

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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AN EXEMPLARY PRODUCT OF A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE?

Ben F. Vick, Jr.

The products which are leaving the colleges, with but few exceptions among us, are insipid and weak. They think that true Biblical love is “go-along-ism” with a wink and a smile. The Christian schools cannot continue to be judged and supported based on the past purposes of their founders, but must be examined on the present positions and actions of their faculties, administrations, and boards.

We have too many Bethanys among us today!

A few days ago the church here received one of those form letters from the dean of enrollment of Michigan Christian College (now Rochester College, this was written in 1996) with a request to list prospective students' names. The first paragraph of the letter reads: “Churches of Christ are blessed to have a number of quality Christian colleges. Their aim is to educate the total person — intellectually, socially, spiritually and physically.”

Well, let us just look at the kind of product which Michigan Christian College puts out and applauds. It might be that godly parents may want to reconsider sending their children to Michigan Christian College.

In this winter's issue of *North Star*, the news bulletin of the Michigan Christian College, the alumni section applauds the attainments of **David Gatewood**, the son of the first president of Michigan Christian College, Otis Gatewood. We are told that David Gatewood is a 1963 graduate of MCC and that “he currently is the clinical supervisor of the counseling department of *Focus on the*

Family in Colorado Springs.” He was the founder of the California Christian Counseling Center in 1976, and in 1992 he founded the Colorado Christian Counseling Center. He directs both centers. The article also tells us that, in addition to his work with *Focus on the Family* and the private centers, he is an adjunct supervisor for Fuller Theological Seminary and directs the National Referral Network, a nationwide database of 1,500 professionals.

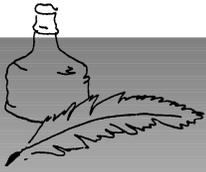
The president of *Focus on the Family* is **James Dobson**, a Nazarene preacher. **Fuller Theological Seminary** is a sectarian school. No Christian is going to be in cooperative cahoots with these sectarians, but David Gatewood has continued to fellowship them. Paul clearly stated: “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of*

God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

And to add sin to sin, **Michigan Christian College is lauding David Gatewood for his accomplishments!** “*Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the Lord”* (Jer. 8:12). Just as there is no shame in the hearts of some when fornication is committed and a child is born out of wedlock, so Michigan Christian College does not blush nor

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An Exemplary Product?...



Guest Editorial...

A Review of Rochester College, Churches Of Christ, And Nondenominational Christianity

Rusty Stark

In December 1998, **Ken Johnson**, President of **Rochester College** (formerly Michigan Christian College) submitted a paper with the above title to the trustees of that institution, designed to answer questions about where they stand on doctrinal matters. The trustees put their own statement with it and made it available. The whole paper is full of flaws, false doctrine, and reflects a wrong-headed desire to “serve Churches of Christ across the spectrum of their diversity” (preface). The proper way to serve the needs of churches of Christ across the spectrum of their diversity is to rebuke those who have left the narrow way, and to reprove those who refuse to stand in the old paths.

This two part series reviews some of the doctrinal problems in President Johnson’s paper. In it we read...

#1 — CAN PEOPLE BE SAVED IN DENOMINATIONS?

“Finally, at the outset, we recognize that the early years of the American Restoration Movement were dominated by a call to unify all Christians, explicitly recognizing not that denominational membership precludes salvation but that the creedal requirements of denominationalism hinder the cause of Christ, making a nondenominational situation preferable” (President Johnson’s paper, p.3).

It is always sad when people begin to turn to men for their doctrine and practice in religion rather than seeking the old path and standing in the old way. This is the cause of all denominationalism. This docu-

ment by President Johnson quotes several restoration leaders in an effort to prove various points. This practice of appealing to men to settle spiritual matters is the practice that causes denominationalism.

If the response is that these men are not quoted to prove their points but simply to demonstrate that Rochester College is not at odds with restoration leaders, we challenge Ken Johnson to go to the Bible and bring forth the texts which support his ideas. What text can be used to show that denominationalism does not preclude salvation? What Bible verses can be pointed out which give men in man-made churches hope of the salvation which Christ promises to his body and bride (Eph. 5:23)?

I am not a restoration historian. I am not a historian of any kind. I refuse to argue what restoration leaders thought or taught about the church. It appears that much of what is passing for restoration history is really revisionism, but it doesn’t really matter. If we use restoration leaders as our authority in matters of faith and practice, we become what they condemned.

The point of this article is that being part of a denomination does preclude salvation. This is true no matter what restoration leaders believed or taught. Like all truth, it is independent of us and it remains true whether we accept or reject it. The idea that denominationalism precludes salvation is true because the Bible teaches it, and no amount of denial will change it.

Denominationalism is the enemy of unity. The practice of denominationalism is the practice of religious division. It violates the express word of God (1 Cor. 1:10).

The “creedal requirements of

denominationalism” do not simply hinder the cause of Christ. They render our worship vain. Jesus says so in plain language: “*This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*” (Matt 15:8-9). Are we to believe that what we offer to God as praise and adoration, sacrifice and devotion are useless, vain, and empty, yet somehow we are still saved? Nadab and Abihu were killed for their wilful worship (Lev. 10). To accept the authority of the creeds of men is to deny the sole authority of Jesus. They who do such cannot be saved. Those who accepted the authority of the Judaizing teachers and submitted again to the law of Christ fell from grace (Gal. 5:4). Can we submit to the pope or any other man and retain God’s grace?

No denomination has divine authority to exist, so each one exists in sin (Col. 3:17). No person has divine authority to join, support, worship in, or be in any way a part of any denomination, so each person in denominationalism is sinning (Col. 3:17).

People cannot be saved in denominationalism. Denominations are wrong because they teach another Gospel than the Truth of the New Testament and are therefore accursed (Gal. 1:8-9). Those who submit to the doctrines of men are fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4). Men must be called out of denominationalism in order to save their souls.

#2 — HOW BROAD IS OUR FELLOWSHIP?

“Thirdly, we believe the message of Jesus recorded in John 3:1-21, the ‘born again’ are in the Kingdom of God, is a reasonable parameter of fellowship by nondenominational Christians” (President Johnson’s paper, p. 2).

This statement is lacking in either clarity or in truth or in both. Is being born again the only test of fellowship? And, what is meant by being born again? Does being born again “of water and of the spirit” include the necessity of water baptism for the remission of sins?

Denominational people believe that 1 John 5:1 means that anyone who believes in (mentally assents to) Christ has been born again. Is there more to being born again than giving mental assent to the claims of Jesus?

We submit that “walking in the light” is a reasonable parameter and a necessary condition for fellowship (1 John 1:7-8). Those who do not walk in the light are not to have the fellowship of those who do.

Here is another quote from this document:

“On the other hand, some members of Churches of Christ acknowledge that their heart for nondenominational Christianity is increasingly unfulfilled as dialog and open discussion are eliminated in many Churches of Christ, replaced by creedal tests of fellowship” (President Johnson’s paper, p.8).

This quote gives rise to several questions also. What is meant by dialogue and open discussion? Must we tolerate all who speak in the name of dialogue and open discussion? There are some whose mouths must be stopped (Titus 1:11). Dialogue and open discussion does not mean we tolerate or support the teaching of false doctrines (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 9-11). So often we are accused of shutting down dialogue just because we tell someone they are wrong and they shouldn’t be saying the things they are saying. Some people who speak are speaking perverse things (Acts 20:30) which ought not to be spoken (Titus 1:11). And, those who teach a perverted Gospel, that which is other than New Testament Truth, will be accursed (Gal. 1:7-9).

What is meant in this quote by reference to “creedal tests of fellowship?” Are there matters that demand conformity to the degree that we cannot extend fellowship to those who do not conform? First Corinthians 5 teaches that moral living is such an matter. Second Thessalonians 3 teaches that refusal to work for a living is a test of fellowship. Matthew 18:15-17 teaches that personal, private sins, committed against another, can and should become tests of fellowship if the offending party will not repent. As

far as the word “creedal” goes, there are things which are surely believed among us (Luke 1:1), and if one denies them, he has no right to be among us (2 John 7).

Footnote #18 on page 8 refers to the idea that we should let nothing divide us but Sin. Immorality is sin; false doctrine is sin; tolerance of sin is sin. It is a shame that these things must divide us, but if they exist in our midst, and if they will not be repented of, they must divide us (1 Cor. 11:18-19).

From the conclusion of this document we read:

“Rochester College should function in theology and religious practice within a middle-of-the-road range of tolerance which rejects control by the restrictive conscience (right pole) and rejects theological liberalism (left pole). The range of tolerance would open our platform to any in Churches of Christ who are not attempting to divide our fellowship; it would close our platform to theological liberals. The range of tolerance would allow interaction by the college with non-divisive, non-liberal, Christ-exalting believers in other fellowship groups from whom we may learn or otherwise benefit or influence” (President Johnson’s paper, p.15).

If it could be true that Rochester College was trying to adopt a position which would close their platform to liberals, how blessed that would be! Actually, Ken Johnson affirms that “virtually all of us in Churches of Christ are conservative.” He identifies conservatives as those who “believe in the inspiration and authority of the Bible...believe in the divinity and messiahship of Jesus...believe in the reality of miracles recorded in scripture” (p.11). A liberal then to him is someone who denies some or all of the things a conservative holds as true (p.12). Truly, those people thus described are liberal, but that description leaves out those who are trying so hard to loosen the commands of God and supplant liberty with license.

The above quote tells us something quite interesting about Ken Johnson’s views. He is interested in

more interaction with people outside the Lord’s church (“our fellowship” as he refers to it). Perhaps this explains the use of Tom Long, a non-Christian, at their 1999 Sermon Seminar. Going beyond even bidding godspeed to false teachers (2 John 9-11), Ken Johnson believes in giving them a platform to preach from. (Tell us, Ken Johnson, has Tom Long been born again as taught in John 3:3,5? If not, are you reaching across what even you describe as a reasonable parameter of fellowship?)

How broad is “our fellowship?” It is no broader than the narrow way (Matt. 7:13-14). It cannot be extended to those outside of Christ or to those who were once baptized into Christ but now teach false doctrine, live immoral lives, engage in false worship practices, etc. The leadership shown by Ken Johnson and Rochester College in these matters is a corrupting influence.

#3 — CHRISTIANS ONLY AND THE ONLY CHRISTIANS

“The present public image of Churches of Christ — “They insist they are the only ones going to heaven” — is quite distinguished from our forefathers’ insistence: “Christians only, but not the only Christians” (President Johnson’s paper, p.6).

This is a sad quote. It again is an appeal to restoration leaders to settle something that is already settled by the Scriptures. The question is not whether or not G. C. Brewer, Barton W. Stone, David Lipscomb, James A. Harding, or N. B. Hardeman really did mean there were Christians acceptable to God within denominational groups. It is notable that Ken Johnson used a quote wherein N. B. Hardeman refers to some of the Lord’s people in confusion and calls them to come out of that confusion. I wonder if N. B. Hardeman thought it was only preferable that they disassociate themselves from denominationalism, as Ken Johnson asserts (p.3), or did he believe it was necessary? In the same spirit we might ask whether Ken Johnson calls upon those in the denominational world (Tom Long for instance, speaker at the Rochester College Sermon Seminar, May, 1999) to come out of

denominationalism, and tells them they are in confusion like N. B. Hardeman did?

But the real point is not what restoration leaders believe. I am no more committed to a restoration movement, as a historical entity, than I am to the Lion's club. My commitment is to the Word of God. My commitment is to the restoration principle of "back to the Bible." If we keep quoting restoration leaders, we are hardly demonstrating our commitment to the word of God.

There are three points to be made regarding the question of Christians only and the Only Christians:

1. The Bible produces Christians only. This will likely be agreed to by President Johnson. The Bible does not produce sectarianism. The Bible never produced a single denomination. The Bible neither encourages nor allows a man to call himself a "Baptist Christian," a "Lutheran Christian," etc. The Word of God or the Word of the kingdom is compared to a seed (Matt. 13:19). We are born again of this incorruptible seed, the word of God (1 Peter 1:23). The seed will always produce the same results. It will produce people who are Christians only.

2. A Christian is a disciple of Christ (Acts 11:26). When we understand that following the creeds and doctrines of men makes our worship vain (Matt. 15:9) and causes us to

fall from grace (Gal. 5:4), we must acknowledge that those who are in denominationalism, submitting and adhering to the creeds of men, are not followers of Christ — they are followers of men. Since they are not followers of Christ, they are not Christians. In the Biblical use of the word, the only Christians are those who are Christians only. Those who are Christians only are the only Christians.

3. We must always acknowledge there may be other Christians beyond our awareness. But, they are not beyond God's awareness, and they will not be found in denominational groups. If they are Christians, it is because they have followed the incorruptible Word of God, not the doctrines of men. Either they never have been a part of the sectarian world, or they have rejected the authority of men in favor of the simple Truth of God's word. But churches of Christ have never, within my awareness, denied that others can come to God by his Word, without doing it through us. We have never denied that those who make this journey are Christians, whether they make it with our teaching or by their study of God's Word alone. They are Christians. Not following the doctrines of men makes them Christians only and it also makes them part of the group that contains all Christians. Since all Christians are in this group, this group represents

the only Christians.

First Corinthians 12:13, "*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.*" This verse makes it clear that all must do the same thing to become Christians. Following what the Spirit has revealed makes them Christians only, and those who do not follow what the Spirit has revealed are not Christians. This means that Christians only are the only Christians. There are no Christians outside the church for which Jesus died.

(Please note, others have written in more detail and with great force about this matter of Christians only and the Only Christians. Readers are referred to articles by brother Thomas Warren in the *Spiritual Sword*, Volume 15, Number 1, inside cover, and Volume 15, Number 2, page 8. Brother Warren also authored a book titled "*The Bible Only Makes Christians Only And The Only Christians*," published by National Christian Press, Jonesboro, Arkansas. Raymond Hagood has written an article with the same name in *Unity In Truth*, Volume 12, Number 4, page 1.)

(First of two parts)
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An Exemplary Product?...

(Continued from page 49)

hush to advertise this spiritual adultery of one of its sons. FOR SHAME! FOR SHAME!

Now, parents, is this the kind of college you want your children to attend? Do you think this is spiritual growth? Brethren, if this is the kind of "Christian" education our children are getting in the "Christian" schools, colleges, and universities then I say: **let them all die a sudden death.** This kind of education is no blessing, but a curse to the Lord's church. The products which are leaving the colleges, with but few exceptions among us, are insipid and weak. They think that true Biblical love is "go-alongism" with a wink and a smile. The

Christian schools cannot continue to be judged and supported based on the past purposes of their founders, but must be examined on the present positions and actions of their faculties, administrations, and boards. We have too many Bethanys among us today!

I had written the president of Michigan Christian College, **Ken Johnson**, on January 5, 1996, stating in unequivocal terms my utter disgust with the article under scrutiny. Ten days later he responded by making a copy of my letter and writing a pitiful, pithy note to me. His plenary response was: "Ben, Having been for 10 years on Harding's faculty, I know that no one employed there would encourage, endorse, or condone your approach in the above letter. KJ." I wrote him back on the

19th of January: "Your pithy response is pitiful indeed. Do you *really* think that I am trying to stand approved in the eyes of Harding's faculty? Sir, I prefer to stand approved in God's sight; and I would suggest that you get your house in order and stop trying to please men." Further, I noted, "You still did not answer why you are upholding the apostate Gateway. If you think that such is teaching Christian principles, you need to go back to Sunday School."

I wish the presidents, boards, and faculties of all our Christian schools, colleges, and universities had the intestinal fortitude to take a stand for truth and righteousness like James Harding of yesteryear. *In The Eyes Of Jehovah*, a biography of Harding by L. C. Sears, the son-in-law of the son-in-law of Harding, we

read this interesting incident:

A brother Lloyd was described by E. A. Elam as a “factionist, a leader of the party which had rent the body of Christ,” yet because Elam thought Lloyd was probably honest and sincere he called on him to lead prayer in a meeting he was holding on Tenth Street. Harding said, “I would as soon have thought of calling on the devil.”

Those are my sentiments exactly about lauding David Gatewood. MCC’s voice might as well have lauded the devil as to have applauded the devil’s advocate.

Others who feel the same way ought to write. Until the rank and file members of the Lord’s church begin to take a stand against the liberalism that has engulfed many churches and schools, the liberal leaders will keep marching to a different drum, taking our young people with them. It is past time that this drum be muffled and the liberal troops scattered. *“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong”* (1 Cor. 16:13).

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph. 6:10-18).

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MUZZLING THE WOLVES

Todd Clippard

In Acts 20:29-31, Paul gave the following warning to the Ephesian elders, *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”* One of the primary functions of a shepherd is to protect the flock from wolves. Too many elderships are taking a lax attitude toward the use of false teachers. Many do not properly investigate what a man believes and teaches before bringing him in among the local flock. Some, even after learning of the false views of the invited speaker, refuse to take action. It appears they would rather lose face with the Lord than with the local congregation (and area congregations). In an attempt to justify the use of a false teacher, elderships give the false teacher explicit instructions not to address the subject wherein he holds a false view. This is what one might call “muzzling the wolf.” Rather than cancel the wolf’s invitation to enter in among the flock, they “muzzle” him, hoping his presence will not damage those over whom they have oversight. Thus, they not only bring in a wolf among the flock, but attempt to disguise him as a sheep! Such a practice is not only unwise, it is also unscriptural! Jesus said, *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”* (Matt. 7:15). Jesus gave his life for the church (Acts 20:28). Do elderships really believe it is acceptable to invite in those who would do harm to the body?

In a recent conversation with a preacher-friend of mine, the following scenario was given with regard to a situation with a church in Tennessee who has unknowingly invited a false teacher to preach in a Gospel meeting. A man who was related to one of the local members was invited to preach in a Gospel meeting (this invitation was given before my friend accepted the local work). When an area preacher heard of the invitation, he sent a sermon tape of the invited speaker addressing the topic of divorce and remarriage. According to my friend, the man took every view except the one taught by the Lord in Matthew 19:9. When the local elders heard the tape, they discussed their options on how to handle the situation. One suggested that in order to keep peace, the false teacher would be instructed not to address the topic of divorce and remarriage during the meeting. The preacher objected on the following grounds:

1. What if others attend the meeting or hear the tapes and are led to believe the man is not a false teacher, and the false teacher is later invited to preach for them and teaches error among our sister congregations?

2. What if the false teacher gains the confidence of some of the local members who later seek out his guidance on the topic of divorce and remarriage and are taught error?

3. What about our responsibility to refrain from inviting a false teacher among us and bidding him godspeed, lest we become a partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 9-11)?

4. What about our responsibility to reprove and expose the unfruitful works of darkness, as opposed to the practice of inviting a false teacher to speak (Eph. 5:11)? When the eldership was presented with the facts, and because they had a great desire to do as the Bible commands, the false teacher’s invitation was retracted.

The Lord’s church needs more elderships who will accept the responsibilities of shepherding and dutifully carry them out, heeding the words of the great hymn, “Rise up O men of God! Have done with lesser things; Give heart and mind and soul and strength to serve the Kings of kings. Rise up O men of God! The Church for you doth wait; Her strength unequal to her task, rise up and make her great!”

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WHY MEN HATE A LOVING GOD

Mark K. Lewis

Why do men so hate God and those who uphold holiness and righteousness? Some men hate God because they simply do not understand what love is (or what “is” is, for that matter).

There are few things more amazing, stupefying, and paradoxical than the vitriolic hatred that many people have towards a loving, compassionate God. “God is love,” the beloved apostle John tells us, and indeed manifested that love toward us by sending His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him (1 John 4:8-9). Everybody wants to be loved, and everybody (in their right mind) wants to live. God provides both — perfectly and eternally. And yet so many men revile and vilify God endlessly. Of course, since they cannot get at God directly, their target, as in Acts 7, is usually those who represent God and righteousness. But the actual object of their malice is God.

Our country has come upon sad times. A time lies within the memory of some who read these lines when nearly all people in America honored God, respected His word, and believed that absolute moral truth exists and that our laws should be based upon the precepts of God’s eternal word. But no more. Militant homosexuals, feminists, and baby murderers now dominate the power sources in America. We have a President who is pro-homosexual, pro-feminism, never met an abortion he didn’t like, plainly is opposed, morally, to just about everything Christians stand for. How could such a man — a proven adulterer and liar — get elected in a “Christian” nation like America? And then the man, a good, decent man by every account of those who know him, who exposed much of the foul, evil villainy of Mr. Clinton is subjected to constant, relentless, barbaric assaults by those who want our sin-promoting President to remain in office. Again, how could such a thing happen in a nation

which barely a generation ago agreed that our country should be undergirded by Biblical principles? Well, quite simply, America is no longer a “Christian” nation, and God’s people and those who defend Biblical precepts are on the run, called racists, bigots, murderers, intolerant, Nazis, and just about every other name the loving, compassionate, tolerant left can invoke. It is quite an irony if one can look at it objectively. The God of love — and those who try to defend His loving Word — are cast as hateful, malicious, Hitlerites. And so many people have swallowed this baloney whole, without one single chew. It is a terrible tragedy, with national and — more importantly — eternal consequences.

Why do men so hate God and those who uphold holiness and righteousness? Some **men hate God because they simply do not understand what love is** (or what “is” is, for that matter). For many, love means doing for me what I want done. God exists, as they see it, to serve them and when God doesn’t come across with the booty they want, when things in life happen that displease them, they blame God and think that He doesn’t care. God doesn’t fit their definition of love, so they hate God. This is one of the reasons the Jews killed Jesus, the loving Son of God. He did not provide them what THEY thought God ought to give them. This isn’t love, of course, it’s pure selfishness, and many men are motivated by nothing more than conceited self-interest. But the Bible says GOD is love, not man, and just as a loving parent often does things that its child does not understand, even so God must frequently do the same. Often a child will selfishly conclude that if his parent doesn’t buy him that toy

he impulsively desires then the parent doesn’t love him. Children grow out of this (hopefully), but some people never mature spiritually to understand the love of God. Our world is full of spiritual toddlers who think God exists to give them whatever new “toy” they capriciously crave. And when genie-God doesn’t grant them their wish — or worse yet, condemns what they covet — then they will go wherever they can to find it. Some will drift into esoteric religions like Eastern occultism, Buddhism, Nihilism; some will simply become agnostics or atheists — the ultimate irresponsible cop-out. But it allows them to believe and do just as they please, which is what they wanted of God in the first place. Unfortunately, for them, God isn’t that kind of being.

But further, Jesus puts His finger on perhaps the main reason most people hate God: “*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved*” (John 3:19-20). Men hate God because “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Men love to sin — “darkness” in the Biblical vernacular — and thus light, to them, is “evil” and must be extinguished. And when we Christians, as “the light of world” (mirrors reflecting the image of God), shine our light brightly, we, too, will be vilified. “*Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you*” (1 John 3:13). Again, it is the ultimate irony: God’s people, trying to bring true love, peace, and life to the world — the very things the world claims it wants — are the targets of the most malicious slander and loathing on earth. But, actually,

the world is living a lie. It claims to want love, peace, and life, but all it wants is to fulfill it's own selfish desires, regardless of who might get in the way. This is the very antithesis of New Testament Christianity. God, His word, and His cause will always be hated by darkness-worshipping men. Perhaps an even greater irony — a joke on the world — is that their hatred of God and His book is actually a fulfillment of what that very Book says; by their hatred, they are providing another confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion.

One more thought, brethren, and let us turn inward for just a moment. Remember, next time you complain about "hard" preaching, remember that "everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed." Homosexuality is not the only evil in this world; some wickedness abides in the very hearts of those who claim to be the light.

Perhaps the greatest mystery of all is not why men hate a loving God, but how in the world can God so love men who so hate Him?

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1 4 T H A N N U A L

Seek The Old Paths Lectureship

JULY 25-29, 1999

Always the 4th Sunday in July

Theme: The Uniqueness Of The Church

SUNDAY, JULY 25

- 9:30 *Chuck Northrop* — The Kingdom Of God/Heaven
- 10:30 *Jimmy Bates* — Putting the Kingdom First
- 7:00 *Garland Robinson* — Misconceptions of the Church
- 8:00 *Nat Evans* — The Church's Founder and Purchase Price

MONDAY, JULY 26

- 9:00 *Walter Pigg* — The Preparation and Establishment of the Church
- 10:00 *Richard Guill* — Solving Problems in the Church — Acts 15
- 11:00 *Mark Lindley* — The Vine and the Branches
- 1:30 *Kent Bailey* — Worship in Spirit — John 4:24
- 2:30 *Wayne Cox* — Types/Anti-types of the Church
- 7:00 *Gilbert Gough* — The New Birth
- 8:00 *Tom Bright* — The Work of the Church

TUESDAY, JULY 27

- 9:00 *Melvin Sapp* — The Church is Militant
- 10:00 *Ronnie Whittemore* — Worship in Truth #1 — Singing, Lord's Supper
- 11:00 *Windell Fikes* — The Church as Seen by the Prophets
- 1:30 *Jon Macon* — The Spiritual Nature of the Church
- 2:30 *Toney Smith* — Church Discipline
- 7:00 *Virgil Hale* — Instrumental Music and Singing Groups
- 8:00 *Charles Blair* — The Bride of Christ, the Church

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28

- 9:00 *David Paden* — Metaphors Used of the Church: Household, Family, Vineyard, Body, Kingdom, Temple
- 10:00 *Don Tate* — The Bible School Program of the Church
- 11:00 *Paul Powers* — Worship in Truth #2 — Giving, Teaching, Praying
- 1:30 *Bill Crossno* — The Influence of the Church — The Salt and Light of the World
- 2:30 *G. W. Childs* — The Organization of the Church
- 7:00 *Gary McDade* — Respect for Bible Authority and the Church
- 8:00 *Terry Joe Kee* — The Pillar and Ground of the Truth

THURSDAY, JULY 29

- 9:00 *Richard Carlson* — The One Body, One Fold, Non-denominational
- 10:00 *Jeff Bates* — The Church's People: Full of Faith and Works
- 11:00 *Robert Taylor* — Church History from the 1st Century Till Today
- 1:30 *Terry Roberts* — The Church and it's Non-observance of Religious Holidays
- 2:30 *Ed Floyd* — The Unity of the Church
- 7:00 *Ken Burleson* — 150 Years of Digression and the Present Apostasy
- 8:00 *Ed Casteel* — Its Eternal Destiny, Delivered to God

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

faithful in the word. We are close friends and have many conversations. I told him when the board brought **Harold Hazelip** in to replace Bro. Collins that major problems were getting ready to start. Unfortunately, I was right. And, now that they have brought in **Steve Flatt**, I believe things have gotten worse and will continue to go downhill. I wish that I could encourage young people to go there but I can no longer do so. I guess when you have men in charge who are more concerned about raising money than they are about shaping lives that you cannot expect anything else but major problems. They have one teacher in the Bible Dept. who preached for a congregation only 4 miles from where I worship. He split that church all to pieces over the role of women in the worship. He advocated and got his way of women waiting on the table and leading public prayers. For the life of me, I don't understand the board allowing such a person on the faculty and especially in the Bible Dept. Steve has been asked about this and the only answer he gives is "The students like him." **Rubel Shelly** continues in his ways. About 6 weeks ago, the Woodmont Hills congregation where he preaches had a weekend workshop on reaching out to youth and the two main teachers were from denominations. This appeared in the local newspaper. Again, I don't understand Rubel because he has forgotten more Bible that I will ever know and I know he is bound to know that Biblical fellowship is a result and not a cause. By the way, the close friend of mine, who teaches at Lipscomb that I mentioned earlier, and I were eating lunch a few weeks back and were discussing **Jeff Walling**. He stated that he had never heard Jeff expound that the instrument was permissible in worship so he called him and asked him his stance. He said that Jeff said that there was no Bible that specifically condemned it and so he wouldn't do it either. My friend said that settled it in his mind as to whether Jeff was a false teacher or not. There are still faithful congregations in Nashville but it seems that so many folks would rather have their ears tickled. The other elders with whom I serve as one have no control over what other congregations do nor do we feel our responsibility is to try and oversee any flock except the one where we worship. Yet, all of the "New Interpretation" of the Word that is so prevalent does effect our ability to oversee because we constantly have to be aware of the environment around our flock and be sure that what is being taught constantly reinforces the truth. It is so disturbing to hear preachers and elders say God really has no plan for mankind and we should open fellowship to all and then work out our differences. If you had told me twenty five years ago that it would be necessary in 1999 to defend the necessity of baptism for salvation among our own brethren, I would have thought you were crazy. But today, not only do we have to defend it but are told that we are troublemakers when we do so" **...TAC, Nashville, TN.** "We receive your publication and look forward to the articles. My husband and I travel frequently when we have time off together and frequently attend worship services in many different areas of the southeastern United States. Our problem is that when we stop at these churches of Christ we never know what we will encounter: from women assisting in the leading of singing disguised by sitting on the front row with microphone in hand, to preaching that reflects error. We have had to leave these services due to the error we have found. Is there any publication that would help us in finding churches of Christ that are true to the name? Your assistance would be appreciated" **...pllasseter@zoomnet.net, Paul and Lisa Lasseter, Gallipolis, OH.** [NOTE: I'm not aware of such a publication or way of knowing which congregations are faithful. But if we run across one, we'll print it in *Seek The Old Paths*. In the mean time, we would like to ask the readers of STOP to send us the names and addresses of sound congregations that we may either publish or have available to pass along to those who enquire about it. It is very difficult to know where to worship when you're traveling. This sure would be a help in planning vacations and travels.] "We appreciate your paper and its contents. We are sending you \$\$\$ to enable you to send copies of *STOP* to editors of gospel papers and to preachers in general. Feel such will "do them good," and may enable other preachers and brethren in general to "SEE WHAT IS GOING ON". God bless you in your labors" **...Ector and Cordia Wat-**

"We are still having continual problems with the church in the Nashville area. I am a graduate of **Lipscomb** and have always been happy to say that. But in the last few years, things sure have changed. We have a good man where we worship who has been teaching at Lipscomb for 20 years and he is

son, Cleveland, OK. "I just want to tell you what a great work your paper is. I am on your mailing list, and I hope that I stay on it. God bless you in your efforts. Godspeed" **...Mark Tabata, tabootta@aol.com.** "We enjoy your publication very much. It's nice to see, that in a world of change, there are still people following the truth" **...Jim & Gail Litton, Livonia, MI.** *Seek The Old Paths* is still doing a great work. Keep it up" **...Mike Ernstberger, Murray, KY.** "We appreciate the paper very much. Thank you so much for your work in the LORD'S service" **...Tony Ferrell, Wards Chapel Church of Christ, Manchester Tenn.** "Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus! Thank you very much. Keep sending me a copy of S.T.O.P. I would like to receive a copy of S.T.O.P. regularly. If you could send me also some old books that we can use for equipping the saints in the church, I will very much appreciate it. Thank you very much and I hope to hear from you soon. God bless you all" **...Danni De Vera, Quezon City, Philippines.** "I think STOP does a wonderful job representing the TRUTH. I like knowing about others keeping the strait and narrow and I like being warned about those who do not. I can't say that STOP and STOP only changed my view on "liberalism", but your truthfulness did help. The "liberal movement" (or "letting the devil in the back door", or the "slide towards denominationalism", or whatever you want to call it) that is happening in the churches of Christ today is very easy to fall into. Thank you for being a beacon" **...Tiffany Griffin.** "Thanks so much for the publication "Seek The Old Paths." I discovered it on the internet and am delighted to find men holding fast to God's Word" **...Don Tanner, Rockmart, GA.** "I appreciate the good work you are doing with *Seek The Old Paths*. I think you are to be commended for dealing with current problems in a fair and dignified manner" **...Thomas Franklin, Pensacola, FL.** "Keep up your good work with *Seek The Old Paths*, lectureships, etc." **...Lester Kamp, Aurora, CO.** "Refused" **...Alan Barham, Pearl, MS.** "Thank you and more power to your magazine" **...G.A. Villanueva, Manila, Philippines.**

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**

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