

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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From The Mailbag...

"CHURCH" COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The truth is that most church leaders and families do little to insure the proper religious training of their children.

I have just started receiving your publication and I find it very refreshing and interesting. I have found all the articles to be direct and to the point, balanced and with the appropriate scriptures to back up the writers positions outlined in the articles.

However, I find the "shock" and disappointment expressed in some of the articles, mailbag and news brief sections to be somewhat surprising when it comes to schools such as **Lipscomb, Harding, Rochester, Pepperdine** and others. The fact that these schools have drifted into secularism should not be a surprise at all. After all, at the root of all these schools is the fact that they are human institutions and therefore businesses.

The fact that they market to potential students (who are members of the church of Christ) and their families with the promises of a "Christian" based education is necessary only to secure a consistent student base and therein lies the problem. This "base", although necessary to secure operating revenue, is not large enough to meet their strategic business plans and long term growth projections. Therefore, they find it necessary to "water down" their religious teaching in order to attract a broader student base (II Tim. 4:3-4). This new influx of students has to come from somewhere and the

denominational world provides this need. As Paul stated, *"the love of money is the root of all evil"* (I Tim. 6:10) and all we need to do is follow the money in order to see one of the major causes why these institutions have drifted away from the truth.

I would like to think that most of these schools started with the best of intentions but like other institutions, and these schools are institutions, they take on a life of their own. They are overseen by a Board of Regents and/or Board of Directors with only the best interest of the school on their mind and that means revenue. These schools are no different from Harvard, Yale, Emory and others that also started as religious schools but eventually evolved into secular schools. Do we really think that Lipscomb, Harding, Rochester, Pepperdine and others are any different given their current direction and marketing approach?

In addition to the need for a larger, broader student base, the image of the school is also of the utmost importance. The schools Regents and/or Directors and staff are not concerned about their image from the perspective of the brotherhood, but that of academia and their peers. They can ignore the brotherhood, after all, we still send our children to their schools and hire preachers trained by them. Why should they be too concerned about us? As long as

the Regents, Directors, professors and staff have a financial interest in seeing the schools grow (reputations, personal careers, salaries, etc.), they will continue to become more secular and less spiritual in their direction and curriculum.

So then, what are we to do? Church leaders and families need to realize that spiritual growth is their responsibility (Deut. 6:1-9; Prov. 22:6; Acts 20:8; Titus 2:1-8). Church leaders and parents need to "Seek The Old Paths" in the area of religious education as well. The truth is that most church leaders and families do little to insure the proper religious training of their children. Most find it too convenient to rely on schools such as Lipscomb, Harding, Rochester, Pepperdine, etc. to do their work for them. Elders of the church and parents must take control and a personal interest in the education of the young men and women in the church and not assume all is well because we send them to a so-called "church" school. After all, where is the scripture for "church" sponsored secular schools? There is none!

If we propose to follow the Scriptures, and we should, we need to insure we do so in the area of religious education as well. Anything

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"Church" Colleges...

Who Shall Become Your Teacher?

Andrew D. Erwin

In hoping to aid fellow young men who are seeking to preach the Gospel in what is ultimately their quest for preparedness, I wish to submit for consideration the following thoughts concerning our institutions of higher learning and consequently their respective Bible Departments. To think that such consideration is unnecessary or schismatic is likely the result of a lack of knowledge or a lack of care for the present crisis facing the church of our Lord, especially with regard to the aforementioned institutions. It is with great sorrow and displeasure that such efforts as this must be made. Nevertheless, any young man wishing to make a life out of preaching like the Savior must be aware of the doctrine (or lack thereof) that is being taught in our brotherhood schools.

When a young man is choosing an institution to attend, that student is choosing who the men will be that help mold him into the preacher that he will become. Such an important decision as this should be made thoughtfully, prayerfully, and wisely. It could indeed prove to be a costly mistake if a student chooses to rush into something as important as his knowledge and ability to understand the Sacred Oracles. May we never have a lackluster attitude toward these types of decisions! Rather, let us act with the deliberate intent and hope of working for the greater good of the church and our fellow man.

A student of the Scriptures must seek out men like Paul. We need to find those men who will take us beneath their wing and commit unto us doctrine that is not only worth learning, but is also worth repeating (2 Tim. 2:2). The wild ideas being taught by many Bible Departments are hardly worth hearing and the only reason they should be repeated is to warn others (Rom. 16:17)! Will your mentors be men with proven track records for teaching and preaching the Bible? Or, will you have some Athenian type nemesis (adversary) of the truth who is always seeking something “new” (Acts 17:21)?

We should also consider how we will eventually look back on our college days. Will we look back with fond memories of beloved teachers who taught truth and were willing to help us to teach others? Or, will we look back with frustration because we had to spend our class-time arguing the case for the inspiration of the Scriptures, the one true church, or proper Christian worship, etc., with an antagonistic professor of error? Personally speaking, I would not listen to such thoughts for free, much less, pay someone for them.

Herein lies the truth of the matter, there are untrustworthy schools among us. And, if we examine them closely, we will find they are not even claiming to teach sound doctrine. In fact, they have done the exact opposite. They are placing known menaces to the church in key administrative positions, and are hiring notorious misfits of error to teach the Bible to often unlearned minds, both in the classroom and in their lectureships. In fact the most notable result of the work being done by such places is not the training of solid Gospel preachers, but rather contempt for the church and the truth she pillars. [For further evidence visit the David Lipscomb “underground” website — <http://lipscombunderground.tripod.com>] These schools often scoff at any inquires by the prospective student (or even the student’s parents) concerning whether or not the old paths will be taught. Horror stories of their shame of conservative brethren, both past and present, stagnantly surround their campuses as slime-ridden motes to anyone who loves the men whom they question and the legacy such champions of the faith have left behind. These people are persistent to do what they want to do regardless of who they hurt. Young men and parents, do you want to give your hard-earned money to support such a work as that? They have made their position known. It is time for young men of the church and their parents to make their position known!

If we choose to be educated by

one of these places and become dissatisfied, then it is our own fault. We could not be considered victims in such cases. In reality, we got what we paid for. Who among us would pay for a bucket with a hole in it? Then why will we pay for the words of broken cisterns? The prophet Jeremiah cried out, “*My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water*” (Jer. 2:13). Have we become like those unfaithful children of God in the long ago? What reason could we possibly have for forsaking the opportunity to learn sound doctrine for the grief that awaits us from hearing lies and hypocrisy? Surely such a decision as this cannot be pleasing to God.

Young men of the church, who shall become your teacher? Shall it be the word of God with all authority, or the opinions of men? Do not feel like your decision to choose sound doctrine over wishy-washy words will go unnoticed. If we stick together, I pray that eventually these questionable institutions will notice that we will not tolerate their error; the solid schools among us will notice our appreciation for their work and be encouraged to continue to fight the good fight; the church will notice the renewed quality of the preachers returning from school; and fervently I pray that our God and Father will notice that through His help we would have prevailed yet again.

Our generation can have a great effect on the future of the Lord’s church if we will act as God would have us to. We can and must make a difference. Let us learn from, and give our full support to, those institutions and schools of preaching that love and honor truth. May we all grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord (2 Peter 3:18). Dear brethren, may we become even stronger in the Lord as years pass by learning to use sound judgment while we are young.

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BEING SATISFIED WITH SO LITTLE

Bill Jackson, deceased

Those obedient to the Lord's will are those who have, and who continue to cultivate, a spiritual appetite. Beginning as the babes they are in Christ, they have a desire for the milk of the word that they may thereby grow (1 Peter 2:2). All of their life becomes, then, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness (Matt. 5:6), and never do they cease in their hunger or desire for the things of God. Their desire is for more and more and more — more knowledge, more zeal, more faithfulness, more prayer, more study, more giving — always, more and more of God's things.

In view of those things, it is amazing in our time that so many are satisfied with so little of the things of importance. We have concern with these areas:

1) *So many are satisfied with so little study and so little acquisition of Bible knowledge.* Jerusalem continued steadfastly in doctrine (Acts 2:42) and the noble Bereans are an example of those who give time to study DAILY (Acts 17:11). But so many are satisfied with so little today. And thus they are not informed and thereby armed when false teachers and false teaching faces them. Without knowledge the people perish (Hosea 4:6). An informed people become a strong people, and thus they can stand faithfully for God and against all error. If they are satisfied with very little Bible information, they will also be satisfied to embrace and live with error.

2) *So many satisfied with so little Bible preaching.* The New Testament emphasis is on PREACHING THE WORD (2 Tim. 4:2) — yea, the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). How can the preacher be satisfied with polite little essays with little or no Bible content? And how can the people in our congregations be satisfied with so little Bible in the sermons presented before them? One would think that those in the pews would be DEMANDING Biblical content! Satisfied with so little!

3) *So many satisfied with so little Biblical oversight.* To be sure, there is

a great deal of attention paid to the finances and business concerns, but what of overseeing the flock in the watching for souls (Heb. 13:17) — in guarding, protecting, feeding, etc.? How can so many called elders be content with so little effort on their part in studying, being informed as to dangers, guarding and protecting the flock? How can so many in the congregations be satisfied with so little Biblical oversight?

What is of great concern is that in being satisfied with so little, we very soon lose sight of the need for what is already in short supply, and can thus “live without it.” In that turn of events, we then cease the study of the word entirely, cease either desiring or wanting the Word of God proclaimed to us, and cease to expect anything of our elders other than keeping the checkbook bal-

anced! Learning to be satisfied with so little will finally, as we continue on that downward road, cause us to be satisfied with none of it!

May the day be hastened when our people become, once more, “a people of the Book.” May the day be hastened when our preachers are once more known as “talking Bibles.” And may the day be hastened when those appointed as elders are once more known as true shepherds, fully equipped to “exhort and convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9). If we had had more of those elders in these last several years, we would have fewer of the trends of liberalism in our midst. We are where we are because we have been satisfied with so little of the things of God. We'll not be what we should be until we once more develop that spiritual appetite that demands MORE, not LESS!

From the Mailbag...

Dear Sirs—

I am a youth minister in the Kansas area. Often times at youth events we will invite admissions representatives from Christian colleges to seek our older teens. I myself am a product of such education (Oklahoma Christian University, 99) and believe it to be by-and-large beneficial to the continual spiritual training of young men and women. Sadly, several of them (including my own alumnus) have become hotbeds for liberal-minded change agents to push their agendas.

For one local event I was going to invite a representative from David Lipscomb University. After talking to one of our elders he counseled strongly against inviting them. I dis-invited them (because I'd already invited them) and told them I was against advancing liberal thinking with our youth. Anyway, a rep emailed me back and is saying that I have been misinformed. I searched your website and found a few things the university has advocated which I believe can be clearly shown:

1. They advocate using groups that use contemporary Christian rock. (Oct. 12 2000).
2. They endorse Joe Beam (who advocates several mis-teachings on the Holy Spirit, Demons, etc.). (Summer 1998).
3. They endorse Jeff Walling (who advocates inter-denominational fellowship, letting women lead in public worship, and believes baptism is “stupid”).
4. They endorse Max Lucado (who is a baptist).
5. They endorse Mike Cope (who traded pulpits with a baptist).
6. They endorse Rick Bundschuh (who is a “pastor” at the Kauai Christian Fellowship) (October 1998).

(Items #3-5 were done at the Lipscomb sponsored Jubilee).

Is this a correct summary? Are there other transgressions I do not know of that have occurred in the past few years? I would like to state to them honestly and objectively why I do not believe they are truly a Christian university.

WHEN COMMON SENSE FAILS

Don Thompson

We often hear people speak of one having common sense in making judgments in their daily affairs. Indeed, common sense is something to be desired by all of us. We should use common sense in our daily decisions. But sometimes common sense isn't sufficient. When it comes to matters of our obedience to God, we must not rely only on common sense.

In 2 Samuel 7:1-12 we can see such an example. God had delivered David and Israel from their enemies. There was peace and David had constructed a fine house built of cedar. He and the prophet Nathan were sitting in this fine home talking when David remarked "I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." It seems that David was thinking the ark of God should be in a house more fitting than the tabernacle. Common sense would suggest that such was the case. Nathan agreed that a house should be built. What is wrong in this case?

The problem lies within the fact that God was not consulted about the matter. Notice 2 Samuel 7:7, "In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?" As we read further, we understand that such a house would be built when God chose to build it. That time would come after the death of David.

Are we, today, like David? I believe that on many occasions some fall into the same situation. Too many it seems think it would be a good thing to build a gym or a ball field to draw the lost to the church. Many times it may seem that we can draw them in with entertainment or social events. Certainly it will draw people to the premises, but will it draw them to Christ? Can we find just one example of this in the New Testament?

Some seem to have lost sight of

the scriptural means by which men must be drawn unto Christ. Jesus said in John 12:32, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Do we not need to hold up Christ as saviour of the lost? Raising the goal post isn't the way to do God's will. The apostle Paul told the Thessalonians that they had been called by the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14). He also stated that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). Is it not time to proclaim the Gospel and cease to try to use gimmicks and entertainment to bring the lost to Christ?

It is time for brethren to return to the Word of God for guidance in making decisions. How can we obey Colossians 3:17 and do ALL in the name of the Lord if we do not take the time to consult His Word? We cannot! Some of our ideas may seem to be common sense, however if we examine them in the light of God's word, we may find that we have no authority to implement them. David and Nathan found this to be true and if two prophets of God can make this mistake, it is certain we can do likewise.

Brethren, is it possible that one day the Lord may ask us, "when did I ask thee why build ye not a gym for my children?" Is it possible we will be asked, "when did I tell thee to go play?" Is it possible we will be asked, "why did you not go teach?" Is it possible we will be asked, "why did you turn my house into a house for pleasure and entertainment?" Is it possible that we will be asked why we have two or more preachers while many congregations have none? Is it possible we will be asked why we built expensive buildings but failed to feed the hungry both physically and spiritually?

Think on these things. If asked those questions, what will your answer be?

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M/M Ronald H. Allen.....	\$30
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Clauda Ruble.....	\$10
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Beginning Balance.....	\$ 6,266.50
Credits	
Contributions.....	\$ 4,695.00
Debits	
Postage	\$ 1,319.98
Ending Balance.....	\$ 9,641.52

For those who have internet access, there are many good web sites available we would like to let you know about. Many of you may remember brother Jim Boyd's publication a few years ago entitled: "A Burning Fire." Many of those lessons are now available in audio format as well as two of his books. Check these out.

www.aburningfire.net
www.pioneerpreachers.com
www.eecc.org
www.seektheoldpaths.com

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

Steve Gibson

By the time Abraham interceded, it was already too late for Sodom (Gen. 18:32). By the time Ezekiel prayed, the chosen nation had deteriorated so much that he was told: *“Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness”* (Ezek. 14:14). As the history of Bible peoples reveals, there comes a time when it is forever too late our foolish mistakes to undo.

Sadly, it is now too late for many of our brethren. Time to get ready has passed (cf. Matt. 25:8-10). The evil day has come, and the pious unprepared are not able to stand (Eph. 6:13). Even long time hearers of pleasant error now find themselves helplessly horrified at “at the end thereof” they are witnessing (Jer. 5:31). There are, of course, valiant preachers who remain “pure from the blood of all men” and throughout the churches there are noble saints who “have not defiled their garments” (Acts 20:26; Rev. 3:4). But in preaching, defending, and spreading the truth, many churches of Christ already lie still beneath the epitaph “Too Little, Too Late.”

Most congregations have warned too little against falsehood and liberalism. As Isaiah said of Israel’s preachers: *“His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber”* (Isa. 56:10). There has been too little barking from our pulpits, and too much howling at the moon. There has been too little knowledgeable instruction, and too many shameless displays of Biblical ignorance. This is so, in part, because there has been too little “attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” by those who would teach, and too much attendance to tables (1 Tim. 4:13; Acts 6:2). Thus, the church’s most serious injuries have been healed only “slightly” and such bandaids on cancers have proved “too little, too late” (Jer. 6:14).

We have also preached too little to our children and for a coming gen-

eration it is largely too late. Too few have learned in youth what is really involved in remembering the Creator, and too many have been trained up in human philosophy, even at the church’s expense (Eccl. 12:1; Prov. 22:6). Immoral leaven has stifled church discipline among us and permeated congregations with worldliness (1 Cor. 5:6). Too many youngsters who have seen it will perpetuate it, for too few tears have been shed over it (Acts 20:31). As “there arose another generation after” Joshua and the elders “which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel,” so there is arising a generation that knows only to look down on the kind of preaching that grew churches of Christ in years gone by (Judges 2:10).

Sound missions have been supported too little and preaching opportunities have been appreciated too late. Some have scoffed at open doors of evangelism and hoarded local treasures lest an “emergency” arise (cf. 1 Cor. 16:10). We are not to say to a needy neighbor, *“Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee”* (Prov. 3:28). Much less should a congregation of God’s children answer an eager missionary in this way! The longer our silver rusts away in bank basements, the more open doors we will have come too late to enter. With missionary preaching we simply cannot afford to produce “too little, too late,” for we may someday find ourselves calling on converts to generously send missionaries to our land.

Because we have preached too little, for many it is too late. “God is not mocked” and as we have sown to the wind, we shall surely “reap the whirlwind” (Gal. 6:7; Hos. 8:7). False doctrine will “eat as doth a canker” and “increase unto more ungodliness,” while its promoters “wax worse and worse” (2 Tim. 2:16,17; 3:13). Because our agnostic preachers have “hated knowledge,” they shall “eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices” (Prov. 1:29,31). But it is never too late for the God-fearing. Wisdom cries

“whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil” (Prov. 1:33). Let those who so dwell “preach the word” and “strengthen the things which remain” (2 Tim. 4:2; Rev. 3:2).

“Church” Colleges...

(Continued from page 81)

less is negligence on our part and unfair to our children and detrimental to the Lord’s church. Paul states *“Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”* (Gal. 6:7), and it appears in many cases we are reaping what we have sowed.

Elders in the Lord’s church need to train young men to teach and preach God’s word (1 Tim 4:13-16). We should never expect secular institutions with their own self-interests at stake to do what the church is to do. If someone wants to send their child to one of these institutions, they are free to do so, but they should remember what they are, secular institutions. If the elders of a congregation want to hire a preacher from one of these institutions they are also free to do so, but those elders need to understand what that preacher may have been taught and then remember their responsibility to him and the congregation.

Obviously, it is always important to point out error no matter where it is found, and that includes institutions of higher education. However, it is and has always been the elders’ responsibility to shepherd the local church and not allow any person or institution governed by men to improperly influence the congregation they oversee. If we allow false teaching to enter local congregations of the Lord’s church, the fault would be solely that of the elders, not altogether that of the secular institutions (Jer. 23:1-2).

In Christ,
Ernest N. Stacey, Jr.
Hartland, Michigan

THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY, PREPARATION, AND IN FACT

Harold Bigham

Long ago, a prophet of God stated, “*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever*”

(Daniel 2:44). Daniel was speaking of the coming kingdom of our Lord. Jesus the Christ identified the kingdom to be the church in Matthew 16:18-19. The apostle Paul said the church is the body and Christ is the head of it (Col. 1:18). Therefore, the kingdom can be referred to as the

church and also as the *body* of Christ.

Isaiah, the city prophet, spoke of the church in prophecy in Isaiah 2:2-4. He, through the inspiration of God, said the church would come in the last days and would be established in the city of Jerusalem. The Hebrew writer described the last days to be in existence during the Christian dispensation (Heb. 1:1-2). The last days began on Pentecost (Acts 2) and will remain until time shall be no more. The last days were not to be found during the Old Testament dispensation of time (Heb. 10:1; 8:8-13). Isaiah, as well as Zechariah prophesied that the place for the establishment of the kingdom/church would be in the city of Jerusalem (Isa. 28:16; 2:2-3; Zech. 1:16). The extent or domain of the kingdom would be to all nations (Isa. 2:2). This would be in accordance with Christ’s command to preach the Gospel to all the world or nations (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15). The preaching of the Gospel to all nations would not begin until Pentecost in 33 A.D. (Matt. 10:5-6). The apostle Paul related in Colossians 1:23 that the Gospel was universally proclaimed, thus fulfilling the prophecy given by Isaiah (Isa. 2:2).

Reliable men of inspiration spoke of the church in the preparatory stage in the Gospel record and shows it was not in complete existence. John the baptizer spoke of the church as being “at hand” (Matt. 3:1-2). Jesus the Christ spoke of his church in the preparatory stage as he stated, “That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1). The twelve were commissioned to preach “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 10:17). The seventy were told to say, “the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you” (Luke 10:9). Some in the very age of the Christ still looked with great anticipation toward the coming of the church in fact. The thief on the cross, as well as Joseph of Arimathaea realized the

THANKS MAX

Anthony Crowell

A week or so ago, I received an e-mail from my dad with Oak Hill church’s Mission Statement for 2003 attached. It would seem that Max Lucado has had a “vision” (page 2, paragraph 2).

“As the details of this vision crystallized for me, I shared them with our elders. They prayed, pondered, and tested the ideas and, ultimately saw them as God’s will for Oak Hills.” (page 2, paragraph 3)

“We call you to dedicate the next forty days (August 31 to October 9) to prayer, asking God to give us all strength to obey his call. Like the Apostle Paul, we desire to say, ‘I obeyed this vision from heaven.’ (Acts 26:19 CEV)” (page 2, latter part of paragraph 3)

“Another major initiative is *excellent pastoral care*. Our elders are facing their privilege with renewed vigor. They are re-evaluating and re-organizing, seeking to shepherd the church through Life Groups.” (page 4, last paragraph)

This document continues on with the different changes to the various worship services that Oak Hills will provide. But the most notable change is the following:

“Let’s seek to remove any barrier that would hinder a person from hearing the Gospel. Our seventh initiative calls for an alteration of our name. We can reach more souls by *modifying “Oak Hills Church of Christ” to Oak Hills Church*”. We do this for two reasons:

To follow the New Testament example: New Testament churches employed a variety of names, never clustering under a common banner other than Jesus Christ (See addendum)

To reach more souls for Christ. While we deeply appreciate our heritage in the Churches of Christ, we recognize the hindrance the name creates for some. A common comment from new members is this: “We would have come sooner, but we had to get over the name of the church.” This is a barrier that need not be.

We recognize the emotional struggle this decision spawns for some. Please know this choice came after careful, extended prayer and thought.” (pages 11 & 12)

I would like to express my appreciation to Max for finally dis-associating himself from the church of Christ. Now maybe the brotherhood can finally breath a sigh of relief knowing Max Lucado has finally shown his true self to the world.

Thanks Max.

church was still in the preparatory stage (Luke 23:42; Mark 15:42-43). Therefore, any church that came before Pentecost was much too early and any church that came after Pentecost was much too late.

The church of Christ came into complete existence or in fact on the day of Pentecost as the Gospel of Christ was being preached by the apostles and obeyed by sinners on that glorious occasion. Peter stood up and uncompromisingly proclaimed the Lord's death, burial, resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:22-36). Those who were pricked by the Gospel (Rom. 1:16), obeyed the Gospel and

were added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). The church of Christ spoken of in prophecy and in preparation finally came in fact! The church of Christ exists now wherever the pure and unadulterated Gospel is preached and obeyed and lived! The church of Christ will never be destroyed. It has weathered many violent storms over the ages, but it remains! As Daniel, by inspiration said, "it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44)!

The church of Christ as seen in prophecy, preparation and in fact is the called out body of believers having been obedient to the commands of the Gospel. Friend, will you

become a member of the church of Christ as scores of others have done throughout the ages and remain faithful and true till death shall take you home? By HEARING (Rom. 10:17), BELIEVING (Mark 16:16); REPENTING (Luke 13:3); CONFESSING the name of Christ (Acts 8:37) and being BAPTIZED for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16), you can become a member of the church that was prophesied, prepared, and is now in existence — the church of Christ!

"MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND THE LAW OF THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE"

Tom Wacaster

Since Jesus made the only exception to His law on marriage and divorce to be fornication, then anything that falls into the realm of "non-fornication" is not acceptable in His sight.

God has given man the ability to reason things through. There are certain laws which men inherently use when they think rationally. To deny these laws of rationality is absolutely absurd and would involve men in numerous self-contradictions. One of these is the law of the *excluded middle*. Simply stated, this means that something either possesses a certain characteristic or it does not — something is either true or it is 'non-true' (i.e. 'false'). For example, I may say that a pencil is either wood, or non-wood. There is no middle ground to such a statement. There is no quality somewhere between being wood and non-wood.

Now let us apply this to God's law on marriage and divorce. In Matthew 19:9 Jesus said, "*And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and marry another, committeth adultery...*" Our Lord is telling us that ANY man, putting away ANY woman to whom he is married, and marrying ANY OTHER WOMAN, enters into the act of adultery (he is actually living in a state of adultery since the verb is a present tense verb). There is, however, one exception to this law. If a person's spouse commits fornication, then the innocent party can put away his wife/husband and

marry another WITHOUT committing adultery.

Now let us apply the law of the excluded middle. When a couple splits the blanket, files for divorce and dissolves their marriage, it is either because of fornication or it is because of non-fornication (some cause other than fornication). Since Jesus made the only exception to His law on marriage and divorce to be fornication, then anything that falls into the realm of "non-fornication" is not acceptable in His sight. Unfortunately there are a great number of foolish men who have taken the position that "except for fornication" actually means "except for fornication and, in some cases, except for non-fornication." Given their position, the law of Jesus on marriage and divorce is meaningless. Can you imagine our Lord saying, "If any man puts away his wife, and marries another, he commits adultery. There is, of course an exception to this rule, and that is if the man puts his wife away for fornication, or, for non-fornication, then he does not commit adultery." Yet this is precisely what the position of some imply of our Lord when it comes to the subject of marriage and divorce. Such a position actually nullifies the law itself. Hence, men have "made void" the commandments of God by their traditions.



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"The Tara church of Christ in Jonesboro, GA is looking for a sound Gospel preacher. If you know of one please have them contact **Jim Lester** at (770) 471-7300 (building) or (770) 603-7468 (home). Thank you" ...**Max Fisher, Jonesboro, GA.** "I see in the Sept/2003 issue of STOP that one Steve DeVore of Idabel, OK does not want STOP

mailed to him anymore. He is evidently neither physical nor spiritual kin to me. I want to continue receiving STOP!" ...**Larry R. DeVore, Wooster OH.** "I read in the LIPSCOMB NEWS that Pat Boone will be performing during homecoming. Perhaps some of you remember when Pat and his wife left the church in the '60's. He got involved in tongue speaking (so called) and various neo-pentecostal meanderings. But why should we be surprised to see him at DLU? He is already on Pepperdine's board of directors. The apostasy continues!" ...**Roelf L. Ruffner, Carlsbad, NM.** "I have returned to full-time work and relocated in Eastern Ohio. I have always appreciated you and your loyalty to our Lord and His church. Please place me on the mailing list of S.T.O.P. Also, my son-in-law and daughter. Thank you so much!" ...**Jack Openshaw, Hanoverton, OH.** "Thank you so very much for sending the publication to the church that meets in Allenhurst, GA. Please accept the enclosed check to be used in whatever way you deem best in publication and distribution of this outstanding publication. Keep up the good work. May God continue to bless your efforts" ...**Bob Miller, church of Christ, Allenhurst, GA.** "We are a small congregation in need of good Gospel literature such as you provide. We would all appreciate being placed on your mailing list. Thank you!" ...**Crossroads church of Christ, Lynn, AL.** "My husband is deceased but I would like to continue to receive your paper S.T.O.P. Enclosed you will find a small contribution. Please use it where needed. Thank you so much for the work you are doing" ...**Margaret Wittig, Bizbee, AZ.** "You are doing a great job writing *Seek the Old Paths*. Keep up the good work. I am thankful for your keeping us informed. God bless. Thanks" ...**Charles Maxwell, Cookeville, TN.** "We appreciate your stamina and persistence in proclaiming the truth. God bless you in your efforts" ...**Donald White, Purcell, OK.** "Enclosed is a check to help in teaching of God's word. Enjoy the paper very much and the sound articles you print. Wish all of the bulletins by other people could be this sound. May God's blessing always be with you in your efforts to teach his word as it is written" ...**Thresa Weir, Sulphur Springs, TX.** "Please stop all mailing to this address. Thank you" ...**Oliver Seat, Batesville, AR.** "I am a member of the Harmony church of Christ in Saratoga, AR. I read one of your mail outs *Seek the Old Paths* and it was a joy to read after being told so many times that we are outdated and should change, but GOD's word has not changed and I am proud to see someone that stands on that principle. If possible, I would like to have 10 copies of *Seek the Old Paths* for our members" ...**Harmony church of Christ, James Vaughn, Saratoga, AR.** "We were recently given several copies of this pamphlet and were certainly impressed with each article's clarity and truthfulness always giving Scripture to uphold the truth of God's Word. Please include us on your mailing list. We received Jan. 2003, and would like Feb. 2003 issue. Also, do you have a bound volume of 2002? May God bless you in this good work" ...**Charles Nicks, Hayesville, NC.** [NOTE: Bound volumes are available for \$5 each.] "Would you please add me to your mailing list? I recently was handed a copy of *Seek the Old Paths* and found it very enjoyable. I would appreciate receiving it on a regular basis" ...**Jesse A. Baird, Jr., Jacksonville, FL.** "Peace, love, grace and mercy be unto us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. I am 58 years old, a Filipina and a U.S. immigrant. I read your Dec. 2002, which I got from Van Nuys church of Christ. I was so grateful that I found a publication like this. This publication is what I am longing for to make my faith strong. I like all the topics in this issue especially the "Boldly Proclaiming the Glorious Gospel of Christ" by Marvin Weir and "Steadfast for the Lord" by Charles Box. I read also at your mailbag two preachers from the Philippines, Serafin Calixto and Tito Peralta. I know them. I hope that not only these two Christ preachers from Phil. read your publication but all churches of Christ preachers in the Philippines must read and subscribe your publication to avoid division and conflict of the churches with regards to our teaching and doctrine. Thanks God, your publication meets the need. May the Grace of God be unto us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our very own SAVIOR" ...**Corazon G. Santiago, Los Angeles, CA.** "To God be the glory, and to you peace, grace and love be

with you all in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen. Am glad to see some of your hand-outs, they are rich and educative as well. I thank you so much for the great work you had been doing for God both in USA and in other nations to win souls for Christ our Lord. I earnestly appeal to you to consider me to be one of your students in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. I still need some Bible literatures and tracts for the ministry work in this area, if it is possible. Am one of the ministers in the church of Christ in Delta State. Am looking forward to see your reply soon by God's willing" ...**Moses O. Agofure, Nigeria, West Africa.** "I am very happy in touch with you through this letter and it is very glad to me in the Lord, to meet you by way of correspondence. First, we thank God and Christ (Eph. 5:20) and to you, and to our most beloved brother James D. Cox of Southern California School of Evangelism. The same brother sent me a copy of your printed page. We thanks to James D. Cox a good and productive servant of God, who is a great source of strength, and gift of God to us. We appreciate him, and love him. Myself and our brothers enjoyed the articles very much, and we discussed some of the contents in our regular Bible Classes. Thank you very much to you that you evangelizing and strengthening the preachers, Bible Class Teachers, and brother and sisters all over the world by the way of your printed page, with the blessings of the Lord. We pray that, it should be widely used for the Lord's service to spread the Kingdom of our Lord. God bless you all those, whose efforts are collectively brought up in the form of STOP. I would so much appreciate having copies of the previous and present, to be mostly used in the church services as well as share them with others too. It is very pleasure to us, we shall be added to your mailing list. We are very grateful to you, sending of your STOP for which I shall be thankful to you brothers. I will pray for you the brethren, there and ask that you do the same for us" ...**K. M. Ratna Kumar, India.** "God Bless You" ...**W. A. Washington, Houston, TX.** "May God bless you and your work to further the Gospel message" ...**Name Withheld.**

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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