

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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IS POPE JOHN PAUL QUALIFIED FOR SAINTHOOD?

Tom Wacaster

In an article appearing on Reuters website, Phillip Püllella wrote, "The Vatican may have found the 'miracle' they need to put the late Pope John Paul one step closer to sainthood." According to the article, Pope John Paul allegedly healed a French nun who suffered from the same Parkinson's disease that afflicted him. But the details of that "healing" are quite revealing, as are the "conditions" for the Pope's sainthood. Let's take a closer look.

First, it is claimed that the "nun" prayed to Pope John Paul after he had died, and was then inexplicably cured of her Parkinson's disease. It should be noted that the New Testament never authorizes anyone to pray to a man for any reason whatsoever. Jesus taught us that we are to pray thus: "Our Father Who art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). In addition, if this woman was "inexplicably cured" of her Parkinson, how does she know that it was Pope John Paul who somehow healed her? At best, it is pure subjectivism. The Hindus in India claim they were healed when they prayed to their Hindu god, but that does not make it so.

Second, the alleged healing is being "investigated" by the church authorities. Why is it necessary to "investigate" any "healing" if indeed it is a true healing? In the New Testament times the miracles of the apostles were so powerful and convincing that even the enemies could not deny that a notable miracle had taken place. Nor could they question who it was that performed the mira-

cle. And how, we might ask, are "church authorities" to go about investigating the matter? Do they call the late Pope John Paul to the witness stand and ask him if he were the active party in the healing?

Third, even if it could be confirmed that the nun was healed as a result of her praying to the deceased Pope (something we affirm cannot be proven), how does that put the Pope "one step closer to sainthood?" I read of nothing in the New Testament that suggests that sainthood is something achieved in increments. Quite the contrary! When a person becomes a Christian he at one and the same time becomes a saint. That is because a "saint" is one who has been "sanctified." Here is what the inspired apostle Paul wrote on the matter: *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God"* (I Cor. 6:9-11).

Note that these Christians in Corinth were sanctified when they were "washed" and "justified." The same is true with regard to all Christians. That is why you read of the "saints in Rome" (Rom. 1:7), the "saints in Philippi" (Phil. 1:1), the

"saints in Ephesus" (Eph. 1:1) and the "saints in Colossae" (Col. 1:2), to name just a few.

Fourth, according to the article "another miracle would be necessary between beatification and eventual sainthood." Another miracle? How many miracles does it take to convince someone that the message has been authenticated? And, if it takes yet "another miracle" to move the late Pope closer to sainthood, then why not a third, fourth, fifth miracle, ad infinitum? Oh reader, do you not see the futility and foolishness of such a doctrine?

Fifth, "only those 'miracles' which occurred after the Pope's death can be investigated and eventually used as proof of holiness." Wait a minute. I thought all faithful Catholics considered the Pope as "holy" prior to his death! They called him "Holy Father" prior to his death (something that is without authority in and of itself! They bowed the knee and kissed his hand and ring! In the eyes of every Catholic the Pope is the epitome of "holiness." Now we are told that it will take another "miracle" from somewhere beyond the realms of the earthly to prove the man's holiness!

Sixth, the month after John Paul died, Pope Benedict dispensed with the "Church rules and put him on the fast track to sainthood." That speaks volumes of the present Pope (as well as all past Popes). The man present-

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Pope John Paul...



Editorial...

BAPTISM AND SALVATION #2

Garland M. Robinson

The purpose of water baptism has long been under attack. The devil will not sit still. Those under his influence detest the purpose of baptism and cry loud and long to persuade men to not believe what they read in the New Testament about it. I grew up hearing these things from denominational neighbors. I confidently believed one thing for sure, never in my lifetime would my brethren move away from the simple teaching of Jesus on baptism. But, oh, how I was mistaken! For many years now we're hearing some among "us" saying things like, "Jesus may save some people in their ignorance and unbelief," "we need to be more tolerant of people who genuinely love the Lord and that are not of our fellowship," "we must not think we are the only ones who will be saved." On and on such unbelief continues.

How can one be saved without believing and obeying the Lord's Word? Remember Matthew 7:21 where Jesus said he would save those who do the Father's Will? Baptism is part of His Will.

THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM

What is the purpose of baptism? Different religious groups answer this question in various ways. Some say "it is the outward sign of an inward grace." Others say "we should be baptized because we are saved," or "baptism is to make one a member of our denomination," or "you do not need to be baptized," or "you cannot be saved without it." Is the Bible so indistinct that we are left in the dark on the subject? Why be baptized? What does the Bible actually teach on this subject?

There is no one specific purpose of baptism. There are many.

One is baptized **in order to obey the Lord**. It is a command of Christ! We read in Acts 10:48, "And he commanded them to be baptized

in the name of the Lord." The command of Jesus was, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

The apostles did exactly as they were told. On Pentecost they preached, "...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). About 3,000 did as they were commanded, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (v.41). The same thing was done time and time again when people turned to the Lord desiring salvation. A grievous persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, was told, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Saul did as he was commanded. He later said of that occasion, "...I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19).

Water baptism is not an option. It is done in order to obey the Lord. Jesus said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say" (Luke 6:46)? If one really desires to go to heaven, he will obey the Lord! All men must obey Christ to be saved for Jesus will take vengeance on those who do not obey (II Thess. 1:7-9; I Peter 4:17).

A person is baptized **to be united with the Lord**. We can be one with the Lord when we are baptized. There is no other action found in the Bible that puts one into Christ. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this,

that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:3-6). "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29).

The apostles taught there is salvation in none other but Jesus (Acts 4:12; II Tim. 2:10). It is clear that all spiritual blessings are found in Christ (Eph. 1:3). One must be united with him in order to enjoy them. The only way to be united with him is by being baptized into Him.

A person is baptized **in order to become a child of God — to be born again**. No greater blessing can be awarded a person than to be a child of God, a child of the King of the universe. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..." (I John 3:1).

One does not become a son of God by accident. It is not accomplished simply by pronouncing certain words or believing it in the heart. One becomes a child of God by being "born again." We become children of our parents by being born and we become children of God by being born again. Jesus told Nicodemus, "...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ... Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:3-7).

Being "born again," the new birth, is one act that consists of two elements: *water* and *the Spirit*. Through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, one submits to being "buried" in water and is raised to walk a "newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). The old man of sin is destroyed in baptism (Rom. 6:6). Being THEN made free from sin, we become the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:18). We are

adopted as sons of God. *“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ”* (Gal. 4:5-7).

Sons of God are obedient to the heavenly Father. *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”* (Rom. 8:14). The Spirit of God “leads” through the words which He teaches. We are begotten by the Gospel (I Cor. 4:15; James 1:18; II Thess. 2:14). When we obey His word and are guided by His word, we are His children. *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”* (Gal. 3:26-27). We are children of God “by faith.” The point at which faith saves (we become children of God) is when we “put on Christ.” The only act by which we “put on Christ” is when we are baptized into Him (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3).

A person is baptized **in order to become a new creature**. When one is “born again” it necessarily follows he is a new creature. *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (II Cor. 5:17). The only way to be “in Christ” is to be baptized into Him. *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized into Jesus Christ** were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in **newness of life**”* (Rom. 6:3-4).

Water baptism begins our new life in Christ which we never experienced before. Being a new creation requires a new life-style. We must now *“...walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God”* (Col. 1:10; cf. Eph. 4:1; I Thess. 2:12). *“If ye then be risen with Christ (in water baptism), seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. ... But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old*

man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:8-17).

A person is baptized **in order to be saved (forgiven) from their sins**. Jesus made it so plain in Mark 16:16 that one needs help to misunderstand it. Sadly, there are many willing and eager to provide such help. Jesus said, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* Ask any first grader what the Lord said do in this verse in order to be saved and the response will always be, **believe and be baptized**. To say anything else is to deny the Lord’s word! The apostles understood it. They were infallible in these matters because they were being directed by the Holy Spirit (cf. John 16:13; 14:26). They not only preached baptism to be forgiven of sins (Acts 2:38), but they practiced it as well (Acts 2:41). The whole New Testament is in complete compliance with what was done on the day of Pentecost. Baptism washes sins away. *“...Be baptized, and wash away thy sins...”* (Acts 22:16). See also Romans 6:3-6, 17-18 and Colossians 2:12.

Peter made it ever so clear when he wrote, *“The like figure whereunto even **baptism doth also now save us** (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”* (I Peter 3:21).

A person is baptized **in order to be cleansed of sin by Christ’s blood**. *“Without shedding of blood is*

no remission” (Heb. 9:22). *“...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood”* (Rev. 1:5). *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins...”* (Eph. 1:7). Christ died on the cross and shed his blood that we might have forgiveness. *“They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb”* (Rev. 7:14). *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life”* (Rom. 5:8-10).

Jesus shed his blood in his death and we contact His saving blood when we are baptized into his death. *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death”* (Rom. 6:3)?

A person is baptized **in order to enter the kingdom of Christ — the church of Christ**. Jesus made this clear to Nicodemus in John 3:3-5. The church is made up of the saved. *“...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”* (Acts 2:47). *“...Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body”* (Eph. 5:23). The only way to enter the church is by water baptism. *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” ... “Praising God and having favour with all the people and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”* (Acts 2:41,47). *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...”* (I Cor. 12:13). The “one body” is the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).

A person is baptized **in order to put one into Christ**. Only two verses in all the New Testament tell us HOW and WHEN one gets INTO Christ. HOW does one get into Christ? *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized into Jesus Christ** were baptized into his death”* (Rom. 6:3)? WHEN does one get into Christ? *“For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ”* (Gal. 3:27). There is no salvation outside of Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Salvation is IN

Christ (II Tim. 2:10). You cannot get into Christ any other way than by water baptism! If so, where's the Scripture that says so?

A person is baptized **in order to bury the old man of sin**. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that **the body of sin might be destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). Baptism shows one's **death to sin**. There's no other way to die to sin than by being baptized (Rom. 6:2-3). We bury dead people, not those who are alive! Baptism is for sinners who die to the old world. In baptism, they are raised to a new life (v.4), free from past sins. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have **obeyed** from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being **then made free from sin**, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:7-18).

Baptism in water for the forgiveness of sins was taught beginning with John the Baptist (Mark 1:4) and continued with Jesus (Mark 16:16) and his apostles (Acts 2:38). It is still taught and practiced the same way today by all who respect Christ and his Word. Does your

BAPTISM STANDS BETWEEN THE SINNER AND SALVATION

Sinner — Baptism — Salvation.....	Mark 16:16
Sinner — Baptism — Remission of sins	Acts 2:38
Sinner — Baptism — The new life	Rom. 6:4
Sinner — Baptism — Sin destroyed	Rom. 6:6
Sinner — Baptism — Washing	Acts 22:16
Sinner — Baptism — Calling	Acts 22:16
Sinner — Baptism — Kingdom	John 3:5
Sinner — Baptism — Cleansing	Eph. 5:26
Sinner — Baptism — Dead to sin.....	Rom. 6:7-12
Sinner — Baptism — Free from sin	Rom. 6:18
Sinner — Baptism — Salvation	I Peter 3:21
Sinner — Baptism — Forgiveness	Col. 2:11-12
Sinner — Baptism — Christ's blood	Rom. 6:3
Sinner — Baptism — A child of God	Gal. 3:26-27
Sinner — Baptism — Death of Christ	Rom. 6:3
Sinner — Baptism — New creature in Christ.....	Rom. 6:4-5
Sinner — Baptism — Good conscience	I Peter 3:21
Sinner — Baptism — Putting on Christ.....	Gal. 3:26-27
Sinner — Baptism — Buried with Christ	Col. 2:12
Sinner — Baptism — Raised with Christ	Rom. 6:4
Sinner — Baptism — Putting off sins	Col. 2:11-12
Sinner — Baptism — Sanctification.....	Eph. 5:26
Sinner — Baptism — Body of Christ	I Cor. 12:13

church teach it the way John, Christ and the apostles did? If not, it's not the church Christ died for and the apostles preached!

2nd of 3 parts

HOW COME THIS "CAMPBELLITE" STUFF WE KEEP HEARING?

Nothing we believe or do is believed or done by the authority of Campbell or any other human. We follow the authority of Christ.

Most brethren have been called "Campbellites" by denominational people at one time or another. They are led to do this by a prejudiced clergy who just abhor the simple plea to return to New "Testament Christianity." They are so wrapped up in denominationalism and their churches of human origin, they just can't conceive of anybody not belonging to a denomination. They just won't allow it. They would prohibit anybody from being just a Christian and a member of the church of which you read in the New Testament. Neither will they be honest with the historical facts regarding Alexander Campbell and the efforts made by many to restore the church as the Bible reveals it. It is just too much for them.

The fact is, efforts to return to

the church of the Bible began before Alexander Campbell ever set foot on these shores. It began among Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and others without ever having heard of the man. Churches of Christ existed in England after Catholicism and the Protestant Reformation and a century or more before Alexander Campbell was born. How could such folks be called Campbellites with any degree of honesty? Dishonesty may be at the heart of the term "Campbellite."

Even in the county where I live, there existed a church of Christ before Alexander Campbell was ever in America. Only a prejudiced clergyman who shows his ignorance of history and the Bible would ever say Campbell, or any man founded the church of Christ. Why don't some of

these people show more honesty with truth and admit the church exists separate and apart from denominationalism? Nothing we believe or do is believed or done by the authority of Campbell or any other human. We follow the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17).

Unfortunately, some, even among brethren who have chosen liberalism over truth, have given away the plea to restore New Testament Christianity. They openly confess they have no interest in its restoration. Here is one of a number of places where we part company. I am interested in the church of the Bible because, of all the churches that exist on earth, that ONE is RIGHT.

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News Release...

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY ALLOWS HOMOSEXUAL RIGHTS GROUP ON CAMPUS

According to a SOULFORCE Press Release (3/27/06), “Equality Riders completed a full day of presentations, discussions and worship with students at Abilene Christian University today, the first school to allow the Riders full access to campus. The school, affiliated with the Church of Christ, has about 4000 undergraduate and 800 graduate students studying in a range of liberal arts and professional programs. ... They have allowed us to present in small classes and big auditoriums, fed us and let us worship with them. We are truly grateful for the dialogue we have had here with students, faculty and administration. ... Equality Riders worshipped at the University Church of Christ just off campus on Sunday night, taking communion, singing and praying with about 800 students. On Monday, Equality Riders joined students in Moody Coliseum for ACU’s daily chapel service. ... For lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students here it’s like their school has said, ‘Yes, you do exist.’ Despite the warm greeting extended to Soulforce Equality Riders, Abilene Christian University continues to hold a student conduct policy forbidding ‘homosexual behavior,’ which has led to students being expelled from the school. ... The Soulforce Equality Ride is a journey to change the heart and mind of America on the issue of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality.” The full article can be read at: www.equalityride.com/article.php?article_id=248

A web posting by Jack Reese, Dean of the College of biblical studies ACU, declared, “We were the first school to allow them to come on campus and make presentations to our students, the first to receive them with full hospitality. ... Most of the Christian schools are keeping them off-campus completely — or trying to. ... After dinner, about 10 SF (Soul Force, – editor) folks and about the same number of Bible faculty had a discussion for an hour and a half. ... People comments were candid, but

there was a lot of grace in the room. People listened. ... We didn’t talk a lot about texts, but we did some. Each person made it clear that he/she knew there were difference. Jake (Jack Reitan, the group’s 24 year old director, -editor) kept saying, ‘I know you think that we are sinners.’ We tried to correct him. ‘We are all sinners, Jake.’ It’s not the ‘being’ gay that anyone was attempting to correct, much less condemn.”

Jack Reese wrote his piece for the internet in Indianapolis, Indiana while attending “the National Preaching Summit, with mostly Independent Christian Church preachers.” He said “the support has been overwhelming.” “I could not speak this morning except out of the overflow of emotion, through tears, and through great passion about what God’s voice might be saying to us in such a circumstance, about our middle class, white, American values. It will be a while before I get past it. I’m not sure I’ll be ‘normal’ again.”

These quotes were taken from

“Hope Network Ministries,” www.lynnanderson.org/content.asp?CID=89561.

Other related web pages are:

“www.equalityride.com/article.php?article_id=248”

“www.acu.edu/events/news/archives2006/060224_soulforce.html”

“www.acu.edu/events/news/archives2006/060324_Equality_Ride.html”

“www.acu.edu/events/news/archives2006/060328_soulforcefollow.html”

This is simply another episode of a long list of departures from the faith this school has been involved in for many many years. The so-called Equality Riders is a group of homosexual activists (I refuse to call them

gay) who are traveling the country trying to raise awareness and acceptance of their chosen lifestyle. I say “chosen” because that is exactly what their deviant behavior is. Homosexuality is sodomy and there is nothing gay (happy, merry) about it. This SIN is condemned throughout the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22-30; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; I Cor. 6:9).

The Lord’s people do not incite violence. Nor do they stage protests and marches. On the contrary, we are caring, compassionate and loving toward sinners (Biblical love means we seek another’s best interest). However, we do not accept, support, nor give a platform to those whose sole intent and purpose is to promote their sinful activity. This group’s goal is not to learn the truth and come under its hold, but to promote the acceptance of their immoral behaviour.

Shall we accept an “organized group” of thieves or murderers or adulterers or drunkards or extortioners or idolaters or witches into our midst to beg our acceptance and toleration as they promote their immoral and depraved lifestyle? What society calls “gays,” the Bible calls homosexuals, sodomites, abusers of themselves with mankind. They are listed among many groups of sinners (I Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 1:18-32).

Yes, Jesus ate with publicans and sinners (Matt. 9:10-11). But these individuals were interested in seeing and hearing Jesus. Their agenda was not to promote their wickedness and convince Jesus to accept and tolerate them. Their sinful behavior was not the issue with them. They wanted to hear the Lord. And Jesus taught them. Jesus didn’t tell them, “I’m not attempting to correct, much less condemn you.” He told men and women everywhere, “go and sin no more” (John 8:11), “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3,5), “woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites...ye blind guides...blind Pharisee...whited

sepulchres...ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:23,24,26,27,33), "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

Our "dialogue" and "facilitated discussion" with sinners is to "reprove, rebuke and exhort" (II Tim. 4:2). This means we identify and expose sin for what it is (reprove), convince and convict those who are living in sin (rebuke) and then exhort them to repent and come out of it in complete obedience to the Gospel. This is what the Bible calls love (John (John 14:15; Luke 6:46; Eph. 4:15). This is being a true friend to Jesus (Luke 15:14).

Garland M. Robinson, Editor

Pope John Paul...

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ly reigning over the Catholic church is not concerned with "rules." The end justifies the means.

Why is it that men cannot be satisfied with doing Bible things in Bible ways? Of course history tells us that the Catholic church has never had much concern about doing things as the Bible directs, for if they did, the Catholic church would not exist. In the final analysis, if Pope John (or any man for that matter) was not a "saint" when he died, he cannot be "made a saint" sometime thereafter. If I read my Bible correctly, the state in which a man dies, "spiritually speaking," is the state in which he is going to spend all eternity, time without end.

Perhaps the world would be better off if they were not so concerned about some make-believe process that can make their deceased "heroes" saints, and were a little more concerned about what it means to live a saintly life in the sight of God now, while there is still time.

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UNITY WITH ERROR?

Ron Boatwright

This year, 2006, there is another unity effort to restore fellowship with the apostate Christian Church. But, "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed*" (Amos 3:3)? How can those in error be fellowshipped? Many people apparently haven't learned from past history when there was a split in the Lord's church in the later half of the 1800s. As a result about 1,330,379 went off into the apostate Christian Church denomination and only 159,123 remained faithful to the Lord's church. In the past 100 years the apostate Christian Church has not repented of their sins, and it is apparent they are not going to repent.

The only unity that is going to occur is if some congregations of the churches of Christ will accept the Christian Church and their sinful practices. Then these congregations will also become apostate like the Christian Church. Men have become tired of God's simple order for His church and have tried to improve on it. When a congregation steps onto the road of error, there is no turning back. After the first step, the next steps are easier.

People today may think it makes no difference if they add mechanical instruments of music in worshipping God. In the Old Testament we have the example of Nadab and Abihu who were also presumptuous in their thinking that it made no difference. Nadab and Abihu learned their lesson the hard way and too late when they, "*offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord*" (Lev. 10:1-2). They took it upon themselves to offer strange fire in worship to God. They died a horrible violent death because they did something in worship that God did not authorize. "*Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition*" (I Cor. 10:11). Just as Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire, men today who have no respect for God's word are offering strange

music "before the Lord, which He commanded them not." Who has authorized man today to do this?

God's command is to sing. "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*" (Col. 3:16-17). The expression, "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" signifies everything we do must be by His authority. Only what God says in the scriptures is authorized. Nowhere in the New Testament is man authorized to add a lifeless mechanical instrument of music to the singing in worship to God. For the Lord's supper, God did not have to say not to add milk and cookies. But adding milk and cookies would be just as sinful as adding a mechanical instrument of music to our singing in worshipping God.

The use of mechanical instruments of music is not authorized. God has never permitted man to devise the plan or means to worship Him. This is very serious because we will lose our souls through presumptuous sins just as Nadab and Abihu lost their lives through their presumptuous sins. It is a presumptuous sin to do that which the Lord has not authorized. Webster defines presumptuous as "to take upon oneself without permission or authority." The Bible tells us to "*Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression*" (Psalm 19:13). It is sin that separates man from God which will cause him to be eternally lost (Isa. 59:2). Judgment Day will be too late to find out that it is wrong to use unauthorized mechanical instruments of music to worship God, when the Lord says, "*depart from me, ye that work iniquity*" (Matt. 7:23).

God has given complete instructions as to how we are to worship Him — "*as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain*

unto life and godliness” (II Peter 1:3). God has told us “all things” in His word as to how He is to be worshipped. We dare not try to improve on it. The reason for apostasy is man has always wanted to do things his way and not God’s way.

The Christian Church teaches that if God has not condemned an action, it is acceptable. But where in the Bible is having a Pope and headquarters in Rome condemned, so it must be acceptable? With this attitude toward Scripture, you can then do just about anything you want, and say it is not forbidden in Scripture. This is absurd. People who want to do that which is sinful will go to any length to try to justify it. How can one who has any respect for God and His word fellowship those in the error of darkness? They can’t. *“For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”* (II Cor. 6:14). We are to *“have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”* (Eph. 5:11). If we really cared for the souls of those in the Christian Church, we would reprove their error, and not fellowship them in it.

One who ignores what God says and does things without His authority, walks in darkness. *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (I John 1:6-7). Only by walking in the light of God’s word can we continue to receive the forgiveness of our sins so we can go to Heaven. We are not walking in the light when we have fellowship with error.

The Christian Church is having their annual convention: the **“North American Christian Convention”** in Louisville, Kentucky, June 27-30, 2006. A number of liberal self-appointed representatives from the churches of Christ who will be featured speakers at their convention include: **Prentice Meador, Jerry Taylor, Jeff Walling, Carl Bracheen, Paul Faulkner, Carrol Osburn, Don McLaughlin, Albert Lemmons, Calvin Warpula, Ron Rose, and Mike Cope.** This is error encouraging error. Those speaking at

their convention must be in agreement with them or they wouldn’t have been invited. The Christian Church knew who to select. They are pawns in the hands of the Christian Church and Satan to change the identity of the New Testament church as they lead many congregations off into the same apostasy as the Christian Church. This is just another ploy of Satan for churches of Christ to abandon the basic principles of the authority of the New Testament which will result in their being transformed and absorbed into the apostate Christian Church. This will result in another split in the churches of Christ, and Satan will win again.

Nothing has changed with the Christian Church since 1906 and nothing will change in the future. If the Christian Church wants unity, why don’t they give up the instrument and their many other sinful doctrines and practices? Because people want to do things their way, *“for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth”* (II Thess. 2:11-12). We must not fellowship denominations in their religious error. *“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”* (II John 10-11). We sin if we fellowship religious denominations in their error by being a partaker of their evil deeds. If a member of the Lord’s church is cast into Hell because of his fellowship with error, he will only have himself to blame.

We must speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. God’s word is the authority and standard by which all people will be judged on Judgment Day. Jesus says, *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). People may choose to ignore God’s word now as the only source of authority, but on Judgment Day they will not be able to ignore it.

If we value our souls and where we will be spending eternity, we dare not comfort the Christian Church in their apostasy. We dare not compro-

mise God’s word by adding to and taking away from it (Rev. 22:18-19). If we want to go to Heaven, we must submit to God in obedient faith by only doing what He says, for the reason He says, and how He says. People must not wait until Judgment Day, when they lose their souls, only to find out they can’t do what God has not authorized.

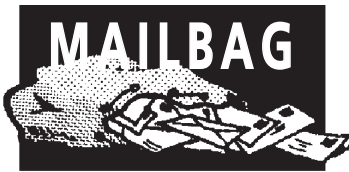
Let’s make our “calling and election sure” (II Peter 1:10). Let’s not fellowship error, but reprove it.

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have been preaching almost 60 years. Most of my work has been in Texas and Oklahoma, but I did preach in the Atlanta, GA area for about 10 years. May the Lord continue to bless your efforts" ...**Jim Lundy, Tulsa, OK.** "Thank you for all your endeavors to spread the good news" ...**Bill Tester, Elkton, MD.** "Your tactic of including all of the requests for removal from the mailing list in your publication is interesting and seems to be a unique practice of your paper. I'm sure that those who have made such unassuming administrative requests are happy to have their names published and spread around the nation. Good work on yet another subtle way to expose those whose faith is eroding into apostasy. Defend the faith!" ...**Cary McCall, Abilene, Texas.** "Enclosed is a check to help offset costs in mailing STOP" ...**Simone Sell, Clemmons, NC.** "I have had the fortune to review some of your past publications, *Seek The Old Paths* by editor Garland M. Robinson, last one being Sept. 2003. I find your articles to be very informative and in keeping with sound doctrine. Therefore, please use this means as a request to receive monthly your publication. Also, if possible, I would like to have the entire year of 2005 publications sent if available. Please let me know the cost and I will send you a check. Thanking you in advance" ...**Art Ostrander, Marshall, TX.** [There is no charge for the paper. We try to keep a supply of back issues available. We appreciate all those who so graciously contribute to our efforts that makes this work possible. -editor] "One again I have to express my gratitude for STOP. This publication has been a blessing to me. I always look forward to receiving the printed copy and often visit the website to read articles, past and present. Readers can find a lot of good information on your website including other publications. Thank you for continuing to publish this monthly bulletin" ...**Robert Price, Jacksonville, FL.** [Thousands of Bible lessons from the radio are available upon demand at wsoj.net. You can search for a certain speaker or subject. Check it out! Also, pioneerpreachers.com and aburningfire.net are excellent websites to read and learn the truth.

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