

Seek The Old Paths

"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths...and walk therein."

(Jeremiah 6:16)

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THE CHURCH OUR LORD BUILT "WAS NOT" A DENOMINATION

Dan Goddard

The church of Christ is a unique religious institution. It is different from all other religious bodies on the face of the earth. One of the things from which it is different is protestant denominationalism. In making this declaration, someone immediately replies, "What do you mean, the church of Christ (they would mean a denomination) is different from protestant denominationalism? Isn't the church of Christ (again a denomination in thinking of a querist) a protestant denomination?"

I know this is the way a good many people view the church of Christ, even some who are members of it; but such is not the case. I, for one, have deliberately refused to join any denomination and have chosen instead to be just a Christian. Can't one be a Christian without joining a denomination? But if one becomes and remains a Christian only, is he a member of any church? And if so, whose? The answer is — Christ's church, and Christ's church is not a denomination.

When Christ said, *"Upon this rock I will build my church"* (Matt. 16:18), did he have in mind a denomination or a federation of denominations? And the "churches of Christ" about which we read in Romans 16:16, were they denominations? Were they not simply local congregations of people who had

become Christians only? If one could be just a Christian, a member of Christ's church in the first century before there were any denominations, why can't one be just a Christian, a member of Christ's church, today, in the twenty-first century without being a member of any denomination?

But, someone says, "I thought a man by the name of Alexander Campbell was the one who started the church of Christ." The truth is that Alexander Campbell was almost 1800 years too late to establish the church of Christ. Campbell was born September 12, 1788. But, as we have already noted, churches of Christ existed in the first century and the apostle Paul referred to them in Romans 16:16. Campbell obviously was not the founder of those churches of Christ. Yet the churches of Christ today are the same as the churches of Christ we read about in the Bible. The fact is that Alexander Campbell, along with a number of other men in various denominations, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, came to the conclusion that, in religion, we ought to abandon human names and human creeds, human traditions and human religious bodies, and return to the New Testament as our only authority in religion. Campbell himself withdrew from the denomination in which he had been reared and for which he had begun to

preach in order to be free of all human encumbrances and free to preach the Gospel as it is in the New Testament. The moving thought behind Campbell and a host of others was that we ought to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. He contended that we ought to be Christians only (without being affiliated with any denomination) and thus members of the one spiritual body of Christ, the church. With such as his guiding principle, Alexander Campbell did not seek to establish another denomination, a new religious body, but rather his aim was to go back over the dark dismal past of departure to the original church of Christ that we read of in the New Testament.

Perhaps an illustration from everyday life will help us to better see this particular point. Abner Doubleday is credited with having invented the game of baseball. Suppose that for the next one hundred years no one played baseball and the game was forgotten. Then a hundred years from now someone finds an old baseball guide book, lays off a playing field, puts two teams of players on the field, and starts playing baseball again. To observers at the time it might appear that a new game had been

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The Church Our Lord Built...



Editorial...

MORE DISAPPOINTING NEWS FROM SEARCY ARKANSAS AND HARDING UNIVERSITY

Garland M. Robinson

The following announcement was made by Jim Galyan in the Friday, August 26, 2005 edition of *The Daily Citizen*.

"Internationally known speaker and best-selling Christian author **Joe Beam** will be the guest speaker at the Searcy Ministerial Alliance community service this Sunday, August 28, at 6 p.m. at the **Downtown Church of Christ Family Life Center**, 900 N. Main. Beam, who was recently a guest on *"Focus on the Family," "Good Morning America"* and the *"Montel Williams Show,"* also will speak Monday morning at **Harding University's** two chapel services at 9 and 10 a.m. at Benson Auditorium. "You better get here early," David Mathews, a minister of the Downtown church stated. "We are anticipating a great crowd Sunday night. Joe is one of the most inspiring speakers I have heard. His message will give hope and encouragement to everyone, especially to those who have struggled with their faith, or their marriage, or with life in general." The Ministerial Alliance is supporting this event as a "kick off" to Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered recovery program now in over 4,000 churches across the nation. It was started at the Saddleback church in California where Rick Warren, author of *"The Purpose Driven Life,"* ministers.

Celebrate Recovery is for anyone with hurts, harmful habits or hang-ups. This would include, but is not limited to, those who struggle with things such as marriage, the effects of divorce, anger, finances, drug and/or alcohol abuse, eating disorders, sexual hang-ups (including pornography), shopping and gambling addictions, and more. Or, as many who are involved in Celebrate Recovery say, "If you are breathing, Celebrate Recovery is for you."

The program has two components. One is the weekly gathering that will begin Friday night, September 2, at the Downtown Church Youth Center. Every Friday night this Celebrate Recovery event will begin with a meal at 6 p.m. (cost \$3), praise and worship at 7 p.m., small group discussions at 8 p.m. and dessert and coffee at 9 p.m. This format has helped literally thousands of people understand how Christ is the answer to every problem we face. It is for both men and women, including teens and college students. The other element of Celebrate Recovery is Christ-centered 12-step groups that will meet at various locations and nights throughout Searcy, mostly at local churches. These groups are based on the teachings and life of Jesus, especially in the beatitudes found in the Sermon on the Mount. The step groups, as well as

the Friday night gatherings, are strictly non-denominational.

Lee Fouts, one of the local leaders of Celebrate Recovery, says that those who have experienced Celebrate Recovery are passionate about helping others. "We learn that no one is too bad or messed up for God. We all have struggled. And most of us need a safe place where we can take off our masks and simply be real." Confidentiality and anonymity are two of the basic ingredients that are crucial for the program to work.

"Participants," Fouts said, "learn quickly that they can trust that what is said in Celebrate Recovery groups stays there. It is completely safe. And no one tries to fix anybody. We are there to support and encourage each other. And it really works." The program is also being implemented in many state prisons with astounding success, including the White County Jail. Mathews says that everyone is invited to the Ministerial Alliance meeting with Joe Beam on Sunday night, "whether you plan to participate in Celebrate Recovery or not. And if anyone is interested in finding out more about Celebrate Recovery, be sure to try to be there Sunday."

For more information about Celebrate Recovery, the Sunday night service with Joe Beam, or the Searcy Ministerial Alliance, call the Downtown church at 501-268-5383."

From this article, we learn Joe Beam was the guest speaker of the Searcy Ministerial Alliance community service which was held at the Downtown Church of Christ Family Life Center in Searcy, Arkansas. This was part of the *Celebrate Recovery* program that operates in over 4,000 denominational churches across the nation. It began at the Saddleback church (denominational)

in California where Rick Warren, author of “The Purpose Driven Life,” ministers. That tells us a mouth-full doesn’t it! It’s not even a part of the one body of Jesus Christ!

Question: how does Joe Beam avoid the many passages which forbid him being the quest speaker in a denominational community service? My Bible still reads the same as it used to. And, yours does too.

Ephesians 5:11 says, *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”* This passage does not tell us to fellowship error or to even fellowship them a little. It says NO fellowship. Can we not understand what that means? Denominational bodies all teach doctrines contrary to the Scriptures — false doctrines on salvation, the church, worship and Christian service. The command of our Lord is to reprove them, rebuke them, expose them — not join hands with them, aid them, assist them. That’s not hard to understand.

Second John 9-11 says, *“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.”* These verses tell us we are not in good standing with the Lord when we fellowship, endorse and condone those who do not teach the true Gospel of Christ. We are counted guilty along with them when we help them. They do not have the sanction of God and neither do we when we encourage them and wish them well.

The reason Joe is able to participate with them is because there’s no real distinction between them. As they are, he is also. Readers will recall that he has taught and continues to teach false doctrine on the direct leading of the Holy Spirit. He is certainly not known among faithful brethren as an upholder of truth. Instead, he is known as a perverter of truth. His 1996 speeches at the notorious Nashville Jubilee are ample evidence. Numerous quotes from some of his speeches can be found at www.seektheoldpaths.com.

Also, how is it that the **Down-**

town Church could go along with this? Do they not know what this is? Have they not read their Bible? Can they not discern between good and evil? Joe is heralded (by one of their ministers) as a most inspiring speaker that will give hope and encouragement to everyone. But, hope in what? Encouragement concerning what? It can’t be salvation because if that were the case, the Scriptures would be honored and obeyed. Anyone can have a false sense of hope and encouragement. They think it’s real and genuine, but it’s not. In order for anyone to have hope of eternal life, it must be based in faith AND obedience to God’s Word. What good does it do to encourage people and give them hope when it doesn’t go beyond this world?

Oh, how many people are facing judgment thinking they have salvation when in fact they do not? They have been lied to by false teachers and they have believed those lies. There’s more to salvation than feeling good and being encouraged! Jesus said, *“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. 7:22-23). This scripture is not hard to understand.

We also find **Harding University** going along with Joe. They have him to speak at two chapel services. How can they participate in this? Where’s the administration and faculty in all of this? Why aren’t they seeking his repentance and return to the fold? Parents should be outraged! They send their precious children off to school and have them exposed to error without a word of warning! You expect such at a state run school that is filled with worldly minded people and the like. But surely we don’t expect such at a school operated by brethren do we? But, none the less, here they are, pitching their hat in the ring. Beam is held up before the student body as one whom they can trust to feed them spiritually. No wonder “our” schools have been, and are continuing, to lead the church down the path of digression. And, there’s no end in sight. Who’s on the forefront

today making a difference? Who?

Another interesting point made in the article was this statement: “no

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NEW PRINTER: Through the help of very generous brethren, we have been blessed to purchase a new printer. The one we’ve been using has 3 million copies on it. It is currently broken down and awaiting repair. The cost of the new printer was \$9,351. We have already received \$5,000 toward its purchase. Since so many have requested that we let them know when we need something like this, we’re taking this opportunity to do so. If you would like to contribute any part of the remaining \$4,351, then feel free to do so. The work of *Seek The Old Paths* is supported by free-will contributions and sent free to all who request it. God bless you as we continue to teach the whole counsel of God. — *Editor*

one tries to fix anybody.” Then please tell me and help me understand, “why does it exist?” This program is supposed to be for “those who struggle with things such as marriage, the effects of divorce, anger, finances, drug and/or alcohol abuse, eating disorders, sexual hang-ups (including pornography), shopping and gambling addictions, and more.” They claim to just support and encourage one another. But, doesn’t the Bible condemn unscriptural divorce, drugs and alcohol, sexual perversion, pornography and gambling? Sure it does! Do these things not need fixing? Sure they do.

The job of every faithful Christian is to work diligently to “fix” anyone involved in sin. We do this by teaching what the Bible says about these things and encouraging people to repent. I don’t know about you, but I’m not interested in being a part of something that is designed to help people emotionally or socially, but not spiritually. What have we accomplished when we help people feel good about themselves in their sins? Not one single thing! Our dear Lord came to die for sinful man, not that man could feel good about himself. Jesus came that men might have forgiveness of sins. That is only accomplished when men are made to feel guilty because of their sins.

Friend, are you helping the situation or harming it. Those like Joe, the Downtown Church and Harding are adding to the problem of error. Don’t be a party to such evil. Obey the Scriptures that tell us to come out from among such and be separate (cf. II Cor. 6:17).

ps. Readers also need to know that the **Scottish Rite Masons** of Arkansas recently donated \$15,000 to Harding University. It was presented by Dwane Treat, sovereign grand inspector general and heartily accepted by Dr. Jeanine Peck, who directs the after-school Reading Program, and Dr. Jim Carr, executive vice president of the University. They have donated \$135,500 to various Harding endeavors over the past 10 years. Does Harding support Masonry?

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“THEY BELIEVE OTHERS MORE THAN THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE SPOKEN BY PAUL”

Steven D. Cline

While reading in Acts 27 of one of the shipwrecks Paul experienced, I was impressed that Paul had given a warning in verses 9-10, telling those on the ship that the voyage would be dangerous and that much damage would be to the cargo. However, the centurion believed the master and owner of the ship more than the things which were spoken by Paul. In verse 17, on to the end of the chapter, we see the ship being tossed to and fro by the howling wind, reeling and rocking in the briny, dark deep, the mighty waves smashing against the wooden hull and crashing down upon the slippery deck, the angry dark clouds dumping a driving, blinding and stinging torrential downpour upon the sailors as they, drenched to the bone with rain and salty sea water, scurry in panic over the deck, trying to lighten the ship or even to escape as peals of thunder boom overhead. In verse 21 Paul said “*Sirs, ye should have harkened unto me.*” He had told them so, he had warned them, but they had not listened.

Other times in Paul’s life, people either would not listen, or believed others more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

In Acts 28 when Paul preached Jesus in the city of Rome, verse 24 tells us, “*And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.*”

In Acts 13, some Jews stirred up men and women against Paul and Barnabas, the result being that they were driven from the area. These men and women believed others more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

Moreover, Paul was maligned and misrepresented oft times during his ministry. In II Corinthians (possibly Paul’s most personal, open and heartfelt letter) the great apostle states how others had accused him of not having proper authority and Paul had to answer such false allegations as seen in chapters 10-12. Little has changed down through the corridors of time, for there are still those who belittle Paul

and would rather listen to others than to him. For example, the Hindu teacher, Mathama Gandhi one time stated, “Paul was not a Jew, he was a Greek, he had an oratorical mind, a dialectical mind, and he distorted Jesus.”¹ First, Gandhi said Paul was not a Jew, but Paul himself stated that he indeed was in Acts 21:39. Second, Gandhi said that Paul “distorted” Jesus, an assertion that no faithful Christian can accept or tolerate. Then, Hugh J. Schonfield wrote, “In many matter [sic] Paulism was in conflict with native Christianity.”² Schonfield continues, “Pauline heresy served as the basis for Christian authority and the legitimate Church was outlawed as heretical.”³ In other words, Paul’s teaching, a heresy when compared to Jesus’ teaching, is what caused the church to be outlawed.

John Lennon was well-known for his rash, off-the-wall comments. Lennon, who heavily influenced my (1960’s) generation once remarked, “Jesus was all right but his disciples were thick and ordinary. It’s them twisting it that ruins it for me.”⁴ One would assume that one of these “thick and ordinary” disciples “twisting it” would include Paul. If so, Lennon was saying the same thing Gandhi and Schonfield said, only in different words. Another foolish and absurd charge leveled against Paul is, “There is no proof that Paul believed in a personal Christ; to him Christ was a principal, ‘dwelling in the light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen or can see’ (Epistle to Timothy).”⁵ Did not Paul believe in a personal Christ? I would suspect that Paul’s actually seeing Jesus on the Damascus highway and talking to him literally, not only on that famous road, but other times as well (Acts 19:9,10; 22:18,21; 23:11; II Cor. 12:9) would lead us to believe that Paul’s relationship to Jesus was indeed personal and not only in principal or abstract. Again, how many will listen to others rather than to the things spoken of by Paul?

Then, one Dr. Salah El Dareer, a

Moslem, stated in his debate with brother Hiram O. Hutto, concerning the false teachers Jesus had warned of, “In view of what we know about Paul and his role in transforming Jesus and his teaching to something drastically different and unreal but more adoptable to the prevailing pagan and hellenistic views of the Gentile, I would like to ask brother Hutto: has it ever occurred to you that Jesus was referring to Paul and those who subscribe to his views as the ones to beware of?”⁶

Paul has even, in spite of his words to the contrary, been accused of not believing in the deity of Jesus. Back to Schonfield, “He [Paul-SDC] did not actually ascribe deity to Christ. As a Jew he could not go as far as that.”⁷ How many will believe Dr. Schonfield more than those things which were spoken by Paul? For Paul did indeed believe in the deity of Christ as seen in Colossians 2:9: “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” [i.e., in bodily form]. See also Philippians 2:6 which states that Christ, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God — words from Paul’s own quill.

Not only is Paul as a person misrepresented, his teachings are shamefully twisted and flagrantly denied. Concerning baptism, the well-known Southern Baptist evangelist John R. Rice said, “In the Bible, we find it clear that people believed first and then were baptized. According to this statement from God’s Word, they were already saved before they were baptized and any other man who trusts in Christ is saved that second, before he could possibly get to the baptismal waters. It does not take baptism to save one.”⁸ Yet Paul, in his own words, told the multitude of his conversion in which he reiterated what Ananias had told him: “*And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord*” (Acts 22:16).

Even some “Bibles” will take Paul’s words and completely change them. As an example, the *Living Bible Paraphrased* has Abraham finding “favor with God by faith alone” in Romans 4:12.⁹ I fear good people believe others more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

I have known unrepentant fornicating adulterers who “go to church.” They go to put up appearances and yet cast Paul’s words in Titus 1:16 behind their backs. The verse says, “*They profess*

that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” In the second Corinthian letter, Paul realized that there were still some unrepentant fornicators in that congregation (II Cor. 12:21). So are there some today. Apparently there are those who deceive Christians with vain words into thinking that one can fornicate, and “going to church” clears them in God’s eyes (Eph. 5:3-6). Furthermore, such souls who heed other’s deception rather than Paul’s words of holy inspiration need to read, believe and apply advice like, “*Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord*” (I Cor. 6:13); “*Flee fornication*” (I Cor. 6:18); “*Neither let us commit fornication*” (I Cor. 10:8); “*But fornication...let it not once be named among you as becometh saints*” (Eph. 5:3); “*...that ye should abstain from fornication*” (I Thess. 4:3). If Paul wrote the Hebrew letter, as many think, he said in 13:4, “*...but whoremongers [pornous, the Greek work for fornicators] and adulterers God will judge.*” In this connection, the apostle states in Galatians 5:19-21 that fornicators and adulterers will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Then there are the perverted people who clamor that “gay is good” and picket for “gay rights.” Many follow their pernicious ways for they had rather believe others than the things which were spoken by Paul. To find what Paul says about such deplorable behavior, please read Romans 1:24-27 and I Cor. 6:9.

There are those in Catholicism, certain cults, Islam and Hinduism that believe, teach and preach that salvation is based on our own goodness and/or meritorious works. Multitudes so accept this rather than listening to Paul who did not believe that salvation can be earned. Read his comforting words in Ephesians 2:4-10 and Titus 3:4-6. Concerning grace, the Calvinist says that one cannot fall from it, and hosts of people had rather listen to such a doctrine from Hell’s hallways than to Paul who said in Galatians 5:4 that indeed one can fall from grace under certain circumstances. Many denominationalists (and some in the church) will advise “attend the church of your choice, there is one destination but many paths, thank God for all the different faiths from which we may choose.” Naturally, minions of millions embrace these utterances more than those things spoken by

Paul who said in Ephesians 4:4,5 that there is but *one body* (the body being the church, Eph. 5:23 and Col. 1:18,23) and *one faith*.

Well, lest the reader wax weary of perusing this article, I will soon lay down my pen, but not before posing a question. Are we going to be like the centurion and believe the master and owner of the ship more than the things which were spoken by Paul? That is to say, are we going to give heed to the doctrines and opinions of deluded men and women and ignore what Paul says? Paul’s words are final and decisive for he spoke by divine inspiration (II Tim. 3:16) and his words are just as authoritative as the other New Testament writers or even as the words of the Savior Himself. Friends, if we choose to be like the centurion and ignore the words of Paul, we are in for a shipwreck as well — a shipwrecked faith (I Tim. 1:19).

Remember, in the coming day of Judgment “*...the books were opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works*” (Rev. 20:12). “The books” include the New Testament writings of Paul. Paul told the rain-soaked sailors during the stormy tempest, “Sirs, ye should have harkened unto me.” Who is to say that Paul will not say the same thing to the disobedient on the Final Day? May we pay him and the other Bible writers heed and continue in the doctrine, for by so doing we shall both save ourselves and those who hear us (I Tim. 4:6).

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7 Schonfield, p.98.

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No “RIGHT” WAY

John Cotham

There always seems to be an effort on the part of some to try some new innovation not supported by the scriptures. Then, when confronted by sound brethren, they will try every way to give some “right” reason for doing a wrong thing. I recently saw this cliché, on a church sign: “There is no right way to do a wrong thing.” How true! No matter how man might try to justify his innovations, there is no right way to do a wrong thing.

Those who try to justify choruses or solo singers twist and distort the scripture by trying to say there is NO scriptural support for congregational singing. Those who try to justify fellowship with the denominations argue a non-scriptural view of fellowship. Those who teach there is no law under the New Testament covenant totally distort the context of New Testament letters like Galatians. In the end, there is no RIGHT way to justify these WRONG things. How do we know that all of these are WRONG? — because the scriptures point out the error of each one.

Some few years ago a great effort was made to bus kids to church. There is certainly nothing wrong with trying to teach children the necessity to love and serve God. However, many bussing programs began to inject other innovations that were contrary to scripture. Many began to bribe children to attend by offering candy, gifts, and other kinds of incentives. Then, when many found themselves with so many young children who disturbed the worship service, they invented something called “children’s church.” This took the children out of the worship assembly so the adults could “enjoy” their worship. Sound brethren soon showed how erroneous it was to divide the worship assembly of God’s people. Many of the churches gave up “children’s church” because it was proven they were in error. Finally, most of the bussing programs failed for several reasons: prohibitive costs, most children had to be bribed to attend, but most of all because it

involved tremendous work on the part of brethren, and they just were not willing to continue the hard work. With the fall of the bussing programs came the end of “children’s church” — at least for a while.

Now, a few years later, we are beginning to see a program similar to “children’s church” once again in some congregations. Some now dismiss the younger children from the worship assembly so that they might attend a class (or classes) while the adults and older children remain for the worship service. When confronted about the innovation, the argument is that these classes are altogether different from “children’s church.” They say this is the “right” way to dismiss young children from the worship assembly. But, it does not matter that the approach is different — it is still wrong. Just as sound brethren argued against “children’s church” years ago, the same scriptures forbid any kind of divided worship assembly.

Notice what the Bible says about the worship assembly: The scripture speaks of ALL the people being together, *“And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; ... And Ezra opened the book in the sight of ALL the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, ALL the people stood up: ... And ALL the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground”* (Nehemiah 8:4-6). Paul also shows how ALL the people were together for New Testament worship services, *“When ye come together therefore into ONE place”* (I Cor. 11:20); and *“If therefore the WHOLE church be come together into ONE place...”* (I Cor. 14:23). Paul speaks of the “WHOLE” church coming together *“in ONE place.”* Paul was NOT speaking of all just being in the same building, but all assembled together at the same time. The Hebrew writer said

we are not to *“forsake the assembling”* of God’s people together (Heb. 10:25). Neither should some adults be forced to forsake the worship assembly just to be glorified “baby sitters.” And, that is what is happening!

Any dividing of the assembly is a man made innovation. It is wrong! It is wrong whether sending children to a “children’s church” or to some similar kind of class. No matter what the program, dividing the assembly is wrong, and cannot be made right. Not only are the children divided from the assembly; but the adult teachers who are caring for them are divided from (absent from) the assembly while others worship.

It is argued that the purpose for dividing the assembly is to “give mom a break.” Since when can mom take a break from teaching her child(ren) some of the greatest lessons they need to learn? These small children need to learn just how important worshipping God should be in their lives. They need to learn how to show the proper awe and respect for God (and fellow worshippers) while in the worship assembly. Young children need to be learning just what the worship assembly is about. They need to be taught to be quiet. It is disturbing to let a child cry or talk continually in the worship assembly. These are the problems some have tried to overcome with “divided assemblies.” All these things can be taught to children from the time they begin to crawl. If they can be taught to behave in a class, then they can be taught to behave in the worship assembly. If they have to be removed from the assembly, let it be to dust off their bottoms until they learn the proper behavior during worship.

All in all, the truth is: There is no right way to do a wrong thing.

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RED LETTER BIBLES

Douglas Hoff

Have you ever wondered why the words of Jesus are printed in red in many, but not all, Bibles? According to information found in my King James Version, the idea originated with Louis Klopsch in 1899.¹ Klopsch was the owner-editor of the Christian Herald magazine and was writing an editorial when his eyes fell upon Luke 22:20 which reads, *“This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”* Klopsch reasoned that red words would suitably represent the words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ. His preacher encouraged him to prepare such a Bible, and in November, 1901, the Christian Herald advertised red letter Bibles for sale.

The preacher, T. DeWitt Talmadge, said of this new edition that “it could do no harm, and it most certainly could do much good.” In preparation for this new Bible, scholars from America and Europe were asked to submit passages which they regarded as spoken by Christ while on earth. Later editions have all words spoken by Christ in red (e.g., Rev 22:16).

The short article in my Bible entitled History Of The Red Letter begins by stating: “The words in red in many Bibles are neither more or less important than the words in black. Jesus said to the seventy: ‘He that heareth you heareth me’ (Luke 10:16).”

This point is exactly right. The words spoken by Peter or Paul are just as much the word of God as those spoken by Jesus (II Tim. 3:16,17). The apostles were guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13,14). Through inspiration, the apostles spoke the words of Jesus when he was no longer on the earth.

It would be great if more people would acknowledge this simple fact today. However, there are some who consider only the words in red to be the words of Jesus. To them, the words of Paul are uninspired commentary on the words of Christ or perhaps the testimony of the early

church. Having had red letter Bibles for over 100 years now, the statement that “It could do no harm...” has been proven false.

What is even worse today is the rejection of the words of Christ by so-called scholars. In 1985, a panel of liberal theologians started having a series of meetings (called The Jesus Seminar) to determine the historicity of the New Testament. What is their conclusion? They charge that 82 percent of the teaching attributed to Christ in the four gospel accounts is not genuine.²

The participants in these meetings vote on the words of Christ and then assign it a color representing the degree of confidence one may put in it. For example, if the saying is undoubtedly genuine it is given the color red (wonder where they came up with that idea?). If it is probably genuine the color pink is used. Gray represents those words which Jesus probably did not utter, but the ideas are close to his. Black is reserved for the words which are definitely not Jesus’.

To these so-called scholars, anything miraculous (including predictive prophecy) is automatically given the black ink. Thus, according to them, Jesus certainly could not have predicted the fall of Jerusalem (Matt. 24:1-34).

Brethren, it is time to get back to a proper view and respect for the Bible. We need to prove to people why the word of God is true and that all of it is the word of Christ, not just the words in red!

ENDNOTES:

1 “History of the Red Letter Edition,” in The Holy Bible — King James Version, Reference Edition (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1972), no page number. The article appears on the page immediately before the Concordance. Stock number 575BG, no ISBN.

2 Wayne Jackson “The Jesus Seminar, 1,” Christian Courier, June, 1994.

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The Church Our Lord Built...

(Continued from page 63)

invented, but those willing to do a little research and go back in history a few years would realize that such was not the case. They would know that nothing new had been started, only that something old and previously known had been restored. Yet, that is precisely what happened in the religious world in the early 1800s. Men picked up God’s “guide book” (the Bible) and started working toward the restoration of the original church founded by Christ. These men were not seeking to establish another denomination, but rather were seeking to restore the very church that one reads of in the New Testament. It was a movement far more glorious and significant than even the Reformation Movement of the 1500-1600s.

Today, it is possible for one to hear of Christ (John 6:44-45; Rom. 10:17), believe on him as the Son of God (John 3:16; 8:42; Acts 8:37), repent of all sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30), confess faith in Christ (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-6,17-18; I Peter 3:21), just as people did in the first century (Acts 2,8,16,18,22). Such will make of one today the same thing it made of one then — simply a Christian, a member of Christ’s church. All today who do this in a particular geographical location make up the church of Christ in that location. If they remain true to New Testament teaching in doctrine, worship, practice, and daily life, they continue to be — even here in the complex twenty-first century — simply a church of Christ, but without being a denomination of any kind.

Indeed, the church of Christ is NOT a denomination!

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"My mother has been receiving your bulletins, but no longer has the time to read them. She asked if I could contact you about removing her from your mailing list so that your efforts might be better used elsewhere. Thank you for your service" **...Velma Lovell.** "I'm the minister of the Apple Hill church of Christ. Our congregation is a small church in a poor

world. I'm now in prison. Just the name of your ministry gave me a light in remembrance of where I've been and the paths I've traveled down with Jesus" **...James Little, Nashville, TN.** "Thank you very much" **...J. D. Beggs, Corsicana, TX.** "Please don't send anymore. Thanks for past issues" **...Glenn Johnson, Lebanon, TN.** "It is a real pleasure to contribute to the work of *Seek The Old Paths.* I really enjoy every issue. May God bless you in this great work for his church. Our prayers go with you" **...Ron & Ruth Shandor, Dealth Valley, CA.** "I have greatly enjoyed and appreciated the work you have been doing in your periodical! I have moved and wish to continue receiving your publication. Thank you" **...Matthew Crowe, Ragland, AL.** "Could you please send me *STOP*? I have a sister that gets it and enjoys it" **...Dee Carr, Snyder, TX.** "Thank you for the copy of *STOP*. Please add my name to your mailing list if I'm not already on it" **...Wilson Rowlett, Rogers, AR.** "Thank you for holding to the truth. Your articles are most appreciated. In a day when departure from the faith is the trend, it's good to see brethren like you telling it like it is. Please keep up your good work" **...Jack Lawyer, Conway, AR.** "You have a great web site. I use it daily for studying. It is an answered prayer for strength and wisdom" **...Katrina.** "I listen to the sermons and singing on my computer almost every day. This is a blessing for me that you can never understand. Please keep up this good work. There is no telling how many people you will reach through this effort. My husband and I have been members of the church since we were children and this gives us both real hope that the Gospel is still being preached. My grandfather was a Gospel preacher and a farmer for many years before his death. I wish he could have seen this wonderful way to reach people. Thank you again for this good work" **...Ben & Brenda Ratliff. (NOTE:** Anyone in the world can listen to congregational singing and Gospel preaching 24/7 on the internet at www.pioneerpreachers.com). "Please remove my name from your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*" **...Mark Tabata, WV.** "We love the booklet *Seek The Old Paths.* Thanks so much" **...Dimple Sills.** "Thank you very much for all you do to keep the Lord's church sound" **...Alabama.**

HURRICANE RELIEF

We've received calls from concerned brethren seeking our help to learn of sound brethren on the Gulf Coast where they might send relief. While there are no doubt many, we know of these we can recommend.

The Chalmette church of Christ in New Orleans suffered the total loss of their building. At the time of this writing, they were under about 10-15 feet of water. The preacher there is Mark Lance who is a native of McMinnville, Tennessee. He, his wife and two daughters are worshiping with us here at East End until they're able to go back and begin to rebuild. They also suffered the total loss of their house, furnishings, car and Mark's entire library. They have flood insurance but the church did not. The Cordova church of Christ has accepted the responsibility of receiving and dispensing funds on behalf of the Chalmette church. Contact information for them is: 7801 Macon Road, Cordova, TN 38018, Ph. (901) 754-9893 (office) or (901) 751-2117 (Jerry Martin, elder). Also, one of the elders of the Chalmette church (Chris Kramer) is staying in Cordova until he's able to return to New Orleans. His number is (901) 756-0402.

The church of Christ in Saucier, Mississippi, is a little north of Gulfport, MS, and in the middle of the devastation all along the coast. The contact for them is their preacher, Cade Somers, 15235 O'Neil Rd., Apt. 5B, Gulfport, MS 39503, Ph. (228) 822-1576. The church of Christ at Milestone in Pensacola, Florida, has accepted the responsibility of disaster relief in that area. Checks can be made to the church of Christ at Milestone and earmarked "hurricane relief." They have a separate bank account set up strictly for disaster relief and it will be used for that purpose and that purpose only. Their address is: 4015 Stefani Rd, Cantonment, FL 32533. The church phone # is (850) 470-8878. Ken Burlson is one of the elders there. His phone # is (850) 968-2207. They have been taking truck loads of supplies every week to the Gulfport area.

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

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