

Seek The Old Paths

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

(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 10, No. 10

October 1999

THE INNUENDO OF APOSTASY

Todd Clippard

An article in the August, 29, 1999, edition of Nashville's *Tennessean* newspaper told of **David Lipscomb University's dismissal of one of its Bible professors because the congregation where the professor served as a minister had begun to use instrumental music in its worship services.** Doug Varnado, professor of Bible for 17 years and director of a campus missions program, was forced to resign after the *Community Church of Christ (CCC)* in Hendersonville, Tennessee, began using recorded instrumental music earlier this year. (The CCC is the result of a split in the Hendersonville Church of Christ some nine years ago.)

The article was replete with innuendo and error. However, being familiar with the *Tennessean*, I know the paper's Religion Editor, Ray Waddle, is no friend of the Lord's church. Thus, it is difficult to know how accurately Mr. Waddle paraphrased and interpreted those whom he interviewed. Nevertheless, we will examine the article assuming Waddle accurately conveyed the intended meaning of the interview participants.

According to the article, *"This spring, the church leadership declared publicly that instrumental music was not a 'salvation' issue. It's not important if the church adds instrumental music on occasion."* First, by what authority does CCC, or anyone else, add anything to the worship of God? We are commanded

to do all things according to the authority of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17). Paul warned the Corinthians against going beyond the things that are written (1 Cor. 4:6). To add instrumental music to the worship of the New Testament church is to transgress (go beyond) the law of God and in so doing, to commit sin (1 John 3:4).

The article continued, *"More important (than instrumental music — TC) is a faith community that shows compassion for people seeking God."* Are the issues of acceptable worship and compassion for the lost mutually exclusive? Can one not seek to worship God acceptably while at the same time show genuine concern for the lost? What good does it do to convert a man only to teach him error concerning the worship of God? In giving the Great Commission, Jesus said we are to make disciples by "baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20). Does the use of instrumental music in worship qualify as one of those things which Jesus commanded us to teach and observe? Or, does the use of instrumental music in worship fall under condemnation as a tradition of men (Matt 15:9)? The article insinuates that those of us who desire to worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24) have no compassion for the lost.

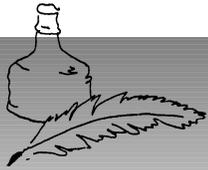
Later in the article, Varnado is quoted as saying, *"Everybody's wel-*

come here." Again, this is nothing more than insinuation. As we have already shown, one of the favorite tactics of digressives is to portray faithful brethren as unkind and unloving. Is it unkind to desire to obey God? The prophet Samuel told King Saul, *"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams"* (1 Sam. 15:22). Apparently, digressives believe that the appearance of kindness and love is better than to obey! Again, obedience is not mutually exclusive to kindness and love.

Furthermore, Varnado's statement of inclusion is refuted in the very same paragraph of the article. The article noted that one minister quit over the introduction of the instrument, and five other members (and we assume their families) were forced to leave to save their jobs at Goodpasture Christian School. This attitude disregards the teaching of Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8. Despite the aforementioned statement of CCC's leadership, how the church is to worship is a salvation matter. However, for the sake of showing their inconsistency, let's assume the use of instrumental music in worship is an optional matter. If CCC is going to practice what Paul taught about love, unity, and matters of opinion, they must

(Continued on page 77)

The Innuendo Of Apostasy...



Editorial...

RUBEL SAYS, STEVE FLATT REPEATS

The following quotes are taken from tapes of both **Rubel Shelly** and **Steve Flatt**. They are laid out side by side to show how Flatt often parrots Shelly. These statements were compiled by brother Wayne Coats and printed in the May, 1998 issue of *The Plumblin*. You would do well to subscribe to this monthly paper that exposes error in the brotherhood. Brother Coats is the editor. The cost is \$5 a year. You may contact him at: 705 Hillview, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122.

SHELLY:

The mountain where Jesus preached was not "...a snow capped peak..."

The location was "...something of a natural outdoor amphitheater."

The sermon is "...history's most famous sermon."

"This sermon is not a salvation sermon."

"John 3 is Jesus' teaching about salvation, and how one enters the kingdom of God."

"Matthew 5, 6 and 7, is the life style of which the newborn child of God is called..."

"...Neither is this Jesus' code for how one continues in salvation..."

"...Neither is this sermon a repudiation of the law of Moses which is how a lot of us have understood it."

"Jesus' purpose was never to repudiate, abolish,

FLATT:

It was "...not a snow covered mountain."

It was an "...amphitheater."

It is "...history's most famous sermon."

"Number one, the sermon on the mount is not a salvation message."

"If you're looking for a salvation message from Jesus, turn to John chapter three and look at the sermon he preached to Nicodemus."

"The sermon on the mount is a description of a lifestyle to which a child of God is already called."

"It is also not a code for how to continue in discipleship."

"The sermon on the mount is not a repudiation of the law of Moses."

"Jesus never repudiated the law." "Read with me

SHELLY:

set aside, do away with what the law of Moses revealed to us about the heart of God and will of God."

"Those six antitheses are between the commands of God as interpreted by the Rabbis and Scribes, versus – those commands as they were intended from God."

"For example, never does the law say, as in Matthew 5, verse 43, 'You've heard it said love your enemy,' ah...love your neighbor, and hate your enemy – the law of Moses never said that..."

"In Leviticus 19, verses 17 and 18, the Jews specifically were told under the old law, you can't hate your fellowman, you can't hate your neighbor, you can't get revenge."

"I'm not sure there is any sense in which the law is abrogated."

"The old law and the new law, that's not really the way to say it."

FLATT:

what Jesus says 'do not think that I've come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the least letter, not the least stroke of the pen, will by any means disappear from the law until every thing is accomplished."

"No those antitheses beginning in Matthew 5:21 where Jesus said, 'You've heard it said, but I say unto you – those are not between an old law and a new law, but between the law of Moses as it was interpreted by scribes and teachers and the laws of God as they were designed to bring about goodness in our lives."

"Look at Matthew 5, verse 43. It said, 'You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy, but I tell you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

"You go home and read Leviticus 19, verses 17 and 18 – you'll find you love your neighbor and you don't pay revenge on anybody."

"As a matter of fact, the law of Moses hasn't been done away. As a matter of fact, the basic law of Moses wasn't the initiation of anything drastically new."

"There is not in that sense an old law and new law."

SHELLY:

“There’s an old covenant which is a part of that covenant predicated certain things on commandments and in the new covenant those same basic things are predicated not on law any more but on grace and yet the law is such as continues through both covenants.”

“The sermon on the mount is not a societal ethic.”

“Bertrand Russell... says you’ll remember that Christ said judge not lest you be judged.”

“In John 18, verse 22, one of the temple soldiers before Annas socked him in the mouth. Instead of turning the other cheek, Jesus protested. He said, ‘Why in the world did you do that? If I’ve done something illegal, if I’ve done something against the law give testimony in a court but don’t do that.’”

“We are in a hopeless situation even as the church, in light of passages like 2 Thess. 3, verse 10, that tells the church not to help some people. If this statement about, from the person who would borrow, or would ask something of you, don’t turn away. If that’s absolute, the church is in a hopeless situation.” “These are ideal guide lines for kingdom ethics in terms of personal one on one relationships within the kingdom.”

FLATT:

“There is an old covenant that was predicated on law and there is a new covenant that’s predicated on grace.”

“The sermon on the mount is also not a societal ethic.”

“Bertrand Russell wrote... for example, the idea, ‘Judge not that ye be not judged’ in the sermon on the mount. Bertrand Russell said, ‘Have you ever known a Christian judge sitting on a bench to live by that? How on earth can a Christian judge sitting behind a bench, judge not?’”

“In John chapter 18, verse 22, when he was on trial before Pilate, one of the soldiers smacked him in the mouth and Jesus turned around to that soldier and said, ‘What have you done? And Jesus said, ‘If I have spoken wrongly, bring charges against me. If not, why do you strike me?’”

“What about 2 Thess. 3, where Paul says there are some cases, where, when people come to you, he says don’t give them anything to eat. How does that jive with what Jesus says in the sermon on the mount? You can put yourself in a hopeless situation if you do not understand what the sermon on the mount is designed to be.” “It is designed to be ideal guide lines for personal kingdom ethics...”

SHELLY:

“It’s not a salvation sermon.”

“Well what in the world is the sermon on the mount? It’s a discipleship manual.” “...It’s the good fruit of being saved.”

“The kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven is neither the church nor the future state of the saved.” “But the kingdom of heaven itself is the sovereign rule of God in the hearts and lives of the redeemed right now.”

“I hope we will be encouraged to pray your kingdom come, your will be done, and no longer think that we can’t really pray that prayer because since Pentecost that part’s inappropriate, it’s been fulfilled.”

FLATT:

“Number one, the sermon on the mount is not a salvation message.”

“...It is a manual for the heart of a disciple.” “...It tells you about the fruits of discipleship.”

“And one of the things I want you to understand about the kingdom is this. You’ve heard either, all your life, that the kingdom of heaven is the church, or the kingdom of God is the church. You’ve heard other people teach and I think – so that the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, is heaven. It’s when we get there, it’s not till the earth ends, and we get to heaven. Let me tell you what the kingdom of heaven is, or the kingdom of God. It is the sovereign rule of God over the hearts of his people. What it is, it’s not exactly accurate to call it the church.”

“A little bit later we will get into Matt. 6, to the Lord’s prayer... remember that expression where it says, ‘Thy kingdom come?’ And I’ve heard some teachers and preachers I respect a great deal say, ‘You know we can’t pray that any more because the church has come,’ I beg to differ. I suggest to you that of all the statements in that prayer, that’s the one we need to pray the most. Lord, let your kingdom come over my heart.”

MOVING? Please be sure to send us a **CHANGE OF ADDRESS** request so that we can continue to mail “Seek The Old Paths” to you. Please include your old mailing address and zip code for reference. Thanks for your help in this matter.

ATTITUDE IS NOT OVERLOOKED BY THE LORD!

It is false to teach or insinuate that externals are of little or no significance to the Lord. There are proper acts and steps that must be submitted to and engaged in if one is to please God. No amount of rhetoric will diminish the truth that there is a divine pattern to be followed and commandments to be obeyed. The Lord said, "...So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). In John 14:15 Christ states, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." And again, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). The apostle John said, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3-4). And, in 1 John 5:2-3 we have these words, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." In view of the preponderance of scriptural evidence, it is mere foolishness to assert that man is not required to keep God's commandments.

Speaking by inspiration, the apostle Paul challenges Christians to "hold the pattern of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13). And, it is equally foolish to argue that Moses was commanded to "make all things according to the pattern" (Heb. 8:5) that was given to him, but that no pattern has been given for the "better covenant" (Heb. 8:6) we are under today.

God has always been concerned with the heart of man. In Matthew 5:8 the Master said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." And later the Savior noted, "This people honoureth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Matt. 15:8-9). Solomon declared, "Keep thy heart with all

diligence; For out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). The wise man continued by recording, "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to Jehovah: Though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished" (Prov. 16:5).

Such scriptures prove that a person may outwardly engage in doing the right thing, but because of inward attitude the correct action becomes empty and meaningless in God's sight. One's attitude has always been a determining factor between acceptable and unacceptable worship. Let us now study an incident of old where the attitudes of people rendered their actions hollow and useless.

Jeremiah 7 vividly describes God's people assembling in His House while continuing to live hypocritical lives! In the days of Jeremiah, God's people took special care to assemble in the temple on a regular basis. They would gather in the temple and cry, "...The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah..." (Jer. 7:4). They believed that since they were God's people and were assembling in God's House they would receive Jehovah's grace and blessings. But Jeremiah informed his people, "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations" (Jer. 7:8-10)?

The lesson to be learned is that all is not necessarily well with the soul just because one has obeyed the Gospel plan of salvation and is assembling with the brethren in the Lord's church at every opportunity. The people in Jeremiah's day were still in love with the world and its worldly ways. They did not love God with the whole heart (cf. Matt. 22:37). "Upon every high hill and under every green tree" God's people played the harlot (Jer. 2:20). In other words, every time the opportunity arose, God's people yielded to

sin, and then would gather in God's House thinking they would be blessed for so doing. It did not work **then**, and neither will it work **today**.

One's actions and fruits are important (cf. Matt. 7:20). The words of James make a powerful concluding statement regarding this matter: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:21-22).

Marvin L. Weir
5810 Liberty Grove Rd.
Rowlett, TX 75089

CONTRIBUTORS

Ruth Sapp.....	\$20
Bill and Joy Gower.....	\$100
Ernest and Faye Meador.....	\$25
Wards Chapel Church of Christ, Manchester, TN	\$25
Edwin and Emma Strother	\$50
Andrew F. Hill.....	\$5
Kenneth Barnett.....	\$25
Clara M. Brooks.....	\$25
M/M Joseph C. Britt, Jr.....	\$50
James and Jean Berry.....	\$30
Anonymous.....	\$50
R. W. Zimmerlee	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$25
Truman Lewis.....	\$20
M/M John H. Brown	\$25
Jim and Jenny Green	\$25
M/M Jackie Weathers.....	\$50
Charles and Nancy Verkist.....	\$25
M/M Drew B. Allen	\$10
William M. Smart	\$25
Harvey Justice	\$125
V. Glenn McCoy	\$10
Rosemary Spann	\$25
Charles E. Johnson.....	\$20
Anonymous.....	\$25
Carlena Nabors	\$25
Bill Crossno	\$25
Martin Bedford.....	\$25
Anonymous.....	\$90
D. Adam Dale	\$30
Cades Church of Christ, Milan, TN	\$125
Marilyn Lawson	\$25
Leon and Ellen Crisp.....	\$50
Imogene Echols	\$10
Alfred Earls	\$15
James W. Boyd.....	\$25
Samuel J. Roney	\$10

The Innuendo Of Apostasy...

(Continued from page 73)

refrain from using the instrument in order to maintain peace and unity among the local flock. To the contrary, CCC's leadership was so intent on having the instrument that they were willing to do so at the expense of losing one of their ministers and numerous members! How's that for being kind and loving?!

Ron Cook, a member and former elder at CCC, was eager to offer his opinion of the situation. He said, "God made music; God surrounds us with music every day. It's absurd to say we can't give music back to God." Question: Did God really make music, or did He give man the ability to make music? Does God really surround us with music every day? If so, which music is God's? Is the thumping and pounding of some teenager's car stereo God's music? How about the lyrics of most modern music? When people drive by and force me to listen to outrageous and vulgar lyrics, am I to assume the deafening noise I'm hearing is God-given? If so, then I should not attempt to get away!

Does Cook *really* believe congregational singing is not music given back to God? One accusation often leveled at members of the church is, "You don't believe in music." My response is always, "That is only true if singing does not constitute worship." God not only desires music in worship to Him, He demands it. However, the music God has authorized in worship is a capella, congregational singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

Also, is it *really* absurd to think there are some things created by God that do not belong in the worship of God? If we could ask Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10) if there were some God-given items that do not belong in worship, what do you think they might say? Would you expect to hear, "God made all kinds of fire; it is absurd to think we cannot offer to him any kind of fire we wish"? I doubt it! Paul condemned the Corinthians because they had perverted the Lord's Supper and made of it a glutinous, segregated feast. Do you reckon any Corinthians, in response to Paul's words in 1

Corinthians 11, said the following, "God made food and drink; it is absurd to think we cannot use any kind of food we desire in observing the Lord's supper?" It is not difficult to see the ridiculousness of Cook's statements and position on the matter.

The article concluded with Cook predicting that "*the music issue will fade away once young churchgoers, wash daily in music, become church leaders.*" Said Cook, "*Instrumental music is already a part of youth events that happen at churches. Teenagers love Christian music. Music is a fact of life. It's inevitable.*"

Cook assumes our youngsters cannot be taught the proper place of instrumental music in the life of a Christian. I have listened to secular music ever since I was a small boy. I

can still remember singing with my father as we listened to his favorite songs on the radio. But I have never given a moment's thought to trying to force the instrument into the worship of God. Why? Because I was taught better! Obviously, Mr Cook's formal religious training leaves somewhat to be desired.

Brethren, if all Christians would train their children in the way that they should go, the music issue would go away, because our children would not tolerate it! Apostasy is NOT inevitable, no matter what the digressives among us may say or imply! The key to making any issue of false teaching go away is proper teaching. May God help us to this end!

10655 US Highway 278
Hamilton, AL 35570

DOING THINGS DECENTLY AND IN ORDER

Guy F. Hester

Recently, my wife and I were present for a Sunday evening service of a Gospel meeting at a congregation known for its doctrinal soundness and stand for truth. I have known, loved and appreciated this church for more than fifty years. Her preacher and elders are very dear to me and what I am about to say is in nowise an indictment against them nor the membership. I know for a fact that the preacher of this congregation has spoken out against "the change agents" in the church when few others in this area would.

The guest preacher for the meeting was unknown to me but because of where he was holding the meeting caused me to have a great deal of confidence in him. By the time for the service to begin, the house was filled almost to capacity. The song service was very capably lead and the singing was spirited. After the speaker was introduced he began with a bit of humor. Now I am not opposed to a little humor to "break the ice" at the beginning of a sermon. In fact, I believe it can, when used with discretion, serve a very valid purpose. However, this particular speaker just kept on until he had the audience roaring with laughter. Some young ladies who were sitting behind us (I have reason to believe that they were visitors) began to clap. The laughter was so loud that I don't know if others were clapping or not. My wife and I were feeling very uncomfortable. Less than one hour before, I had preached a sermon in which I spoke against applauding the preacher and using the pulpit for entertainment.

Then the speaker wanted to teach us a song called, "Wear Your Sunshine Smile." A few in the audience already knew the song and sang along which prevented a solo by him. Then he asked all to sing. This was not in any way a worship type song and would not fall into the category of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Col. 3:16). It was the kind of song that might be used at youth camp. At this point, my wife and I quietly got up and left. I am told that when he finally got into his sermon that he had an excellent lesson. However, from my viewpoint, he ruined a good thing by his conduct before his sermon.

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40). Hopefully the elders of this church recognized the lack of wisdom of what happened and have taken action to prevent this type of situation from happening again. Let us all be warned because such is becoming all too common in the brotherhood.

1925 County Highway 59, Haleyville, AL 35565

DO WE KNOW WHAT A GOOD PREACHER IS?

Several months ago a bulletin contained the following statement: “The elders at this time have decided to make a change in the pulpit. This decision is not being made due to any lack of preaching faithfully the word of God or working energetically to advance His cause. —(the preacher) and —(his wife), during their time with us, have put forth maximum effort in their preparation and work for the congregation here and for this we are very appreciative. The elders’ decision has not been based on any failure on their part to serve the congregation here 168 hours a week, being available at any and every hour to serve in our time of need. This decision is being made only because of our likes and dislikes...”

This writer never has questioned (nor does he now question) the right (authority) of elders to hire and to dismiss a preacher in the congregation in which they (the elders) have the oversight. The Bible teaches plainly that elders have authority (delegated by Christ through the Holy Spirit, the apostles and prophets, and the Scriptures) to make decisions in matters of expediency (matters which involve option in the exercise of human judgment) which are binding upon the members of the congregation over which they (the elders) serve as overseers. However, what this writer is extremely concerned with today is a woeful lack of understanding on the part of some regarding what it takes to be a good gospel preacher. Some who ought to know, simply do not know, what a good preacher is. That such is the case is evident when one (as the aforementioned preacher) is: 1) “preaching faithfully the word of God,” 2) “working energetically to advance His cause,” 3) putting “forth maximum effort in preparation and work,” and 4) serving “the congregation 168 hours a week, being available at any and every hour to serve” and yet is informed, “We don’t want you to be our evangelist here any longer because of ‘our likes and dislikes!’”

Paul identified to Timothy what a good preacher is when he wrote: “If

thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained” (1 Tim. 4:6). From his passage we learn that a good minister (servant, 2 Tim. 2:24-25) or evangelist (preacher, 2 Tim. 4:2,5) is one who (1) knows the truth (2) follows the truth and (3) teaches the truth.

A GOOD PREACHER KNOWS THE TRUTH

Paul wrote that the one who preaches needs to be “nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine.” The word translated nourished in this verse means educated or to “form the mind” (Thayer, p.219). The good preacher is one who is educated in the right things, viz., “the words of faith and of good doctrine.” He knows the Scriptures which are the words of faith (2 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 10:17) and good doctrine (2 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). One might know theology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and a hundred other things, and yet not be a good preacher, because he does not know the Bible. Too many today are considered good preachers simply because they know the professional techniques of speech, “church administration,” how to tell a good story, all the latest counseling techniques, etc., instead of the fact that they know the Book and can open it and find the place where it is written (cf. Luke 4:17).

One of the reasons some of our preachers today do not know the Bible as our men once did is because too many have allowed their study to become an office. Instead of seeing themselves as ministers of the Word (students, followers, teachers, and preachers of the Word) they (and others) see themselves as church administrators, P.R. men, and organizers of programs aimed at keeping the church motivated. There needs to be a return to the recognition that a good preacher is a leader when it comes to being a serious, diligent student of the Bible. And, not only is it the case that the preacher studies,

but he studies the Bible, and he learns (knows) it.

A GOOD PREACHER FOLLOWS THE TRUTH

Paul wrote that it also is the case that a good preacher practices what the Bible teaches concerning the way one should live. He spoke of the words of faith and good doctrine “whereunto thou hast attained.” The word attained means to “follow a standard or rule of conduct.” The knowledge of the facts and truth of Scripture leads “to the conduct spoken of” (Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, p.486). It is not enough to know the Truth. We must do what it (the Truth) says. Ezra’s example, in principle, is that which each one of us needs to follow. He “*had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments*” (Ezra 7:10). The Scottish essayist and historian Thomas Carlyle once received a letter from a young man who was ambitious to become a teacher. “Will you tell me the secret of successful teaching?” Carlyle answered: “Be what you would have your pupils be....” The greatest preacher, our Lord himself, began both “*to do and teach*” (Acts 1:1). Good preachers still do the same today.

A GOOD PREACHER PREACHES THE TRUTH

Not only does the truly good preacher (1) know the truth and (2) follow the truth but he (3) preaches the truth. Paul informed Timothy that he would be a good minister of Jesus Christ, “*if thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things.*” “These things” were the things Paul had written (1 Tim. 3:14) or, in other words, the Truth — the Word of God. “These things” are synonymous with everything Timothy was (and every preacher today is) to preach. Timothy was not to preach merely some of “these things” but all of “these things.” Paul reminded the elders of this same church with whom Timothy was

working as evangelist that he (Paul) had not “*shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27). The good preacher not only preaches the Truth but all the Truth. It certainly is possible (in fact it is happening in some pulpits today) that a preacher can preach only the Truth week after week, yet not preach all the Truth. He may preach that Truth that is welcomed or that which is “safe truth” on selected matters. Someone may question his (the preacher’s) stand on a certain issue and his supporters may say “he (the preacher under question) has never preached error on that issue.” However, the fact may be that he has not ever preached error on the issue because he has never said anything about the issue! He has been totally silent, thus the problem lies not in what the preacher is saying, but what he is not saying. One may preach for years for a congregation and it be said that in all those years he never preached any error but has always preached the truth. However, it is yet another thing when it can be said he has preached all the counsel of God, the entire message, the negatives as well as the positives, the rebuking and reproving as well as the exhorting. Some preachers who are considered by some of the brethren today to be “good preachers” are very adept in the art of saying nothing. The gift of gab and a few Scriptures does not make one a good Gospel preacher!

It is both a great privilege and a sobering responsibility to be a preacher. Every one of us who preaches should desire to be the very best preacher he can be. In our desire to be good preachers, let us realize that the good preacher is one who (1) knows the Truth (2) follows the Truth and (3) preaches the Truth. May more elderships and congregations also realize what a good preacher is. If you are a preacher, be a good one (1 Tim. 4:6). If the congregation where you are a member has a good preacher, thank God for him and give him your support. If your preacher is not a good one (as set forth in 1 Tim, 4:6) encourage him to become such. May we truly understand what a good preacher is.

– Charles C. Pugh III
Therefore Stand, Nov. 1985

ARE THERE ANY INSPIRED PREACHERS TODAY?

Paul Powers

Occasionally a preacher will make a claim to have some special ability or some privileged, extra-Biblical information that is not available to the average person.

Some will declare they are prophets, modern-day apostles or inspired proclaimers of special messages that God wants His people to be aware of. They will reveal that God has spoken directly to them or sent informative visions that they must make known to others. In making these claims, they expect (even insist) their message be accepted as genuine. Anyone who doubts the authenticity of their revelation is rebuked as one who rejects the will of God. They expect their messages to be received as authority in religion, even if they are not in harmony with the revealed messages of other so privileged receivers of information from God. They expect their revelation to be accepted even when it is not in harmony with the inspired writings of the Bible.

The problem that arises in situations like this has to do with the conflicting information that is declared by such speakers. Each one claims special revelation and each one wants his message to be accepted as a special revelation. Obviously, God would not send conflicting inspired messages, so how are we to determine which are genuine messages? It is easy to see how this subjective and arbitrary method of revealing the will of God creates tremendous confusion in religion. God, through His grace and foresight has eliminated the possibility of this sort of chaos and gave a permanent, unchangeable standard of authority. Let us see how it is vastly different from the so-called inspired messages that men claim to make today.

Peter wrote, “*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*” (2 Peter 1:20,21). These men who wrote the Bible were “moved” by the Holy Spirit, that is, they were carried along in their writing by the Holy Spirit. What they wrote was genuine. The message of the Bible can be trusted to be genuine, but the private messages of men stand in doubt. Peter also said “*According to his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness...*” (2 Peter 1:3). Since God has given us ALL things that relate to our daily living and to matters of religion, then why is there any need for further revelation?

Paul wrote, “*All scripture given is inspired of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Tim. 3:16,17). If God has made it possible for man to be completely furnished by the Scriptures, then any other revelation would be inconsequential. One would expect the messages of God in the Bible to be the same message of God through an inspired preacher, so why would there be any need of duplication. Consider this implication of the so-called inspired speakers: The Bible says it furnishes us completely and that ALL things have already been given to us. If additional information is necessary through human agents, then the Bible has made a false statement.

Jude wrote that we “*should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 3). Literally rendered, “the faith” or Gospel is once for all time delivered to the saints. No other revelation will be delivered at any other time.

The Bible is the only reliable standard of divine revelation. If someone claims to be inspired and their message is different than that of the Bible, then they are not to be believed. If their message is in agreement with the Bible, then why are their services necessary. God gave us an inspired message that is unchangeable and appropriate for all time. Let us look to the Bible for God’s will, not to men.

24441 Highway 15, Tiplersville, MS 38674



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

Keep up the good work you are doing" ...**Joyce McCharen, Tupelo, MS.** "Dear brethren, please keep sending me Seek The Old Paths. Thank you" ...**A.F. Hill, Calvert City, KY.** "Your publication, *Seek The Old Paths*, has been recommended to me by friends of Arkansas City, KS. Please add my name to your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Donna Delozier, Wichita, KS.** "Thank you so much for sending *S.T.O.P.* to me. I enjoy reading it each time. Would you send it to my sister, she would appreciate it very much" ...**Faye Gunter, Clarkrange, TN.** "A friend gave me a few copies of *Seek The Old Paths* and I enjoyed reading them. Please put me on your mailing list. Thanks in advance" ...**Phillip A. Owens, Athens, AL.** "We hope things continue to do well for your congregation. I am enclosing a small donation to keep *Seek The Old Paths* coming our way. We really enjoy the publication. May God continue to bless your efforts" ...**Joe & Alene Britt, Baxter, TN.** "I no longer wish to receive *S.T.O.P.* Thank you" ...**Darryl Harrison, Bristol, TN.** "Thank God for *S.T.O.P.* and the East Corinth elders. Keep up the good work. Enclosed is a check to help out. In Christian love" ...**James & Jean Berry, Montgomery, AL.** "Please remove my name from your mailing list" ...**Wallace Henderson, Tallahassee, FL.** "If it wasn't for *Seek The Old Paths* we wouldn't know a lot of what's going on. Keep up the good work" ...**Truman Lewis, Clark Ridge, AR.** "Thank you so much for *Seek The Old Paths*. A friend had it sent to us. We enjoy it so much. Thank God for Christians like you that will hold for the truth and preach it like the Word. Include me on your mailing list. I enjoy the paper very much" ...**Imogene Echols, Huntsville, AL.** "We really do appreciate *Seek The Old Paths*. We like to keep up with our erring brethren. Please keep up the great work. We appreciate Christian brethren such as you" ...**Billy & Martha Cooper, Grant, AL.** "Enclosed is my check to help with publishing of *Seek The Old Paths*. I appreciate your strong stand for the Truth" ...**V. Glenn McCoy, Yorba Linda, CA.** "I hope this will help some with *S.T.O.P.* Keep up the good work" ...**Harvey Justice, Amory, MS.** "Thank you so very much for all the issues of *Seek The Old Paths* I have received. I especially appreciate the August 99 issue—the front page article. Every parent of teen-agers should read this" ...**Anonymous, IN.** "My family really enjoys reading *Seek The Old Paths*. Our prayer is to keep it up" ...**C. Johnson, Gardena, CA.** "Thank you for the excellent work being done with *S.T.O.P.* We would very much like to distribute this publication to our members. We know it will greatly benefit all who take the time to read it. Thank you again for the time and effort it takes to publish *S.T.O.P.*" ...**Cades Church of Christ, Milan, TN.** "It is truly admirable that you and others stand and proclaim the TRUTH so readily. I personally want to say THANK you for staying FAITHFUL to the TRUTH in a time when so many are turning their backs on the 'ways of Christ' and following after the ways of mankind!" ...**Adam Dale, Gadsden, AL.** "We have been so edified by your wonderful publication. Thank you so much for standing for the truth. We would like to add several names of families in our congregaion to your mailing list. We pray God's blessings on your continued work in God's vineyard" ...**Pamela McCall, Albuquerque, NM.** "Keep doing your great work for Truth" ...**M/M James L. Stroud, Jr., Abilene, TX.** "A fellow member spoke very highly of this magazine. We would like to have it mailed to us" ...**Leo & Mary Parry, Livonia, MI.** "Thanks for all of the good material that you continue to publish in "*Seek The Old Paths.*" I look forward to reading it each month. Could we get a bundle of 10 sent to the congregation here so that we could share them among our members?" ...**Danny Box, Cottondale, AL.** "I have been receiving your publication for less than a year now and have been very pleased with all of your efforts. As you are opposing error, others are in opposition of this as you well know. Their problem is not with you and others who do the same, but with God's strict commands to do so (2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 16:17-18). How **F. LaGard Smith** and others like him continue to be fellowshiped is beyond my understanding. I know our Lord God disapproves because the New Testament is full of how he feels about this subject and I encourage all to study and obey God's commands regardless of how they may feel. Keep up the good work!" ...**Eddie Lane, Marianna,**

"Dear brethren in Christ, It is so encouraging to read your bulletin and know the good fight that is being so faithfully waged. May God bless you in all your labors"

...**Edwin & Emma Strother, Lindsay, OK.** "I sure do enjoy reading your paper. It really is good and true. May God bless you.

FL. "I will say that we have greatly enjoyed STOP and appreciate the stand which you and the congregation have taken to speak the truth. I find the articles in STOP very interesting" ...**Jason & Cindy White, Milliken, CO.** "I like your publication very much, But I moved! So I want to continue getting *Seek the Old Paths*. I thank you for standing up for what's right in the Lord's church today. Please keep sending the paper to me" ...**Lanny Key, Brandon, MS.** "We plan to begin a new work about 300KM from here in Devonport, Tasmania. It is exciting to us. Our daughter and son-in-law, Brett, and Jo Rutherford are planning on coming to work with us. Please keep us in your prayers. Your Lectureship will be over now. We would certainly love to have been there. Hope you had a good one. Keep up your good work. We appreciate *S.T.O.P.*" ...**Jan McPherson, Tasmania, Australia.** "I am looking forward to receiving my first *Seek the Old Paths* and was wondering if I could ask your assistance in something. I am transferring to Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, and want to know where I can find a church that is sound in faith and doctrine. I will be new to the area, and can think of no one else to ask, as I fear the admissions department at the college probably would not know what I mean by being "sound" in the faith. After looking at the Searcy homepage, I see many Churches of Christs, but have heard that some are advocating "change", such as fellowshipping denominations. I tried to do this many years ago with a fellow student with the Assemblies of God. It doesn't work. I disagreed with so many of their views, as to merit my visits to their bible studies totally unproductive (i.e. speaking in tongues, laying on of hands, faith only, musical instruments, etc. etc). Please help me!" ...**Mark Hammer, New Orleans, LA.** [NOTE: I am not familiar with any of the churches in Searcy or nearby. I fear what you have mentioned above is true. You may contact **Terry Joe Kee** in Jonesboro, AR, to ask him concerning any sound congregations in the area. His address is tjkee@bscn.com]. "Your paper sounds interesting and I think I would like to read more. If at all possible, I would like a subscription to "*Seek The Old Paths.*" Thank you" ...**Andrew Burns, Fayetteville, WV.**

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

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

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

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

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