

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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They're On A "Journey Together" .. TO DESTRUCTION!

O.B. Porterfield

Many times the membership does not study the Word of God and simply doesn't see the error. Some who know what's right don't have the backbone to stand for the Truth and defend it. Some don't want to offend anyone and try to keep everyone happy. Faithful members of the church of Christ must speak up, loudly and clearly, and support others who do the same.

More members of the church of Christ have drifted or totally abandoned the Truth than we would care to admit. We continue to hear of unscriptural practices and doctrines being taught in congregations of the Lord's church.

It wasn't with a little amazement, though not totally surprising, to see a few bulletins of the local churches of Christ carry an announcement of a service at the local Methodist Church. Where can that lead? Read the following article entitled "Historic Event" from a recent North Alabama newspaper to see just how far some of our brethren have gone. We are reprinting the article in its entirety so there can be no misunderstanding or thought of misrepresentation. I am embarrassed as a member of the Lord's church to expose such shameful behavior.

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HISTORIC EVENT *Church of Christ, Methodist church hold joint meeting*

FLORENCE – A joint celebration of worship by Magnolia Church of Christ and North Wood United Methodist Church last Sunday night is considered a historic occasion, say ministers Joe VanDyke, Church of Christ, and the Rev. Stanley Clark, Methodist.

Attendance was estimated at approximately 500 with numerous chairs added to increase the seating capacity of the pews in the sanctuary at the Methodist church.

"We're not here together tonight to say that we agree on everything there is to discuss," VanDyke said in his sermon. "We're here to say that there's something greater that we share in common than anything that would divide us."

ON JOURNEY TOGETHER

VanDyke mentioned the greater things as including the message of salvation, the death of Jesus on the cross, the resurrection and the commandments to love the Lord God with all our might and to love our neighbor as ourselves. The lesser things include doctrine.

"We're on a journey together," he told the congregation at one point in his sermon. "The Church of Christ is not on a journey by itself. Neither is the Methodist. One of the strange things about being on a journey with God – when you link yourself with God – he chooses those who will travel with you. We'd like to pick our fellow travelers, but God tells us he will do the choosing."

Referring to Ephesians 4, VanDyke talked about Paul's message to be diligent in one body and one spirit.

"It seems that Paul was telling us there are things of great impor-

tance and things of lesser importance," he said, "and if you want to talk about preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, you'll have to put yourself in override and come over some of those differences and focus on those things that you hold in common."

VanDyke said that one purpose of the joint meeting was to affirm, not only for the church members to "see, hear and enjoy," but for the entire Shoals community.

"There are people in the Shoals area who are concerned with moral, uprightly and godly living and walking in the pathway of the Lord," he said, "and these people are able to lay aside what the world views and even what some of us view, as pettiness and say there's something greater and more crucial at stake than those things that divide us."

VANDYKE: MANY SEE DIVISION

VanDyke said he believes that in the Shoals area of 150,000 people, many see division over things they don't even understand when they look at the religious world.

"There are people who are wondering how this meeting of the Church of Christ and the Methodist is coming out tonight, but there are also people who couldn't care less," he said. He said there are people who need to understand that there is a God in heaven who sent his son, Jesus into world.

"These people need to know that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the Shoals and they need to see a religious world united around that event," VanDyke said.

"The message we should take to the Shoals is 'Hey, look at us don't listen to us, but look at who lives in us and look at the unity and strength and power that can come into an individual's life and a body of people because they say, 'I love God with all my heart, soul and strength and my neighbor as myself.' Those things are the sum and substance of all the others – everything else depends on all of this."

Then VanDyke quoted Jesus, "By this will all men know you are my disciples, by the love you have for one another."

VanDyke said that his theory is this: "If religious fellowships can focus on the supreme, that which they hold highest in common, and believe in God through his son, there will be no time to notice those things that have caused differences and divisions in the past."

He stressed that the answer the Shoals area is looking for is the message of salvation borne in Jesus on the cross and the power of the resurrection with the empty tomb standing as a silent witness today that God is alive and that his spirit dwells in those who are his people.

VanDyke said that prior to the meeting, some members of Magnolia Church were talking about times in their young life when various churches held meetings together.

"We're calling it an historic meeting, yet it's not really that," he said. He added that his own father, a minister, had carried his family to different churches on some occasions.

"We're not here to point a finger, but something happened in between times you and I were kids," he said. "There was some stiffness that developed in the religious world and we began to focus on those things that divide us rather than on things that unite us."

BOTH CHURCHES TAKE PART

Members of both churches took part in conducting the service. The organ was played during singing of half of the hymns and the other half were sung without musical accompaniment, in respect to the traditions of the denominations.

Song leaders were Donald Kennedy, North Wood Church; Glenn Rikard, Lanny Wright, Magnolia.

Those reading scripture and offering prayers included Pete Glover, Frank Sharp, North Wood,

and Raymond Isbell, Gary Shannon, Billy Ray Warren, Magnolia.

Lindon Ezell, chairman, Magnolia administrative committee, said members of the Church of Christ had parking problems when they began meeting in the Little Angel kindergarten building across from North Wood Methodist some five months ago.

"We used to stand in front of the building and say, 'That's sure a nice parking lot the Methodists have.' Then we were delighted when you offered to let us share it. We have come tonight to thank you for letting us use your parking lot," Ezell said.

Clark, the son of a minister, presented his personal testimony, telling of his Christian walk that began when he was a child. He said that the meeting was the first annual North Wood Methodist-Magnolia Church of Christ gathering.

The service closed with the singing of "Blest Be the Tie that Binds" and "I Love you with the Love of the Lord."

After the meeting, refreshments and fellowship were enjoyed by the two congregations.

Marie Wright, the mother of a Methodist minister and member of North Wood Church, said, "I think this was a wonderful service. I believe all Christians should love each other and be able to worship together. After all, we are all trying to do what our savior wants us to do. I praise the Lord that he loves each of us and has no favorites."

A young visitor from College Church of Christ, Perry Cox, said, "This is a monumental occasion. I enjoyed it tremendously. To have a church put focus on the positive in worship to God is an awesome thing."

By Lucille Prince, Staff Writer (Times Daily, Sept. 25, 1993, Florence, Alabama. Page 4B. Used by permission.)

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After you have read the article, consider the following...

Notice that brother VanDyke says, "We're here to say that

there's something greater that we share in common than anything that would divide us." Now, let's see about that.

The Methodist church teaches the unscriptural notion that the church is composed of many branches of which the Methodist Church is one. Jesus promised to build only His church (Matt. 16:18). The saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47). There is only one body (Eph. 4:4). The body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23). *"But there are now many members, yet but one body"* (I Cor. 12:20). The church of Christ can be read of in the Bible (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16). Mention of the Methodist Church cannot be found anywhere in the Bible!

Faithful members of the church of Christ do not agree with the Methodist Church's message of salvation. The Bible plainly teaches that the alien sinner must hear the Word (Rom. 10:17); believe it (Heb. 11:6); repent of sins (Luke 13:3); make the good confession (Acts 8:37); and be baptized, immersed, in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 8:38; Mark 16:15-16). Can you name a single congregation of the Methodist Church that teaches the Bible plan of salvation?

Brother VanDyke said that God chooses those who will travel with you. That's exactly right... and He condemns division as well. Study the prayer of our Lord in John 17:20-21 and His words in Matt. 15:13. How can we travel together with Methodists when we consider the following (Amos 3:3):

1. Methodism was founded by John Wesley. The church of Christ was founded by Christ.

2. The Methodists teach that it makes no difference as to what name church members wear. The Bible doesn't agree. The new name was prophesied to be given when salvation went out from Jerusalem and the Gentiles saw His righteousness (Isa. 62:1-2).

The new name, Christian... not Methodist, was given in Acts 11:26. King Agrippa knew the name... *"Christian"* (Acts 26:28). Consider also I Peter 4:16 and Acts 4:12.

3. The Methodists teach that the church is to be governed by a General Conference which has full power to make rules and regulations for the church. The New Testament church is purely congregational in its form of government. A plurality of elders oversees the local congregation. Never does an elder oversee a plurality of congregations (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5). It is not the duty of the church to make laws but to obey the laws given by the Head of the church... Christ (Col. 1:18; Matt. 28:18). The Methodists don't know what they are going to be called on to believe in the future because their Discipline is changed at different times. The Bible, though, remains the same (Matt. 24:35).

4. The Methodists teach that the officers of the church are Presiding Elders, Circuit Riders, Class Leaders, Stewards, etc. The New Testament names only two classes of church officers over the local congregation (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8; I Peter 5:2).

5. The Methodists teach that man is justified by faith only. Consider what the Bible teaches in James 2:17; 2:19; 2:24.

6. The Methodists teach that baptism is not essential to salvation. Look at what the Bible teaches in Acts 2:38; I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; I Peter 3:21; Mark 16:15-16. Remember that we must obey Christ in order to be saved (Heb. 5:8-9).

7. The Methodists teach three modes of baptism: sprinkling, pouring and immersion. The Bible teaches only one mode of baptism - immersion (Eph. 4:5).

8. The Methodists teach that it is not necessary to observe the Lord's Supper each week. They commune once each quarter.

Read Acts 2:42 and Acts 20:7.

No, the Methodist Church and the church of Christ are not on a "journey together." Brother VanDyke needs to read and obey Ephesians 5:11 which says, *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."*

Brother VanDyke mentions that "among the greater things is the commandment to love the Lord God." Do you suppose that he is even aware of I John 5:3, *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous."*

Notice that brother VanDyke refers to Paul's message to be diligent in one body. He evidently isn't aware of Eph. 1:22-23 that teaches that the body is the church. There is only one true church. It is not the Methodist Church because it cannot be read of in all the Bible and does not exist by divine authority. It will be rooted up according to Matt. 15:13 and not one drop of the precious blood of our Lord was shed to purchase this human denomination. Brother VanDyke would have us to overlook the differences that exist between the true church and man made churches. Well, brothers and sisters, God hasn't given him, you or me the authority to do so. The things that divide the religious world are not petty in the sight of God, they are an abomination!

Brother VanDyke says that "these people need to know that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the Shoals and they need to see a religious world united around that event." Well, we surely can't unite until we agree on a common standard of authority. Faithful members of the Lord's church agree that the Bible is the only authority while the Methodists must use their Discipline. If they were to discard their Discipline, shed their denominational trappings, and accept the Bible as the only

authority, then we would have a basis for unity as Christians only!

Brother VanDyke mentions that various churches have had meetings together in the past. He is evidently referring to meetings of churches of Christ with denominational churches. I can also remember two congregations of the church of Christ in different places that met with denominational churches and both were characteristically weak in Bible knowledge and religious conviction. Too often members and so-called gospel preachers of such congregations ignorantly have a greater desire to please men than to please God.

Notice that the article reports

that they used the instrument with some songs and sung others acapella. It doesn't seem that either side has any conviction on the issue of using the instrument in worship, do they?

When those who call themselves gospel preachers go to outlandish denominational churches such as the Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago to learn how to build the Lord's church, you can readily see where some of "our" preachers are leading the people today.

Why is this shameful behavior allowed to go on? Many times the membership does not study the Word of God and simply doesn't see the error. Some who know what's right don't have the

backbone to stand for the Truth and defend it. Some don't want to offend anyone and try to keep everyone happy.

Those faithful members of the church of Christ must speak up, loudly and clearly, and support others who do the same.

While I don't personally know brother VanDyke and have no intention of making a personal attack, I do know that the activity reported in this article is sad, sinful, ridiculous, disgusting and an embarrassment to the Lord's church. I hope he has the wisdom to repent and make the effort to put those he has led astray back on the right path.

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ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO AGREE TO DISAGREE

Terry Cole

On September 19, 1993, a shocking thing happened in the Shoals area of Northwest Alabama. The members of the newly formed Magnolia Church of Christ in Florence, Alabama had a joint worship service with the North Wood United Methodist Church. This group had recently split off from the Chisholm Hills Church of Christ, lead by their preacher, Joe Vandyke. The churches of Christ in this area are astounded and deeply grieved by these developments. This article is written because of the care of all the churches in this area (II Cor. 11:28) and also for the defense of the gospel (Phil. 1:17). It is not written in the spirit of ill-will, envy, or hatred, but to simply "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

UNION OR UNITY?

To begin with, we need to

study two terms: unity and union. **Unity** implies a oneness; a condition of harmony. **Union** implies a thorough integration. An act of uniting or joining two or more things into one. Something formed by a combining or coalition of members.

We believe the Magnolia Church of Christ is attempting to form a *union* with the North Wood Methodist Church by agreeing to disagree on doctrinal matters. The following will show reasons why unions as these are in opposition to Biblical teaching.

THE WRONG AUTHORITY BY WHICH MEN ESTABLISH UNITY

The **Bible** is the only standard of authority established by God to be the criterion or test by which we attain unity. Sadly, there are many false standards that men use:

1. Some people use their own feeling to establish a foundation for unity. The Bible says, "...*there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Prov. 16:25).

2. Some people regard their own conscience as the true objective standard. Paul said, "*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin*" (Rom. 14:23). This means that whatever we do must be done with the belief (conviction) that it is acceptable to God. That is, whatever we do is sinful for us to do unless it is directed "by faith." It is sinful to do something without a clear conscience. However, our conscience does not tell us what truth is. We must learn the truth (from the Bible) to educate our conscience (John 6:44-45; 8:32). The Bible makes it clear that one can live "*in all good conscience*" (Acts 23:1), while yet being "chief of sinners" (I Tim. 1:15). Therefore, our conscience is not the

standard. The Bible is the standard.

3. Some people hold to dreams, visions, or still small voices as the standard. In Galatians 1:8 the apostle Paul says, *“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.”*

4. Some people believe that common sense is the objective standard. They hold that one can just “figure out by rational thought” what to do without the Bible. In Jeremiah 10:23 the prophet said, *“...the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”* The writer of Proverbs makes it clear that men are not to lean on their own understanding, but are to trust in the Lord with all their hearts (Prov. 3:5-6).

5. Some people believe that formal creeds are the standard. Many religious groups publish books which set forth the official positions of the respective group on various religious questions. To some people these creedal statements constitute the standard. The Bible should be our standard. Peter tells us, *“...according to his divine power he hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness”* (II Peter 1:3). Paul speaks to young Timothy by saying, *“all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (sound), for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* (II Tim. 3:16-17). God’s word will judge us (John 12:48), not a creed book. Study the book which matters (II Tim. 2:15)!

THE TRUE STANDARD BY WHICH WE ESTABLISH UNITY

Now that we have examined the false standards, let us now

take a look at the true standard for establishing unity. Brother Roy Deaver calls Ephesians 4:1-6, God’s “One-derful” plan. This is the plan for unity set forth by God. There are seven pillars of unity shown here. Paul said in I Timothy 3:15 that the church of the living God is the pillar (support), and ground (preserver), of the truth.

Paul says in Ephesians 4:1-6, *“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is **one body**, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in **one hope** of your calling; **One Lord**, **one faith**, **one baptism**, **One God** and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”*

Please observe what these seven pillars are:

1. **One body** — This is the unity of organization. The organization which has been established is the body of Christ, which is the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; I Cor. 12:12-14).

2. **One Spirit** — This is the unity of revelation. We have all received the same revelation, whether we be white or black, rich or poor. This revelation has not been given to only a select group. Every religious group on earth has access to it! One only needs to open the pages of inspiration. *“...Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost...”* (II Peter 1:21; II Tim. 3:16-17; John 6:63).

3. **One hope** — This is the unity of aim. This aim is the hope of heaven as our eternal home. *“...Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul”* (Heb. 6:19; Titus 1:2; Rom. 8:24-25).

4. **One Lord** — This is the unity of authority. All who are in the body of Christ submit to the Lord’s authority. *“All power*

(authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth...” (Matt. 28:18; Luke 6:46). Matthew 21:23 says, *“...By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?”* The source of this authority is God and the standard is His Word!

5. **One faith** — This is the unity of teaching and doctrine. *“Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3; I Tim. 4:16; II John 9-11). We can only teach people what has already been delivered unto the saints by inspiration.

6. **One baptism** — This is the unity of practice. *“...Buried with him in baptism...”* (Col. 2:12-13; Rom. 6:1-6, 17,18; Gal. 3:26-27; Acts 2:38). This unity demands immersion or burial, not pouring or sprinkling!

7. **One God** — This is the unity of worship. *“...God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24). We cannot create our own worship to please ourselves (Acts 7:41; Rev. 4:11).

These seven “ones” constitute the unity that God planned for believers to have and that Christ prayed for in John 17:20-24. The first century church practiced this unity in Acts 4:32 and the apostle Paul commanded it in Romans 12:4-5; I Cor. 1:10-13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 4:1-6; Phil. 2:2; Col. 3:15; I Thess. 4:9. Peter also commanded it in I Peter 3:8 along with John in II John 9-11.

CONCLUSION

These verses all condemn what took place September 19th at the building owned by the North Wood United Methodist Church. Do they speak the same things as the Magnolia Church of Christ? Are they all perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment? Some hymns were sung in that joint

(Continued on page 7)

ANOTHER ATTEMPT...

What Baptism In Florence, Alabama?

Glenn Colley

Every week it seems something comes to my attention about brethren from one area or another, who are buying in to the liberal ideas which are so popular today. Without question it's the "In" thing to do.

When people decide to adopt these liberal positions they almost always criticize those of us who are "traditional" enough as to still teach against the system of denominationalism, and who preach the oneness of the church we read about in our Bibles. They gradually see the church of Christ as equal with denominations and argue that we should unite with them based on our common ground, while stifling any doctrines on which we differ.

A few weeks ago in Florence, Alabama the recently formed Magnolia Church of Christ united in a first annual joint worship service with their neighboring North Wood United Methodist Church. The newspaper headline read, "Historic event; Church of Christ, Methodist church hold joint meeting." Joe Vandyke, the preacher from the Magnolia church of Christ said in his sermon that his theory is this: "If religious fellowships can focus on the supreme, that which they hold highest in common, and believe in God through His Son, there will be no time to notice those things that have caused differences and divisions in the past." These people are under strong delusion.

Consider please that one of those "things that have caused differences and divisions in the past," which we expect to have, "no time to notice," is the *mode of baptism*, and the question of *whether baptism is essential to salvation or not!* Folks, while this is not the only problem with uniting with our neighboring denominations as some are pushing to do, this is

critical and fundamental. THIS IS A "PEARLY GATES" QUESTION! Have you ever heard of a "pastor" in the aforementioned denomination who taught or practiced baptism for the remission of sins? Have you ever heard of one who would renounce infant baptism as unscriptural and worthless? I have not. The apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:5, "*There is one baptism....*" Which baptism will these people practice when they unite with their neighbors? Suppose someone had come to the "Historic" worship service in Florence wanting to be saved and asking how. What would our brother have told that man? I tell you this: He could not have told the man the truth and continued the service, because he would contradict his new brethren's doctrine on salvation!

Let us commit to heart what the Bible says about salvation, and it's irrevocable connection to baptism:

- Baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

- People must believe and be baptized to be saved. (Therefore infants are not suitable candidates for baptism) (Mark 16:16).

- Baptism is immersion in water (Acts 8:38-39; Rom. 6:4-5).

- We are baptized into Christ's death (Rom. 6:3).

- Our sins are washed away when we are baptized (Acts 22:16). They are washed away in his blood (Rev. 1:5).

- The way one gets "into Christ" is by baptism (Gal. 3:27).

- "*Baptism doth also now save us...*" (I Peter 3:21). Friends, plainly speaking, one cannot be saved without being baptized according to the scriptures. Man's baptism will not do! Some are saying that any baptism, provided the person wants at the time to please God, will be acceptable. Simple consid-

eration will show that is not true. The Holy Scriptures teach that there is one baptism, and shows us that baptism is essential to our salvation. Almost all denominational churches today believe, teach, and practice a baptism which has, according to them, NOTHING to do with a person's salvation! If you want to know whether their baptism is from the Bible, ask one of their preachers to describe it to you, and then compare it with the Bible.

We all enjoy the sweet thoughts of all churches' uniting into one body. No one desires that more than I do. But to compromise the very plan of salvation to have unity is to take steps toward the certain loss of people's souls. Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

The preacher said, "There will be no time to notice those things which have caused differences and divisions in the past." What he meant was, "We will be so busy saying, Lord, Lord that we won't have time to be concerned about doing the will of the Father." Brethren, may it be our fervent prayer that we will ALWAYS make the time to notice the differences like those concerning the precious plan of salvation.

In case you're wondering, according to the newspaper, "Members of both churches took part in conducting the service. The organ was played during singing of half of the hymns and the other half were sung without musical accompaniment, in respect to the traditions of the denominations. ... The service closed with the singing of 'Blest Be The Tie That Binds'."

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ENEMIES OF THE CROSS

Melvin Elliott

Are the real enemies of the cause of Christ today the rank heretics? I really don't think so, although they are enemies to be sure and are causing serious problems. However, it is my opinion that the majority of the church will yet accept the real beliefs of men like Rubel Shelly, Mike Cope, Marvin Phillips, etc. Our real problem is the rather sizeable group who have accepted the philosophy of liberalism. For the most part these still accept and teach most of the truth but they are quick to brand us for exposing the doctrinal error of others as critical, hard, unloving, judgmental, keepers of orthodoxy and witch hunters. Such individuals have accepted the philosophy of liberalism.

These are the people who say we have "misunderstood" the false teacher and we ought to "love" them and give them a chance to study more while permitting them to continue teaching their error. These are the ones who want only "positive preaching" and usually misapply Matthew 18:15 and, of course, would never think of using verses sixteen and seventeen even in their misapplied view. They are the ones duped by the philosophy of liberalism to "love everybody" and will not allow the truth preached to the extent of exposing false teachers among us.

It is this group, of which most congregations have at least some, rather than the rank heretics who are responsible for firing good preachers and teachers. These are the ones who condemn us while saying to us it is wrong to condemn false doctrine. Of course, they will ignore the doctrinal problem by saying we "have something personally against" those whom we expose.

It is certainly true of those deceived into accepting this liberal philosophy that they are losing their doctrinal soundness step by step. However, few, if any, will meet in a straightforward doctrinal discussion but want to attack us on their trumped up charge of "attitude of judgmentalness." But it never occurs to them that they criticize us for criticizing and judge us for judging, not to mention their direct responsibility for the "moving on" of most sound preachers. If the elders are not of this persuasion, nevertheless, this group will eventually get their way. By constant pressure, underhanded methods, etc., they make life so miserable for both good elders and preachers that they succeed in finally convincing the elders to move the preacher or else he gets a chance and gets out. But the fact remains, this liberal philosophy will have its way or ruin both congregation and preacher in the process.

Somehow we must get people to see the serious error and even *viciousness* of this liberal philosophy. If they do not, and soon, then doctrinal soundness will be a thing of the past in many if not most places. Already, "doctrine" is being placed in the background and we don't hear any teaching from this group that "*becomes sound doctrine*" (Titus 2:1). Further, they are forced to defend even the rank heretic because of their captivation by this liberal philosophy rather than "*charge some that they teach no other doctrine*" (I Tim. 1:3). The end result of all this will be their complete forsaking "*...the form of sound words...*" (II Tim. 1:13). At this point, apostasy will have matured and the church will have been brought down to a denomination among denominations.

It is likely that it is already

too late for many, but hopefully some will be caused to see the insidiousness of liberal philosophy before they are hopelessly entangled therein. Hopefully, the church will again, "*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee*" (I Tim. 4:16).

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ANOTHER ATTEMPT...

(Continued from page 5)

service with the accompaniment of an organ and some were not, in order to please all persons present. Paul said in I Corinthians 1:10-13 and again in 14:15 that "*God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints*" (I Cor. 14:33).

With much sorrow we declare the Magnolia Church of Christ along with it's minister, Joe Vandyke to be in grave error and out of harmony with God's Word. Our prayer is that they will someday return to their first love (Rev. 2:4-5) and be restored to the fellowship of the church of our Lord. But as of present I ask; "*...can two walk together except they be agreed*" (Amos 3:3)?

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“WE NEED TO CHANGE”

Darrell E. Beard

Some among us are calling for a change in order to appeal to the “baby-boomers” and their children — the “baby-busters” who have found “church” rather boring and dull. The poor things hate “tradition” and are looking for creativity, high quality, sincerity, and relevance in the assembly. They opine that we must spice things up a bit (maybe quite a bit) and accommodate ourselves to meet their “felt needs” and desires.

While some say we should not sacrifice doctrine or decency in this needed change, others are open to most any activity or measure which will add excitement, pleasure, and interest to the assembly. Thus, we see liberal brethren experimenting with a number of things to bring in the crowds and fill the pews.

It is interesting that the denominations here and abroad are also facing this appeal. An article in a recent Daily Journal (our area newspaper) told of a young African woman returning for a visit to her denominational church in Ghana early this summer. She “discovered that reaching out to young people is becoming a musical process. Danceable hymns catch youthful ears...,” she reported. Although the old established denominations used to look upon “churches that incorporated dance, lively music, hand-clapping, and musical instruments more common in dance halls...,” she found that her old home town denomination was not the same. The order of service started in the traditional way, but when it came time for the offering, “a brass band struck up, the congregation...sprang to life, and...danced down the aisles to vernacular hymns to drop the offering before the altar.”

Is something like this going to be the pattern for the “needed” change among us? Some have forgotten, while others have rejected, the fact that there is a Bible pattern for the worship and praise of God. Worship is to please *God*, not man. It is not the Scriptural standard which needs to be changed to please man, but man must change to conform to the Bible pattern. Boomers, busters, and just plain human beings must change their minds, attitudes, convictions, and lives in order to please God. Surely, no one is opposed to changing mere custom in order to make worship more Scriptural and effective. There are probably improvements which can be made in the quality of leadership and congregational participation in the five acts of worship. But, we don’t need to “change the truth of God into a lie” (Rom. 1:25). We should urge people to forget about selfishly desiring to please themselves and devote themselves to worshipping God in spirit and in truth, as He seeks (John 4:23-24).

It is the sinner who needs to change into a saint and the saint who needs to change his thoughts and opinions into the things authorized in the Bible. Let us not expect the church to enter into a theatrical endeavor and present the best show in town on Sunday.

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“Please take my name off your mailing list. When you stand before God at the judgment day, don’t you think that God will be more pleased with you if you would put out a paper teaching that Jesus is the way to heaven, instead of

putting out a paper with such ugly criticism of other pastors? ...Cayce, SC. [Editor’s Note: It’s amazing how many people have no idea what the Lord’s church is all about. Teaching the lost is only a part of God’s overall plan of salvation. Reproving, rebuking and exhorting — instructing the saved to continue in the “old paths” is also a part (2 Tim. 4:2; Jude 3; Titus 1:13; 2:1; 2 Peter 1:12). It is to this latter part that **Seek The Old Paths** is dedicated. See the article entitled “Occasional Criticism” in the February, 1993, issue and the article “What Is The Church All About?” in the Jan. 1993 issue.] “Within the past week I have received my first copy of **Seek The Old Paths** and I wish to thank you for it very much. Please send the May 1993 issue to our preacher” ...Elmira, NY.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The primary focus of this issue is to expose the infamous practice and liberalism of the recently formed “Magnolia Church of Christ” in Florence, Alabama. Their joint meeting with the Methodist Church is where so many others among us are heading in their present apostasy from the faith. We pray they will open their eyes and see where they are heading before it’s too late. We commend the efforts of faithful brethren for exposing this heresy.

Seek The Old Paths is a publication of the **East Corinth Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is mailed free upon request. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3; II Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:1; II Peter 1:12.

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