in doctrine but they are also false in their character.

*The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised (1978 Ed) by Harold K. Moulton, (c)1978, Zondervan.

*A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament by Barclay M. Newman, Jr. / The Greek New Testament, 3rd Ed., Edited by Aland, Black, Metzger (c)1971, United Bible Societies, London.

*Greek-English New Testament Lexicon by George Ricker Berry, (c)1952, Zondervan.

*Bauer's Greek-English Lexicon, (c)1979, Second Ed., Edited by Danker.

*Strong's Greek Dictionary. (c)2002, (May 9th)

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A FLOOD OF EVIL

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Our days are evil days. Materialism, immorality, dishonesty, raping, robbing, murdering, and molesting run rampant in our society. John wrote correctly, “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19). The whole world around us is under the power of the Devil.

The evil of gambling: **Gambling is sinful.** Why is gambling sinful? 1) Gambling violates the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12). 2) Gambling violates the second great commandment — “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39). 3) Gambling is sinful because it destroys a good influence (Matt. 5:16). 4) Gambling is a violation of God's law of faithful stewardship (1 Peter 4:10). Gambling and other wrongs associated with it are flooding our nation.

The evil of dancing: **Dancing is sinful.** Why is dancing sinful? 1) Dancing is lewdness (Gal. 5:19). 2) Dancing is a failure to abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22). 3) Dancing is reveling which is sinful (Gal. 5:21). 4) Dancing often puts one in the company of those doing other evils (1 Cor. 15:33). 5) Dancing is a stumbling block to others (1 Cor. 10:32).

The evil of immodesty: **Immodesty is sinful.** Why is immodesty sinful? 1) Immodesty violates plain Bible teaching (1 Tim. 2:9-10). 2) Immodesty is lewdness (Gal. 5:19). 3) Immodesty shows a lack of discretion (Prov. 11:22). 4) Immodesty is sinful because nakedness is shameful (Rev. 3:18). 5) Immodesty is not walking worthy (Eph. 4:1).

The evil of beverage alcohol: **Drinking alcohol is sinful.** Why is drinking alcohol sinful? 1) Drinking alcohol is sinful because it destroys the power of the brain (Prov. 23:31-35). 2) Drinking alcohol is sinful because it takes away understanding and causes people to act foolishly (Gen. 9:18-28). 3) Drinking alcohol is sinful because it makes one incapable of sobermindedness (Titus 2:12). 4) Drinking alcohol is wrong because it weakens and destroys the body (1 Cor. 6:19-20). 5) Drinking alcohol is wrong because it is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). It is still true that, “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise” (Prov. 20:1).

God has always demanded His people be different from those around them. In our world it takes being different to be right. Christians should be careful about the way they dress and the things they do. “Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8).

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THE SILENT LIBERAL

Bob Spurlin

Assigning names and attaching labels is a common occurrence in the political realm as well as in the religious world. We have heard terms like *conservative*, *moderate*, *liberal* and other such titles. This writer has been subjected to a variety of terms and labels as most preachers of the Gospel. Having never sought a particular label makes me wonder why the characterization needs to be made.

Jesus once healed a man that was possessed with a devil being “blind and dumb” (Matt. 12:22). The people giving their accolades to the Nazarene for such a miracle called Him the “Son of David” (Matt. 12:23). While the Pharisees, on the other hand, accused Jesus of doing this miracle by the power of “Beelzebub the prince of the devils” (Matt. 12:24).

Bearing labels and/or other such designations is nothing new and we should not be surprised to receive an artificial label in either a flattering or unflattering way. If a “conservative” is a person who strives to walk the “strait and narrow” and gives strict adherence to a “thus saith the Lord” without deviation or alternation, I am your man. A liberal is one who takes liberty with the Scripture minimizing the importance of the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11), and brings about innovations to effect change.

The silent liberal is the person refusing to speak up when God’s word is being violated. All too often we think of preachers and those in the leadership that fall into the “liberal” camp, however it needs to be stressed that every member of the body of Christ must ask themselves, “am I a silent liberal?”

1. When we are in the company of a person who diminishes the importance of the church, we are a “silent liberal” when we say nothing. How many times have we heard those cry about the importance of Jesus and in the same breath desecrate the significance of the divine institution (the church) for which Jesus shed his blood (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:12-16; Acts 20:28)? For over a generation now we have heard those

articulate in their own way, “Jesus yes, the church no,” or “preach the man, but not the plan.” Dear friend, if you hear such rhetoric and remain quiet, you are a “silent liberal.” Silence is not always golden as occasions require that we stand up and “contend for the faith” (Jude 3). Using an old expression, let us “put our faith where our mouth is” as we discharge our duties as soldiers of the king and meet the adversary on every corner (Eph. 6:11-18).

2. When someone inquires “what denomination do you belong to,” are we a silent liberal? Frequently, Christians are placed in an awkward position of having to answer the query “what denomination are you a member of,” to which all too often they respond “the church of Christ!” The clear implication is drawn that we are members of the Church of Christ denomination. What other meaning will the queerest draw from such a reply? This question should give us a rare opportunity of informing those that the church of Christ is not a denomination and these are the reasons why. We are a silent liberal when such an opportunity presents itself to us and we ostracize ourselves from giving a proper reply (1 Peter 3:15). Fear should not hinder us in “standing fast in the faith” (1 Cor. 16:13; 15:1; Gal. 5:1).

3. Elders are often “silent liberals” when they refuse to take a stand and make decisions mandated by God. Elders are often weak by appeasing a certain group, as weighty decisions must be made in the best interest of the church. Matters regarding the role of women in the church, marriage-divorce-remarriage, innovations in the worship, etc. This writer is aware of a congregation that allowed their guest evangelist to speak in their six-day Gospel meeting to promulgate the doctrine of “grace only.” These elders became tragically “silent liberals” by allowing such false doctrine to go unchecked. Paul writes “...mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom.

16:17). Elders are all too often ready with a “wink and a nod” at doctrinal problems and in some cases refuse to act as godly elders for fear that such decisions would cause them to lose substantial financial contributions.

Elders become “silent liberals” when they abandon the mandated decree of God and therefore the church blends in with the world (Rom. 12:2). Peter clearly underscores the chief responsibility of elders to “feed the flock of God...taking the oversight” (1 Peter 5:2). There’s no better time than now that we desperately need those godly, mature, men of wisdom to lead and guard God’s flock in these troubled times (Heb. 13:7,17).

4. Preachers are “silent liberals” when they ignore certain subjects and souls are lost due to their silence. The root meaning of a Gospel preacher is one who “heralds good news.” Preachers must never forget the power is in the “Gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16) and not in the human eloquence of man (1 Cor. 1:21-23). Our pulpits are becoming weaned from the inspired message of Christ and as a result, those on the pew are ill-prepared and ignorant to meet the attacks of Satan (1 Peter 5:8). Some preachers have stated in my hearing, “I cannot preach on marriage-divorce-remarriage or I would lose my job.” The “silent liberals” who refuse to speak-out on a biblical subject that is needed is nothing short of professional preachers who are more concerned about their position, financial package or their homes. Imagine visiting your doctor with a serious illness and he ignores your condition. You would give him a serious reprimand and dismissal; therefore preachers that refuse to address serious spiritual issues are straddling the fence and are nothing short of “silent liberals.”

Let us be cognizant of this grave problem or else the existence of the church will be on the brink of extinction. Paul writes, “with all boldness as always Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death” (Phil. 1:20). Paul says he was a “debtor” and was “ready” to preach

the Gospel (Rom. 1:14-15). All preachers should have this disposition of heart as life and death weighs in the balance.

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M/M Blaine Pinkston	\$25
Georgia Dashner	\$10
Donnie Henderson	\$100
Jim & Laurel Parsley	\$30
Martin Bedford	\$200
M/M Ronald H. Allen	\$30
Chuck & Nancy Verkist	\$25
Joe Myers	\$20
Kenneth Kemp	\$25
John H. Brown	\$25
M/M Howard Stark	\$30
Rube & Lorene Wilson	\$25
William J. Paul, Jr.	\$50
Lois Smith	\$25
Florence church of Christ	\$500
M/M John H. Brown	\$25
Dolores Renfro	\$25
Anonymous	\$30
Anonymous	\$155
Anonymous	\$45
Anonymous	\$250
Anonymous	\$160
Anonymous	\$60
Anonymous	\$30
Robert Price (booklet maker)	\$200
Anonymous (booklet maker)	\$200
Beginning Balance	\$ 2,655.38
Credits	
Contributions	1,900.00
Booklet Maker	400.00
Debits	
Postage	1,127.29
Booklet Maker	400.00
Ending Balance	\$ 3,428.09
Booklet Maker	\$13,500.00
Contributed	\$ 8,145.00
Remaining	\$ 5,354.14

LECTURESHIP BOOK INFORMATION:

\$5.50 pre-publication price if post-marked by July 31, 2002. \$6.50 beginning Aug. 1, 2002. Please include postage and handling: 1 book \$1.50, add 50¢ for each additional book. Make checks payable to "Old Paths Publishing" and mail to: PO Box 97, Nettleton, MS 38858. These books are not sold by the church.

The latest schedule and information can be found at www.eastcorinth.org/lect2002.htm

17th Annual Seek The Old Paths Lectureship

July 28 – August 1, 2002 (Always the 4th Sunday in July)

D I V I N E A U T H O R I T Y

(Leadership in the church, home, government)

SUNDAY, JULY 28

9:30	Nat Evans	Faith is essential in good leadership
10:30	Garland Robinson	Respecting the Silence of the Scriptures
7:00	Jimmy Young	Eccl. 8:11, Leadership through discipline
8:00	Charles Blair	God still rules the world

MONDAY, JULY 29

9:00	Milton Mathers	False standards of authority
10:00	Richard Carlson	Who is on the Lord's side?
11:00	Richard Guill	Responsibility to church and state
1:30	Virgil Hale	Exodus 18:19-22 and Leadership
2:30	Alan Adams	Qualified elders
7:00	Terry Joe Kee	Watchmen over the flock (Ezek. 3:16-20)
8:00	Gilbert Gough	Preachers of truth and principle

TUESDAY, JULY 30

9:00	Randy Kea	Prov. 29:2
10:00	Roger Campbell	The challenge for parents to rear godly children in an ungodly world
11:00	Dwight Fuqua	Effective and ineffective leadership
1:30	Don Tate	Leadership and evangelism
2:30	Ken Burlison	Training qualified leaders
7:00	James Boyd	Eli and Samuel as leaders
8:00	Tom Bright	The authority of the Scriptures

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31

9:00	Ray Penna	Leadership and teaching
10:00	Ed Floyd	Leadership in worship
11:00	Jimmy Bates	Leadership and the necessity of vision
1:30	Robert Oliver	Leadership and women
2:30	Douglas Hoff	Take heed unto thyself
7:00	Ed Casteel	Joshua as a leader
8:00	Tom House	Threats to God approved leadership

THURSDAY, AUGUST 1

9:00	Darrell Beard	Achieving and maintaining Bible unity
10:00	Everett Spencer	Leadership and subjection
11:00	Rick Knoll	Keeping the saved, saved
1:30	Jarred Knoll	Designation of elders
2:30	Victor Eskew	Leadership in benevolence
7:00	Raymond Hagood	Leadership and the home
8:00	Gary McDade	Let us rise up and build

The lectureship will be held at the East Corinth Church of Christ, 1801 Cruise St., Corinth, MS 38834. Ph. 662-286-2040 (voice and fax) or 662-286-6575. Corinth is located in Northeast Mississippi on the Tennessee border at the intersection of US Highways 72 & 45.

MOTELS:

Executive Inn – 800-354-3932 / Comfort Inn – 800-228-5150 / Hampton Inn – 800-426-7866 / Holiday Inn Express – 800-465-4239 (Tell them you're with the Lectureship)

Limited housing is available in member's homes. Contact the church office at (662) 286-2040, (ecorinth@bellsouth.net). RV

units may park beside the building with water and electrical hook-ups provided (sorry, no sewer hook-up. There is a dumping station in town). We would like to know in advance of your arrival to reserve you a space.

VIDEO & AUDIO TAPES ARE AVAILABLE:

AUDIO TAPES are being offered free by the church at East Corinth. Donations to help defray the cost of these tapes are welcome. VIDEO TAPES are offered for \$40 for the set (postage paid). Order from:

James Green
2711 Spring Meade Blvd., Columbia, TN 38401, www.geocities.com/jgreencoc (Nothing is being sold by the church)



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"The following is from the April 30, 2002 bulletin of the **Sunset Church of Christ in Carlsbad, NM**: 'After a careful and prayerful study of hand clapping and raising hands during singing, the elders have determined that some members are conscientiously opposed to the practice — others are not. The elders neither endorse nor forbid

these practices. It is up to each individual to decide according to his/her own conscience. We do ask you to be sensitive to the feelings and beliefs of others who may become offended and caused to stumble by your practice.' A group recently broke away from this liberal congregation and formed the 'Caverns City Church, a fellowship of the churches of Christ.' The report is that on Sunday, May 5, 2002 a group of cheerleaders was in front of their meeting place urging folks to come in. And, just when I thought I had heard it all!" ...**Roelf Ruffner, Carlsbad, NM**. "I was recently made aware of your excellent paper while filling in for Brother Albert McDaniel at the House Springs Church of Christ. Brother McDaniel had recently had heart surgery and will be unable to preach for a few weeks, so a number of men from the sound congregations agreed to fill in. After searching your website for what turned out to be a few hours I decided to ask if you would be so kind as to include me in your mailing list. I am saddened and very concerned about the 'changes' some of our brethren are trying to sneak into the Lord's church. We (the elders at the Pacific Mo. congregation) have just this past month had to expose error trying to be taught here and fear more is on the way. This is a time that we certainly must beware as the 'ravenous wolves in sheeps clothing' seem to be everywhere. Again thank you for your publication. May the Lord continue to bless your good work" ...**Kenneth L. Moore, Union, MO**. "Though I appreciate your having sent your publication to me for some time, please remove me from the mailing list for *Seek the Old Paths*" ...**William Dickinson, Salisbury, NC**. "Will you please add me to your mailing list of your publication of *Seek the Old Paths*? I appreciate so much your good work in standing for the Truth. May the Lord bless you in your work" ...**Betty Tyler, Pocahontas, AR**. "I don't know who sent our name to you, but I am happy they did send it. When I first began reading your informative lessons, I became somewhat defensive. I believed you were teaching the truth, but something about the way you presented it seemed to me to be argumental and accusing. The more I read them the more I think it's what it's going to take to restore the purity of the church. In my opinion one of our biggest problems is trying to make our beliefs acceptable to denominations and to save our numbers at any cost. To me the church is God's church. He gave us everything and all he asks in return is that we love him enough to accept his plan of salvation, his plan of living righteously, and teach his word. He made it all so simple that a child can understand it if he is taught and as he grows studies the word. But people are not willing to accept it in a simple manner. As in everything else, man thinks he has to add something to it every now and then to keep up with a world that grows more sinful and evil every day. The simple message when used as God intended it to be used, is the most powerful, effective, and persuasive answer to the problems of the people of this world than anything man has ever even thought about. So, yes, I think your way is perhaps one of the most effective messages we can offer at this time. I don't think we have to worry about being God's people. We can believe that God only has one church if we want to. I don't fall out with denominational people because they believe the way they believe. God is going to be the final judge. Every one believes the teachings he wants to believe will take them to heaven and isn't that what we believe. I think it's unfair for the world to condemn us and criticize us for believing the same thing they believe, 'That what we believe and practice will get us to heaven.' If I didn't believe that, I'd find something I could believe in and so would all denominations. But it's really nothing new. The church has always been criticized, condemned and all kinds of efforts to stop its teaching. The teachings of the church of Christ is the only one today that is not accepted, so a lot of people would like to change it so we'd be more popular. Good Christians will never be popular in the world. The world doesn't like to be reminded of its warts. The church needs to stay together, now, more than ever instead of trying to unite with denominations. I guess the only thing we can do now is to be sure we have good sound teachers, both in the pulpit and in the classroom, and definitely in the home to

teach our people what the original design for the church is and how to be grounded in the Word, so that every puff of wind that comes by will not carry them away, and pray like never before. With men like you who write the truth, the church will always be here. It doesn't matter if it's big or little, it will be a haven for those who really love God and truly want to follow his Word in its entirety. I'm sorry you have to take abuse from your own brothers and sisters as well as from the world. But I know you know that your heavenly reward will more than compensate for that in the end. God is with you, as are prayers from those of us who believe God was intelligent enough to give us a plan of salvation and instructions to go by, and the ability to learn and understand it. Thank you for your good work" ...**Almeta Brantley, Newport, AR**. "Please remove me from your mailing. Good paper. Keep up the good work" ...**Marie Harrell, Sibley, MS**. "I have read some of your papers. I really like it. I would like to be added to your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Letha Hicks, Drumright, OK**. "I enjoy your *STOP* very much. I have only received one copy but admire you for teaching the truth in love. I would like my son to receive this copy, too, if you would add him to your mailing list. Thank you and keep up the good teaching of truth" ...**L. Fagan, Trimble, TN**. "Please remove my name from the mailing list. I did not request this publication. Thank you for your assistance" ...**Ken Slater, Lansing, MI**. "We here at the church of Christ at Deer enjoy your publication of *Seek the Old Paths* very much. It is wonderful to find a publication that is sound and scriptural. We have been able to trust what is written in here to be the truth. This day and age, this is hard to find. Please keep up the good work and may God continue to bless you and your work. I, as the preacher, enjoy your web site very much, as do some other members of the church. May this contribution help in your work. Please feel free to use it however you best see fit" ...**Church of Christ at Deer, Kelly Woods, Deer, AR**.

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

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

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

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