

Seek The Old Paths

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

(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 5, No. 10

October 1994

EVANGELISM THE LORD'S WAY

Jon Macon

In these days in which the population of the world soars toward the 6 billion mark (of which over 95% live outside the U.S.), and as formerly closed doors in places such as the former Communist nations of Eastern Europe and certain areas of Southeast Asia, etc. are opening up, perhaps at no time in history has Christ's "great commission" to take the gospel to all the world presented the Lord's church with as great a challenge, as great an opportunity or as great a responsibility as today.

As we consider such staggering numbers of people we need first of all to face the hard reality that the overwhelming majority of these souls are lost! Matthew 7:13-14 and Luke 13:23-24 teaches that most people are walking along that broad road that leads to eternal destruction. First John 5:19 tells us that *"the whole world lieth in wickedness."* Billions of souls are in the snare of the devil, taken captive by him at his will (II Tim. 2:24-26). That these souls are in a lost condition spiritually, facing an eternity of torment and separation from God, is described so vividly in Ephesians 2:11-13 which says that those *"without Christ"* are *"aliens," "strangers," "having no hope, and without God in the world."* We see the problem and

its gravity, so what is the solution?

The solution or *"help"* which the man of Macedonia begged Paul for in a vision was someone to *"preach the gospel"* (Acts 16:9-10). The problem of the unsaved is that they are without Christ. The only solution is to give them *"God's power unto salvation"* which is *"the gospel"* (Rom. 1:16). The gospel reveals Christ and God's way to get into Christ and live the life that pleases him. But the *"Macedonian call"* shows that for the ones with the problem to receive the solution, someone must *"go"* and must *"preach."* Christ in the *"great commission"* has given his disciples, his church (us), not a suggestion but a commandment, the responsibility to *"go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15).

There are two essential components to fulfilling this commandment of Christ. One of the necessary ingredients is **Christians who are willing to go.** It is still true today and perhaps more than ever that *"the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few"* (Matt. 9:36-38). There remains a great need for people like Isaiah who responded to the Lord's question of *"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"* by saying, *"Here am I, send me"* (Isa.

6:8). The Lord still asks, *"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"* (Rom. 10:14)?

The second essential component is found in the very next verse, *"And how shall they preach, except they be sent"* (Rom. 10:15)? Therefore, not sending those willing to go is disobedience to Christ's great commission. Also, the need for senders only grows as the numbers of lost souls grows while at the same time the number of churches of Christ remaining faithful to the Lord amidst today's on-rushing tide of error grows smaller. Not everyone is able to go, but those who do not go must help send those who are willing to go.

There are several Biblical reasons for faithful congregations to desire to be senders. Of course, the first and foremost reason is that it is a commandment of God. Second, sending the gospel to the lost should serve as a great encouragement to a congregation. Those who send also get credit with the Lord for the fruit that is produced through evangelistic efforts. Philippi had *"fellowship in the gospel"* (Phil. 1:5) and the fruit of the work was abounding to their account as well as Paul's because they were provid-

ing for Paul's necessities (Phil. 4:15-17). This kind of fruit is eternal treasure in heaven that moth and rust will not corrupt and no thief can steal (Matt. 6:19-20). Supporters of evangelists are also called "*fellow helpers to the truth*" (III John 5-8). Many scriptures show the joy on the part of senders upon hearing of those converted through the efforts to which they had contributed (Acts 11:18; 15:3; 21:18-20). Third, sending out evangelists is an opportunity to be a good example to other brethren (I Thess. 1:1:7-8). Finally, what greater honor could there possibly be in all the world than to be "*laborers together with God*" (I Cor. 3:8-9; II Cor. 6:1) in his harvest?

To be willing to take part in evangelizing the world by either going or sending is only the beginning. Next, we need to turn our attention to the **way** we must do this work. For a work to bear fruit and abide, God must give the increase (1 Cor. 3:5-7). We can do all things through Christ (Phil. 4:13), and without him we can do nothing (John 15:5). For God to give increase to or "*bless*" a work, it must be done God's way (I Cor. 3:10-11). Nothing we do will be pleasing to or rewarded by God if we do not follow his pattern.

What, then, is the Lord's way to do evangelism?

First, **we must use the right message.** That has already been demonstrated to be the gospel. A few selections from Acts shows this as God's pattern: some 5,000 were converted "*by the word*" (Acts 4:4); "*the word of God increased*" and therefore disciples were multiplied (Acts 6:7); they "*went everywhere preaching the word*" (Acts 8:4); "*the word of God grew and multiplied*" (Acts 12:24); "*the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region*" (Acts 13:49); and "*mightily grew the word of God and prevailed*" (Acts 19:20). There is no

substitute for God's inspired word. The wisdom of men is not to be preached instead of or in conjunction with the scriptures. The word of man builds faith in men (I Cor. 2:4-5). The only source of godly faith is hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Jeremiah 23 contrasts God's word and man's: only God's words turn men from evil (v.22) while man's word strengthens the hands of evildoers (vs.14-21), thus God's word is the wheat (v.28), the fire and the hammer (v.29), while man's word is the chaff (v.28). We have God's Word, the Bible, and that alone is what we must faithfully speak (v.28). Men cannot say it better than God, and those who try to are to be withdrawn from (I Tim. 6:3-5).

Second, **we must preach the whole message.** What else did Christ mean when he said in the under-emphasized part of his great commission to teach all nations to observe all things that he has commanded? The gospel, therefore, includes the entire New Testament. Only by declaring "*all the counsel of God*" can we be pure from the blood of all men (Acts 20:20-21, 27). Like Paul, we must hold nothing back!

Third, **we must use the right method of evangelism.** The evangelist Timothy was instructed to commit the gospel (all of it) to faithful men who would be able to teach others also (II Tim. 2:2). We should do likewise. No amount of North American preachers could possibly make personal contact with all the billions in this world. We need to emphasize training native brethren in foreign countries to evangelize their people. In conjunction with the previous point, such training should have as its aim to see not only many souls converted, but to also see them *grounded in the faith* so they will grow up in the image of Christ from being spiritual babies. We should aim to have foreign lands filled with many

congregations of the Lord's church that are strong churches with qualified elders and deacons.

Fourth, **we must be zealous of this good work** (Titus 2:14). Truly "*many false prophets are gone out into the world*" (I John 4:1). We must not let their misguided zeal for error (Rom. 10:1-2) exceed our zeal for the truth!

Another principle of God for doing evangelism is that **only God's faithful children must be involved in the work.** This applies to both the ones going and the ones sending. That is, God will not give increase to a work that uses either those who have never been his children or his unfaithful children. In the Old Testament, God's chosen people of Israel forsook God and became unfaithful while Judah struggled to cling to the "*old paths*" of the Lord. King Amaziah of Judah had a battle to fight for the Lord against Edom. This was God's work yet Amaziah hired soldiers from Israel to take part in it. Though Israel was their brother, they were walking unfaithfully toward God and God sent a prophet to tell Amaziah that "*the Lord is not with Israel*" and if he used their soldiers, God would make him fall before the enemy (II Chron. 25:5-10). Unfaithful men offered to take part with Ezra in the Lord's work in rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. Though they claimed to be seeking and worshipping God the same as Ezra and God's faithful children, in truth, they were not, and Ezra refused to use them in the Lord's work, telling them, "*Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel*" (Ezra 4:13). This principle is still valid today as the New Testament says, "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*" (Eph. 5:11). Also, faithful churches of Christ are command-

ed in II John 9-11 not to aid false teachers or else be guilty of partaking of their evil deeds. (Notice that senders get credit for what is done in a work whether good or evil, yet still they must send, so therefore, they must discern those who are the teachers).

The flip-side of II John 9-11 is covered in III John 7-8 where faithful evangelists are not to take anything from unfaithful individuals or congregations to do the Lord's work for "his name's sake." Today, with so many of our "brethren" (like those of Israel were brothers to Judah) departing from the faith as Israel did, though claiming to be properly and acceptably seeking and worshipping God, we must take heed. It will certainly not please men (which isn't to be our aim anyway). We need to also note Israel's rejected soldiers' response to Judah in II Chron. 25:10,13. We cannot spiritually afford to give, receive from or cooperate in any way in doing the Lord's work with anyone who does not faithfully believe, teach, and follow the Lord's pattern, paths, doctrine, traditions, etc. Therefore fellowshiping or cooperating with denominations is wrong, but we see that wearing the Lord's name and claiming to be the church of Christ is not the sole criterion for determining faithfulness today any more than it was in the days of Amaziah, Ezra, Christ or Paul. To those who would question "limiting ourselves" in this way, let us remind them that "God hath power to help, and to cast down" and is able to give us much more than this (II Chron. 25:8-9) and "better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right" (Prov. 16:8).

As we consider the tragic masses of lost souls in our world today and their need for the gospel in order to be saved, let us do all we can to get that gospel to them. **Let us strive, however, to only do the work God's**

way whether we go ourselves or send others. In this, we will most assuredly be opposed (II Tim. 3:12; Phil. 1:28-30). But no matter what obstacles we face in this monumental task of fulfilling our Lord's command to do this work, in whatever "distress" we are in, may we have the faith

and courage of Nehemiah and his faithful fellow laborers and rise up and do the work, strengthening our hands for this good work, for truly our God's hand is also good upon us (Neh. 2:17-18)!

3622 Boundbrook Lane
Columbia, SC 29206

The Liberals Among Us Are Denominationalizing The Church

Roy J. Hearn

1. They are doing this by denying the identity of the church, and classifying it simply as another denomination among denominations.

2. They are teaching the doctrines and commandments of men claiming that the Holy Spirit literally, actually, bodily, personally indwells Christians. Some are claiming to perform miracles, and to speak in tongues.

3. They are denying that there is a pattern of worship and thus rejecting the observance of the Lord's supper on the first day of the week, the use of instrumental music and throwing caution to the winds in other affairs. They are advocating that scriptural bounds should be ignored and that we should embrace the fellowship of practically all denominations.

4. Liberalism tends to cheapen the cause of Christ by using cheap schemes to promote the Lord's work instead of emphasizing the great doctrines of the gospel, which if presented and accepted are sufficient to promote the Lord's work.

5. We emphasize, liberalism would sacrifice the Restoration Plea and Principle and ignore the work and sacrifices of those who are known as pioneer preachers, saying that they did not have the "spirit of the gospel."

6. Liberalism is stressing the so-called "social gospel" which takes attention off man's sins and God's judgment to come. The social gospel takes emphasis off the authority of Christ as expressed in and through the Bible (Heb. 1-3). Therefore the social gospel is anti-social because without the recognition of the authority of Christ the gospel has no restraining power. Without its restraining power it does not curb the sensual desires, and worthy aspirations of people. Consequently, people who subscribe to the so-called "social gospel" may not act properly toward each other.

Be Not Deceived With Vain Words

Charles A. Pledge

Just because the world approves a thing does not mean one may do that with God's approval. Much to the contrary! Let us first have the approval of God, then let us do it with confidence. Let every gainsaying mouth be stopped by those who love the truth.

The world has always used vain words to deceive concerning sin. That is to be expected because when people see the bottom line of sin they are repulsed by it. But it is sad when brethren use vain words to evade the force of teaching against sin. Yet that is exactly the situation we see regarding all grace and no law; salvation by faith only as taught by some among us; a false definition of legalism that inveighs against obedience to God's word, and in many other ways indicating a willingness to accept sin as a normal Christian way of life.

We read in Ephesians 5:6: *"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."* The vain words in this passage are empty words. Any word designed to lead one to believe sin is acceptable to God and, unrepented of, will go unpunished by God, is vain.

Observe the things Paul included when he declared that because of these things the wrath of God comes. Read verses 3-5 which say: *"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater,*

hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

In one place this preacher was severely criticized as being a false teacher for saying it would be sinful to baptize a couple living together in fornication, with no pretense of marriage, until they repented and quit that sin. It was said afterwards that if they repented no one could refuse to baptize them even though they were determined to continue living together as in the past. What empty words to claim repentance has no effect upon a sinful life.

Suppose John the baptist had that idea. Would he have said the following words: *"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham"* (Matt. 3:7-9)? Any reasoning that leads to the conclusion that God will accept a sinner while that sinner continues to flagrantly and deliberately practice sin is faulty reasoning and words of that sort are vain words.

One preacher made the statement that Christians need not get uptight over whether they do right or wrong. His conclusion was that it doesn't matter if a Christian practices sin because

the grace of God takes care of things like that. That man hadn't read with the understanding what Paul wrote. If he had, he doesn't believe it. Certainly the grace of God provides for forgiveness of all sins when the sinner meets the terms and conditions God places on forgiveness.

Another person said they didn't have to be concerned about their actions; they did what they wanted to do and the blood of Jesus took care of it all. John writes in I John 1:7: *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."* The blood of Jesus does cleanse Christians from their sins in a continual way. But, only if we walk in the light. Walking in the light is the condition of the cleansing. Let no person deceive you with vain words. Scripture is truth!

In a more radical way we are hearing statements questioning the credibility of all Scripture, especially Scripture which reproves sin and calls for the sinner to repent and turn to God. A new breed of preachers has arisen who honor neither God and Christ, nor their word. These preachers scoff at plain statements of God's word, including Paul's statement to the Ephesian Christians. We are confidently told that these things are but a shadow of the gospel and must be understood spiritually. Shades of

atheism!

Paul warned the evangelist Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:1-5: *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."*

Perhaps the apex of foolishness and ignorance is manifested by the statement: "We are not expected to believe and regard all the negative, harsh, and unloving statements men wrote in the Bible just because they are written." Why even bother to claim to preach the gospel if one believes such? And, if one is not concerned about pleasing God, why even bother to be religious. In such an instance it is nothing more than an absurd waste of time.

Men are making vain statements about moral sins, from hating a brother to homosexuality; from lying and stealing to murder. Just because the world approves a thing does not mean one may do that with God's approval. Much to the contrary! Let us first have the approval of God, then let us do it with confidence. Let every gainsaying mouth be stopped by those who love the truth. Let us reject outright all vain statements that are designed to cause us to relax in our battle against the sinner of all sins; Satan. Let us love, respect, know, and obey the gospel of Jesus (and the gospel includes the writings of the apostles of Jesus). Let us live in such a manner that our very life is reproof of all vain words.

7 West Colorado
Sheridan, WY 82801

THE NEW HERMENEUTIC

Kerry Duke

The title of this discussion has been the center of much attention in the church in recent months. Certain men in the church have proposed the idea that a new approach to interpreting the Bible is needed. Of course, to suggest the need for a new approach is to imply an inadequate, "old" approach to interpretation. For these men, the insistence that Biblical authority is established by means of direct statement, example, and implication is an outdated and faulty model. This model, they contend, had its roots in the scientific era of which Alexander Campbell was a part. They reject this approach as a man-made hermeneutic.

The new hermeneutic, however, is not merely an arbitrary rejection of the "direct statement-example-implication" approach. Doctrines of men are not created in a vacuum. Men have reasons for what they teach, and the underlying rationale of a doctrine is present though it may be unnoticed. What many who critique the new hermeneutic fail to observe is the fact that it is a perspective on Biblical matters more than it is a systematic model interpretation. The mindset of the new hermeneutic is that the "old" model of interpretation is cold, mechanical, and lifeless, having no spirit or heartfelt religion. It is actually a protest to what is perceived to be an approach to interpretation that leads to a heartless theology that relies on human reasoning rather than that the love of God.

In regard to the rejection of the view that Biblical authority is established by means of direct statement, example, and implication, advocates of the new hermeneutic ignore several important facts. First, the only conceivable ways of ascertaining what the Bible authorizes is by a direct statement, an example, implication and the realm of expedience. Second, the Bible itself verifies this approach. All that Christians do must be *"in the name of the Lord Jesus"* (Col. 3:17). Bible writers themselves authorized by way of direct statement (II Thess. 3:6), example (I Cor. 11:1), and implication (Matt. 22:31-32). Third, the efforts of advocates of the new hermeneutic are inconsistent. When they wish to establish a point on a Biblical matter, do they not appeal to direct statements, examples, and implications of Scripture?

In regard to the perception of the "old" hermeneutic as spiritually cold and mechanical, it is appropriate to observe that this type of over-reaction has been common in religious thought for centuries. When the rational side of man is stressed in regard to religion, some eventually fear that the emotional side of man is neglected. This fear often leads to the extreme view that correct reasoning (which employs the intellectual side of man) is a threat to "heartfelt" religion. When this frame of mind is produced, feelings become the standard authority. Having Bible authority then becomes of little concern.

Jesus said that we must love God with all of our heart and mind (Matt. 22:37). The emotions are an important part of the Christian life, but God demands that we use our intellect to *"prove all things"* (I Thess. 5:21). Regardless of how one may feel, no one can go to heaven without proper respect for Bible authority.

3525 Vista Circle
Cookeville, TN 38501

Lesson From The Colossian Heresy

Joe W. Nichols

"Take heed lest there be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiment of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

Each generation of God's people is obligated to learn from the heresy propagated in the church at Colosse and *"take heed."* Heresy supplants the Faith of children of God and terminates their salvation.

Paul outlines and confronts the heresy advanced in the church at Colosse (2:14-23): a combination of Judaism, Gnosticism and Mysticism. There is definitely an attempt to rob Jesus of his headship (1:18; 2:11), to deny his association with flesh (2:9; II John 7-8), and to accredit the creation to some other source (1:16). Through reducing the Christ and his work, the church was being led into accepting certain forms of Judaism and other forms of Mysterious rites (feast days, Sabbath, circumcision, outward shows of piety, etc.), ascetic disciplines (rejection of marriage, inflicting pain and punishment to the flesh, etc.) and acknowledgment of intermediate beings said to be responsible for creation and salvation (the worship of angels). Gnosticism considered all matter to be evil (spirit was thought to be good). Therefore, according to the doctrine, God could not have created heaven, earth and man which was considered to be sinful and evil. The conclusion being that lesser forms from God worked in the creation and later in the redemption process.

Gnosticism associated with Mysticism claimed a special insight (enlightenment) into the intermediate realm where angelic orders worked. According to the doctrine, only through this knowledge man could be saved

from the clutches of evil matter. This resulted in a denial of the work of the Christ and the all-sufficiency of the Gospel in achieving the redemption of man.

The Colossian Heresy might be summarized in this statement: that the creation and redemption of man was not the work of Christ alone, but the work of intermediate spirits and through such knowledge man is made complete.

There is an old saying, "Don't bite the hand that feeds you." When the greatness of the Christ and his work is reduced, rendered in-effective, or eliminated - salvation is lost. Just as the Colossian Heresy threatened the salvation of the Colossian church, heresies today can do the same for us:

1. When Jesus is presented as something less than the Christ, the Son of the living God; our salvation is threatened (Col. 1:15-20; Acts 4:12; John 11:25; 14:6).

2. When baptism is dismissed as a condition of God's grace, the blessings put therein are nullified - *"ye were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were raised with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead"* (Col. 2:11-12).

3. When the church is deemed unimportant and its function as the body over which Christ is head is eliminated, the blessings therein are lost (the saved are added to it; each one is to membership it favorably; fellowship with God, Christ and one another is enjoyed in it; it is God's mission institution; Jesus is the Savior of it (Col. 1:13,18; Eph. 4:15-16, 22-23, 5:22-33;

I Cor. 12:18-27).

Heresy is a very serious matter. Heretics, *"after a first and second admonition"* are to be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:10). Christ, as our Savior; baptism, wherein the body of flesh is cut away; and the church where the saved are placed and nurtured until Christ comes for them are all important and necessary to Christians' salvation. Any heresy that seeks to render all, or any one of these points useless to our salvation, surely *"makes spoil"* of us and *"robs"* us of our prize.

P. O. Box 853
Vidalia, LA 71373

CONTRIBUTORS:

Billy Jack Alexander	\$13
Norvin A. Brewer	\$20
Shelbyville Rd.	
Church of Christ	\$25
Richard Metzgar	\$500
Clarence Keller	\$15
R. E. Vann	\$25
Phillip E. Spaulding	\$5
Pauline Kennedy	\$10
Charlie Choate	\$5
Anonymous	\$245
Kevin Cole	\$15
L. O. Word	\$75
John H. Rider	\$25
Ben A. Way	\$10
Gary Wilder	\$15
Freddie Clayton	\$10
Anonymous	\$25
Verona Church of Christ	\$50
W. H. Dell	\$10
Joyce McCharen	\$10
Albert Duke	\$50
Delena Duke	\$50
Robert Hayes	\$10
Estelle Green	\$10
Virginia Sullivan	\$25
Anonymous	\$1,200

MAILBAG...*(Continued from page 8)*

council of God. Not many will do this and I am so thankful for you. Thank you for your articles in S.T.O.P. I believe this is the best publication in the brotherhood. God bless you and yours as you continue to stand and fight for the truth. I love and appreciate so much what you are doing" ...*Duncanville, TX.* "You are doing a good work through S.T.O.P. " ...*Baytown, TX.* "I read your August/94 issue and the articles were excellent! We need this type of stand for the truth and pattern. Please add me to your monthly list" ...*Richmond, VA.* "A friend gave me a copy of S.T.O.P. and I have just finished reading it. I want to commend you for your good work and the congregation for making it free. I appreciate your stand for the truth and desire to make it available to all who will read it. You and the leadership are to be commended for your work. Keep up the good work. We see liberalism creeping around and making it's way into some of the congregations in this part of the country also" ...*Sterling, IL.* "Sure enjoy your paper" ...*Bell Buckle, TN.* "I like your paper very much and support you in preaching the Word" ...*Jamestown, TN.* "After reading another sound issue (Aug/94), I realized my elders and minister should be receiving it. I look forward each month to your excellent paper" ...*Woodstock, GA.* "We thank you for your stand for the truth" ...*Florence, SC.* "There was so much good information in your Aug/94 issue concerning Jubilee and what is going on in Nashville. I need some extra copies to pass out to some preachers here" ...*East Liverpool, OH.* "Recently someone shared your publication with me. I in turn shared it with several of my friends. We all are so thankful that there are faithful Christians who are willing to stand for the truth. Please add these names to the mailing list. Thanks muchly. Keep up the good work" ...*Blue Ridge,*

CA

Please send us your change of address before you move. The Post Office does not forward third class mail. It costs us 29¢ for each one we get back if you do not send us your change of address. **You will be removed from the mailing list.** We want you to receive S.T.O.P. if you want it, but please send us your new address!

**LEROY BROWNLOW
ON DEBATING***Dennis Gullede*

The name Leroy Brownlow is a household term among churches of Christ. Many of us were brought up on his book, "Why I Am A Member Of The Church of Christ." He is the author of many other books that have benefitted people for many years.

Not long ago I conducted an interview with brother Brownlow and among the questions I asked him was this one: "It seems that our brotherhood has seen a decline in debating over the past thirty years or so. Do you agree that this is true, and if so, to what would you attribute the decrease in the number of public discussions?" His reply:

Yes, there has been a decrease in the number of debates. The reasons: (1) We are not being challenged by the sectarians as we once were. In the past we baptized so many of their people, it made them want to fight. Now, we are not making inroads among them. Now, they are barely noticing us, except for an occasional compliment for being so much like them. (2) In the past we were largely a rural or small town church. In that setting with no interest in human recognition and glory, the members were more inclined to put themselves on the front line in the preaching and defense of a distinctive gospel. Later as we got larger, moved from the back alley to the main street, members went into business and wanted customers, began seeking public jobs, and joined clubs and associations. As our convictions became tired, we became tired of being different. We became hungry for recognition. As an example, we went wild over Pat Boone. Our people were saying, "You know, Pat Boone is a member of the church of Christ." Saying it to everybody. We didn't feel honored to be in the church bought and headed by Jesus Christ. We felt elevated to be in a church with Pat Boone, a national recording artist. Hence, in many congregations they publicly sold his book in the Sunday morning worship, even though it contained pictures of pinup girls scantily dressed. That didn't matter. We were so hungry for notice, we thought it might reflect a little glory on us. Well, we really got burned on that one - you know the result.

It appears that our view of debates and the gospel in general has been affected by either direct or indirect instruction from sectarians. Many of our preachers and professors have sat at the feet of errorists in sectarian seminaries for two or three years and then went back to our colleges and pulpits. Consequently, our students in college and our people in the pews began indirectly receiving instruction from Baptists, Presbyterians, Nazarenes and others. No, not all who have gone to denominational theology schools have weakened. But, generally speaking, it appears to have had an influence on us. I can't conceive that the Catholic Church would send their men who are studying for the priesthood to a Baptist Seminary.

*P.O. Box 345
Mabelvale, AR 72103*

MAILBAG



"Keep up the fine publication S.T.O.P. and the work you are doing for the Lord at East Corinth. It is so sad and heart breaking to see or hear of so many Christians who no longer are

standing for the truth" ...*Pontotoc, MS*. "I am enjoying S.T.O.P. and appreciate the truth that is being taught, especially with all the error that is being taught today. May God bless you as you proclaim the truth of his Word" ...*Weatherford, TX*. "Please send me S.T.O.P. I saw a copy and enjoyed every article. Keep up the good work" ...*Orange Park, FL*. "We received our first issue of S.T.O.P. It's very true to the scriptures. Keep us on your mailing list. I will pass it on to others" ...*Wewoka, OK*. "I want you to know that I enjoy S.T.O.P." ...*Hyden, KY*. "I was handed a Feb/94 copy of S.T.O.P. on the speakers at Jubilee. I enjoyed it very much and feel the speakers should be exposed to their error. Keep up the good work" ...*McMinnville, TN*. "I enjoy and appreciate S.T.O.P. Thanks very much" ...*Clinton, MS*. "I really enjoy reading your paper. It has been a real inspiration to me in living a better life" ...*Hyden, KY*. "We so much appreciate your work and your publication" ...*Charleston, MS*. "We recently came across a copy and enjoyed reading it. We appreciate your stand for the truth" ...*Lynchburg, TN*. "We appreciate all the effort you put into your service to God. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for allowing Him to use you in such a broad range of work. Your dedication and firm stand on the truth is an excellent example for members of the church everywhere. May you have continued success at East Corinth. Our prayers are with you" ...*Las Cruces, NM*. "I very much appreciate your stand for truth and your willingness to put the material in print" ...*Hartsville, MO*. "You are doing a great and fine work. I pray God you can keep it going" ...*Cookeville, TN*. "The cause of Christ is endangered here in our area. Many of the elect are being drawn away by the 'blowing winds' of liberalism. We need strong teaching. We need to be aware of what is happening to the beautiful bride of Christ" ...*Green Valley, AZ*. "I am enjoying S.T.O.P. God bless you for this publication and thanks be to God there are faithful Christians and leaders who are standing boldly for the Faith, contending earnestly for the Truth, in a day when that is no longer a popular stand to make. I am enclosing a list of Christians who need to receive your paper so badly. They need to know there are those that love the Truth so much that the elders are willing to make this paper free to those who request it. Please send me 10 copies of brother Robinson's book 'Preparing For The Eldership.' This is the best book in study and condensed form. I am recommending it for men's training classes and I pass them on to young men that need to be preparing for the eldership in God's service. The cause of Christ is endangered here in our area. Many of the elect are being drawn away by the 'blowing winds' of liberalism. We need strong teaching. We need to be aware of what is happening to the beautiful Bride of Christ. God bless you and your work" ...*Green Valley, AR*. "My thanks to the East Corinth Church of Christ, it's fine elders and preacher, for the printing of S.T.O.P. It teaches the truth in its simplicity so anyone can understand the subject being taught. It is truly inspiring. May God continue to bless you all in this work is my prayer" ...*Vichy, MO*. "I enjoy receiving S.T.O.P. The articles are timely and helpful because they help people keep abreast of what is happening in the brotherhood as well as build one up spiritually. Keep up the good work" ...*Krypton, KY*. "Thank you for the publication S.T.O.P. We are grateful that you are making this material available" ...*Fayetteville, NC*. "Wonderful paper. Keep up the good work" ...*Morrison, TN*. "I enjoy S.T.O.P. Excellent reading" ...*Louisville, MS*. "Please do not mail your newsletter to us anymore. It was not requested and takes time away from our Bible study. I'm sure we would

never be able to please you anyhow. I'm too busy praying each day to please God and then reading his word for me. Save your postage and perhaps you can use it to further disrupt, discourage and divide other Christians. Yours in Christ" ...*Tyler, TX*. [Editor's note: my heart aches to think of how people, well intentioned people, turn their ears away from the truth and unto fables (II Tim. 4:4). The one that submitted this person's name wanted them so desperately to come to a knowledge of the truth that they might be saved. However, some people just will not heed. It is error, not truth, that disrupts, discourages and divides. We pray and work for the day to come that brethren will open their eyes and see! The whole world lieth in wickedness (I John 5:19) and those who have departed from the faith do also.] "You do a fine job standing for the Truth" ...*Gideon, MO*. "I thank you time and again for upholding the truth in such perilous times. Your publication is vital in keeping us informed where we would not be otherwise" ...*Atlanta, GA*. "I was recently given a copy of your publication and must say I enjoyed it very much. I appreciate your stand for the truth. I would enjoy receiving your paper" ...*Murfreesboro, TN*. "I think S.T.O.P. is wonderful" ...*Russellville, AR*. "Sorry please. Do not send your bulletin to me. I will not find time to read it. Have to study my other lessons. Sorry, thanks" ...*Mayhill, NM*. "I like what I read. Continue to stand for the truth. God bless you" ...*Lexington, AL*. "I am so grateful for brothers like yourself who are not ashamed of the Gospel, who will stand firm and put on the whole armor of God and preach the whole

(Continued on page 7)

MAILBAG

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

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
P A I D
Permit No. 253
Corinth, MS

EAST CORINTH CHURCH OF CHRIST
1801 CRUISE ST.
CORINTH, MS 38834-5108

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED