

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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What About Promise Keepers?

Jim Blankenship

My first encounter with "Promise Keepers" was in the August '95 issue of *"The Christian Chronicle"* which I usually scan through each month to see what's going on in the brotherhood, good or bad, and it's usually bad. I just sort of read the headlines and passed it off as another fad of our brethren. But it wasn't long before I saw a local television station (Cookeville, TN) where a local Baptist Church was having a "Promise Keepers" meeting and soon thereafter one of the Churches of God was having such a meeting. Then I thought, "Uh-Oh," because I had read it in the "Christian Chronicle" and the next thing I know the denominational world is promoting it. The local ads gave names and phone numbers to contact for further information, so I called several people trying to see what was going on. It was like "pulling teeth" to get the information. I was a day late and a dollar short of their local meetings to get the information first hand.

WHAT IS "PROMISE KEEPERS?" According to "The Chronicle" and "Promise Keepers" literature, "The idea for 'Promise Keepers' originated in 1990 between Colorado University Head football coach Bill McCartney and his friend Dave Wardell."

Their concept is good, which is, "to encourage men to fulfill their godly roles." However, it is also "a leading nondenominational organization devoted to fostering integrity in husbands and fathers." The founders "wanted to exhort men to

become better husbands and fathers and to grow closer to God." By all means, America needs these qualities badly with all the "dead beat dads" we have. Hasn't the New Testament taught this principle all the time (Eph. 5:22-23; 6:4; Col. 3:21)? Do we need a new set of rules for men in the 1990's? Of course not. God has "given us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Jude commands us to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (v.3).

Although the concept is good, the way they have of accomplishing it is another story. "It wasn't until 'Promise Keepers' emerged on the national scene that men come together in a large-scale mobilization to counter these problems," according to the "Chronicle" article. "Fifty thousand men packed into a sports stadium rise in unison. They shout, stomp their feet and cheer on their victor. Beach balls fly through the air. These 50,000 men are yelling...for Jesus," "The Chronicle" continued. Do we call this worship? Whatever happened to John 4:24 where Jesus commands to "worship in spirit and in truth?" Whatever happened to 1 Corinthians 14:40, "let all things be done decently and in order?" I have a hard time believing the Lord is pleased with shouting, stomping, cheering, beach balls, high-fives, and yelling for Jesus. Which way are we going (Matt. 7:13-14), the broad way or narrow way?

If that is not enough, consider the "Seven Promises" to which "Promise Keepers" pledge them-

selves, as per their literature:

1. "Honoring Jesus through worship, prayer and obedience to His word, through the power of the Holy Spirit."

New Testament Christians are commanded to "worship God" (John 4:24) not Jesus. What about John 9:31, Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46? Does not this also teach the direct operation of the Holy Spirit?

2. "Pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises."

Is not this also the purpose of the Lord's church and the Lord's Way (Acts 2:42; Phil. 1:3,5; 1 John 1:7)? Why do we need something else?

3. "Practicing spiritual, moral, ethical and sexual purity."

Isn't this also commanded in the New Testament (Matt. 5:8; Acts 15:29; 1 Tim. 1:5; 5:22; 1 Peter 1:22; James 1:27; 1 John 5:21; Jude 21)? Why look we for another?

4. "Building strong marriages and families through love, protection, and Biblical values."

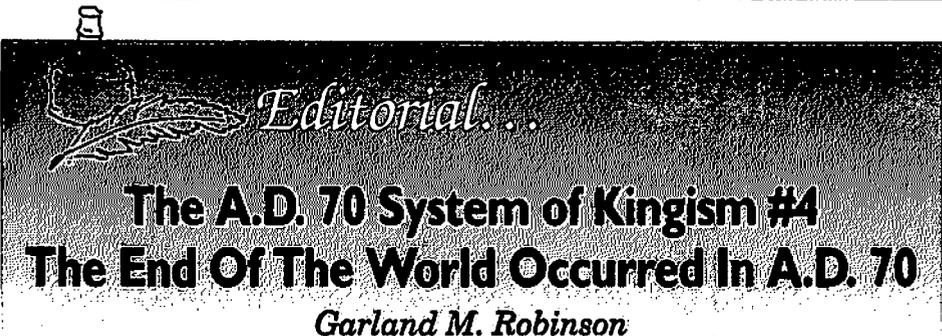
Again, isn't this Biblical teaching already (Gen. 2; Matt. 19-1-9; Eph. 5:22ff). Why do we need something more?

5. "Supporting the mission of the church by honoring and praying for his pastor and by actively giving his time and resources."

We fulfill the mission of the church by preaching the Gospel

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What About Promise Keepers...



Editorial...

The A.D. 70 System of Kingism #4 The End Of The World Occurred In A.D. 70

Garland M. Robinson

Before you question my sanity at the above heading, please take note that the system of "Realized Eschatology" teaches the world ended in A.D. 70. Of course you are probably now shaking your head and thinking, if that is so, what are we doing here. What has been going on the past 1,900 years? If there is no future end of the world, will the earth continue on and on? What's going on here?

Kingism says,

This was the end of the world, the destruction of the temple, and the coming of Christ (Matt. 24:1-3). This was when heaven and earth passed away (Matt. 24:35; Rev. 20:11). (*Spirit of Prophecy*, p.68).

A.D. 70 advocates make the references to the "end of the world" equivalent to the end of the "Jewish age." But, as we have seen in previous points, their forced interpretations will not hold up.

Matthew 24 is so clear and discerning as to the descriptions of both the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (vs.4-34) and the end of the world (yet future; vs.24:35 - 25:30) that it is hard to conceive how anyone can miss it. In verse one we read, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. ²And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. ³And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, *when shall these things be?* and *what shall be the sign of thy coming*, and *of the end of the world*" (Matt. 24:1-3)?

In Matthew 24:4, Jesus begins to answer their questions. He begins telling when these things shall be and what "signs" to notice that will

signal the approaching destruction. When the Christians observed these signs they were to escape to the mountains — leave Jerusalem. But in regards to the end of the world, there would be no "signs" given, for escape will not be possible! In verse 34 Jesus says, "...This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Everything preceding verse 34 would come to pass in "that generation" and there would be sign after sign to indicate its arrival. However, a sure and marked contrast to the destruction of Jerusalem is discussed beginning in verse 35. Whereas regarding the destruction of Jerusalem there were "signs" to watch for so that one would know when to leave the city; but concerning the end of the world, no signs would be given. "But of *that day and hour* knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (v.36). If "that day and hour" (v.36) is discussing the same event as "this generation" (v.34), then there is a certain and irreconcilable contradiction. The remainder of the chapter, as well as chapter 25, gives one example after another to show there would be NO "signs" or "warnings" as to when the end of the world would occur.

When the end of the world comes, it will be without warning. There will be absolutely no indication that such is about to happen. Notice the examples Jesus used to illustrate this truth: 1) Business will be as usual among men, just as it was when the flood came (24:37-41), 2) No one knows when a thief may break into his house (24:42-44), 3) A master comes home unannounced to recompense to his servants their due (24:45-51), 4) The 10 virgins had no indication when the bridge groom would come to take them to the wedding (25:1-13), 5) The man who travelled into a far country and left his

goods with his servants gave no indication when He would return.

This physical world in which we now live and the entire material universe will one day be destroyed so that it will no longer exist. By inspiration, the apostle Peter, very ably and plainly said, in talking about this physical world, *"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."* ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.* ¹¹Seeing then that *all these things shall be dissolved*, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, ¹²Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein *the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat*" (2 Pet. 3:7, 10-12). He is plainly talking about this physical world (2 Peter 3:3-6). As the flood of water in Noah's day destroyed the earth, the day is yet future when "fervent heat" will melt the earth, all the works that are in it, and all elements of the universe. Everything will be dissolved (v.10-11)! There's no way to strain a spiritual fulfillment out of this text!

Hebrews one discusses the majesty and deity of Jesus the Christ. It reveals that God, through Jesus, made the worlds (material universe) "in the beginning" and maintains them by the power of His Word (1:2-3,10; cf. Gen. 1:1). Jesus is eternal (1:8), but His creation, the "worlds," are temporary. ¹¹"*They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;* ¹²And *as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail*" (1:11-12).

A.D. 70 theorists take Hebrews one and say that it refers to the end of the Mosaic age, not the material universe, just as they do all passages which speak of the "end-time!" But, such is the plight of those who have an agenda to maintain. In the case of Kingites, they must take every passage that speaks of future things

and twist them around to fit their doctrine that every Bible prophecy of "end things" was fulfilled in A.D. 70. On this point in Hebrews one, brother Wayne Jackson comments.

In verse 10, when the record says, "And thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands," is there anybody in his right mind who is going to read this passage in this fashion: "And thou, Lord, in the beginning of the Mosaic dispensation, didst lay the foundation of the earth, that is, you established the law of Moses; and the heaven, that is, the ordinances of the law, are the works of your hands?" To interpret that as the Jewish law has to be the biggest bunch of theological garbage that I have every been exposed to in my life. It is pure foolishness. (*The A.D. 70 Theory, A Review of the Max King Doctrine*, Jackson, Wayne, Courier Publications, Stockton, CA, 1990, pp.77-78).

Revelation 20:11-15 reveals the judgment scene in which heaven and earth "fled away; and there was found no place for them." All the dead, small and great, wherever they were, stood before the throne and were judged according to their works. Where did such occur when Jerusalem was destroyed? Were the dead which had died at sea resurrected and brought to Jerusalem to be judged? Were the dead in the hadean realm resurrected in 70 A.D. to stand before the Lord's throne in Jerusalem? Strain as hard as you might, and you will not find it here!

(Fourth of six parts)

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ATTEMPTS TO JUSTIFY PROMISE KEEPERS

Terry Joe Kee

Rape the bride of Christ. Beat her and leave her for dead. Ridicule, laugh and scoff at the church of Christ, the Lord's church. However, do not ever say anything about "Christian" academies, colleges, day cares, or any organization operated by brethren. Some brethren who are so non-combative and passive when attacks are made against the body of Christ will fight, battle and die for their schools, day cares, counseling services, etc. Write what you will in *Seek The Old Paths* about the church, but do not dare attack sin in our pet institutions. In our past, such ire was raised only when one of "our" institutions was being questioned, but times have changed. The latest "sacred cow" to rear its head among us is the ecumenical movement called "Promise Keepers."

It is surprising that those who will not defend the church against her assailants, are now writing and trying to justify their support of "Promise Keepers." Since a Promise Keeper's rally was held in our city (Jonesboro, Arkansas), preachers and elders who sponsored and supported this event have been trying to defend their actions. Sadly, some brethren have their consciences soothed whenever an elder or preacher quotes scripture and says here is our authority. This is commonly followed by a jab at those "weak" brethren who have not gained such knowledge and do not understand these wonderful Bible principles they have so eloquently spelled out.

It simply is not possible to notice all the arguments they make to justify supporting and being "card carrying" members of Promise Keepers. Many of the arguments have been made over and over through the years by liberals trying to mask their liberalism. An elder in a Northeast Arkansas church wrote a letter defending the supporters of Promise Keepers. His letter to churches in this area who opposed this fellowship argued we were judging and condemned by Matthew 7:1. Never mind that his letter was a judgment against brethren! He had not read, or chose to disregard, Matthew 7:15 where

Jesus commands to judge if wolves are among us in sheep's clothing.

The elders who sponsored the Promise Keepers meeting said in their defense,

"You will be happy to know that during that rally our Master's name was praised; religious division was condemned; men were encouraged to be faithful to their families and God; and non-believers that were present were encouraged to turn toward Jesus."

This is the old argument, "but there is some good in it." To say there was "some good" is an open admission there was some sin. This is an attempt to focus one's attention on some presumed good and get them to ignore the sin. Eve saw some good in the forbidden fruit and Uzzah saw some good in reaching forth his hand to steady the ark, but that good was not cause to ignore the sinfulness of their actions. Should this cause us to be happy? Surely, joy and happiness comes when our Master is praised and God is glorified, but this is only done in the church (Eph. 3:21). Who do they argue was magnifying the Master, condemning division, etc.? These were denominational preachers, not Christians. Denominationalism does not magnify the Master. It calls for pseudo-unity where all agree to disagree. Surely it is admirable to call for men to be better husbands and fathers, but do the faithful need to be instructed by the apostate, lost and sectarian? What happiness is brought when men are encouraged to turn toward Jesus by faith only? Should we rejoice that Calvinism is being preached? Even though an attempt is made to portray some good, there was none present!

The fellowship that many now seek and enjoy with denominationalism has been coming for years. Some elderships and preachers have been traveling this way for a long time. They began by bringing James Dobson, the American Family Association, and other denominational efforts into our assemblies by use of audio and video tape. No one was to say anything because they were not

bringing in the denominational preachers, just their materials. After conditioning brethren with such denominational series, they now bring in the denominational preachers under the guise of praising the Master, condemning division, remembering family, and encouraging men to turn toward Jesus. Then whenever someone rises up in opposition to these sinful associations, they are accused of not wanting the Master praised, division condemned, etc. How can their own brethren condemn or question them when they have allowed these same ones into their midst by means of their denominational materials for years? The next step is to admit they are nothing more than a denomination themselves and to join with them fully. These seeds are already being planted by those who refer to restoration history as “our beginning” and “our roots.” If the church of Christ began with Campbell, Stone, etc. we are nothing more than a denomination! Not one faithful soul believes the church began anywhere except in Acts 2.

Those who have supported the Promise Keepers movement argue from ignorance. They say they did not know these things were going to be done. However, their own bulletin advertised it by saying,

“In 1990 God gave Dave Wardell and Coach Bill McArtney a vision to see men become godly influences in their homes, churches, communities and the world. Come hear how it all started and join with men from all denominations and races in seeking God to continue that vision in our community.”

One of their staff members wrote in their bulletin,

“Promise Keepers is an inter-denominational Christian organization begun a few years ago to encourage men to turn their hearts toward their wives and children, to reconcile broken promises, and unite with fellow brothers in Christ, so that God may be glorified.”

The local newspaper quoted Louis Monroe, the Arkansas/Missouri director of Promise Keepers, six days before the local rally was held, saying a man is “able to receive the word for the very first time because he don’t have to wear the mask anymore. Before he knows it, the Holy Spirit has him worshipping

God as he’s always wanted to. Coming to honor God — that’s what it’s all about.”

How can anyone plead ignorance when they say these men have received a vision from God; are an interdenominational Christian organization inviting us to join with fellow brothers in Christ; and can have the Holy Spirit working on us before we know it? Are these so ignorant they do not know God does not reveal himself in visions today? Are they so ignorant they believe we are a denomination and those in denominationalism are our brothers? Are they so ignorant they do not know how the Holy Spirit works in conviction and conversion? If they are so willingly ignorant, they are no better than the world of Noah’s day or the Jews of Hosea’s day who were destroyed because of a lack of knowledge (2 Peter 3:1-12; Hosea 4:6).

If you still cannot see churches selling themselves out to denominationalism, listen to the local preacher as he is quoted in the *Arkansas Times*, a newspaper out of Little Rock, saying,

“Yes we are trying to be faithful and be the New Testament church, but we don’t see ourselves as the only Christians — and they probably do.”

“They” refers to churches in this area who opposed their sponsoring a Promise Keepers rally. And yes, we do believe you must be a member of the body of Christ, the church of Christ, to be a Christian. No, we do not believe there are Christians outside the body of Christ.

There is an effort to try to justify their actions by appealing to the scriptures. There are several passages which have been used by brethren trying to justify using denominational preachers in these Promise Keepers meetings.

I CORINTHIANS 14:25

A local elder argues,

“Look at I Cor. 14:25. What does Paul view as happening? An unbeliever falls face down and begins to talk right out loud in church. Suppose something like that happened today — how would you react? How do you suppose other congregations would react to the church where that happened? Do we really know as much as we think we do about the first century church? Are not a lot of things upon which we pass harsh judgments

actually an effort to keep an older image of the twentieth century church rather than be like the first century church?”

Is this parallel to inviting denominational preachers into our pulpits to preach? Did this man in Corinth stand up and ridicule and laugh at the church for not using instrumental music? Please notice the context of this passage. “*If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth*” (I Cor. 14:23-25). Paul is showing the superiority of prophesy over speaking in tongues. The confusion in an assembly where all were speaking in tongues would not be conducive to one’s seeing salvation in Christ. Such a confused assembly would make an unbeliever think the church at Corinth was “mad” (*mainesthe*), raving maniacs. However, an unbeliever who would come into the assembly and hear the gospel spoken plainly in an orderly assembly, would be convicted of his sin, judged by the gospel, and have the secrets of his heart laid bare. The result would be to have him fall down and worship God with the full understanding that this is the truth. Is this parallel to an unbeliever coming into an assembly of the church where a Promise Keepers meeting is held? Here he hears denominational preachers mocking the church of Christ for not using mechanical instruments of music in worship and laughing at the idea of the oneness of the church. Then he hears a plea for us to all be alike, yet different at the same time — unity in diversity. Will he think us raving maniacs or will he be convicted and judged to rise up and declare “that God is in you of a truth?” There is simply no parallel.

Acts 21:20-26

Then an elder says

“Look at Acts 21:20-26. Let it sink in. Paul is participating in a traditional religious ceremony in the worship building of another religion.”

This is not parallel to denominationalism. Some have argued in this

passage that Paul sinned. The apostle was not above sin, but the context does not seem to indicate that he sinned. Remember that truth was being revealed in part. Paul told the Corinthians, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part" (I Cor. 13:9). Not all revelation was given at one time. The books of Galatians, Colossians, and Hebrews had not been written at this time. At what time did a total severing of all Jewish ties begin? Remember that the law had a purpose. It was not perfect in that it could not offer remission of sins by the blood of bulls and goats, but it was perfect in its purpose. It prepared a people for the coming kingdom. Please also notice that Paul was being accused of "saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs" (Acts 21:21). Whatever Paul is doing must be done to relieve the minds of the Jews in these areas. Circumcision began with Abraham (Gen. 17). It was a seal of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Paul did not bind or loose circumcision. He had Timothy circumcised in order to help reach the Jews (Acts 16:3), but he refused to have Titus, a Gentile, circumcised even when compelled (Titus 2:3). Customs were not a part of the law. This passage deals with their habits, customs and traditions. Paul was being falsely charged. Whatever is happening in Acts 21 does not parallel nor give comfort to those desiring to fellowship the denominations. Rather than a difficult passage, one should remember that it is the sum of God's word that reveals truth, not one passage, but the whole. Why not read some plain passages like Ephesians 5:11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather prove them." Or, maybe 2 John 9-11, "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, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Some do not want to be reminded of those plain passages which condemn their actions.

I CORINTHIANS 9:19-23

The Promise Keepers supporters use I Corinthians 9:19-23. Paul said, "For though I be free from all men, yet

have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." Paul is not teaching the pragmatic philosophy that the end justifies the means. Paul had the right to expect financial support from those he taught. Yet, he did not exercise this right lest his motives for preaching should be questioned. To afford known false teachers an audience in order that you might be afforded the same opportunity in their assemblies is not justified by this passage.

PHILIPPIANS 1:15-18

Finally, there are two passages which have been used over and over to justify sponsoring, supporting, being members, and encouraging the Promise Keepers movements among churches of Christ. Paul's words in Philippians 1:15-18 read, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Denominations do not preach Christ. To preach Christ is not simply to call out the name of Christ — it is the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Paul was not commending some pseudo-gospel. He condemned such in Galatians 1:6-12. The doctrine which was being taught here was the pure doctrine of Christ. Their motive for preaching it is what grieved Paul. Some with envy, strife and contention were preaching Christ. Others preached Christ out of good will and sincerity. Paul was more concerned with the gospel being preached than in petty jealousies and envyings. Paul's bonds and sufferings did not keep him from desiring to have the gospel preached. If the Baptists, Methodists and Pentecostals were

preaching Christ, they would not be Baptists, Methodists, and Pentecostals. Neither their doctrine nor their motive is commended or condoned by this passage.

MARK 9:38-41

The "sugar stick" passage of all the defenders of Promise Keepers and the use and fellowship of denominational preachers is Mark 9:38-41. Mark's record reads, "And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

No one could have cast out demons without God working with him (cf. John 3:1,2; John 9:31). John admitted that this man was casting out demons "in thy name." This expression has always meant, according to or by His authority. The seventy had been sent out with the power to cast out demons (Luke 10:17). These had been given power and authority by Christ. Not being numbered among the twelve did not mean they did not have authority. Jesus said they could not do the miracles without doing them in His name. This did not mean they were a division of followers who taught contrary doctrines and wore sectarian names. There is not one denomination that exists by the authority of Christ! One is not doing anything in the name of Christ except he is doing it according to the will of Christ. Again, this passage does not offer any comfort to the liberals who try to justify their use of these false teachers.

Let us resolve to adorn the beautiful bride of Christ. Let us keep her spotless and blameless. We have waged the war and won against the denominations in years past. We have waged the war and won against our own brethren who desire to carry the church into apostasy. Now Satan, in league with denominationalism and some of our own brethren, is rising up in battle against the bride of Christ again. As before, let us put on the whole armor of Christ stand fast in the defense of the gospel.

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“We Don’t Care What God Won’t Allow We’re Gonna Play Our Organ Anyhow”

Steven D. Cline

A well-known song that has been adapted to Country, Bluegrass, Pop and Swing music over the years is the one entitled *Momma Don't Allow No Music Playing 'Round Here*. Each verse is identical to the one preceding it, save that a different instrument is named. To clarify, a line in the song says “We don’t care what mama won’t allow, we’re gonna play our guitar [or banjo, snare drum, trombone, etc.] anyhow.” Actually, any number of verses can be used for any number of musical instruments. Readers of this article who are familiar with this song know that it is a real toe-tappin’ tune. Of course, it does not say much concerning one’s respect for mom’s authority, does it? “So what if mama doesn’t allow it? Why, we’re gonna do exactly what we want! Who cares what she thinks? We like it, so we’ll do it!”

The rebellious attitude that many in the church are now fostering and nurturing concerning the use of mechanical instruments of music in praise to God is growing faster than toad-stools in a dark and damp cellar. So many, once faithful (we suppose) brethren, are deserting the scriptural position to which they once held fast concerning singing songs of honor to God apart from the instrument (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and are now seeking the companionship of denominationalists and digressives who have long been saying “We don’t care what God won’t allow, we’re gonna play our organ anyhow.” Brethren once vigorously, skillfully, unflinchingly and courageously defended the truth. Currently, however, they seek out their former opponents as their companions, compatriots, cronies and bosom buddies. They seem to want to fellowship anyone and everyone except their own brethren in the Lord’s church. I wonder what their erstwhile disputants think of our brethren’s new found allegiance to the instrument? Perhaps the denom-

inationalists and digressives are saying “I told you so!” After all, our brethren who at one time adamantly and correctly opposed this innovation of man in worship to God have conceded their position by capitulating to and endorsing those in error.

The old song, *Momma Don't Allow No Music Playing Round Here*, reveals an attitude of open anarchy against dear mother’s wishes when it comes to making music. Jehovah is our Heavenly Father and as such, He is not a mother. Notwithstanding, there is one verse and one verse only in the Bible in which God is compared to a mother. In Isaiah 66:13 we read “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” And, just like the mother in the song, God has children who rebel against him, having ceased to worship him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24) and having ceased to serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28).

In December, 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge, Brigadier General Anthony McAuliffe and his American troops were surrounded by the Germans at Bastogne, Belgium. The Nazis demanded his surrender. General McAuliffe’s reply went down in the annals of war history. He said tersely, succinctly and conclusively, “Nuts!”¹ There are those in the denominational world who think that our rejecting the instrument is “one of the most ridiculous assertions and one of the silliest of the Church of Christ heresies.”² Then there are those who went out from us (1 John 2:19) who ask that we surrender and accept the instrument for the sake of an ersatz (fake) “unity.”³ Finally, there are those claiming to still be in the church who say that we are wrong to oppose the instrument; that instruments are acceptable to God.⁴ To all three we give the same classic comment that General McAuliffe delivered to

his Fatherland foes: Nuts! Or, as Paul said of the Judiazers (and, in a sense, the instrumental music crowd, whether denominationalists or our own brethren are Judiazers, trying to bind an Old Testament worship practice on us), “To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal. 2:5).

“We don’t care what God won’t allow, we’re gonna play our organ anyhow.” Really? The bottom line is this: are we going to be trusting sheep and lovingly follow God, or are we going to be goats, shaking our horns, bleating our protests and butting our heads against God’s authority? Well, even a casual reading of Matthew 25:31-46 tells of the two eternal destinies awaiting the sheep and the goats. One had better care what the Lord won’t allow. One had better bend his own iron-stubborn will to God’s, rather than making a flagrant display of “will worship” (Col. 2:23) and in so doing, depart from the living God due to a rebellious and evil heart of unbelief (Heb. 3:12), for God does not allow mechanical instruments to be used in worship of His High and Holy Name in these New Testament days

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Endnotes

1. Sulzberger, C. L., *The American Heritage Picture History of World War II*, p.524, American Heritage/Bonanza Books, New York, 1966.

2. Pyle, Hugh F., *The Truth About the “Church of Christ”*, p.77, Sword of the Lord Publishers, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 1977.

3. Graham, Ralph V., “Why I Left the ‘Churches of Christ,’” *Voices of Concern*, Robert Meyers, ed., p.133, Mission Messenger, St. Louis, Missouri, 1966.

4. Yancy, Walt, *Endangered Heritage*, pp. 146,167,161, College Press Publishing Co., Joplin, Missouri, 1987.

What About Promise Keepers...*(Continued from page 1)*

(Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16) — but look out, “Pray for his pastor.” They have denominational clergy-laity false doctrine advocated. Isn’t it another “unity in diversity” compromise? Isn’t this the language of Ashdod (Neh. 13:24)? What about supporting the church with our free-will offerings on the first day of every week (1 Cor. 16:1-2)?

6. “Reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of Biblical unity.”

They are a little behind with their “racial barriers” because Jesus removed them with the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). If we remove the “denominational barriers” can we all “speak the same thing” with “no divisions among us” (1 Cor. 1:10)? That’s not their idea. With propagating “unity in diversity” and “emphasizing our likenesses not our differences,” they don’t want us to “speak the same thing.” The Bible Way is our way to stay. “Change agents” have already digressed from God’s word. If we go for the purpose of converting these people that’s one thing, but to compromise the Bible with their views is another thing altogether.

7. “Influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).”

How can we influence our world by compromise? We’ll influence alright, but not for good through compromise. It cannot be done scripturally.

Our late brother Albert Ward told me many times, “The time’s a comin’ when you won’t be able to tell the Lord’s church from the biggest denomination in town.” Brethren, that time is here. That time is now. What are we going to do about it? **“PREACH THE WORD!”** Hundreds of thousands of men are being drawn to “Promise Keepers” but what’s wrong with the Gospel to start with? **NOTHING! THE BIBLE ONLY MAKES CHRISTIANS ONLY AND THE ONLY CHRISTIANS — ALWAYS!**

1625 Bilbrey Park Dr.
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Elders COLUMN

Administratively Speaking

Bill Graddy

Encompassing the eldership of the Lord’s church is the administrative affairs. Scriptures authorize elders to expedite matters of expedencies in discharging their responsibility. Much of the success of the church hinges on their ability to superintend. For an eldership to be able to radiate an administrative “yes” among the congregation is quality control. This “yes” will ensure the unity and the scripturalness throughout the members as they work and worship. For any organization to run smoothly and effectively, leadership must be evident. In the church, the operational services surround the elders and their competence in delegating authority to the members. Deacons and other qualified members should be able assistants to the elders working with them to implement the outlined program of work.

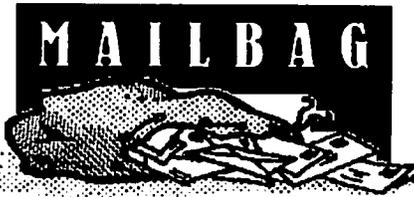
Administrative finesse is an applied science. If an elder becomes old and dotty or ceases to be qualified, a wise administration could correct this from within the eldership if possible. The changing of the preacher could be dealt with in the same manner. Sometimes when an eldership cannot see that one of them is no longer effective and/or there is a need to change preachers, when members suggest a change they become upset. Thus, the administration is part of the problem. Many times a failure to act will cause members to leave, withhold their contribution and the work is stagnated. An open line of communication between the elders and the members is pastoring at its best.

From an administrative standpoint, the worship service should receive prompt attention. Not only the preaching, but those who lead the singing, make announcements, lead in prayer and serve at the Lord’s table should be constantly evaluated. Enhancing our worship to God corporately comes by educating the members individually. Dignity should always be a concern in the worship without a rigid formality. Decorum should prevail at all times. Good administration will insist on punctuality, reverence, and good taste. Laxity, awkwardness, and poor taste should be corrected by administrative expertise in classes and sermons designed to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). In utilizing members in corporate worship and realizing different educational and spiritual levels, elders should provide the necessary training without being partial and helping all to develop to their potential.

Bible classes are a vital link to the work of the church. Curricula and personnel should be given ample administrative consideration. Elders may accomplish this in various ways. Special attention should be given to the materials used. One with knowledge of curricula needs to be appointed to this task. Teachers should be screened and selected with utmost care by the elders or at least approved by them. On-going classes for teachers, prospective teachers, and all public workers should receive top priority. False doctrine will infiltrate through ill-prepared personnel. Elders should be alert to the subject matter under their oversight. It may be wise to utilize an educational director to assist the elders in this work. The future of the church emanates from such leadership (Joshua 24:31).

In all the roles and functions of the church, qualified elders will develop strong administrative workers to execute the work of the Lord in the most effective manner.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

and that it is so badly needed in western Oklahoma. Liberalism here has a strong hold, but there are great numbers of faithful brethren who would take a stand if they only understood the problem. May our God, who will give us the victory at last, continue to bless you and the East Corinth brethren. Please convey my gratitude to the church for their loyal support of your work and their love for "the faith once delivered" ...*Jerry C. Brewer, Clinton, OK*. "I'm writing to take Seek The Old Paths paper and wanted to commend you on your efforts to combat liberalism. Please keep a "full steam ahead" approach. It's really opened my eyes to a lot of what is going on in the brotherhood. We need more and more firm brothers like yourselves. Please don't ever change your attitude toward this" ...*Tommie McCravy, Brent, AL*. "I applaud your objectives. The Lord's church is in severe peril and needs aggressive defense" ...*R. Phillips Turner, Nashville, TN*. "Please remove our family from your mailing list. We do not want any more information effective immediately" ...*Jimmie Philpot, Lindale, TX*. "May our God continue to bless you as you strive to do his good will" ...*Jimmie Hill, Crossville, TN*. "Thank you for the work you do" ...*Charles Ivie, Arkansas City, KS*. "I continue to enjoy your paper very much. Each month, as our bundles come in, I distribute them to our members. They also appreciate it very much, and are becoming better educated as to what is going on in the brotherhood and the need to stand fast in the faith. Keep up the good work!" ...*Stephen Fishel, Bradford, TN*. "I really appreciate your good paper. Keep up the good work" ...*M. C. Brooks, Vista, CA*. "I am grateful for the faithful congregation there and the wonderful works they are doing. The Seek The Old Paths paper is great and I appreciate so much receiving it. It has been a great joy in my life to be associated with the lectureship. Thanks again for the opportunity and privilege you have extended to me" ...*Phil Jenkins, Crossville, TN*. "Really did enjoy reading my first copy and looking forward to others" ...*Ada Herrington, Cleveland, OK*. "We continue to hear good reports from those who are getting Seek The Old Paths here. Our prayers are that we will be able to help with postage again by the first of the year. The church at East Corinth is to be commended for their efforts" ...*Larry Bailey, Lansing, MI*. [NOTE: Postage is our biggest expense, running about \$600 a month. Whatever help readers of "Seek The Old Paths" can give is greatly appreciated — Editor.] "Much appreciation" ...*Norman Barnes, Oklahoma City, OK*. "I love Seek The Old Paths and the work you are doing. I look forward to each issue" ...*James Fisher, Franklin, LA*. "Thank you very much for your time and the efforts that you put into maintaining the integrity of the church" ...*Charley & Mary Ellis, Sherman, TX*. "We used to receive Seek The Old Paths and then moved. We failed to send an address change and have missed the publication. We appreciate your publication and will enjoy receiving it once again. If it is possible, we would like to receive the missed issues" ...*Tony & Ginger Wallace, Maryville, MO*. "Enjoy and benefit much from receiving Seek The Old Paths. Thank you very much for staying on track. Thank you deeply! God bless and keep us all" ...*Sue McDonald, Jonesboro, TX*. "Please remove my name from your mailing list" ...*Carl Rudd, Jackson, TN*. "We enjoy reading Seek The Old Paths and share it when we can. In our travels we have the opportunity now and then to copy some article and give to someone and ask them to consider it to teach them out of something that is not scriptural" ...*Bill Prather, Odessa, TX*. "Seek The Old Paths is a great paper. Keep up the good work" ...*Melvin & Hilda Carlock, Nesbit, MS*. "Please remove my name and address from your mailing list" ...*Dustin Adkins, Nashville, TN*. "I really enjoy your paper. Keep the faith. Keep preaching the truth" ...*Wayne Covington, Columbia, SC*. "We attended a lectureship here at Cleveland, Oklahoma and signed up to receive Seek The Old Paths. We received our first issue in October and really enjoyed and got a lot of information from it. We are battling liberalism and need all the help we can get" ...*Clyde Lewis, Agra, OK*. "My wife and I enjoy your publication. May God bless you and may you continue to stand for the truth" ...*Crossville, TN*. "We thank God, every time we receive an issue, that we still have Christians who stand solely on God's Word for their doctrine. We know we can depend on your writers for the truth" ...*William Paul, Jr., Elmore City, OK*.

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