

Seek The Old Paths

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

Vol. 7, No. 12

December 1996

Buddy Bell Returns To Montgomery, Alabama!

NOTE: What follows, appeared in the bulletin of the Seibles Road Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama, dated November 3, 1996. It was of such tremendous value that we are reprinting it here. — Editor

It is with a great deal of sadness that I report that **BUDDY BELL** has moved from Pensacola, Florida to Montgomery. He is now the minister of the **Landmark church of Christ**.

Our readers may remember that in 1994 we wrote about brother **BELL** and **JOE BEAM** coming to Montgomery to speak on Faulkner University's "Focus." Many protested their being on the program, even the Bible Department of the University, but to no avail.

Read and consider the following three letters made public by brother **RAY DUTTON**, a recent member of the Landmark congregation, which chronicle his efforts to investigate and arrive at the truth. You can see the reaction he received when trying to deal with this problem as the Bible directs. Every congregation needs a man like Ray Dutton in their membership. He is to be commended for his efforts to try to correct this situation.

I have some very close relationships at Landmark and find no pleasure in making this exposure. I cannot remain true to the old paths, however, and remain silent about

this potential tragedy in Montgomery. We will have more on this issue in upcoming bulletins and what it means to the church in Montgomery. I have written a letter to brother Bell with some pointed, direct questions regarding his position on these matters and have not to date received his response.

Please pray that the elders will have a change of heart. Please pray that the membership will not tolerate this unscriptural action. Please remember brother Dutton and his family in your prayers. It would be great if all faithful members would write him a note or letter of encouragement. This is a tragic, serious situation, brethren. — *O. B. Porterfield*

To: The Elders of the Landmark church of Christ
From: Ray Dutton
Date: September 25, 1996

Brethren, you are the shepherds of my soul, and I come to you begging you for your spiritual guidance in one of the darkest hours of my life. My soul aches with a burden I am bearing. Because of it, I cannot sleep. I cannot rest. I feel like my soul is being torn apart.

I wanted to come and just talk to you all about this situation, but honestly, I was afraid that I would be too emotional to talk about it the way that I should. Therefore, I apologize for having to put my thoughts

in writing, but I did not want you to misunderstand anything I am about to tell you.

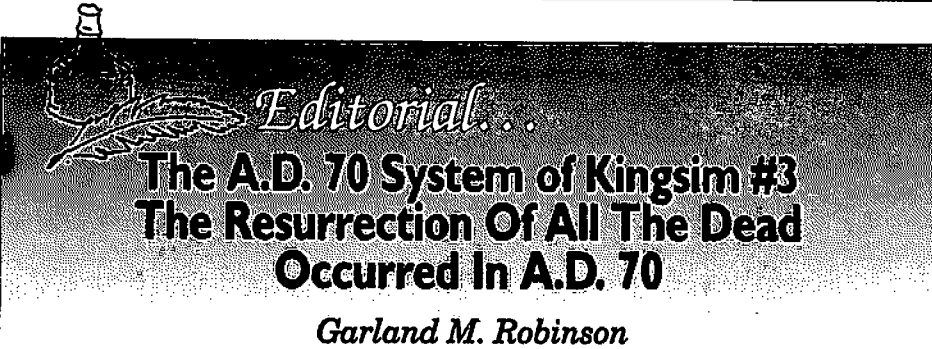
Recently, I became very upset about the scheduling of a known false teacher to speak to our young people. Some of you thought I overreacted to the situation. Maybe you were right. Maybe that kind of thing should not upset me, but it did. Maybe I have just become too sensitive about speakers we have been inviting to Landmark.

When you made the announcement that you had asked Buddy Bell to come to Landmark, I did my best not to over-react. Though I was well aware that Buddy had a reputation for keeping company with a number of known false teachers, I had hoped that he was *personally* committed to the truth of God. Many of my brothers and sisters, here and in other congregations, came to me to ask me what I thought. I asked them to be patient and not jump to any conclusions. I promised them that I would talk with Buddy and then let them know what he said. After Buddy officially began his work with us on September 15, I met with him the following Tuesday.

Let me assure you, brethren, that I have no ill will in my heart against Buddy. On the contrary, I love him and want nothing but the best for him and his good family. Buddy, seems to be a very sincere

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Buddy Bell Returns...



Editorial...
The A.D. 70 System of Kingism #3
The Resurrection Of All The Dead
Occurred In A.D. 70
 Garland M. Robinson

"The author sincerely believes that the general resurrection belongs to the same time and event as given to the coming of Christ, the judgment, end of the world, and receiving of the eternal kingdom." "This text deals with spiritual, not physical death, which is fairly evident from the context. The quickening power of God and Christ (John 5:19-23) has to do with spiritual regeneration." (Max King, Spirit of Prophecy, pp.212,219)

The teaching of Kingism says that the references to the resurrection in the New Testament have to do with a spiritual resurrection and not a resurrection of the body. Their view is that the church of Christ which began on Pentecost (33 A.D.), was stifled, repressed, restrained by the Old Law of Moses. The Lord's church, they say, ran concurrently with the Law of Moses until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. At that time, the body of the church was "resurrected" (in a spiritual sense) from the shackles of Judaism and received in its full glory and power. Therefore, references to the resurrection have to do with the spiritual resurrection of Christianity.

Again, with this teaching comes the immediate question, "If the resurrection of all the dead occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem, then where are they now and what are we that are alive doing here? Why are the grave yards still full and men around the world continue, day by day, to populate them even more?" Good questions!

The Holy, inspired Scriptures, easily refutes this wild and reckless doctrine. Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which *all that are in the graves* shall hear his voice, ²⁹And shall come

forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). As per Kingism, this is a reference to the church under the persecuting domination of Judaism. But, this Scripture speaks of "all" that are in the graves. Literally, two Greek words are used in this verse, both of which are plural, saying "all those" in the tombs. Question, is the church plural? Were there *churches* being smothered by Judaism? No, the church is one body, not many (Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:13).

If that were not enough, consider this: was the church "dead" for the first 40 years of its existence? Did the Lord establish dead, lifeless, bodies (the church) which would be resurrected from the graves (tombs, plural) in A.D. 70? Imagine, the Lord died and shed His blood in order to purchase and establish a dead religious system that consisted of "bodies" (plural) and placed in "graves" (plural) to be resurrected 40 years later! Who can believe it?

Further, there are two classes of "all those" that will be resurrected from the "graves" in John 5:28-29: some have done good while others have done evil. Each class of "all those" (individuals, plural) will receive that which is due them. There's no way in the world to arrive at any other conclusion than to understand that this verse identifies a general resurrection of "all those" that have lived upon the earth, from Adam and Eve, to the last person in the world.

Between A.D. 30 and A.D. 70, was there a good church(s) and an evil church(s)? Were both resurrected and each received that which was due them? Outrageous! This text cannot be explained in any way other than a general resurrection of

"all those" dead ones (bodies) who have been buried in "graves" around the world since the beginning of time.

In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul discusses at length the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15). He establishes the fact of the Lord's death, burial and resurrection from the grave (vs.1-11). The brethren there believed and accepted that fact. However, in verse 12 we read, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" The Holy Spirit emphatically sets forth, in the remainder of the chapter, the fact that those who have died will one day be raised from the dead just as Christ was raised from the dead. Christ's bodily resurrection is used as a comparison or likeness of our own bodily resurrection. Heaven's argument is,

¹³...If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: ¹⁴And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. ¹⁵Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. ¹⁶For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: ¹⁷And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. ¹⁸Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ¹⁹If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. ²⁰But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:13-23).

One day, yet in the future, those who have died will come out of their graves and stand before the Lord to be judged (2 Cor. 5:10)! Our body will be changed! It will not be the body that was buried for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 15:36-58). None the less, there will be a bodily resurrec-

tion of all the dead. Every verse in this text makes plain that what is under consideration are humans, people, those who once lived and have died. There's no way the church is spoken of here because it is alive and singular, not dead and plural. The church does not have now, nor has ever had, "flesh and blood" (cf. v.50). Adam (a living human being) died even as all humans die as a consequence of his sin. Through Christ, all (along with Adam) will one day be made alive (v.22).

Christ is referred to as the "first-fruits" of them that sleep (vs.20-23). That is, Christ was the first to be raised from the dead never to die again. For Him to be the first, implies there were others to follow. That is the argument and point of First Corinthians 15. But, if the resurrection occurred in A.D. 70 and it was only a "spiritual" resurrection, then that necessitates the Lord's resurrection was only a spiritual resurrection — that He did not literally,

bodily, rise from the grave! But He did rise from the grave! He walked, talked and ate with the apostles (John 21). He showed them the scars in his hands, feet and side (cf. Luke 24:39-40; John 20:20-27).

The Lord's resurrection from the grave is proof of our future resurrection from the grave (1 Cor. 15:12-22). "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:23). It is inconceivable to imagine how some say the resurrection is past already — long ago in 70 A.D. and, that it was the spiritual resurrection of the church from under the suppression of Judaism.

The Bible often speaks of departures from the truth and provides ample information to refute such damnable doctrines. Error concerning the final, universal, resurrection from the dead is nothing new in our generation. There were even those as far back as the first century that believed and taught damnable error with regard to the resurrection. Two

men especially were immortalized in heaven's book, the Bible, in calling their names and marking them for their error for all time. Read it, ¹⁶"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. ¹⁷And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is *Hymenaeus* and *Philetus*; ¹⁸Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:16-18; Rom. 16:17-18). Notice: saying the resurrection has already occurred is a doctrine of no little consequence. Those who so believe and teach have left the faith and overthrow the faith of others! It is not and can not be an optional matter to deny the final resurrection of all the dead. It is a matter of faith — a matter of fellowship — a matter of heaven or hell. To deny the future resurrection of all the dead is to deny the resurrection of Christ and to deny the resurrection of Christ makes salvation impossible and our preaching to be vain (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

Buddy Bell Returns...

(Continued from page 1)

and loving person. I have always enjoyed hearing him speak. He is, no doubt, a very fine young man. Therefore, I would never want to hurt Buddy or his reputation if that could be avoided.

Yet, I am certain that if I share with you and others what I now know, Buddy is going to be hurt. This eldership is going to be hurt. My family and I are going to be hurt. And this church is going to be hurt. Frankly, I would to God that I could walk away from Landmark and not have to deal with this situation. But I am convinced with all my heart that to do so would dishonor my heavenly Father and would endanger the souls at Landmark and in this city.

I don't say this because I want to leave. I love Landmark. I love each one you elders and all of my other friends here. I love every precious soul in this church. Kay and I chose Landmark in 1986 as the place where we wanted to rear our children and spend our lives. But... I

would give up my family at Landmark and never return if that alone would save the many precious souls here who are now gravely in danger from a man I now believe is a false teacher "secretly brought in" (Gal. 2:4), who has come to God's flock in "sheep's clothing" (Matt. 7:15) but is in truth a "ravenous wolf."

Brethren, I do not make these charges lightly. I clearly realize the seriousness of what I am saying. I have spent hours upon hours in prayer over this since I had the meeting with Buddy. I cannot begin to tell you how much I have agonized over my decision to lay these things at your feet. I have counseled with my elder mentors, and to a man they have told me that I must tell you what I know about Buddy and his beliefs. All of them have said that these errors must be dealt with for the sake of all the innocent souls who are now in danger of being led astray by this false brother.

1: BAPTISM

My first question for Buddy was "Who are the saved?" Buddy said

that he felt that if he and I were teaching a non-Christian that our answers would be the same. He then stated to me that he believed that baptism was essential. I, then, asked him if a person could believe what the Baptists and Methodists teach about salvation and be saved. He did not answer YES or NO. He hedged by saying that he wasn't sure whether a person had to understand that baptism was for the remission of sins.

Since his answer troubled me, I asked him if he believed Baptists are SAVED. Again, he responded that he had a hard time answering that, and that he had some real mixed emotions about that. So I asked him if he considered them brothers and sisters in the Lord's fellowship. His answer: "Probably some I would." When I pressed him further to explain himself, he admitted to me that he was confused about some of these things and that he thought a lot of Baptist people who have been immersed for a very good reason and who love the Lord that God's grace would cover that.

Brethren, I'm confused too, but not about baptism. I'm confused as to why we have a man preaching for us who is not sure whether **baptism MUST BE for the remission of sins**. If the Baptists can be saved by the doctrine of **FAITH ONLY**, just as long as they are **immersed for a very good reason**, then I confess that I have been confused on salvation all of my Christian life.

2: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC and DENOMINATIONALISM

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, faithful brethren throughout our great brotherhood were forced out of their churches by false brethren who pushed the use of **instrumental music** until they had driven out all of the faithful brethren who could not in good conscience worship with it. These digressive teachers took more than half of our church buildings. They argued that **instrumental music** in Christian worship was optional and should not be made a test of fellowship. Yet, they continued to sway the minds of brethren until they had enough numbers to bring the instrument in. They then callously told the remaining brethren that they would have to go along with it or leave. The result was the formation of the Christian Church / Disciples of Christ denominations.

For almost 100 years our faithful preachers have taught us that the addition of **instrumental music** to Christian worship was a SIN against God. It was "adding to God's Word" (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18). It was a clear perversion of the worship of a God who demanded that we worship Him in "truth" (John 4:24) as well as "spirit." But just like **Carl Ketcherside** and **Leroy Garrett** of the 60s and 70s, we again have brethren like **Rubel Shelley**, **Jeff Walling** and others who now argue that we **SHOULD NOT MAKE IT A TEST OF FELLOWSHIP**. When I asked Buddy how he viewed the Christian Church, he floored me by boldly saying that he was in "**FULL FELLOWSHIP WITH THEM**." Since I couldn't believe what I had just heard, I asked him the second time, "You are in full fellowship with them?" Buddy said, "I feel that

way."

Brethren, what we have is a brother who claims to be in "full fellowship" with the very ones that have destroyed the unity of the Lord's church with an innovation that they themselves argued was "no big deal." Buddy feels that he is in "full fellowship" with the very ones the apostle Paul condemned in Romans 16:17-18, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses 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.*"

No doctrine has done more to destroy the unity of our brotherhood than **instrumental music**, but Buddy thinks we should be in "full fellowship" with those who advocate this error. If Buddy believes that "**in matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty,**" he puts the use of **instrumental music in Christian worship** as nothing more than opinion.

Now, I want to be fair and tell you that Buddy says he personally does not use it and that he would not want it brought in at Landmark. But his position was that he didn't think that our arguments against **instrumental music** was that strong and that they were mostly historical arguments. His opinion was that it should not be used at Landmark because it would disrupt the fellowship. But on the other hand, he would not argue that it was either scriptural or unscriptural. He feels like both sides have some arguments and that in his mind the whole issue was not a "big deal."

When I asked him if you elders had asked him these questions, he stated that you **HAD**. Frankly, he said that you had asked him about his view on **instrumental music** and that some of you "**shared his exact position**." Later, when I told him that I didn't believe that the majority of our members believed what he believed about this issue, he said that he knew a number of the brethren at Landmark and that he did not agree with my statement.

Brethren, the perversion of true worship with **musical instruments** may not be a "big deal" to Buddy,

but it is to me. And regardless of what Buddy thinks, I believe that it is a "big deal" for most members of this church. I believe that most members of Landmark still believe that it is a SIN, and that its use would endanger their souls.

#3: SOLOS, CHOIRS, QUARTETS AND OTHER SPECIAL MUSIC

When I asked Buddy if he believed **solos, choirs, and quartets** were scriptural in worship, he did not even hesitate with his answer. He told me in no uncertain terms that he believed that the practice of using **solos, choirs, and quartets** was in his words, "very scriptural." In fact he went on to state that he had NO biblical problem with them. The funny thing is that he was amazed that I was so convicted that they were wrong.

We discussed the issue back and forth for a good while, and finally he just dismissed my arguments by saying that he thought the biblical evidence was "**very strong**" for the use of "special music" (this is the phrase these false brethren use to describe the use of **solos, choirs, and ensembles** in worship). Then he stunned me by saying that he **would love to be a part of a church where that kind of freedom in worship existed**, but he wasn't sure if it would ever happen at Landmark. I asked him why he doubted that it would be introduced here, since he was convinced on the issue. Certainly he would move the congregation in that direction. He responded by saying that he had taught it at **Gateway** (Gateway Church of Christ, Pensacola, Florida—editor) but that they were not using special music. I reminded him that I knew for a fact that **Gateway** already had a similar group. I told him that my daughter had visited **Gateway** and was surprised to see a group of singers sitting off to one side, each one wearing microphones. Buddy admitted that but denied that it proved **Gateway** was moving in that direction.

Brethren, you have pledged over and over that you were not going to let this unscriptural practice be brought into our church. But now you have a preacher that openly argues that the practice is "very

scriptural." What are you now going to do when Buddy teaches what he believes?

#4: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

When I questioned Buddy on his beliefs about the role of women in the church, he again stated several things with which most of us would seriously disagree. For example, he told me that if he happened to be in a group where there were both men and women, and if they wanted to pray, he would **"not be uncomfortable with us all praying in a chain prayer."** But don't worry, he said that he was not planning on inviting a woman to lead prayer in his Bible class.

When I asked him about women being appointed as deacons, he was rather ambivalent. He said he had some questions about it, but he **"might not object"** to it. I reminded him that the scriptures said one of the qualifications of deacons was that they be *"husbands of one wife"* (I Tim. 3:12).

I also asked him about his view on women waiting on the Lord's table. He quickly said, **"It wouldn't matter to me."** He said he thought it was a stupid idea, and that he didn't know why anyone would want to do it, but that it was just **"not a biblical issue."**

#5: HONESTY WITH THE BRETHREN

What worries me as much as anything is the fact that Buddy has no intention whatsoever in exposing his radical views to the whole church. False teachers never come into a church with the intention of being up-front and honest with the members. Buddy knows well how terribly disruptive his views would be at this point in his work. But, given time and opportunity, one person after another, one family after another will be drawn into the web of his error.

Time and again I challenged Buddy to let the Landmark brethren know the very things he was telling me, but he strenuously rejected that idea. I told him that I thought that it was nothing less than trickery for him to stand before this church and

claim that he was going to be **"biblical,"** when he knew that faithful brethren would not believe he was **"biblical"** if they knew what he believed. Brethren, I believe that it is nothing less than cowardice and hypocrisy for Buddy to publicly claim to be **"biblical"** while privately advocating heresy.

Could it be that the reason Buddy is opposed to making his views public at this time is that he is aware of what the Bible demands of us who are faithful. *"A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject"* (Titus 3:10). The apostle John told us exactly how we are to handle false teachers who come to us with their apostasies: *"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"* (II John 9-11).

#6: FELLOWSHIP WITH THE DENOMINATIONS

Finally, one of the most dangerous doctrines espoused by Buddy during our discussion is his view on having fellowship with denominational churches. I have already pointed out that he claims to be in **"full fellowship"** with the Christian Church. When I questioned him about fellowshiping the Baptists and Methodists, he looked at me and said, **"I'm going to fellowship them where I can fellowship them."** To prove his point he brought up **"Promise Keepers."** To my surprise he openly stated that he was going to be, in his words, **"real comfortable rejoicing with those people about Jesus on what He's done."**

Honestly, brethren, does this not represent an unquestionable defiance of such scriptures as Romans 16:17-18, II John 9-11, Titus 3:10, II Thess. 3:6, I Tim. 4:1-3? If we go along with such are we not guilty of making the word of God of **"none effect"** (Mark 7:13)? How can we promote fellowship with those who preach **"another gospel?"** Did not

Paul tell us, *"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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed"* (Gal. 1:8-9).

Buddy thinks we should promote these denominational gatherings with our presence, even though these very denominational preachers lead scores of men and women to hell by turning them from the truth of God to the lies of the Devil. When the apostle Paul had the opportunity to **"fellowship"** one of the false teachers of his day, Elymas the sorcerer, his actions were quite different from those advocated by Buddy. Paul said to Elymas, *"O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord"* (Acts 13:10)? Then God cursed Elymas with blindness. Buddy wants us to **"fellowship"** those who *"pervert the right ways of the Lord."*

Buddy thinks we should **"rejoice"** with these purveyors of error, but again Paul warned Titus that *"there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake"* (Titus 1:10-11). How can we support and encourage these false teachers at **"Promise Keepers"** or any other denominational endeavor when Paul says that their *"mouths must be stopped?"*

CONCLUSION

Brethren, I pray to God that you will remove this false teacher from our flock before he begins his destructive work. To do less will threaten the unity of Landmark and the unity of God's people in Montgomery. His continued presence at Landmark will likely destroy the cooperation of our churches in the "Inner City Ministry." But what is worse; if Buddy does not renounce these errors, he will not only endanger his own soul, but he will ultimately jeopardize the souls of many spiritually immature Christians

throughout the Montgomery area.

Brethren, I love Buddy and I want to help him change his views on these matters, but his "mouth must be stopped." No matter how sincere Buddy is in what he believes, I believe Satan is using him to destroy innocent souls.

You are shepherds of God's flock. A wolf has entered God's sheepfold in sheep's clothing, and if he is allowed to stay, he will not "spare the flock." I stand ready to help you accomplish this. I'll be more than happy to study these matters with you, with Buddy, and with any other member at Landmark, but I cannot just walk away from this situation and pretend that these matters are just innocent differences in opinions.

Brethren, just as I was obligated by God to share this information with you first so that you can take the appropriate action to remedy this situation, I also have a personal obligation to the other faithful members of this congregation to warn them about these things. I would hope that you can resolve this matter within the next week or two. I would not want to embarrass you by going directly to our brethren when it is your place to take the lead in this. But as we talked previously, I will do what I believe God's will demands that I do "through Christ who strengthens me."

May God's grace and mercy be with us all.

Open Letter To: The Elders of the Landmark church of Christ
From: Ray Dutton
Regarding: Our decision to leave Landmark
Date: October 9, 1996

Brethren, I hoped that this time would never come, but recent events have made it impossible for my family to remain under your oversight at Landmark. This is effective immediately. Though we love our Landmark family deeply, and hate to give up the sweet association we have had with so many, your recent instructions to me have put me in the bitter position of having to deliberately disobey YOU or disobey my Heavenly Father. Like Peter, who was instructed not to teach the truth

about Jesus, I have decided that "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

When I learned that Buddy Bell was going to be our new preacher, I was greatly disturbed because of his reputation. I tried to follow the teachings of Matthew 18 to the best of my ability. On September 17, I went to my brother, whom I believed might be holding to and advocating false doctrines. When I learned of the errors he espoused, but failed to be able to get him to change or to openly tell the church what he believed, I came to you.

When I met with you elders September 25, I gave you a detailed account of the numerous false doctrines that he had shared with me. You led me to believe that you would confront him with these things. You did meet with him, and he confirmed that he had told me those things. According to what you told me, he did not deny any of these things that I had presented in my letter. But! instead of correcting him or removing him from the pulpit, you chose to support him and to rebuke me for not having kept these matters a secret. Even worse, what really made me realize that I would no longer be able to stay at Landmark was the fact that one of you actually tried to defend his unscriptural position on using choirs and quartets in Christian worship. This elder's exact words were: "There is not a scripture in the Bible that you can show me that either supports or denies special music." He even went on to deny that Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 apply to worship.

Brethren, I would never have believed that such words would come out of the mouth of an elder at Landmark. Nor could I believe that not one of you objected to this. The fact is that the Bible does not have to list everything in the world that is unscriptural to do in worship; it simply tells what to do and then instructs us not to add" to God's word (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18). There is not one command, example, or implication in the Scriptures that the churches of the New Testament ever used "choirs, quartets, or solos." The Bible commands: "Speaking to yourselves" (Eph. 5:19) and "teaching and admonishing one another" (Col. 3:16). These com-

mands to the churches of Ephesus and Colosae could not THEN and cannot NOW be carried out by one person singing a solo or by an "ensemble" (such as the one used at the Carriage Hills Church of Christ, Montgomery, AL) doing our singing for us.

Brethren, I love all of you and I love Buddy, but I am convinced that these errors endanger the souls of all at Landmark. It is not right to risk the souls of our young people and other innocent Christians by allowing Buddy to teach his errors privately as he did to me and as I fear he will do with others. Even if he elects not to preach these false doctrines publicly, he cannot conscientiously teach the truth on these matters either. Since you made it clear to me that you have no intention of making these facts available to the other members at Landmark, and since you have told me that I should not repeat them, I am left with no alternative. I have to leave Landmark, because I refuse to remain silent and thereby risk the souls of innocent members who have no idea what Buddy truly believes about these crucial matters. Therefore, I believe it is my obligation to my Heavenly Father to "tell it unto the church" (Matt. 18:17).

We will keep all of you in our prayers. Pray for us, and may God be merciful to us all.

Letter Mailed to the Landmark Membership

Dear brethren,

I apologize for having to send this letter to you. As God is my witness, I hoped this day would never come. But, my family and I are leaving Landmark. We have been a part of this wonderful family since 1986. Though we have not been able to get to know all of you the way we would have liked, it still hurts us to have to make this move.

I have found myself involved in a situation that has left me with no alternative than to move my family to another congregation. It is my firm conviction that the church at Landmark is presently in danger. This danger centers around the false doctrines currently held by Land-

mark's new preacher. I love Buddy. He has tremendous potential for good in the Lord's church, but his views regarding some very crucial matters of doctrine have made this letter necessary.

I have included two letters that I have presented to the elders. The first letter of September 25 was written after I had a very disturbing meeting with Buddy on September 17. The other letter is my final letter to the Landmark elders after our meeting last week, on October 2. I believe you deserve to know these things. What you do with the information is up to you. My conscience would not let me leave Landmark without your knowing what I know, and my Father has commanded me to "tell it unto the church" (Matt. 18:17).

If you have any further questions about these things, you can reach me during the day at my office, 272-8700, or after 7 PM at home, 244-0182.

May God be with you all.

Ray Dutton
434 E. Vanderbilt Loop
Montgomery, AL 36109
(334) 244-0182

Enclosures

More About BUDDY BELL

Please refer to last week's bulletin, November 3, that made reference to brother BUDDY BELL being hired as the new minister for the Landmark church of Christ here in Montgomery. A copy of a letter that I sent to him follows this preface. It was mailed on October 17 via certified mail. I received a call from a lady at Landmark who said that the letter was received but that brother Bell was away at a meeting and would not return to Montgomery until the end of October. To date we have not gotten a reply from brother Bell. When, and if, I receive his answer, I will run it in this bulletin. I realize that if he chooses not to respond, that it is his privilege to do so. It would be great, though, to set the record straight and his answers

would confirm where he stands. Wouldn't it be great if brother Bell took a Bible stand and made it known loudly and clearly? Certainly by taking such an action he could lead many back to the Truth. I pray that this happens. I have already stated that I have no personal ill will toward brother Bell or the Landmark church. Quite the contrary, I am concerned for his soul and those that he would influence. I have very close relationships with some at Landmark. But, with brother Bell's "track record" don't you believe we have a right to ask his beliefs on some of the things that trouble the church in the world and in Montgomery today? I Peter 3:15 teaches, "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."

— *O.B. Porterfield*

October 17, 1996
Buddy Bell
Landmark church of Christ
1800 Halcyon Blvd.
Montgomery, AL 36117

Dear brother Bell:

I was given a copy of the information gathered and printed by brother Ray Dutton. A person then told me that what you said last Sunday concerning this material they "took as repentance on your part." Others say that they did not. I hope that you do not object to my writing to you concerning these matters and asking did you repent on Sunday and, if so, would you please state what you repented of?

I intend to write an article in our bulletin on Monday, October 28, 1996 concerning this and I would appreciate your help in making it accurate, if you see fit, by answering some straightforward questions. Let me say at the outset that if you have repented of the things that have troubled the churches in Montgomery and many other places, I will certainly rejoice and intend to give it all the publicity I can. I want to inject here, brother Bell, that I am not asking you if you intend to accomplish any of these things at Landmark or if any of these things

are on your "agenda." I am interested in knowing what you believe the Bible teaches on each of the following questions.

1. Did you repent of the things that brother Dutton says in his printed material you told him?

2. Do you believe that there are some people in the Baptist, Methodist, Catholic or other denominational bodies who are saved?

3. Do you believe that a person must understand that baptism is for the remission of their sins before they are baptized in order to be scripturally baptized?

4. Are you in full fellowship with the Christian Church?

5. Do you believe that it is scriptural to use solos, choirs, quartets and other "special music" in the worship service?

6. Would you object to a woman leading public prayer whether it would be in a Bible class, a chain prayer or in the worship service?

7. Would you object to a woman being appointed as a deacon in the church?

8. Would you object to a woman serving the Lord's Supper to the congregation?

9. Do you believe that it is scriptural for the church to observe special days such as Easter, Christmas, dedicating babies, honoring parents or graduates as part of the worship service?

10. Do you believe that it is scriptural to fellowship Baptists,

CONTRIBUTORS

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| R. Phillips Turner | \$10 |
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| John E. Milligan..... | \$20 |
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| Anonymous | \$30 |
| Norman Barnes | \$20 |
| Charles Verkist | \$25 |
| Ruth Jeffcoat | \$10 |
| Kit King..... | \$20 |
| Bill Prather..... | \$5 |

Methodists, Catholics or other denominations?

11. Do you believe that it is scriptural to promote and/or be a member of the organization known as "Promise Keepers?"

12. Do you endorse "Jubilee?"

13. Would you attend and/or encourage others to attend "Jubilee?"

14. Do you believe that one would be lost if they were to use instrumental music in the worship service?

15. Do you fellowship Joe Beam?

16. Would you participate on a program, worship service, youth meeting, etc., with Joe Beam and encourage others to attend?

17. Do you believe that Rubel Shelly is a false teacher?

18. Would you participate on a program, worship service, youth meeting, etc., with Rubel Shelly and encourage others to attend?

19. Do you believe that Jeff Walling is a false teacher?

20. Would you participate on a program, worship service, youth meeting, etc., with Jeff Walling and encourage others to attend?

21. Would you recommend Max Lucado to speak at any gathering of the Lord's people?

22. Do you believe that the present day church of Christ had its beginning on Pentecost (Acts 2) or that it came about as a result of the Restoration Movement?

23. The doctrines of the Carriage Hills church of Christ here in Montgomery are well known. Would you fellowship them? Would you encourage the young people at Landmark to join in with them for devotionals, etc.?

24. Do you endorse the magazines, "Image" or "Wineskins?"

25. Do you believe that it is scriptural to accept people into the fellowship of the church of Christ based upon their denominational baptism?

26. Do you believe that there are other scriptural reasons than fornication (Matt. 19:9) that the innocent party in a divorce can remarry?

27. Do you believe that it is scriptural to use material (lessons, filmstrips, etc.) prepared by denominations in the worship service or Bible classes?

28. Do you believe it is scriptural to let a denominational preacher use our church buildings to speak on whatever subject they choose?

29. Do you think that it is scriptural for the church to have car washes, yard sales, etc. to raise money for the work of the church?

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and giving consideration to answer these questions. I hope to hear from you very soon. I want you to know that I have absolutely no ill will toward you and if you have truly repented, I believe there would be great rejoicing in all of the Lord's church. I know there would be on my part!

Sincerely,
O. B. Porterfield, minister
The Seibles Road church of Christ

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