

# 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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## MISREPRESENTATIONS OF THE CHURCH

*James W. Boyd*

It is wrong to misrepresent anyone or anything. Sometimes it is done ignorantly. Sometimes it is deliberate. To deliberately misrepresent is dishonest. Regardless of the motives behind the misrepresentations of the church, they do the church harm. The misrepresentations need to be refuted and corrected. The truth deserves defense against those who would misrepresent it.

We should not be alarmed that the church is sometimes misrepresented. Nor should we assume that what we have to say in its defense will forever silence the voices of those who have no love for the church but instead seek its detriment. It is no new thing for those who love the Lord to suffer various kinds of persecution. *"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"* (Matt. 5:11-12). *"All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"* (II Tim. 3:12).

We are not to hastily conclude that we suffer misrepresentation just because of our godliness. Sometimes we may be living in such a fashion as to misrepresent that for which we profess to stand. We may give a distorted picture of what we believe and therefore people misunderstand and misrepresent. Hypocrisy provokes ugly things against the church.

When some Jews approached

Paul in Rome, they said, *"But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest, for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against"* (Acts 28:22). The "sect" of which they spoke was the Lord's church, mistakenly thought to be a sect of the Jews at that time.

Our lesson is to help us be as was Paul when he said, *"...knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel"* (Phil. 1:17). We not only need to be ready to give answer to every man that "asketh a reason for the hope that is in us," but also to defend the Lord's church against misrepresentation.

### THIS IS SERIOUS

We cannot minimize the seriousness of the church being misrepresented. The inevitable consequence is that truth is hindered. False ideas will be believed. People will be misled and develop misconceptions. The result of this is the creation of prejudice — spiritual blindness to the truth that saves. It will discourage brethren as well as turn away the lost without even a fair investigation of the truth. It leads to the condemnation of souls that Christ came to save.

Misrepresentation is based on "half-truths" and a lack of complete information. Distorted versions of what the Lord's church really upholds will cause the church to be erroneously presented to others. It is sinful to circulate a false report. Lying and bearing false witness is transgression. Even if one is sincere

and honestly believes what he presents, if it is false, he is guilty of misrepresenting. Certainly, everyone that may do this does not do so out of maliciousness as much as out of ignorance and prejudice. But no honest person will continue to believe and circulate a false report once the truth has been presented to him. Therefore, in making a defense of the church, we can only appeal to those who are honorable enough to be open-minded. We really do not expect to make headway with those who are intent on being injurious.

### CAMPBELL'S CHURCH

It is said that the church of Christ was founded by Alexander Campbell and was a break-off from the **Baptist Church**. There are those who proudly point to Campbell as the founder of their church, such as the **Christian Church**, the **Disciples of Christ**. But those of the church of Christ are not among them nor admit to Campbell or any other man being the founder of that to which they belong.

Is it wrong to plead for the Lord's church? We are concerned about the church of which you read in the Bible. Cannot people be concerned about that? Take your Bible and learn that the church of Christ was founded by Christ on the foundation that Jesus is the Son of God (Matt. 16:16-18). It began on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of

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**Misrepresentations...**



## Guest Editorial

# IS IT SCRIPTURAL TO IDENTIFY PEOPLE BY NAME?

Roger D. Campbell

***When true danger looms in the spiritual realm,  
we are better served by identifying by name  
the deathly doctrine or practices, as well  
as the proponents of such.***

When a religious group propagates falsehood that, if accepted and followed, will cause people to be lost, is it in harmony with the teaching of the Bible to identify that group by name? Or, if an individual in or out of the body of the Christ teaches a message that clearly contradicts the Bible and leads people “from the truth” (Titus 1:14), is it ever acceptable in the sight of the Lord to identify that person by name? And, what about identifying or pointing out the names of congregations among God’s people that are apostatizing? Would there ever be a place for such action?

These are practical questions. We are convinced that the same biblical principles that answer one of the three questions raised above, really answers all of them. I want to address a series of relevant questions that I hope will be helpful in studying this topic.

Is it acceptable to call something by name? God has done it before. “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night” (Gen. 1:5). When it comes to the living creatures of the earth, God brought them to Adam “to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof” (Gen. 2:19). From these first two chapters in Genesis we learn that God approves of assigning names to things, including, as the old timers would say, “calling a skunk a skunk” (that is what Adam did). Let’s look further.

Is it acceptable to call geographic names? Again, God did. When the children of Israel murmured against

Him, “...The LORD smote them with a great plague, And he called the name of that place *Kibrothhattaavah*: because there they buried the people that lusted” (Numbers 11:34). Thus, there is nothing wrong with identifying a place by its geographical name.

Is it okay to call or identify a person by name? God has done it many times. He gave Abram the new name “Abraham” (Gen. 17:5). God’s angel told Joseph that he would call the son that Mary would bear “Jesus” (Matt. 1:21). So, again, in and of itself, there is nothing inappropriate in identifying a person by his/her name.

What about referring to a particular nation by its name? Jehovah charged the Israelites to cast out the seven nations that inhabited the land of Canaan, identifying them by name: Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (Deut. 7:1). Based on this, we would conclude that it is not sinful to refer by name to the people of a nation.

Is it okay to identify a specific group by name? In the New Testament we read that Jesus did so, both with those that followed Him, as well as with those that opposed Him. In one case we read that He chose twelve special men from among His disciples, “...whom also he named apostles” (Luke 6:13). On another occasion Jesus warned His apostles, saying, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6). What “leaven” of these two groups did He have in mind? A few verses later we find the answer: “...he bade

them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (16:12). So, Jesus identified the twelve as “apostles” and He called the Pharisees and Sadducees exactly what they called themselves: “Pharisees” and “Sadducees.” Note that Jesus also pointed out to His followers the danger of the teaching of the Sadducees and Pharisees. Jesus loved all men, so we would never accuse Him of being unloving when He pointed out the errors of specific Jewish groups, including those occasions when He did so publicly (cf. see what is written in Matthew 23:1-33).

What about calling or identifying the name of faithful saints? In the New Testament we read a number of instances where the Holy Spirit guided the apostle Paul to do this very thing. One instance of this is Colossians 4:7-14 where we read the names of nine brethren. Paul specifically referred to Tychicus and Onesimus as being “faithful” (4:7,9). Surely none would oppose the right to call the names of faithful servants of the Master.

By way of summary, to this point we have seen Bible examples in which God Himself and His faithful servants took the action of “calling names.” They called objects by name, geographic places by name, people by name, nations by name, specific religious groups by name, and faithful saints by name. This brings us to another important consideration.

Is it ever scriptural to identify by name an individual or congregation that teaches or lives unfaithfully? The Holy Spirit did so, stating through Paul, “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (I Tim. 1:19-20). Someone might say, “Yes, but this was a personal letter to Timothy and was not for general knowledge.” It was a personal letter (I Tim. 3:15), but what was Timothy expected to do with the information he received in this inspired letter? Paul went on to tell him, “these things command and teach” (I Tim. 4:11). What Paul wrote about

Hymenaeus and Alexander was not something Timothy was to keep to himself any more than he was to keep secret what Paul wrote about the qualifications of bishops and deacons in chapter three.

When Paul later wrote to Timothy, he was inspired to identify by name those who were teaching falsely. *“And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some”* (II Tim. 2:17-18). These men were a real danger to the Cause of the Christ, and the Holy Spirit identified them by name. We have a record of it in the Bible for the whole world to read.

Some say:

1) “If I were a preacher or Bible class teacher, I would never identify any unscriptural groups or false teachers by name.” Well, Jesus did. So did Paul. Were they wrong to do so? The Bible says that we are to imitate Paul like he imitated Jesus (I Cor. 11:1).

2) “I just feel like it is so unnecessary to identify by name those preachers, churches, and schools that are involved in false teaching or false practices. How is that going to help anything?” The Bible says, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them”* (Rom. 16:17).

3) “I just don’t like the way brother Blank preaches because he tells the names of false teachers.” One that says this is, in reality, doing the very thing that he/she opposes: “It’s not right for brother Blank to call names, but it is okay for me to call brother Blank’s name.”

Jesus gave a general warning about false prophets with no names specified. He simply said, *“Beware of false prophets”* (Matt. 7:15). At other times Jesus identified by name groups of people that were doing things that did not please God. At least seven times in Matthew 23 we read that Jesus specifically referred to “Pharisees” and/or “scribes.” Then, as we have noted, the Lord’s inspired preachers sometimes identified by name specific individuals that were false teachers or a cor-

rupting influence in the Lord’s work.

In view of the clear biblical teaching we have observed, we conclude that there is a time for giving general warnings about false teachers (cf. II Peter 2:1). In addition, there is a time to identify by name religious groups that do not follow the truth. There is also a time to identify by name specific individuals that are either morally corrupt or that lead others astray with false teaching. There is New Testament precedent for each of these. Such is plainly set forth for all to read. For anyone to deny this truth would be to deny the authority of the Bible itself.

How often should we sound forth general warnings about false teaching? How often should we tell by name which religious groups do not teach what the Bible does? With what frequency should we make it known which preachers and congregations of the Lord’s church are involved in unscriptural teaching or practices? Because there is no New Testament instruction that specifies how often such should be done, it falls into the realm of opinion or personal judgment.

When we step outside the arena of spiritual activities, we all understand the value of identifying by name a person, product, or activity that is harmful to society. We don’t just want to hear that “some medicine” has deadly side effects. No, we want to know the specific name of the product so we can avoid it. We don’t just want to hear that “someone somewhere” has grabbed a gun and started gunning people down. No, we want to know the specifics — tell us what state and city, the type of vehicle used (if any), and provide a picture of the suspect(s), if possible. Why? Because we care about our physical safety. In the same way, when true danger looms in the spiritual realm, we are better served by identifying by name the deadly doctrine or practices, as well as the proponents of such.

Sometimes the general statement, “Let’s all be careful out there,” is just not sufficient. Let each of us strive to speak the truth in love.

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Many good websites are found on the internet. Among them are these:

**[seektheoldpaths.com](http://seektheoldpaths.com)** — Back issues of STOP are archived and searchable. You can find key words or people. There is also a wealth of other good information to be found.

**[aburningfire.net](http://aburningfire.net)** — This is the web site of James Boyd. There are 942 lessons you can listen to. These are the audio lessons that appeared in the printed version of “A Burning Fire” published several years ago. His commentary on Romans and book on the Home is also found there.

**[wsqj.net](http://wsqj.net)** — We’re just beginning this web site. It will eventually include thousands of audio lessons by various speakers. We plan on having it so you can search for a lesson by a certain topic or speaker.

**[pioneerpreachers.com](http://pioneerpreachers.com)** — You can hear the Gospel 24 hours a day by clicking on the LISTEN button. It is a broadcast of WSOJ-LP radio station operated by the East End Church of Christ. You can also find information on a number of old-time preachers and hear some of their sermons.



## Misrepresentations...

(Continued from page 41)

Christ (Acts 2). This was nearly two thousand years ago. It was founded in the city of Jerusalem, with the Word of God being the guide as was delivered by the Holy Spirit through the apostles.

To assign the name of Campbell to that institution, or to call those who are members of it “Campbellites,” is to cast derision on those who are concerned only with the church of the Bible. There is nothing taught or practiced by members of the church of Christ that came by the authority of Campbell or any other uninspired man. Should we hold convictions which Campbell and others also held, it is because we have derived these convictions from the same source, the Bible. I was a member of the Lord’s church for over three years before I recall even hearing the name of Alexander Campbell (though it may have been mentioned). We are not what we are because he designed or authorized anything. We seek to uphold no denomination whatever, but only the Lord’s church. To accuse us of something other than that is to misrepresent. The Protestant and Catholic world has smarted under the plea and the effort to return to the Bible as the sole authority in religion. They have balked at disposing of human creeds. They have done many things individually and collectively to undermine the growing conviction that God’s Word is sufficient and exclusively permitted in determining truth. Campbell was only one, and not even the first of his generation, to contend that people should “*speak as the oracles of God*” (I Peter 4:11). Is one who obeys what Peter taught a Campbellite? Is he not rather acting like a Christian?

We do not deny Campbell’s scholarship in the Bible, nor his astute mind. His accomplishments are outstanding in the annals of religious history. But by no adherence to the truth can he be called the founder of the church. Nor did he pretend to found one. Our hope is in Christ, not Campbell. We are what we are because of what the Bible teaches. The challenge is continually put forth to the scoffer to show wherein we follow Campbell because of

Campbell. When one points out the error of our way he is not our enemy, but our friend. Unlike so much in this world, we seek the truth without the additions and subtractions imposed by theologians, scholars, councils, conferences, etc. etc. We are Christians, not Campbellites.

### THE ONLY CHRISTIANS

We are accused of trying to monopolize the name “Christian.” But the truth is that we are calling for people everywhere to abandon names that have no Biblical authority and for everyone to wear just the name the Bible gives — which is “Christian.” We never read of the members of the Lord’s church being called **Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Catholics,** etc. Those who contend exclusively for the name “Christian” do so with Biblical authority. Those who want to wear other names, or names in addition to the identifications of Scripture, are going beyond what is written. The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Peter said, “*Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf*” (I Peter 4:16). Paul almost persuaded Agrippa to be a Christian (Acts 26:28).

Names have significance and meaning. They bestow honor and identification. We want to be identified with Christ as the Bible teaches. Denominational names divide, not unite. The Lord opposes such division. We would that all religious people who professed to follow Christ would adhere to the Biblical terminology rather than perpetuating the divisive errors of human institutions. Surely, this is a far cry from trying to monopolize the name.

### TOO NARROW

The members of the church are often accused of being narrow-minded. This may be true in some instances. But some think that if you believe there is a right and a wrong about anything that you are narrow-minded. Believe it or not, to be accused of being narrow-minded may be a compliment even though it is not intended to be. There is nothing wrong with being as narrow-minded as is the revealed truth in God’s book.

People do not object to narrow-

mindedness in the chemical laboratories. They insist upon it in mathematics, athletics, mechanics and medicine. It is only in the realm of religion where people are wedded to traditions and customs and unbiblical doctrines and practices that they do not want to accept the line God has drawn between truth and error. They want anything to be all right.

Jesus said that the way of life was strait and narrow, not broad and wide (Matt. 7:13,14). Many are on such a broad-minded craze that they will embrace those things that are prohibited or those things not authorized of God. That is too broad for acceptance before God.

Let us illustrate. Why do people use an organ in worship? It is not because the Bible teaches it. Those who do not use it are not just trying to be different and narrow for narrowness sake. There is that earnest desire to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. We have no right to add to what God has spoken. And when he has spoken, we have only the privilege of conforming to his will. Only singing is authorized in the Scripture for Christian worship in the realm of music. Some may call it being narrow, but it is only as narrow as is God’s revelation.

Some think that making any distinction between right and wrong is narrow. They are so inconsistent as to deny there is such a thing as absolute truth, and they are absolutely sure in making that assertion!

### WATER SALVATION

The church is misrepresented by saying we believe and practice water salvation. That water is involved in salvation is true because the Bible teaches it. “*Baptism doth now also save us*” is what Peter said in First Peter 3:21. We are not going to deny that. There is one baptism (Eph. 4:4-5) and we deny it not. Every example of conversion to Christ was concluded with baptism (Acts 2,8,9,10,16). We believe it. We are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-4). We are baptized into the body (I Cor. 12:13). Paul was baptized to “wash away sins” (Acts 22:26). All the words of denominational clergymen shall never alter that fact.

We are also aware that water is

not the saving element. The blood of Christ is the saving element (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7). It is not a question “if” the blood saves but “when” does the blood save. When we are baptized into his death we reach that saving blood. That is why we are raised to a new life (Rom. 6:3-4). The water is only the element into which we are commanded to be baptized (Acts 10:48).

This is not the same as “baptismal regeneration” as some practice: that is, believing that the efficacy is in the water. The power is in the blood of Christ. But the blood is applied when we have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that pictures the death, burial and resur-

rection of Christ (Rom. 6:17-18). Baptism is a symbol of those facts, but not a symbol that we are saved before being baptized.

Why should it surprise us that God involves water in our salvation? Has not he involved water in other “salvations?” Did not Jesus involve water in granting the blind man of Siloam to see (John 9)? Were not those who were saved with Noah “saved by water” (I Peter 3:20-21). Was not water involved in delivering Israel from the Red Sea (Exodus 14), and Paul called that a baptism in First Corinthians 10:1-2. Was not water used in the healing of Naaman from leprosy (II Kings 5)? Why should we think it such a strange

thing that God has declared baptism in water to be essential to salvation? To ridicule any appointment that God has assigned it is to misrepresent His truth.

There are other misrepresentations, and they are as equally false as those which we have mentioned in this brief span. But we all ought to be very careful about making a thing appear to be something when it really is not true. What the honest person will do is to hear the explanation and measure it by what the Scripture teaches rather than blindly, prejudicially, continue to misrepresent the truth as many are inclined to do.

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## “BE NOT CONFORMED”

Jimmie B. Hill

**“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”** (Rom. 12:1-2).

There is no mistaking in these verses that the perfect will of God is that one be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of his mind. The psalmist said, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11).

Shortly after I became a Christian, I discovered that many habits and practices of mine were wrong and needed to go. However, there were some things that were not as obvious. The Bible was clear about stealing, lying, and cursing, etc. but what about those things that were not so clear? What about things that are not specifically mentioned in God’s Word? As I studied, I found five questions that helped me in determining some of these things.

**Is It Helpful?** “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient...” (I Cor. 6:12).

— Does it help me or hurt me

physically?

— Does it help increase my spirituality?

— Does it help me by getting my mind off things that may draw me into sin?

**Does It Enslave Me?** “...All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (I Cor. 6:12).

— Do I sleep too much?

— Do I consistently overeat?

— Do I watch too much television?

— Do I do anything to excess?

**Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness”** (Rom. 6:16).

**Will It Cause Others To Fall?**

“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (I Cor. 8:13).

**Is It Good Stewardship?**

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (I Cor. 4:2). God requires that I be a good steward of:

— My body.

— My money.

— My time.

— My influence.

— My spirit.

— The gospel.

**Does It Glorify God?** “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (I Cor. 10:31). What about it? Be truthful! Do these things you are not sure about bring glory to God? Instead of asking, “What will others think about me?” ask yourself, “What will others think about my God?”

After asking yourself these questions, there are three more things you need to do.

First of all, pray! “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5). “Not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39).

Second, ask God’s people. “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” “The way of the fool is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise” (Prov. 11:14; 12:15).

Third, use the gray matter between your ears. Many times we know what is right but we lie to ourselves. Don’t kid yourself! “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

“Be not conformed to this world.”

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# MAX LUCADO'S STORYTELLING

Marvin L. Weir

The *Dallas Morning News* Religious Section of March 24, 2001 (page 2G) features an article by Max Lucado on how to tell a story. No one would deny Max's talents for spinning quite a story. In fact, every denominational religious group today is enthralled with Max's "storytelling."

Max has spoken for Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches. He swapped pulpits with Buckner Fanning of Trinity Baptist Church and defended his doing so by saying, "Whenever I see a man call God 'Father,' I see a brother." Paul R. Buckley wrote an article several years ago in the *Dallas Morning News* about Max Lucado. He begins, saying:

We've heard the joke before. A guy is getting a tour of heaven and is walked by rooms of folk from all different denominations. As he passes by one last room he is told to be very quiet. "Why?" he asks. The guide whispers to him: "Those are the people from the church of Christ — they think they're the only ones here."

Buckley then comments on the joke and Lucado, saying:

It's an old one, but Max Lucado still laughs because he knows as well as anyone the Church of Christ's no-one's-saved-but-us reputation. He's a Church of Christ minister, after all, as well as the hottest Christian writer around. And **he believes that there really are Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics in those other rooms** (Emph., MLW).

It was on Radio Station KJAK in Lubbock, Texas in December of 1996 that the "story-telling" Max Lucado said:

You see, in God, by virtue of your adoption, you have a divine affinity, you have eternal security, and you have a golden opportunity. I cannot imagine an orphan

turning down an opportunity to be adopted. With one decision, with one raising of the hand, with one agreement to leave the orphanage, that person all of a sudden goes from being abandoned to being claimed, from having no name to a new name, no future to a new future — he leaves the orphanage, and enters the house of the Father.

That's what God offers you. No quiz, no examination. All you have to do is to say "yes" to the Father. And many of you have done that. But I have a hunch that not all of you have. I have a hunch that there are a few of you listening, even now, and God is using this to pull on your heart. The Holy Spirit is informing you of something that you have never really heard before — and that is, that God is ready to be your Father. Maybe you never understood that the invitation was for everyone. Maybe you thought that you were unworthy. Maybe now you do understand. God will make you worthy, and the invitation is for you.

**And all you have to do is to call Him Father. Just call him Father. Just turn your heart to him right now as I am speaking. Call him your Father. And your Father will respond. Why don't you do that? Father, I give my heart to you. I give you my sins. I give you my tears, I give you my fears, I give you my whole life. I accept the gift of your Son on the cross for my sins. And I ask you Father, To receive me as your child. Through Jesus I pray, Amen** (Emph., MLW).

The announcer then stated, "And friend, if you prayed along with Max Lucado just now, here on UPWARDS, we want to welcome you into the family of God. We hope you will contact us and share your personal testimony. If you are already a believer,

we thank you for praying for these new brothers and sisters in Christ."

Yes, Max Lucado is quite adept at "storytelling." If you are beginning to suspect that the word "storytelling" can have a double meaning — you are correct! Many parents have taught their children not to tell stories — that is, do not tell a lie.

In the March, 24, 2001 *Dallas Morning News* article Max gives five guidelines to keep in mind as you tell stories. I offer the following comments on his guidelines for telling stories.

**"Be accurate. Exaggeration and fabrication are easily detected."** Absolutely! Wouldn't it be wonderful if Max would be "accurate" with the Word of God? Does the Bible teach that one is saved by reciting a "sinner's prayer?" Absolutely not! One must hear the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), believe God's Word (Heb. 11:6), repent of his sins (Luke 13:3), confess Christ as God's Son (Rom. 10:9-10), and be immersed for the remission of his sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). The apostle Paul admonished, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (II Tim. 2:15). Paul also said to the Ephesian elders, "*For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27). If Max were to make the same claim to the elders of his congregation, it would indeed be magnificent "storytelling."

**"Be humble. Don't use a story as a back door for self-promotion."** God ask Pharaoh, "*How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me*" (Exodus 10:3)? We ask the same question of Max and every other false teacher. Max's "storytelling" has made him popular and wealthy, but unless he repents, it will cost him his soul.

**"Be creatively simple. If a 10-year-old can't benefit from the story, don't tell it."** One does not need to be creative with the Gospel message — just tell it like it is. Paul said of Timothy, "*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scrip-*



tures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 3:15).

**“Be diligent. The best storyteller is a bad one who didn’t**

**quit.”** If Max were “diligent” with God’s truth, it would be the case that “the best storyteller was a good one, but he quit!”

**“Be observant. Every event is somebody’s story. Tell it.”** Max

should observe the Scriptures the way he does social events. The Gospel in its purity is what all need to hear (Gal. 1:6-9; 10-12; 4:16).

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## SHALL WE SUPPORT DENOMINATIONALISM?

*John D. Cotham*

It must be understood that false teachers and false doctrines exist today. The apostle John said: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1). John wrote this before the first century ended.

The apostle Paul warned, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (I Tim. 4:1-2); and again, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (II Tim. 4:3-4).

This is a sad commentary on mankind, but it is true. Today, we live in a world where man has so distorted God’s word that it is impossible to know all the many different false doctrines and false “faiths” that exist.

Shall those who insist on following the truth of God’s word support these doctrines and the people who preach, teach, and practice these doctrines? The Holy Spirit answered this question through the apostle John in II John 1:9-11, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, **receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.**”

In spite of the Scriptures above, some Christians (hopefully through

ignorance) still support some of these false teachers and their false doctrines. Just how might we be guilty of supporting false doctrine?

1) We can be guilty of supporting it by our language, attitudes and actions. Some are guilty of using denominational language. From time to time one might hear a child of God call the preacher “Pastor” or “Reverend.” A preacher is neither. “Reverend” is a term used to describe God. It has never been a term assigned to the proclaimer of God’s word. Read Matthew 23:8-12. The only way a preacher might truly be a pastor is if he is one of the installed pastors, elders, bishops, etc. And, the Lord’s church has never had just one pastor.

2) We might hear a child of God talk about witnessing. No one in the twentieth century is a “witness” in the New Testament sense. Witnesses are those who “see and tell.” In choosing one to take the place of Judah Iscariot, notice Acts 1:21-22, “Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” Also Luke 24:45-48, “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.” No one living today were eye witnesses of these things.

3) We might hear a child of God talking about someone saved in their hospital bed or on their death-bed.

Such is an impossibility. One must be baptized in water to be saved (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). One cannot pray through, nor can a preacher pray someone’s sins away.

4) Sometimes Christians support denominational people by attending their functions. Some have gone to their “Easter” programs or “Christmas” programs. Some might even go to one of their “revivals.” Remember John said that to do so is to bid them God speed in their efforts (II John 9-11).

5) It could be that some of us have supported their error financially. In my home town there is a large Catholic complex: huge church building, convent and school. Each year there are two “fun carnivals” held. People flock in by the groves. And, yes, sometimes Christians are present. In the past they also have a monthly smorgasbord on a Sunday afternoon. Groves flock to eat their Sunday dinner; yes, sometimes even Christians.

6) The easiest way for the average Christian to support false teachers and false doctrine is to just keep their mouth shut. So many are weak and they are never willing to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). To let a co-worker espouse his false doctrine without rebuttal from God’s word is to “bid one God speed” in his doctrine. Peter said: “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (I Peter 3:14-15). Paul said “...I am set for the defence of the gospel” (Phil. 1:7,17).

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## SEEK THE OLD PATHS

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