

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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THE MOLD OF DOCTRINE

Wayne Coats

I get somewhat disgusted at the efforts utilized by the liberals who compass land and sea in an effort to make proselytes from among the various denominations. This is especially true of the apostate preachers who cuddle up to the Digressive Christian Church people. They use such expressions as, "Christians in other denominations," "our erring brethren," or "those Christians outside our own little group."

I would encourage, beg, plead with and insist that my faithful brethren please be very careful to observe that the men who can be so glib about "Christians in other churches," offer not one shred of proof for their silly assertions. There isn't anything as cheap as the chatter of a sectarian liberal. They may think that they are so high and mighty as to see no need of proving their baseless assertions. There are those who are so gullible that they do not require any proof from the Bible.

It is as false as it can be that sectarian baptism is acceptable to God. Sectarian baptism is not the one baptism taught in the Bible. A person cannot be taught wrong and be baptized right.

Please think with me as carefully, deeply and honestly as you can while we consider the statement of the inspired Paul speaking to the Romans. I am trying to say, Please do not let prejudice, preconceived notions, family ties, popularity or anything else blind our eyes from the truth. The apostle wrote, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of

sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:17).

Alexander Campbell in *The Living Oracles* rendered the verse, "But thanks be to God, that although ye were the slaves of sin, yet ye have obeyed from the heart the **mold of doctrine** into which ye were delivered."

McKnight renders the text, "By thus speaking, I do not insinuate that ye have made yourselves slaves to sin; on the contrary, I thank God that although formerly ye were the slaves of sin, ye have willingly obeyed the **mold of doctrine** into which ye were cast at your baptism. And that being set free from the slavery of sin, by your faith, ye have voluntarily become the slaves of righteousness, whom therefore ye ought to obey."

The word "mold" or "form" denotes a shape or item into which melted metals are poured and such becomes the exact shape or form of the mold. That mold of doctrine which the Romans obeyed was the Gospel. They had obeyed the mold of doctrine into which they were cast at their baptism. In this act they were made free men — **free** — such as the Romans would bestow upon a slave when he was given his freedom. The Romans called this "emancipation."

A few matters need to be considered relative to the passages presented by the apostle. The Gospel had been preached to the Romans. They had obeyed the Gospel. The apostle did not preach a multiplicity of

gospels. If you think so, present the proof. Different preachments will result in different practices — such as the unholy state of affairs which is seen all around us.

Some brethren have very fertile imaginations that need to be cast down by the truth (II Cor. 10:5). The people were granted their freedom as slaves to sin **after** obedience and not before. The obedience involved a submission to a form or mold of doctrine. We are not so far-fetched as to say that there were many or diverse molds into which they had been cast. Anyone who can find the text under consideration surely has enough judgment to understand what the Holy Spirit through Paul is teaching.

To refer again to the process of pouring molten metal into a mold, the pieces of metal which are cast are all alike. This is the truth which the apostle is teaching. Away with the foolish notion which the liberals prattle that all the sects are pleasing to God. I have not yet seen one shred of supposed proof from those who palaver so much about the "other Christian fellowships." What in the name of sense would be offered as a kind of proof if something were offered?

When I was a youngster, a very enjoyable game was played which we called Pitching Dollars. For the dollars used, we would cut a round hole in the hard dirt about the size of a silver dollar. We would melt down some

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The Mold of Doctrine...



Editorial...

COMPROMISE WITH ERROR

Garland M. Robinson

We've received a note from a good brother down in Alabama telling us of an event that is sad indeed.

"I just wanted to share a couple of disturbing ads that were in the *Times Daily* Newspaper in Florence, Alabama on Nov. 11th and 18th, 2006. How blatant and farther away from the truth can you get? I know you and other good brethren have tried hard to expose such error and will continue to do so."

Here is one of the ads to which this good brother refers.

"You are invited. Combined Worship Assembly. North Wood United Methodist at Magnolia Church of Christ, 6:00pm Sunday, Nov. 19. There's quite a story behind the annual gathering of these two area churches. We won't have room to tell it this week, but be looking for it next week in an expanded ad. Suffice it to say, God brought us together under some unusual circumstances ... and our respective fellowships have never been quite the same. We look forward to our annual gatherings and we want you to share in the joy of this year's event. It will be the Sunday night before Thanksgiving, November 19. The location alternates from year to year — this year we are at Magnolia. Peter Hawker, North Wood's new pastor, will be preaching. Special musical selections will be presented by groups from North Wood and Magnolia. Beautiful congregational singing will fill Magnolia's worship center. Mark it on your holiday calendar and plan to join us. Remember — you're always welcome at Magnolia! Magnolia Church of Christ, 2650 Vulcan Avenue, Florence AL. (256) 767-6776." (*Times Daily*, Florence, AL 11/11/2006)

The church at Magnolia has been involved in fellowship meetings like this for many years, dating back to 1993. Since that time, there have been more than 50 gatherings of this sort with various religious groups and denominations in the area. This is the 15th combined meeting of the North Wood Methodist Church and the Magnolia Church of Christ.

In a second ad they tell us that "tears will flow, laughter will roll, God will be glorified! Who knows what God might have in store?" (*Times Daily*, Florence, AL 11/18/2006).

I don't have to guess or imagine what God has in store for those who abandon the right ways of the Lord. I can read my Bible and learn that. And, the picture the Bible gives concerning such compromise with error is not pleasant nor desired.

In Romans 16:17-18 we read, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." This Scripture says to **mark them**, not fellowship them. Denominationalism, which includes the Methodist Church, is a major cause of division. Their teaching and practice is contrary to the Lord's doctrine. Heaven says to avoid them because they serve not our Lord Jesus Christ. They serve their own belly. They are deceivers whose good words and soothing speeches mislead the hearts of the simple, the innocent, the gullible. The preacher at Magnolia, **Joe VanDyke**, and the members there, have bought into a man-made system that does not honor the Lord and His Way. They think their way is right, but Proverbs 14:12 says it is the way of death.

Second John 9-11 gives stern warning about fellowship with those

in error. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he 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 God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." The point of these verses is clear. Those who do not hold to the sound doctrine of the Lord may *think* they have fellowship with God, but the truth is, they *do not* have fellowship with God. Anyone who does not hold to sound doctrine is not to be received into fellowship. We are not to endorse them in any way. We are not to assist them or wish them well. They are our enemy because they are an enemy of the Lord. If we support them in any way, we are counted as guilty as they are. We become a partaker of their evil deeds. I know I'm not the smartest person in the world, but these verses are not hard to understand.

Ephesians 5:11 is a clear passage. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Is it not the case that any error, that which is contrary to sound doctrine, is an evil work of darkness? According to the Scriptures, there is only truth or error, right or wrong, heaven or hell. Therefore, that which is not the truth is error. It is described as an unfruitful or evil work of darkness. The faithful of the Lord are not to fellowship works of darkness. We are not to have joint participation and sharing with error. The opposite is the truth. We are to reprove works of darkness. That is, we are to expose error. We are to condemn error, not fellowship error or encourage error.

First John 4:1 tells us to "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." We are not to be so naive and trusting that we would believe just anyone that comes along who claims to follow Jesus. We are to test, prove, determine, quiz, investigate, discover, learn, examine, question. This is done because we love the truth and the souls of men. This is done because we desire to go to heaven and we want others to go as well. This is done because the Lord commands us to do it. The next question

is, what are we to do with the information we learn (discover) from trying the spirits (those who claim to be the Lord's servants)? If that information is contrary to the revealed will of God, then we learn from the scriptures we've examined above that we are to "mark" and "avoid" them, have "no fellowship" with them, "reprove" them, "receive him not...neither bid him godspeed."

This is not hard to understand. It does not take a rocket scientist to learn the will of the Lord. It takes an open heart that loves the truth. It takes a heart that loves the Lord. It takes a humble spirit that complies to a "thus saith the Lord." What kind of heart do you have?

CONTRIBUTIONS

Don Green.....	\$20
Rabon McCormick.....	\$20
Joe & Jean Ware (in memory of Frank Cantrell & Cleo Ware).....	\$50
Robert R. Price.....	\$200
Jackson St. church of Christ, Alexandria, LA.....	\$200
Anonymous.....	\$350
Anonymous.....	\$180
Baker church of Christ, Baker, FL.....	\$25
Frank P. Allen.....	\$50
Dorothy Gilley (in memory of Austin Gilley).....	\$50
Anonymous.....	\$50
Evans church of Christ, Evans, GA.....	\$35
Anonymous.....	\$50
Bobby & Mary Lawrence.....	\$100
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Norman Cozort.....	\$50
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Anonymous.....	\$180
Anonymous.....	\$400
Murel & Pat Jones.....	\$50
Central church of Christ, Denison, TX.....	\$20
Ruby York.....	\$175
Baker church of Christ, Baker, FL.....	\$25
Saks church of Christ, Anniston, AL.....	\$50
Frankfort Road church of Christ, Tuscumbia, AL.....	\$300
Bettye Blankenship.....	\$100
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Edmond & Lucille King.....	\$20
David & Lisa Horwath, Jr.....	\$100
Danny & Margaret Vaughn.....	\$25
Beginning Balance.....	\$10,209.24
Contributions.....	3,325.00
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Postage.....	1,333.52
Paper.....	1,706.10
Supplies.....	25.00
Ending Balance.....	\$10,469.62

The Mold of Doctrine...

(Continued from page 89)

old fruit jar lids and pour the molten lead into the round hole. All of the dollars we cast were of the same size and design.

When sinners are cast into the form or mold of doctrine, the mold is the same and the results are the same. The pity is that proud, pompous and bigoted religious "divines" presume to shape their own forms or molds. Consequently the devil has more odd, curious and peculiar children than anyone can count. I have a serious problem respecting any religious man who sets aside the divine mandate to, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21).

It is a fact which cannot be denied that the Bible teaches most clearly that the people of God are to be *united, speak the same thing* and be *one*. Who in his right mind would pretend that the apostles all taught contradictory doctrines? Suppose a clergyman preached on the first Sunday of the month that immersion is the only form of baptism and on the second Sunday he just as emphatically preached that sprinkling and pouring is commanded in the Bible. On the third Sunday he preached the doctrine of inherited total depravity, and on the fourth Sunday he preached that little babies are born sinless and pure. On succeeding Sundays of the entire year he contradicted himself over and over without fail. Such a scenario is exactly what some of my foolish brethren are trying to get us to accept as right and proper.

When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, he informed the brethren that the same truth which he had presented to the churches of Galatia, he taught the same to the church in Corinth (I Cor. 16:1-2). Had Paul been like some of the liberals among us, he would have presented all sorts of diverse doctrines to those plural churches.

Paul spoke of the "churches of Asia" (vs.16:19). The apostle declared, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (I Cor. 16:22). If anything is clearly taught in the Bible, it is that if one loves the Lord, one will **obey the Lord.** "If ye love me, keep

my commandments" (John 14:15). Obedience is not a hodge-podge of feelings and doctrines of men.

It is interesting that Paul made three missionary journeys and established churches by preaching the Gospel. Paul did not establish different kinds of churches because he did not preach different doctrines.

When Paul made a later journey he "...went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples" (Acts 18:23). When a man named Apollos was discovered teaching error, Paul did not stretch the truth and compromise like a liberal and say, "Apollos, you are my brother, and we accept you as you are, even though you know only the baptism of John." The man was not given a false hope. Aquila and Priscilla "...expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26).

When Paul wrote his letter to the church at Colossee, he said, "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Col. 4:16). Colossee did not have one creed and Laodicea a completely different creed. Such would have been the case if the churches were different sects such as that which is proliferated by liberals who have so many brethren of different faiths.

Men such as Paul, Peter, John and Luke wrote more than one New Testament letter. Did they write materials that were blatantly diverse, contradictory and at odds one with the other?

In bitter sarcasm, Paul wrote, "...I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ...For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (II Cor. 11:2,4). Did Paul condone the idea of a man being a husband to many wives? Did he approve of preaching different ideas relative to Jesus? Did he agree that the brethren should receive different spirits? Would it be right to accept a preacher who presented another and different gospel? Such is absurd! This moronic mentality is what we

get from the liberal element!

When the apostle Paul preached, there were those who would pervert the Gospel of Christ and such perverters continue to be a curse to the cause of Christ to this day. In no uncertain terms, Paul warned, "...there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:7-8). To emphasize what he had just stated, Paul repeats the warning in verse 9. If the Holy Spirit had repeated the passage a thousand times, it matters not to self-willed men.

How many gospels are there? How many gospels did Paul preach? All the churches of Asia were subservient to the one Gospel (Gal. 1:2). Where does this place those liberals today to talk about "our brethren in other fellowships," or "our brethren who can say 'Jesus'?" A perverted Gospel offers a false hope to people.

Paul explained that he "...now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed" (Gal. 1:23). Some of the mamby-pamby, apostate, compromising, liberal preachers are now destroying the faith they once preached. Please consider that Paul preached THE faith. He did not waste his time nor jeopardize his soul by trying to be a pleaser of men (v.10).

The great system of faith can be preached by any honest, humble, God-fearing, sound and faithful Gospel preacher. This kind of preacher is deeply concerned with contending "for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). For hundreds of years, silly men have taken the liberty to change, pervert, twist and try to rewrite the system of faith and have substituted every fool notion that can be concocted.

What did the Holy Spirit mean when He said, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:4-5)? The modern clergy can wax eloquent in proclaiming a multiplicity of faiths. The men who pose as scholars can jump on the cultic cart and condone all kinds of diverse and different faiths — and ignorant church mem-

bers will approve and support such twaddle. Brethren think they have gotten so brilliant that they can extrapolate ONE into HUNDREDS!

There is **one faith** just as there is **one baptism**. I know how men have changed the "one baptism" and have presented a few others. Every cult, sect and denomination has its own peculiar and distinctive kind and purpose of baptism. Am I the chief of sinners when I plead for the "one faith" and the "one baptism?"

The Bible declares there is *one Lord* (Eph. 4:5). "...We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God..." (I Cor. 8:4-6).

Do you not get a feeling of sickening disgust when a heretic preacher traipses over the country and debates a few atheists who deny the existence of the one God, but the same fellow will stand on the podium in Nashville, Tennessee, and approve of a multiplicity of faiths and baptisms? Such is sick — sick indeed!

I know the dodge of the compromising characters who like to **guess** that we just cannot be expected to all agree and see the Bible alike. What is the proof? A bare guess holds far more importance to most people than the inspired Word of God.

When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt there were six hundred thousand men besides women and children. Every single, solitary one of those ancient people were to be in subjection to the law of God. How many people were blessed by failing to keep the law? As I recall, "...every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward" (Heb. 2:2). I want to think that people who live in the 21st century have as much sense as the ancient Hebrews, but I may be mistaken.

When Jesus prayed for his disciples, he prayed that they might be one and also that those who heard them might be one (John 17:20). The oneness for which Jesus prayed was that which characterized the Father and the Son (John 17:11, 21, 22 and 23).

A foolish, flimsy, broken crutch which is used by the heretics is that we are to be one in believing the "core

items" of the Gospel. Jesus did not say one word about a core gospel. The "core gospel," the "essentials," is but another damnable doctrine which some false teacher has concocted. I am not so stupid as to swallow such tripe. I at least try to prove my points and the reader has the freedom to reject what I write in toto.

There is perfect agreement between the Father and the Son (I John 5:7). But we are told by the liberal element (without any proof whatsoever) that the children of God can disagree on all sorts of Bible truths, and such will please God. Such babblers must be reading from the Cotton Patch Version!

Paul wrote a very plain and decisive statement to the brethren in Ephesus. The apostle stated that Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Eph. 2:15). There were the twain (or two) but such were too many. God desired one, so the twain ceased to exist in the mind of God.

What do we see today? There are hundreds — which make a mockery of the death of Christ. Yes, one can ridicule, make fun of, deprecate and belittle the strife, discord and division that exists in so many congregations. Such calumny does not mean that the sectarian cultic division is scriptural and right. In spite of all the clatter, it is still the truth that "There is **one faith**."

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705 Hillview Dr.
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Send us a change of address
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THE NEW TESTAMENT AND MASONRY

Glendon W. Cantrell, Sr.

Brethren need to know and be aware that the Masonic Lodge is more than just another civic club in our community. Masonry is widely known for several good deeds in which they are involved. The most noted one is the burn hospitals that provide care for victims without charge. We should appreciate any and all good that is done by everyone. However, we must recognize that just because someone does good does not mean that he is accepted by God (Matt. 7:21-23). Much good is done by those in the world and in the denominational world as well. When it comes to the truth regarding Masonry, we must not be beguiled into thinking them simply a social club. Masonry is indeed a religion. As such, we must stand against it as we should any denomination (Eph. 5:11; Rom. 16:17-18).

Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary, Volume II, p.1064 defines religion as: "A belief binding the spiritual nature to a supernatural being, as involving a feeling of dependence and responsibility, together with the feelings and practices which naturally flow from such a belief." It also defines religion as "any system of faith and worship."

Masonry is a false religion and in direct conflict with New Testament worship and, thus it is also in opposition to the Lord's church which we read about in the New Testament.

Please consider the following quotations from their own writer, Albert Pike, who served as Grand Commander from 1859-1891. His book was prepared for The supreme Council of the THIRTY-THIRD DEGREE (Mother Council of the World) for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States and Published by its authority. In this book, "Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Free Masonry," we read, "Masonry is a WORSHIP; but one in which all civilized men can unite ... it TRUSTS in God, and HOPES; it BELIEVES, like a child, and is HUMBLE" (page 526). "Masonry and Philosophy...have the same object, and propose to them-

selves the same end, the worship of the Grand Architect of the Universe" (page 325). "Masonry may rightfully claim to be called a religious institution" (page 618). "Masonry, around whose altars the Christian, the Hebrew, the Moslem, the Brahmin, the followers of Confucius and Zoroaster, can assemble as brethren and unite in prayer to the one God who is above all Baalim" (page 226).

In the Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, on page 474 we read, "Freemasonry is a religious institution, and hence its regulations inculcate the use of prayer (as a proper tribute of gratitude)."

These quotes from their own writers should suffice to show beyond doubt that Freemasonry is a religious institution. It is occultic, satanic and sensual in nature. It is an evil that must be removed from the church. Instead, congregations allow masons to lead in the services of the Lord. Masonry is incompatible with being a faithful Christian (II Cor. 6:14—7:1). I have friends who are members of the Masonic Lodge. Having spoken to them on this matter, I pray they will come out of it before it is too late.

The question that must be asked is. **Can a faithful Christian be a member of the Masonic Order?** Consider these thoughts:

1) Can one be a member of an organization that offers hope to men of all religions of the world? If so, one can be saved separate and apart from Christ. If this is true, and Masonry adheres to such a doctrine, there was no need for Christ to leave heaven, suffer and die the death He did. A faithful Christian cannot be a Mason IF the Masonic Order is another religious institution. God only authorized our Lord to build one religious organization — the church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4).

2) Can one be saved by being a good Mason only? If a faithful Christian can be saved in such a fashion, he can be saved without the blood of Christ. Not one drop of His blood was shed for any institution other than His church (Acts 20:28). Man's salva-

tion is in the Lord's church (Acts 2:47), thus salvation is not in the Lodge or the Masonic Order. If so, the church is unnecessary and wasn't worth the Lord shedding His blood.

3) Can one be a Mason and faithful Christian at the same time if a Mason has to call someone "**Worshipful Master**" (Matt. 23:8-10)? Masonry's Lodges have a Worshipful Master.

4) Can one be a faithful Christian and recognize some man other than our Lord as his Potentate? Christ is our only Potentate (I Tim. 6:15).

5) Can one be a faithful Christian and a Mason if he has to take meaningless oaths that go against God's teaching (Matt. 5:34-38)? Several oaths are involved in Masonry.

6) Can a faithful Christian go to heaven using another standard other than the New Testament? The standard of living for the Mason is his Blue Book, "The Masonic Monitor and Ceremonies." If being a faithful Mason to his book will get one to heaven, then we do not need the New Testament (James 1:21).

A faithful Christian abides by all the doctrine of Christ. No denomination or Lodge has the authority to change one "jot" or "tittle" of God's word (Gal. 1:6-9).

I am not debating the morality or good deeds of Masons in this article. The subject is doctrine. The truth of the matter is that Masonry and New Testament Christianity are not compatible. The Masonic Lodge, it's oaths, the rituals it requires and its promises of heavenly reward are totally foreign to the teachings of the New Testament. The only way to heaven is through the blood of Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 22:16) and we contact that blood by obedience to the Gospel (John 12:48; acts 2:38). There is no other organization or lodge in this world that can save us!

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SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE IS NOT ARROGANT

Douglas Hoff

By inspiration the Lord's servant Paul wrote, *"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."* (Eph. 4:14-15). It is always important to teach the Gospel in a loving way since precious souls are at stake. The apostle also taught that *"...the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth"* (II Tim. 2:24,25). Christians should always strive to present the Gospel in a way that avoids unnecessary upset or controversy. The truth is divisive enough without adding a bad attitude on the part of Christ's follower (Luke 12:51-53; John 10:19). Regrettably, some first century disciples preached Christ from envy and strife while others did so out of love (Phil. 1:15-17).

There are some who claim members of the Lord's church are arrogant when they present the message of salvation. Is it possible for a Christian to state the truth of the Gospel in a haughty manner? Yes. However, declaring there is only one true church Jesus will save is not a mark of arrogance. It is stating the truth that will save souls (Eph. 1:22,23; 5:23). When people believe one church is as good as another, there is no incentive to seek the true church. Is it arrogant to say a person must be a faithful member of the church of Christ to be saved? No, that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ (II Thess. 1:8). There are many in denominational circles who affirm such a statement is the height of arrogance. What is exceedingly strange is that some who hold this view are members of the Lord's church. The very people who ought to know the truth act as if they do not understand it. Maybe they

have been deceived into mouthing this popular, though fallacious opinion. Perhaps an appeal to reason can rectify the situation (Isa. 1:18).

Defining terms can help resolve misunderstandings for those who are willing to investigate (Acts 17:11-13). The word arrogant means "making claims or pretensions to superior importance or rights...." Some synonyms for arrogant are presumptuous, haughty and proud. Antonyms of this word include meek, modest and humble. Arrogance is defined as "offensive display of superiority or self-importance; overbearing pride."

Since proud is listed as a synonym for arrogant, let us consider its definition and then also see the shades of meaning among related terms. The word proud has two distinctly different connotations. One is a positive trait and means "feeling pleasure or satisfaction over something regarded as highly honorable or creditable to oneself." For example, a father can be proud of his son's achievements. The other connotation of proud is the negative sense which is condemned in the Bible as sinful. This definition means "having, proceeding from, or showing a high opinion of one's own dignity, importance, or superiority." The related words proud, arrogant and haughty reveal a belief in one's superiority.

These three words are distinguished from each other as follows. Proud implies lofty self-respect. Arrogant applies to overbearing behavior which arises from an exaggerated belief in one's importance. Haughty implies an often disdainful assumption of superiority over others.

God's word condemns the negative sense of pride as well as arrogance and haughtiness. Consider a few verses from the Bible on this subject. *"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall"* (Prov. 16:18). *"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil"* (I Tim 3:6). *"Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble"* (James 4:6). *"But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all*

such rejoicing is evil" (James 4:16).

The Bible plainly teaches Jesus never sinned (Heb. 4:15; I Peter 2:21,22; I John 3:5). Thus, he was never guilty of the sin of pride or arrogant boasting. Prophecy revealed the humble character of our king, *"Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass"* (Matt. 21:5). Our Lord said of himself, *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls"* (Matt. 11:29).

Since arrogance implies one is "making claims of superior importance," was Jesus arrogant when he said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6)? No. He was simply stating the exclusive truth, even though it offends many. As a spokesman for the Lord was Peter arrogant when he said, *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12)? No, though there are many who would accuse the apostle of being too narrow minded. Still, the Bible shows there is only one way to be saved and that is through Jesus Christ. Any other way is the way of eternal loss. This is not an arrogant claim of superior importance, it is God's revealed truth.

Was Paul arrogant when he said, *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism"* (Eph. 4:4,5)? Certainly not since it was the same writer who just ten verses later instructed Christians to speak the truth in love. Paul was not guilty of insolence when he pointed out the Gentiles were *"alienated from the life of God"* (Eph. 4:18). Instead, Paul was motivated by love for lost souls. He wanted the Gentiles to hear the Gospel that could save them (Rom. 11:13; I Tim. 2:7). Was Paul being arrogant saying Christians have salvation while the unconverted Gentiles did not? No. Read his words in Galatians 6:14,15 *"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. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Paul pointed out the Jew was no better than the Greek since all have sinned (Rom. 3:9,23).

What does it mean to speak the truth in love? Apparently, some have concluded it means never upsetting anyone. However, this is not in harmony with God's word. Jesus said things that offended some who heard him. A good example of this are the hard words Jesus spoke to the Pharisees (Matt. 15:1-11). *"Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying"* (Matt. 15:12)? Even some of Christ's disciples got upset and no longer walked with Him because of His teaching (John 6:60,61,66).

Speaking the truth in love means following Jesus' example. *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his com-*

mandments" (I John 5:3). We must love lost souls enough to confront them with their sin and doctrinal error just as our Lord did. The apostles had plenty of opposition from unbelieving Jews but Paul said, *"I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God"* (Acts 20:20,27). Failing to declare all of God's word to avoid controversy is not truly loving. It is cowardly.

Why might some contend it is arrogant to say there is only one true church? It is a common trait of the wicked to accuse the righteous. Ahab called Elijah the troubler of Israel when in fact it was the other way around (I Kings 18:17,18). One lost in sin usually does not want the light of truth exposing his dark deeds (John 3:19,20). Why did Cain murder Abel? *"Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous"* (I John 3:12). Only those who love the truth will

appreciate the courage and wisdom of another who will point out his sin (John 3:21; Prov. 9:8,9).

Accusing a person of being arrogant when he stands for the unique identity of the Lord's church makes one a judge of the heart. Who alone can fairly and accurately judge a person's heart? God can! *"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God"* (I Cor. 4:5). See also Jeremiah 11:20; Acts 17:31 and II Timothy 4:8. Sadly, emotions and friendships rather than God's word dictate some people's actions (Matt. 10:37,38). We must not be silenced by those who insist it is arrogant to say there is only one true church and that one must be a faithful member of it to be saved.

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THE BEST AND THE WORST COMES OUT

We have witnessed it during sporting events. The pressure mounts. All have the capacity to respond in a reasonable and humane manner to the reality that half of the players on the field and fans in the stands will be disappointed with the outcome. The character concealed beneath the helmet, shoulder pads, and pompom bursts forth for all to see, whether it be that deserving of applause or that which disgraces. The best and worst within man comes out. Certainly there are more serious areas in which we see these same principles played out on a regular basis.

A family is beset with crisis. How will family members respond? How one handles the less than enjoyable and assorted situations he/she finds herself/himself in can vary from heroic to criminal; from sacrificial to indulgent; from medal deserving to firing squad warranting.

We have seen it when a congregation of God's people faced turmoil. Selfishness will seek to take advan-

tage of the situation for less than honorable benefit, while others will go the second mile to avoid hindering the cause of Christ. Character comes out in times like these for all to see, both the best and the worst. Sadly it sometimes takes difficult times to manifest the true colors that if known sooner could have avoided much of the mess.

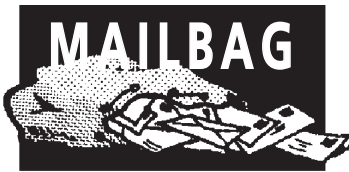
In the midst of the devastation and anguish, the loss of possessions and life in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we have witnessed these same qualities that separate the good from the bad — those who are a blessing to humanity and those who are a curse. On the one hand we see those who put their lives on the line to save someone they do not even know, to the other extreme of vandalism, rape, and wholesale mayhem. It is sad and sickening indeed, but typical when choices are there for the making. The very best and the very worst all arise out of the same difficult and demanding circumstances.

Hopefully, we will never have to

deal with what the Gulf Coast has faced and continues to face. What would you do if faced with such devastation, loss, hunger, thirst, and plain old frustration? Could we make a fairly accurate guess about that? If we lose our composure when it is raining at our tee time, would that not hint at a failure to hold up well if something really bad occurred? Jeremiah 12:5 asks the sobering questions, *"If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"*

Let us live each day doing our very best, living the very best, with conviction and character, then when things get rough we will just keep on the pace we've traveled all along.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

"Thank you brethren!!" ...**Jim Harrison, Anderson, IN.** "Thank you" ...**Tod & Janelle Goddard, Prairie City, SD.** "Thank you very much and I enjoy reading every edition" ...**Steffie Stewart, Riverview, MI.** "Please remove me from the mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*. I will continue to read and learn from it using the internet.

I have a shortcut on my screen that takes me to your great publication. My removal will save money for your paper and allow someone who does not have the internet to enjoy. May God continue to bless your work" ...**Steve Carmack, Ripley, TN.** [NOTE: Our web address is: www.seektheoldpaths.com]. "Thanks and keep up the great work!!" ...**Travis C. Phillips, Birmingham, AL.** "Recently I ran across a copy of STOP. It belonged to my mother who passed away in 1994. The copy dated back to September 1990 regarding music in the New Testament church. I really enjoyed it very much. I am a member of the Tylertown church of Christ. Please put me on your mailing list" ...**Gloria Boyd, Tylertown, MS.** "Thanks for my new STOP. I didn't want to put it down till all was read. Such good Bible truths. Don't see this kind of papers any more. So much twisted teachings and so sad. Please send me some extra copies to pass around. I pray they will be eye openers to some people I'm praying to see the truth. Keep up the good work" ...**Lillian Harrison, Gallipolis, OH.** "I pick up *Seek The Old Paths* where I attend church services, Mt. Olivet church of Christ, Greeneville, TN. I often put them in the beauty shop where I go. One man reads through them and requests that I bring them. He uses them in teaching. He and his wife are members of the Church of God. He teaches a class there and uses them to prepare his lessons" ...**Greeneville, TN.** "Thank you for publishing such great articles concerning our spiritual souls" ...**Dorothy Chism, Plumerville, AR.** "I am happy to send this check to help the excellent work with your publication. I appreciate the articles and the writers who stand up for the TRUTH. I am sorry some people ask to be removed from your mailing list. They are missing out on some of the best lessons available. Thank you for being there!" ...**Patsy V. Cox, El Paso, TX.** "Your publication is very informative concerning vital Bible soundness. I appreciate it beyond words and pray for it to reach good and honest hearts desiring truth!" ...**H. Weaver, Fayetteville, AR.** "Just finished browsing your website. I'm impressed. I'm still getting STOP via snail mail, but to save postage, you can delete my name, as I now read it on the net" ...**Toby Miller, Auburn, IN.** "Just a note to let you know that I have moved and I need you to please start sending it to my new address. Keep up the good work" ...**Dallas Jones, Decatur, AL.** "I am writing to say how much we enjoyed you when you were up at the Northwest church of Christ. Keep up the good work. I enjoy reading the paper" ...**Shirley Reaves, Red Boiling Springs, TN.** [NOTE: Thank you for your good note. I enjoyed preaching there and meeting the many good brethren, ...**editor — gmr**]. "Over the past several years, I have seen the daughters of elders, deacons and preachers wear mini skirts, spaghetti strap dresses, low cut tops, blouses that bare the shoulders, and skin tight jeans and sweaters to worship services on a regular basis. Some wear shorts in public that would have to be bikini bottoms to be any shorter. Some are cheerleaders. Some couple the sin of immodesty with the sin of lasciviousness by wearing strapless evening wear to the prom. These young women are looked to as examples due to the positions their fathers hold in the church. Honest but weak members of the church and novice Christians who sincerely want to reach heaven will probably never understand the importance of dressing according to the principles in God's word, as long as the families of elders, deacons, and preachers set such examples. My personal efforts in this battle have had little if any effect, but, your publications, especially in concert, can make the difference. Please, consider making this the year of the brotherhood publications' war on immodesty and nakedness in the church. The salvation of some elders, deacons, preachers, their families, and the Christians who follow their examples is at stake" ...**Michael S. Hatley Brookland, AR.** "Please remove my name and address from your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you" ...**David Smith, Cobden, IL.** "I was recently discussing music as it pertains to the New Testament (Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16-17) with a young brother in the church. He seems to be struggling with humming and using the voice to sound like mechanical instruments in supporting the songs. I have communicated to him

the scriptures state we are teaching one another in songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts unto the Lord. I have conveyed to him that there's really no teaching in humming and using the voice as mechanical instrument in support of the song" ...**Andre Washington, TX.** [NOTE: You've pretty much described the situation to this young brother already. I certainly agree with what you have said. The Bible says "SING." Humming is not singing. Making sounds with the mouth is not singing. Clapping, foot stomping, swaying, is not singing. Remind him that the burden of Scriptural proof is upon him since he is the one contending for humming and making sounds. If such is authorized, then he must be able to point to the passage(s) that authorizes it (while rightly dividing the word). Singing involves WORDS — words which can be understood. Words communicate thoughts. Humming does not communicate. Vocal sounds do not communicate. Singing DOES communicate. The Scriptures tell us to TEACH and ADMONISH with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. This can only be done through WORDS. Humming does not involve words. Making sounds does not involve words. Did God tell Cornelius that Peter would come and hum or make vocal sounds to him so that he would know what the will of the Lord was? Certainly not! He told him Peter would come and tell him WORDS so he could be saved (Acts 11:14). Men may think humming and making noises sounds good. And, they may think it draws them closer to God, but it doesn't matter what man thinks or likes. It's what God likes that counts. What did God tell us to do? Sing, hum or make noises? The Bible answer is SING, ...**editor, gmr**]. "Keep up the good work with STOP. We enjoy it very much. We pray for the church there and you daily. May God bless you in all your efforts in Christ" ...**Bill & Gladys Glenn, Brandon, MS.** "Keep up the good work" ...**Wanda Clements, Sun City, AZ.** "Thank you and God bless" ...**Jennifer D'Entremont, Manchester, NH.** "We pray you will have a long and useful life to preach and teach the true Gospel" ...**Ira J. Bowman, Ringgold, GA.**

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

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