

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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Why Does It Make So Much Difference About Sound Doctrine?

David B. Jones

Sound doctrine is essential to our salvation and we must demand it and defend it at all costs. What we need are more brethren who are not afraid of controversy and who see the need for standing in the gap and being heard for truth. We need more brethren who will demand sound doctrine.

The Lord's church has undergone a change over the past generation in far too many places regarding the necessity of sound doctrine. Members of the church of Christ used to be called "Bible-totin' Bible-quotin' Christians." Elders used to demand the truth be preached no matter who wanted to hear it. Thousands were rescued from the kingdom of Satan and were translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13-14).

Today, we have too many "preachers" who are too afraid they are going to "offend" some or "run some off" if they preach the truth in the manner they need to. They have decided they can lure the people in and lull them to sleep with watered-down sermonettes, rather than "reprove, rebuke and exhort" as Paul commanded (2 Tim. 4:2).

Sound doctrine should still be demanded in every pulpit where the saints meet. Members of the church need to remember the words of Jesus: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy

angels" (Mark 8:38). Sound doctrine should be taught because:

THE SAVIOR COMMANDS IT

One may ask, "Where does the Savior command that sound doctrine be taught?" We must keep in mind when we read the New Testament that we are reading the words of the Savior. Paul wrote, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). The Lord sent the Holy Spirit to inspire the writers of the New Testament. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13). Peter explained how the words of the New Testament came to be. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:20-21). No man was given a thought and left to

his own discretion as to exactly what to write. All the writers were "carried along" or "borne along" by the Holy Spirit who was communicating the very words of Jesus. Jesus told the apostles, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14-15). The Father told the Son; the Son told the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit inspired the men to write heaven's words.

Now, understanding that principle, we turn our attention to what the New Testament (the words of the Savior) has to say about sound doctrine.

Paul wrote, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Paul was exhorting Timothy to remain faithful to the doctrine which had come

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Sound Doctrine...



Editorial...

The Bible Versus Change Agents #4

Garland M. Robinson

Change, any change, all change from the divine pattern is error. Error causes both its teacher and doer to be lost, no matter how sincere they may be. Jesus wants us to know the truth which makes us free from error (John 8:32). We must love the truth or suffer the consequences of believing a lie. Those who believe a lie will be damned (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

The Bible always answers error because it is the all-inspired and all-sufficient Word of God. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim 3:16-17). Notice how verse 16 says that all Scripture is profitable for "doctrine" (teaching, showing what is wrong), for "reproof" (exposing, rebuking and convicting one for doing wrong), for "correction" (showing how to correct the wrong and reform one's ways) and "instruction" (showing how to continue in that which is right and training in the right way). The apostle Paul did not just write his own words. He said to the church at Corinth, "...the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). We read in 2 Peter 1:3, "According as his divine power hath given unto us **all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.**" Everything we need to know how to live in this life and please God can be found in the New Testament. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

The Bible tells us to test those who are supposed to be teachers of the Gospel. The apostle John writes, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because

many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). A "Gospel preacher" is not offended when questioned about his belief, teaching and practice. He welcomes it. On the other hand, those who teach error are usually insulted and angered when questioned. This serves as a warning sign of those who are not sound in the faith. When you find one like this, beware!

The Bible tells us what to do with those who teach 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" (2 John 1:9-11). Faithful Christians cannot help or assist those who teach error. We must not do anything that could be interpreted as supporting them in their error. When we do so, God counts us as guilty as if we were teaching that error ourselves. This is "guilt by association" i.e., we are counted guilty because we fellowship them. Too many refuse to see that their fellowship of those in error makes them guilty of error. The old adage that says "birds of a feather flock together" is certainly true.

Paul writes, "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**" (Rom. 16:17-18). To "mark" means to observe — turn attention toward. Brethren everywhere need to be made aware of those who are teaching error so they will not be "taken in" by their false doctrine. This, of

necessity, involves "calling names." Those who teach contrary to the doctrine of Christ must be identified. It is impossible to do that without knowing who they are, that demands knowing their name. There are even occasions when we are to "mark" those who faithfully follow the Lord so we may imitate them (Phil. 3:17). However, that cannot be done without knowing who they are. Therefore, they must be identified by name. To not do so is a violation of Romans 16:17 and Philippians 3:17.

The Bible tells us the end result of those who teach error. They "...shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess 1:9). In Old Testament days, "...there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2:1). All false teachers, along with "...the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). Those who follow them will suffer the same destiny.

No one can change God's way and escape the consequences.

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Sound Doctrine...

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from heaven (1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:2). The young preacher was warned by the aged apostle that there would be some who would turn from sound doctrine and turn unto fables. Paul equates sound doctrine with truth in this text, speaking of sound doctrine in one verse and the truth in another.

Paul also wrote, "*Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers*" (Titus 1:9). The context of this verse concerns itself with the qualifications of an elder. An elder (bishop) is to be able to convict one, by using sound doctrine, who would speak against or deny truth (a gainsayer). This command came from the Savior also. Again Paul wrote: "*But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine*" (Titus 2:1).

How can those among us today say doctrine is not important? Jesus said to speak that which is sound doctrine. Therefore, because we are commanded to speak sound doctrine, there is the danger of speaking that which is not sound! That which is not sound is to be avoided (Rom. 16:17-18). The word "sound" means "to have sound health, i.e. be well (in body); fig. to be uncorrupt (true in doctrine); be in health, (be safe and) sound, (be) whole (-some)" [Strong's]. Sound doctrine is that which is healthy to us spiritually. To teach doctrine which is not sound is to teach a corrupted doctrine that will cause one to be lost, not saved.

SALVATION DEMANDS IT

Not only does the Savior command sound doctrine, but our salvation demands sound doctrine. Jesus said, "*And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32). We have already noticed sound doctrine is equal to truth, so it is sound doctrine which sets us free. We can also see this point when we notice Romans 1:16, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*" The gospel is also equal to the truth as

we notice in another place of Paul's writing. "*But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Thess. 2:13-14). The gospel is God's power to save and it is equal to truth which is equal to doctrine. God's power to save could also be referred to as sound doctrine. Therefore, our salvation demands sound doctrine.

What is amazing is how brethren say doctrine is not important and at the same time try and show someone how to be saved. Sound doctrine is essential to salvation because the gospel is essential to salvation. The gospel is essential to salvation because the truth is essential. Yet, there are brethren who say we do not have to agree on doctrine! Do we have to agree on truth? Do we have to agree on the gospel? All these terms are equal to each other!!

SANCTIFICATION MANDATES IT

The Savior commands sound doctrine because it is by Truth we are set free. Not only is it by Truth we are set free, but it is by Truth we remain free. We must continue in the gospel in order to go to heaven. "*If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister*" (Col. 1:23).

Speaking sound doctrine mandates we live a sanctified life. We are to live a life which is different from the world about us. Paul writes: "*But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the*

word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:1-5). Sound doctrine involves being the proper examples in our homes, being the proper examples in our personal lives and being the proper examples of what Christians should be. We must continue in this doctrine to be healthy, spiritually. Therefore, there is never a time we can speak any thing other than sound doctrine.

So, why do we insist upon sound doctrine? Because the Savior commands it, our salvation demands it and our sanctification mandates it! We must have sound doctrine in order to please God and go to heaven. We must study to know sound doctrine and then we must be willing to die in order to preserve it. We can not fellowship those who do not uphold sound doctrine. We can not compromise in order to avoid persecutions. Sound doctrine is essential to our salvation and we must demand it and defend it at all costs. What we need are more brethren who are not afraid of controversy and who see the need for standing in the gap and being heard for truth. We need more brethren who will demand sound doctrine.

With this in mind, we close by noticing the words of a great soldier of the cross, Jerry Moffitt. On the inside cover of his book, *Denominational Doctrines*, brother Moffitt writes:

"Really, before one studies much on false doctrine one needs to be in agreement with himself regarding controversy. As long as there is good and evil, truth and error, ministers of the gospel and wolves in sheep's clothing, there will be conflict, controversy and opposition. God blames the conflict on the devil and his false teachers and false doctrine. Jesus, Paul and the early church spent much time in necessary disputes. Since it promoted truth, it was and is a necessary form of evangelism, sharing the same purpose as preaching, i.e., eternal life. It is a form of soul winning and salvation. As much as we may find controversy distasteful and may love peace, we all must do our share in the battle. So love peace and unity, but love truth more."

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SHALL WE CHANGE THE TIME OF OUR WORSHIP FOR CHRISTMAS?

Doug Smith

Those congregations that meet regardless, avoid, in many cases, the lack of consistency in church attendance because they send the right message.

The clamor has already begun in many churches throughout the brotherhood to cancel or change the scheduled Wednesday worship service on Wednesday night, December 24th, as well as the service on December 31st. What should be the attitude of a Christian toward Worship and Bible Study? What message is given to members of the local congregation when a change or cancellation occurs? Brethren have consistently preached and taught that worshipping God is of the utmost importance. We have preached, and rightfully so, that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25). Our brotherhood understands that we are to seek first the Kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33).

Let me also say something in regard to the authority of elders in the Lord's church as this relates to this subject as well. Certainly elders rule and have authority as the Bible makes that plain beyond any doubt (Heb. 13:7; Acts 20:28). Elders rule and make decisions in matters of judgment and those decisions must be respected and upheld by members of each local congregation. It is a sad commentary on our time when members, and even preachers, defy and undermine the authority of elders. I must admit that this is one decision that would fall under the category of judgment. If an eldership in a local congregation makes the decision to cancel or change the time of a service because of Christmas, New Year's, etc. that is their prerogative. We must respect that and stand behind them even though we may disagree because, after all, this is a judgment call.

Now, with all this being considered, I want to set forth some things for all to consider regarding this subject. It is certainly true that many families get together during the Christmas season and this is always something enjoyable and worthwhile. But the question is: Should this be allowed to interfere with our obligation to God and to the church? Someone may reply: "Well this is a legitimate reason to cancel or postpone the service since it is a rare occasion." Another may say: "Christmas Eve is a very important day for our family. We have traditionally gotten together as a family on Christmas Eve and certainly worship services should be canceled or postponed to be accommodative." Another may say: "We don't want to make things difficult on others who have family plans when there is a conflict between family get-togethers, such as takes place during the holidays, and our worship services."

From a casual observation, these expressions appear to have validity at first. After all, who wants to be overbearing, difficult, and uncooperative? Now, remember that ultimately this is a judgment call that a local eldership must make from time to time, and that decision must be respected. But **stop** and think about the message that canceling or changing the time of a service sends to others (those in the congregation as well as in the community).

Does not canceling or changing the time of a service, due to an event like Christmas, send the message that Christianity is a religion of convenience? Does moving or discontinuing worship to the most High God to accommodate such an activity display a burning zeal to put the Lord first? Christianity was never meant to be a religion of convenience. Think about the message it sends to members of the congregation. We preach and teach that one ought not to forsake the assembly of the saints together, and that nothing should come before God, but then turn right around and send the message that there is, after all, something more important than assembling (family get-togethers at Christmas).

If family get-togethers associated with Christmas and New Year's is a legitimate reason to cancel or change the worship services of the Lord's church, are there not other legitimate reasons as well? What if Alabama is playing in a bowl game on a Wednesday night? In my family, that would be even more legitimate than a Christmas get-together. If there is one legitimate reason to cancel or postpone a worship service then that just opens up the flood gates for evermore and turns Christianity into a religion of convenience. If not, why not?

It is also very interesting to note that congregations who see fit to cancel or change the worship services due to things like Christmas begin to see inconsistent attendance on the part of their members. You will begin to see a decline in the attendance during gospel meetings and other activities, which is only a natural result of the message being sent. Those congregations that meet regardless, avoid, in many cases, the lack of consistency in church attendance because they send the right message. May we always endeavor to seek the Lord and His church first in our lives.

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OBSERVATIONS FROM AN ALUMNUS OF SUNSET SCHOOL OF PREACHING

Tommy J. Hicks

A native of Lubbock, Texas, I am an alumnus of the Sunset School of Preaching. Back when I was a student there (from January 1967 to January 1969) a person could receive excellent Bible training. However, during those two years, though hardly perceptible to most, I witnessed the “winds of change” beginning to influence some of the instructors in the school.

Prior to attending the Sunset School of Preaching, I had attended Lubbock Christian College. One of my teachers at L.C.C. was **K. C. Moser**. Moser taught that “law” and “grace” were mutually exclusive. Moser insisted that since Christians lived under “grace” then they were under NO LAW at all. I swallowed — “hook, line, and sinker” — Moser’s false doctrine (with its implication of “salvation by faith only”). Fortunately, I had a sound, knowledgeable, gospel preacher for a grandfather. His name was **J. R. Hicks**. My grandfather knew **K. C. Moser** and he knew Moser’s heretical doctrine from his days as a local preacher in Oklahoma. Upon learning that I had become a “Moserite,” my grandfather devoted many hours to study with me. He was more than able to show me the error Moser taught — error I had accepted. Later, my grandfather would tell folks, “I had to study that boy out of that “Moser mess.” He did!

Fresh out of that “Moser mess” at L.C.C., I began my studies at the Sunset School of Preaching. Naturally, whenever **K. C. Moser’s** name was mentioned or whenever something was taught that reminded me of Moser’s doctrine, my ears would perk up. At first, when the instructors mentioned Moser or his doctrine, it was done so in respectful disagreement. Yet, it was extremely noticeable to me that, during my two years at Sunset, Moser’s doctrine became more and more acceptable. **Richard Rogers** seemed to have been the most influenced by Moser (whether by being personally taught

by Moser or by reading Moser’s writings, I do not know). From his writings (*Freed for Freedom* in particular) and from lessons I have heard him present, it appears to me that **Ed Wharton** may have also been greatly influenced by Moser. (I hasten to add that Wharton does not appear to take the extreme view that Moser did on “law” and “grace,” though at times he comes very close to doing so.)

Twenty-eight years have passed since I graduated from the Sunset School of Preaching. The incremental, almost imperceptible changes that were taking place in the late 60s snowballed. While so many changes (not for the better, but for the worse) have come to pass, none stand out any clearer than Sunset’s teaching on “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.” From 1967 to 1969, I do not recall that any of the instructors taught that the “guilty party” can Scripturally remarry. I have asked some of the men who were in my class at SSOP and they have told me that they do not recall that any of the instructors taught us that the “guilty party” can remarry. Instructors (such as **Richard Rogers**, **Ted Stewart**, and **Truman Scott**) are now teaching that the “guilty party” can remarry after a divorce. Sunset’s apostate teaching on “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage” is known around the world — brotherhood wide.

The first I heard that SSOP “might” be teaching something it should not on the “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage” question was in 1978. Living in California at the time, I had returned to San Angelo, Texas, to perform a marriage for a lovely Christian young couple. While in San Angelo, my wife, Sue, and I visited with many of our old friends. An older couple we visited asked, “Before you go back to California are you going to Lubbock to visit with your parents?” I responded that I was. Then, this couple asked, “Will you do a favor for

us? Will you go to the Sunset Church of Christ and ask them where they stand on “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage?” This couple had a reason for wanting to know the answer to their question.

They had a niece whom they dearly loved and whom they had been financially helping through her schooling at Texas Tech. Only a few hours away from graduation and receiving her degree, she had abruptly dropped out of Texas Tech to enroll in the A.I.M. (Adventures In Missions) program at Sunset. Her aunt and uncle, the couple in San Angelo, learned that she had done so because she had fallen in love with a young man who was a student in the A.I.M. program. The young man in question had been married, but was divorced (and he did not have Scriptural authority to remarry). Sunset knew of the young man’s marriage and divorce. Thus, the couple in San Angelo was unable to understand why Sunset did nothing to discourage what people (from Lubbock to San Angelo) knew seemed likely to happen — an adulterous relationship as the result of an unscriptural marriage. Thus, the aunt and uncle in San Angelo asked me to look into the matter for them.

After arriving in Lubbock, at my earliest convenience I went to Sunset and visited with brother Paden in his office. During that visit, I conveyed to brother Paden the San Angelo couple’s concerns and asked him to respond to their questions relative to Sunset’s stand regarding what the Scriptures teach on “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.” With a prelude of mild bluster to express his “righteous indignation” about people blaming Sunset for this and that, brother Paden asked Marge Smith (then secretary of the Sunset School of Preaching) to retrieve two copies of a letter (one for the couple in San Angelo and one for me) that he had prepared to answer just such questions. The letter brother Paden provided me was

dated, March 6, 1973, and was addressed: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN. This meant, evidently, that as far back as early 1973, enough people were beginning to question Sunset's stand on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage" that, to save time, brother Paden produced a form letter and kept a supply of them on hand. Besides this, brother Paden's 1973 form letter revealed a number of other things.

In paragraph two of his March 6, 1973 letter, brother Paden implied that the students were to be blamed, not the school, for the school being called into question on the issue of "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage." Explaining the school's obligation, brother Paden stated, "Our task is to leave the student with a position which can be substantiated by a 'thus saith the Lord.'" In 1973, brother Paden said there was "a position" (singular) that could be Scripturally substantiated. Now, in 1997, I appeal to my brother, Cline Paden, to answer: "When it comes to the subject of 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage,' which 'position' (singular) does the Sunset Elders, the School of Preaching administrators and the faculty say can be substantiated by a thus saith the Lord?" The temperature in *Gehenna* will drop to below 32 degrees Fahrenheit before brother Paden will answer that very simple question. Why? Because brother Paden knows that the *teachers*, in what is now called the "Sunset International Bible Institute" (S.I.B.I.), advocate "practically every viewpoint that anyone has ever entertained" on the subject of "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," and that they "present these positions in class in the form of questions and comments." In other words, today (1997), the teachers at Sunset are guilty of doing the very thing that brother Paden condemned the students for doing in 1973. Indeed, Sunset has changed — not for the better, but for the worse.

Again, in paragraph two of his March 6, 1973 letter, brother Paden emphatically stressed, "We cannot control what a student may believe, for he may have believed it long before coming to Sunset. *We can only control what he is taught*" (emphasis mine, TJH). Certainly, what is

taught in the School of Preaching *can be controlled* by the elders at Sunset. That is not the question. The question is: "Are Sunset's elders controlling what is taught on 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage' in the School of Preaching?" Is it because of their control that Richard Rogers, Ted Stewart, and Truman Scott teach what they do on the subject in question? Brother Paden has been heard to say, "Yes, but we also have Norman Gipson and Ed Wharton who hold the 'traditional view' on 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.'" Question: "Is it because the elders are in control of what is taught in the School of Preaching that there are conflicting doctrines taught on the subject of 'Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage' at Sunset?" Are the Sunset elders themselves divided on this issue? If there is only one position, "a position" (singular), "which can be substantiated by a 'thus saith the Lord,'" as implied in brother Paden's 1973 letter; and, if Sunset's elders "control *what is...taught*" in the School of Preaching; then, Why are there contradictory, diametrically opposed doctrines being taught by the instructors relative to "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage" at Sunset? Why can we not get straight answers (in my case, "any answers") to these questions?

The Bible is "all sufficient" (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; 2 Cor. 9:8). It is amazing beyond belief that a Sunset elder (if not all the elders), not to mention the former Director of the School of Preaching, would deny the "all sufficiency" of the Scriptures. Yet, that is exactly what brother Paden did under point 5 in his March 6, 1973 letter. When it comes to the remarriage of the "now-put-away-guilty-party," brother Paden wrote, "It may be inferred that since he is not now married to anyone he may for that reason be justified in joining himself to another, yet *the position is devoid of outright Biblical consideration, and is clothed in an atmosphere of doubts and uncertainties. To speak either way is to speak from indefiniteness — and from indefiniteness on any Biblical subject one should not presume to speak authoritatively*" (emphasis mine, TJH). I take this to be an attempt by brother Paden to

"hedge" on the issue. How ludicrous it is to say that the remarriage of the "now-put-away-guilty-party" is "devoid of outright Biblical consideration." What about Matthew 5:32, 19:3-12, Mark 10:2-12 and Luke 16:18? There is no "atmosphere of doubts and uncertainties" in what the Bible teaches on the subject of "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage!" It would seem that it is brother Paden who is "devoid of outright Biblical consideration" and who is trying to create an "atmosphere of doubts and uncertainties." On "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," there is no "indefiniteness" to be found in the Bible's teaching. Therefore, if one preaches the "all authoritative" Word of God, he speaks "authoritatively" when he teaches that any divorced person (except the one who has put away his mate for the cause of fornication) commits adultery if he remarries. Brother Paden needs to answer, "Is the Bible 'all sufficient,' or not?"

If, "To speak either way is to speak from indefiniteness — and from indefiniteness on any Biblical subject one should not presume to speak authoritatively," then why did brother Paden conclude: "Therefore, Sunset School of Preaching does not, and will not teach that the guilty party may remarry?" How could he draw that conclusion? Would he not be guilty of speaking authoritatively where he had just said "one should not presume to speak authoritatively?"

Since March 6, 1973, has Sunset "changed" what it teaches concerning "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage?" Remember, then, brother Paden wrote, "Therefore, Sunset School of Preaching does not, and will not teach that the guilty party may remarry." Remember, he also said, "We can...control what...is taught." If they are controlling what is taught on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," and if Rogers, Scott, Stewart and others are teaching "that the guilty party may remarry," then Sunset has changed. If Sunset still wants the teachers to "not teach that the guilty party may remarry," and if Rogers, Scott, Stewart and others are teaching "that the guilty party may remarry," then Cline Paden and the other Sunset elders do not (or cannot) "control what...is

taught." I, for one, am convinced that the Sunset elders are in control of what is taught. Thus, Sunset has changed (not for the better, but for the worse) when it comes to what is taught relative to "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage." Again, this is but an example of one of Sunset's changes when it comes to doctrinal matters.

Since Sunset comes to individual Christians and to untold numbers of congregations seeking students and financial support, she ought to be more than willing to answer questions about "who" is teaching there — and "what" is being taught there. Therefore, I ask the Sunset elders to answer: "Since you brethren are in control of what is taught in the School of Preaching on the subject of "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," please inform me and other interested brethren, specifically and plainly, what do you expect your instructors to teach on this subject?" Further, I ask the Sunset elders, "If an instructor teaches something other than what you have authorized him to teach on "Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," what actions do you take in regard to that teacher?"

If any school is teaching doctrines contrary to the word of God, we must not send students and/or financial support to that school. To do so is to support and help in the spread of false doctrines. Any school that will not answer questions about what it teaches *on any subject* must be rejected when it comes seeking financial support and/or students. More than that, any graduate of that school must be carefully scrutinized when it comes to what he preaches and teaches. Although I am an alumnus of the Sunset School of Preaching, and although it breaks my heart to say these things, **I ADVISE BRETHREN — DO NOT SEND STUDENTS OR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO SUNSET!** Why? Because false doctrines are being taught at Sunset. Because when Sunset is questioned about what is taught there, one either receives "double-talk" for an answer or receives no answers at all.

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THE FRUITS OF SIN

Recently a committee within a well known American denomination released a report which recommended their denomination accept practicing homosexuals into their church as well as unmarried heterosexual couples "living together." Needless to say there was an uproar among the conservative wing of that denomination. Ads were placed in newspapers around the nation denouncing the report as seeking to condone sin; which it was. The decent, God-fearing members of the denomination were outraged; as they should be. God's displeasure with sin, homosexual or heterosexual, is well stated in His word (Lev. 18:22-23; Rom. 1:21-32; I Cor. 6:9-10,18; Heb. 13:4).

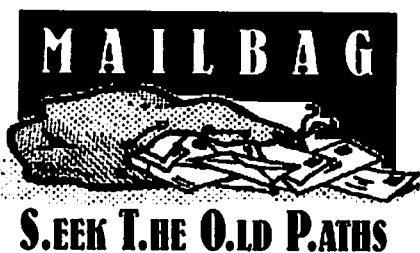
Even though this report will probably not be adopted at any convention of this denomination in the near future it does point out the sin inherent in any man-made religious organization. The same God who said, "*he hateth putting away*" (divorce, Malachi 2:16) also said through Paul, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement*" (1 Cor. 1:10). God does not want many "churches" but one body, the church of Christ (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4). He certainly does not want a polyglot of religious confusion with each party "doing its own thing" yet still claiming to have "unity in diversity" in Christ. How contrary to the spirit of unity for which Christ prayed (John 17:20-21)!

I am thankful for the **congregational autonomy** of the New Testament church. Congregation "A" has no scriptural authority to prescribe what congregation "B" can practice or teach. Yet they should lovingly point out doctrinal error and even disassociate themselves from an apostate congregation if necessary (Rom. 16:17). This is one way the Lord isolates apostasy and keeps it from spreading to other parts of the body (1 Cor. 11:18-19).

Any denomination begins harmlessly enough. A religious conglomeration of individual congregations forms which follows some leader espousing doctrines foreign to the New Testament. Again contrary to the New Testament, they form a denomination with each local congregation giving up some of its autonomy in the process. They organize conventions or ruling bodies which make rules and regulations not found in the New Testament. A bloated bureaucracy follows, demanding part of the "tithes and offerings" of the local body. More and more the local body is governed by a hierarchy in a distant city. Gradually the denominational leadership becomes imbued with secular ideas and modernism. Soon this man-made monstrosity is far removed from the idealism of its founder and even the beliefs of the laity. And, one of the fruits of the sin of denominationalism is the acceptance of anti-biblical positions on morality.

Let us use this "report" to show our religious neighbors the sin of denominationalism. If we show them this sin, they may become convinced of the other errors they embrace concerning infant baptism, the Lord's supper, baptism, false worship, the church, etc. Perhaps we can teach them the simplicity and God blessed obedience of New Testament Christianity. They can be freed from creeds and the doctrines of men and be simply Christians, saved by the blood of Christ. God grant us the opportunity and the love to do this!

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

me to travel. I know all the speakers. You make good choices. Keep up the good work. God bless you and the elders" ...*Daryl Busby, Sullivan, MO*. "We just wanted to drop you a line to thank you and the elders for such a good lectureship. We enjoyed the spiritual food and also the hospitality of the good food that was served each day and thank the ladies for doing such a good job. We thank God for good men like you, so keep up the good work" ...*Virgil & Ima Lee Cretsinger, Shady Valley, TN*. "I am an avid reader of *Seek The Old Paths* and support whole heartedly anyone who supports the gospel. Please pass my appreciation of this paper on to all who are involved in publishing and circulating it. You will never know until eternity how much good you are doing" ...*George Sellers, Duluth, GA*. "I really look forward to *Seek The Old Paths* each month. God bless you and the elders at East Corinth church and keep up the good work" ...*Michael Estey, Tuscumbia, AL*. "Thank you and all of the elders for your stand for the Truth of God's Holy Word. God bless all of you." The apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 3:4 that, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery (gospel) of Christ." Therefore, when Paul says the following, those who love the truth "that they might be saved" (2 Thess. 2:10) should have no difficulty in understanding. Paul makes it clear that for one to be "strong in the Lord," for one to "be able to withstand the wilves of the devil" and for one to "obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:10) that one must "put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:10-11; 1 Thess. 5:8). One cannot leave off "the breastplate of the hope of salvation." One cannot discard "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." To not have one's "loins girt about with the truth of the Gospel and to not have the shield of faith" is to fall short of what God demands (Eph. 6:13-17). The text states, "the whole armour of God" and anything less just won't do. Each of these apply directly to Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 4:15; Rev. 14:12; 2 Tim. 2:10). Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). When one puts on Christ, that one has "put on the whole armour of God." "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27) ...*James Fisher, Morgan City, LA*. "During the past few months I have missed receiving *Seek The Old Paths*. I would very much appreciate being put back on the mailing list for this fine publication" ...*Bruce Ligon, Plain Dealing, LA*. "Just read a copy of the Feb. issue and enjoyed it very much so please add me to your list" ...*Lewis Cantril, Salida, CO*.



"Please take me off your mailing list. I shudder to think of what Postal workers think if they read any of this as it comes through. Such harm to our witness of Christ in our lives" ...*Doug Jantz, Winona, Missouri*. [NOTE: Do you know of a better, more economical way to inform brethren of error and those teaching it? It is a command that we do so (Rom. 16:17). The world needs to be taught the Truth, even that there are and will be false teachers who teach things they ought not (Titus 1:11). Though we do not wish to display "dirty laundry" before the world, the world also needs to know that we are not afraid to acknowledge error, wherever it exists, even in the church; and, that we are willing to oppose it with the Truth of the Gospel even among ourselves. Oh, by the way, I don't read anything in the New Testament about being a "witness" of Christ. I wasn't there (in the first century) and neither was anyone else living today. Witnessing is a denominational concept that is void of Bible authority — gmr]. "Your web site is excellent" ...*Virgil Poe, Katy, TX*. "I just viewed your page and what the churches of Christ are trying to do by Christ's authority (Col. 3:17). The page looks good" ...*Bill Sexton, Van Buren, AR*. "It is great to have previous issues of *Seek The Old Paths* available on the internet! In researching a scripture, I found a previous article to be very helpful! Thanks" ...*Bruce Lewis, Huntsville, AL*. "The lead article "The Refutation of the Irrefutable Constituent Element Argument" by Tom L. Bright (Aug/97) is one of the best written articles I have read. I would like to congratulate him on his professionalism in writing and

"You and the brethren at East Corinth are doing a great job combating error. *Seek The Old Paths* has to be one of the best in the brotherhood. I can't wait to get my copy each month and don't put it down until I read every word. I only wish I could attend the lectureship but my health will not allow

his defense of the Truth. Mr. Bright did not engage in any name calling and presented all of his arguments very logically. Please continue to have articles of this high caliber" ...*Glen Norman*. "I read and respect you for the stand that is made for the church and most of all for Christ" ...*Charles C. Ainsworth, Looxahoma, MS*. "Appreciate your stand for the old paths" ...*James Gammon, Sr.* "HELP! The article "People Change, Times Change..." in the Sep/97 *Seek the Old Paths* is exactly what my congregation needs to hear. I mean the whole congregation!! Please tell me what it would take on my part to be able to send you a directory of my church brothers and sisters who desperately need to hear this information. We have just had to flee ourselves, but we love them all so much and would love to see them mend their ways before it is also too late. I was attending the Summerville Church of Christ and my family had to leave for reasons so similar to the ones in Jerry Pence's article it's frightening. I will gladly pay whatever costs are involved in getting each family a copy of this article and even on your mailing list" ...*deebunch@bellsouth.net*. [NOTE: we are happy to supply free back issues to those who need them. Just send us your mailing list and we will add them — gmr].

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