

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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"THIS THING WAS NOT DONE IN A CORNER"

Gary McDade

The vanity of seeking the traditions of men over the word of God is legendary. Jesus said, "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).

A parachurch organization currently known as MUM (Memphis Urban Ministry) was formed in 1994 for the purpose of planting new churches in Memphis. It was then called MCPM (Memphis Church Planting Ministry) and was led by a full-time coordinator/church planter, Ron Cook, and by a steering committee representing congregations involved in church planting.¹ *Mission: Memphis* was a quarterly newsletter designed to inform and involve people in MCPM, which is now, MUM.² Subsequent publications such as *Vision for the City* published by the Highland Street Church of Christ which sponsors MUM and *Up Close and Personal: Embracing the Poor*³ written by Harold Shank, Anthony Wood, and Ron Bergeron about their experiences in MUM have continued to publicize MUM and the churches under its canopy of organization.⁴ The published "Vision Statement" of MUM is "The goal of Memphis Urban Ministry is to involve area churches of Christ to establish ethnically diverse city churches, locally led, to holistically serve and evangelize their communities."⁵ *Harding* magazine, an interna-

tionally circulated periodical, published in August of 1995 the story of the Downtown Church in Memphis.

The Raleigh Community Church opened its doors June 15, 1997, as announced in *Mission: Memphis* in the winter edition of the same year, page 3. It was in the spring of the following year when *Mission: Memphis* carried the background of the new church's beginning. Sadly, it has taken all these years for some brethren in Memphis to become concerned about whether or not MUM and its predecessor MCPM is scriptural. As more and more unscriptural actions are taking place in MUM churches such as testifying, women leading in prayer in the assembly, and women waiting on the Lord's table, some who have been involved and apparently cannot or will not decide whether they are for or against MUM are claiming earlier exposures of their support are misrepresentations. The tract I wrote in 2000 on *The Community Church* is said to contain a misrepresentation on page 23 of the activities of the Boulevard and Chelsea Avenue congregations' participation back then. Please, bear in mind that the infor-

mation quoted in that tract is taken verbatim from *Mission: Memphis*, the newsletter of MCPM, which is now, MUM. If Boulevard did not organize "an area-wide fund-raising dinner" and if the Chelsea Avenue singers did not hold a "special concert to encourage Raleigh Community members and inspire seekers," then they need to take that up with Ron Cook and MUM because he is the gentleman who reported these practices for all to see through his newsletter. Quoting Paul before King Agrippa, "This thing was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26).

The objections that observant, concerned brethren and I have raised come not from misunderstandings about private, personal differences but from well-established, publicly published sources such as those mentioned earlier. Matthew 18:15-17 applies to the former, and I Timothy 1:3 and II Timothy 4:2 applies to the latter. The only time anyone currently associated with MUM ever came to me in private was in the early 90s when Ron Bergeron came to my

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This Thing...



Editorial...

RESPECTING THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES #2

INSPIRATION FORBIDS US SPEAKING WHERE GOD HAS NOT SPOKEN

Paul wrote, *“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us **not to think** [of men] **above that which is written**, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another”* (1 Cor. 4:6). We must not think of men (or any other subject or matter) above and beyond what God has revealed in his Word. We must not presume to know what God has not declared. We must not act, proceed, undertake or perform in realms or areas where God has not authorized (legislated) our actions. This verse clearly sanctions the silence of the Scriptures.

The apostle John declared the same thing, *“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”* (2 John 1:9). To either violate what God has said (transgress) or to not be restrained by what God has said (abideth not, goeth onward), is a violation of God’s will. To do a religious act without Bible authority (book, chapter and verse) is not abiding in the doctrine of Christ. This verse clearly sanctions the silence of the Scriptures.

John also wrote, *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall **add unto these things**, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall **take away from the words of the book** of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and [from] the things which are written in this book”* (Rev. 22:18-19). If we ignore what God has specified (take away) or teach and practice (add to) what God has not authorized, we stand condemned. If

we speak, allow, permit, grant, license or authorize on the basis of the silence of the Scriptures, then there is no end to the things we can teach and practice in the name of religion. These verses clearly sanction the silence of the Scriptures.

Many other passages forbid adding to or taking from God’s word (Deut. 4:2; 13:32; Prov. 30:6; Gal. 1:6-9).

APPLICATION OF THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Many simple observations have been used to illustrate the principle of acting on silence. For example:

If a mother sends her son to the grocery store and tells him to buy a loaf of bread and a gallon of milk and he returns with bread and milk along with bananas, candy and a magazine, he’s got some explaining to do. He may argue that he was not told he couldn’t buy those things, but his mother’s silence about them forbid his purchase of them. A mother does not have to go through the list of the hundreds of items in the store and tell her son not to buy those things. Her silence does not give him liberty to buy what he wants. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

What would you think if you gave the pharmacist a prescription to fill and he included another medicine or two? He’s in big trouble! He may say the doctor didn’t tell him not to include other drugs. But, everyone knows the doctor’s prescription (by its silence) forbid any other drugs. The pharmacist has authority to act according to the prescription — adding nothing and deleting nothing. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

What about water baptism? Some religious groups sprinkle and some include infants. They can argue that the Bible does not say “thou shalt not sprinkle,” “thou shalt not pour,” “thou shalt not baptize babies.”

However, the Bible authorizes immersion (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12) for penitent believers (Acts 2:38). Its silence on sprinkling and pouring and infants does not authorize sprinkling, pouring or baptizing babies — its silence forbids it. However, the Greek word *baptidzo* demands immersion. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

The Bible authorizes singing and making melody in your heart (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). But someone says, “It does not say we can’t play instruments.” But, the Bible’s silence on the subject forbids the use of mechanical instruments of music. People often argue that we are making a law God did not make when we forbid mechanical music since the Bible does not forbid it. However, the Bible does forbid it in its silence. By God telling us what to do (sing) and use (lips, Heb. 13:15; heart, Eph. 5:19), he eliminates having to tell us what not to do (play) and use (mechanical instruments of music). Those who contend for their use are adding to God’s word. They are speaking where God (the Bible) has not spoken and stand condemned before God (Rev. 22:18-19; II John 9-11). They are allowing that which the Bible forbids in its silence. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

Many people count beads, burn incense and pray to Mary. They may argue that the Bible says nothing about these things. It is silent! But, does that fact allow their use or authorize their practice? If it does, then there is no end to the things that could be used or practiced in the name of religion. God authorizes what he wants and his silence forbids all he does not want — it eliminates everything else. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

Many religious groups have synods, councils, conferences, high ranking clerics or even a pope. The Bible says nothing about these things. Does its silence grant men liberty to act as they so desire? No it does not. The Bible says Jesus is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:15). That eliminates everything else. God did not have to specify every type of organization he did not want. Silence is not only important, it is essential!

When God authorizes a thing to be done, His silence on the subject

forbids everything else. For example:

The authority for Noah to use gopher wood in building the ark forbid him using oak or pine or poplar (Gen. 6:14).

The authority for Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice forbid him offering Ishmael instead (Gen. 22:2).

The authority to use fire from the altar forbid using a “strange” or different fire (Lev. 16:12; Num. 16:46; Lev. 10:1-2).

The authority to use a lamb in the passover meal forbid offering another kind of animal (Exodus 12).

The authority for Moses to speak to the rock forbid him hitting it (Num. 20:7-12).

The authority for Moses to hit the rock forbid him speaking to it (Exodus 17:6).

The authority for priests of the

tribe of Levi to offer sacrifices forbid someone from another tribe doing so (Exodus 28:1; 28:43—29:1; Num. 18:21,26; Heb. 5:1; 1 Sam. 13:5-14).

The authority for the high priest to be from the tribe of Levi forbid one from another tribe being high priest (Exodus 27:21—28:1; Heb. 7:12-14).

The authority for unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in the Lord’s supper forbids hot dog buns and orange juice (Luke 22:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25).

The authority to sing and make melody in our heart in worship to God forbids playing mechanical instruments of music, including humming, thumping, booming, whistling, oohing or anything but singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

The authority to give as we’ve been prospered on the first day of the

week forbids giving on any other day and it forbids tithing, selling or fund raising (1 Cor. 16:2).

The authority to “preach the word” forbids preaching anything else (2 Tim. 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9).

Silence is not only important, it is essential!

CONCLUSION

The Bible clearly demands authority for all we say and do (Col. 3:17). To act without authority brings God’s displeasure upon us (as seen in the many examples above). God’s silence speaks volumes. We must not presume to speak where God has not spoken. We must not go beyond that which is written (1 Cor. 4:16). This is such a simple lesson that so many refuse to learn and heed.

Respect Bible (God’s) authority!

LEADERS CAUSE THEM TO ERR

James E. Farley

“**F**or the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed” (Isaiah 9:16).

I have a great regard for those who serve as elders in the Lord’s church. I am thankful we have men who have prepared themselves to meet the imperative qualifications of I Timothy 3, Titus 1, and I Peter 5. These are men who willingly take on what we sometimes refer to as “an awesome responsibility.” It is awesome, for they are men who will indeed be subject to a harsher judgment (James 3:1). You see, they watch for the souls of those under their care, and will give an account of how they’ve done their heaven-ordained work (Heb. 13:17). Good and godly elders are worthy of honor — some of “double honor” (Rom. 13:7; I Tim. 5:17). Members of the church need to know their elders, know the kind of labor they are involved with, and the stress they labor under. They need to be esteemed highly because of the work they do for the Lord (I Thess. 5:12-13). We need to do all we can to lift up their hands as they lead us into battle against Satan and his cohorts, and as they struggle with us to win souls for the meek and lowly

Jesus (Heb. 12:12; an illusion to Exodus 17:10-13; cf. also Isa. 35:3-4).

But beware elders, and beware members who labor under an eldership. Elders can and sometimes do err, and when they do they lead their flock into error with them. Let us never forget that the first major apostasy was a departure from God’s ordained plan for the organization of and leadership in the church. This was foretold by the Holy Spirit through Paul (Acts 20:25-32).

We are living in a time when error among the people who name the name of Jesus is rampant. Many congregations of the churches of Christ are being swamped by tidal waves brought on by smooth talkers with fair speeches (Rom. 16:17-18). If elderships had been watching as they should have been, and stopping the mouths of the gainsayers as they should have been, many of these false preachers would not have gotten to first base with their pernicious ways (Acts 20:25-32; Heb. 12:12; Titus 1:9-11). Some have crept in (Jude 1:4) and have poisoned the flock of God while “shepherds” have sat idly by and slept, allowing it to happen; some elderships even encouraging it to happen! When false

brethren came in among the churches of the first century, they were not given even an hour to discharge and inject their venom (Compare Gal. 2:4-5).

In the 1979 Freed-Hardeman College Lectureship book, Andrew Connally wrote on “The Authority of Elders.” On the duty of elders he wrote concerning: a) The duty of self-examination (Acts 20:28), b) The duty of watchfulness (Acts 20:31; cf. Ezekiel 3:16-21), c) The duty of meeting the forces of error (Titus 1:9), d) The duty to plan worldwide evangelism (Mark 16:15-16), e) The duty to keep the church pure (I Thess. 5:14; II Thess. 3:6), and f) The duty of leadership in the local work (Acts 20:28).

Commenting on “The elder’s duty for watchfulness,” he wrote, “God’s elders must be ever vigilant to guard, protect and keep God’s heritage safe from error both from without and within. Perhaps no other passage in all of God’s word better expresses the responsibilities of a watchman than does Ezekiel 3:16-21. An elder’s soul is dependent on his faithfulness as a

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**Leaders Cause Them
To Err...**

CAN A CHRISTIAN STILL BE AN EVOLUTIONIST?

Brad Harrub

If one were to believe everything the scientific community has offered regarding man's origins, we would find that very few theories include acts by a supernatural Creator. In fact, scientists are quick to point out that the Universe took billions of years to form, and thus it would be absurd to believe that it was created in just six days. For instance, consider what Thomas Hayden recently wrote when he added another "certainty" of life, besides taxes and death. His effort to shore up the ever-faltering theory of evolution was the cover story of the July 29, 2002 issue of U.S. News & World Report. In explaining "how evolution works, and why it matters more than ever," Hayden stated: "It's an everyday phenomenon, a fundamental fact of biology as real as hunger and as unavoidable as death" (2002, 133[4]:43).

Sadly, this type of grandstanding and propagandizing in the media occurs all too often. And people by the millions accept it as the "final word" on the subject — without any real knowledge as to what the evidence truly reveals. Even within the church, Christians often subconsciously find themselves favoring science over the Bible. We have forgotten the Truth on the matter, which can be summed up simply with the first ten words that appear in the Bible: "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1, emp. added). If this is not true, then every word that follows should be called into question.

Because of the prevailing idea of an ancient Cosmos, many people have tried to find ways to fit evolution and its billions-of-years time frame into the biblical account of creation. In essence, they still espouse belief in God and the Bible, but they also pledge a great deal of allegiance to science and the evolutionary theory. As the old adage says, they want to "have their cake and eat it, too." But can both the Bible and evolutionary theory be true? People cling-

ing to both the Bible and evolution are commonly known as "theistic evolutionists." "Theistic" comes from the Greek *theos*, which means "God." Thus, theistic evolutionists believe God does exist, but they also hold to the theory of evolution as true. They rationalize their beliefs by stating that "yes, God created the heavens and the Earth," but then He used (or allowed) evolutionary processes to produce the Universe we see today.

Thus, "Bible believers" find themselves in the awkward position of compromising the opening chapters of the Bible. If Genesis 1-11 is tossed aside as merely a mythological story, then we must toss out the entire Bible because the one major theme that is taught throughout the Bible is redemption. Man's relationship with God started at the pinnacle of Creation week in the Garden and degenerated from there. Christians need to be fully aware that theistic evolution teaches that man started out at the bottom and worked his way to the top (via the old amoeba-to-man story). Therefore, either man started at the top and fell, as the Bible indicates, or he started at the bottom and rose to the top, as evolution supposes. Both cannot be correct! The prophets long ago declared the fall of humans, and the resulting need for a Savior. Scripture indicates that this was the reason for Christ's death — to bring men back into a covenant relationship with God. If men truly did not fall as described in the Creation account, then why did Jesus Christ, the Son of God, come to this planet and suffer a cruel death on the cross? Additionally, consider the following:

Surely evolution will not have to reverse itself and concede that it reached its zenith with the birth of the Christ child a long, long time ago. Surely this colossal system will not have to concede that it is less able now to produce a greater than Jesus than it did produce two thousand years ago. If evolution is not now able to produce a greater than Jesus, then

it seems the system has ceased to be evolution and has become devolution, at least in one sense? (Taylor, 1974).

Today, this theory appears more like "devolution" than devolution. As long as we are tossing aside Scripture, we might as well get out our scissors and cut out all references to the Creation, starting with the Gospel recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Jesus Christ Himself made reference to the Creation when He stated in Matthew 19:4 (c.f. Mark 10:6): "*Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female.*" These words indicate that Adam and Eve had been on the Earth "from the beginning of Creation" (Mark 10:6). Of course we also would have to throw out John, because the first few verses of chapter one review the beginning and Creation. Other Scriptures such as Acts 4:24, Acts 17:25, Romans 1:20, Colossians 1:16, 1 Timothy 2:13, Hebrews 1:2, 1 Peter 4:19, and Revelation 4:11 also would be called into question if the Creation account is merely a nice "story" and not historically accurate. As a matter of fact, the only books that do not refer to the Creation in some form are the books of Jude, Philemon, and 2 and 3 John!

Additionally, if we do not accept that God created the Heaven and the Earth in six literal days, then we are making Jesus Christ our Savior, a liar. Jesus stated: "*But from the beginning of the Creation male and female he made them*" (Mark 10:6), affirming that Adam and Eve were on the Earth since the beginning of Creation. Paul affirmed in Romans 1:20-21 that the things God had made had been "perceived" even "since the Creation of the world." According to evolutionists, man did not come into the picture until about 3-4 million years ago. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that if the Earth is supposedly 5-6 billion years old, then the last 3-4 million is not, by any stretch of the imagination, "from the beginning." Rather, it

is “from the end.” Therefore we are left with a choice: either Jesus Christ lied and the evolutionists are correct, or we can believe that the words Jesus Christ spoke are true, and therefore evolution is 100% wrong. The belief in theistic evolution allows for the Savior to be called a liar!

Ah, but you say, “Adam was just a mythological creature. We know today that man originated from a Neanderthal-type creature.” However, if this is true, why did the inspired apostle Paul pen these words: “*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*” (1 Cor. 15:22), and then in reference to Christ he wrote, “*And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit*” (1 Cor. 15:45)? If Adam and Eve are merely mythological, does this mean that this “last Adam,”

Jesus Christ, was a mythological creature, as well?

Reference: Taylor, Robert (1974), “More Problems for Theistic Evolu-

tion,” Gospel Advocate, January 3.

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News Brief...

Notice this little lectureship series from the 2003 ACU Lectureship catalog: “SEEKING PEACE IN TRANSITION: STORIES OF THREE CHURCHES.” Monday, February 24, 2 p.m. — “Monterey and Worship” by Barry Stephens of Lubbock, TX. “Transitions are an inevitable part of congregational life. Some transitions are minor, but others significantly challenge the way a church conceives its life. How can churches maintain their peace in the midst of transition? In this class, three churches, (Monterey, Lubbock, TX.; Garnett Road, Tulsa, OK, and Highland, Abilene, TX) describe their journey through significant transition, sharing both the things they did well and the things they wish they had done better.”

Sounds like a journey to Hell to me. As I recall, Monterey was an active participant in the Graham Crusade in Lubbock a few years ago. They now have two worship services on Sunday, “Contemporary” and “Traditional.” If I were a betting man I would bet that the “traditional” is not that traditional. On Tuesday, February 25 they have “Garnett Road and Leadership” by Jon Mullican of Tulsa, OK. And on Wednesday, February 26 they have “Highland and the Role of Women” by David Wray of Abilene, TX.

Future faithful church historians will note this compendium of apostasy. Brother West, I hope you are taking notes!

“They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time I punish them, says the Lord” (Jer. 6:14 NKJ).

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I never lose my sense of amazement every year when I check out the catalog for the annual ACU Lectureship in Abilene, TX. This year is no exception with the theme of “Welcoming the Reign of God.” It always seems to chronicle the “new” trends in apostasy. Notice the following: Monday, February 24, 8:30 a.m. Lecture by Jack Reese (I think he is still chair of the Bible Dept.). Title: “Out of the Quiet; Taize Worship as a source of Renewal and Reconciliation (Part I).” “The river of worship renewal should be fed by many streams. This class will explore the possibilities for renewal emerging from the Taize movement, an international fellowship committed to simplicity, confession, and reconciliation. Come learn about and experience the ancient yet contemporary worship that characterizes the Taize movement.”

Sounds like a holy “wow” to me. Just like the apostles did, eh? I looked these folks up on the Taize website and it is mostly Catholic in emphasis. ACU is so enamored with them that they printed this in the FRONT of the catalog concerning this “worship experience”: “Join us Sunday through Tuesday evening after the evening lecture in the lobby of the Williams Performing Arts Center.” Sounds like they discovered some new gimmick for “spirituality” and “experiencing God.” I wonder if they offer the Lord’s supper then. I imagine they also offer a free tape of Benedictine monks humming. Maybe they even shave the top of their heads and walk around in robes? Apostasy always leads to further apostasy. These folks have gone off the deep end!

Rolf L. Ruffner, Carlsbad, NM

This Thing...

(Continued from page 9)

office at the Gragg Avenue Church of Christ one day to ask me what we did to start the Horton Gardens Church of Christ. When I told him we taught and preached the Gospel through Bible correspondence courses, personal home Bible studies, a two-week tent meeting, and Gospel meetings, I never saw or heard from him again. Exposures of MUM churches and the Cordova Community Church have been made not on private conversations with its leaders but on publicly published and widely circulated printed materials, i.e., books, periodicals, newsletters, bulletins, and websites, that they themselves have made available “to involve area churches of Christ.”

In view of the upcoming area-wide youth conference slated to be held at the Raleigh Community Church of Christ in 2003, perhaps fewer congregations will be drawn into this movement by seeing a review of the church’s doctrinal stance that is a matter of public record and refuse to promote or participate in advancing the unscriptural MUM churches. People are asking the question, “What’s wrong with it?” The following four items are listed for investigation: (1) The wrong name, (2) The wrong terminology, (3) The wrong pattern, and (4) The wrong organization. (The wrong worship was touched upon earlier).

One, **the wrong name.** Identifying the church as a “community church” gives it the wrong name. In the March and April 2000 issues of *The Christian Chronicle* the Community Church movement as it has emerged within churches of Christ across the United States was presented. The use of new sounding names like “New Covenant Christian Fellowship,” “Christ’s Community Church,” “Oak Tree Church,” “Servants of Christ,” and “Grace Church” were said to break the barriers of prejudice with the “unchurched” and make them feel less threatened by “traditional” names. This paper has a circulation of 103,000, so it is not surprising that some churches of Christ across the country who are not hearing preaching on the identity of the church from the Bible and are being

told “this will help us grow” are adopting these new names. Rick Warren wrote in *The Purpose Driven Church*, “The spiritual terminology that Christians are familiar with is just gibberish to unbelievers.”⁶

The vanity of seeking the traditions of men over the word of God is legendary (Matt. 15:9). Jesus said, “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). The church of Christ is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:23-33). How should a husband feel when his wife finds excuses not to wear his name? One thing all those in the “Community Church of Christ,” whether it is Cordova Community Church of Christ or Raleigh Community Church of Christ, have in common is to add or subtract the phrase “of Christ” depending on their surroundings like an unfaithful wife might take her wedding ring off or put it on depending on who is in the crowd.

Two, **the wrong terminology.** An article published in *Vision for the City* by Jim Harbin, preacher for Raleigh Community Church, bears the title “Purpose Driven Evangelism.” The term “purpose driven” is trademarked by Rick Warren, a Baptist preacher known for founding the Saddleback Community Church in Orange County, California.⁷ Additional books of his are *The Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* and *The Purpose Driven Life*. How could someone claim no affinity with the Community Church movement who is publishing, not similar terminology, but trademarked terminology coined by one of the foremost leaders in the movement? Obviously, brethren need to be reminded about I Peter 4:11, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” How much light did Isaiah say was in them if they spoke not according to the word of God (Isa. 8:20)? Is the brotherhood forgetting that the Lord alone has “the words of eternal life” (John 6:68)?

Three, **the wrong pattern.** In the article “Purpose Driven Evangelism” — Jim Harbin displays a reliance on Rick Warren’s book *The Purpose Driven Church* by using it as the pattern followed in their evangelism. Compare the following:

The Purpose Driven Church By Rick Warren

1. What do you think is the greatest need in this area?
2. Are you actively attending any church?
3. Why do you think most people don’t attend church?
4. If you were to look for a church to attend, what kind of things would you look for?
5. What could I do for you? What advice can you give to a minister who really wants to be helpful to people?⁸

“Purpose Driven Evangelism” By Jim Harbin

1. Are you currently attending a local church?
2. What do you think is the greatest need in this community?
3. Why do you think some people don’t attend church?
4. If you were looking for a church in the area, what would you want?
5. What advice would you give to our minister?⁹

Now, does anyone actually believe Raleigh Community Church is not looking to Saddleback Community Church for its pattern?

Four, **the wrong organization.** The opening paragraph gave the organizational structure of MUM and those familiar with the New Testament readily see why MUM is unscriptural. By its own admission, it has (1) a full-time leader, (2) “a steering committee representing congregations involved in church planting,” (3) a unique mission statement, i.e., “The goal of Memphis Urban Ministry is to involve area churches of Christ to establish ethnically diverse city churches, locally led, to holistically serve and evangelize their communities,” and (4) five local congregations under its control.

In contrast, the New Testament presents no organizational struc-

ture larger than the local congregation. The elders of each local congregation are answerable only to the chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ (Acts 14:23; I Peter 5:1-4). Unlike the Church of God in Christ with its worldwide headquarters in the old Chisca Hotel downtown and the lesser known Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ with its worldwide headquarters on White Station Road in East Memphis, the church of Christ has its headquarters in heaven (Phil. 3:20). The split in the American restoration movement that was noted in the United States Census Report of 1906 was propagated from two basic issues, mechanical instruments of music in worship and the American Christian Missionary Society. Hard lessons learned from this type of unscriptural organization presently could stand investigation and review.

What to Do?

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). *“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, nei-*

ther bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (II John 9-11). *“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* (Rev. 3:14-22).

ENDNOTES

¹Ron Cook, “Memphis Church Planting Ministry,” in *Mission: Memphis*, Ron Cook, ed., vol. 1 (winter, 1997), p.1.

²*Ibid.*

³The commendations of the content of the book on the back and in the flyleaf are from such personalities as Lynn Anderson, Maxie D. Dunnam, former Senior Pastor of Christ’s United Methodist Church in Memphis, and Max Lucado.

⁴These churches are known as The Downtown Church, Raleigh Community Church of Christ, Frayser Mission Church, Wonder City Church, and the Hispanic church at White Station Church of Christ (cf. *Vision for the City*, Anthony Wood, ed., September, 2000, pp.1-8.)

⁵*Ibid.*, p.1.

⁶Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven*[TM] Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), p.189.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp.190-191.

⁹Jim Harbin, “Purpose Driven Evangelism” in *Vision for the City*, Anthony Wood, ed., September, 2000, p.3.

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Leaders Cause Them To Err...

(Continued from page 11)

watchman. He shall give an account (Heb. 13:17); as a steward of God’s heritage it is required that a steward be faithful (I Cor. 4:2).”

Under the heading of “meeting the forces of evil”, brother Connally wrote, “So few elders ever do such in most congregations. Far too many of them preach ‘love, sweet love,’ while whole churches are steeped in sin and apathy. How many of them can actually defend the truth on marriage, divorce and remarriage? How many of them are prepared to meet the false philosophies and ungodly elements of liberalism in the church? Far too many of them cannot do this and do not want their preachers to do

it either! For shame!”

Under the heading of “keeping the church pure” he wrote, “Elders are commanded to discipline the ungodly members (II Thess. 3:6). To fail at this point is to court disaster and imperil their own souls. It is little wonder most congregations have so little influence in their communities. Their members are so ungodly their influence is a shame and disgrace and the elders tolerate it. Many, many times those in positions of leadership are the worse offenders! Every preacher I know has long lamented the negligence of elderships everywhere at this very point. Elders want preachers to defend their authority and to go to bat for them at the first sign of rebellion, but they steadfastly refuse to exercise that same authority to discipline the ungodly. Which is worse, those who

reject the authority of elders or elders who neglect the authority and refuse to discipline the ungodly or refuse to give every Christian a job and see that he does it? How sayest thou?”

Brethren, we need elders in every congregation. However, we need men who meet the qualifications, and men who will work the work as God has ordained it. Much of the trouble we are currently experiencing within the churches of Christ is due to a lack of qualified and willing leadership. Let us pray that the situation may be reversed. Let us work toward training men to become elders as God would have them to be.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

...**Serafin M. Calixto, Philippines.** "Thank you so much for *S.T.O.P.* We believe it to be one of the best publications in our brotherhood. It is heart breaking to see liberalism and praise worship taking over so many churches in Nashville, TN. It creeps in slowly and before you realize it there is a take over like Madison Church of Christ had. This was so sad. Thanks again" ...**Herb & Nancy Marlin, Nashville, TN.** "I heard that you have a wonderful paper that you put out once a month with good sound articles. I would like to receive it, and if there is a cost I will pay" ...**Curtis Watson, Clio, MI.** "Greetings to you in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I hope this letter finds you and yours in good spiritual health and prosperity. I am a preacher in Nigeria at Baeita church of Christ and I would like to receive *Seek the Old Paths* publication. A friend overseas send me one and I enjoyed it so much. It's help and encourages me and others to keep spreading the truth. Our Lord will continue to bless all your efforts to serve Him; As God will provide for you to donate to us. Our fervent prayer is that God will grant you and the ministry the strength to work for Christ" ...**E. O. Agbeyemi, Nigeria, West Africa.** "I would like to receive your *Seek the Old Paths* in the mail. It is a very good paper. It brings back information that I knew at one time but had forgotten. You can't find many people today who tells it like it is. It's very uplifting to me. Very good articles in it" ...**Name Withheld.** "You folks do great work! May our good God bless you in every possible way" ...**Al Sowins, Wallowa, OR.** "I appreciate the work that is being done by the East Corinth congregation. I have used *Seek the Old Paths* to supplement my private Bible study as well as sharing the publication with others. I am enclosing a donation to be credited to the Bookletmaker Fund" ...**Mary Lawrence, Fayetteville, GA.** "My son receives *Seek the Old Paths*. I read it and firmly believe you are standing for the truth. I pray you will continue to spread the Gospel through this means" ...**Helen Guthery, Broken Bow, OK.** "Thanks for sending *Seek the Old Paths* to the addresses I sent you. You are doing a good work. We look forward to receiving your publication" ...**Phyllis & Floyd Roe, Cushing, OK.** "I'd like to thank you for adding me to the *S.T.O.P.* mailing list as per our email conversation. Keep up the good work! You are helping more people than you will ever know. Enclosed is a check for \$50. Please use this in whatever manner you see fit to help in the production and distribution of *S.T.O.P.* Thank you once again for adding me to the list. May God bless your efforts and all those who work with you there at East Corinth" ...**Jake Taft, Cordova, AL.** "We enjoy *Seek the Old Paths*" ...**Joe Watts, Cordova, AL.** "Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am writing to cheer you up and to say thank you for being what you ought to be and for doing what you ought to do — exposing the deeds of darkness; standing firmly on the truth despite the spread of liberalism like wild grass fire. Thank you for not being ashamed of the sound doctrine of Christ despite criticism from fools who think themselves wise. Keep it up! *Seek the Old Paths*. I received two copies of *Seek the Old Paths* from brother James D. Cox (God bless him forever), and as usual, I and brother Fidelis here screened them. They are good and fruitful. So please keep it up. If not for our poor economy I could have contributed financially to the spread of this work. Please keep us on your mailing list. And tell the false teachers that only good works such as this are being appreciated by Christ and Christians. Keep us on the mail forever. Greet one another with a holy handshake" ...**Akpobome C.S. Diffre-Odiete and Fidelis O. Iwheri, Nigeria.** "We appreciate your sending us *Seek the Old Paths*. We enjoy reading each copy. Please keep up the good work" ...**W. D. Gower, Magnolia, AR.** "A good friend of mine, Douglas Hoff, sent me an email and highly recommended your lectureship book. He also talked of the great works you are doing in Corinth and I would like to encourage you to keep up that good work. Sound teaching and diligent study of God's Word is the only thing that will preserve the "old paths." My wife and I are determined to do all we can here in New York to help people learn the truth. It is through support from sound teaching and publications like yours that enable us here to grow. We can not thank you enough. If Doug says it's good then I know it is. I can't wait to

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