

“BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM”

Gary McDade

In the inaugural sermon of the Savior called the Sermon on the Mount, the Son of God offered a word of caution to his followers lest they should be led astray by false teachers. He said, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:15-20).

Scriptural objections have been raised in earlier efforts to the appearance of Steve Flatt, President of Lipscomb University in Nashville, on the Growing By Sharing in Memphis this year. What follows is a display of his fruit offered for the inspection of those who may be interested in the warning of Jesus.

The President of an educational institution is in the best position to influence who the instructors/professors will be for that school. The following is a brief glimpse at some of the instructors/professors serving under the leadership of Steve Flatt.

John Mark Hicks—Educational director of Woodmont Hills Family of God/Woodmont Hills Church of Christ where Rubel Shelly is preacher and who supported the Billy Graham Crusade in June of 2000. Co-founder of Cordova Community Church. Co-author of “A Theological Treatise for a New Church Planting,” which is no more than a creed including erroneous teachings such as the acceptance of modern miracles and the re-organization of the church after the Willow Creek Community Church model.

Scott McDowell—Former minister of the Sycamore View Church of Christ who holds the position that God speaks primarily through the Bible but definitely speaks to man directly (“God Is Alive” article in *Sycamore Views* by Scott McDowell).

Mike Moss—Contended at the so-called Christian Scholars Conference in 1989, “The simple appeal to command, example, and necessary inference, as the solution to all questions of biblical hermeneutics, has lost its attraction, not only for the scholar, but for the college student and many a Christian in the pew.” And, he

made the definitive statement, "The Bible was not written to us, but it was preserved for us." And, a follow up comment, "Strict pattern theology must be abandoned."

John York—Co-preacher at Woodmont Hills Family of God/Woodmont Hills Church of Christ with Rubel Shelly which congregation supported the Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville last year. Of course, the statement of Shelly that there are "devout, sincere, knowledgeable, Christians in all the denominations" has been widely reviewed.

Steve Flatt himself—Holds the view that to say the church is the kingdom of Christ is "not accurate." Also, teaches there are sixteen spiritual gifts he has discovered instead of the scriptural nine of I Corinthians 12:8-10 (on audiocassette tape). Lipscomb University hosted the Forrest F. Reed Lectures for the Disciples of Christ Historical Society in 1997 at which Richard T. Hughes from Pepperdine University affirmed, "My treatise of the story in the twentieth century focuses on the evolution of Churches of Christ from sect to denomination" (**Dangers Facing the Church—Changing Views**, p. 153).

The Lord said, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." The apostle John wrote, "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" (II John 9-11).