

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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DOES CHRIST AUTHORIZE OPEN FELLOWSHIP?

Danny Butler

"And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part" (Mark 9:38-40).

"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9:49-50).

The above passages are often used completely out of context. It is futile to attempt to prove by these verses that our Lord meant that we could and should extend the "right hand of fellowship" to just anyone calling himself a Christian. There are at least two ways these verses have been used by those advocating open fellowship. (1) To justify extending fellowship to one who claims baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, even when he endorses denominational doctrine foreign to the New Testament pattern. And, (2) To extend fellowship to denominations and those among us who have gone the way of Balaam.

There is an important point that must be considered here. Truth is like a straight line, it never wavers from its path. If it does, it is no longer truth! Dear reader, we would never consider changing a prescription that the doctor

gave us for an illness would we? Then why do some seek to change God's precious truth to satisfy their frail desires? Is this not what John was showing in 2 John 9-11? If not, why not? What did Jesus mean in these verses? We can understand these verses by examining other verses (2 Tim. 2:15). There are certain things we know He did not mean.

WHAT CHRIST DID NOT MEAN

He did not mean for us to accept just anyone that called Him Lord, for he said, *"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). Those who will enter heaven's gate are those who are obedient to the will of God! Therefore, complete obedience is necessary for fellowship. If not why not? Obedience is the means by which the soul is purified (1 Peter 1:22). King Saul was rejected because of partial obedience (1 Samuel 15:22). Those who render partial obedience are rejected by Christ. They teach a perverted gospel when they teach faith, repentance, and confession but deny baptism. These are not complying with the will of God. Therefore they cannot be fellowshiped. This then forbids the Christian worshiping and/or in any wise communing with denominational friends in a worship setting.

Christ did not mean we should fellowship those who refuse to follow the

apostle's doctrine. In Acts 2:42 the Bible states, *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."* The apostolic writings are sensitive to those who refused to follow the gospel they were given by inspiration. Paul made this plain in Galatians 1:6-9. He concluded that those who taught differently were perverters of the gospel. They would receive heaven's curse if they did not repent. It is interesting that Paul even included angels in this curse. In short, no one was to change the inspired word! Therefore, if there be one among us teaching things he ought not, faithful brethren cannot fellowship him with heaven's approval.

Contrary to what the advocates of false doctrine tell us, they are not preaching the gospel! Truth cannot be two ways. You cannot alter Truth and it still be Truth! Think, dear reader, Paul withstood Peter to his face because he was not walking according to the gospel (Gal. 2:14). How then can we fellowship those who are not walking according to the apostles doctrine?! It is time that faithful brethren withstand the false teacher to his face. Sadly, too many who have wandered away are not like Peter who was willing to conform himself to the old paths.

Paul wrote to the brethren in Thessalonica, *"And if any man obey*

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OPEN FELLOWSHIP...


Editorial...

Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? Will you be faithful and join the battle?

Garland M. Robinson

One of the gravest problems we are now facing in the Lord's church is the fact that so many are standing (or may we say sitting or even lying down) on the side lines and not joining in the fight against digression and error! In my judgment, this is one of the most serious problems in the church today.

*"Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle; **The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, '...if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan.** **And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them**" (Num. 32:1-2,5-7).*

This text reveals how the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh were content to settle the land east of Jordan and let their brethren, the rest of the tribes of Israel, continue on in their fight for the promised land. The land they desired for their inheritance was now secure. They were at peace. They were ready to settle down and take it easy. They thought their fighting was over.

Since the things written aforetime were written for our learning (Rom. 15:4), there appears a remarkable parallel here for many in the church today. The vast majority of congregations (elders, preachers and members) are sitting on the side-lines, not lifting their voice nor hand to aid the few who are fighting the onslaught of digression. Where are they? Where is the help faithful servants of God so desperately need? Many are content to

just sit and say things like, "Oh, we are not troubled with that here. We are at peace. Everything is going well. We are not concerned with problems faced by brethren in other places. We do not believe it is as bad as you say. You are on a witch-hunt. I'm not a watch-dog, etc., etc."

The inaction of brethren who are not assisting in the current fight against digression is a great discouragement to those who are fighting the fight. Notice the response Moses gave to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. *"And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them? **Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them. And the LORD'S anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying, 'Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD. And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed. And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel. For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people**" (Num. 32:7-15).*

When the Reubenites and Gadites heard these words, *"...they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones: **But we our-***

*selves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land. **We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance**" (Num. 32:16-18). When they learned of their terrible sin of not helping, they repented and joined in the war. Oh, how we pray that brethren everywhere today will do as they did. Brethren everywhere must have the attitude toward error and those who promote it that we read about in II Timothy 3:9, *"...they shall proceed no further..."**

*²⁰And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war, **And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, And the land be subdued before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out**" (Num. 32:20-23). These tribes, every man, were to go "armed" and assist their brethren. If they would do so they would be found guiltless before the Lord. Had they not done so, they would have been guilty. Verse 23 says "ye have sinned." *"But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith"* (Num.32:27).*

There are those who are teaching error and desperately seeking to add the rest of us to their number. There are those who see this grave error and are desperately seeking to warn the whole brotherhood day and night with tears as did Paul at Ephesus (Acts 20:31). And, I am convinced, the majority of the brotherhood are lying silently in between these two groups, not even aware of what's going on and many of whom seem to not even care! I do see hope in many places though of brethren who are beginning to join us in their concern for the Old Paths. Are you among that number? Are you involved in the fight (I Tim. 6:12)? Will you sit and rest while your brethren go to war? Join us in the fight for truth and righteousness!

"BUT THEY'LL GET MAD!"

Douglas Hoff

Generally speaking, there are only two reactions to truth. People will either accept it or reject it. The hard sayings are what really separate true believers from the unconverted. When Jesus taught that he is the bread of life, many were offended at this (John 6:48-61). Jesus knew in himself that men would reject this because he knows what is in man (John 2:25; 6:61). What is sad is that it was many of his disciples who "went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). Suppose one of the disciples had cautioned Jesus not to teach these things. We can almost hear one saying "But they'll get mad!" Would that have stopped the Lord from so speaking? No. The truth is what men need to hear, believe and obey to be saved (John 8:31,32). Jesus loved us enough even to say the hard sayings.

Man's reaction to truth says a lot about him. One who rejects the hard sayings is not truly converted to the Lord's way. Hear what the Bible says: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the Lord, and depart from evil" (Prov. 3:5-7). When one accepts only the easy sayings of Jesus, he is leaning on his own understanding.

Whoever rejects the hard sayings is headed for destruction because of his foolishness. "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul" (Prov. 15:31,32). He is like the son who would not be warned of the dangers of a loose woman. He cried out in misery "How have I hated instruction...and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers" (Prov. 5:12,13).

Think about the person who advises another not to teach the "controversial" subjects of the Bible. When one says, "But they'll get mad," is this merely stating the obvious? Is it possible that such comments are urging an avoidance of "touchy" matters? If so, this amounts to not trusting the Lord with ALL one's heart.

Though Jesus' teaching was offensive to many in John 6, the apostles continued to walk with Jesus. Jesus tested their commitment by asking the twelve "will ye also go away" (John 6:67)?

Peter's answer ought to characterize us as well: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68,69). Though Peter later denied even knowing the Lord because of fear, he repented and returned to the only source of eternal life.

Let us also resolve to be true followers of ALL that Jesus taught. If we have trouble accepting the difficulties of the Christian life, let us remember what Jesus endured for us on the cross. Then,

call to mind the words of our Savior when he told us "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). This is a hard saying for many people but those who get mad and reject it will reject eternal life. Jesus became mankind's greatest friend by laying down his life for us. Should not we humbly submit to his commandments even if it means suffering "light affliction, which is but for a moment" (II Cor. 4:17)?

Rt. 2 Box 312, Ramer, TN 38367

Elders COLUMN

After receiving much encouragement by word of mouth and letter, we have decided to run a column in S.T.O.P. for the next few months called the Elders Column.

Our primary purpose is.

1. Teach the word (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20).
2. To be ensamples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3; Heb. 13:7).
3. Take a stand against evil (1 Peter 2:21; Heb. 1:8, Psalm 119:104; Rom. 12:9).
4. To warn against the crisis that the church is facing today (1 John 4:1; Heb. 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:3-4).
5. To encourage the young men to be preparing to qualify and serve as elders one day.

We begin the column knowing our authority is not legislative, for such belongs only to Christ (Heb. 1:1-2; James 4:12). Christ completed his legislative work with the completed New Testament (Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19). The authority delegated to elders is to keep the local church which they oversee doctrinally and morally pure (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:5; Titus 1:9-11).

Two years ago we, the elders at East Corinth, decided to start a class for the men to study lessons on the eldership. Our local preacher, Garland Robinson, taught the class. We urged each male member to attend and especially those in their teens. The class was well attended by members of East Corinth and other congregations. After the completion of the studies we asked Garland to publish the book for classroom studies. The book is now in its second printing.

We welcome your comments, criticisms and questions. If you have any good articles on the work and responsibility of elders we would like to study them and use them in this column if they would be scriptural and suitable for this column.

The church has a much greater work to do than any or all of the institutions of man. The elders have many duties, but the most important is to "tend the church of God" (1 Peter 5:3). Elders should not be deceived by those who are liberal, anti, soft, or merely uninformed. There are many congregations that have elders today that will not stand against sin and guard the flock. They will hire and fire the preacher and the rest is left up to the preacher. If the preacher is doctrinally unsound the devil has a feast (1 Peter 5:8).

To make it clear to the readers of this column, we do not uphold any eldership that will neither stand for the truth nor preach against sin. We do, however, uphold and encourage all elders who will stand in the truth and make sure it is preached. It is our desire that this column will encourage elders of each congregation to take a stand against the "winds of change" that are blowing in the direction of apostasy. It is our duty to let our voices be heard. We must be dedicated to Christ the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). He refers to shepherds who are not committed to a defense of the flock as "hirelings" who actually do not care for the sheep (John 10:12-13). Where do you stand fellow elders?

The elders at East Corinth

HALF OF PENTECOST

Kerry L. Sword

The title of this article showed up last Summer in many religious papers after a large campaign was held in the Ukrainian city of Donetsk. Two hundred eight Americans came for the campaign. Although some stayed for a month, most stayed for the ten days of campaigning only. After massive advertising and the ten day effort, which left campaigners with (as one article put it) "very little time for eating, sleeping, or shopping," there were "1,545 saved."

What is the result of this love bomb dropped on Donetsk less than one year later? At least four Christians who live and have worked in the area report there are many converts who are struggling and confused and feel they have been abandoned by their American brothers and sisters in Christ. One local Christian stated congregations that had follow-up teaching by those who stayed behind retained 70%, but those that had no follow-up lost 70%. Yet, even these figures are questioned by some who observed entire congregations disband after the Americans left.

Through the efforts of Americans that stayed on the field, there have been approximately 100 more baptized since last summer's campaign. Taking these into consideration the total number baptized during the past nine months would be about 1,650. A previous campaign the year before had netted about 120 in the same area. Two Americans working with the churches there now estimate between 500 and 700 are currently meeting among the churches started in these campaigns. Another Christian in the area put the estimate as low as 250.

Matthew's account of the great commission tells us Jesus said teach new converts to "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20). What minister of Satan bewitched the children of God into thinking that they can neglect this commandment? Grounding Christians in the faith and teaching them to teach the doctrine of Christ to others is what brings the gospel full circle. It is seriously doubted that this commandment of God can be successfully carried out in a one or two week interval. Nor can it be expected that a handful of brethren left on the field

can stabilize so many. Again, many times have I heard, "We've left a young Ukrainian convert (19-20 years old) in charge to do the preaching and teaching, but he's very mature for his age." Yes, I've also heard the arguments given about the "apostle Paul not staying in one place too long." Or "The Ethiopian eunuch had no follow-up teaching, but went on his way rejoicing."

Are we so naive to think that Jesus gave a commandment to teach new converts to "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," but the apostle Paul and others disobeyed it? Jesus, the Master Teacher, spent three years training the twelve. We know at one point Paul spent two years "disputing daily" in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9-10) in Ephesus. After having received a vision of encouragement from Jesus at Corinth, Paul continued 18 months longer in that city (Acts 18:11). Later he sent Timothy and Erastus to Corinth to continue the follow-up work (Acts 22:19; I Cor. 4:17; 16:10). He left Titus in Crete to set in order the things that were wanting and to appoint elders in every city (Titus 1:5). Although Timothy was a young man, we know that he was one who knew the scriptures through the faith of his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (II Tim. 1:5).

Should we forget the fact that Paul, as well as the other Apostles, had the authority to lay hands on others thus blessing them with miraculous power such as wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, etc., for the purpose of establishing the young church until the written word could be completed (Eph. 4:11-13; I Cor. 13:10). Even now that we have the written word, new saints must be taught "to observe all things." Concerning the Eunuch, are we to charge the Holy Spirit with disobedience for catching away Philip and not allowing further teaching? Or, is it easier for us to believe that the word of God harmonizes and that the man from Ethiopia did, through the will of God, receive additional teaching?

It is true that there is an air of excitement in going to a mission field with a large group. There is something about Christians working together in a common goal that naturally leads all to be encouraged about what is being done. It's unfortunate that many Christians do not maintain that same spirit of enthusiasm about the Lord's work all the time. Many seek to find a spiritual lift on a two week mission campaign. Workers come to the mission field and stay in the best accommodations available (lower than American standards, but still the best locally), have their meals prepared by the hotel and actually have little real-life contact with the local people in their deep poverty. Americans are grouped together with fellow workers and are seldom exposed to problems that face the local converts. They do not know the language, which in a great way isolates them from what is going on around them. They are on a spiritual high for two weeks and travel home with stories of hardship, adventure and conquests for the cause of Christ.

And what happens to those they leave behind? While there may be a casual interest in relationships made, the issues of life on the home front soon cause them to forget the real needs left behind. While there are exceptions to this, this happens far too often.

Would not the money spent on Airfare, hotels and food for such a large number have been better spent on sending some one or more, who would be willing to stay three to five years, and continue the work? Instead of sending some two hundred plus workers for ten days, why not send ten workers every month to cover the first two years of growth?

These young congregations cannot long survive without mature leadership giving example in word and deed as to how they are to behave. This cannot be accomplished in a ten day campaign, but will involve long term commitment on behalf of those mature enough to accept the challenge. Already the young churches in the Ukraine are being challenged with the issue of Bible inspiration and other attacks on the faith. With the wide usage of female interpreters, the role

of women in God's plan is being challenged. One group of Christians in Kiev has already used women to pray before a mixed audience. If we give in to this issue, what will come next? Women preachers? Women elders? Absurd as it may sound, one has but to look at the digressive world of denominationalism to see that these situations already exist.

Often untrained and immature Americans are being left to look after 50, 100 or more, new saints right out of a culture plagued with atheism and superstition. I encountered one American brother in the Ukraine that had been encouraged to come to the mission field because of his zeal and desire to come. He was told that whatever he knew about the Bible it was far superior to the knowledge of the Ukrainian people. After being here for some time he admitted that it was simply not true. He said that people here knew much more Bible than he, and he simply could not answer all of the questions being asked.

Have we not read that the Spirit admonishes us to "...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 in fear" (I Peter 3:15). Being "ready" to give an answer involves preparing ourselves to be ready. This preparation is accomplished today through our diligent efforts to know the word of God. Has not the Spirit told us, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). There is shame in not knowing the word of God and not being ready to give an answer. How is it the case that we can send people into the field that don't know the Word of God and expect the Word to go out and be blessed with a fruitful return?

I'm afraid, for many, mission work has become just another current fad. One that will be here today and, after the excitement wears off, gone tomorrow. After the thousands of dollars are spent to make American Christians feel good about themselves, will the Lord be pleased or the cause of Christ better off?

Already, plans are being made for an even larger scale campaign this Summer. The goal as one brother put it, "To surpass the number on Pentecost." While American churches may get excited about big numbers on the

mission field, I've never seen one example of a personal report of the number of Christians lost due to the neglect of campaigners that failed to plan ahead. When I asked about the follow-up for the new campaign and if anyone was planning on staying I received the not so surprising standard answer: "No one that I know of, but I'm sure their looking for someone."

P.O. Box 171,
Kiev, 252 001
Ukraine

Editor's Note: Kerry Sword, 32, is a 1990 graduate of the East Tennessee School of Preaching. He and his wife, Karla, moved from Anchorage, Alaska, to Kiev, in September, 1992. They have two children and work with the Centre Church in Kiev, Ukraine.

CONTRIBUTORS

John H. Brown	.....\$21
Art D. Rocco	.....\$20
M. W. Kiser	.....\$25
Verona Church of Christ	.....\$50
Anonymous	.....\$100
Frank B. Bradshaw, III	.....\$50
Anonymous	.....\$30
Anonymous	.....\$25
Albert Duke	.....\$25
Anonymous	.....\$100
Gilbert Gough	.....\$25
W. H. Dell	.....\$10
Douglas Goff	.....\$10
Clarence Nash	.....\$20
Artie O. Collins	.....\$5
Louise Welch	.....\$10
Joyce McCharen	.....\$10
Ed Foster	.....\$5
M/M Everett Logue	.....\$50
M/M Horace Miller	.....\$5
Joan L. Fikes	.....\$10
Daisy Lee Old	.....\$50
Wayne Crawley	.....\$10
Frank Paris	.....\$2
Gerald Harris	.....\$10
John C. Flowers	.....\$20
H. C. Word	.....\$25
D. W. Simpson	.....\$5
William D. Watson	.....\$10
Stanley D. Crews	.....\$5
W. A. Martin	.....\$5
Wilma M. Watson	.....\$10
Edward L. Wells	.....\$10
Marguerite Johnson	.....\$10
Sandra Welte	.....\$10
Harold Heath\$5
James Cox\$10
Jewell Howard\$25
J. P. Williams\$5

OPEN FELLOWSHIP...

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not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (2 Thess. 3:14). In Romans 16:17 Paul wrote, "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Under discussion in these passages are those men that were determined to do things contrary to sound doctrine. Paul was ready to withdraw fellowship from those who would flagrantly violate God's will. If we are to follow apostolic doctrine and example, can we extend the right hand of fellowship to those who are living ungodly lives - satisfying the flesh? Can we extend the right hand to those who cause division and strife by following the doctrines and philosophies of men? Of course not! Christ did not mean that just because a man professes to be a Christian he is to be received by us.

Because of innovations and sectarian doctrines, the church has lost its distinctiveness among the masses who need the truth. They cannot tell the difference between many congregations of the church of Christ and their denominational neighbors. There is no "middle ground" in obedience to divine law. We are either obedient or we are not!

If truth will save, then a half truth or untruth will condemn. The truth has no place with error (2 Cor. 6:14-18). Paul pleads for the distinction of Christians. He reasons like this, "And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel" (2 Cor. 6:15)? The Lord's church (the body of Christ) has no part with that which is vain, corrupt and against the heavenly father.

WHAT CHRIST DID MEAN

John's reason for rebuking this one who "cast out devils" was that he was not an immediate follower of Jesus. Seeing another casting out devils excited John's jealousy. Jesus explains that this jealousy was uncalled for. The work that the man was doing was proof that he was not against Jesus or His work. In short, John should have rejoiced that there

were those who were helping with the task. There is nothing in the text to imply that Jesus was encouraging John to fellowship anyone that did not have His approval. Notice the man was casting out devils in Jesus' name. This means he was acting under Jesus' authority. He was not doing anything contrary to Jesus or Jesus would not have told John to let him alone. It would be contradictory to all Jesus stood for to allow someone into fellowship that was contrary to His mission and teaching.

Christians ought always to accept and join those who are involved in the Lord's work. They should never be jealous of another's accomplishments for good. This acceptance must be based upon God's criteria and not man's. If the work as well as the person is not sanctioned by God, then those desiring to abide in the doctrine must oppose the person or work and strive to correct it. Christians cannot, with heaven's approval, extend the right hand of fellowship to anyone who violates the will of God. John made this clear in 2 John 9-11, *"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ 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 godspeed: For he that biddeth him godspeed is a partaker of his evil deeds."*

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is sad that many good men have left the faith and gone into false doctrine. What is equally sad is those who oppose them are branded as "trouble makers" and "unloving." If this is true, then the apostle Paul was about as cold and unloving as you can get. Was he unloving when he instructed the Corinthians to purge the fornicator from among them (1 Cor. 5:1-13)? Was he a trouble maker when he rebuked his fellow apostle to the face (Gal. 2:11)? These are divine examples for faithful brethren to meet error face to face and call it what it is - SIN!

If error is not refuted, then the church will become nothing more than a man made social club as some desire it to be. Christ did not authorize open fellowship with error, instead He opposed it. Read Matthew chapter 23. In this chapter he pronounces eight

woes upon the hypocritical Pharisees. In Matthew 15 he exposed the tradition of the Jews.

Let all faithful brethren stand up and be counted in the fight against those who choose to follow the way of Balaam! No where in Holy writ can one find God's encouragement to extend fellowship to those in error. The Jews failed to exterminate the seven heathen nations as God had directed (Deut. 7:1-6). Instead, they

befriended them. The result was the contamination of the very people God had said were to be a peculiar treasure unto Him (Exo. 19:3; Deut. 7:6)! The Lord's church is not immune to contamination by liberal philosophy and worldly doctrines. Faithful brethren everywhere must *"earnestly contend for the faith"* (Jude 3).

219 Stucker St.
Paoli, IN 47454

MY AIM AS A PREACHER

Wesley Simons

The major points in this article were written by Dub McClish and appeared in *The Minister's Monthly* in June 1967 page 483. The points are so great that we feel they need to be repeated. This writer is convinced that many preachers have forgotten what their true aim ought to be. Many preachers are so busy doing minuscule things and trying to please all the people all the time that they do not have time to study, visit the lost, visit the sick, edify the saved and defend the truth. Now let us notice what our aim ought to be.

1. **"Be true to God's word, regardless of the consequences."** Some preachers are so afraid of being dismissed that they will not preach what needs to be preached. They will not preach on subjects like: marriage, divorce and remarriage, social drinking, dancing, various denominational errors, etc. I want to be able to say at judgment day, *"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"* (Acts 20:27). God will take care of us if we proclaim the truth. Even if we are killed as were some in the first century, then heaven will be our final abode. Brethren, it takes courage to be a preacher. Who are you trying to please?

2. **"Seek the approval of God above all others in spite of who might disapprove."** Every preacher must have the attitude that he is God's man first. We are to proclaim the truth in love. Those to whom we preach may or may not approve of our message. This we regret. However, consider this: *"But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye"* (Acts 4:19). Also ponder this: *"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29). We cannot allow the pew to control the pulpit. **We must allow God's word to control the pulpit.** Many preachers have become "so tactful" that they never say anything worth hearing. Some are trying to preach without making enemies. This is impossible! Jesus said, *"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake"* (Luke 6:22). The Bible also states, *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution"* (II Tim. 3:12). Somehow, some feel that they know more than God, in believing that one can live the Christian life and never suffer in any way for it.

Some have declared that if Stephen would have been more tactful, then he would not have been stoned. What nonsense! Those who state such are weak-kneed, namby-pamby, soft-soaping, compromising, so-called preachers.

Brethren, we are living in a very liberal and compromising age. Can God depend on us to be His mouthpiece here on this earth? Will we have the conviction to speak the truth in love regardless of the cost? May God help us to do this.

Rt. 5 Box 2487, Panhandle Rd.
Elizabethton, TN 37643

10th Annual SEEK THE OLD PATHS

L · E · C · T · U · R · E · S · H · I · P

*Theme: The Church at Corinth
A study of the rewards and problems of the church at Corinth.*

July 23-27, 1995 Always the 4th Sunday In July

SUNDAY, JULY 23

- 9:45 The City Of Corinth In Paul's DayWindell Fikes
- 10:35 The Financial Support Of Those Who Preach The Gospel (1 Cor. 9:9-14).....Walter Pigg
- 7:00 Jesus Christ, The Only Foundation (1 Cor. 3:11-15)Melvin Sapp
- 8:00 My Grace Is Sufficient For Thee (2 Cor. 12:9)Charles Blair

MONDAY, JULY 24

- 9:00 Walk By Faith, Not By Sight (2 Cor. 5:7).....Terry Joe Kee
- 10:00 The Corinthian Carnality (1 Cor 3:1-3).....Dan Bailey
- 11:00 One Body But Many Members (1 Cor. 12:12-27).....Virgil Hale
- 1:30 1 Cor. 7 - Instructions On Marriage #1Ken Burleson
- 2:30 Come Out From Among Them And Be Ye Separate (2 Cor. 6:14-17).....Nat Evans
- 3:30 Not To Think Above That Which Is Written (1 Cor. 4:6).....Melvin Sapp
- 7:00 Be Ye Obedient In All Things (2 Cor. 2:9).....Garland Robinson
- 8:00 The Preaching Of The Cross (1 Cor. 1:18-21).....John Shannon

TUESDAY, JULY 25

- 9:00 Godly Sorrow Worketh Repentance (2 Cor. 7:8-10).....Ferrell Hester
- 10:00 Shall A Brother Go To Law Against A Brother? (1 Cor. 6:1-8).....Charles Pledge
- 11:00 The Open Door Of God's Providence (1 Cor. 16:9).....John Ferguson
- 1:30 1 Cor. 7 - Instructions On Marriage # 2Ken Burleson
- 2:30 Our Light Affliction (2 Cor. 4:16-17)Sidney White

- 3:30 Faithful Stewards (1 Cor. 4:2).....Dan Jones
- 7:00 A More Excellent Way (1Cor. 12:13).....Wayne Coats
- 8:00 We Are Not As Many Which Corrupt The Word Of God (2 Cor. 2:17, 4:2).....Gilbert Gough

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

- 9:00 God Loveth A Cheerful Giver (2 Cor. 9:6-7).....Guy Hester
- 10:00 Difficult Passages: 1 Cor. 2:9,14; 3:15; 8:13; 9:22; 11:22; 15:29.....Sidney White
- 11:00 The Proper Treatment Of A Brother In Sin (1 Cor. 5).....Eddy Craft
- 1:30 1 Cor. 14 And Women's Role # 1Alan Adams
- 2:30 Unity & Division: When To Be Desired And When To Be Avoided.....Wayne Coats
- 3:30 The Letter Killeth But The Spirit Giveth Life (2 Cor. 3:6-18).....Jimmy Bates
- 7:00 The Resurrection Of The Dead (1 Cor. 15:12-58)Dan Sikes
- 8:00 Exhortation To Faithfulness (1 Cor. 15:58)Ed Casteel

THURSDAY, JULY 27

- 9:00 The Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20-34)Ben F. Vick
- 10:00 Baptism & The New Creature (2 Cor. 5:17)....B. J. Clarke
- 11:00 The Temple Of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20).....John West
- 1:30 1 Cor. 14 And Women's Role #2.....Alan Adams
- 2:30 The Apostle PaulWayne Cox
- 3:30 Satan And His Ministers (2 Cor. 11:13-15).....Jerry Joseph
- 7:00 Now Is The Day Of Salvation (2 Cor. 6:2)Eddy Craft
- 8:00 The Judgment Seat Of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10-11)Charles Leonard

LECTURESHIP SPEAKERS :

Windell Fikes, Wayne Cox, Melvin Sapp, Charles Blair, Terry Joe Kee, Dan Bailey, Virgil Hale, Ken Burleson, Nat Evans, Garland Robinson, John Shannon, Ferrell Hester, Charles Pledge, John Ferguson, Sidney White, Dan Jones, Wayne Coats, Gilbert Gough, Guy Hester, Charles Leonard, Eddy Craft, Alan Adams, Jimmy Bates, Dan Sikes, Ed Casteel, Ben F. Vick, B. J. Clarke, John West, Walter Pigg, Jerry Joseph

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

nia, NC. "Enclosed please find a check to help in your fine work of exposing and refuting the works of our liberal brethren(?). S.T.O.P. is a much needed paper" ...*Art Rocco, Toms River, NJ*. "I just read your April/95 issue of S.T.O.P. What a great issue of great articles. Our liberal brethren need to read such materials! Please put me on your mailing list! We too are surrounded by liberalism to the core! Keep the faith, preach the word, and contend always for it (Jude 3)" ...*Milton Mathers, Richmond, VA*. "I am thankful to receive it and benefit from reading each issue" ...*David Lemmons, Trumann, AR*. "I thoroughly enjoy S.T.O.P. Thank you so much" ...*Bobby Stafford, State University, AR*. "We thank this is a good work and a great help in spreading the gospel" ...*Clarence Nash, Baxter, TN*. "I really enjoy the paper. Thank God for strong men like you. Keep up the good work" ...*Joyce McCharen, Pontotoc, MS*. "I enjoy your paper. It is the best paper out" ...*Ed Foster, Pontotoc, MS*. "We sincerely appreciate this good work and thank God for those such as you who stand strongly for the truth of God's Holy Word" ...*Everett & Carrie Logue, Corinth, MS*. "I appreciate your effort in informing the brotherhood of the wild things some of our brethren are doing. Keep up the good work and may God's richest blessings be yours" ...*Horace & Evelyn Miller, Downsville, LA*. "I enjoy it very much. Keep up the good work of presenting the truth" ...*Edith Rich, Red Boiling Springs, TN*. "We enjoy it very much" ...*Leo Chaffin, Baxter, TN*. "I enjoy it so much and learn a lot. I like to hear people that stand for the truth and teaches sound doctrine" ...*Valley Chaffin, Silver Point, TN*. "It is good to see that there are some who are willing to stand for truth in a time when so many of our brethren are willing to compromise" ...*Dalton Wilson, Fulton, MS*. "I enjoy it very much. It is one of the best I get" ...*Faye Huddleston, Booneville, MS*. "I appreciate getting S.T.O.P. Keep up the good work. Keep up the faith. God bless you and your writers for spreading the gospel" ...*Tyler, TX*. "I appreciate you and the elders of the East Corinth church for your stand for the Word. I am tired of seeing "Remove my name from your

"Don't dare stop S.T.O.P. I look forward to it. I look forward also to being with the East Corinth church July 23-27 for the Lecture-ship" ...*Tom Meacham, Murray, KY*. "May God richly bless you" ...*Tyrone DeBose, Lubbock, TX*. "May God continue to bless your efforts in his work" ...*David Vaughn, Gasto-*

mailing list" by the liberals now among us. I look forward to S.T.O.P. every month and I do not lay it down till I have read all of it. Thanks for keeping us informed in the church today. Never remove me from your mailing list it is one of the best. I knew Larry West was false for some time" ...*Wayne Crawley, Morrison, TN*. "I'm thankful to God for your good works. Continue to write and warn our beloved brotherhood of the problems that threaten us. Thanks so much" ...*Gus Munden, Gentry, AR*. "I appreciate the good work you are doing with S.T.O.P." ...*Ed Ballard, Jackson, TN*. "I enjoy the paper very much and enjoy the strong stand for truth. May God bless all those involved with its production" ...*Frank Paris, Trezevant, TN*. "Thank you and the East Corinth church for continuing this excellent work for our Lord and Savior" ...*M/M John Flowers, Lawrenceburg, TN*. "It is the very best publication that I receive or have seen" ...*H. C. Word, Russellville, AR*. "We enjoy the paper very much" ...*D. W. Simpson, McMinnville, TN*. "We appreciate and enjoy reading S.T.O.P. so very much. Thanks and keep up the good work" ...*M/M W. D. Watson, Pulaski, TN*. "I appreciate the good work you are doing in S.T.O.P. I am grateful for the truth you are keeping before the public" ...*Charles Maxwell, Cookeville, TN*. "By all means renew my subscription and accept the enclosed check to help in the good work you are doing. Every article is well written and timely. What is happening to our brotherhood is sad beyond measure. We can only fight back in a spiritual warfare to overcome the flood of liberalism that is making havoc in many places. There is an old saying "Right always wins, it just takes longer." I believe that! If you brethren did nothing but put your available money into adding more and more names to your already expanding mailing list you would be doing the brotherhood a great service. Carry on, brother, carry on!" ...*Nashville, TN*. "I believe it is doing a good work in teaching truth and exposing error" ...*Stanley Crews, Belton, SC*. "I appreciate the emphasis you are taking in trying to help stem the tide of digression" ...*Joe E. Galloway, Greenville, TN*. "We enjoy reading the fine articles which appear in your publication. They are timely and well presented without an axe to grind. Keep putting out the true message of our Lord. Thank you for your work in the proclamation of the gospel message" ...*Oscar P. Craft, Greer, SC*.

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If you haven't yet renewed, you still have time. Look at your address label. If it says ****PLEASE RENEW NOW**** then let us know soon if you desire to keep receiving this FREE publication. It's because of brethren like you that S.T.O.P. is made possible.

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The **Seek The Old Paths** lectureship book this year **IS NOT** being printed by the church at East Corinth. However, they are purchasing enough copies to provide one free to those who attend the lectureship. There will not be any free copies sent through the mail.

Those who wish to purchase a copy may do so for \$3.50 each. Please add postage as follows: 1 copy \$1.30; 2-3 copies \$1.85; 4-5 copies \$2.35; 6-7 copies \$2.85, etc. The book will be approximately 150 pages. Make your check payable to: **Old Paths Publishing** and mail to 304 Ripley St., Corinth, MS 38834-5139.

Cassette tapes are \$25 postage paid for the whole set. Order from Garland Robinson.

Video tapes are \$60 postage paid for the whole set. Order from James Green, Rt. 1 Box 427, Dunbar, PA 15431.

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

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson**

Associate Editor: **Jimmy Bates**

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