

Thank God for the Seven Thousand

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While it is necessary on occasion to highlight the extreme departures some who were once among us have made, there is room for some optimism. One of the encouraging things I've experienced in my travels has been meeting saints I had not known before who love the Truth and who are determined to uphold it. There are many such brethren "out there" who faithfully make their appointed rounds each day living uprightly, teaching those who will listen, faithfully worshipping each Lord's Day, and contending for the Faith. They would sooner be shot than compromise. We need to guard against the "Elijah Complex" (1 Kin. 19:18). Doubtless, there are far more than seven thousand who have not "bowed the knee" to the damnable philosophies and influences all about us.

A climactic division occurred in the church a little more than a century ago. The divisive symptoms were the use of instrumental music in worship and the employment of a universal missionary society for evangelism. The actual cause was rebellion against Scriptural authority. When the dust had settled, a scant fifteen percent of those who had once been united in the Truth had withstood the onslaught of digression. Surely, a greater percentage than this remains steadfast now, and I believe will continue to do so.

Someone may be thinking, "We have not had such a division since then." That is correct, if such a clear-cut "organic" division is under consideration. However, it is on the horizon. Perhaps the sundering is not yet so universal as to enable the taking of a census of congregations and/or saints as either "conservative" or "liberal." However, the distinction between two contradictory spiritual postures in the church is so clearly definable as to be undeniable. The deniers would likely feel right at home in Alice's Wonderland, which is where they are living, spiritually speaking.

The division is clear in many cases and places, involving schools, papers, and congregations. For example, who can rationally deny that Pepperdine, Abilene Christian, and Lipscomb Universities have utterly severed themselves from sound and faithful brethren. Further, who would dare argue that they can ever be turned from their leftward agendas? They will get worse with time. Other schools have apparently hitched their wagons to them. The silence of the other brotherhood-related universities concerning the egregious departures of these larger schools is deafening. It can only be interpreted as tacit agreement and endorsement.

The boards of the “wannabe” schools would do well to look a bit more closely at PU, ACU, and LU and reassess whether or not this is really what they “wannabe.”

The Christian Chronicle continues its charade of being merely a “newspaper” that indiscriminately reports on activities of brethren and brotherhood events (strangely reminiscent of the liberal secular media’s incessant and laughable claim of “objectivity”). The paper is “undiscriminating” in one sense: It exercises no discrimination in its glorification, news stories, and advertisements of people, projects, practices, doctrines, congregations, schools, and gatherings, regardless of how far astray they may be. If it ceased printing advertisements, news stories, and implied endorsements of such people and efforts, it could be printed in 14-point font on both sides of one page from a “Big Chief tablet.” Its publisher (Oklahoma Christian University) and editors seem determined to ignore the “real story” (except for interviews with “new hermeneutikers”) – the cleavage in the church because of diametrically opposite systems of hermeneutics. The *Chronicle* brethren remind me of Neville Chamberlain’s (Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, 1937-40) proclamation of “peace for our time” while the smell of conflict is everywhere.

Many congregations, especially the larger ones in metropolitan areas, long ago surrendered to error. Others are on their way. The members in them who loved the Truth either had to leave or sear their consciences. However, there are many congregations (smaller, but nonetheless strong) in which Truth has triumphed and from which the compromisers have departed. There is a clear separation between these respective kinds of churches. Many congregations are still in the on-going struggle, and only God knows whether Truth or error will win.

The division is well underway and will eventually run its course. It will occur regardless of what anyone thinks about it unless the Lord comes first. I opine that the sooner it all “shakes out,” the better off the Lord’s cause will be. I plead with those who have drastically departed from where they once were (and where many thousands of us still are): Demonstrate at least as much honor as most of your ancestors in apostasy did. When they divided the body of Christ, they adopted a different name, at least for the most part. Most of them departed under the *Christian Church* banner (although some of them, mostly in midwestern states, still deceptively clung to *Church of Christ* and still display such on their properties).

A few of the modern schismatics have adopted such appellations as *Community Church* or *Family of God*. However, most are demonstrating an utter lack of integrity in this regard.

While in doctrine and practice they have become denominations, they deceptively retain the designation, *Church of Christ*. They apparently hope thereby to steal this Biblical designation from the Lord's faithful people. (We "amen" the sentiments of the notorious false teacher, Rubel Shelly, who in his former days of spiritual sanity, pled, "O, for an honest false teacher!")

There is bad news and good news in all of this. The bad news is that a large percentage of brethren have departed from the Lord, and they and their followers will be lost without repentance (Mat. 7:21-23). They have already caused and are continuing to cause grievous division of the Lord's church. However, let us not lose sight of the good news. We will be far ahead of where our brethren were more than a century ago, after the division took place. This inevitable division will leave the church of the Lord stronger rather than weaker – the spiritually weak ones are those who have left or will leave. When the separation is complete, we can turn our attention to a far greater degree to evangelizing the world, because we will not have to spend so much time, effort, and money exposing and fighting Benedict Arnolds in the kingdom of Christ.

Despite abundant evidence to the contrary, some still seem determined to deny that the afore-described situation exists. To all such skeptics, I simply say: "Read the Websites of some congregations." (I've cited such Websites in other articles, some of which are accessible by clicking [HERE](#), [HERE](#), and [HERE](#).) It is nothing short of astounding to see how brazen some of them are in their error. They betray either such gross ignorance of Truth that they are unaware of how far they have strayed, or they are fully aware and are proud of their blatant departures.

For those who have closed their eyes to such matters ("If I don't know about it, it doesn't exist."), the Website of "the SPRINGS" [with "CHURCH OF CHRIST" in very small font beneath *Springs*] in Edmond, Oklahoma, should be an eye-opener for those still in denial. The congregation was originally founded by faithful brethren in 1953 as "The Village Church of Christ" and renamed "Quail Springs Church of Christ" in 1980 (click [HERE](#)). (A very revealing history of the liberal evolution of this church is available [HERE](#).)

The preceding is a prime example of a church that has no reasonable claim to identity as a church of Christ, yet dishonestly still clings to the designation. The immediately foregoing link graphically records the evolution of this once-sound congregation of the Lord's people. Sad to say, it is representative of the same journey into the loss of its original New Testament identity which numerous other congregations have taken in recent decades. Given the outrageous (and often greatly applauded) errors that some have written, spoken, and begun

practicing in recent years, the end of such was all too predictable. The case above underscores the validity of the warnings some of us have been sounding for several years, only to be demonized as “watchdogs,” “alarmists,” “legalists,” “witch-hunters,” “brotherhood policemen,” and worse.

The failure/inability to ascertain Biblical authority for their teaching and practice is not so much the cause of their egregious apostasy, as it is a result. Such brethren have discarded the Bible (first as to source—except in some “remote” sense—then as to authority). This done, all that remains is their pitiful selfish carnal preferences in religion. One is tempted to encourage “the Springs” church to apply for membership in the Southern Baptist Convention. However, its attitude toward the Bible would likely render it ineligible. The SBC at least **professes** to believe in the Bible’s inspiration and authority, even if in doctrine and practice it betrays the profession. The sooner the division between such folk as those in “the Springs” church and those of us who still stand for the “old paths” is universally consummated, the better off the church of our Lord will be.

[**Note:** I wrote this MS, and it originally appeared in the May 2003 issue of *The Gospel Journal*, a 36-page monthly of which I was editor at the time.]

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