

# The Old Paths

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## “Entertainment Or Religion? (#2)”

Jarrod Jacobs

In light of last week's bulletin entitled, "Entertainment or Religion?", I wanted our dear readers to be aware of a prime example of what we were talking about. This was found in Monday's (4/8/02) edition of the *Messenger-Inquirer* (p. 1B). This article, written by Steve Vied, notes Zion United Church of Christ celebrating what they called "Mirth Sunday" on 4/7. "Mirth Sunday" is described as: "Zion's annual salute to joy." Specific things done on "Mirth Sunday" included: 1) The choir used kazoos, and "a few dance steps" to observe this day. 2) The preacher, according to Vied, "cracked jokes" in his sermon. 3) Steve Hall, one of the members, tossed a softball to a member of the choir. 4) At one point, the sermon was "interrupted by ballplayers, and a girl kicking a soccer ball." 5) Other people wore outlandish clothes to mark this occasion. 6) "When it was time to take up the offering, everyone was given oversized \$10 bills .... That was so they could put some 'big bucks' in the offering plate, their pastor told them."

Some may wonder how things could have digressed to this point. However, remember that when the door is opened to sin and error, there is no stopping place. When you have people (not only Zion, but anyone) who wishes to not stand by the authority of God anymore (Col. 3:17), then it won't be long until such things creep in. What I thought was telling was

that in the article, Mr. Vied admitted that some uninformed person who might have visited Zion on that Sunday, "would have been justified to believe he had stumbled into some kind of parallel, albeit zany, universe."

Brethren, may our eyes be opened to see how far some have sunk in an effort to gain numbers, and to please men. Someone might say, "Doesn't God speak of joy?" He does! Read: Philippians 4:4; Proverbs 15:13, 15, 17:22; Romans 12:12; I Thessalonians 2:19-20, 5:16; I Peter 4:13; I John 1:4; and Jude 24. These and many other passages talk about joy. Yet, do those passages concerning "joy" give us license and liberty to run rough-shod over God's will and just do as we please in an effort to get a "laugh"? Of course, not! Have we forgotten that God expects things to be done "*decently and in order*" (I Cor. 14:40)?

Let us not pander to the carnal attitude. We are interested in spiritual matters, and serving our Lord according to His will (Jn. 4:24; Col. 3:17). We are not interested in those who say and do things "for a laugh" and call that religion. We are interested in "*speaking as the oracles of God*" (I Pet. 4:11). We're interested in the truth (Jn. 17:17). How wonderful it is when people gather together to praise and rejoice in the Lord (Hab. 3:18; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). Even the apostles rejoiced "*that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name*" (Acts 5:41). Yet, what does Scriptural rejoicing have to do with soccer balls, kazoos, choirs, cracking jokes, dance

steps, and over-sized money?

In light of what was reported by Mr. Vied, is there any wonder why so many people are fed-up with "organized religion"? Is there any wonder why people try to separate "religion" from Christ and spirituality? Even many worldly-minded people recognize that such attempts at "fun-and-games" are not spiritual! Some today call themselves "spiritual," but not "religious" people. How can this be? Why make this distinction? While other factors (including "New Age" philosophies) could be considered, doesn't this "carnival" atmosphere which characterizes so many so-called "churches" add to the confusion and frustration many feel as they search for the truth? I believe it does.

Whatever happened to just relying upon God's word; standing for and preaching it in our worship and at home (Acts 20:7; II Tim. 2:2, etc.)? Whatever happened to reverently praying and singing praises to God (Acts 2:42; Eph. 5:19)? Is this not enough for us anymore? For many in our society it is not enough, they must be entertained, and the masses must be appeased. Shame on us for not having faith in God's word to save souls (Rom. 1:16).

Southside church of Christ, because we worship God according to His will, and strive to serve Him daily as His children (Jn. 4:24; Acts 2:42; Rom. 12:1-2; Jn. 14:15), stands out as different from much of the religious world. This is not because we are striving to be different, or be an oddity, but we stand out because we are ready and willing to serve the God of Heaven (I Pet. 4:4). Unfortunately, we must also add that we stand out from many who have "church of Christ" on their sign, too! This is because they have succumbed to the wishes of men. May this never happen to us, but let us continue, with God's grace and guidance, to stand solidly for the truth.

“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk

### ANVIL SPARKS ....

- ♦ “The pessimist has no motor, the optimist has no brakes.”
- ♦ “Straight living cannot come out of crooked thinking.”
- ♦ “Where you are on the road is not as important as where you are headed.”
- ♦ “Humility on display is hypocrisy.”

(From: R.L. Whiteside, *Doctrinal Discourses*)

### “A Sound Church Is ...”

Jarrold Jacobs

**A** while back, someone wrote me and asked the question, “What would be a sound church?” Below is my answer:

“A sound church is one that follows Christ’s word as its only law and practice (Col. 3:17). A sound church is one that is devoted to only doing as the apostles did in worship (Acts 2:42, 20:7; Eph. 5:19). A sound church is one who disciplines those who walk disorderly (II Thess. 3:6). A sound church is one who will not just take “anyone” as a member there, but will test and ask questions, and allow them to ask questions (Acts 9:26-28). The truth has nothing to fear, you know. A sound church is one who knows the truth and will defend it, and will spread the truth (I Thess. 1:8; II Tim. 4:2; Jude 3). A sound church is one who will not be involved in unauthorized ways of handling the Lord’s money such as: the support of orphan homes or benevolent societies from its treasury (Phil. 4:15-16; Jas. 1:27). A sound church is one that realizes “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink” (Rom. 14:17). Thus, it will not be like the denominations in support of “fun, food, and frolic” in order to “win” people to them. A sound church is one who remembers its first love (Rev. 2:4; Eph. 4:15). A sound church is one who

reverences Christ (Acts 4:12). A sound church does not tolerate or coddle worldliness (II Cor. 6:17). A sound church wears the name of Christ (Acts 20:28; Rom. 16:16).”

What would you have said had you been asked this question? Based on what has been said already, do you belong to a sound church? Brethren, let us compare this congregation with the Scriptures. Would God consider us to be a sound church?

We might also consider the fact that a sound church is properly organized, having no connections to a larger organization other than the local congregation! A sound church can be scripturally unorganized for a while (Clearly, when churches were started in the first century, there were not men qualified to be elders or deacons at first. Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5); but there comes a time when a congregation, in order to be sound, must be scripturally organized, having elders to oversee the local group, deacons to serve, and saints to do God’s will, and be under the oversight of the elders (I Pet. 5:2-3; I Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9; Phil. 1:1).

Let us think about what we are doing to fulfill our duties to God, and make this a sound church in Owensboro! “What would be a sound church?” I think the answer is clear. The question is, are WE a sound church? Are WE a sound congregation meeting in Owensboro? “Search the Scriptures” and see!

### “An Injustice Done To Men”

Jarrold Jacobs

**S**omeone once said, “No greater injustice can be done to any person than to give them the impression that they are saved when, in fact, they are not.” How true this is! Brethren, let us not be guilty of allowing our friends and neighbors to go through life having never heard the gospel! How terrible it would be to see our friends or neighbors stand before God and be sent to a devil’s Hell all because we refused to tell them the truth! Are you one who does not give others the opportunity to hear the gospel preached? How many people have you invited to the worship services this week? This month? This year? Answer this question honestly, and it can show us where our priorities truly are!

What are we more interested in — a ball game or the worship to God Almighty? Are we more interested in knowing that some lost soul has obeyed the Lord and become a Christian or whether the bass are biting at the lake? Are we more interested in Bible study or reading the newspaper? Christ said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these (physical) things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). Friends, after we pass on, what will be left? Where will you, your friends/neighbors spend eternity? And will this be because of or in spite of our efforts?

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**Sunday Evening Worship** ————— **6:00 pm**  
**Wednesday Evening Bible Study** ————— **7:00 pm**

Don’t forget the call-in radio program on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-9246** or **683-5200** with your Bible question.

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