

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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FAITH AND WORKS

Mark K. Lewis

We have not earned salvation by obedience, we are accepting God in His way, on His terms, fully believing that if we will do as He requests, He will deliver the blessing He has promised. If anyone can see "earned salvation" in those works, he has spiritual myopia of the grossest sort.

Martin Luther called the epistle of James, "an epistle of straw," largely because of the section under consideration in this article. Beginning with Luther, the beautifully harmonious Bible teaching of **faith and works** has been a major problem and matter of misunderstanding among denominational churches. The infatuation with "faith only" has absorbed too many. This enigma has even infiltrated the Lord's church; a clear statement of the confusion runs as follows:

"Whatever we say about baptism or a 'plan of salvation,' we must place it within the context of a free gift from God. We cannot do anything to be saved, not if it is a free gift...It is clear that we are justified by what God has done for us, not by what we have done. We are not saved by obeying commandments; we obey commandments because we are saved. We do no works to be saved: we work because we are saved...We do not do baptism as a work on our part. It is rather something done to us..."

No works, no obedience, all by grace. Another false brother concurs:

"It is all by grace! If one is to be saved, it must be totally by grace. One cannot be saved partly by law keeping and partly by grace... [But now note just a few pages later, MKL]: We are justified by faith through grace in obeying the gospel."

We do wish those folks would make up their minds. Is salvation totally by grace? The word "totally" means "in a total manner; wholly; as a whole." If salvation is totally by grace, then faith and obedience have nothing to do with it. So enamored are some by grace, and so filled with bitterness are they concerning obedience, they resort to this contradiction and cannot see it to save their souls. Let us see if we can untangle this mess.

No one denies that salvation is by grace (Eph. 2:5; Titus 2:11-12). Nor is there any debate on whether salvation is by faith — a plethora of verses so teach (Eph. 2:8; Heb. 11:6; John 3:16; John 8:24; Rom. 10:9; ad infinitum). The question has never been does faith save, or does grace save? The dispute is, does faith (or grace) **ALONE** save (of course, by definition, if one of the two saves **ALONE**, i.e., by itself, then the other is automatically excluded. However, there are none so blind as

they who will not see). Look at faith "alone" in James 2:14-26: alone, "Can faith save him?" (v.14, the rhetorical question is obviously answered, "no"). In vs.15-16, James insists that works are needed, and if not forthcoming (v.17), then faith is dead, being alone. Yea, indeed, there is a matter called "faith alone." James says it is "dead" and unable to save. In verse 19, we learn that even devils believe faith only! The Greek word for believe is the same as used for a Christian's belief; there is an obvious difference between the devil's faith and the Christian's faith, and that difference keeps the devils from being saved. What is that difference — works! Faith only is the possession of devils — it is amazing anyone would claim that it could save. Note now, in verse 21, James gives an interesting perplexity that no "faith (or grace) only" advocate has a prayer of solving, and was the enigma that Luther couldn't resolve that led him to his condemnation of the book. In Romans 4:3, Paul says that Abraham was justified by faith without works and then quotes Genesis 15:6 in confirmation. In James 2:23, James says Abraham was justified by works, and then

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Faith And Works...



Editorial...

MAN'S PART IN SALVATION IS IT EXTREME? So Says Steve Flatt

"Through the years, I've noticed that people that I know, in our fellowship and out of our fellowship, sometimes migrate to one of two extremes. For example, many, many people go to the extreme that baptism is nice, even important, but it's not really necessary for one to come to Christ in obedience to the Gospel. ... That's one extreme. At the other extreme, I've encountered many people who think baptism is necessary because faith is not enough. Baptism is necessary because faith is not enough. In fact, I've heard that stated before. And this group refers to many New Testament passages that link baptism to a saving moment — the washing away of sin. So many come to the conclusion, well, God did his part in salvation back on calvary and now its up to do your part. And, these folks tend to talk about salvation as a matter of steps, you step your way to salvation. And the idea is God works, now you work, and you come together and you get it done. Now let me say, both of those groups are trying to stress something important. But I believe both those notions, as I have just described them, are wrong. ... The important thing is to say what does the Bible say about baptism." (Steve Flatt, *The Necessity of Baptism*, We Believe Seminar, 1998, Granny White Church of Christ, Nashville, Tenn.)

Brother Flatt went on to say many good things in his lesson about both faith and works. And, he certainly is right when he says "the important thing is to say what does the Bible say about bap-

tism." However, I want to examine what he calls an extreme and wrong position; i.e., that it is up to man to do his part in salvation and that there are steps to salvation.

Is it an extreme position to teach that God has a part in salvation and that man has a part in salvation? Is it wrong to speak of man's obedience to the Gospel as steps he must take? Isn't **faith** a step toward salvation (Mark 16:16)? Isn't **repentance** a step toward salvation (Luke 13:3)? Isn't **confession** a step toward salvation (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:10)? Isn't **baptism** a step in being saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16)? Brethren, if the Bible teaches anything it teaches that man has a part in his own salvation. He is not an arbitrary object that has nothing to do with his own salvation. Each act (work) of faith is a step, if you please, toward salvation. Each step (act) puts one closer to salvation than he was before.

God has done his part so completely that there remains nothing more God can do to save man. God is true to his nature and promises. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He has promised to save those who do His will and He has promised to punish those who do not obey his will. There is nothing more God can do in saving man than what he has already done. What remains now is man's response, man's part if you will. Brethren, man having a part in his own salvation is not an extreme position and is not contrary to the Scriptures.

The thousands on Pentecost were exhorted to **save themselves** (Acts 2:40). Did Peter forget to tell them there was nothing they could do to be saved? Did they not understand it is an extreme position to think they played a part in their own salvation? The text says, "*then*

they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Did they have a part in their own salvation? Yes. Would or could they have been saved without their participation — without doing their part? Absolutely not.

Those to whom the apostle Peter wrote in his first epistle were told: "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*" (1 Peter 1:22). By doing our part, what God requires us to do, we purify our souls. Would our souls be purified without us doing that which we are commanded by God to do? No. Man has his part to do in being saved.

"*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee*" (1 Tim. 4:16). How was it that Timothy could save himself and contribute to the salvation of others? It was by doing his part — by taking heed to the Lord's doctrine/teaching, obeying it and teaching it to others for them to obey. We have a part in our own salvation when we do what God has commanded.

"*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded*" (James 4:8). If man does not have a part in salvation, then why is he commanded to cleanse his own hands and purify his own heart? If it's all God's part, then it's God's fault if anyone is lost! But it's not God's fault if anyone is lost (Rom. 5:8). The very fact that God commands men to do anything is evidence and proof that man has a part to play in his own salvation.

Those who are saved are those who obey God's Will. "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven*" (Matt. 7:21). The Lord is the author of eternal salvation to **them that obey Him** (Heb. 5:9). The Lord will take vengeance on **them who do not obey** (2 Thess. 1:7-9; cf. 1 Peter 4:17). Does man therefore have a part in his salvation?

When we do that which God has commanded, have we earned salvation? No. Will one be saved without obeying? No. None-the-less, God requires man to do his part in accomplishing salvation. If there is anything man must do to be saved, then that is the part man must do. Without that part being supplied, there is no salvation. By obeying God's Word, we do not supply that which God lacks, wherein God comes

up short. It is simply the case that God predetermined (predestined) to allow man to make his own choice in his own salvation. God does not and will not force salvation upon anyone. He leaves that final decision with each individual. Therefore, man must do that part which God has left in man's own hands: **faith** (Heb. 11:6), **repentance** (Acts 17:30), **confession** (Rom. 10:9-10), **baptism** (Acts 2:38) and **continued**

faithfulness (1 Cor. 15:58). These acts (works) are done in faith. Without these works, faith is dead, vain, barren (James 2:24). Without man doing his part in both faith and works, he cannot be saved. But remember, these are not works designed by man, they are God ordained works and when we do them in faith, they definitely play a part (man's part) in salvation.

LOVE AND RESPECT FOR THE BROTHERHOOD

Robin W. Haley

An interesting quote was printed within the very colorful, glossy booklet from ACU (Abilene Christian University) advertising their 81st annual lectures. Before I consider the quote, let us examine a few things from the opening "welcome" comments made by Royce Money (President).

He tells us that we will be welcome to this "period of spiritual renewal." He assures us that through the efforts of the invited speakers, we shall be uplifted and rejuvenated to "new levels of faith and commitment to His service." Now, I have never been to ACU, nor have I been to Corinth. But I can read and learn what sort of things to expect when one travels to such places. Anyone who contends that their spirits will be "renewed" or that they will reach a new level of "faith and commitment" is one who does not understand what the Bible teaches regarding these subjects. One cannot "grow in grace and knowledge" (2 Peter 3:18) while being fed a diet of post-modern poppy-cock, neo-Pentecostal paddy-cake, nor ecumenical enfamil (baby formula). Such comments are insulting to those who have studied their way out of denominationalism, and it is amazing to believe that there are "Christians" who will go to such an event called the ACU lectures and think they are being edified in the most holy faith (Jude 20).

The quote: "The ACU Lectures are one of the few forums left in the Churches of Christ where one can be exposed to a variety of viewpoints, all of which are presented with an attitude of love and respect for the brotherhood as a whole." This is credited to Mark Smith, a member/preacher/associate (I know not which, rwh) of Vaughn Park Church of Christ, Mont-

gomery, Alabama. I do not know Mr. Smith, nor do I know of Vaughn Park Church of Christ, but when such "praise" is spoken for such as ACU in her departure from the faith, I immediately suspect ignorance on someone's part. Perhaps it is mine. Let us examine this quote.

First, there seems to be a lamentation expressed in the opening line. To paraphrase, I would interpret this man saying, "Alas and what a shame that such open-minded freedom to castigate the doctrine of Christ, and to lambast the church of our Lord is too soon being limited to such a few opportunities like those at ACU." This is like lamenting the fact that the chances of contracting polio are sorely reduced.

Second, he seems to actually be lauding the fact that at ACU one can be exposed to all kinds of thinking. Now wait a minute. This is ACU. Abilene Christian University. Christian, Christian, now let me think. Where have I heard this title? Oh yes, the Bible. What does that word *Christian* mean again? Is it *really* a good thing that Christians can be "exposed" (subjected) to all kinds of poisonous doctrines and thinking of men? Did not Mr. Money, er...Money, say that we would be spiritually renewed? That we would be carried to new levels of faith? Whence cometh faith (Rom. 10:17)? What happens when God's people "give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:3-4)? What did Paul recommend to the saints at Corinth? Read it: "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind

and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). Where does "a variety of viewpoints" fit in here?

Now, lest the reader conclude that I am against open-mindedness and consideration of other doctrines, I am not. I believe it is very beneficial to study denominational doctrines and false philosophies so that we know how to combat and destroy them with "thus saith the Lord." Is that what Mr. Smith is advocating that takes place at ACU? Is there anyone that ignorant and misinformed?

This quote by Mr. Smith contradicts what Mr. Money stated. On the one hand we have one saying that we "will explore the very nature and true depth of God's plan" (Money), and on the other we can be "exposed to a variety of viewpoints" (Smith). Which shall it be: God's plan, or a variety of viewpoints? Which do the attendees at ACU desire? What shall they receive? Actually, "God's plan" or what passes for it, will be but a small part of the wide variety that shall be, and has been offered for some years at ACU. This is good? Mr. Smith seems to think so. Sad.

Our title: I deny that these "viewpoints" are offered "with an attitude of love and respect for the brotherhood." Peter said, "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17). To offer the doctrines of men and pass it off as something from God is not loving the brotherhood, neither is it an action of love, but of destructive irresponsibility! What a shame that so many will continue to be duped by so few there at ACU.

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[Editor's note: The front page article, "A Disturbing Conversation," in our October issue concerned *Youth In Action (YIA)* sponsored by the University Church of Christ in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Under pressure from the exposure of their evil deeds by faithful brethren, they issued a letter concerning this year's upcoming program. It is printed below along with an examination of it by O. B. Porterfield and Todd Clippard.]

Youth In Action Update

Youth in Action has been a ministry of the **University Church of Christ in Tuscaloosa, Alabama**, for twenty seven years. The sole purpose of this event is to aid in the spiritual growth and development of any and all teenagers as they seek our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We have and will continue to use any and all methods necessary to achieve this, as long as they are Biblically based. We seek to have the most challenging and convicting speakers, the most powerful worship, and teachers who help make it personal for each and every student. This is a Youth Rally. It is about teenagers. It is about growth. It is about changing the lives of teens and pointing them toward the Father. We teach baptism, we teach grace, we teach love, we teach service, we teach a changed life of discipleship, but most of all we teach Jesus.

A lot of controversy has arisen surrounding one of our invited speakers for this year. Mr. Tony Campolo has been featured by the national news media and many of his views have been misrepresented. This controversy has spiraled out of control and therefore, we have decided to rescind his invitation to speak at Youth in Action this year. We apologize for any inconvenience or concern this may have caused you and your church family. We look forward to seeing you this year. Please be looking in your mail for our registration packet, which will be mailed out next week. We welcome your comments and covet your prayers.

In His Service,
Craig Smith (signature)

Youth Minister
University Church of Christ

ELDERS: Marcus Brown, Bob Collins,
Alvin Dauchy, Bob Keith, Ted Northington,
Bill Rose, John Seale

Now, consider the following...

They invited a Baptist preacher to be a speaker at *Youth In Action* and one of the "ministers" at the University Church of Christ

says, "I don't know what he teaches in regard to the plan of salvation." Smith remarks, "...many of his views have been misrepresented." The man is a Baptist preacher. It doesn't matter that Campolo's views may have been misrepresented. We know what the Baptists teach with regard to salvation and that they are in error. Does that sound like the youth who would attend this event are in good hands?

Notice that Smith says that Campolo's invitation was rescinded because the "...controversy has spiraled out of control..." not because he was a Baptist preacher and didn't have anything to offer for Christian growth. The University Church just got their hands caught in the cookie jar and this was their only way out.

Smith says, "The sole purpose of this event is to aid in the spiritual growth and development of any and all teenagers as they seek our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." **That's not possible with the lineup of false teachers they had and still have on the program.** They are planning to treat our young people to the likes of **Buddy Bell, Jeff Walling and Acapella.** How sad to think that there are some in the church who would intentionally pollute the spiritual well-being of our youth.

It seems odd that the University Church would cancel a Baptist preacher and keep Buddy Bell on their program. Buddy is quoted as saying that he intended to fellowship the Baptist Church when he could. What's the difference?

Faithful Christians and congregations can't and won't support *Youth In Action*. Kindly warn others.

- O. B. Porterfield
Seibles Road Church of Christ
bulletin
541 Seibles Rd.
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October 18, 1998

University Church Withdraws Campolo's Invitation

In a letter dated September 23, 1998, the **University Church of Christ in Tuscaloosa, Alabama** announced it had withdrawn Tony Campolo's invitation to speak at *Youth in Action*. The letter was written and signed by Craig Smith, the Youth Minister at University and the organizer of Youth in Action. Also, the names of the University elders are at the bottom of the letter. The reason for this action is given as follows: "A lot of controversy has arisen around one of our invited speakers for this year. Mr. Tony Campolo has been featured by the national news media and many of his views have been misrepresented. This controversy has spiraled out of control and therefore, we have decided to rescind his invitation to speak at Youth in Action this year." In fairness to Mr. Campolo, the national media did misrepresent at least one of his views. Following Campolo's hiring by President Clinton as a "spiritual advisor," the media called Campolo (to paraphrase) "a liberal Baptist who does not view homosexuality as incompatible with living the Christian life." While Campolo IS a liberal Baptist, he does NOT believe the practice of homosexuality is compatible with living the Christian life. He made this clear in March of this year in a speech before a group of United Methodists. (Incidentally, it is Peggy Campolo, Tony's wife, who attempts to defend the practice of homosexuality.) This is the ONLY reason given for rescinding Campolo's invitation to speak.

Noticeably absent from the letter is any admission of wrong-doing by brother Smith or the University eldership. Like in the original pro-

motion, no mention is made of the fact that Tony Campolo is not a member of the Lord's church. There was, however, this defiant and unrepentant statement in the opening paragraph: "The sole purpose of this event is to aid in the spiritual growth and development of any and all teenagers as they seek our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We have and will continue to use any and all methods necessary to achieve this, as long as they are Biblically based."

According to University, inviting a Baptist preacher to address hundreds of young Christians is a biblically based mode of operation. I beg to differ. Since Mr. Campolo is not a Christian, he will not bring the doctrine of Christ to *Youth in Action*. Hear the Word of God as given by John, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11, NKJV). Hear the Word of God as given by Paul, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (Eph. 5:11).

One may do what is right for the wrong reasons and without repentance. From the content of this letter, I am inclined to believe University will continue to believe and teach unbiblical doctrines regarding salvation and fellowship. In so doing, they "trample the Son of God underfoot, count the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified a common thing, and insult the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29).

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Faith And Works...

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quotes Genesis 15:6 as confirmation! Unless one properly comprehends faith and works, this puzzle is unsolvable. Then in verses 24-26, James flatly states that justification comes by works and not by faith only. Those words are plainly in Scripture and we believe them; only those with a preconceived ideological axe to grind cannot accept what James, the brother of our Lord, is teaching. Let us unravel the solution to this encumbrance.

What does the Bible teach about works? Well, obviously, and there is no disagreement here, some works cannot save (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:20; 2 Tim. 1:9; Gal. 2:16; 5:19-21). Yet, there are just as obviously some works that are required by God: "In every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him" (Acts 10:35 cf. James 2:24-26). Note also the interesting problem created by Titus 3:5 and Acts 10:35: Titus reads, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Now read again Acts 10:35: "he...that worketh righteousness is accepted with him." We invite the reader to contemplate that, while we provide the key to unlock this simple mystery. Please refer to John 6:28-29: "Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." The answer is easy: there are works that cannot save and works that can! The works of man — his own "plans of salvation," his meritorious deeds, his piling up of good actions — these are ineffectual towards our salvation. But those commandments which God gives us — called His works — ARE necessary for eternal bliss. Notice that **even faith is a work!** Not a work of man, though man must believe, but a commandment, a LAW (perish that word!), a work of God required for man to please Him. (The key to Acts 10:35 versus Titus 3:5 is Paul's fragment in the latter, "which we ourselves have done" — our "works of righteousness" cannot save; but God's — Acts 10:35 — can!) The motive also is important here. If our

works are done to earn salvation, they will fall short. They must be performed with the intent to glorify God (Matt. 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12). These works show our love and appreciation for God, and while they are insufficient, in and of themselves, to save, we cannot be saved without them.

The Scriptural examples of this principle are abundant and staggering in their simplicity. Hebrews 11:30 states that the walls of Jericho fell by faith after they had been compassed about for seven days. If one turns to Joshua 6, he will find God saying to the great military leader of Israel, "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho" (v.2). Jericho was a gift (grace) of God to the people. He then proceeds to tell them exactly what they had to do to receive this gift of grace! And, by faith, the people did exactly what God said do, and when they had finished — and not one second before — when they had done ALL that God commanded, the walls fell. Joshua did not reason the way some "enlightened" ones do today: "Well, now wait a minute God. If You are going to give us this city, if it is by grace, then how can we DO anything to get it?" Joshua had no problem with this, and neither should we. You see, cities aren't earned by traipsing around them, blowing horns, and shouting; no other city in history has been conquered that way. Thus, Israel did not earn Jericho; God gave it to them by faith, but they had to prove they believed in Him. Thus, the test came by their obedience. The plan of salvation for you and me is the same principle. God has always demanded that the faithful prove their obedience by doing things He asked of them — "His works of righteousness."

Since God is righteous, then all He commands is righteous as well. We have not earned salvation by obedience, we are accepting God in His way, on His terms, fully believing that if we will do as He requests, He will deliver the blessing He has promised. If anyone can see "earned salvation" in those works, he has spiritual myopia of the grossest sort.

Let us not be confused on faith and works; there is nothing that is confusing about it.

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DURHAM CHURCH OF CHRIST, ONE YEAR LATER

Jerry Pence

In 1996, the elders, where we were attending in Durham, North Carolina, endorsed the "Unity in Diversity" movement that has destroyed many churches of Christ. Because of these men's false teachings, a remnant of God's people established a faithful congregation in Durham. In September '97, I wrote an article for **Seek The Old Paths** entitled, "*Times Change, People Change, But The Lord's Church Will Never Change!*" That article outlined the events that lead to the establishment of "The Durham Church of Christ." The purpose of that article was written for members of the Lord's church to see how the false teachings of "Unity in Diversity" move into a congregation. This present article is being written one year later to show how a faithful group of Christians overcame that evil by "Seeking the Old Paths."

OUR STORY

On the first Sunday of '97, a meeting was held with the elders to determine exactly where they stood on several doctrinal issues: baptism, Lord's supper, women's role, etc. That meeting convinced us that we had no choice but to leave the people we had worshipped with for years. We were in shock! What do we do? Where do we go? What do we do next? Starting a new work seemed ominous and the nearest faithful congregation we knew of was 30 miles away.

On the second Sunday of January '97, the Durham Church of Christ opened its doors with 23 faithful Christians. During our first three months, we met in one of our member's home. We then rented a small house that would accommodate 40 people, but by June of '97, we were popping at the seams with 40 to 50 people every Sunday. We were growing!

We had to find something larger! We searched every street and alley in Durham trying to find a place

where 60 to 70 people could meet to worship God. We checked with schools, hotels, and civic groups, but nothing could be found that met our needs. Then in August of '97, we got a call from our realtor that she had just listed an "old" church building that would seat 100 people. Calls were made to every member to let them know about the "old" building. Two hours later, almost every member arrived at the "old" building with hope and dreams in their eyes. After a short evaluation of the "old" building, we bought it the next day for the asking price. Now I want to make one thing clear. I don't believe in miracles, but I do believe in the providence of God. The Lord provided us with an "old" building that needed a lot of love, and we were a people that had a lot of love to give. Was this a miracle? No! Was it the providence of God? We believe it was! Through God's word and through prayer all things can be accomplished (Phil. 4:6-7,13). The location was perfect, the neighborhood was great, and we were growing!

October '97 was spent remodeling the auditorium, two classrooms, and the bathrooms. Our first service was held in our beautiful "new" remodeled building the first Sunday of November '97. The singing was great, the prayers were wonderful, and the sermon I preached that Sunday morning wasn't half-bad either. There wasn't a dry eye in the house on that glorious day the Lord had made (Psalm 118:24). We were growing!

The pace and fervor to serve the Lord never slowed down. The very next weekend we held our first gospel meeting. Four sound gospel preachers from the area volunteered to hold a meeting for us on "The Authority of God's Word." The elders at our former congregation had distilled God's authority by proclaiming the New Hermeneutics and teachings from material such as, "*Wine-skins*" and "*The Second Incarnation*"

by Shelly and Harris. **We had to get back to the basics!!! Souls were at stake!!!**

Remodeling continued through the end of the year, but that was not all that was happening. Members were doing works they had never done before. Men were preaching, teaching, leading prayer, directing songs, and developing talents as God had intended. Women were teaching children's classes, conducting ladies Bible studies, working in the building, and providing support wherever needed. We were spiritually alive again and God was adding precious souls to the church daily. We were growing!

From January '98 until present, everything has been a blur. We have grown in membership from 45 to 75 members, appointed elders, conducted our first vacation Bible school, held our second and third gospel meetings, and baptized 6 precious souls into Christ. Also, we are helping a sister congregation by filling the pulpit every Sunday, conducting Bible studies with six non-Christians, and we just called the realtor to ask her to start looking for a larger church building. We are growing!

If you have missed the point of this article, here it is, "Don't sit in self-pity, worrying about what the liberals are doing. Get off the couch, roll up your sleeves and put your faith to work." There are precious souls in this world that are seeking the truth! Paul tells us, "*How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard*" (Rom. 10:14)? Brothers and Sisters, if we don't take the Gospel to the world, we are going to lose our souls and many others will as well (Mark 16:15-16).

You are not alone in this battle! There has always been a remnant of God's people who will fight for the truth; and, there always will be (Rom. 11:5). One reason why it appears we are losing ground to the liberal element in the church is

because we are allowing it to happen. I have been asked on numerous occasions why the Durham Church of Christ has grown so rapidly since its conception. The answer is simple. Jesus said, "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 28:29). You cannot love the Lord with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind, and then watch the church be destroyed. It is time for all of us to put our faith into action and stop whining (James 2:20)!

OUR ACTIONS

How are we putting our faith into action? We are following the instructions given to all of us over 1900 years ago!

- Select qualified leadership that can and will defend the truth (1 Tim. 3:13, Titus 1:5-8).
- Join forces with other congregations and fight against false teaching (Rom. 16:17).
- Attend Gospel meetings and lectureships, wherever and whenever you can (Acts 17:11).
- Hold Gospel meetings to lift up the faithful and help teach the lost (2 Tim. 4:2).
- Send cards, make phone calls, and knock on doors of those you know, and those you don't know in the neighborhood (Mark 16:15-16). Even those in the church need encouragement for doing great things for the Lord (John 13:34-35).
- Follow-up with every visitor that attends services. Out of town visitors may provide the name of a local contact, or the visitors' home congregation could be a means of future support.
- Teach members the importance of evangelism and then train them how to do it (Matt. 28:19).
- Turn off the TV. Go and visit in homes, hospitals, nursing homes, and any place where you can encourage others (Matt. 25:40). You will gain more than you give!
- Treat the church as a family (Eph. 3:15). Praise your members often. Instruct them on how

to grow. Deal with conflicts quickly and lovingly.

- Fellowship with Christians as often as possible (Acts 2:44). These are people with whom you will spend eternity. Don't you think you should get to know them better here on earth?
- Avoid looking like the world (Rom. 12:2). Christmas parties, Easter egg hunts, car washes, bake sales and bowling trophies may all have a place in the world, but not in the church.
- Discipline as needed with Love (Eph. 4:15; Matt. 18:16). Churches of Christ have long been able to quote book, chapter, and verse to the salvation of the alien sinner, but many are hesitant to administer discipline to the erring child of God.
- Insist that teachers and preachers use only sound Bible translations, such as the King James, New King James and the American Standard 1901 (2 Tim. 3:15).
- Know what is happening in the church today (Acts 20:29). Church leaders must not bury their heads in the sand, if you do, wolves will devour the church. Read good books published by men in the brotherhood, like "Piloting the Strait" by Dave Miller, "Change Agents in the Church" by William Woodson and "Behold The Pattern" by Goebel Music. Subscribe to sound brotherhood publications like "Seek The Old Paths."
- Seek the help of sound Gospel preachers in the brotherhood — men who have devoted their lives to studying and teaching God's will without compromise. But always compare what they say to the Scriptures (Rom. 10:15). Don't follow any man blindly (Acts 17:11).
- Prepare the youth for the future (Prov. 22:6). Train the young men to offer Wednesday evening invitations and to deliver sermons on Sunday night. Teach them to lead songs, pray, and wait on the Lord's table. Train the young women to teach children's Bible classes, conduct Lady's Bible studies, and to provide special assistance to those

who need help.

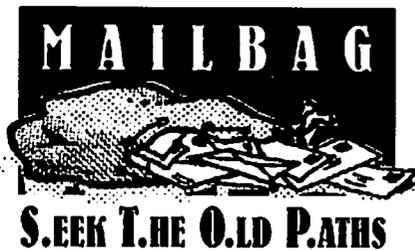
- Insist on sound Bible class material and teachers (2 Peter 3:17). False teaching most often enters the church through the classes and the pulpit. Never take either for granted.
- Insist on sound Gospel preaching (2 Peter 3:17). Nobody likes conflict, but if error is being taught, nip it in the bud!
- Worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Remember Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2)?
- Always "SEEK THE OLD PATHS" (Jer. 6:16).

REMEMBER, People Change, Times Change, But The Lord's Church Will Never Change. If we let "change agents" go unchallenged, the devil wins. Is that what we want? Oh, by the way, we had 86 in attendance last Sunday! We are growing!

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have warned that our so-called "Christian schools" are promoting and encouraging spiritual destruction. I grow weary of reading in church bulletins of those who claim to be gospel preachers who take every opportunity to promote *Abilene Christian University* (and other Christian (?) universities just as ungodly). How those who profess Christ and claim to have sound minds and common sense can continue to support the rape of the Lord's church and His word by such institutions boggles my mind! Those who stand on the Lord's side ought to be angry, mad, piqued, livid, furious, irate, infuriated, enraged, and just a wee bit upset! Instead, however, preachers who proudly plug ACU are tolerated by the congregation, patted on the back by the elders, and given a yearly increase in salary. I am increasingly concerned about those who privately say they do not condone the pillage of the church of our Lord, but for lack of backbone and fear of losing favor with the majority of the synagogue, they encounter lockjaw. Brethren, lockjaw can be deadly! Members of the Lord's church must clearly show to whom their allegiance belongs. If not, you will be in the same situation as those who cried "Lord, Lord," but were called workers of iniquity by the Master and told to depart (Matt. 7:21-23). The bottom line for all professing to be Christians — quit supporting institutions the Lord would mark and condemn if on earth today!" ...**Marvin L. Weir, Rowlett, TX.** "I really enjoy your web page and the information on it" ...**Travis Phillips, Green Hill, AL.** "As a gospel preacher, I very much appreciate your paper. I do not appreciate false teachers like **Joe Beam** who, because of their ungodly influence, turn souls away from God as well as cause preachers to change their addresses. Please change my address from Mason, Texas to the one below" ...**Randall Maxwell, Maysville, OK.** "Please change our address so that we can continue receiving *Seek the Old Paths*. We have moved, and we are now attending the Memphis School of Preaching. Thank you very much for your help in this matter. We really enjoy receiving this paper" ...**Greg Ballentine, Memphis, TN.** "I enjoy this publication immensely and have copied many of the back publications, reading them and passing them on to a dear friend who is also enjoying them. Thank you" ...**Bessie Graham.** "Just a note letting you know how much I appreciate your sound teaching in the sermon videos we have received and the articles that I have read of yours. I appreciate your stand for the truth. I hope the *Seek The Old Paths* Lectureship was a success and all were uplifted by it. ...**Chuck.** "We appreciate what you have sent us so far, but please remove our name from your mailing list" ...**Lonnie Olson, Hobart, OK.** "Thank you so much for providing material such as this throughout the brotherhood. My prayers that much good will be done through your efforts" ...**Charles Barrett, Elkins, WV.** "I appreciate your zeal manifested through your opposition to the error which is so mutilating congregations throughout the world. Continue the fight, and God be with you" ...**Ben Overby, Pikeville, TN.** "Received my first publication of *Seek The Old Paths*. I'm going to share it with others. Just can't express how good it made me feel. Keep up the good work" ...**SLH, Pearl, MS.** "Your articles are so timely and well written. And, what you don't write you have others, equally as able. I firmly believe we are winning the battle over the liberals. Truly, the pen is mightier than the "sword" ...**Tommy Exum, Nashville, TN.** "We enjoy *Seek The Old Paths* so much" ...**Fred & Iva Browning, Fortville, IN.** "Please add me to your mailing list. God bless you in your work!" ...**Barbara Strange, Sheffield, AL.** "Please add my name to the list for *S.T.O.P.* I've read several issues and am happy to see your stand for the truth. Thank you for the good work your congregation is doing" ...**Roger Harman, Weaver, AL.** "My preacher has been letting me read your newsletter. I would like to be put on your mailing list because I really enjoy reading it" ...**Todd Esterling, Leola, AR.** "Would love to receive your paper *S.T.O.P.* as I have seen a copy and enjoyed it very much. No one can help but understand what the Bible says when you answer questions" ...**Mrs. Billy Joe Hicks, Lubbock, TX.** "I appreciate your courage in standing for the truth and

"Lockjaw is deadly! Some people refuse to be warned! They will not believe the truth. When truth is presented to those who have nothing but disdain for God's Word, it is too much for them to bear! For years now those who love the Lord and His church more than the accolades of men

encourage you to continue the good work of preaching the truth and exposing error" ...**Irvin Williams, Louisville, KY.** "Enclosed is a check to help with postage. I enjoy the tract very much. Keep up the good work" ...**Doyle Castleberry, Brasstown, NC.** "Please remove my name from your mailing list. Thank you" ...**Chris Overbey, Richmond, VA.** "May God bless and keep you. Please, do not become weary in well-doing. Keep up the fine work you are doing. God willing, this is not the last time you will hear from me" ...**Martin Bedford, Tucson, AZ.** "I recently received a copy of *Seek The Old Paths* from a relative in Missouri and enjoyed it very much. Would you please put me on your mailing list?" ...**Bill Simpson, Ennis, TX.** "We so appreciate the job you and the elders at East Corinth did in presenting the *Seek The Old Paths* lectures this year. The subject was timely and the presentations were great. You did a splendid job with your assigned subject. You and your work with the publication does not go un-noticed. We appreciate the efforts you put forth. May God bless you and yours as you serve Him" ...**Mark & Linda Miller, West Jefferson, NC.** "Hello, my name is **Graham Walker**, graduate of East Tennessee School Of Preaching, and I preach for the church that meets in Palmerston North, New Zealand. I am always looking for informative articles to put in our newsletter. May I have your permission to share these great faith building messages with the brethren through that medium? Also, can I reproduce them to handout during my daily door-knocking routine? I appreciate you and the great magazine *S.T.O.P.* I just wish those with liberal tendencies would take the time to apply some reasoning and take note of the "Old Paths" you proclaim. Your servant in Christ, **Graham Walker, Palmerston North, New Zealand.** [NOTE: you have our permission to use whatever material we publish to the glory of God and His church. We wish you well and pray for your work.] "I receive *STOP* by mail and I enjoy it very much. Continue exposing the error in the church today" ...**Travis Phillips, Florence, AL.**

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.

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