



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 24, No. 9

September 2013

WHY I CHANGED CHURCHES

Paul D. Murphy (deceased)

I left the Baptist Church to become a Christian only and a member of the Lord's church. The more I studied and learned, the more I became dissatisfied with the Baptist Church and convinced they were in error on many vital points.

In 1 Peter 3:16 it is written, *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”*

Pursuant to the demands of this text and in compliance with the requests of my friends, I desire to set before you some scriptural, well-grounded, and well-founded reasons as to why I left the Baptist Church to become a Christian only and a member of the Lord's church.

I grew up in a community where there were only two churches, one a *Methodist* and the other a *Baptist*. As long as I can remember, I have always been interested in Bible subjects and Bible things. When just a small child, I used to come home from the Baptist or Methodist revivals and tell my good mother the preacher's text (that was about all the Bible they preached in those days) and much of the preacher's sermon. The preachers would tell us that we ought to get saved and join the church of our choice. They would tell us that we didn't have to be a member of the church to be saved, but just to accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour by “faith only” and then join the church of our choice. In my case that meant either the Baptist Church or

the Methodist Church since there were only the two churches in our locality.

While I knew very little about the Bible, it always seemed to me that the Bible was a common sense book and that the preachers ought to be telling sinners what the Bible said rather than telling death-bed, blood-curdling, hair-raising stories and plum-thicket experiences calculated to scare the sinner into coming to the mourners bench to pray through to victory. It just never did seem reasonable to me that one would have to go to the mourners bench (this was the common practice in those days) and make a fool of himself to be saved; consequently, I never went to the mourners bench in my life, nor asked anyone else to do so.

When I was sixteen years old, I became deeply concerned about my soul and began to pray and study diligently to learn what a sinner must do to be saved. At that time the Baptists were having their annual revival, and it just so happened that they had brought in a shrewd Baptist preacher to do the preaching. He preached more Bible than any man I had ever heard up to that time. Since I believed that that was what a preacher ought to preach, I became deeply interested in his preaching

and listened with rapt attention to his sermons. After hearing him a few days and nights in the meeting, I went forward one evening and joined the Baptist Church along with twenty-five others. The night I went forward the pastor of the church asked me if I had a Christian experience to relate. I told him that I wasn't a Christian, had never been, and therefore could not possibly have had a Christian experience. I explained that my reason for coming forward was to become a Christian. He then asked me if I believed that God had for Christ's sake pardoned my sins. Even though I had certain convictions in my heart about baptism and its connection with salvation, I knew what I was supposed to say and said, “yes”. You see, I had read the Bible enough to know that baptism had something to do with the salvation of one's soul. I had listened carefully to a sermon the preacher had preached on baptism and instead of saying that baptism was not essential to salvation as the other preachers had always done, he would say, “now baptism is a command and ought to be obeyed, but it isn't compulsory.” Well, it had always seemed to me that any-

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Why I Changed Churches...



Editorial...

"SPEAKING IN TONGUES" #2

Garland M. Robinson

WHO RECEIVED THE GIFT OF TONGUES?

Select individuals, not every Christian, are the only ones who received the gift to speak in another language. The 12 apostles (Acts 2:1-4), the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:11), the 12 men at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7), some in the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 12-14), and undoubtedly many others of which we have no record. To understand the 'purpose of the gift' helps explain "who" received it and "why" it was not for every Christian (see purpose below).

THE MEANS OF OBTAINING THE GIFT

The Bible reveals there were only two means through which this gift was received: the baptism of the Holy Spirit and laying on of the apostles hands.

Acts 2:1-4 speaks of Holy Spirit baptism, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they (the 12 apostles, Acts 1:26) were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And **they** (the 12 apostles) **were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**"

"Laying on of the apostles hands" is spoken of in Acts 8:14-18 and 19:6, "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them **Peter** and **John**: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the

Lord Jesus.) Then laid **they** (Peter and John) **their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money.**" ... "Now when **Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.**"

The gift of tongues was never received any other way! However, people today claim they pray and wait for the Spirit to "move them." Claims are made that "tongues" are for everyone! We read of nothing in the Bible like that!

THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES

The purpose of "speaking in tongues" is well defined in the scriptures. It was one of nine spiritual/miraculous gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10. Concerning these gifts, we read in Mark 16:17-18,20, "And these **signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.** ... And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and **confirming the word with signs following. Amen.**"

As the apostles were preaching a "new doctrine" never before heard, God enabled them to "confirm" their preaching, i.e., make it firm, convincing, irrefutable. This new teaching was from God, not man. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, **ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also**

in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13). If we reject God's word, how then "shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and **was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will**" (Heb. 2:3-4). God bore witness to their preaching, and did so with miracles!

Performing miracles confirmed the words of the inspired preachers. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, **hearing and seeing the miracles which he did**" (Acts 8:5-6). This was acknowledged by Nicodemus who "...came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, **we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him**" (John 3:1-2). Peter preached on Pentecost, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, **a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know**" (Acts 2:22).

Whether it be speaking in tongues or any of the other gifts, such miracles were not to accommodate the speaker or even the one being acted upon (such as healing). The miracle's purpose was to show unbelievers that what was being taught was from God. "Wherefore **tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not**" (1 Cor. 14:22). This was the effect upon those in Samaria in Acts 8:5-6 as noted above! Such miracles even caused some at Lystra to think Paul and Barnabas were gods (Acts 14:8-12). The object of miracles was to prove to those who observed them that the preaching and teaching of the Gospel was indeed from God.

Tongues were for the purpose of bridging the language barrier and to authenticate the preaching of the Gospel. Non-believers could hear the Gospel in their native tongue and marvel that those speaking were "unlearned and ignorant men" just as we read in Acts 4:13, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and

John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”

While the church was young and the books of the New Testament incomplete, there was a need for the people of each congregation to be taught the Word of God. This was done by the use of several miraculous gifts. The exercise thereof would prove the things said and done to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. God’s

choice was to have it “proven” by miracles — such as healing the sick, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, inspired prophecy (teaching), discerning of spirits, etc. (1 Cor. 12:7-10). Without the Gospel being written on paper so it could be distributed, they needed a means to convince their hearers — it was a “sign” to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22). During the early days of the church, God chose that through this means his word might be quickly dispensed into all nations of men. However, as we

will see later (in part three of this series), once the Word of God was established and recorded for all to read, the need for “speaking in tongues” ceased.

If “speaking in tongues” and performing other miracles is being done today, then we do not have the completed revelation of God’s word. If they have ceased as the Scriptures confirm, then the New Testament is complete. To claim miracles exist today attacks the very inspiration of the Scriptures.

Why I Changed Churches...

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thing that was commanded was essential to one’s salvation, but when this preacher said it was a command of God but wasn’t compulsory, I thought he meant that God Almighty didn’t compel one to be baptized: that we could accept it and be saved, or reject it and be lost just like faith or any other command that was given us. I later realized that he was saying the same thing that they had always said but just using a different word. He was just being subtle about it and didn’t believe that baptism was, in any sense of the word, essential to salvation. Thus being deceived like many other honest people, I had believed a lie instead of the truth and was thus being damned instead of being saved (II Thess. 2:10-12). Anyway, I had now gone forward, had given the preacher my hand, and confessed that I believed that God for Christ’s sake had forgiven my sins. Then the preacher stated that Paul Murphy had come forward desiring to be received as a candidate for baptism and after baptism as a member of the Baptist Church at that place. They took a vote and I was accepted as a candidate for baptism. Then they gave me the right hand of Christian fellowship, and one month later I was baptized into the Baptist Church.

I immediately became very active in the affairs of the Church for I resolved if I were going to be a Baptist, I would be the best Baptist in the community. The Sunday following my baptism, I was given a Sunday school class. I wasn’t even a good

Sunday school scholar, but I resolved that if I were going to be a Sunday school teacher I would endeavor to be the best teacher in the church: therefore I studied my lessons diligently both day and night. A few weeks later, my grandfather, who had been the superintendent of the Sunday school for many years died, and I was elected to take his place. A few weeks later, I was called on to preach and I was given a license to preach regularly in the Baptist Church.

From the day I began to try to preach, I resolved in my heart that God being my helper I would always preach what, and only what, I believed the Bible taught on any subject without fear or favor. To that resolution I’ve always tried to be true. I remember one evening I was to preach on the question, “What Must I Do To Be Saved?” I told the pastor of the church, who was sitting on the rostrum beside me, that I was just going to tell the people what the Bible said on the subject even if it did contradict Baptist doctrine. A member of the Primitive Baptist Church was visiting in the community and was present that evening. The next day I met him on the street. He told me that he was really amused at those Missionary Baptists the night before when he heard many of them bragging on the wonderful sermon I had preached. He said that when one of them asked him what he thought of the sermon he had replied, “Why, that young fellow is preaching rank campbellism and you folks don’t have sense enough to realize it.”

Another young man in the community started preaching for the Methodist Church about the time I had begun to preach for the Baptist

Church. I persuaded him to join the Baptist Church so we could preach and work together. This he did and we conducted a number of revivals together.

For two years I preached for the Baptist Church, but I always preached as best I could what the Book said. I studied my Bible diligently by day and night. The more I studied and learned, the more I became dissatisfied with the Baptist Church and convinced that they were in error on many vital points. I had resolved that I would follow wherever the Bible lead me, that right was always right and wrong was always wrong, and that the very moment that I learned what was right, I’d do it regardless of friend or foe. Even though the Baptist Church had promised to educate me; and even though I could see no way of going to school to further my education at the time; and even though there was no New Testament church in our community, once I learned the truth I hesitated not. For above all things, I wanted to be saved and I knew I could not be saved and remain in error.

I learned of a Gospel preacher by the name of J. L. Rogers and wrote him to come and baptize me into Christ just as Philip had baptized the eunuch (Acts 8:26:40) and as Paul had baptized the twelve who had been baptized with John’s baptism (Acts 19:1-6). That grand old man caught a bus immediately and came a distance of forty miles and baptized me into Christ. Since that hour I have been telling the old old story to the best of my ability and rejoice with exceeding great joy that I am affiliated with the greatest institution on

earth, the Lord's church, and can fearlessly preach all the counsel of God (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47).

Many of my good friends and relatives were amazed and shocked when I left them and became a simple New Testament Christian and have repeatedly asked me why. I have always tried to answer this question plainly and kindly and give them scriptural reasons for my decision with the prayer and hope that many of them may be lead out of the darkness of religious error into the light and liberty of the children of God. This, many of them have done.

Why then did I leave? As you can see from the foregoing statements, it was not because I fell out with any of them in a personal way. They were my dear friends and relatives whom I loved; and, I had right and reason to believe they loved me. It was not because I was not sincere when I joined them for I was just as sincere the day I became a Baptist as I was the day I became a Christian only, but just being sincere is not enough. We must be sincerely right (Acts 23:1; Prov. 14:12). I did not leave them because they do not believe in God Almighty, for they do. I did not leave them because they do not believe the world is lost and that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, for they do. I did not leave them because they do not believe in the inspiration of the word of the Lord, for they do. I did not leave them because they do not believe in morality, for they do. I did not leave them because they do not believe in mission work, for they do. I did not leave them because they do not believe in benevolent work, for they do. (Incidentally, I have never known of them to fuss and divide over how to do benevolent work as many of our brethren sometimes do.) I did not leave them for social prestige, neither for financial standing, nor because they would not help and encourage me, for this they always did; and I'll ever be grateful for the same. Why then did I leave?

Kindly, may I tell you this: I left because of **deep convictions** based on God's word. **As a Baptist I could not preach the Gospel that Paul preached, and I knew I'd be eternally doomed and damned if I did not** (Gal. 1:6-9). They wanted me to tell my friends that a sinner was

saved by "faith only," but the Bible says it is "not by faith only" (James 2:24; Mark 16:16). They, therefore, wanted me to tell sinners, as the preacher had told me, that baptism was not compulsory even though the Bible says it is (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21). This I could not preach and be a loyal Baptist. As a Baptist, I could not ask a sinner to make the scriptural confession that he believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but rather that he believed that God had for Christ's sake forgiven his sins. Incidentally, how can any right thinking person believe that his baptism is scriptural when he confessed that he was already saved before his baptism? Read Matthew 10:32, Acts 8:36-38, Romans 10:9-10.

As a Baptist I could not accept the Bible as my all sufficient and alone sufficient rule of faith and practice. This was one of the first things that opened my eyes to the fact that I could not follow the Bible and be a loyal Baptist. For instance, one evening when the invitation was extended, a fine old man and his wife came forward desiring to transfer their letters from the Methodist Church to the Baptist Church. The pastor told them that that was contrary to the usage and practice of the Baptist Church. They stated that they had been immersed in the Methodist Church. He told them that they still couldn't take them for they could only accept baptism that was performed by a regularly ordained Missionary Baptist preacher. At first, they demurred but finally consented to be baptized into the Baptist Church. He then made this statement to the audience, "Brother and sister so and so have come forward desiring to unite with this church. I have known them for many years and believe they are two of the finest Christians I have ever known. When they came forward tonight they thought they could transfer their letters from the Methodist Church of which they have been faithful members for a good many years to the Baptist Church, but after I had explained to them that that was contrary to the usage and practice of the Baptist Church, they graciously consented to be baptized." Then he exploded a bomb that really shocked and

stunned me. He said, "I personally believe that we have a great deal of red tape to some of our rules, but we want to be loyal Baptists and therefore do not wish to violate any of the rules." Well, I knew that the Lord didn't have any red tape to any of his rules and according to the preacher's own admission, one could not be loyal to God's word and be a Baptist. The preacher had further stated that the old couple were two of the finest Christians he had ever known and that baptism was not essential to salvation, and yet he would not accept them unless they were baptized! How on earth can right thinking people support such a doctrine?

Not long after this incident, he took me aside one day and said, "Paul, I need to get you a Baptist Manual and want you to study it for I can see that you don't understand our doctrine." I said, "Isn't our doctrine in the Bible?" "Oh yes," he said, "but you just don't understand our doctrine." "Well," I said, "I am trying to read and study the Bible, and if I can understand it, then I can understand our doctrine if it is in the Bible for I certainly don't intend to preach or practice anything but that which is found in the Bible." He shook his head sadly and walked away. I am happy therefore that I can be a member of the church of our Lord where one is not tied to a human creed, but is free to believe and practice anything and everything that is found therein. I am happy that we can speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. This is the only course we may pursue and be pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God (II Tim. 3:16-17; II John 9; Rev. 22:18-19).

Another thing that caused me to leave the Baptist Church was her unscriptural teaching on the subject of baptism. The preacher I previously referred to said it was not compulsory, meaning, of course, that it was not essential to salvation right in the face of Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, I Peter 3:21, Galatians 3:26-27, etc.

And too, **although I was in the Baptist Church for two years, I never had the privilege of eating the Lord's Supper but twice, and then it was closed communion.** I could read in Acts 20:7 that the early Christians ate the Lord's Supper

each and every Lord's Day, and the act that brought them together was for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:33).

Also, **in the Baptist Church in addition to vocal music, we had mechanical instrumental music.** I took my Bible in hand and read and marked all the passages that authorized Christians to offer praise unto God and found in every single instance that it was to be done with our lips, and not by sawing it out of a fiddle, beating it out of a drum, blowing it out of a horn, or pecking it out of a piano (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; I Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; Heb. 13:15; James 5:13). The person who does more than this does it at the peril of his never dying soul (Rev. 22:18-19).

In the Baptist Church I could not plead for Christian unity on the basis of God's word, but as a member of it I was upholding, aiding and abetting religious division contrary to our Lord's prayer and the earnest pleading of the apostle Paul (John 17:20-23; I Cor. 1:10-13; Eph. 4:1-6). In the Lord's church I can stand free and unfettered by the doctrines, names, and commandments of men, and tell honest people that if they find us doing anything not in the Bible to call our attention to it and we'll drop it immediately. On the other hand, if they see us leaving off anything that we ought to be practicing, please call our attention to it and we'll incorporate it into our practice immediately. I knew that if this were done in the Baptist Church it would destroy it immediately. You just can't follow the Bible only and be a member of the Baptist Church!

Furthermore, **I could see while a member of the Baptist Church that in order to be a Baptist one had to do more than the Bible said to do;** and that the "Bible only" made "Christians only;" and that it took the Bible plus the Baptist Manual to make Baptists even as it took the Bible plus the Discipline to make Methodists. I could read in Acts 11:26 that the disciples were called Christians (just Christians) and not some peculiar brand of Christians. I've never seen the day wherein I wanted to be more than just a simple New Testament Christian. Shouldn't that be good enough for all of us?

Now, basically, these are the reasons I left the Baptist Church to become a Christian only, a member of the Lord's church only, without any denominational affiliation whatsoever. Even though it meant the giving up of some of the dearest friends I had ever known, the breaking of many fleshly ties, I did it joyfully for the truth of the Gospel. For I knew that there was but one person that I was to love more than father, mother, brother, sister, wife or children, or even my own life, and that person was the Christ who loved me and gave Himself for me on the old rugged cross (Luke 14:26-33; Matt. 10:37).

Thus I plead with you, my friend, to *believe* on the Lord with all your heart, to earnestly and sincerely *repent* of every sin, *confess* your faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son, allow some servant of God to bury you in beautiful *baptism* for the remission of your sins; thus to become a member of the Lord's church. Then stay in the Lord's church and stay out of everything else. Be a faithful, devoted, consecrated member; die in the triumphs of a living faith; and then go home to receive the Christian's reward in that land of eternal beauty where beyond these voices there is peace.

THIS IS THE WAY THAT IS RIGHT AND CAN'T BE WRONG!

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JESUS DIED

- He is the redeemer of sinful men (Eph. 1:7; Titus 2:14).
- He purchased the church with his blood (Acts 20:28).
- He will save only those in his body, the church (Eph. 5:23).
- He will send to hell those that do not obey him (Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:8-9).
- Are you ready to OBEY him to be in his church?

CONTRIBUTIONS

Anonymous	\$75
Anonymous	\$50
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Anonymous	\$70
Anonymous	\$50
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M. S. Rooker, Jr.....	\$600
Kenneth Kemp	\$50
Anonymous	\$250
Anonymous	\$100

Beginning Balance.....	\$10,492.06
Contributions.....	\$1,840.00
Debits	
Postage	\$1,667.91
Paper	\$ 2,089.13
Supplies.....	\$528.50
Ending Balance.....	\$8,046.52

DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHAT RELIGION YOU PRACTICE?

Only the right authority gives the right answer. The authority is not man (Jer. 10:23) nor what seems right to man (Prov. 14:12). It's not feelings, conscience or creed books. The only right answer is God's Word (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:3). The question is not what matters to man, but rather, "what matters to God." If it does not matter to God, then why did God demand religious people obey the Gospel (Acts 2, 8, 10, 16, 22)? If it does not matter to God, then there are no false religions, doctrines and teachers. But the Bible reveals that such do exist (Matt. 7:15,21-23; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Pet. 2:1-2; 1 John 4:1). When one reads the charge of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16), does not that show the Lord is not just interested in one "practicing religion", but it is His Word that determines what we are to believe, obey and practice (Col. 3:17)? It matters to God what we "believe in," "belong to" and how we "live and worship." It is His Way and only His Way that leads to Heaven.

— Jerry Joseph

ADVANTAGES FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS ENJOY

The Christian has many, many advantages for a productive and prosperous life in this world, and after this brief life is over, joy eternal.

In the end, faithful Christians are the recipients of an eternal inheritance because we are God's chosen people (1 Peter 1:3-9; 2:9). Christians sing "Count your many blessings, name them one by one, count your many blessings, see what God has done." It's more than a beautiful hymn, it's good advice.

We should not focus exclusively on the turmoil, sin and chaos of the world in which we live. Christian values may cause us to wonder about the corruption around us as we hear the news and observe society continuing on its downward path of self destruction. Can things get any worse? As the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13-16), we seek to rescue the perishing with the Gospel. We must not allow Satan to discourage us.

Christians understand that this world and this life are but temporary and if it were not so, then death and the grave would be the victors. But God has revealed to all who will hear, that we have within us an immortal spirit and that death and the grave can not claim the victory over us. "O death, where [is] thy sting? O grave, where [is] thy victory? The sting of death [is] sin; and the strength of sin [is] the law. But thanks [be] to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:55-58).

LET US COUNT SOME OF OUR BLESSINGS AS CHRISTIANS

1. We know there is an all wise, all powerful, ever present, loving and merciful Creator, because God has revealed this to us through His Holy Oracles, the Bible.

2. We know God calls us, speaks to us and guides us through His holy word and by His providence (Matt. 11:28-30; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

3. We know we may call upon

God at any time and that He will hear and give answer to our petitions. "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John 9:31). "Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

4. We know Jesus loves us because the Bible tells us so. This may be the most profound thought that man may possess. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and [that] your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:9-14).

5. We know the Lord will provide for us because He has promised that he will do so. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no

thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where-withal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:25-33).

6. We know the Lord is my Shepherd and I shall not want (Psa. 23).

7. We know God created this world and that at a time he chooses he will bring it to an end (Gen. 1:1; 2 Peter 3:9-12). Christians need not worry about the earth's destruction by the hysterical ranting of global warming charlatans or sky gazers who fear some space object will bring an end. The end of the world is in the hands of the Creator of the world and He alone knows when such will happen (Matt. 24:36).

8. We know the Lord has prepared a place for those who are prepared for heaven. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

The Christian has many, many advantages for a productive and prosperous life in this world, and after this brief life is over, joy eternal. "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, O what a foretaste of glory divine." All things are ready, come to the feast.

Is your heart right with God? Today is the day of salvation. Make your calling and election sure. Believe in Christ, obey His commands and enjoy the peace that exceeds our understanding.

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Elder's COLUMN

HOW CAN WE GET MORE PEOPLE TO ATTEND BIBLE CLASSES?

Roger D. Campbell

There may be a few isolated cases and congregations in which the number who attend Bible classes matches the number who attend worship services, but unfortunately, those would be exceptions, rather than the standard practice.

This concern is legitimate. Every local church of which I have ever had knowledge has had members who did not regularly attend Sunday and/or mid-week Bible classes. Spiritually-minded saints and congregational leaders are always wondering what, if anything, can be done to increase the attendance of Bible classes. Let me offer a few suggestions for us all to consider.

1. Make Bible class attendance a priority — something we look at as being extremely important. Advertise the classes. Make it known to the whole church that our goal is to have 100% attendance of our members coming to every Bible class. We recognize that sometimes things happen that are totally out of members' control and legitimately prevent them from attending Bible classes, but we are talking about all of our folks having a desire and making an effort to be at such classes.

I personally am befuddled by the mindset that presents the goal for Bible class attendance as a lower figure from the number who attend worship on the Lord's day. What kind of message does it send when we tell members that our goal for Sunday worship is 100, but our goal for Bible classes on Sunday is 75 and our goal for mid-week Bible classes is 40?! Why not make the goal 100%?!

2. Educate all members about the need for and benefits of Bible study. God wants us to grow in knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). He wants us to desire the word so we can grow by it (1 Peter 2:2). One of our greatest joys as a Christian is being able to teach others the Bible. We all recognize the truth that each of us is capa-

ble of teaching only those things we have learned (2 Tim. 2:2). In order to know the Book, we have to study it. Personal Bible study in the privacy of our residence is wonderful, but organized public classes can also be extremely helpful. Jesus said that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled (Matt. 5:6). When folks are hungry enough for the word and see its power to transform their lives, they will make an effort to attend Bible classes.

3. For those members who have children or grandchildren, appeal to them to think about the spiritual welfare of their offspring. Being in Bible classes (temporarily at least) keeps kids out of trouble and away from the corruption of the entertainment industry, but more than that, it allows them to learn God's story of salvation. Can you think of a better use of a child's time? Timothy was blessed because someone took the time to see to it that he was taught God's word (2 Tim. 3:15). Children need to be in class learning the way of the Lord! Surely every conscientious parent or grandparent would agree. Teaching children the truth of Jehovah helps lay the foundation for the rest of their lives. Parents, get your kids to Bible class — every time, and on time. It just might make the difference in where they (and you!) will be in eternity.

4. Make every effort to make the Bible classes appealing and beneficial. That begins with having the best teachers possible doing the teaching. Unprepared teachers, incapable teachers, those whose spiritual maturity is below the level of those whom they teach; and, teachers who seem to have an agenda or hobby [for instance, in 3 out of every 4 classes they teach, they seem compelled to bring up dancing (which needs to be taught) or the origin of Satan] — such teachers will prevent Bible classes from reaching their potential.

We need dedicated, mature-but-still growing teachers in our classrooms teaching the truth of God with a kind disposition. My life has been richly blessed by sitting at the feet of such teachers.

A second key element in making classes attractive is the atmosphere of the teaching. Does in-depth Bible study go on in the class, or is the class merely a forum for pooling ignorant comments about matters that are far removed from the Bible? Do those who regularly attend Bible classes speak courteously to one another and to the teacher, even when they do not see eye to eye, or do they sound as if they would be more than happy to "take it outside and settle it" with their fists? Do some of the students constantly bring up irrelevant topics that ruin the flow of the study? Do a couple of people "hog the floor" with excessively long comments? Or, do people do their best to make their comments brief, stay on subject, and let the teacher do his/her job, which is to be the teacher, leader, and guide of the study?

5. Finally, it would be great if those saints who come to every Bible class would encourage the non-attenders to come and be a part of the classes. Those who already receive benefit from the classes they attend should be a special advertisement for Bible classes. Talk up the classes. Talk up the benefits of attending. Exhort others to come and share in the spiritual nutrition and uplifting spirit that good Bible classes provide.

No, I do not believe that a single article on Bible class attendance will change the minds of the majority of those children of God who have not yet been convinced to attend Bible classes. But, hopefully I have presented some ideas that will help stimulate further serious thought on the subject.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

not in the schemes of men. Even to an old preacher like me, my faith is reassured through the many Biblical articles produced in this publication. I marveled at the recent series of articles **WHY I AM NO LONGER A PENTECOSTAL** (June, July, August, 2013). I thank God that William Davis had the integrity to acknowledge his former mistaken belief, for in so doing he has confirmed everything I have taught concerning the nature and fallacy of this man-made doctrine. As you may know, there have been attempts to bring this false doctrine into the Lord's church on more than one occasion. It caused me (along with many other faithful brethren) to study in-depth to expose the fallacy of Pentecostalism. Do we recall how **Pat Boone** was deceived by this doctrine of emotionalism and how his book **A NEW SONG** was stacked up in our 'Christian Book Stores' to make a few dollars? I personally knew Pat's father, Arch Boone, and at one time served with Arch Boone on a board of directors. How many know that Pat's mother and father were influenced to leave the church in spite of the best efforts of the elders at the Granny White congregation and who, late in life, embraced Pentecostalism? I am enclosing a small offering for the purchase of a new printer" ...**Lloyd Gale, Jr., Lebanon, TN**. "Please accept the enclosed contribution check. If possible, please enter three new subscriptions for *Seek The Old Paths* publication to be mailed to the following addresses.... We recently learned of your wonderful publication from Denzel Furguson. Brother Furguson shared his copy of your publication with us. If you don't mind, please enter any credit given for this contribution in his name. Thank you. Have a blessed day" ...**Lyles, TN**. "My friend and sister in Christ receives *Seek The Old Paths* and has been giving me copies of her copy for a very long time now. I thank Carol Marshall for doing this for me and I thank you for the publication of STOP. Please accept my gift to show a small token of my appreciation. God bless all of you" ...**Donna Prince, Rochester, NY**. "Brethren, I look forward to *Seek The Old Paths* each month. This is a small donation to help with printing. May God give you strength to keep printing the truth" ...**Lorene Wilson, Binger, OK**. "God bless you in your work. Thank you" ...**Mike & Mary Lou Gilley, Dowelltown, TN**. "Keep up the good work spreading the good articles of God's love. Here is a little more help (no name please)" ...**OH**. "Stop sending STOP. We can read it online" ...**Jerry & Tammi Pernell, Crossville, TN**. "Alton Dickerson has passed away" ...**Corinth, MS**. "Please put the following name on your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths* paper. Thank you" ...**name withheld by request, OK**. "We were given a copy of *Seek The Old Paths* from 2004 and we are wondering if it is still in print and if we can be added to your mailing list please. If the publication is still available, we would like to have it. We belong to the Salamanca Church of Christ. Thank you" ...**Linda & Noel Poling, Salamanca, NY**. "Have you ever had your feelings hurt? For whatever reason, we know it is not a good feeling at all. Somebody says or does something that is hurtful. It takes time sometimes to get over the hurt feelings. Whether you've been on the side of hurting someone or being hurt, it is not good. But what about God? Does God have feelings? Does God become frustrated or hurt? According to the Bible, He does! In Ezekiel 6:9 we read, *'And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations.'* God hates sin and what makes mat-

"I wish to thank the congregation at Leoni (Woodbury, Tennessee) for assuming the oversight of *Seek The Old Paths*. This publication has meant so much to so many to strengthen and reassure their faith. I thank God that there are yet many who put their trust in God's word and

ters worse is when his children willfully sin against him, he is 'broken.' May it ever be that we strive to be like the Psalmist and say, *'Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee'* (Psa. 119:11)" ...**Del Brantley, Salem, KY**. "Please use this contribution however you want in memory of Johnny Morris" ...**Barbara Morris, Lampe, MO**. "God bless and keep up the great work" ...**Ted Lingren, Henderson, TN**. "Please add 10 more copies of STOP to our bundle of 10. The May/13 issue of STOP was outstanding in every particular; especially your Editorial, 'The Bible On Booze.' As I have heard my mother say, 'Now that's the truth if it's ever been told.' Again I appreciate all your labour for the Lord's cause" ...**Jeff Grimes, Sasser Church of Christ, Andalusia, AL**. "Our prayers go up to God for you in your service to the Lord Jesus Christ" ...**Gene & Audrey Pegg, McMinnville, TN**. "I really enjoyed reading the piece on *Whatever Happened to Sin*. Society and the world calls it everything but sin by changing the language and the church is adapting to it. Thank God for all of you. Keep the truth coming" ...**Mary Childs, Pine Bluff, AR**. "Thank you for STOP. May this check help to buy a new printer" ...**Merriam Rickert, Mesa, AZ**. "Please discontinue the STOP. I have access to it online. Thank you" ...**Wally Kirby, Pikeville, TN**. "Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I pray that you are in good health and spirit at this time. I'm writing in regard to a request for some back issues of STOP. There is so much helpful and insightful information in each issue that I wish I had every one ever printed. STOP is a wonderful work for the Lord and I pray that he will continue to bless your efforts in its publication" ...**Rajah O. Greer, Cuero, TX**. "Frank M. Calvert has passed away" ...**Gilmer, TX**. "Martha Townsend passed away" ...**Grenada, MS**.

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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