



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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THERE IS SOMETHING IN A NAME

Clayton Winters (1931-2013)

Generally speaking, church names came about in one of three ways: 1) because of admiration and respect for the founder; 2) because of tenant or ordinance emphasized by that denomination; or 3) because of a particular form of church government.

A good example of the first is that of the **Lutheran Church**. *Martin Luther* was a great and fearless teacher. He came on the scene at a time when Catholicism had reached the epitome of corruption; and, at risk to his own life, he successfully challenged the people to rise in revolt to the abuses of the Catholic hierarchy, leading his followers to a greater appreciation of the Bible as the final authority in matters religious. So great was his impact on people who fell under his influence that they crystallized his doctrines and began to call themselves **Lutherans**. Luther remonstrated (admonished) against this practice, appealing to his followers to designate themselves only as Christians. But despite his protests, the name stuck; and today we have the **Lutheran Church** — a group holding to the basic tenants of Luther.

Another illustration of churches taking their names from an ordinance may be found in the various **Baptist Churches**. At a time when sprinkling or pouring was by far the most practiced form of baptism, small groups of people refused to submit to this doctrine of men, insisting rather that immersion was the only Scriptural means of baptism. So emphatically did they affirm their practice that they soon

came to be designated by this particular ordinance; and, the **Baptist Churches** were born. Other adjectives would soon become a part of their denominational titles. There were the Old, Regular, or Primitive Baptists (sometimes derisively called Hardshells). These had adopted the Calvinistic theory of predestination, a doctrine that a person's spiritual state had already been fixed in eternity, and that nothing within the individual's power could change it. They believed that even if one predestined to hell died in infancy, to hell he surely would go. And since man was born, lived, and died in a fixed state, no effort was made to evangelize the world. However, some among the Baptists did not hold these views to its fullest extent. They believed that through divine intervention of the Holy Spirit an individual was empowered to change his state from that of a sinner condemned to hell, to a condition of salvation from all sins — past, present, and future. This gave impetus to mission work, and so was born the **Missionary Baptist Churches**: a people who believe in a changeable state of sinners, but in the eternal security of believers — that is, a fixed state for the regenerated. But not all their members would buy even this modified form of predestination (the eternal security of believers). They contended that even after regeneration one remained in control of his own destiny; and that it was a matter of individual choice, volition, or free-will as to whom one might choose to serve. The ones holding these views soon made this tenant a

part of their name, and thus they were designated as **Free-Will Baptist Churches**.

Churches who base their names on internal organization or rule, may best be exemplified by the **Presbyterian** and **Episcopal Churches**. The Greek word *presbuterion* (transliterated in 1 Timothy 4:14 as *presbytery*) means “a body of elders.” It was adopted as the official name for the **Presbyterian Church** because they believe in a rule of elders with each one exercising equal authority. However, let it be clearly understood that the New Testament rule of elders was strictly limited to the local congregation (1 Peter 5:1-3), while the denominational title Presbyterian designates a form of church government that is graduated from a local level to a whole-church disciplinary body. The **Episcopal Church**, however, does not accept the equal authority position of Presbyterians; it believes rather that among the elders is one endowed with greater authority, and usually referred to as the bishop. King Henry VIII divorced his fifth wife (Catherine of Aragon), so that he might marry Anne Boleyn; and in so doing, he divorced England from the power and control of the papacy, declaring himself as head of the **Church of England**. With the American settlers in rebellion against England, it would have been extremely unwise for one to belong to a “Church of England” on this continent; so the church was renamed the **Episcopal**

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Something In A Name...



Editorial...

SOLVING PROBLEMS AMONG BRETHREN #3

Garland M. Robinson

There are basically two classes or areas of problems among brethren. Each are to be dealt with differently.

1) **There are problems that are doctrinal.** They are clearly right or wrong, black or white, based on the teaching of the Word of God. Such issues involve: the one church (Eph. 4:4), worship (John 4:24), instrumental music (Eph. 5:19), baptism (Acts 2:38), divorce and remarriage (Matt. 19:9), fellowship (1 Cor. 5; Eph. 5:11), women's role (1 Tim. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:34-35). The list goes on and on.

When men transgress the Law of Christ (Rom. 8:2), their soul is in jeopardy. Unless they repent and obey God, they will be eternally lost in a devil's hell. The Lord's instructions on how we treat error is certain and swift. Paul said, *"To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you"* (Gal. 2:5). We must have *"...no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"* (Eph. 5:11). Many lists of sins shows that those who commit such things will not and can not go to heaven (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

When doctrinal problems exists between brethren and/or congregations, there is no room for compromise. Those involved cannot "agree to disagree." This is not a time to "live and let live" or let "bygones be bygones." The issue(s) involved is not petty differences between brethren. Doctrinal issues are heaven's directive — eternal truth. No man has any right to tread upon such sacred ground. All must accept and adhere to the Lord's way or be subjects of His just and final wrath.

2) **There are problems that are differences of opinion or judgment.** They are not doctrinal, they are personal, many times private. They do not involve matters of eternal Truth. The way they are han-

dled is different than if it were a matter of truth and error.

Paul and Barnabas had a strong disagreement over John Mark (Acts 15:36-40). However, they each continued their work of the Lord. Romans 14 discusses problems of personal judgment and how to deal with them. These are different than doctrinal problems.

There are many of these kinds of problems that currently plague our great brotherhood. Brethren have divided, congregations have split and those involved are at a stand-off with one side (sometimes both) refusing to sit down and calmly discuss the matter in a genuine effort to solve it. **Brethren, shame, shame on any who will not meet to discuss their differences and work for peace among brethren.** It appears that such are guilty of the sin of being "implacable" — unwilling to budge (Rom. 1:31). What a tragedy for it to be left up to God to render judgment in the matter when it is too late for repentance and reconciliation. Brethren, **if you are "at odds" with another, get on their door step NOW. Do all within your power to make things right with them.** If the problem goes unsettled, make sure it's not because of you! Swallow your stubborn pride. Eat your words. Let tears swell up in your eyes and beg forgiveness on your part.

You will face the Lord in judgment. Do you want to do so having made every effort to be reconciled to your brother or do you want to stand before Him having made no effort or having just forgotten it? Let's choose the former.

Matthew 18:15-17 is often misapplied by otherwise well meaning brethren who seek to make what the Lord said in regards to a private, personal matter and make it apply to a public sin of error and false teaching. Such is a twisting and perversion of

the Scriptures (2 Peter 3:16). If a problem of sin is private, then handle it in that realm. It should only become public when it has not been solved privately. A grave and serious problem arises when brethren misapply the Scriptures and counsel for breaking the Law of God instead of keeping it.

Some are so enamored and charmed by so-called unity and peace that they are willing to trample upon the Word of God to have it. They are willing to sweep under the rug and ignore every sin to achieve what they think is peace. However, it is not peace with God. They conveniently neglect to understand that "peace at any price" is not approved of the Lord.

In order for there to be peace, genuine peace with God, we must first have purity, doctrinal purity. James 3:17 says, *"But the wisdom that is from above is **first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.**"* Compromising with error is not the way to solve problems. There are many problems that can be settled "among men" when the Truth is ignored. But, they are not settled with God. "Go along to get along" while running roughshod over God's Word is not the theme of the Scriptures.

Peace with God is centered in love and obedience to the Lord's Way. Notice these Scriptures. *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). *"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you"* (John 15:14). *"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous"* (1 John 5:2-3).

The love of God is wrapped up in commandment keeping! Not according to our works, but according to God's works. These are the works that God devised and commands that we obey/work (John 6:29). Without our obedience and performance of the same, there can be no salvation.

SUGGESTIONS ON SOLVING PROBLEMS

The suggestions listed here concern themselves largely with differences between brethren that are not

matters of right and wrong, truth and error. However, the principles involved would apply to all problems whether doctrinal or not.

Have and maintain the right attitude. Humility is a must. When tempers flare and rage, sensible discussion is not possible. Remember to ask yourself, “what would the Lord do?” Would He speak like this? Would He work for a just solution?

Do not have the attitude it’s “their” problem, let them come to me. Scripture demands that whether we have been offended or are the offender, we move to be reconciled. “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matt. 5:23-24). “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Matt. 18:15).

Do not have the attitude you’re “going to make them pay.” We cannot hold a grudge and be acceptable to God. We must seek what is best for others. Even the Lord pleased not himself (Rom. 15:2-3; Phil. 2:3).

Do not rub salt in the wound. When brethren recognize their fault and ask forgiveness, don’t belittle or shame them. Don’t tell them, “it’s about time!” Have a heart of compassion and helpfulness. Receive him back in loving arms. See Gal. 6:1-2.

Love all men, especially a brother in the Lord. “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (1 John 2:9-11). “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:15).

Be willing to solve the problem. Acts 6:1-7 shows the brethren were willing to correct the problem. When such prevails, a just solution will be agreeable to all sides.

Be willing to compromise. It

won’t hurt you to make concessions to help a weaker brother. Romans 14 has much to say about this. However, we cannot compromise on the Truth.

Be willing to swallow pride. “And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matt. 23:12). “...Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4:6). “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:6).

Truly consider the other side. Don’t think you have done no wrong and the entire problem lies solely with others — it may or may not. Listen to what they have to say, how they feel, what they think. Put yourself in their shoes.

Be willing to admit you are wrong. Be as David and say, “I have sinned” (2 Sam. 12:13). Don’t make excuses or seek to shift the blame. Be a man and admit your fault (cf. 1 Cor. 16:13).

Choose faithful and level-headed men to help resolve the problem. Sometimes it is necessary that others help. You may need a mediator(s). This was done in Acts 6:1-7. Be impartial. Be willing to abide by just decisions, even if it don’t go your way. You can never compromise the truth, but when the Bible truth is not at stake, then abide by fair resolutions.

Do all things in accordance to the Scriptures. This is an absolute — regardless of the problem. God’s Word always must govern our lives. It is by the truth that we will be judged (John 12:48; Rev. 20:12).

Recognize some problems cannot be resolved. But, this is only because the other party is unwilling to solve it. You may have gone the “second mile” in attempting to correct it. However, you must never violate the Scriptures yourself in an effort to be at peace with another. You can only do what is good and right. Others have to do the same. Sometimes they do not. When you have done all you can do, realize it’s out of your hands. Their blood is not on your head. God knows our heart and their heart. He will take care of the matter at the judgment.

Once the problem is solved, don’t keep bringing it up. Some hold a grudge long after a right and

just resolution has been reached. If the problem has been worked out, let it die! Bury the hatchet! Don’t leave the handle sticking out of the ground so you can use it again. Put it behind you. To keep bringing a resolved problem up again and again shows you’ve either not forgiven or are unwilling for it to be made right. Jesus said, “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4).

Are you willing to work for peace according to God’s word? If you’re in a problem, solve it. If you’re not in a problem, perhaps you can assist others in helping them solve theirs.

The end result of our lives, regarding all its twists and turns, is that God be glorified and that we may be at peace in this world.

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DANGER OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS (NIV) #2

Randy Kea

In our previous article (June/18) we pointed out that all the words of the Bible should be left intact and unaltered. Deuteronomy 4:2, “*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*” Proverbs 30:5-6, “*Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*” Galatians 1:7, “*Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.*” We further noted that the New Testament is the last will and testament of Christ, and just as we would not want one single word modified in our personal wills, in like manner the Lord will not hold one guiltless who tampers with His last will and testament.

In this second article on dangers present in modern translations, we will focus on the **New International Version**. The preface of the NIV is truly enlightening to one who carefully studies modern translations. Here are some points gleaned by reading the preface:

1. The NIV claims to be “a completely new translation of the Holy Bible.”
2. The Old Testament Hebrew Masoretic text is altered by using other sources (Dead Sea Scrolls, etc).
3. The New Testament text is based on what they call an “eclectic text” which means they used a text based on the fallacious reasoning of two theologians by the names of Westcott and Hort who lived in the 1800s.
4. The preface indicates that they did not believe in plenary, verbal inspiration — “to achieve clarity the translators sometimes supplied words not in the original texts — have striven for more than a word for word translation.” Remember, the Bible specifically condemns those who “add words” (Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19).
5. As translators, they operated on the faulty idea of thought trans-

lation — “fidelity to the thought of biblical writers.” This technique of translating would result in nothing more than a paraphrase.

I don’t know of anyone who has influenced modern theology more than John Calvin. One of his fundamental tenets was the doctrine of “total hereditary depravity.” This false doctrine asserts that: 1) man is born a sinner from the womb, 2) he has inherited the sin of Adam, 3) his will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, 4) he cannot choose good over evil without the direct power of the Spirit of God. Clearly these concepts are not in harmony with plain Bible teaching, and yet the NIV translates Psalm 51:5: “*Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*”

We further note the infamous renditions of the word for “flesh” in Romans chapters 8 and 9 and Galatians 5 as “sinful nature.” Edwin H. Palmer was the executive secretary of the New International Version and the general editor of the NIV Study Bible. He wrote a book entitled “The Five Points of Calvinism” defending and explaining the doctrines of John Calvin. It is not surprising therefore to find the NIV laced with Calvinistic error.

Here are some additional critical issues and glaring errors found in the NIV:

1. With reference to the marriage and divorce passages, the generic phrase “marital unfaithfulness” is used in place of the specific word “fornication” (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). Also, the last part of Matthew 19:9, “*whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery,*” is completely omitted.
2. Because the translators used the Critical Text (Westcott/Hort basis), entire paragraphs are deleted or relegated to a footnote (Mark 16:9-20; John 7:53-8:11).
3. By rewriting the Bible, these translators have essentially inserted modern denominational doctrines into the text of God’s Word. For example:
 - a) the NIV has people saved at

the point of *hearing* (Eph. 1:13) and *faith only* (Rom. 1:17) without any further acts of obedience. I’m sure the Calvinists and Methodist preachers love this.

- b) Premillennialism is inserted into the text with the phrase “at the renewal of all things” (Matt. 19:28).
- c) Neo-pentecostalism is promoted in the phrase “but when perfection comes” (1 Cor. 13:10), thus opening the door for the continuation of miraculous powers even unto today.
- d) The NIV omits “only begotten” in John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9, undermining the *virgin birth* and *deity of Christ*.

These examples could be multiplied, but these are sufficient for one to discard the NIV as an accurate and reliable translation.

As with essentially all modern translations that have attained any prominence, the problem is two-fold with the NIV.

First, the NIV uses a faulty text base for the New Testament and alters the Old Testament by using spurious sources (these are noted in the preface);

Second, the translators employed the dangerous dynamic equivalence technique in the translation process which allows them to add and delete words and insert theological errors at their whims. The very first thing Satan did was to alter what God said, thus resulting in the deception of Eve and the tragic consequences that followed (Gen. 3:1-6). Our Lord said that the devil would continue to use this method: “*then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved*” (Luke 8:12). We maintain a primary way that our adversary has done this is through the massive production and widespread acceptance of pseudo-translations. John describes Satan as our arch enemy “*which deceiveth the whole world*” (Rev 12:9).

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(Bishop's) Church. This is indicative of the fact that it is controlled by bishops much like the Catholic Church, but it stops short of having a pope over all the bishops. So their name is definitive of their church organization.

But New Testament names or appellations of the church are also definitive. However, as we shall presently see, they are indicative of a much higher and nobler relationship of the people of God. Consider, for example, the following Biblical terms:

THE CHURCH OF GOD. “*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*” (1 Cor. 1:2). This term is indicative of the fact that the church was planned by God in eternity (Eph. 3:9-11), predicted by Him through prophetic message (2 Peter 1:19-21), and consummated in the mission which He gave His Son (Heb. 10:9-10; Eph. 1:10).

THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST. “*Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you*” (Rom. 16:16). This is a prepositional phrase showing possession. It is equivalent to saying “Christ’s church,” or “the church which belongs to Christ.” It exalts Christ as the *Builder* (Matt. 16:18), *Foundation* (1 Cor. 3:10-11), *Cornerstone* (Eph. 2:19-22), *Head* (Col. 1:18), *Purchaser* (Acts 20: 28; 1 Peter 1:18-19), and *Savior* (Eph. 5:23).

THE BODY OF CHRIST. “*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many*” (1 Cor. 12:12-14). There is a beautiful relationship between Christ and His people: “*For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*” (Eph. 5:30). Spiritual nourishment is gained by a union with the Head (Col. 2:19). Each joint and ligament supplies what every other joint and ligament lacks (Eph. 4:16). Each member is dependent on every other member of the body (1

Cor. 12:15-27). All of this is inherent in the term, “the body of Christ.”

THE HOUSE OF GOD. “*But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*” (1 Tim. 3:15). To speak of the Lord’s church as a house or household shows a family relationship. In this relationship we are depicted as begotten by the word of God (1 Cor. 4:15), born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5), brethren (*adelphos*, from the same womb), and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). We must not think of God’s house as a material building or a mere meeting place; it is far more than that. It is His people; and may we ever rightly understand and express that, when we use the expression, House of God.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. “*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*” (2 Cor. 11:2). “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ... This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church*” (Eph. 5:25,26,32). The church is pure, made white in its bridal attire by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:13-14). Married to its Christ, it brings forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:4). So when the Bible speaks of the Bride of Christ, it is showing that intimate relationship which exists between Christ and His church.

What, then, is in a name? Everything! Denominational names glory in men, ordinances, and organizations; but New Testament names bring glory to Christ and His church. Denominational names limit truth or express outright false concepts; New Testament names express in full beauty and truth the glorious relationships of the church with the Father and the Son. Denominational names sectarianize and divide; New Testament names unify.

Is it then any wonder Paul exhorted, “*Now I beseech you, brethren, by 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 perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared*

unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect” (1 Cor. 1:10-17). “*For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man*” (1 Cor. 3:4-5)? “*And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another*” (1 Cor. 4:6). “*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*” (Gal. 6:14). “*Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen*” (Eph. 3:21).

Conclusive as the above is against denominational titles, still one other observation may be necessary. Why do “sects” wear unscriptural names in the first place? The fact is, as we have seen, names are descriptive; and unscriptural organizations and practices cannot be described with Scriptural names. Inspiration knows nothing of a Bishop’s or an Elder’s Church. It speaks not of a church wearing the name of some man such as Martin Luther. Nor does it give any intimation of a church which glories in an ordinance to the extent that it would wear the name of that ordinance (see 1 Cor. 1:17). Thus it is evident that if sectarian churches are to be identified by any name, it would have to be an unscriptural one. Think about it! There is something in a name!

THE BLIND FAITH OF MORMONISM PRACTICING A RELIGION THAT IS NOT BELIEVED

Jon Gary Williams

For those who have had in-depth studies with Mormons, it is understood that many live under a canopy of blind faith. When challenged with problems found in the Book of Mormon, often they will put aside common sense and turn to a blind faith, a faith overseen and controlled by the Mormon Church. Seldom, if ever, will they seek investigation. For fear of excommunication they dare not openly question the teachings of their Church.

There are, however, instances when Mormons have observed the errors of the Book of Mormon, yet, because of the ridged, manipulating structure of this religion they are compelled to simply overlook them.

Among this number there are some who are honest enough to admit the flaws in the Book of Mormon are real and that the book is fraudulent. Yet, they will remain with the Mormon Church, but for a different reason — they do not want to lose their long-held relationships in the Church. Hence, they stay on, but keep their doubtful opinions quiet. Below is an example of such hypocritical reasoning.

The following excerpts are from a letter written years ago by a highly regarded Mormon, Thomas Stuart Ferguson, to a couple who were questioning their faith in Mormonism. For many years Ferguson was a strong believer in Mormonism and in Joseph Smith as a prophet. He was responsible for founding the New World Archaeological Foundation at Brigham Young University. For several decades he sought to locate archaeological evidence supporting things found in the Book of Mormon — places, objects, animals. Failing to discover such things, he finally concluded that the Book of Mormon was nothing more than fiction. However, in order to maintain good relationships with family and friends, he superficially remained a Mormon.

In this letter, he revealed his hypocritical approach to Mormon belief as well as his growing disregard for

belief of any kind — he became an agnostic. His advice to this couple is both shocking and extremely revealing. While he clearly exclaimed his disbelief in Mormonism, he encouraged them to, like him, just stay the course and overlook their doubts about the Mormon Church. As he indicated, such hypocritical regard to religious faith is common among members of the Mormon Church.

Mr. Ferguson asked the couple to keep his words private — however, those who years later obtained possession of the letter chose to make its contents known. It appeared in a recent issue of the Ex-Mormons For Jesus publication.

“Dear Mr. And Mrs. —

This is in reply to your letter of... In the December issue of Reader's Digest is an article on the importance of myths to the human family. People must believe in something (otherwise we face the abyss of death and extinction). Mormonism is probably the best conceived myth-fraternity to which one can belong... Joseph Smith tried so hard to put himself out on a limb with the Book of Abraham, and also with the Book of Mormon. He can be refuted — but why, bother, when all religion is based on myth....

Why not just say the right things and keep your membership in the great fraternity, enjoying the good things you like and discarding the ones you can't swallow (and keeping your mouth shut)? Hypocritical? Maybe. But perhaps a realistic way of dealing with a very difficult problem. There is lots left in the Church to enjoy — and thousands of members have done, and are doing, what I suggest you consider doing. Silence is golden... Precious few believers will you change — no matter how the evidence mounts. They believe because they want to believe... So why try to be heroic and fight the

myths — the Mormon one, or any other, that does more good than ill.

Perhaps you and I have been spoofed by Joseph Smith. Now that we have the inside dope — why not spoof a little back and stay aboard? Please consider this letter confidential — for obvious reasons. I want to stay aboard the good ship... Belonging with my eyes wide open is actually fun... and no strain at all... I never get up and bear testimony — but I don't mind listening to others who do...

You might give my suggestions a trial run — and if you find you have to burn all the bridges between yourselves and the Church, then go ahead and ask for excommunication. The day will probably come — but it is far off — when the leadership of the Church will change the excommunication rules and delete as grounds, non-belief in the two books mentioned and in Joseph Smith as a prophet, etc.

I have tried to help you the best I can. Kind regards. Thomas Stuart Ferguson."

Mr. Ferguson, in essence, told this couple that faith in any religion, including Mormonism, is nothing more than myth. So, his advice was — just remain in the Church and play the game, disregarding any negative concerns about Mormonism. Though it would be denied, this describes precisely the practice of untold numbers of Mormons.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF MORMON BLIND FAITH

Several years ago while discussing the Book of Mormon with a long time Mormon, I showed him a passage from the Book of Mormon (III Nephi 15:21) which was, word for word, the same as a passage found in the King James Translation (John 10:16).

Since the Book of Mormon was

supposedly written on gold plates in about 421 A.D., and since the King James version did not appear until 1611 A.D., I asked him to explain how this could be. It was obvious that he was unaware of this problem.

His first reaction was to say that this was just coincidence. However, I then pointed out that in the King James Translation this passage contains an italicized word “and” which was supplied by the translators for clarity. This, of course, ruled out any possibility of coincidence; the passage in the Book of Mormon was obviously

plagiarized from the 1611 King James Translation.

I politely encouraged him to give some serious thought to this. Later, when mentioning the problem to him again, his only response was simply, “Isn’t it amazing how God can work things.” He then broke off our discussion.

We would think that such a glaring example of fraud would cause one to back away from the Book of Mormon and take note. However, this man, like many others, had been conditioned to follow the path of blind faith in

Mormonism.

When attempting to teach adherents of the Mormon religion, it is important to keep in mind how deep-rooted they may be in their rationale. To have any success in studying with a Mormon, penetrating this barrier is essential.

Contact brother Williams at jongaryw@aol.com His free book, *The Book of Mormon — A Book of Error and Fraud*, may be ordered from his website: www.jongarywilliams.com

SEE YOU IN HELL

Roger Campbell

I had never seen the young man before. I know nothing about his personal conduct and certainly do not know what he was thinking in his heart. When I saw him in another country, I witnessed him doing one thing: walking in a mall. It was the printed statement on the back of his shirt which caught my attention: “SEE YOU IN HELL.”

My first thought was, “How sad.” How sad that anyone would end up in eternal torment. How sad that someone would make money by printing clothing which speaks of a rendezvous in hell. How sad that people actually buy and wear shirts that have such language about being in hell inscribed on them.

The New Testament Greek word for *hell* is *gehenna*. “This was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned; a fit symbol of the wicked and their future destruction” [Thayer via e-Sword, word no. 1067].

Know this: what the Bible says about hell portrays it as a place that we should want to avoid at all costs (Mark 9:43-49). Making plans to meet up with someone in hell (as in “See You in Hell”) shows a failure to understand just how horrible hell really is.

Did you realize that in the New Testament message about hell, Jesus said more about it than anyone did? Out of the twelve times that *gehenna* is found in the New Testament, in every instance except one (James 3:6) we read it in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. And in those three books, the references to hell always came from the mouth of the Christ. Jesus exemplified compassion and love in all that He did and said. The fact that the most caring person ever to walk the earth spoke about *gehenna* lets us know that it is not unloving to tell the world what the God of heaven says about hell.

Some have suggested that hell is a fantasy, a concept that Bible-believers imagined and hold over people’s head to try and get them to be good. Not so, my friend. Hell is real. Jesus used its existence and nature to motivate people to think properly and make proper decisions. As Jesus prepared to send His apostles out to preach, He told them in advance about the opposition and persecution that they would face. Even under such circumstances, He

did not want them to shrink from living for Him and proclaiming His message: “...fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). No, hell is not a joking matter. Some Christians need to clean up their speech about hell, because there is nothing funny about it or being one of its inhabitants.

Hell is a place of punishment. Jesus asked the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, “*Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell*” (Matt. 23:33). As we noted earlier in the message of Matthew 10:28, hell is a place of destruction. Regarding the destruction that will take place in *gehenna*, “The idea is not extinction but ruin; loss, not of being, but of well-being” [Vine, word no. 622; www2.mf.no/bibelprog/vines.pl?tofrom].

Hell is a place of permanence. Jesus called it “...*everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matt. 25:41). In the same breath, so to speak, the Master referred to it as “*everlasting punishment*” (Matt. 25:46). The punishment in hell never comes to an end. Those who arrive in hell will be permanent residents there! Hell is a place from which not one single person will escape from the awful, unthinkable torment. In hell, there are no doors marked “Exit.”

Hell is a place which will be heavily populated. The everlasting destruction of hell (and from the presence of the Lord) awaits those who do not obey God and who do not obey the Gospel of the Christ (2 Thess. 1:8,9). In general, Jesus said, “...*wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat*” (Matthew 7:13).

Many people of our day lack a reverence for the Lord and a healthy fear of the horrors of hell. Let us not be ashamed to tell the world and the church what Almighty Jehovah says about hell. Each person needs to hear that message. At the same time, let us proclaim with tenderness and boldness that because of God’s matchless love, Jesus paid the price for our sins, allowing us to avoid hell and receive eternal life.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Thank you for every article in STOP. They stand for sound doctrine and help each of us (1 Peter 3:15). Being retired law enforcement, the article ‘Who Pulled The Trigger’ (April/18) was something I could relate to and I concur with Larry Acuff. I’m afraid the scales have tipped so far to the Left we can’t bring it back on our own. Look at the News each day. This nation needs to repent, then God will again bless us, and only then. It’s not the guns!” ...**Bert A. Kramer, Modesto, CA.** “Thanks for your good work” ...**Jason Gann, McMinnville, TN.** I pray you will keep preaching the Truth of God’s Word. I’m so thankful for all who donate so God’s Truth can be preached. I pray it will bare much fruit. God bless all” ...**Lorene Wilson, Binger, OK.** “We are moving, please change our address. We still want to get STOP. Thank you and God bless” ...**Dan Fredman, Wagoner, OK.** “Thank you so much” ...**Justin Wiygul, Goose Creek, SC.** “I am living in a Assisted Living Community and would like to receive *Seek The Old Paths*. I am a Christian but disabled and cannot attend worship services any longer so this would be very much appreciated. Thanks” ...**NC.** “*Seek The Old Paths* has been running many fine and timely articles in regards to appropriate worship. This is all great, since worship must be according to the pattern of New Testament worship given in the Scriptures. Jesus Himself said: ‘in vain do they worship me.’ Also the Scriptures say ‘God is a spirit and must be worshiped in spirit and in truth.’ The Bible is very clear regarding worship. The pattern is *preaching and teaching* the Word. Also, *prayers* for the body, community, and especially the lost, and those serving the Lord’s church. Also, *singing*, as the Bible says, ‘speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.’ Also, the time of *communion*, to commemorate Christ’s death. Communion must be a solemn time to reflect on what made our salvation possible and never a gluttonous and drunken feast as done by the Corinthians. Also, *giving* as we are able. The Bible says that the early church gave as they were prospered. The New Testament church is not bound by the law of the tithe, Sabbath, and dietary and ceremonial laws. Unauthorized worship, such as dancing, burning of incense, and rolling on floors should be avoided. The lesson of Nadab and Abihu, in Leviticus 10 needs to be heeded. They offered strange fire and were consumed. I title my article ‘Worship God’s Way” ...**Leslie Putman, Eldorado, AR.** “I appreciate your publication, *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Jack Openshaw, Searcy, AR.** “Please put me on your list! Wonderful publication” ...**Wallace Harpp, Indianapolis, IN.** “I would like to subscribe. Thank you” ...**Garlon Campbell, Cleveland, TN.** “Please add us to your mailing list. Thank you” ...**David & Melissa Duncan, Henderson, TX.** “Would you add these addresses to your mailing list? If you have extra copies would you start with the May/18 issue? This issue has many good articles in it. I have been reading and enjoying *Seek The Old Paths* for many years. It has been a blessing for me. Thank you” ...**Bonnie Barnett, Eufaula, OK.** “The recent article ‘Who Pulled The Trigger?’ by Larry Acuff is one that shows how far we have strayed from that ‘strait and narrow.’ We have allowed minority interests to interfere to the point that waywardness has become the order of the day. Furthermore, it has become extremely difficult to find someone ‘taking to task’ those who create such ungodliness. Keep up that good fight. God Bless” ...**Denver Thomas, Milton, WV.** “Thank you for making this monthly Bible study possible. I am one of the multitude who is indebted to you for STOP” ...**JoAnn Campbell, The Villages, FL.** “Please update our address. *Seek The Old Paths* is a welcomed publication to our home that we have received for many years. Thank you for this work” ...**Roger &**

Denise Granatiero, Sterling, NY. “Please add these names. Thank you” ...**Don Stringer, Mesquite, TX.** “Randy Arnold has passed away” ...**Whitehouse, TX.** “Thank you for your good work” ...**Macedonia C/C, Dresden, TN.** “Dear brother Robinson. I enjoy reading *Seek The Old Paths*. I have been passing them around. Thank you” ...**Albert Boyd, Chicago, IL.** “Please add me to your subscription list. Thanks for the great work” ...**Suzane Dill.** “Thank you” ...**Elaine Hitchcock, Newport News, VA.** “Thanks for what you and the Leoni body of Christ does for the kingdom. I have tried to supply ‘STOP’ and ‘House to House’ to as many friends and relatives as possible as we share God’s word” ...**Ole Olsen, Keller, TX.** “Thank you so much for mailing the STOP publication every month. I’m getting to know writers of the different articles and had Victor Eskew speak at the Valley Springs Christian Encampment we have every last weekend of each year in April at Valley Springs, CA. One day I’m hoping to visit your congregation at 6818 McMinnville Hwy, in Woodbury, Tennessee so I can put the faces together with the names I’ve come to know throughout the years. I have included a check for this good work you brethren are doing. Thank you” ...**Randall & Reny Gruenewald, Chico, CA.** “We no longer need for you to send *Seek The Old Paths* newsletter. Our members who wish to read your publication will access it on line. Thank you” ...**The Elders, Merkel Church of Christ, Merkel, TX.** “I would like to receive your publication, STOP. The list that I found this on said it was FREE. Thank you” ...**Sharon South, Pall Mall, TN.** [YES, IT’S FREE].

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked “not for publication.” The church building is located at: 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

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