

Defender

"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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Response To The Forest Hill Church Of Christ Elders "Marking" Of David P. Brown And Dub McClish

December 18, 2009

Introduction

In 2005, a great division occurred among brethren who formerly worked shoulder-to-shoulder in proclaiming the saving Gospel of Christ and defending it against those preferring a perverted gospel. The division involved primarily the defense by Memphis School of Preaching and others of Apologetics Press and its executive director, David Miller, the most renowned proponent of the doctrine of elder reevaluation and reaffirmation and perhaps the only proponent among brethren of the "marriage intent" doctrine.

Two things are certain. First, we have openly opposed both of these doctrines since becoming aware of them prior to June 2005, and we will continue to oppose them publicly. Second, MSOP and Forest Hill opposed the so-called elder R&R doctrine (and, we are confident, the "marriage intent" doctrine as well; if they did not do so, they can so declare) before June 2005, but have since either embraced the doctrine, or continue to verbally oppose it while

fellowshipping those who uphold it.

Furthermore, MSOP and FH have assumed a stance of confidentiality and nondisclosure. We want transparency; they want to keep it quiet. The following statement and letters to the FH elders are made available to you in furtherance of our effort at transparency. We call upon the FH elders and MSOP faculty to make public all the documentation in their possession claimed to sustain their position, and to engage in an open discussion of the same. You, the reader, would thus be properly equipped to evaluate the evidence for yourselves.

Statement Dated December 10, 2009 By the Elders of the Spring Church of Christ Regarding the "Marking" of Brethren Brown and McClish By the Elders of the Forest Hill Church of Christ

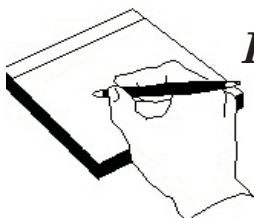
The elders of the Forest Hill Church of Christ ("FH") announced in the December 1, 2009 issue of *The Forest Hill News* ("TFHN") that they had marked brethren David P. Brown and H. W. (Dub) McClish. Both are

overseen by the Spring elders.

In the announcement, the FH elders asserted that brethren Brown and McClish have engaged both in a "continual pursuit of sowing discord among brethren" and in telling "outright lies concerning" the FH "elders, evangelist, the Memphis School of Preaching," and the FH congregation. The evidence for such was purportedly to be found "once again" in the October, 2009 issue of *Contending for the Faith* ("CFTF"). The "once again" descriptive would imply, at least, that evidence may be found in other issues of *CFTF*.

Since 2005, many brethren including, but not limited to, those at Memphis School of Preaching, Southwest School of Bible Studies, Schertz, Texas Church of Christ, and by implication at least, their overseeing elderships, have engaged in fellowship practices not authorized by the New Testament. *CFTF* has chronicled and exposed these compromises in scripturally authorized fellowship. We are fully aware of what brethren Brown and McClish

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Notes From The Editor

Michael
Hatcher

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But Now

Not too long ago, if a brother in Christ decided to advocate

- singing a song that addresses and prays to the Holy Spirit and for His direct impact upon Christians
- that teachers and preachers using whatever version/perversion they choose in the pulpit and classrooms does not indicate liberalism on their part
- supported the breakup of Sunday night worship services in favor of small groups in various homes of its members
- proposed dismissing or changing the time of the Sunday evening services so they would not clash with the Super Bowl
- taught that brethren may forsake the assembly to participate in various sports activities that might take place during the time of the worship assembly
- had no objections to providing coffee and doughnuts during our Bible classes (especially Sunday mornings)
- indicated that brethren should begin enlarging our fellowship "circle"

almost every man whom brethren considered sound and faithful (conservative) would have spoken out against such practices.

I can *hear* in my mind how brother Ira Y. Rice would have boisterously condemned such a brother as one who

is a rank liberal and is attempting to destroy the Lord's church. Brother Roy Hearn would have rebuked such advocacy as being liberal. Brother E. L. Whitaker would not have tolerated the promotion as such liberalistic tendencies. The same could be said of brethren Richard Curry, John Renshaw, and J. A. McNutt, along with a host of other faithful brethren.

At one time men such as Garland Elkins, Curtis Cates, and Keith Mosher would have rebuked any brother who attempted to promote such actions. Brother Bobby Liddell would have reproved such actions through the pages of *Defender*, while he was its editor. Brother Robert R. Taylor would have altogether arraigned, accused, and admonished brethren that involvement in such actions are indefensible and inexcusable (he even wrote an excellent book dealing with the versions—*Challenging Dangers of Modern Versions*).

But "now, it is different" (Hiscox 22), at least with some of these brethren. In the February 10, 2009 edition of *The Forest Hill News*, bulletin of the Forest Hill Church of Christ (home of Memphis School of Preaching), Barry Grider (then the pulpit preacher for the congregation) defended all the above actions in the three articles he chose for that week's bulletin (one he wrote, one Tyler Young wrote—and given the direct endorsement of Barry Grider, and an older article about enlarging one's circle of fellowship). Many brethren thought that at least some of the previously mentioned brethren who are still alive and at least some of the Forest Hill elders would have objected to the material presented in that bulletin. However, in response to articles suggesting that some of these brethren might not be pleased with the actions advocated, Barry Grider

wrote in the December 1, 2009 *Forest Hill News* that the Forest Hill elders, preacher, and the MSOP faculty "have operated in peace and harmony to this present hour." If we accept brother Grider at his word (and we have no reason not to believe such), then who changed? Sound brethren still oppose such actions as the ones brother Grider supported in the February 10 bulletin. Yet, brother Grider sanctions these actions, and then informs us in the December 1 bulletin that he, his elders and his fellow faculty members at MSOP are operating "in peace and harmony." Thus, according to brother Grider, these brethren who would once oppose such compromises, will now work "in

Policy Statement

All correspondence written to *Defender*, myself (Michael Hatcher), or to the elders at Bellview concerning anything in *Defender* is viewed as intended for publication unless otherwise stated. While it is not the practice of *Defender* to publish our correspondence, we reserve the right to publish such **without further permission being necessary** should the need or desire arise.

* * * * *

Occasionally we receive requests to reprint articles from *Defender*. It is our desire to get sound material into the hands of brethren. Thus, it is our policy to allow reproduction of any articles that should appear in this publication. However, honesty should demand that you give proper credit when reprinting an article. You should give the author credit for his work and we would appreciate your including that you got the article from this paper.

peace and harmony” with those who advocate such.

Forest Hill Elders’ Marking

In the same bulletin (*The Forest Hill News*, December 1), the Forest Hill elders “marked” brethren David Brown and Dub McClish. We will make two observations concerning this marking.

First, God gives us a command to mark those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ (Rom. 16:17). When discussing the withdrawal of fellowship and marking of brethren, there is often latitude given in **how** to go about such. However,

sometimes God has given specific instructions regard-

ing these actions. He gave specific instructions when a Christian trespasses against another Christian in a personal offense. The Lord says the offended Christian is to go privately to the offender and “tell him his fault.” If he fails to repent, then the offended is to take one or two with him on a second visit with the offender. If the offender still refuses to repent, the offense is then to be told to the church to bring about the entire church’s influence upon the offender. If he still refuses to repent, then he is to be “as an heathen man and a publican” (Mat. 18:15-20).

When one is “an heretick” (KJV), God has again given specific instructions regarding the marking of that individual. *Heretic* as is translated in the KJV, is “factious man” in the ASV, “stirs up division” in the ESV, and “divisive person” in the NET, and “divisive man” in the NKJV. These are translated from the Greek *hairetikos* that means, “causing divisions.” Inspiration states: “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject” (Tit. 3:10).

God gives the specific instructions that there must be a first admonition, then a second admonition before the divisive man (a charge the Forest Hills elders specifically lodged against brethren Brown and McClish) is rejected. My first question for the Forest Hill elders (and thus for all brethren) is, “When and where did the first admonition take place?” My second question is, “When and where did the second admonition take place?”

I know of two invitations to those at MSOP to meet with brethren Brown and McClish (along with

Some are now calling toleration and compromise, longsuffering and patience.

others) to discuss matters that are dividing us. Those of MSOP (and their supporters) refused the invitations. Then another attempt was made that encouraged Forest Hill and MSOP to host a meeting to discuss these matters (for which meeting we would pay our own expenses), but there was never any response to this attempt. Therefore, where and when did the Forest Hill elders do what God commanded them to do in admonishing David Brown and Dub McClish (whom they accused of a “continual pursuit of sowing discord among brethren”—another way of accusing them of being divisive) the first time and then the second time? If they failed to do this, then they have violated God’s instructions and need to repent.

The second observation concerns the accusation that these brethren told “outright lies.” We have heard these types of accusations (and documented them) from those of Memphis before. At the 2006 West Kentucky Lectureship (Sunny Slope Church of Christ in Paducah, KY),

Keith Mosher made the claim: “If you’re going to believe some of these publications you’re going to have a problem because those brethren are lying to you” (it is a shame that Harold Wood, the director of the lectureship, and the West Kentucky Lectureship did not hold Keith Mosher accountable for these statements). Thus, in the August 2007 issue of *Defender*, we challenged brother Mosher (who has an earned doctorate and thus knows how to do research and provide evidence) to **prove** (provide the proper evidence for) the alleged lies which “some of these publications”

had printed concerning Dave Miller.

Brother Mosher never

has made an attempt to prove any alleged lies anyone has printed concerning Dave Miller. Instead, in an email to me, he accused me of “evil surmising” (does this sound familiar?). In light of this history, while the Forest Hill elders should document the “outright lies” that brethren Brown and McClish supposedly have told, why would we expect them even to attempt to document anything?

Troubler

“And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim” (1 Kin. 18:17-18). In the current Forest Hill/MSOP situation we could rightly change the foregoing wording as follows: “And it came to pass, when Forest Hill (elders, preacher, and faculty of MSOP) saw David Brown and Dub McClish, they said to them, Art ye they that troubleth Israel? And David Brown and Dub McClish

answered, we have not troubled Israel; but ye in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and ye have followed Dave Miller.”

At least Ahab was willing to gather all his people for a meeting to examine the evidence (18:19-20). To this time: Curtis Cates, Bobby Liddell, MSOP faculty, and Dave Miller (and those associated with him) have refused to gather for a meeting to lay out all the facts and consider the evidence. Are they perhaps afraid they might suffer an outcome similar to that which befell Ahab, Jezebel, and their false prophets? A similar offer is being made to the Forest Hill elders as was made to Curtis Cates, Keith Mosher, and MSOP as recorded in the August 2007 issue

of *Defender*. I am calling upon the Forest Hill elders to arrange a public meeting at the Forest Hill building between all who are involved in the current controversy (inclusive of the Forest Hill elders, MSOP faculty, and Dave Miller, along with any others they might deem necessary and David Brown, Dub McClish, the Spring elders, myself, and any others we might deem necessary). This meeting must be video taped and the tapes made available to all who request them. In this meeting, both sides must have equal opportunity to present evidence and ask questions (it must be fair to all involved, not a sham meeting like the one in which Jerry Manning and Curtis Cates sought to bushwhack Ken Chumbley

a few months ago). The Forest Hill elders can arrange the details as to topics, date, and time (as long as these are agreeable to both sides) since all such meetings we have attempted to arrange were ignored by Dave Miller and his supporters. Surely truth has nothing to fear (1 The. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:15). We desire unity, but it can only be based upon the truth of God’s Word and our obedience to it. Unity will not come about by compromising the Scriptures. Forest Hill elders: The proverbial ball is in your court. Are you for unity and peace? Or are you for division?

Work Cited:

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Continued from Page 1
have written in opposition to these compromises and commend them for their efforts.

In the February 10, 2009 issue of *TFHN*, Barry Grider, currently the pulpit minister of FH, wrote two articles entitled “I Got Used to It” and “I Drew My Circle Again”. These articles, which, in effect, question the singularity of the Lord’s church and its doctrine, were critically reviewed by Dub McClish in the April 2009 issue of *CFTF* [also carried in the September 2009 issue of *Defender*]. In his editorial in the October 2009 issue of *CFTF*, David Brown again referred to these two articles. In the same February 10th *TFHN* bulletin, Grider also included an article by Tyler Young excerpted from Young’s manuscript for the 2008 Lubbock Lectureship. The import of Young’s article supported Grider’s two articles and was likely included for that reason. Young was publicly and appropriately rebuked

by Tommy Hicks, director of the Lubbock Lectureship, for presenting this material there when he had been expressly forbidden to do so by Hicks (Hicks had excised this material from Young’s manuscript prior to its inclusion in the lectureship book). As a matter of information, Hicks is in close fellowship with the staff of Memphis School of Preaching and likely the FH elders. We assumed that the FH elders were opposed to the sentiments expressed in these bulletin articles as were Hicks and others. We were wrong. Not only do the FH elders not oppose the loose views expressed in these articles, but by virtue of their “marking” action, they agree with and endorse these views.

With our assumptions now corrected, it is still the case that assertions are not proof. In order to be credible, the FH elders must provide adequate evidence to support the assertions made in their “marking” announcement. In a letter to them

of this date, we have invited them to provide such proof. As a matter of record, previously we have invited the principals at MSOP, SWSBS, Schertz, Apologetics Press, et al, to participate in an Open Forum, but such efforts were spurned or ignored.

If the response to our letter to the FH elders is either silence, dismissal, or a soliloquy similar to the self serving lead article of the above mentioned December 1st bulletin, then we must assume that the “marking” has no merit.

As a further comment, we express surprise at the timing of this “marking”, the necessity of doing it formally, and the limitation of the same. The fellowship issues that have divided us began in 2005. We have not had fellowship with MSOP, FH, SWSBS, Southwest Church of Christ (Austin, Texas), Schertz Church of Christ, AP, and others similarly disposed, from the time they demonstrated that they would condone or practice, or both, unau-

thorized fellowship. So why now? Also, they have “marked” brethren Brown and McClish but not the elders who oversee their work. Do the FH elders still consider themselves in fellowship with the Spring elders? Will they now mark all those who remain in fellowship with Brown and McClish? In the marking of brethren Brown and McClish, the proper approach would be to provide the Spring elders with the adequate evidence to substantiate their action. Once proved, they should then call upon us to act accordingly in a disciplinary action against Brown and McClish. In our humble opinion, their marking action will likely extend far beyond their expectations and result in consequences that are both unanticipated and uncontrollable.

Perhaps our aforementioned letter will prompt them to do what they have thus far failed to do. We wait, hopefully not in vain, but certainly not in idleness.

/s/ Kenneth D. Cohn elder
 /s/ Buddy R. Roth elder
 /s/ Jack T. Stephens, Jr. elder

**Letter Dated December 10,
 2009 From Brethren David P.
 Brown and H. W. (Dub) McClish
 To the Elders of the Forest Hill
 Church of Christ**

Dear brethren:

We are in receipt of your December 1, 2009, edition of *The Forest Hill News (TFHN)* in which you announced you have “marked” us as unworthy of fellowship on the basis of Romans 16:17. We assure you that we believe in following and count very important what the New Testament teaches regarding the marking and withdrawing of fellowship. You accused us of two things in your announcement: “sowing discord” among brethren and telling “outright

lies” concerning yourselves, your evangelist, MSOP, and Forest Hill, serious allegations indeed. While granting for the moment that our words/deeds may have caused discord, as you brethren know, doing so is not inherently evil (Mat. 10:34–39; Luke 12:51–53).

We are truly thankful that you have clarified your position regarding your past, present and continued support of brother Barry Grider. Your public statement of implied support for brother Grider’s doctrine and conduct dispels any idea on our part (and should do so on anyone else’s part) that any one of you disagrees with and/or opposes him. Contrariwise, your statement implies to all that the Forest Hill eldership, the Forest Hill church and MSOP faculty **are in full support** of brother Grider’s doctrine and conduct. We assure you that any suggestions to the contrary we have made regarding the same were based on information at hand (which we believed to be reliable) and with no intent to deceive.

We will publicly correct our misconceptions of this matter on the pages of *Contending for the Faith* and trust that you will forgive our erroneous suggestion. It has always been the policy of *Contending for the Faith* to make appropriate acknowledgments and corrections when we become aware of any misstatement. Regarding such matters, we have expected that same Scriptural attitude in and conduct from others, but have sadly found that, all too often, others are unwilling to make necessary corrections when they have not only been charged with error, but have been proven guilty of said charges. Lamentably, many who are guilty of sin and/or error seem to be far more interested in attempting to justify their erroneous conduct than repent-

ing of it.

You did not specify the “lies” of which you accused us, making it difficult for us to repent of unspecified offenses and leaving us to guess at what they might be. In brother Grider’s article that accompanied your announcement, he pointedly expressed his frustrations with us, but in the venting of his spleen, he was no more specific in his charges against us than were you men. To simply throw out invectives as brother Grider did only proves (if it proves anything at all) that he can throw out invectives without specificity. It is strange that he did not deal with specifics, but chose rather to deal only in caustic generalities.

From reading brother Grider’s recent article, it appears that you and he were most disturbed by the following (which he termed a “lie”): Our suggestion that one or more of you men and/or one or more of the MSOP faculty members may have sorely disagreed with brethren Grider’s and Young’s February 10, 2009, *TFHN* articles. Brother Grider stated in his December 1 article:

The truth is our elders, this preacher, along with our faculty, have operated in peace and harmony to this present hour.

We accept brother Grider’s claim, and stand corrected as previously noted. We are in brother Grider’s debt for setting us straight. Taking him at his word **in writing, you and the entire MSOP faculty** “have operated in peace and harmony to this present hour.” Simply put, we did not think that any (much less, all) of you men could ever approve of the February 10 articles. While we have apparently **misstated** the case in this regard, this hardly makes us **liars**, for a liar is one who makes “a false statement with deliberate intent to

deceive.” We ask your forgiveness for suggesting that there may have been disagreement within the eldership and that some of you and some of the faculty may have been displeased with brother Grider because of his February 10 articles.

We must therefore regretfully accept the fact that **all** of the Forest Hill elders and **all** of the MSOP faculty **are now on record** as being in **full agreement** with and as having **no objections whatsoever** to the following things advocated in the Grider and Young articles: (1) Singing the song, “Sweet, Sweet Spirit” in your assemblies (which song directly addresses and prays to the Holy Spirit for his direct impact upon the singer), (2) allowing teachers, preachers, and preacher students to use whatever Bible version(s) they choose in your pulpit and classrooms (including MSOP), (3) dismissing your Sunday evening worship assemblies in favor of small group meetings in homes, (4) moving or canceling your Sunday evening worship period on “Super Bowl Sunday,” (5) serving coffee and doughnuts during your Bible classes, (6) teaching your members and preacher students that they may forsake the assembly in order to participate in sports activities, (7) enlarging your fellowship “circle,” and (by implication) (8) teaching in the classes at MSOP that the foregoing practices and teachings are mere incidental and optional matters.

With your official public statement, along with brother Grider’s December 1 article, we now know exactly where you stand and what you advocate concerning some of the things brother Grider advocated himself and that he defended in brother Tyler Young’s teaching in the February 10 articles. Your statement also gives us greater insight concern-

ing your attitude toward brother Dave Miller’s errors and toward those who fellowship him.

While we continue to have difficulty believing that you brethren countenance such things, brother Grider’s declaration of your perpetual “peace and harmony” leaves us no alternative but to believe that you do. So that brethren may know of our admission of mischaracterizing you brethren as defined and set out in this letter, please distribute our admission in this regard as widely as you have distributed your statement of marking. This distribution, however, must include this letter in its entirety.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ David P. Brown

/s/ H. W. (Dub) McClish

P.S. We were a bit surprised that you took more than four years to mark us as unworthy of your fellowship. Because of your fellowship compromises, we have not been in fellowship with you since you began (in 2005) defending, endorsing, and extending fellowship to brother Dave Miller in spite of his errors and of his steadfast refusal to repent of the same. We know of nothing that proves brother Miller’s repentance, confession of sin, and/or his request for brethren to pray for his forgiveness. If you do know of such precise and specific evidence, please make that evidence available to us. We would greatly rejoice in his repentance as we would rejoice in your repentance as well for extending your fellowship to him and to those who fellowship him in his unrepented-of errors. Until such a time, even if you should “unmark” us, you will remain “marked” by us and by all who refuse to show “respect of persons for the sake of advantage” (Jude 16).

Letter Dated December 10,

2009 From the Elders of the Spring Church of Christ To the Elders of the Forest Hill Church of Christ

Dear brethren:

Thank you for informing the Spring elders by means of the December 1, 2009 issue of *The Forest Hill News* (“TFHN”) of your markings of brethren David P. Brown and H. W. (Dub) McClish. You sent the bulletin to the offices of *Contending for the Faith* (“CFTF”) with which we are associated as an eldership only by sentiment. (Brother Brown expeditiously hand delivered the bulletin to the elders. Please note above the correct mailing address of the Spring Church of Christ. [Letterhead in original: PO Box 39; Spring, TX 77383]) Both brethren are, however, overseen by the Spring elders.

We, as well as brethren Brown and McClish, were operating under the assumption, proved by you brethren to be false, that you and perhaps some of the faculty of the Memphis School of Preaching (“MSOP”) were not in full agreement with the articles appearing in the February 10, 2009 issue of *TFHN*. As distasteful as it is to us, your action in marking these brethren has forced us to recognize the harsh reality that you indeed have endorsed and are in full agreement with said articles. What is further distressing is that the implications and repercussions of your endorsement and agreement extend far beyond the subscribers of *TFHN*. Please extend our gratitude to brother Grider for informing us that you elders, the MSOP faculty, and he are even to the present operating in peace and harmony.

Any marking is a serious matter. This one is especially so because its implications are broader than just the congregations of Spring and

Forest Hill. For that reason, and in order for us to fulfill our obligations as elders having oversight over two whom you have marked, we respectfully request that you, collectively but endorsed individually, provide us in writing the specific information you considered and the reasoning from the Scriptures you employed in arriving at your decision. Surely you “proved all things” prior to your action. Prove it not only to yourselves, but to us, David, and Dub as well. If only for the sake of David’s and Dub’s souls, surely you are willing to do this.

We reference your announcement in the December 1, 2009 issue of *TFHN*. You accuse them of a “continual pursuit of sowing discord among brethren.” Even a “continual pursuit” must have a beginning. Please tell us just when this “continual pursuit” began. What were the actions, words, and the like, that constituted “sowing discord”? We are not concerned with sowing “discomfort” if such is deserved. Paul did not say “Have I become your best friend

because I tell you the truth?”

You accuse them of telling “outright lies” concerning you, the Forest Hill elders, the Forest Hill evangelist (which we assume to be Barry Grider), MSOP (Did you mean just the faculty, the students, former students, or all inclusive?), and the Forest Hill congregation (Did you mean each and every member, individually, or the aggregate?). You further state that the evidence of such lies (and perhaps respecting the “continual pursuit” statement as well) was to be found in the October 2009 issue of *CFTF*. Please enumerate each and every statement made by Brown or McClish or both, whenever or wherever made, but particularly in *CFTF*, known by you to be a lie respecting each group mentioned in your announcement. Also, please clearly state the reason such statement is a lie and the truth pertaining thereto. Although you may believe the task to be unduly burdensome, do not let that be a deterrent to an honest effort. In order that our understanding may not be lacking, your responses

may be the occasion of further questions.

It is important for us in fulfilling our obligations as elders and for all faithful Christians everywhere to be provided the foregoing in order that all may consider the merits of your action. We certainly do not want such egregious conduct, if indeed it is, to go uncontested.

Given the far reaching implications of your action and the need of the brotherhood to be adequately informed, in your response, do not invoke a right of confidentiality. It will not be honored. Likewise, we claim no right of confidentiality for ourselves. You may distribute our communications with you as widely as the distribution of *TFHN*. We stipulate only that our communications with you be reproduced in their entirety.

Trusting that your response will be timely and thorough, we remain

Yours truly,

/s/ Kenneth D. Cohn

/s/ Buddy R. Roth

/s/ Jack T. Stephens, Jr.

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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History Repeating Itself

Michael Hatcher

In the early 1900s, Robert Henry Boll (1875-1956) became a very popular writer within the Lord's church. He was a front-page editor of *Gospel Advocate* for several years till he was forced to resign in 1915 because of his premillennial views. In the 1930s, brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr., combated the premillennial views being espoused by Boll (often identified within the church as Bollism). If it were not for brethren like brother Wallace and other faithful men, the Lord's church might have apostatized into premillennialism. Yet, because of brother Wallace's opposition to Bollism, his adversaries often vilified him. Because of the personal attacks against him, he wrote two articles titled "The Campaign of Calumny" that he published in *Bible Banner*. Consider carefully what brother Wallace says concerning the events of that day and compare what is taking place in the church today as some are making simply personal attacks against others instead of dealing with evidence and fact (evidence of Dave Miller's false teaching and the material Barry Grider published in *The Forest Hill News*, February 10, 2009).

November 1938

The appearance of anonymous circulars of malicious character apparently represents a well-laid underworld plot. There is more than one party to it. There is the writer; there is the source of his underground information; there is the one who furnishes the money. It is also remarkable that it proceeds from brethren who have boasted of superior spirituality and sweetness of disposition, and who have repeatedly charged others with dealing in personalities in the fight waged against millennial teaching. Yet it is a noteworthy fact, yea, a notorious fact, that dating from the Winchester, Kentucky, debate this group of brethren have dealt in nothing but personalities and of the basest sort.

In all the debates held on these questions, and in the editorials and articles written, we have never even by remote inference reflected on any man's character and for this contemptible contumely and work of infamy going on among these brethren whose false doctrine has been exposed, we have nothing but scorn.

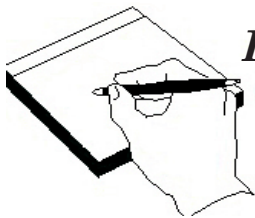
So grossly perverted are the matters referred to in these scurrilous

documents that even any element of truth or fact upon which some of their references are based is lost in their perversion.

We have abundant documentary evidence, signed and sworn to, in proof that all transactions referred to were honest and upright. But personally, I have never felt disposed to debate my own character. That to me is not debatable.

My own person is nothing and my individual fortune insignificant, compared with the eternal interests of the cause we have set out to defend. Therefore, should my foes succeed in proving that I am as bad as they say I am, it does not change the truth for which we have fought. The ignoble means to which they resort in a final effort to dispose of men who are in their way can be construed only as an admission of defeat in the issues which we have debated. It is a campaign of calumny which all their pious protestations cannot conceal, though they may smile and smile and smile. They may, and doubtless will, continue to talk and talk and talk—but as they talk we shall continue to strive to do our whole duty as hum-

Continued on Page 5



Notes From The Editor

Michael
Hatcher

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Ad Hominem

We have all heard the expression that you have never been *loved* till you have been *loved* by a liberal. The reason for such an expression is because while the liberal **claims** to be loving and kind, they are actually mean and vicious. They are often the most vicious, inhuman people that you will ever encounter if you cross them. If, however, you never cross them, they keep that kind, gentle, loving spirit and portray themselves as such to everyone.

Barry Grider outdid himself in his *ad hominem* attack against David Brown and Dub McClish in his editorial for the Forest Hill Church of Christ bulletin, *The Forest Hill News*, December 1, 2009. The mean-spirited, vicious, hateful *ad hominem* attack against these brethren should bring shame upon everyone associated with the Forest Hill congregation and Memphis School of Preaching. Since it is obvious to all who read the attack that Barry Grider could not contain himself, someone else should have. However, if history is a predictor, then nothing but praise will be heaped upon him.

Barry's editorial reminds me of the preacher who had written in the margin of his outline: "Weak point, yell real loud." Barry did not produce any evidence, all he did was "yell real loud." Or we might say that all Barry did was whine and viciously attack real loud. He simply made *ad hom-*

inem attacks against David Brown and Dub McClish. *Ad hominem* is an "argument against the person." So instead of dealing with the issues, Barry introduced a red herring to divert attention away from what he wrote in his editorial for February 10, 2009 and the articles he included in that bulletin. By trying to present brothers Brown and McClish as evil men "on a vendetta" and what they write is "venomous" and "outlandish," and "filled with evil surmisings." He attacks them as having no "respect for truth whatsoever" and having an "attitude that is totally devoid of anything Christ like." He pronounces "they cannot love the church," they are "rude and crude," "hateful and haughty" and they are "not normal." He attacks them by saying "they behave like spoiled children." What a malicious and sadistic attack Barry made. If these things were true (which they are not), why would anyone listen to anything they have to say? This is the whole idea behind the venomous attacks. Divert attention away from those things advocated in the February 10, 2009, *The Forest Hill News*, by attacking the credibility of others.

Even if everything Barry has written about brethren Brown and McClish were true (which it is **not**), it does not change the **fact** of Barry advocating in that bulletin article these doctrines:

- singing a song that addresses and prays to the Holy Spirit and for His direct impact upon Christians
- that teachers and preachers using whatever version/perversion they choose in the pulpit and classrooms does not indicate liberalism on their part
- supported the breakup of Sunday night worship services in favor of

small groups in various homes of its members

- proposed dismissing or changing the time of the Sunday evening services so they would not clash with the Super Bowl
- taught that brethren may forsake the assembly to participate in various sports activities that might take place during the time of the worship assembly
- had no objections to providing coffee and doughnuts during our Bible classes (especially Sunday mornings)
- indicated that brethren should begin enlarging our fellowship "circle"

Another thing that Barry said in his December 1, 2009 bulletin article was of special interest to me. He wrote, "We gave them one of their last platforms of influence, through our lectureship and *The Gospel Journal*." The first observation regarding this amazing statement is that everyone should now realize they if you appear on the MSOP lectureship, they are simply using you. Truth and error no longer matter; it is if they can use you to further themselves is all that matters. Also in connection with this is that no one has any influence unless they give it to you.

I do not know how much influence Barry Grider has with the MSOP lectureships, but he adds *The Gospel Journal* to his list. I was there for the very first meeting in November 1998 regarding what was to become *The Gospel Journal*. Barry Grider was not at that meeting! I was one of the men to be on an ad hoc committee in the forming of the publication and attended just about every meeting if not every one. Barry Grider was not on that ad hoc committee nor was he at any of the meetings. I received the emails that went

back and forth in the forming of the paper (and still have most if not all those emails). Barry Grider did not receive any of those emails. I contributed my thoughts to the forming of *The Gospel Journal* both in meetings and emails. Barry Grider contributed nothing in the forming of it. I was one of the men selected to be on the board of directors for *The Gospel Journal* and served as the secretary of the board till I resigned from that post in 2005. Barry Grider during that time was never on the board. I along with the other four members of the board (only one of them having a direct connection with Forest Hill and MSOP) selected brother McClish to be the editor of the paper and could not think of anyone more qualified or anyone else we wanted to be the editor. Barry Grider had nothing to do with that selection.

Yet, Barry Grider says, “We gave them...” Barry, just who is the “we”? *We* is a first person plural, yet you—Barry Grider—were not involved in any way in the forming of *The Gospel Journal*, in getting the first editor (Dub McClish), nor in the first five years of its existence. However, Barry Grider might have played a part in the forced resignations of Dub McClish and Dave Watson from *The Gospel Journal*. Notice carefully the following Open Letter written by brother Virgil O. Green.

**AN OPEN LETTER TO MY
BRETHREN
(QUESTIONS OF GREAT
CONSEQUENCE)**

In September 2005, this writer and sister Sandra Greene sought counsel of brethren whom we greatly respected and admired, Curtis Cates and Garland Elkins, concerning a personal matter brought about by the contents of a lesson preached by brother Cates at 2004 lectureship

at Sunny Slope Church of Christ at Paducah, Kentucky.

After the meeting we, Sandra, brother and sister Cates and I, went to a local restaurant for lunch. It was during this time we spent with the Cates that we discussed the removal of Dub McClish from the editorship of T.G.J. and the false teaching of brother Dave Miller (which Dave Miller has not repented of, not to my knowledge. V.G.) I am dealing with this part of the overall problems that have besieged the brotherhood since July, 2005. There is plenty of evidence out there concerning these things. I have written letters to all parties involved up front and directly associated with said problem involving Dave Miller.

I became aware of Dave Miller’s false teaching in the summer of 2000. I was made aware of his apostasy through brethren at Roanoke, Texas. I investigated the evidence and found that it revealed him to have taught falsely on Elder R & R at the Brown Trail church of Christ, Bedford, Texas. All this has been proven so I will get to the reason for this letter.

In September, 2005, I was at M.S.O.P. in regard to said lecture mentioned above (i.e., at Sunny Slope). At this time, I was in the dark as per the reasons of the removal of the editor and co-editor of *The Gospel Journal*. I was made aware that Dub McClish was to be removed from that position because he had “gone off the deep end” (words of Bryan Braswell who had started his work at Roanoke in the summer of 2002). I was also made aware that this change was to take place on the week following the lectureship at Sunny Slope at a scheduled meeting of *The Gospel Journal* board at Schertz, Texas.

I knew only a few days before I

attended the lecture at Sunny Slope that the editorship was to be changed. I had not researched nor sought any information on these matters until after my meeting with the two brothers at M.S.O.P. I did relate to brother Cates what I had found out in my investigation at Brown Trail and that being, that brother Dave Miller was guilty as charged.

After the lunch with brother and sister Cates, we (sister Sandra Greene and I) sat in the parking lot going over the information given us. We were emotionally upset by the accusations leveled at Dub McClish, for we knew the truth of Dave Miller’s teaching on Elder R & R. Up to this point, I had not sought any information on the reasons for the removal of Dub McClish and Dave Watson from the ranks of T.G.J. I let my subscription lapse after the change. It was not of the quality I was used to in the original journal that I received since its beginning. I knew something terrible was amiss. I had been heartsick since I had been made aware of Dave Miller’s apostasy, and now it was clear that there was more to this than was told me by brother Cates when I was in Memphis.

Our brothers at M.S.O.P. truly expect souls who are in sin, who are taught the truth about their sins, to repent and be restored to the body of the Lord. At least, that is the impression I have always had of them. Even when they were counseling us on the personal matter mentioned above, they indicated and acted as though, when a person becomes aware of his sins, he needs to repent of said sins and turn away from such and not be involved with such sins any longer.

The sins of defamation publicly committed against brothers McClish and Watson, started off with the attack on brother McClish by brother

Frank Chesser in Alabama, which caused brother Cates to accuse brother McClish of wrong doings. Brother Cates was visibly upset over this ordeal. I had asked him if brother McClish had gone off the deep end and he agreed that it was so. Brother Cates told us that brother Miller had told him that he never did the things that he was accused of. I related how I had come to know about Miller's false teachings regarding the 2002 practice of Elder R & R, and which I had verified by brother Dan Flournoy, one of the other preachers at the Brown Trail congregation at the time. He told me that Miller (although he was already involved in getting ready for his move to Alabama) was involved behind the scenes in the action Brown Trail was taking against their Elders. Brother Cates mentioned several times that "they" made him take actions against McClish. When I asked, "they who?", he replied that the board members told him that since he was the president of the board, it was his place to remove McClish.

Now, I ask you folks in Memphis, in Schertz and all others who claim to be preachers and teachers of God's Holy Word, when are you going to do the very thing that you teach others to do? Repent! Admit that your attack on brother McClish was unwarranted, and work to straighten out this big sin against the truth of the living God of Heaven! If you brethren have any biblical proof against brother McClish, you should make it known publicly—just as publicly as your attacks have been on brother McClish, brother Watson and those that support the truth! Either admit your sins or if you are so sure that you haven't sinned, then publicly discuss these issues. The liberals, whom you all have stood against in the past, are happy to know that you folks are

moving over to their way of thinking.

How can an honest Bible student support the apostate elements, operating as workers of righteousness, who you stood against in the past, but now, you openly fellowship and defend? Now you ignore their wrongs! Those of us who have looked to you brethren for sound teaching are hurting, knowing that, for some ungodly reasons, many of those whom we felt could be relied upon have deliberately left off standing for the truth and the righteousness of our God and His Only Begotten Son.

When brother Miller stated that the liberal element was no longer a big problem (in my words V.G.), he must have meant that most of the opposition to him and his type were being manipulated over to the side of the liberals. I am thankful that I understand enough of God's word to be obedient to it. I have many steadfast brethren to thank for this. It's a strange thing to me how I struggled, constantly in trouble with my liberal brethren because they didn't live (stand behind) what they taught or preached. Thanks to many of you brethren, sister Sandra and I came to a better knowledge of the Word and grew in the Faith to a point that we **could** repent and be reconciled to God.

Now I am in kind of a dilemma. If I continue to study and grow in knowledge and in faith, is there a point that I will reach that I can go on where Christ has not led? God forbid!! Some of the men who seemed so strong have been turned aside by Satan. He used some of the same tactics that he used on Eve... surely you won't die (spiritually)... God doesn't want you to be ever so popular and in good standing **only with the minority!** You need to buddy up with those who have much

money, power and influence in order to come to the more popular life, to be **all** that you can be!!

Don't listen to Satan! There are many who love your souls and pray for you daily.

I wrote only what I know about, what I personally was witness to. These things alone seem to be the great cause of all that has come to be. The problem exists because no one will stand up and face the facts at hand.

As your brother in Christ, I am seeking for the "peace that passeth all understanding" for this great brotherhood. It can only exist in the Christ and His Word. Amen!

Virgil O. Greene

P.O. Box 212; Alto Pass, IL 62905

Now regarding Barry Grider's part in this: how did Bryan Braswell know before the board meeting that Dub McClish was going to be "removed" as editor of *The Gospel Journal*? Barry Grider had called Bryan Braswell and talked to him on the phone (Barry Grider has denied telling Braswell that brother McClish would be "removed"). However, we also know that on July 17, 2005, McClish called Cleatius Copeland (one of the elders at Roanoke where Braswell preached at the time) to tell him about the Schertz meetings and that he suspected and that he might not be editor of *TGJ* when he came back from that board meeting. McClish then told Copeland, "For all I know, you may already know about the meetings in Schertz and their likely outcome." Copeland then replied, "As a matter of fact, I do" and proceeded to tell McClish of Grider's call to Braswell.

Thus, instead of giving Dub McClish "one of their last platforms of influence," Barry Grider tried to destroy the influence of Dub McClish.

One last observation about brother

Greene's open letter is that I (one of the members of the board of directors at the time) do not know of anyone who told Curtis Cates "that since he was the president of the board, it was his place to remove McClish." While some other board member might have

said this, I do not know of it taking place, and any action would have been an action by the board as a whole and not the responsibility of any one member of the board (whether president or not).

Brethren, these things are certainly

a sad state of affairs. However, they need to be exposed for all to see. While Barry Grider and his cohorts might attack and defame faithful brethren, we will not be deterred from exposing and opposing error.

MH

Continued from Page 1

bly as we can while "the nations rage and the heathen imagine vain things." We shall not stoop to their plane, neither be deterred by their calumny. *They shall not pass!*

Bible Banner p.12

Later, others attacked brother Wallace (this time from those who wanted to sell the Lord's church out to the denominational Christian Church), so he again took pen in hand and wrote this article under the same title. It was also published in *Bible Banner*, on page 2.

June 1941

There is nothing new about it. It is the same old campaign of calumny. If it breaks out in a new place it comes from the same old source. It began with the discussions which were held with Boll, Neal, and Norris. Defeated on the issues, they swore vengeance in personal destruction. Even when Norris sought palliation for utter defeat in personal retaliation these false brethren fed him on slander and slime. There they met on common ground.

Then came the Clinton Davidson movement and anonymous letters. Because the *Bible Banner* stood squarely in the way of this sinister movement its promoters vowed to destroy its editor. His movement died but his bitter hatred lives and flows through other channels.

Next up was the Murch-Witty National Unity Meeting notion-a

carefully devised scheme to take over the church. The *Bible Banner* opposed the schemes of Witty and Murch on the same principle precisely that it opposed the schemes of Clinton Davidson. Stung by defeat, Davidson was seeking revenge and saw an opportunity to enlist the assistance of Claud F. Witty. The following letter reveals the Davidson-Witty calumnious coalition. It was written by Brother F. L. Rowe as a "confidential" letter to the editors of the *Christian Leader*. But as it was sent as a form letter, it could hardly be maintained that it is confidential. Read it and see the spirit and the persons back of the campaign being waged.

CONFIDENTIAL LETTER TO LEADER EDITORS

January 8, 1941.

Dear Brother: About three weeks ago, Brother Davidson called up from New Jersey about 8:30, but I let Sister Bauer answer the phone as I have a little difficulty sometimes in hearing clearly. The substance of his conversation was that if I would go after Foy E. Wallace and expose him in every way that I could and in every way that would be proven to me that such a work on my part would be financed by a Brother in Detroit. My answer to him was I would have no part in any such an affair and that as far as I am concerned I am out of all that. I had Sister Lena tell him that I was starting a new paper and wanted to keep it clean. So much for that.

Then this week, Monday, Claud F. Witty came to Cincinnati and called on me and talked to me privately about lending my name of influence to a paper for a few months at least whose purpose would be to expose Foy E. Wallace because of his bitter attacks upon Witty and others. I told Brother Witty I could not lend my name to any such a proposition and I suggested that he get some small-town printer get the paper out for them and that they mail it themselves. I told him I was through with all that manner of contention among brethren. I asked him why he came to me. His answer was, he wanted my name and reputation. I told him he would have to find someone else that I would be no party to it.

Fraternally, F. L. ROWE.

No comment is necessary to point out the evident purpose of what is being done. Regardless of who is doing what or whether they have an understanding or not, they are one in aim, and intent. Here they meet on common ground "of one accord and of one mind"—to destroy whom they hate.

The amazing thing is that the men back of this thing are the promoters of "unity meetings" and appear as love embodied and piety personified.

A Boll-Jorgenson-Witty writer descended to the level of contributing an article to the editor of the paper which is now their tool. It revealed their own mental level. They claim that they do not "sanction" the Unity Movement—but "rejoice in the

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Sunday, February 28

9:30 AM	<i>The Worldly Church</i> by Alan, Hughes, & Weed	David P. Brown
10:30 AM	<i>Facing Our Failure: The Fellowship Dilemma in Conservative Churches of Christ</i> by Todd Deaver	Terry Hightower
5:00 PM	<i>Down, But Not Out</i> by Al Maxey	Lester Kamp
6:00 PM	<i>Free In Christ</i> by Cecil Hook	Lynn Parker

Monday, March 1

9:00 AM	<i>The Core Gospel</i> by Bill Love	Skip Francis
10:00 AM	<i>Don't Shoot We May Be On The Same Side!</i> by Marvin Phillips	Daniel Coe
10:00 AM	<i>Women in the Church: Reclaiming the Ideal</i> by Carroll D. Osburn #1**	Sonya West
11:00 AM	<i>Shall We Splinter?</i> by James D. Bales	Bruce Stulting
1:30 PM	<i>Errors on MDR</i> by Several Authors	Daniel Denham
2:30 PM	Extended Open Forum: Barry Grider's Article in the Dec 1, 2009 <i>The Forest Hill News</i>	
6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 PM	<i>Our Heritage of Unity and Fellowship</i> by W. Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett	Ken Chumbley
8:00 PM	<i>The Stone-Campbell Movement: The Story of the American Restoration Movement</i> by Leroy Garrett	Paul Vaughn

Tuesday, March 2

9:00 AM	<i>Rebaptism</i> by Jimmy Allen	John West
10:00 AM	<i>In Search of Peace, Unity and Truth</i> by Olan Hicks	Danny Douglas
10:00 AM	<i>Women in the Church: Reclaiming the Ideal</i> by Carroll D. Osburn #2**	Sonya West
11:00 AM	<i>They Smell Like Sheep: Spiritual Leadership for the 21st Century</i> by Lynn Anderson	Gene Hill
1:30 PM	<i>The Cruciform Church</i> by C. Leonard Allen	Doug Post
2:30 PM	<i>Leadership in the Kingdom: Sensitive Strategies for the Church in a Changing World</i> by Ian Fair	Wayne Blake
3:30 PM	Open Forum	
6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 PM	<i>Sermon on R & R of Elders Delivered at the Brown Trail Church of Christ</i> by Dave Miller	Michael Hatcher
8:00 PM	<i>Come to the Table: Revisioning the Lord's Supper</i> by John Mark Hicks	Johnny Oxendine

Wednesday, March 3

9:00 AM	<i>What Would Jesus Do Today</i> by Mike Cope and Rubel Shelly	John Rose
10:00 AM	<i>Daring to Dance With God: Stepping into God's Embrace</i> by Jeff Walling	Jimmy Gribble
11:00 AM	<i>Righteousness Inside Out</i> by Mike Cope	Lee Moses
1:30 PM	<i>The Fire That Consumes</i> by Edward Fudge	Gary Summers
2:30 PM	<i>The Peaceable Kingdom</i> by Carroll D. Osburn	Jess Whitlock
3:30 PM	Open Forum	
6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 PM	<i>The Way of Salvation and The Gist of Romans</i> by K.C. Moser	Dub McClish
8:00 PM	<i>Who Is My Brother?</i> by F. LaGard Smith	Gary Summers

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iniquity” of libel. They have admittedly distributed bundles of papers containing what was indecent, to get even with Foy Wallace because of his alleged “unchristian” treatment of the promoters of Premillennialism and pseudo-unity movements.

The denominations will unite to oppose their common foe—the church. It is in the same spirit that these men, some of whom have little or no use for each other, have met on common ground to oppose the *Bible Banner* by any means or measures necessary, fair or foul—mostly foul.

It is my firm conviction that the public in general, and the readers of

the *Bible Banner* in particular, can and will see the influences back of this campaign of calumny. It cannot be disguised.

Concerning the personal attacks that are being made, the *Bible Banner* has no reply to make. Our battle has been fought on issues and attitudes that affect those issues. We have not attacked the personal character of any man in all these controversies. We shall continue to leave that type of “journalism” to those who oppose us. It is significant that we have refused to even quote the bad language of articles to which attention has been called.

The person of this editor is nothing,

and his personal fortunes are nothing. Do unto him what they will; it does not matter. But as long as he lives he will continue *the fight on error* “while the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things.” We shall continue to stand by the issues involved in this controversy. And on these issues—*they shall not pass!*

Deceased

We can truthfully say with brother Wallace regarding the “issues involved” in the present controversy—**they shall not pass!** We will continue to fight the good fight of the faith even though personal assaults come our way.

MH

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Sure Hope Those Lost Souls Get Saved

Lynn Parker

Souls are lost in sin. **But what can we do about it?** Congregations are gripped by apostasy. **But we can't do everything, can we?** Our young people are drifting away from the Lord. **But that's their choice.** A large segment of the brotherhood is grossly ignorant—unaware of false teachers and doctrines. **Sure hope they wake up before it's too late.**

In the brotherhood there are some congregations that are self-supporting, sound in the faith, healthy, and vibrant. Some congregations are "on the bubble." They may be without clear, sound teaching. They may eventually go off into "wild-eyed" apostasy. Can we help prevent that from happening? Other congregations may be sound in the faith but small and dying-out at an alarming rate. Some congregations may just need some help doing the right thing and standing for Truth. "And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). We can and must help others.

One can intellectually acknowledge the truth that souls are in grave danger and still be unmoved with compassion. Without compassion

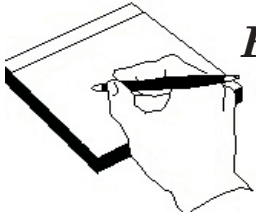
for souls, there is little or no action to save the lost and erring. We can preach the truth on our need to reach out to lost souls yet still fail to act in that very area. Dear brethren, is it possible that we recognize the crucial need but are doing precious little about it? In other words, can sound brethren and congregations do more to reach the lost before it is too late? We go through our daily and weekly activities and settle into our "routine," but that routine may not be as soul-oriented as it should be. Have we lost a sense of urgency? It is possible to be both sound and evangelistic. More than possible, it is essential if we would be obedient to the Heavenly Father and faithful stewards of time, blessings, and opportunities.

There are lots of congregations that have departed from the Truth. Sound brethren are few and far between. Faithful brethren often lament that fact and fondly remember days when the brotherhood was stronger and scriptural unity was more prevalent throughout the land. Digressives like Rubel Shelly, Max Lucado, Joe Beam, Abilene Christian College, Sunset School of Preaching, Harding and Lipscomb Universities, and the like have taken a toll on the

brotherhood. We have recently seen many "new liberals" (for example, those at Florida School of Preaching, Memphis School of Preaching, Southwest School of Biblical Studies, Tri-Cities School of Preaching, *The "new" Gospel Journal*, Dave Miller, Frank Chesser, etc.) break out like the plague to further hurt the work of Jesus Christ.

But remember this: there are brethren and congregations out there—about which we know nothing—that are still reachable. They are "teachable." They do not know anything about Memphis School of Compromise or the Dave Miller Band. They may not be everything they should be in light of the Bible standard. They might have error that needs to be addressed. These congregations may be unaware of brotherhood issues. Some are woe-fully ignorant of what transpires in the church. Some love the truth but are small in number and geographically isolated—tucked away in small towns, distant outposts, or "country congregations." Shall we just "write them off" because they are not in attendance at our lectureships and they do not know of sound papers

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Notes From The Editor

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Does Not Pay

Mary Evelyn Frechette was born September 15, 1907 in Wisconsin and died January 13, 1969. She was an American singer, waitress, and lecturer. She might be better known by her other name “Billie” Frechette and her association with John Dillinger. She was known to have been involved with Dillinger for about six months although some believe they had a much longer relationship. She married Welton Sparks in 1925, but he was convicted and imprisoned for post office robbery the same year.

Frechette was known to be an associate of Dillinger in November 1933 and possibly earlier. In April 1934 she was arrested while Dillinger and one of his friends watched from a block away. While he wanted to rescue her, he was held back and accepted that he would be killed if he made such an attempt. Thus, Frechette was convicted based upon the federal harboring law (harboring Dillinger). She served her time at the Federal Correctional Farm at Milan, Michigan of two years and a day and was released in 1936. Dillinger was finally killed in Chicago, Illinois on July 22, 1934 (three months after Frechette was arrested).

After Frechette was released from prison in 1936, she toured the nation with Dillinger’s family for five years as the “Crime Did Not Pay Show.” She learned, both by association and personally, that crime did not pay. While Dillinger, Frechette, and oth-

ers might have obtained some money and certainly fame through their exploits, Frechette realized that in the long run, crime just was not worth it. It seems many today need to learn that **sin does not pay!**

In the long ago, Moses recognized that sin did not pay. He had the opportunity to enjoy all the riches and pleasures of Pharaoh’s house, but he knew sin was not worth it. The Hebrews’ writer says, “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (11:24-25). Moses knew being with God was far more important than enjoying those pleasures he would have as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He knew **sin did not pay.**

Paul is another who realized sin does not pay. He described his life in the Jews’ religion (which had been taken away and nailed to the cross): “Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Phi. 3:4-6). To the Galatian brethren, he wrote, “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers” (1:13-14). Paul had everything going for him in the Jewish religion. He had been trained by who some consider the greatest

teacher of Judaism—Gamaliel. (Acts 22:3). He had advanced in the Jews’ religion that at the stoning of Stephen (the first Christian martyr), the people laid their clothes at Saul’s feet (7:58) showing he was in a leadership capacity in the stoning (8:1). He was able to get letters from the high priest to go all the way to Damascus to find Christians and bring them back in chains for punishment. In some ways, Saul had it all—power, prestige, popularity (with the *right* people), and all the benefits that go with it. But Saul realized that it did not pay. He wrote, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ” (Phi. 3:7-8). He realized that sin did not pay. The real dividends came from magnifying Christ. He would say, “According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death. For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain” (1:20-21). A true Christian comes to realize that which is of all importance is glorifying God in his body, just as Paul learned. Then he, with Paul, can say, “For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain” (1:21), and, like Paul, at the end of his life he can say, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Many today need to learn that sin does not pay. Paul says, “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). James reminds us, “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (Jam. 1:14-15). That sin separates us from God: “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, And your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:2). Sins ultimate end is an eternal separation from God in eternal torment. “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal”

(Mat. 25:41, 46).

The non-Christian need to learn that sin does not pay. The one who has fallen away from faithfulness to God needs to realize the severity that will come upon them (2 Pet. 2:20-22). The false teacher needs to realize that they will have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10). Additionally, those who extend fellowship to the false teacher needs to realize they are also separated from God (2 John 9-11). God stands opposed to the prideful (Jam. 4:6-7) and those who are out for money (Mat. 6:19, 24) the things of this world (Luke 12:15). We need to learn that the majority are on the side of sin that does not pay instead of on the road to eternal life (Mat. 7:13-14). Yet, it seems that many will stick their finger in the air to find out where the majority will come down on an issue facing the church. Far too

many (one is too many but there are many more than just one) are looking for all the power with brethren they can get. They do not and cannot really do things simply because they are right; there is always that ulterior motive behind what they do—what is in it for me. They want themselves on a pedestal and anything that gets in their way will be stomped out of existence and destroyed. (We saw this with the colleges and the staff and faculty instilling loyalty to the school instead of to God and we are now seeing it with the staff and faculty of the schools of preaching.) These things will **not** pay in the long run. They are like the man who stored up his goods for many years, “But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee” (Luke 12:20). They play the fool because **sin does not pay**.

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Continued from Page 1

among us? True enough—some will not listen, and some do not want to know the truth on any brotherhood issues or false teachers. But some will hear. Some will listen. Some can be brought out of ignorance. We simply must exert an effort to identify and reach them.

What Can We Do?

How can we do this? Every congregation (being autonomous) will have to decide what works best in their community, understanding, of course, that we must do only that which is authorized by heaven (Col. 3:17). We can provide a few examples of work, but they are just that—examples. They are not sources of personal or congregational glory (1 The. 2:6)—the power is in the Word (Rom. 1:16), and the glory is God’s (1 Peter 4:11). We, too, can and must

do more. Jesus said, “Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10). Many congregations and preachers have announced to the brotherhood the works in which they are engaged. We have all rejoiced in conversions and good work that was reported from foreign lands. These examples, then, are offered to simply “provoke one another to love and good works” (Heb. 10:24). They are in no way to be construed as the **only** way to do things, or even the best for your situation.

Reaching the Alien Sinner

To reach the alien sinner, you might knock doors and hand out tracts. Sure, we have been told that door knocking is no longer fruitful. We disagree. We do find interested

hearts. It is good for our brethren. You might seek to enroll people in Bible Correspondence Courses or a home Bible study.

Provide invitation cards for each member to carry in wallets or purses so while going about their daily activities, they can hand them to people they meet. In preparation for a Gospel meeting, lectureship, or special effort, you can use pre-printed, personal invitations for members to invite their non-Christian friends and neighbors. Programs come and go, but a motivated Christian that constantly keeps evangelism on his heart as he goes about his daily activities, in his sphere of influence and contact, is still a most effective way to take the Gospel to the lost. Talk to the waitress at the restaurant, the clerk at the store, and the neighbor mowing the lawn. Hand that person

a card and extend a sincere invitation to attend worship with your family. Work on doing this every time you talk to a non-Christian.

Preachers and elders can help here as well. It takes more than an occasional sermon or bulletin article to produce an evangelistically minded congregation. The congregation will watch leaders for examples. Brethren will look to see if their preacher really practices what he preaches in this area. Elders and preachers help set the tone for evangelism. Announcements should ring with evangelistic reminders. The duty to teach the lost must be constantly kept before the brethren.

You can use mass mailing to reach every home in a postal route. With that in mind, we produced “*Light For A Dark World*,” a periodical mailed directly into homes, with sound articles

by sound writers, designed exclusively for non-Christians. This tool is available for other congregations to use as well. Finances do not allow us to send copies of every issue to every home in our communities at every mailing, but we are doing what we can. Because we cannot do it **all** does not mean we cannot do **some** things.

Reaching Other Congregations

To reach other congregations, you might offer to send preachers to “fill-in” if they are without one. In one instance from years ago, we contacted some congregations that were searching for preachers in *The Christian Chronicle* (which periodical is certainly not friendly to Truth).

We asked brethren if they would be interested in a “fill-in” preacher while they were looking for a permanent one. One congregation agreed, and it turned out that from this one speaking engagement, some doors were opened for truth and a false teacher’s influence was stopped in that congregation. Of course this means that you will need to train preachers and have them ready to go at short notice.

In preparation for Gospel meetings decades ago, it was not uncommon for one congregation to contact

in mind, just a few of us got together and envisioned a camp where the Bible would be emphasized, Christian youth could form associations, and where we could (as an evangelistic effort) reach some congregations through their youth. No one else in our area was doing this. Someone should. But it occurred to us, “We are the **somebodies** that need to do these works!” Brethren, if you do not do it, who will? Still, we began a youth camp with the idea that it could serve more than one purpose. To this end,

we tried to secure a campsite in the chosen area of work. For several years we used a camp site in another area of the state, but having located a suitable site in our target area, our plans for this next year are to provide a Bible camp in the “Hill

Defender Via E-Mail

Defender (along with our weekly bulletin *Beacon*) is available to those who would like to receive it by e-mail. With the continued increase of expenses (paper, printing material, mailing expense, etc.) sending out the publication via e-mail will save us some expenses. It will also enable you to receive the paper the most expeditious way (you will receive it before others who have it being sent by regular mail). We will e-mail you an Adobe Acrobat PDF (a free reader is available from www.adobe.com). We will send you the file with the ability to print it on your printer if you desire. If you would like to receive either or both of these publications sent directly to your e-mail please send us your e-mail address at bellviewcoc@gmail.com. Your e-mail address will not be used for any other purpose than to send you these publications or information relating to them.

others and ask if they could send a brother over to make a personal invitation to the congregation. That might be effective in your area, and it could expose brethren from a weak congregation to sound teaching. “They won’t come,” someone might argue. It might be that some—even one—would come. Some brethren are simply unaware. We cannot quit because some or all reject the invitation.

For a long time, there were only a few Bible camps for young people in which we could have confidence. Then there were none. So many were run by liberals, and so many catered to a worldly mindset. In our area, there was no sound camp. With this

Country” to the west of us. The location and proximity will enable area congregations—a great many of which are unaware of digression—to send their young people. These camp efforts are larger than young people; they are for the Lord’s cause, the spiritual health of congregations, families, and yes, young individuals. All of this requires weeks and months of travel and contact with people “face to face” that new congregations and families can be reached.

Critics and Discouragements

There are always critics, detractors, distracters, and nay-sayers. They are present in every generation, and if we listen to them, good works will

Back To The Bible

35th Annual Bellview Lectures

June 12 - 16, 2010

Saturday, June 12			Tuesday, June 15		
7:00 pm	Back To The Bible	Tim Cozad	9:00 am	Back To Biblical Morality	
7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Authority	Daniel Denham			Dennis "Skip" Francis
Sunday, June 13			10:00 am	Back To Biblical Giving	Wayne Blake
9:00 am	Back To The Biblical View Of Immodesty		11:00 am	Back To Biblical Respect	Tim Cozad
		John West	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
10:00 am	Back To Biblical Living	John Rose	1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Translation	Charles Pogue
<i>Lunch Break</i>			2:30 pm	Back To Biblical Fellowship	Ken Chumbley
2:00 pm	Back To Biblical Preaching	Danny Douglas	3:30 pm	Open Forum:	
3:00 pm	Back To The Bible View Of Communion		<i>Dinner Break</i>		
		Ken Chumbley	7:00 pm	Back To The Biblical Organization Of The Church	John West
<i>Dinner Break</i>			7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Confession	Gene Hill
7:00 pm	Back To Biblical Grace	Dub McClish	Wednesday, June 16		
7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Faith	Charles Pogue	9:00 am	Back To Biblical Eschatology	Dub McClish
Monday, June 14			10:00 am	Back To The Biblical View Of God	John Rose
9:00 am	Back To Biblical Prayer	Lee Moses	11:00 am	Back To Biblical Speaking	Wayne Blake
10:00 am	Back To Biblical Attitudes	Danny Douglas	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
11:00 am	Back To Biblical Homes	Gene Hill	1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Peace	Lee Moses
<i>Lunch Break</i>			2:30 pm	Back To Biblical Priorities	David Brown
1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Warfare	Lynn Parker	3:30 pm	Open Forum:	
2:30 pm	Back To The Biblical View Of The Holy Spirit		<i>Dinner Break</i>		
		Daniel Denham	7:00 pm	Back To The Biblical Work Of The Church	
3:30 pm	Open Forum:				Dennis "Skip" Francis
<i>Dinner Break</i>			7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Baptism	Lynn Parker
7:00 pm	Back To Biblical Music	Michael Hatcher			
7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Repentance	David Brown			

Bellview Lectures Information

Housing

The Ramada (7051 Pensacola Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32505) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$55—to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/476-9091. *Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.* If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Meals

The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch Monday – Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

Books

The lectureship book, *Back To The Bible*, will be available for purchase. The price of the book has not yet been determined. The book will contain 15 chapters. This will be a soft-cover book that can be used for teaching purposes. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2010) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD has not yet been determined. The CD also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2009), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2009), and other material.

DVDs

All lectures will be recorded on DVDs. They may be purchased during the Bellview Lectures or by mail order afterwards. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the Bellview Lectures in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

Transportation

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please call or write our office. We will arrange to meet you, at no charge, if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

come to a grinding halt, or at least be muzzled, hindered, and stifled. Nehemiah, when invited to cease his work and come to Ono, replied, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you” (Neh. 6:3). It is not convenient or easy but then that is why we call it the Lord’s work.

“It won’t work.” “You’re being naive.” “You’re too optimistic—there’s not that many interested anymore.” OK, let’s just give up, sit down on the pews, watch each other grow old, pat each other on the back, and let the last person alive turn out the lights and lock the doors. **That is not an acceptable alternative!** When we first envisioned starting a youth camp, several good, well-intentioned brethren questioned the effectiveness or viability of such an effort. Some said it would not be successful. But then every work could have been halted before it began by such negativism. Do not be discouraged by the grasshopper mentality (Num. 13:33). Press ahead! We cannot be satisfied with just preaching to the saved, but must “be ready unto every good work” (Tit. 3:1). The account of a lost sheep, a

lost coin, and rejoicing in heaven over a saved sinner impress upon us the need to diligently attempt to reclaim those who have erred from the ways of truth (Luke 15:3-10). We must not ever reach a point of self-satisfaction or complacency. Foreign mission efforts would have never been born if certain brethren were satisfied with the *status quo*. There were local works in which these men could have labored, but they chose to reach out. Preaching schools would never have been born except for the fact that some decided, “There is a work that needs to be done, and we will, by the help of the Lord, do it.”

Some might insist that their work—their way—is the only way it can be done. Some might impugn your motives if you do not help in *their* work, the way *they* want it done. Several years ago someone pushing a particular evangelistic method with a very carefully designed approach, training class, and written materials, approached brethren in a congregation. He was insistent that this method be utilized by preaching students. The fact is, methods are just that, and one size does not necessarily fit all. One

method may be more effective locally than that used by a sister congregation in another locale. Our methods may not be the methods that other congregations use to reach these souls. If another congregation works to reach the lost, utilizing a scripturally authorized method, then let us all rejoice. In summary, do not let discouragement keep you from the work.

Conclusion

After all is said and done, let us carefully examine our work and attitude toward it. Where needed, let us re-ignite a spirit of keen concern for the lost and erring. Our King sets forth our obligation (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). We must teach and exhort, and diligently strive to impress on good and honest hearts the saving truth of our Lord. But they will not come to the truth simply because our sign out front says, “The Church Of Christ Meets Here.” What shall we say concerning the lost? “Send The Light!” or “We’ll leave the light on for you”—that is, until we padlock the doors and die out.

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Roelf Ruffner Support Letter

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Dear Brethren:

You may or may not have heard about the trials my family and I have undergone in the last few months. Because of the fellowship practices of the Morrison, TN church of Christ and the High Plains church of Christ (Cheyenne, WY), I was dismissed

from my position as preacher for the High Plains church. (The eldership at Morrison has overseen the salary of the preacher at High Plains since 2000.) About six months ago an elder revealed to me that the Morrison eldership was fellowshiping brother Dave Miller, a marked false teacher (Rom. 16:17,18; 2 John 9-11). After a personal visit with the elders and two phone conference calls it was evident that they would not change. Unfortunately, after supplying ample

evidence and following weeks of discussion, most of the men of the High Plains church decided that their 9 year relationship with Morrison was more important than their fellowship with the Lord and their relationship with me. My family and I are thankful for the Lord’s help during this time.

The day I was dismissed at High Plains (December 6, 2009) I was contacted by brother Daniel Coe of the Trail Creek church of Christ with an

offer to come and work with him and the brethren in Lawrence, Kansas. I held a gospel meeting for these brethren in October of last year and was impressed by their faithfulness. Trail Creek was formed about three years ago by brethren concerned about the fellowship practices of congregations in the Greater Kansas City area. They have undergone continuing persecution because of their faithfulness. Their future plans are to establish a "bricks and mortar" school of preaching. I have been asked to be one of the instructors in that school. Because of religious liberalism and compromise by most brotherhood schools the need for sound preacher training is great. In the meantime I will be aiding brother Daniel in preaching/teaching and evangelizing this area of almost one million souls. I consider it an honor to be a fellow laborer in the Gospel with a faithful servant of Christ like brother Coe.

The Trail Creek brethren are unable to fully support me and my family at this time. I am writing to you humbly requesting you con-

sider supporting us in this work on a monthly basis. I know that everyone is on a tight budget during this economic recession. Any amount of support would be welcome and greatly appreciated. Presently we are living with the Tullis family until we gather enough support. They, the brethren and the Lord are supplying our needs. Contact me for our budget and planned expenditures for this coming year. You will notice that we already have four supporters: Trail Creek church of Christ, Damon Road church of Christ, South Seminole church of Christ, and Gary & Barbara Summers. If you have further questions please contact me at the above address. I will be glad to answer any questions or supply references.

I have contacted the eldership of the Bellview church of Christ in Pensacola, Florida, and they have agreed to oversee my salary. Any support would be sent to them and they would disperse the funds to me. You may reach them for any questions at: Bellview church of Christ, 4850

Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FLA. Phone: (850) 455-7595 or bellview-coc@gmail.com.

Brethren, I have been preaching the Gospel for almost twenty years and will soon be 56 years old. My wife, Janice, and I have four children; only one, Langley (16 years old) is left at home. I have always strived to remain faithful to God and His word, "pulling them out of the fire" (Jude 23). We have always served the Lord in small, struggling congregations. Yet we have never encountered a more loving and faithful group of Christians as are at Trail Creek. Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, these brethren have come out of the fire of persecution un-singed and seeking to spread the Truth.

I look forward to hearing from you. If you know of any other congregation or individual who would be interesting in helping us, please pass this information on to them.

In His service,
Roelf L. Ruffner
Evangelist

Books-On-CD

The 1988-2005, 2007-2009 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2008, and the weekly bulletin *Beacon* 1974-2008, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Windows and Macintosh computers). The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$85 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.75 (total is \$86.75) in which you receive all the lectureship books (\$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

D*efender* is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Sauflay Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Forbidden Fellowship (Hos. 7:11-14) Tim Cozad
Improper Rejoicing (Hos. 9:1) Johnny Oxendine
God's Goodness and Severity (Joel) Dennis (Skip) Francis
Pouring Out of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32) David Brown
Two Walking Together (Amos 3:3) Darrell Broking
Prepare to Meet Thy God (Amos 4:12) Paul Vaughn
Woe to Them at Ease in Zion (Amos 6:1-7) Wayne Blake
A Famine in the Land (Amos 8:11) Lynn Parker
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How Long? (Hab. 1:2) Lester Kamp
The Just Shall Live by Faith (Hab. 2:4) Danny Douglas
The Lord Will Act (Zep. 1:12) John West
No Shame for Sin (Zep. 3:5) Darrell Broking
Consider Your Ways (Hag.) Harrell Davidson
The Priest King (Zec. 6:12-13) Gary Summers

Refusing to Obey (Zec. 7:1-14) Roelf Ruffner
Polluting the Worship (Mal. 1:7-14) Loy Hardesty
The Wife of Thy Youth (Mal. 2:14-17) Daniel Denham
Robbing God (Mal. 3:7-12) Doug Post

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Defender

"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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An Open Letter To My Fellow 1995 And Other MSOP Graduates

Brethren:

As was true with me, one of the highlights of your life was undoubtedly the two years you spent at Memphis School of Preaching. The verse by verse study of the Bible in our classes was greatly beneficial. The related curriculum, including Bible Archeology, Logic, The Preacher and His work, and Greek has also proven to be helpful through the succeeding years. In many ways, we will always recognize a sense of gratitude for those two years of study.

Even though I look back on the two years I attended MSOP with appreciation, I was not entirely comfortable with everything at the school then, and am now gravely concerned over the direction our alma mater is headed. My concerns began the very first day of the fall initiation process for new students. If you recall, we were told that even if a student preached on a regular basis for a congregation in the area, the bulk of his contribution should go to Knight Arnold (now Forest Hill). I never abode by that suggestion, because I personally believed it was unscriptural as well as dictating a rule that neither the school nor its director had the authority to make.

I was personally privy to a discussion that dealt with the Holy Spirit error of

Mac Deaver. The gist of that conversation was to take a wait and see attitude instead of taking a stand. One comment that was made was, (and I am not putting this in quotes because I cannot remember it word for word), let's let those crazy brethren in Texas fight it out. We will see then where to come down on the thing.

Do you remember when we were told singing hymns with the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music outside the worship service was a matter of scruple, and after the instructor said that in class, he categorically refused to even discuss it? He would not have answered had any of us asked, but have you ever wondered why he refused to discuss it? I have, and cannot reason to any good answer he could have given.

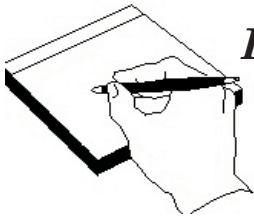
Surely, you must remember that one of the human innovations often condemned, was the use of dramatic skits. How many of you are aware that while we were students, a dramatic skit reenacting the conversion of the Eunuch was presented at the youth day on Saturday preceding the lectureship? I am well aware that was not a regular worship assembly, but still it was hypocritical.

How many of you know that an instructor took the position that Rahab

was justified in lying about the spies according to the so-called concept of the greater good? That was not in our class, but in the one that followed us. Is that not either the human philosophy of utilitarianism or of pragmatism? I was told about this by a student in the class immediately after it happened.

None of you know this, but while I was a student at MSOP a sister in Christ, who taught me in Bible class when I was four or five years old, had gotten herself caught up in the error of the Richland Hills Church of Christ. I went to an instructor and had him listen to an awful tape of a "sermon" preached by Rick Atchley that was a defense of instrumental music. The aforementioned sister had given the tape to my parents, and they passed it on to me. I hoped the instructor would be of some help in dealing with the situation. What did he do? He wrote a letter to Rick Atchley, read it to me, but then never even mailed it. I was left alone to write the sister a ten-page letter (which I would have done anyway). From that day forward she would turn her back on me, and refused to even speak to me from then until the day she died. Perhaps the help of the instructor would not have changed anything, but

Continued on Page 3



Notes From The Editor

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Mission

The mission of the church is to save souls. Jesus says, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). We recognize that this is accomplished in three ways: (1) preaching the Gospel to the lost, (2) edifying those who are already saved, and (3) helping those in need—benevolence.

In edifying those who are already saved, we must warn of false teachers. Jesus warned: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mat. 7:15). We are repeatedly warned throughout the Scriptures of false teachers and the destruction they will bring. The Scriptures teach us not only to beware false teachers but also to expose them. Paul tells the Roman brethren: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (16:17-18). We have the obligation to “mark them,” not simply to mark the false doctrine which they teach. “Mark” is from the Greek *skopeo* and means “to pay careful attention to, look (out) for, notice” (BDAG), or “to spy out, look towards an object, to contemplate, give attention to” (Zodhiates). We cannot give attention to or look out for “them” unless we point out the “them.”

In writing to the Ephesians, Paul said, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (5:11). Again, we must “reprove them.” This comes from the Greek *elegcho* meaning, “to state that someone has done wrong, with the implication that there is adequate proof of such wrongdoing—‘to rebuke, to reproach, rebuke, reproach’” (Louw-Nida). There is no way you can “state that someone has done wrong” without stating the “**someone**.” This is why Paul would name the names of some of the individuals who had taught false doctrines: “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:18-20). Notice he charged Timothy to “war a good warfare,” and mentioned Hymenaeus and Alexander as ones whom he should war against because they had blasphemed causing him to deliver them unto Satan. Still, in writing to Timothy, he says, “And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Here are two (Hymenaeus and Philetus) who were teaching false doctrine causing the faith of some brethren to be overthrown. So Paul gives their names for everyone through the rest of history to see with a warning to shun them (2:16).

Occasionally we receive objections to *Defender* and the material we publish because we are willing to expose error and name the names of those who teach and practice such. These mistaken, but

no doubt well meaning, brethren complain that they could not give *Defender* to one who is not a Christian to convert them to Christ. Brethren, that is not the purpose of this publication. It was never intended to be the intent of this paper; instead it is intended to expose error and those involved in it and uphold the truth of God’s Word. Thus, we will continue to expose those rank liberals whose putrid smell goes up before God as an affront to Him (like the Rubel Shellys, Max Lucados, et al.) and also those closet liberals who might do more damage to the Lord’s church than the rank liberals (like the Barry Griders who was given the nickname of “the mole” soon after moving to the Forest Hill congregation, Dave Millers, Stan Crowleys, Tyler Youngs, et al.). Why will we continue to do such? Because God tells us to do so! Look again at Romans 16:17-18 and Ephesians 5:11. God knows and we realize that false doctrine and liberalism left unchecked will cause those once saved to end up being lost eternally in hell. It is our desire to save souls, so we will continue to “mark them” and “reprove them” as we “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

We also have the obligation to spread the Gospel to those who have never obeyed the Gospel of Christ to the saving of their souls. Christ gave the apostles a great commission to preach the Gospel to every creature that is just as applicable to every Christian today as it was to the apostles (in spite of the fact that some, like Marion Fox and Gary Smith, deny such to be the case). Each and every Christian needs to be involved in doing what God says in seeking to teach others the Truth. We are to be sowing the seed of the kingdom, planting the Word of God in the hearts of man.

The Bellview Lectureship this year

is intended to do this very thing. If you notice the schedule (placed elsewhere), each of the evening lessons deals with the scheme of redemption and other matters dealing with the beautiful bride of Christ. The book this year will only have 15 chapters and they will be shorter than normal. The purpose for this is to direct the book to non-Christians. The chapters have also been written in a style that will appeal to one who is in the world. They are all being written in a fictional story-telling (narrative) style that teaches Biblical principles so an alien sinner would be more likely to read it. Also, instead of our normal hardback book, we will be publishing this book as a paperback. This is intended to keep the cost down (even more so than we normally do) so brethren can comfort-

ably buy several copies. The purpose of all this is to be able to hand this book to a non-Christian and by his reading the book (hopefully the chapters will draw him in to reading it and continue reading it), he will be taught what he must do to become a Christian based upon the grace of God, worship acceptably, the organization of the church, the work of the church, and the principles of Christian living. The book, *Back To The Bible*, will be around 150 pages so it will not bog down the alien, and we are looking for it to be priced in such a way that you can buy several copies. If you spent \$100 or \$200 or more on these books and one person obeyed the Gospel, would it not be worth all the money that you spent? Jesus reminds us the value of one soul when He said, "For

what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mat. 16:26).

Brethren, if sound, faithful congregations do not get out and evangelize, we will die out. While many people will flock to those of the rank liberal persuasion (who have no concern whatsoever with Bible authority) and many others will run to those of the closet liberal persuasion (and they will convince them that all is well, preaching "peace, peace, when there is no peace" but in reality they are lost and eternally damned if they do not repent), we must intensify our efforts to save souls. Prayerfully, this book will help us to evangelize the lost as we continue to edify the saved.

MH

Continued from Page 1
couldn't he at least have tried?

Brethren, how many times were we made to feel that we had an obligation to raise money for the school once we graduated? You know as well as I do we were told we had a debt to Knight Arnold and MSOP that we could never repay. Since our graduation, the school has been more and more about money. Money was important enough to compromise the lectureship roster in order to secure the N.B. Hardeman library. What the enormous amounts of money MSOP has spent on the present facilities, and must spend on upkeep and maintenance I am not even willing to guess. MSOP, through its extravagance, is redirecting enormous funds from hundreds of congregations that ought to be spent funding efforts to spread the gospel. Instead, Forest Hill and MSOP are intent on building expensive facilities in which to turn out robotic preachers, who have been virtually brainwashed to toe the institutional line and back and promote the school

no matter how far it moves, especially in fellowship, to the liberal left. How many of you knew that as far back as 1987, MSOP was willing to accept funds from a congregation that had hired a preacher who had been withdrawn from for his rebellion against his elders. While MSOP claimed to honor the withdrawal, they nevertheless accepted the funds from the congregation. A portion of those funds went to a student the entire time he was in school. As an older and wiser man, the student now regrets that he accepted that support. Don't let B.J. Clarke know that he now understands his mistake; he would be chided for not coming to his present knowledge 23 years ago!

Brethren, you know as well as I do that MSOP does now, and always has, been as intent on producing graduates who see their task as promoting the school as much as the Gospel of Christ. Consider this statement from the July 1, 2008 Forest Hill News:

When these men (over 1,000 of them now) complete their studies, they go

out and spread the word concerning the Memphis School of Preaching. As they faithfully discharge their duties as evangelists, they represent the Lord Jesus and the school very well.

Before I entered the MSOP, I attended one session at another school of preaching. I started over at Memphis, because the director in the other school had decided to leave, and the future of the school was in doubt. Brethren, not even once in the other school were we ever told that we owed them and the host congregation a debt. Why? Because they at least realized that if they were conducting a school of preaching, it is because the debt was theirs. They understood they owed the cause of Christ the work of training preachers. It was never suggested that once we graduated that we had any responsibility to raise money for the school. Why the difference at Memphis? Because brethren, as much as I hate to say it, Memphis is, and for too long a time has been, too much about money. I was informed that a past director of Memphis insisted on having

a \$1,500.00 office chair purchased for him. Not only was that at a time when the school could hardly afford such an extravagance, no one needs a chair costing that much!

In recent months, your fellow graduate has adopted a saying I wish I had realized and applied a long time ago: **“Foot dragging is the gait of the lame.”** I should have begun speaking up a long time ago, and am writing this letter to you now in an attempt to redeem the time I lost. As you all must know, there is now a controversy surrounding MSOP’s continued support of Dave Miller who preached a sermon advocating, and was involved in, the unauthorized practice of reevaluation/ reaffirmation of elders, at the Brown Trail Congregation in Bedford, Texas. Contrary to some things that have been said, he was involved by preaching a sermon and active participation in that unscriptural practice undermining the authority of the eldership. Also, contrary to what has been said by some of the same ones who deny he was involved, he has never repented of that involvement. It strikes us as odd that individuals would claim a man has repented of something they allege he never did. Brother Miller also contrived what has been called an intent doctrine in the matter of marriage, and attempted to justify the act as a scheme by which a foreign student was brought into this country to attend Brown Trail School of Preaching. Some students at Brown Trail objected, and one was even thrown out of school for making criticisms in related matters. That act, if not an outright violation of federal law, was at the very least blatantly deceptive. Those who continue to support brother Miller, including GBN, MSOP, and of course, Apologetics Press, who made him director, despite the warnings of many brethren to the contrary, are guilty of fellowshiping his error, and thereby

under the condemnation of 2 John 9-11.

How many of you brethren know that virtually all, if not all, of the instructors at MSOP spoke out against the elder r/r procedure. Some of them were among the 60 brethren who signed the letter of support of Apologetics Press after the sad situation with Bert Thompson. At the time they did not know that Dave Miller would be appointed as the new director. If they had, some of them, maybe all of them, would not have signed the letter. But, instead of admitting to a mistake, they changed their tune, and began to support brother Miller. Why? Brethren, if the matter of money does not play some role in that, the skies are not blue, the grass is not green, and the wind does not blow in March!

Many brethren over the past five years since the unwarranted forcing out of Dub McClish and David B. Watson as editor and co-editor of the original *Gospel Journal* respectively, have up until the present time focused almost exclusively on the matter of fellowshiping the false teacher, Dave Miller. Now, though, they are beginning to realize that that issue only touches the hem of the garment respecting what is transpiring at Forest Hill Irene and MSOP.

The Forest Hill congregation and the school are seriously changing their position on the crucial matter of fellowship. The lectureship this very year featured speakers who have also appeared on programs of some of the most apostate schools, including Sunset Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas. Some speakers are affiliated with schools and congregations who practice things which in and of themselves, would have excluded them from appearing on the lectureship when you and I were students. For instance, on January 10, 2010, Phil Sanders now the speaker on *In Search of the Lord’s Way*, spoke on the Sunset Bible Institute Workshop. Faithful

brethren withdrew from Sunset years ago. At the close of his remarks, brother Sanders very plainly extended the hand of fellowship to those at Sunset.

Have you brethren read what Phil Sanders said in a February, 2006, *Christian Chronicle*, interview? Here is his response to the question of how he perceives members of the Independent Christian Church denomination:

I can only speak for myself here. I believe baptized believers in the Independent Christian Church are my brethren, since everyone who is scripturally born of water and the Spirit is a child of God. I love my brethren, but I grieve that they have clung to an unscriptural [instrumental music] practice. I wish we could find biblical and hermeneutical unity once again.

The same Phil Sanders spoke on the MSOP lectures on March 31, 2010.

Herb Alsup, who spoke on the MSOP lectures this year, also spoke on the lectures at Tennessee Bible college in 2007. TBC is a supporter of the direct operation of the Spirit error of Mac Deaver. Who spoke on the same TBC program with brother Alsup, in fact, immediately after him? None other than Mac Deaver himself!

In 2009, brother Bobby Liddell spoke on the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver Lectureship. Among the other speakers was Robert Oglesby, of Richardson, Texas. Oglesby is involved with a Sunset Bible Institute Satellite school. Another speaker on that program was Rick Walker of Golden, Colorado. Brother Walker preaches for a congregation that utilizes the divided assembly; Children’s Bible Story Time, they call it. It is unclear if this is done on both Sunday morning and evening, or one or the other of the two worship periods. The congregation also is involved in the small group Bible study practice. Brethren, you know as well as I do that these things would never have been condoned, practiced, or tolerated

Back To The Bible

35th Annual Bellview Lectures

June 12 - 16, 2010

Saturday, June 12			Tuesday, June 15		
7:00 pm	Back To The Bible	Tim Cozad	9:00 am	Back To Biblical Morality	Dennis "Skip" Francis
7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Authority	Daniel Denham	10:00 am	Back To Biblical Giving	Wayne Blake
Sunday, June 13			11:00 am	Back To Biblical Respect	Tim Cozad
9:00 am	Back To The Biblical View Of Immodesty	John West	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
10:00 am	Back To Biblical Living	John Rose	1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Translation	Charles Pogue
<i>Lunch Break</i>			2:30 pm	Back To Biblical Fellowship	Ken Chumbley
2:00 pm	Back To Biblical Preaching	Danny Douglas	3:30 pm	Open Forum:	
3:00 pm	Back To The Bible View Of Communion	Ken Chumbley	<i>Dinner Break</i>		
<i>Dinner Break</i>			7:00 pm	Back To The Biblical Organization Of The Church	John West
7:00 pm	Back To Biblical Grace	Dub McClish	7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Confession	Gene Hill
7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Faith	Charles Pogue	Wednesday, June 16		
Monday, June 14			9:00 am	Back To Biblical Eschatology	Dub McClish
9:00 am	Back To Biblical Prayer	Lee Moses	10:00 am	Back To The Biblical View Of God	John Rose
10:00 am	Back To Biblical Attitudes	Danny Douglas	11:00 am	Back To Biblical Speaking	Wayne Blake
11:00 am	Back To Biblical Homes	Gene Hill	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
<i>Lunch Break</i>			1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Peace	Lee Moses
1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Warfare	Lynn Parker	2:30 pm	Back To Biblical Priorities	David Brown
2:30 pm	Back To The Biblical View Of The Holy Spirit	Daniel Denham	3:30 pm	Open Forum:	
3:30 pm	Open Forum:		<i>Dinner Break</i>		
<i>Dinner Break</i>			7:00 pm	Back To The Biblical Work Of The Church	Dennis "Skip" Francis
7:00 pm	Back To Biblical Music	Michael Hatcher	7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Baptism	Lynn Parker
7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Repentance	David Brown			

Bellview Lectures Information

Housing

The Ramada (7051 Pensacola Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32505) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$55—to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/476-9091. *Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.* If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Meals

The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch Monday – Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

Books

The lectureship book, *Back To The Bible*, will be available for purchase. The price of the book has not yet been determined. The book will contain 15 chapters. This will be a soft-cover book that can be used for teaching purposes. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2010) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD has not yet been determined. The CD will also include the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2009), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2009), and other material.

DVDs

All lectures will be recorded on DVDs. They may be purchased during the Bellview Lectures or by mail order afterwards. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the Bellview Lectures in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians in the sound room.

Transportation

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please call or write our office. We will arrange to meet you, at no charge, if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

when we were students at MSOP. You also know that a few years ago, brother Liddell would not have appeared on a lectureship with those men.

If all of the above information were not disappointing enough, there is still more. On February 10, 2009, in the Forest Hill bulletin, brother Barry Grider included three disturbing articles. The first one was entitled, “*I got used to it.*” In that article, brother Grider defended the song, “*Sweet Sweet Spirit.*” He denied the song makes any reference to a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, but anyone who can read, and understand what he reads, immediately recognizes that it does. The second article was by brother Tyler Young, and entitled, “*Binding Where God Has Not.*” Brother Grider informs us that the material in the article was prepared for the 2008 Lubbock, Texas Lectureship. What brother Grider neglects to mention, though, is that the material was so far to the left that brother Tommy Hicks, the preacher for the Southside congregation in Lubbock which hosted the lectureship, refused to include the material in the lectureship book. When brother Young delivered the material orally anyway, the Southside elders would not allow the lecture to be included on the DVD with the other lectures. The material suggested that it may be legalism to bind that it would be wrong to change (even dismiss, one would have to conclude) the Sunday evening worship to accommodate brethren who do not want to miss any part of the Super Bowl. It questions whether it is wrong to forsake a worship assembly to participate in a sporting event, defended dismissing the Sunday evening service in lieu of small group gatherings instead, and expressed disdain for regulating which versions of the Bible can be used in preaching and teaching. Again, brethren, this does not sound like the Knight Arnold

congregation, or the Memphis School of Preaching you and I attended. The third article was a rendition of an old poem, “*I Drew My Circle Again.*” The poem sarcastically criticizes the limiting of fellowship only to those who are right on all points of doctrine and practice. This is the same kind of heretical thought expressed in the book, *Facing Our Failure: The Fellowship Dilemma In Conservative Churches of Christ*, by Todd Deaver. Whether it was viewed as a go ahead from the lofty Forest Hill Irene church we know not, but since Grider published the poem it has been showing up in quite a few church bulletins. According to Grider, the Forest Hill elders and his fellow faculty at MSOP have been in complete working harmony up until the present time. If this is true brethren, the MSOP brethren agree with the February 10, 2009, bulletin material; if that is true, your alma mater and mine has changed, and not for the better.

Although strange, uncertain, and completely heretical sounds have been raised in many places, a few years ago, many would have been surprised that now those places include Forest Hill and MSOP. Please read the following excerpt from page 2 of the February 14, 2006 Forest Hill bulletin, and then answer this question: Is this an indication of things still to come?

70th Annual

Freed-Hardeman Lectures

This past week several thousand Christians gathered in Henderson, Tennessee for the 70th Annual Freed-Hardeman Lectures. As they have done for many years, our students in the Memphis School of Preaching, attended the lectures on Tuesday, as did I. Throughout the day I heard some wonderful preaching from the Book of Hebrews by outstanding evangelists such as James Watkins, James Meadows, Dan Winkler, and Winford Claiborne. It was good to see many friends and acquaintances,

along with a number of graduates of the school of preaching who are now doing local work in various locations. The highlight of the day, perhaps of the week, was the William Woodson Appreciation dinner. Brother Woodson is a man who is highly regarded for his soundness and scholarship. I have benefited greatly from his lectures and writings. Brother Billy Smith served as master of ceremonies for the dinner. Those who spoke commending the life and work of brother Woodson were Tom Holland, Alan Highers, Dan Winkler, and Hardeman Nichols. **It was my pleasure to be asked to sit close to the front at a reserved table, along with Jim and Sherry Brown, Everett and Doris Day, and Buster and Matilene McGuire.** I owe this honor to our dear sister McGuire. Sister McGuire is a multi-talented lady. She is a superb organist and provided the entertainment for the event. After an enjoyable, yet exhausting day, I could not help but realize that our own lectureship is not far away (March 26-30). We look forward with great anticipation to a marvelous week together with friends and loved ones far and near. [emph. CP].

Barry

I know this was not a worship service, but it was a religious activity, and the implication that entertainment on this occasion was an organist is very troubling. I believe it adds more fuel to a liberal fire that is already beginning to flame at Forest Hill Irene and MSOP. I would ask my former classmates and all graduates of MSOP, to consider these things very carefully. Be honest with yourselves. Ask yourselves this question, and answer yourself truthfully. Is this the MSOP I attended? I think not!

In the December 10, 2009, Forest Hill bulletin, a scathing notice of withdrawal of fellowship was announced against brethren David Brown and Dub McClish. All these two faithful Gospel preachers have been guilty of is calling upon Forest Hill, MOSP, and

many others, to repent of their support of a false teacher who is not even willing to admit that he did something wrong in the eyes of God, much less repent of it. I am totally confident that in the years of 1993-1995 all of those who are involved in the Memphis work would have been shoulder to shoulder with these two brethren in calling for brother Miller to repent of his preaching in favor of elder r/r and his participation in the process. The only thing different that I can see now is that if they speak out, and brother Miller does not repent, and Apologetics Press retains him, and GBN continues in fellowship with AP, Memphis would stand to lose the support, including financial support, of many brethren. Put it all together with the pressure while attending as students and as graduates to raise money for the school, and brethren, I fear that MSOP has lost its way and for nothing more than the pursuit of the huge amounts of money they need. No wonder the apostle Paul warned Timothy that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10). But it isn't just the love of money

that springs forth in evil. Putting one's self or an entity in the position of needing more money than is responsible does the same thing. This, in my view, is what has happened to Memphis School of Preaching. And unless and until repentance is forthcoming from them, they do not have the fellowship or support of this graduate.

In the early 1990s, I received a form letter from the now totally apostate, Rubel Shelly. In that letter, Shelly claimed that he had not changed in doctrine, only in attitude. Everyone knows now that his claim was a pure fabrication. I am not sure if the Forest Hill elders, Barry Grider, and the MSOP, would even admit to undergoing a change in attitude, but the truth is, they have not only changed in attitude, they have changed in actions, too. The words and deeds of Forest Hill Irene, and the presence of false teachers on the MSOP lectureship (and 2010 is not the first time it has happened), conclusively proves this to be the case. Some of you may blindly follow the lead of the school, others may be deceived, and still others may understand and agree with

the fellowship compromises. If you are in either of the first two categories, I plead with you to do some open-eye and mind investigation. If you are in the third class of individuals, you, along with the brethren at the school need to repent. Apostasy begins in different ways, including compromise in fellowship. Compromise in fellowship cannot help but lead one to the conclusion that one really cannot determine what issues are matters of fellowship and which are not. Ultimately, the only conclusion to which it can lead an individual is that the New Testament does not constitute a pattern at all. Perhaps they would deny it, and maybe you would, too, but, my brethren, that is the direction Memphis School of Preaching has been heading for a considerable number of years. I implore you to join with your fellow classmate and graduate, and plead with the school to face how they have changed and turn them back from it, before it is too late to salvage.

Yours in Christ,



Charles Pogue

Books-On-CD

The 1988-2005, 2007-2009 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2008, and the weekly bulletin *Beacon* 1974-2008, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Windows and Macintosh computers). The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as "baptism for the remission of sins" in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only \$85 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.75 (total is \$86.75) in which you receive all the lectureship books (\$4 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, then check with us for an upgrade at a significant reduction in price upon the return of the previous CD. Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.

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Recommended Reading: *Profiles in Apostasy #1*

Gary W. Summers

Profiles in Apostasy #1 is one of best reference works of this century, and within two weeks it has already generated quite a response. For years various name brand liberals have been writing books to influence brethren away from the Scriptures, and occasionally a lectureship book has reviewed a few of their materials, but this volume of 608 pages is the most thorough one available; it contains reviews of 24 books—from those of K. C. Moser (1932) to Todd Deaver in 2008. The 25th review is not of a book but rather a sermon delivered in 1990.

One of the charges already made is that those reviewing the books had not read them, which is absurd. A few of the speakers mentioned publicly that they had read the assigned material not once but two or three times. One lengthy tome was read so thoroughly that quotes from the author's footnotes are cited. In at least two instances, speakers had to borrow the books from others. Some of the reviews are 25 to 40 pages long, and that amount of material cannot be presented at a lecture. Perhaps someone watching the review on-line might think that, since certain as-

pects were not covered, the critic had not read the information, but no one could come to that conclusion from reading the book itself. Numerous references are cited in each chapter.

A second criticism is that the writers/speakers had never met or talked with the actual authors of heresy. So? Each one published a book for others to read, and they all employed the English language to do so; words have meaning. This charge would have weight if a reviewer took something out of context or misrepresented the author, but great care was taken to avoid such mistakes. If someone's work was not handled carefully, the simplest response would be to furnish the evidence of such. Otherwise, it does no good to mouth vague charges while providing no proof. The problem for liberals is that the light was shined upon what they truly believe. Embellishment is not needed; the truth will do.

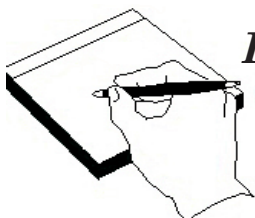
The first book reviewed is Todd Deaver's *Facing Our Failure: The Fellowship Dilemma in Conservative Churches of Christ*. Many do have concerns about fellowship (or should have), but Todd does not supply workable solutions. Relying

on typical scholarly language (what George Orwell might have called Ed-Speak), Deaver advocates that churches of Christ "acknowledge the failure of the traditional paradigm" (3). Apparently, he would disagree with his grandfather, Roy C. Deaver, who wrote an excellent booklet, *Ascertaining Bible Authority*. Of course, Todd has developed nothing with which to replace those Biblical principles.

Terry Hightower penned this review (he actually has known Todd for years), and it is thorough. As he has been known to do in other situations, he composed four true-false questions that are easily answered, which get at the heart of the matter. Who knows if Todd will make any better reply than others who have been asked even fewer questions by Terry? They may seem simple, but they make obvious what some are trying to hide: Are the following statements true or false?

1. NO matters of Bible teaching are heaven/hell issues.
2. ALL matters of Bible teaching are heaven/hell issues.
3. SOME matters of Bible teaching

Continued on Page 3



Notes From The Editor

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Silence

In 1967, The Tremeloes released a hit song “Silence is Golden” written by Bob Crewe and Bob Gaudio. The song is about a man who knows a girl he is infatuated with who is being cheated on by her boyfriend. He could tell her with the results of hurting her, but was being encouraged that “silence is golden, golden” even though “my eyes still see.” The song even mentions that it is a “pity, she’ll be the last one to know” because “he deceived her so well.” His dilemma is seen in the third stanza when he says, “Should I tell her or should I keep cool? And if I tried, I know she’d say I lied.” So the admonition, “Mind your business, don’t hurt her, you fool,” because “silence is golden.”

This song reminds me so much of the recent division within the beautiful bride of Christ. Our eyes see the false teacher—Dave Miller. There were some efforts to expose him as a false teacher. (Shortly after Miller preached his sermon, Goebel Music sent a letter to several preachers with several quotes from Miller’s sermon along with what Brown Trail practiced. All that responded universally condemned the action. Others were told by word of mouth.) When Brown Trail practiced it again in 2002, *The Gospel Journal* (under the editorship of brother Dub McClish) had a special issue dealing with liberalism in the church with one article, written by brother Marvin Weir,

exposing the elder r/r action.

However, at the time Dave Miller was in the process of moving to Apologetics Press (he was still involved in the 2002 practice and defended it to Dub Mowery and has continued to defend the practice). Bert Thompson took some heat and lost some support for hiring Dave Miller, but continued on. When the sins of Bert Thompson were revealed, he had to resign from his position at Apologetics Press, the board of directors placed Dave Miller as the executive director of the organization. Apologetics Press contacted several brethren of whom sixty allowed them to use their name as being in support of Apologetics Press (they had “complete confidence” and “commend AP to the brotherhood”). Among those names were the president and vice president of the board of The Gospel Journal, Inc. This presented a conflict within The Gospel Journal, Inc., between the editor and some on the board, which led to the forced resignation of the editor and associate editor (Dub McClish and Dave Watson). While some claim that this matter was not an issue till this time, it is evidenced that it had been a problem and was being exposed for the error it was. However, this brought the situation to the forefront.

While exposing Dave Miller and the sinful situation at Brown Trail (of which they did repent, but Miller has steadfastly refused to do so), we have been attacked by brethren wanting us to keep silent. They would have you believe that “silence is golden, golden.” However, our “eyes still see.” Some told us, it never happened (a charge that was easily refuted), but our “eyes still see.”

Later, people were told that we were lying. Keith Mosher, when speaking at the West Kentucky

Lectureship in 2006, stated, “these people are as vile a group, and I do mean vile as I have ever read after in my life. I have never seen the kind of attitude they have.” He went on to say, “If you’re going to believe some of these publications you’re going to have a problem because those brethren are lying to you.” Brother Mosher was telling us, “silence is golden, golden.” In the August 2007 issue of *Defender*, we challenged brother Mosher to prove any lies we had told. Instead of providing the evidence and proving that we had told lies, brother Mosher decided, “silence is golden, golden,” and all he would do is accuse me of evil surmising. Brother Mosher, that challenge is still open if you can gather the courage to prove what you said was true and prove that we have lied! We can make the challenge because our “eyes still see.” He would also write that this matter is not something over which to split the beautiful bride of Christ. Again telling us, “silence is golden, golden” regarding this subject. In reality, silence in this matter is just cowardly.

In the February 10, 2009 issue of *The Forest Hill News*, Barry Grider advocated several liberalistic tendencies (see the January 2010 *Defender*). When brethren began speaking out about these liberal tendencies advocated by the Forest Hill preacher and some wondered aloud if the elders at Forest Hill and the faculty and staff at MSOP might be displeased with such, then the Forest Hill elders marked brethren David Brown and Dub McClish. In the same bulletin (December 1, 2009), Barry Grider made a vicious, unwarranted attack against these two brethren. They were, in essence, telling everyone that might say anything in any way in opposition to Forest Hill and MSOP that “silence is golden, golden” and if

you fail to follow our dictates, then you will suffer the consequences. However, our “eyes still see.”

In the January 2010 issue of *Defender*, we mentioned several attempts through the years to arrange a meeting between brethren where we could try and work out our differences (each side being able to have equal opportunity to present evidence, ask, and respond to questions). I also called upon the Forest Hill elders “to arrange a public meeting at the Forest Hill building between all who are involved in the current controversy.... This meeting must be video taped and tapes made available to all who request them. In this meeting, both sides must have equal opportunity to present evidence and ask questions (it must be fair to all involved...)” I asked them to make the arrangements. However, what has taken place? You would be correct in saying: “silence is golden, golden.” However, in this case the truth of the matter is that silence is just cowardly.

However, Barry Grider had already instructed everyone to remain in that cowardly state in his article in *The Forest Hill News*, December 22, 2009 issue. He talks about an article written about him that was “filled with ugliness, sarcasm, and smartalackness [sic].” He was told not to respond to such and not even to acknowledge it. He claims this is the wise and discerning path to follow. However, the article that is really filled with ugliness is Barry Grider’s own article in the December 1, 2009 bulletin. Worse than simply being filled with ugliness is the fact that it is simply filled with untruths. However, he was advised and giving advice to others that “silence is golden, golden.” He ends his advice by saying, “sometimes certain brethren have to be marked because they engage in lies, innuendo, evil surmising, and divisive conduct.” We have asked the Forest Hill elders to provide a time where such accusations can be **proven**—if they can be! However, they would rather sit back

and falsely accuse brethren, than to deal with the issues. Why is this brethren?

Truth has nothing to fear. That is why we have been completely open and aboveboard with everything. While some have only agreed to talk if others will sign an agreement that nothing can be said or written about the discussion, or that they have evidence but will only show it if you come to their office to see it (and then you cannot tell anyone about it). Some have essentially said, “you just do what we tell you to do and think the way we tell you to think.” Brethren, ask yourselves if this is the way you find the apostles working. Is this how they dealt with problems? Absolutely **not**! If the Forest Hill elders and preacher along with MSOP faculty and staff have the truth, let them prove such. If they cannot **prove** it, then they need to be rejected!

For the truth’s sake.

MH

Continued from Page 1

are heaven/hell issues.

4. SOME matters of Bible teaching are NOT heaven/hell issues (21).

The first two are false, and the second two are true. Any reasonable person must give these answers, although liberals gravitate toward #1. When stated as it is above, however, it shows that the only disagreement that can logically exist is what each of us might include in the “SOME” that are fellowship issues. Hightower offers excellent analysis of a serious subject, making humorous comments along the way. Todd’s thesis, if believed, would lead people astray and cause their souls to be lost, which is the reason for the review.

Edward Fudge first published *The Fire That Consumes* in 1982. While the book is scholarly, it is not without bias, but the reader should know that those outside the churches of Christ consider that Fudge has “become well-known as a **leading advocate** of the view that when the wicked die, their punishment is ‘eternal’ in the sense that the consequences last forever, not in the sense that the wicked experience unending torment” (86).

Fudge’s arguments, spread out over 500 pages, are examined carefully. Much of what he writes is irrelevant, but he also considers most New Testament passages. It is pointed out that, as with most false teachers, he **redefines** key words and phrases

in order to establish his case. Thus, everlasting destruction (torment that continues forever) becomes annihilation that cannot be reversed (in other words, one’s extinction is irreversible). Since Fudge has had an impact both in and out of the church, it is important to consider this review carefully.

At the root of much of today’s heresy are the teachings of K. C. Moser (no relation to Keith Mosher of the Memphis School of Preaching, as the different spelling indicates). The two books he is known for (and they are quite similar) are *The Way of Salvation* and *The Gist of Romans*. The headings in this chapter provide an indication of what his false doctrines were: Under “Calvinist

Inclinations” are “Antinomianism” (referring to the maximization of grace and the minimization of obedience), “Imputed Righteousness,” and (surprisingly) “Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit.” Also from Moser’s teachings came “The Man or The Plan” discussion in the early 1960s. Much historical data is included that provides a context for this discussion.

One might wonder, “Why are all of these books by apostates under review? Who cares? None of these things affects me or where I worship.” People who make such comments are undoubtedly sincere but, regrettably, shortsighted. In the first place, while a Christian may be confident that he and the church he attends is unaffected by various false doctrines, he will at some time be caught off guard by a fellow member asking him if he has read one of those books. Second, what happened with Moser’s writings could happen with anyone else’s:

Seeds can lie dormant for years or even centuries, awaiting the right conditions to germinate and spring to life. The power is in the Gospel seed (Luke 8:11), and, unfortunately, in the seed of error as well (106).

Third, all Christians have the responsibility to contend for the faith (Jude 3). How can we do so if we do not know what the enemy is doing or the ways in which he is attacking? Not only have Christians received this charge, but elders are especially commissioned to protect the flock from the wolves (Acts 20: 28). How can they be effective if they have no idea what some of the leading wolves have written?

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

In the past 35 years, books promoting loopholes so unscripturally divorced people could remarry have proliferated. Daniel Denham’s 64 pages

on several authors are enormously helpful. The amount of research he has done (not only in the Greek, but in several other languages) is impressive (the “Works Cited” contains 59 entries). The material he presents is not too technical for most people, and the evidence is so compelling that the liberals who disagree will not be writing a refutation any time soon.

At the forefront is Olan Hicks (*What the Bible Teaches about Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*), who has, perhaps, written and debated more than anyone else on this topic. Brother Denham analyzes several of the passages that Hicks abuses: 1 Corinthians 7:2, 27-28 and Matthew 19:6, 9 (152-80). Also reviewed are the works of James Woodroof (*The Divorce Dilemma*), James D. Bales (*Not Under Bondage*), Lewis Hale (*Except for Fornication*), Rubel Shelly (*Divorce and Remarriage: A Redemptive Theology*), and Al Maxey (*Down, But Not Out*). Although Denham devoted 6 pages to Maxey, another entire chapter also analyzes this material. In fact, Olan Hicks gave high praise to Maxey’s book, saying that it was written with “an objectivity that is refreshing” (455). Hicks would likely call anyone’s views that echoed his *refreshing*.

Two adjacent chapters deal once more with fellowship. The first of these was also penned by Olan Hicks and is titled *In Search of Peace, Unity, and Truth*. The reader should remember that Hicks has no problem fellowshiping those who use musical instruments in worship, which accounts for his vain efforts to negate the value of lessons we all use from Noah and the ark, Nadab and Abihu, and Uzzah (216). Like Todd Deaver, F. LaGard Smith (*Who Is My Brother?*) likewise has difficulty determining which doctrines and practices

fall into the SOME that are heaven/hell issues and which may be listed in the SOME that are not. Smith proposes five levels of fellowship, but his thinking is both flawed and contradictory. Although he affirms that calling someone a brother does not make him one (244), he clearly wants those who are **not** baptized for the remission of sins to be saved anyway (255, 263).

Along these same lines is the book by Jimmy Allen, *Rebaptism? What One Must Know To Be Born Again*. The reviewer of this work pinpointed the essence of the book precisely when he wrote: “Allen’s book is his way of convincing the brotherhood that the church needs to be more accepting to the person who defends his sectarian baptism” (281). Allen thinks that, despite what the New Testament teaches, a sufficient reason to be baptized is to **obey** Christ, thus ignoring Acts 2:38. Carroll Osburn also questions the purpose for baptism, whether it is “for” or “because of” the remission of sins in his *The Peaceable Kingdom* (241). He also urges fellowship even if there is disagreement on instrumental music or premillennialism (558). Osburn was a “distinguished” professor at Abilene Christian University.

A Summary

Another of Osburn’s books, *Women In The Church*, was reviewed for the ladies; this 40-page chapter contains 24 sources in the “Works Cited.” Other professors from Abilene have also written books, although some of them have now departed the school. Among them are Ian Fair’s *Leadership in the Church*; its author thinks that leaders ought to be “agents of change” (498). Others include C. Leonard Allen’s *The Cruciform Church: Becoming a Cross-Shaped People in a Secular World* and

his *The Worldly Church*, which he co-wrote with Richard Hughes and Michael Weed. This latter book contains the denominational error that the “indwelling Spirit...enlightens our minds to the things of God” (338).

The ACU Press published Bill Love’s *The Core Gospel: On Restoring the Crux of the Matter*, which is yet another attempt to loosen the boundaries of fellowship for some short list of unspecified, essential doctrines. Lynn “Big, Sick Denomination” (which he spoke in Abilene in 1973) Anderson’s book, *They Smell Like Sheep*, also receives attention; one of the book’s errors is approval of re-evaluating elders or just rotating them in and out “by democratic process” (356). Another Abilene apostate is Mike Cope, and his book sounds like it might be Biblical: *Righteousness Inside Out: The Sermon on the Mount and the Radical Way of Jesus*. Despite the inclusion of some good material, Cope misinterprets Matthew 23:23 (as most liberals do) (273) and thoroughly perverts Matthew 7:13-14 (277).

Teaming up with Rubel Shelly, Cope also co-wrote *What Would Jesus Do Today?* At the risk of sounding unscholarly, a “Valley Girl” response from the early 80s comes to mind: “Barf me out!” The authors simply try to make Jesus be “a proponent of their errors” (523). Instead of fantasizing about what Jesus might do today, brethren would profit more from a study what Jesus actually did do! Equally silly is Marvin Phillips’ *Don’t Shoot, We May Be On the Same Side*. Most of us know where we stand, and it is nowhere near the vicinity of Marvin Phillips. He frequently makes the statement that the instrumental music question will never be settled on earth. That issue “was settled by inspiration in the first century” (360).

Somehow, Marvin missed it.

No list of heretics would be complete without a mention of the modern founders of waywardness: W. Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett, who co-wrote *Our Heritage of Unity and Fellowship*, which rests upon their erroneous dichotomy between gospel and doctrine. Garrett’s book on *The Stone-Campbell Movement* is a separate chapter. Cecil Hook published the Ketcherside-Garrett collaboration, and his own work, *Free in Christ*, is examined; Hook was another one of several who believes that, if “one is to be saved, it must be totally by grace” (441). Many of these men are walking contradictions; Hook, for example, wrote that a “man need not have New Testament writings to know the will of God for holy living” (450) but then took issue with the proponents of homosexuality because it contradicts the New Testament (451-52).

One of Todd Deaver’s mentors, John Mark Hicks, wrote *Come to the Table: Revisioning the Lord’s Supper*. Yes, he revisions it, all right, advocating that the reader can use whatever he likes (whatever he finds meaningful) in place of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. The reviewer concludes of Hicks: “Logic escapes him, and sincerity is beyond his reach” (314). Another book relating to fellowship is James D. Bales’ *Shall We Splinter?* which contains some misinformation and is a defense of his own actions.

The last book (mentioned in this review) is endorsed by Rick Warren, Max Lucado, and F. LaGard Smith; what could possibly be wrong with it? *Daring to Dance with God* was penned by Jeff Walling. No, he is not still promoting the Macarena; as Max Lucado put it: “...dancing with God is learning to let go” (533). He advocates that worship be spontaneous, unpre-

dictable, and full of surprises. Right! Sounds just like what Jesus told the woman at the well, doesn’t it?

The Tape

All of these reviews have centered on the books that apostates have written, but one chapter is written about a sermon that was given at Brown Trail on April 8, 1990 on the subject of the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders. The sermon that Dave Miller preached that day is included in the chapter (127-39). The one crucial piece of information that the reader must remember when reading this sermon is that **the sermon must be viewed in the context of what Brown Trail practiced!** It cannot be divorced from that situation in order to try to give Dave Miller an alleged benefit of the doubt. There is no doubt! While considering this chapter, the reader must remind himself that Dave Miller has told brethren repeatedly, “I have never done anything wrong (in connection with this practice) that I need to repent of.”

Following Miller’s Brown Trail sermon is the statement released by Dave Miller, which many of his defenders have erroneously called his statement of repentance. It is no such thing; remember, he has nothing of which to repent. Dub McClish’s careful and thorough analysis of that statement follows. The reader would see many problems with the statement for himself, but McClish’s keen scrutiny brings to light a number of important points worthy of consideration.

All of those who have been assured by Dave that he never did anything wrong (one preacher recently lost his job because the congregation he was working with, in their naiveté, believed what Dave told them) should think about his guarantees while

Back To The Bible

35th Annual Bellview Lectures

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7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Authority Daniel Denham	10:00 am	Back To Biblical Giving Wayne Blake
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10:00 am	Back To Biblical Living John Rose	1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Translation Charles Pogue
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2:00 pm	Back To Biblical Preaching Danny Douglas	3:30 pm	Open Forum: <i>Dinner Break</i>
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7:00 pm	Back To Biblical Grace Dub McClish	Wednesday, June 16	
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Monday, June 14		10:00 am	Back To The Biblical View Of God John Rose
9:00 am	Back To Biblical Prayer Lee Moses	11:00 am	Back To Biblical Homes Gene Hill
10:00 am	Back To Biblical Attitudes Danny Douglas	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
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1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Warfare Lynn Parker	3:30 pm	Open Forum: <i>Dinner Break</i>
2:30 pm	Back To The Biblical View Of The Holy Spirit Daniel Denham	7:00 pm	Back To The Biblical Work Of The Church Dennis "Skip" Francis
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reading this chapter. Why would anyone accept a personal assurance in lieu of facts? The situation could not be any clearer, and Dave (by his own admission) has never repented of it (since he never did anything wrong). Why, then are brethren so eager to fellowship a brother that is

clearly in error? Does genuine brotherly love overlook someone's sins?

The value of this book is several times the meager price of \$20 plus shipping. The hours of research that went into its production will only be worthwhile if brethren buy it and read it. Elders especially need

to know the teachings of these false teachers—before they surface in their own congregations—and how to deal with the various doctrines highlighted in this volume. It may be ordered from David Brown at (281) 350-5516; e-mail: dpbcftf@gmail.com
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Bellview Lectureship Book and Souls

How much would you give to save a soul? Jesus said, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mat. 16:26). The value of one soul is worth more than all the riches this world has to offer.

While defending the faith, we must also realize the need for reaching out to the lost and teaching them the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bellview Lectureship this year is designed along this very line. The book of the lectures has been written in a style conducive to non-Christians—all the chapters are written in a narrative style (story telling). It is not

the normal length of book we have produced in previous years—this year the book has 15 chapters and about 150 pages written by faithful soldiers of the cross. Instead of it being a hardback book, as in previous years, this year's book is a paperback (perfect binding).

It has been designed to hand to a non-Christian and by his reading the book, it will teach him what he needs to do to be saved, to worship acceptably, the proper organization of the church, the work of the church, and a chapter on Christian living. It will teach him some of the basic things he needs to know in becoming a Christian.

This is an open door that we have to present the Gospel to lost souls. How much would it be worth to you to see the salvation of their souls? The cost of the book is a measly \$3.00 even though the material is of eternal value. At this cost, you can buy multiple copies and hand them out to family, friends, work and recreation associates, et al. While we encourage you to hand them a book, you also need to do proper follow-up with them: discuss with them what they have read, invite them to worship services with you, set up home Bible studies with them, etc. How many books will you order and hand out to the lost? How valuable are lost souls to you?

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender

"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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Brotherhood Problems: The Spiritual Growth Workshop

Gary W. Summers

Most people do not enjoy hearing about problems in the church—after all, do we not all have enough troubles to keep us busy elsewhere? We hear of national and international problems on the news, and we must often face personal and family difficulties as well. The one place we would like to be free from strife is in the church. The devil, however, has other ideas. Our brethren in the first century were plagued with the Judaizing teachers; Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews were written to combat these assaults upon the Gospel.

Since it is the truth that saves people and sets them free from sin, Satan constantly mounts attacks against the Word and those who propagate it—the church. Some of these may be from without—in the form of persecution. The darkness always hates the light because the light exposes evil (John 3:19-21). Also, the world does not care what anyone believes, no matter how bizarre, so long as he does not insist that what he believes is the truth.

Concerning the Bible, the battles waged against it have been numerous—not all of these have come from unbelievers. Many in religious denominations and some in the church have lent credence to the theories

of Modernism and Postmodernism, although these assaults cannot stand. The fact is, however, that someone has challenged every major Bible teaching—usually by those professing to be believers.

In light of this destructive attitude of the devil, it was necessary for Paul to warn the elders of Ephesus day and night with tears for three years against the wolves that would come in to savage the flock. Even from among themselves would arise some with the desire to draw away disciples to have a following of their own (Acts 20:29-31). Paul also charged brethren to mark or note those who “cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine” they had been taught and avoid them (Rom 16:17-18).

If all these things (and more) happened within the first 30 years of the church’s existence, what chance exists for tranquility among brethren today? How often have many preachers felt like Jude, the Lord’s brother? He had intended to write to them about their common faith—perhaps an encouraging tract on what it means to be saved, with exhortations to be faithful to God or practical advice on how to overcome sin. Whatever he might have been thinking about teaching,

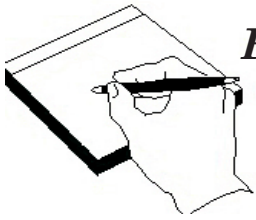
however, suddenly was superseded by a pressing concern:

I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ (3-4).

Brethren ought to give the wolves some credit (but no cash). They do not stand up and say, “We came to teach you the ways of lasciviousness.” That would be too obvious. Instead, the wolves dress like sheep, showing that they can be as subtle as their father, the devil (Mat. 7:15). Their **teachings**, if followed, will allow for or encourage immorality. Some allow for unlawful divorce and remarriage, immodest dress, fornication, drunkenness, etc. None of these things square with: “let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1).

Christians cannot get away from the influence of false teachers nor the myriad false doctrines they have introduced into the church. Satan

Continued on Page 4



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

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Unite

When President Barack Hussein Obama was elected president, there were calls from various parts and political people for all Americans to unite behind the new President. For many, President Obama represented hope and change. As we have seen the President's policies implemented, many have grown to fear the type of change President Obama represents and advocates. We have observed that there is a growing opposition to the President's plans. At first, the opposition was small and the President's pundits tried their best to isolate them as a small group of radicals. They painted them as insignificant, haters, along with a host of other names to ridicule them. However, they did not try to answer them or the charges they brought. There were more cries to unite behind the President.

As the President's policies have become clearer (at least to some), there is growing opposition because President Obama does not represent the America we know and love. President Obama's value system and vision is not the value system or vision of most Americans. Thus, there is the definite cry that we will **not** unite behind President Obama. Instead, we will do our best to see that he is shown the exit door of the oval office when his first term has ended. But unite behind him? Absolutely not! Those who wanted us to unite behind President Obama would have us compromise our vision and value system, but for what? Simply so President

Obama's policies, agenda, value system, and vision are furthered. One said (it has been attributed to David Barton) concerning this matter: "Any more compromise is more defeat!" Thus, more and more are standing up and speaking up to the agenda our liberal President and his minions seek. We are saying in essence, we will not be quiet. We will do everything to countermand whatever the President seeks.

What has been seen recently (and no doubt is a repeat of history) in the political arena is also seen among members of the Lord's church. When Bert Thompson was released from Apologetics Press, those in charge went into damage control mode. There was (and has been) the thinking that Apologetics Press must be saved—no matter what the cost. They promoted Dave Miller to be the executive director (along with putting him as one of the three people on the board of directors). Then the cry went out to unite behind Apologetics Press. They got on the telephones and called numerous brethren. Sixty men allowed their names to be on a statement stating:

We, the undersigned, wish to announce that we have complete confidence that Apologetics Press is on a firm footing that will insure its continued work of excellence. We commend AP to the brotherhood and recommend that it continue to be the recipient of financial and moral support.

At the same time this statement was sent out over the brotherhood urging brethren to unite behind Apologetics Press, the elders at Palm Beach Lakes Church of Christ in West Palm Beach, Florida (Apologetics Press is supposedly a work of this congregation) also sent out a letter in which, among other things, they stated, "The Board named Dr. Dave Miller as interim Executive Director and we have every confidence in his spiritual foundation, talent and

leadership ability.... You can help. We implore you to increase your financial and moral support to A.P. for the next two years then make an evaluation. We are confident the Lord will bring unparalleled results through the new leadership, its renewed focus and the amazingly talented staff" (signed by their six elders). Apologetics Press came out with all guns blazing encouraging everyone to unite behind Apologetics Press. However, when questioned about the doctrinal baggage surrounding the new executive director, Dave Miller, it was quickly screamed out that it was just a small group of radicals. When brethren pointed out some of the fellowship problems with Dave Miller and Apologetics Press, they were told to simply trust them and unite behind them. Ignore these problems because Apologetics Press was too important to the brotherhood to fail. (It is a great deal like the unChristian Colleges in the past who many felt were too important to the brotherhood to fail and some felt and acted as though the Colleges were more important than the church.)

Forest Hill/Memphis School of Preaching would hate to be left out of the unite behind us bandwagon. For years they have been hammering their students with this idea. They are taught almost from day one that they owe the school and the congregation. If a former graduate of the school should dare speak out against the school in any way, then they would possibly get a letter from Keith Mosher telling them they should feel morally responsible for paying back the school and congregation for their education. In effect, he was saying that you better stay on the unite behind the school bandwagon or else. When brethren David Brown and Dub McClish publicly exposed the liberal articles contained in the Forest Hill bulletin, the Forest Hill elders

withdrew fellowship from these faithful brethren. It certainly was a warning shot that anyone who documents (proves) the error that Forest Hill/MSOP is involved in (fellowship errors, false doctrines advocated in their bulletin) needs to stay quiet and unite behind Forest Hill/MSOP. Ignore the fact that you do not agree with these things that have been advocated and practiced, MSOP is too important to allow anyone to say anything about it in a negative way.

Thus, unite behind the school.

We do need to unite. Jesus prayed that we would be united:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also

may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me (John 17:20-21).

There is a qualifying statement regarding that unity. It is based upon the Word that the apostles would be preaching. Thus, if we are not united on the Word of God, then there can be no unity. We must think according to God's Word: "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 have the admonition not to think above what is written in the Bible. Likewise, what we speak is to be the Scriptures: "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" (1 Pet. 4:11).

When we unite behind the Word of God, then we must also be united regarding our fellowship. We can only be in fellowship with those who are in fellowship with God. John pointed this out when he wrote:

Defender Via E-Mail

Defender (along with our weekly bulletin *Beacon*) is available to those who would like to receive it by e-mail. With the continued increase of expenses (paper, printing material, mailing expense, etc.) sending out the publication via e-mail will save us some expenses. It will also enable you to receive the paper the most expeditious way (you will receive it before others who have it being sent by regular mail). We will e-mail you an Adobe Acrobat PDF (a free reader is available from www.adobe.com). We will send you the file with the ability to print it on your printer if you desire. If you would like to receive either or both of these publications sent directly to your e-mail please send us your e-mail address at bellviewcoc@gmail.com. Your e-mail address will not be used for any other purpose than to send you these publications or information relating to them.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:5-7).

Paul points out that this fellowship does not extend to the unrighteous when he wrote:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple

of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

He also stated that we are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Eph. 5:11).

So should we unite behind the "Christian Colleges/Universities"? Should we unite behind Apologetics Press? Should we unite behind MSOP? Should we unite behind others? The answer is that when these

people/organiza-

tions unite behind God and His sacred Word, then we will be united (unite behind them or with them). However, when Apologetics Press has a false teacher as its executive director, it does not matter how many brethren tell us that they have "complete confidence" in Apologetics Press, we must not and cannot unite behind them. When MSOP advocates practices and doctrines that are wrong (see the Feb. 10, 2010 bulletin), then it does not matter how many brethren ridicule, mock, and disparage us in various ways, we must not and cannot unite behind them. Let them repent of their false teachings and make things right with God and man, then we will be united.

MH

Continued from Page 1

has a great deal of experience and is successful at what he does; therefore, preachers and elders must be careful regarding what they themselves teach (1 Pet. 4:11), and all brethren must evaluate what they hear (Acts 17:11).

Communication

Satan is unquestionably the source of problems in the church, but what are the mechanics of his success? He mixes in several ingredients, such as: (1) covetousness (the desire to have one's own following, as already noted), (2) pride, (3) miscommunication, and (4) even the refusal to communicate. The Lord provided solutions for all of these possible problems.

First, it is wrong for anyone to desire his own following. While it is always pleasing to receive compliments from brethren for one's preaching, writing, teaching, or administrative skills, a man can never allow such praise to go to his head, thinking, "Hey! I really am that good!" Even in secular areas, we can see the destructiveness of such thinking. An athlete or an actor suddenly makes millions of dollars and can only credit himself for his success. So he (or she) thinks the normal rules and conventions of society do not apply and begin to engage in unacceptable behavior.

The antidote for this attitude in the church is found in 1 Corinthians 4:7, where Paul asked: "For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you glory as if you had not received it?" It is tempting for some to use the prominence they have achieved by virtue of their skills to influence other brethren. One can hear comments such as, "Brother X thinks this way," as if that settles the issue. The question is not, "What does brother X think?" but "What is the basis for his

thinking?" What evidence does he have for his conclusion? Brother X is subject to being influenced by friends and insufficient information—like the rest of us. For that reason positions need to be well reasoned and thought through.

The second temptation, pride, will often not allow someone to back down or admit even a small error. Certain public figures have made statements they should have apologized for but never have (Al Sharpton, for example). Others were quick to condemn the Duke Lacrosse players prematurely and never apologized for their kneejerk condemnations. Pride is operative in such situations. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (Jam. 4:10).

Miscommunication is one of the easiest things to do. How often has someone misunderstood what another has said and taken offense to it? For that reason our Lord provided solutions. If anyone thinks he has been offended, he is to go to that brother (Mat. 18:15-17). If a person finds out that a brother has something against him, he is to go to that brother (Mat. 5:23-24). In this way conflicts can be resolved. But some refuse to communicate. Like Marian Guinn in Collinsville, Oklahoma, some refuse to talk with the elders. They reject answering questions that are not at all complicated? "Did you perform a certain action? Yes or no." Refusal to communicate with a brother is a sin. More than once, all parties in a dispute have agreed to tape a conversation, then refused to release the tapes!

Attitude

Sometimes brethren charge other brethren with acting in an uncivil way. As human beings fighting against error that is harming the body of Christ, it is indeed possible for one's emotions to cloud one's judgment—to

say things harshly rather than kindly or, at least, impassively. The motivation for defending the faith is right, of course, but it is also important to establish one's case in an appropriate manner. However, some seem to be quick to accuse others of incivility. Pressing one's point to show error has always been acceptable. Some just do not want any conflict, and for them **any** challenge may be designated as unloving.

Below is an example of rage against an opponent; no defender of the faith against error's advancement upon the truth has ever been so forceful as this instance. Any harshness of one brother against another has probably never reached this intensity. What is quoted below was published in Philip Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*; it is a summary of a papal bull spoken by the lips of Clement VI (the pope) on April 13, 1346, against Lewis the Bavarian:

It called for God to strike Lewis with insanity, blindness, and madness. It invoked thunderbolts of heaven and the flaming wrath of God and the Apostles Peter and Paul both in this world and the next. It called for all the elements to rise in hostility against him; upon the universe to fight against him, and the earth to open and swallow him up alive. It blasphemously damned his house to desolation and his children to exclusion from their abode. It invoked upon him the curse of beholding with his own eyes the destruction of his children by their enemies (6:99).

By contrast, brethren never wish such calamities upon the false teachers whose doctrines we bring to light and analyze. We know that God can bring judgment upon His opponents (Balaam, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, for example), but our fervent prayer is that they might repent and try to undo the damage they have done before God brings punishment upon them (although some false teachers are

never judged in this life).

The use of sarcasm some find objectionable, but the purpose of using it is not just to ridicule an opponent but to show the absurdity of his position. The reader can judge for himself which of these (or possibly both) Elijah was doing when, in 1 Kings 18:27, he mocked the false prophets of Baal.

What follows is the analysis of certain men who have been asked to speak on a program in Orlando that routinely invites wolves to come and speak (every two years). This year is no exception. Many times the speakers brought in have been objected to, and occasionally a few have been changed, but they were only replaced by men of the same stripe. Churches must be warned against events such as these.

Meet the Wolves

All of the speakers have not yet been listed on the Spiritual Growth Workshop Website (as of this writing), but the keynote speakers have been, and a look at two of them is sufficient for brethren to see that they should not in any way support this event. One of those is Harold Shank, who is a professor at OCU and reviews books for *The Christian Chronicle*. Providing documentation for either one of these liberal entities would require chapters of material. We will pass over OCU and just pull some information from an article written by this same author on July 1, 2001 in *Spiritual Perspectives*:

In the May issue of *The Christian Chronicle* is an introduction to a two-part series which begins by stating that "our fellowship is experiencing tremendous pressure on many fronts from a society in the midst of cataclysmic change..." (17).

How the churches of Christ will survive such pressure in order to endure and prevail is dependent on leaders within our congregations who are

seeking God's will and are bringing their wisdom to these challenges of the future (17).

So what "leaders" does *The Christian Chronicle* interview for a sampling of their "wisdom"? Below are some of the names of those who were consulted:

1. Lynn Anderson announced nearly thirty years ago that the church of Christ is a BIG, SICK, DENOMINATION. He has since written *Navigating the Winds of Change* and is regarded by all faithful brethren as a "change" agent. Dave Miller reviewed his book in the 1995 Spiritual Sword lectureship book, *God's Amazing Grace* (507-38). Yet Anderson was the man chosen to discuss "Leadership Renewal" (May) and "Empowering Leaders" (June).

2. Gregory Sterling is a Notre Dame professor and preaches for a congregation in Warsaw, Indiana, which other churches in that area do not fellowship—one that has appointed deaconesses. His topic is "Leadership in Churches of Christ" (May).

3. Don Browning...can fellowship Leroy Garrett (who has been on the cutting edge of apostasy for more than four decades) and at least some religious denominations (June).

Some of the other "leaders" are associated with Abilene Christian University.... Is it the flair for defying the Word of God that made these interviewees desirable to *The Christian Chronicle*?

Now how does a man who is "sound" in the faith work with a liberal university and a liberal paper? For 21 years, the Pearl Street congregation in Denton, Texas, hosted an annual lectureship on one or more books of the Bible, producing several thousand pages of in-depth studies of the Scriptures over the years, including controversial topics, but *The Christian Chronicle* never once saw fit to interview the director.

Another speaker is Randy Harris, who teaches at Abilene Christian

University, which is, technically, all that needs to be said. He co-wrote *The Second Incarnation* with Rubel Shelly, which further identifies him as a liberal, since Shelly has been at the forefront of apostasy for almost thirty years. Below is an excerpt of this book from this writer's review of that book from June 19 and 26, 2005.

One of the most ridiculous arguments ever made is aimed at those of us trying to restore New Testament Christianity. The authors chide us for wanting to re-create the Jerusalem church, asking if we want to imitate Ananias and Sapphira or neglect widows (6). A more ineffective and irrelevant argument would be difficult to make. Obviously, when brethren advocate following any church in the New Testament, we recognize imperfections; we praise, however, the strengths and are inspired by the ideal. Brethren in Corinth were plagued with numerous problems, but they listened to the apostle Paul, something that today's liberals refuse to do.

Shelly and Harris refer to baptism as "the rite of initiation into Christ's spiritual body." What Scripture teaches that concept? They never mention the blood of Christ in connection with baptism. They also affirm: "There is neither a set of doctrines nor a series of activities that can guarantee the existence of the church" (62). Really, one wonders if those who continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine in the first century would agree.

They also declare: "Our assemblies need not be dull exercises in boring ritual. They can be creative, alive, and refreshing to the spirit" (105). Did they just make a blanket condemnation of all of the assemblies of the churches of Christ? Is not worshiping in spirit and in truth refreshing? Much more could be cited, but these

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Back To The Bible

35th Annual Bellview Lectures

June 12 - 16, 2010

Saturday, June 12			Tuesday, June 15		
7:00 pm	Back To The Bible	Tim Cozad	9:00 am	Back To Biblical Morality	Dennis "Skip" Francis
7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Authority	Daniel Denham	10:00 am	Back To Biblical Giving	Wayne Blake
Sunday, June 13			11:00 am	Back To Biblical Warfare	Lynn Parker
9:00 am	Back To Biblical Music	Michael Hatcher	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
10:00 am	Back To Biblical Living	John Rose	1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Translation	Charles Pogue
<i>Lunch Break</i>			2:30 pm	Back To Biblical Fellowship	Ken Chumbley
2:00 pm	Back To Biblical Preaching	Danny Douglas	3:30 pm	Open Forum:	
3:00 pm	Back To The Biblical View Of Communion	Ken Chumbley	<i>Dinner Break</i>		
<i>Dinner Break</i>			7:00 pm	Back To The Biblical Organization Of The Church	John West
7:00 pm	Back To Biblical Grace	Dub McClish	7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Confession	Gene Hill
7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Faith	Charles Pogue	Wednesday, June 16		
Monday, June 14			9:00 am	Back To Biblical Eschatology	Dub McClish
9:00 am	Back To Biblical Prayer	Lee Moses	10:00 am	Back To The Biblical View Of God	John Rose
10:00 am	Back To Biblical Attitudes	Danny Douglas			Gene Hill
11:00 am	Back To Biblical Speaking	Wayne Blake	11:00 am	Back To Biblical Homes	
<i>Lunch Break</i>			<i>Lunch Break</i>		
1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Respect	Tim Cozad	1:30 pm	Back To Biblical Peace	Lee Moses
2:30 pm	Back To The Biblical View Of The Holy Spirit	Daniel Denham	2:30 pm	Back To Biblical Priorities	David Brown
			3:30 pm	Open Forum:	
3:30 pm	Open Forum:		<i>Dinner Break</i>		
<i>Dinner Break</i>			7:00 pm	Back To The Biblical Work Of The Church	Dennis "Skip" Francis
7:00 pm	Back To The Biblical View Of Immodesty	John West	7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Baptism	Lynn Parker
7:45 pm	Back To Biblical Repentance	David Brown			

Bellview Lectures Information

Housing

The Ramada (7051 Pensacola Blvd; Pensacola, FL 32505) is providing a special rate for those attending the Bellview Lectures. The price (tax not included) is \$55—to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/476-9091. *Tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures when making your reservations.* If you are planning on attending the lectureship you may want to make your motel reservations early.

Meals

The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch Monday – Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants will be available at the registration tables.

Books

The lectureship book, *Back To The Bible*, will be available for purchase. The price of the book has not yet been determined. The

This year's lectureship will be broadcast live on the Internet. Go to the lectures web page for the link: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com/lectures.php>. If you have a question for the open forums, send an email to: mhatcher@gmail.com.

book will contain 15 chapters. This will be a soft-cover book that can be used for teaching purposes. Everyone will want to purchase a copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

Books-on-CD

The Bellview lectureship books (1975-1976, 1978, 1988-2005, 2007-2010) will be available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of the CD has not yet been determined. The CD will also include the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2009), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2009), and other material.

Transportation

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Continued from Page 5
 show the position of the authors.
 Now, presumably, the other speakers know a little something about these men—unless they have been living in a vacuum. So why would they want to be on such a program with them? If they do not share the same beliefs as these wolves, why are they

going to hang out in the same pasture together?
 More to the point, however, is: Why do the sheep want to endanger themselves by getting as close to the wolves as they can? And why would shepherds not warn them against doing so? Would it not be about the same as a child telling his father, “I’m

going out to play in traffic now”? What loving parent would allow it? Inviting speakers such as these is not a fluke; these are the type of men that always appear on the Spiritual Growth Workshop! These individuals should not be fellowshiped but marked, as Paul commanded.
671 Oak Vista Ln; Winter Park, FL 32792

2010 Bellview Lectureship Book Order Form		Total Price
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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender

"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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The 2010 Bellview Church of Christ Lectures

Charles Pogue

The annual Bellview lectures were held June 12-16, 2010, and what a marvelous lectureship series it was! If you were there, or viewed the lectures online, you participated in a great spiritual feast. Seven things necessary for a successful lectureship came together for a very important five day span of time: Dedication, hard work, hospitality, a vital theme, an important and unique lectureship book, well-prepared and powerfully delivered lessons, and enjoyable fellowship.

The commitment of the Bellview elders, brother Fred Stancliff and brother Paul Brantley, to present the Bellview lectures cannot go without notice. They understand the need for and the good accomplished by such efforts. These men exemplify the instructions Paul gave the Ephesian elders to feed the flock over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers (Acts 20:28). We appreciated very much the public announcement of the commitment to continue this very important lectureship series.

The amount of work that is involved in planning and hosting a lectureship such as the one at Bellview is large. The many hours spent by Bellview's faithful evangelist, Michael

Hatcher, is noted and appreciated by all. The selection of speakers, choosing the topics, planning the book, and doing the scheduling, along with the many other tasks involved takes a lot of time. Our thanks to brother Hatcher for his tireless work is happily extended. His efforts were done heartily as unto the Lord (Col. 3:23).

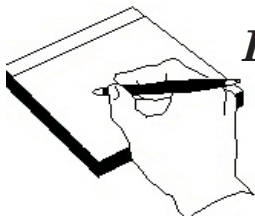
The hospitality of the members at Bellview to prepare the daily meals and provide places for the speakers to stay is also appreciated. The friendliness and gracious comments by all of the members were always welcomed. A special "thank you" needs to be extended to Bellview's helpful secretary, Denise Mowery. She does so many private tasks, some of which are done personally (as she did for this writer) for the speakers. Thanks, Denise! The brethren at Bellview were, as they surely always are, given to hospitality (Rom. 3:23).

The theme of this year's lectureship was *Back to the Bible*. What a timely topic that is. The world in which we live includes many people who have determined to be their own authority in religious matters, but it was pointed out numerous times by a number of speakers that man cannot direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23).

There are ways that appear right unto men, but they will ultimately lead to death (Pro. 14:12). The Bellview lectureship series included sermons on the fundamentals of obedience to the Gospel and others that covered essential things for the child of God to be faithful in doctrine and conduct. A number of the lessons covered moral issues that are very much needed both in the world in general and in the church of the Lord as well. Every specific topic was both crucially relevant to the theme of *Back to the Bible* and needed by today's society.

In this writer's opinion, the most impressive thing about the entire 2010 Bellview lectureship was and is the lectureship book. The uniqueness of the book is immediately seen in that it is a paperback book. Each chapter of the book (15 in total) was written in story form. From the opening chapter, "Back to the Bible" by brother Tim Cozad, to the closing chapter, "Back To The Biblical Work Of The Church" by brother Skip Francis, and all of the chapters in between the material is presented in such a way that the book can be handed out to non-Christians for their reading and study. The material

Continued on Page 4



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

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mhatcher@gmail.com

Change

Change, by itself, is neither good nor bad. It simply means, “make or become different” or “the act or instance of making or becoming different” according to the *New Oxford American Dictionary*. The change can be from good to bad, from bad to good, or a neutral change (one regarding one expedient to another expedient). What they change from and what they change to determines whether the change is good or bad.

All men are expected to change though. When a child grows and develops, he reaches a time in which he knows “to refuse the evil, and choose the good” (Isa. 7:15), or as we call it, he reaches the age of accountability. He makes the choice to choose evil instead of refusing it and thus sins (Rom. 3:10, 23; Gal. 3:22). When he sins, he needs to repent. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). Jesus said, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5). The basic idea of *repent* is to change. The Bible teaches us that one must repent of his sins if he desires to have fellowship with God and eventually go to heaven.

With this change, there must first be a change of mind. One must come to believe that God is and Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24). That belief comes through proper evidence be-

ing provided (Heb. 11:1) since faith comes by hearing God’s Word (Rom. 10:17).

It must also bring about a reformation of life. John the Immerser told those coming to be baptized of him to “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Mat. 3:8). In response to Paul’s heavenly vision, Paul says, “But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet [worthy] for repentance” (Acts 26:20).

Far too many professed Christians try to hold onto the world and still be a Christian. They are not prepared to make the necessary change in their life to be the type of man God expects. It has always been true: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mat. 6:24). They have never learned to “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” and to sent their affections on things above and not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2). They still love the world even though John writes, “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17). These brethren need to learn what it truly means to love God in the way Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all

thy mind” (Mat. 22:37) and to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (6:33). These brethren need to bring about the proper change in their lives to be acceptable to God.

It is also possible for there to be change from being pleasing to God to apostatizing from Him. Adam and Eve were the first to do this as God placed them in the Garden and had fellowship with them. However, they allowed sin to come into their lives and were thus separated from God with the result that God cast them out of the Garden and from His fellowship. Demas at one time was one who was faithful to Christ as Paul by inspiration listed him among others that were his “fellowlabourers” (Phm. 24). Yet, later in Paul’s life, he would have to write of Demas, “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica” (2 Tim. 4:10).

Peter writes very descriptively of those who leave the Truth and return to the world when he states: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Pet. 2:20).

One of the purposes (if not the main purpose) in the writing of the Hebrews letter was to try and prevent brethren from leaving Christ and returning to an inferior religious system (specifically Judaism). Among the many warnings, he says it is possible to fall away and “crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.... if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins... Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?... For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven” (Heb. 6:6; 10:26, 29; 12:25). If we fall away, “*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*” (10:31).

This type of falling away does not come all of a sudden. Inspiration described it this way: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip” (Heb. 2:1). Other versions put the end like so: “lest haply we drift away *from them*” (ASV), “lest we drift away” (NKJV), and others will use either “drift away” or some similar wording. Zodhiates defines the word (Greek: *παρῆναι*—*pararreō*) saying, “To float by or drift past as a ship, or to flow past as a river. Figuratively to slip away, suggesting a gradual and almost unnoticed movement past a certain point.” In apostatizing it is generally done in a way that is so gradual that

it is almost unnoticed till we reach a point that it is no longer recognizable as being the truth.

My father use to illustrate this slow drifting away by drawing a straight line on a chalkboard then going back and begin drawing a second line on top of it and slowly, almost imperceptively, moving off the first line till it was finally a long way off the first line. This is the way apostasy creeps into a congregation or a person’s life. For a congregation it might be innocent sounding things like: what version preachers or teachers use does not indicate liberalism on their part, or breaking up the Sunday night service in favor of small groups in various homes of its members, or dismissing or changing the time of Sunday evening services so they will not clash with the Super Bowl, or teaching that brethren may forsake the assembly to participate in various activities (such as a sporting event), or simply bringing in coffee and donuts during our Bible classes, or maybe it would be something as simple as suggesting that maybe brethren should enlarge our fellowship “circle.” However, it begins the move away from the truth and into apostasy.

The wonderful thing to know is that one can return from their apostasy. The very thing that allowed them to make a change from their faithfulness to their departing the faith (whether totally apostate or in just the beginning stages), allows them to return to faithfulness. Simon was just such a person. When Philip preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Christ, the Samaritans obeyed the Truth. “Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip” (Acts 8:13). However, when Peter and John came to Samaria and began imparting

miraculous powers to them by laying on of their hands (the only way miraculous powers could be passed on to others), the Record states: “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost” (8:18-19). Simon had left the Truth at this point and Peter said to him, “But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God” (8:20-21). Peter then told him what he needed to do: “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (8:22). Upon hearing this, Simon said, “Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me” (8:24). Simon did what was necessary to come back to the truth of God’s Word.

We implore all those who have left or are just in the beginning stages of leaving faithfulness to God’s Word to come back as did Simon. Make the change in your life that is necessary to be totally right with God.

MH

Postage Chart for 2010 Bellview Lectures Book

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Continued from Page 1
 is written to hold the reader's attention and yet impart very important Biblical teaching for the welfare of men's souls. In other words, this book is designed to be an evangelistic tool, and in our judgment will prove to be a very successful one. The Bellview brethren are also to be commended for working diligently to keep the price of the book low enough that an individual or a congregation can purchase multiple copies for distribution. The price is only \$3.00 each. [Notice the updated shipping charges on page 3.] While the interest of many in spiritual things is dwindling, there are people in the world who are searching for the Truth and the church one reads about in the New Testament. This lectureship book can be a key to helping them find them.

Not all of the lessons that were delivered orally are included in the lectureship book, but those are available for viewing on the congregation's website, <http://bellviewcoc.com/lectures.php>. We would encourage

everyone to view those. Whether reference is to the topics discussed in the book or those that were delivered orally only, all of the speakers demonstrated careful study and preparation of their material, and all of the sermons were powerfully delivered. It is just one person's impression, but the 2010 Bellview lectureship had the atmosphere of a Gospel meeting with multiple speakers. It is often the case that lectureships have a significant number of topics in which much of the material, by its very nature, is approached primarily in a forensic way; the great selection of topics in this year's Bellview lectures was more conducive to heralding the truths needed by men and women. For that, we are grateful to brethren for the selection of topics, and we are also grateful to each speaker who made the most of the theme and each assignment to "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2).

One other vital component of the 2010 Bellview lectures was the fellowship. The fellowship enjoyed with brethren from different areas

around the country was not unique to this particular lectureship, but it was most enjoyable and precious. As we witness congregation after congregation and brother after brother depart from the faith in one or more ways, the fellowship with those who are determined to remain faithful to the Word of God is more precious than gold! "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren dwell together in Unity" (Psa. 133:1). The encouragement we receive from one another helps to increase our commitments to carry on with teaching and practicing only that which God authorizes in His Word. The need for that encouragement was particularly evident at the 2010 Bellview lectures. The time we spent together there certainly supplied it! While it may be the case that the numbers at the faithful lectureships are not what they were a few years ago, the closeness among those who seek to remain faithful to all of God's commands was visible to all. A great big thank you goes out to all who were present, or in any other

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way, involved in the 2010 Bellview lectureship.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect thoroughly

unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Those familiar words by the apostle Paul sum up the theme, the book, and the sermons delivered from the pulpit at the 2010 Bellview lectureship. They remind us of the great work God has given us to do and the challenges that

are involved in accomplishing it. All that we heard at Bellview was consistent with the two verses from the letter to Timothy. Knowing the love the Bellview brethren have for God and the Bible, no one would expect anything different.

12868 Bryant Ln; Rogers, AR 72756

An Open Letter to *The “New” Gospel Journal*, Its Board of Directors and Curtis A. Cates

The purpose of this writing is to clear the name and reputation of the church of Christ located in Evant, Texas. For many years the congregation in Evant, Texas has been known as a church that stands forthright for the cause of Truth, that does not compromise with error, and that will not endorse either false teachers or false doctrines. It is our desire that the brotherhood understands that such continues to be the case this first day of June, in the year of our Lord, 2010.

The “New” Gospel Journal, hereinafter designated as TNGJ, included the Evant church of Christ in the church listing section of that publication for the years 2006 and 2007. The bill had been inadvertently paid. Mike Mallett, one of the elders wrote under date of December 17, 2007 to request that money be returned. Why? Because the elders had dropped the congregational subscription to TNGJ, following the dismissal of brethren Dub McClish and Dave Watson, as editor and co-editor. According to the policy of TNGJ, only those churches with congregational subscriptions would be listed in the “church directory” section without charge. The elders had never requested that the Evant congregation be included in the church list. Under the capable leadership and editorship of brother Dub McClish, it had been

a pleasure to be listed with sound congregations. However, the paper was already headed in a direction far removed from the Truth. It would be many years before the congregation in Evant would ever see any of that money.

In that letter, brother Mallett stated in clarion terms: “Under the present leadership of *The Gospel Journal* we do not wish to have any association with this publication or its board of directors. Please remove our church name from this directory.” What is so difficult to understand about that request? (1) The Evant church of Christ does not desire to be associated with TNGJ, (2) Please remove our church name from this directory, and (3) Quote: “As we did not authorize your publication to list us in your directory for the past two years we are requesting that *The Gospel Journal* refund the payment of \$240.00”

As far as anyone here knew, that was to be the end of the matter. However, under date of February 11, 2010 the church in Evant received a note of “thanks” from Paul Sain, Business Manager, for TNGJ. Brother Sain also included a bill in the amount of \$128.00. Remember, the paper still owed the congregation in Evant, Texas \$240.00. The bill was for the “church listing” in 2009. We

assume that 2008 issues of TNGJ included such listings.

Under date of March 6, 2010, the elders requested that I respond to brother Sain’s correspondence. I reminded him that since the sad events of 2005 the Lord’s church in Evant, Texas had had no association with TNGJ. The letter pointed out that neither he nor the editor had any business putting the Evant church in their directory. We requested (again) that the name of the Evant church of Christ be removed from the pages of TNGJ. We asked for an immediate correction of that blatant oversight.

After twenty days had passed, with no acknowledgement whatsoever, another letter was sent to brother Sain under date of March 26, 2010. We asked for a cessation of all such ads and a statement that the Evant congregation does not lend support to TNGJ. We let him know that copies of all this correspondence were being sent to brother Curtis A. Cates, and to the elders of the Forest Hills church of Christ. We requested a deadline for both of these matters to be resolved no later than the last day of April, 2010. We desired that the name of the Lord’s church in Evant, Texas be cleared as quickly as possible.

March 26, 2010 we asked Curtis A. Cates as the editor of TNGJ, if

he would assist us in clearing up this matter. March 26, 2010 we also asked the elders of the Forest Hills congregation (Memphis, TN), for their assistance in resolving this injustice. We have never received one word from brother Paul Sain, nor any of the elders of the Forest Hill congregation.

Curtis A. Cates did respond to the elders of the Evant congregation with an apology and a statement that the church here was released from all supposed debts for which the church had been erroneously billed. He had in his possessions copies of the correspondence, showing that TNGJ still owed the Lord's church in Evant, Texas \$240.00.

Under date of April 5, 2010 a letter of thanks was sent to brother Cates for both his apology and release from the "obligation" to pay the \$128.00. Also, we reminded him that a statement needed to be placed in the pages of TNGJ, to allow brethren to realize that although our church name was in the "directory" for three or four years, that the church in Evant, Texas did not go along with the new liberal stance of the paper, and its obvious support of false teachers and false doctrines. The congregation here does not fellowship those things that are freely fellowshiped by TNGJ, and its current board of directors.

The elders of the Evant church of Christ received a note from brother Cates under date of April 16, 2010. The note included a check in the amount of \$240.00 from the personal checking account of Curtis A. Cates. He stated that he was sending his personal check to the church in Evant, Texas "to clear this matter up..." Therefore, we sent another letter of thanks to brother Cates under date of March 24, 2010. Once more, we reminded him that several attempts had been made with him and brother

Sain to have some sort of retraction printed within the pages of TNGJ, to let those who still received that publication, (which that month still contained the Evant congregation information in its directory), that the church in Evant, Texas does not support nor endorse the new direction of TNGJ. The letter explained that "the elders here do not wish to leave the mistaken impression that the Lord's church endorses or supports the extremely liberal views of fellowship as upheld by the board of directors, the current editor, nor any of the writers."

The final correspondence was sent to brother Paul Sain under date of April 26, 2010. The elders wanted the business manager, brother Sain, to know that the original false bill, in the amount of \$240.00 had been reimbursed by brother Cates from his personal funds. We would not want to falsely take \$240.00 from TNGJ. Once more, we included a reminder that some sort of statement needed to be made in the pages of TNGJ, informing the brotherhood that the congregation in Evant, Texas could no longer support nor endorse the digressive directions of the TNGJ.

Please understand, that the board of directors, the elders of Forest Hill, brethren Curtis Cates, and Paul Sain all knew of our intent to have a public retraction made within the pages of TNGJ. The elders of the Evant congregation also informed brother Sain that the \$240.00 has been placed in our mission fund, which helps with the monthly support of brother Dub McClish.

The entire month of May is now gone. TNGJ has finally removed the name of the Evant congregation from the church directory within its pages. We are thankful for this. As of today's date there has been no statement and no word (could we say silence?) from

the editor, the business manager, nor any of the board of directors about such a statement. This deafening silence suggests to us that there will be no such statement placed within the pages of TNGJ.

THEREFORE; let it be known to faithful brethren and churches of Christ throughout the world, that the church of Christ located in Evant, Texas does not support nor endorse the TNGJ, the current editor, board of directors, or elders of the Forest Hill church of Christ in their numerous departures from the powerful Word of God. We wish to stand in fellowship only with those who are in fellowship with God. Those who have let it be known that they are no longer in fellowship with God and His holy teaching, are not in fellowship with us. Since our many requests for such a message to be included in the pages of TNGJ has fallen upon deaf ears, please help us to spread this message throughout the borders of His kingdom. Let us pray that the time will come when TNGJ will return to the old paths and be counted as standing on the Lord's side, in the way that once it did!

*Because of a cross,
Jess Whitlock
Evangelist
Evant church of Christ*

"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, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

Am I a Radical?

Roelf L. Ruffner

Recently I read an article by a brother-in-Christ who maintained that Christians were coming out of “liberalism” and “radicalism.” Now I know I am not a liberal (“loosing what God has not loosed”) but I do disagree with this brother on certain issues. He might even maintain that I was a radical (“one who takes an extreme position”). It is a sad day in spiritual Israel when one is called a *radical* for striving to stay with the Scriptures and having a “thus saith the Lord” for what Christians and the Lord’s church do in this world!

Am I a radical because I preach what the Bible says about refusing to fellowship false teachers? Fellowship is turning out to be of prime importance among the churches of Christ in the first decade of the 21st Century. Many Christians (including preachers) base their fellowship of others upon past *friendships* and associations. They invite “marked” (Rom. 16:17) false teachers to speak in Gospel Meetings, Seminars, and Lectureships. **Their excuse:** “Well, he is my friend and he won’t teach anything like that here.” Brethren, *friends* can change, but the Word of God does not change. They forget what the apostle John and the Holy Spirit decreed: “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” (2 John 10-11).

Some of my preaching brethren have no qualms about appearing on the same speaking program with a false teacher and remaining quiet as a *church mouse* about this brother’s false teaching. Have they not wondered what the Lord would do if He suddenly returned and found them there? Would Paul have been on the same lectureship with the Judaizers of Acts 15? Would John have allowed himself to be on the same *podium* with a Nicolaitane (Rev. 2:5-6)?

A preacher should preach/teach what the Bible says about fellowship and false teachers. He should also **practice** what he preaches; always mindful of what the Lord sees and not what others think. “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13).

Am I a radical because I preach that compromise and toleration of false doctrine is a great evil in the church today? Compromise and toleration of false doctrine is a great evil in the world today—as it has always been. Speaking specifically of greed, but I believe the principle applies here as well, Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters” (Mat. 6:24). We cannot oppose a false doctrine such as Elder Reevaluation/

Reaffirmation, in which the office of elder becomes a political football, while holding hands with those who espouse it and practice it. Some brethren have this strange spiritual weakness called compromise which the Lord never had. For example, He did not hold hands with the Sadducees while opposing their materialistic doctrines. “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God” (Mark 12:24).

The apostle Paul strongly opposed the Judaizers who tried to bring Gentile Christians under the yoke of the Law of Moses. Peter opposed them also (Acts 15:10), yet later compromised his position at Antioch by refusing to eat with Gentile brethren when certain of his Jewish brethren were present (Gal. 2:11-15). Peter wanted it both ways. Paul “resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned” (2:11—ASV). The Christian also stands condemned before the Lord when they tolerate false doctrine/teachers in the name of so-called *harmony* and *brotherly love*.

Lord willing, I plan to continue to preach and teach against false doctrine and to refuse fellowship to purveyors of it. Though at times it may be a lonely position, I believe that I am in good company.

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Mac Deaver and the Doctrine of Present-Day Holy Spirit Baptism

Daniel Denham

This is the first of several articles to address the egregious doctrine being advocated by Mac Deaver and his closest associates relative to present-day Holy Spirit baptism. A separate series is also planned for his "direct help" heresy on the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian as well. The spread of both errors has become the central focus of the Deaver camp and has been aided and abetted by those willing to turn a blind eye to their obvious destructive implications to maintain fellowship with those in that camp. A number of prominent brethren have sympathies siding with those of Mac Deaver on certain aspects of these errors, especially that of the "direct help" doctrine.

Our plan of attack in dealing with the error of present-day Spirit baptism is to begin with a background and overview of the issue relative to the Deaverites. Next, we shall focus in the serial on the portions of Mac's book *The Holy Spirit (Center of Controversy – Basis of Unity)* expressly addressing the subject and finally address the central texts used to try to support its underlying suppositions.

The Tale of the Time-Line

It is a truism that the best place to start is almost always with the beginning. Mac would seem to have us believe that he came to his current views on Spirit baptism after long and serious deliberation and study—that he was the one of his inner circle to come to the *truth* of this new position some years after some of his cohorts. In fact, in his book he gives Glenn Jobe and Todd Deaver credit for convincing him of this *truth* (*Holy Spirit* 291-96). Todd has since run on ahead into the camp of the likes of John Mark Hicks, Rubel Shelly, and Al Maxey to promote ultra-liberalism and the pan-ecumenicalism of the Emerging Church Movement.

A salient point on this issue is that Mac implies in his book that he did not come to accept the view of present-day Spirit baptism until 2006 and for the first time defended the view in a public debate on the necessity of water baptism April 3-6 of that year against a Baptist preacher (296-97). In fact, he expressly states: "And let me say that between 2001 and 2006, I had seen nothing and had heard nothing by way of evidence

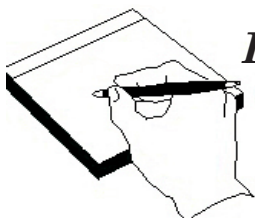
that falsified the position taken by Glenn" (*Holy Spirit* 296).

Dates Can Be Troublesome When Rewriting History

Historical revisionism has become stock in trade in liberal circles. On the secular level, Marxist *historians* are daily trying to convince folks that what happened really did not happen and that history actually occurred the way they wish it had. Similarly, liberals, especially of the postmodern variety, strive to rewrite Restoration History and even the records of more contemporary events as it suits their perceived needs. It is not surprising that such things should be practiced among such folks, but it is stunningly surprising to find at least a hint of it in the writings of a man whom I have previously held the highest regards for in his work in the Kingdom. Something does not quite meet the eye relative to Mac's storyline in the 20th chapter of his book as to how he came to accept from Glenn Jobe and Todd Deaver the notion of present-day Spirit baptism.

Mac's story is openly suspect as

Continued on Page 3



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

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Truth

In the movie *A Few Good Men* (I do not recommend this movie), two enlisted men are on trial for the death of a fellow soldier. The movie comes to a climax as Lieutenant Daniel Kaffee places Colonel Nathan R. Jessep on the stand. Kaffee is going to try and get Jessep to admit he ordered a "Code Red" and thus the two enlisted men are not guilty of murder but were simply following orders. So Lt. Kaffee asks the question, "Colonel Jessep, did you order the Code Red?" Since ordering a Code Red was a violation itself, the Judge interrupts saying, "You don't have to answer that question." However, Col. Jessep says, "I'll answer the question. You want answers?" To this Kaffee responds, "I think I'm entitled." Jessep then asks a little more forcefully, "You want answers?" To which Kaffee states emphatically, "I want the truth!" At this point Col. Jessep shouts back, "You can't handle the truth!" He then gives a soliloquy about men like himself in regard to defending the nation. Religiously, many people think they want the truth, but they "can't handle the truth."

Many "can't handle the truth" regarding the exclusivity of the Lord's way and His church. Many want to find numerous ways to go to the Father and obtain heaven's home. Many in our society today are wanting to make the way broad enough to include just about anyone no matter

what they believe or do. Some would include Muslims and atheists. Yet, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He sets forth an exclusivity that He is the only way and there are no other ways to the Father. Not only is He the one and only way, but the church of Christ is the only place where salvation exists. In Acts 2, when the Jews "received the Word" (2:41) by repenting and being baptized (2:38), they were added by God to the church (2:47). Which church? Paul says, "*There is one body*" (Eph. 4:4). He has already told us that the church is His body (1:22-23). Thus, there is only one church. That one church belongs to Christ since He built it (Mat. 16:18) and paid the purchase price for it (Acts 20:28). It should be no wonder then that it wears His name—the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). It is this one church that Christ is going to save (Eph. 5:23). Many "can't handle the truth" relating to denominationalism and that those who are in a denomination (Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Catholic, et al.) are lost and will spend eternity in hell if they do not obey the Truth. Yet, while many "can't handle the truth" relating to this, it is still the truth.

Many "can't handle the truth" when they find out what God has authorized as to our avenues of worshiping Him. Most can handle many of the aspects of worship, but when the demand of the need to attend all the services of the Lord's church to worship God, many simply "can't handle the truth." They might not mind attending on Sunday morning, but start complaining about Sunday night and they will forget about mid-week Bible study. Others "can't handle the truth" when they learn that the use of mechanical instruments of music

in worship is sinful. They are going to have their idol (the instrument) no matter what God says. While they think they want the truth, when they are told the truth, they really "can't handle the truth."

There are a lot of people who simply "can't handle the truth" when it comes to how one becomes a Christian and who is and is not a Christian. Most religious people "can't handle the truth" regarding baptism being for the remission of sins or a condition of being saved. Most denominationalists will accept the *need* to be baptized, however they rebel against the purpose God has said to be baptized. God said the one must be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), to have the remission or forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), to wash away sins (22:16), or to become a disciple (Mat. 28:19-20). All of these are various ways of expressing the one purpose of baptism. Baptism is that one act that changes our state from being lost to being saved. One must have an understanding of why he is being baptized for it to be something more than simply a dunking in water. (Some "can't handle the truth" about baptism being an immersion in water.) When they learn that those who have not been baptized for the purpose God established are not saved, not a Christian, and thus on their way to eternal torment, they simply "can't handle the truth."

Some look at the church and its work and think they want the truth

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

regarding the church's work. They see denominations building all sorts of "family life centers" and recreational halls, then providing entertainment and all forms of recreation for their people and some will wonder if there is anything spiritual regarding the work of the church. The Bible does establish the work of the church as being concerned with the spiritual. Jesus responded to Pilate by saying, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). Many can accept a general teaching regarding the church's work, thus thinking they want the truth. However, when it comes to really understanding that the work of the church is spiritual, and thus where the church has the right to function and spend its money on, they "can't handle the truth." The church has the right to spend its money on things pertaining to the work and worship of the church (preaching to the lost, edifying the saved, benevolence, worship activities). However, there is no authority from God to spend the Lord's money on taking the kids to Six Flags, or a movie, or to enter some kind of "church league" ball team, or a thousand and one other activities. (Obviously there is nothing wrong with the family or the home engaging in secular activities—it should be

encouraged.) Secular activities such as these are simply not the work of the church, but many while thinking they want the truth, "can't handle the truth."

The fellowship of the Lord's church is certainly important but seemingly has been almost ignored over the past few years (maybe longer). When one obeys the Gospel, he comes into a relationship with Deity (Mat. 28:19). When he walks in the light, then he has fellowship with God (1 John 1:7). When one has fellowship with God and others have fellowship with Him, then they have fellowship one with another. Most Christians long to hear the truth in this regard. They like the idea of having fellowship with God and with other Christians. If they could just stop at this point, then they can handle the truth (and now many preachers will stop at this). They do not really care for the application of God's Word regarding fellowship. Some rebel at the idea that we cannot have fellowship with those who are in the world including our denominational friends. The Scriptures teach, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:14, 17). While most will accept the truth regarding those in the world (some while verbally

accepting it will not practice it), many will not accept the truth regarding those who have obeyed the Gospel at one time but are no longer walking in the light. The Scriptures teach us not to fellowship those who are immoral (1 Cor. 5). We are not to fellowship those who walk out of step with the Christian lifestyle (2 The. 3:6). When one becomes factious or divisive (a heretick) we must withdraw our fellowship from that person (Tit. 3:10). Then if a person teaches doctrinal error, brethren must not fellowship him (1 Tim. 1:3, 19-20; 6:3-5; Tit. 1:9-11). However, we must not extend fellowship to one who does fellowship (do anything that might indicate we are in agreement with him, or support or aid him in any way) the false teacher (2 John 9-11). Many brethren simply "can't handle the truth" when it comes to applying God's Word regarding fellowship matters. They will continue to extend their fellowship to those God has essentially said: do not fellowship.

Are you one who wants the truth? Or are you one who wants the truth but "can't handle the truth"? Solomon told us: "Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Pro. 23:23). Is truth really worth it to you? Your eternal destiny depends on your answer to that simple question.

MH

Continued from Page 1
to its truthfulness in view of other writings and the dates clearly associated with them. As far back as the October-December, 1999 issue of *Biblical Notes Quarterly* (hereafter *BNQ*), Bob Berard, in an article titled "Behold, I Thought the Spirit Indwelt Christians Only through the

Word," implicitly affirmed that very position in a paper edited by none other than Mac Deaver (14-16)! One of the specific texts discussed by Bob was Colossians 2:12-13, a favorite for present-day Spirit baptism advocates going back to John Calvin and even Augustine. Bob asserted:

Summarizing, one remains spiritually

dead until he is baptized even though he has willingly submitted to the Spirit's word and was thereby "indwelt" (as some imply) by the Spirit solely by means of the Spirit's word. The Spirit's word and man's submitted will leave man lost in sin until that man is immersed (Acts 22:16). It is in that immersion that God operates in addition to His word according to Colossians

2:12-13. At baptism (not before by the word alone) spiritual life is attained and this is simultaneously with the Spirit's personal entrance into the heart (Rom. 8:9; Col. 2:12-13). Since spiritual life is a working of God occurring at baptism (Col. 2:12-13) and since the indwelling Spirit is identified as the Divine Person giving life (John 4:10-14; 7:37-39; Rom. 8; [sic] 11, 13), the Holy Spirit is the Person of the Godhead who personally imparts spiritual life in the heart of the person being baptized (*BNQ* 1999/16).

Precisely at this juncture, Mac Deaver, the editor gave the following parenthetical notation to Bob's remarks:

(If the reader would require even more precision, it could be said that the Holy Spirit changes the heart during baptism [Titus 3:5] and then moves into the heart to take up His indwelling after the heart is cleansed [Gal. 4:6], Editor) (16).

Bob completed his summary by writing:

This is a personal work of the Spirit done in addition to (but in conjunction with) what He does through His word and this is precisely what is meant by the term "direct" as defined in the introduction of this article.

While Bob did not explicitly call this Holy Spirit baptism, he nonetheless implied that concept in his description of the action, and Mac endorsed and even clarified that description even more vividly with his parenthetical observations. We shall come back to Berard's and Deaver's comments on this text when we examine the passages used to promote this new heresy in another article.

But for now, we wish to concentrate on the unfolding of it historically. Three years later in 2002, Bob Berard revisited the subject before us in a paper that he circulated while he was in Cambodia. The article was titled, "Baptism with the Holy Spirit

and Baptism into Christ [sic] Are They the Same or Different?" He contended that water baptism for the remission of sins and Holy Spirit baptism actually are two parts of the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. He also maintained that Colossians 2:12-13 concerned Spirit baptism as well as water baptism (cf. *Contending For The Faith* {*CFTF*}, August 2002, 14-16). He claimed that Colossians 2:12-13 harmonized the position that Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism actually were the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5 (15).

Are we to believe that Mac had no clue as to where Bob was headed back in 1999 with his assertions on Colossians 2:12-13? To phrase the question another way: Are we to believe that Mac Deaver had no idea whatsoever as to the common treatment of that text by many Calvinists and Arminians, among the many followers of Augustine's theories? Are we to accept the notion that the editor of *BNQ*, who has made a recent career of chiding brethren over their supposed naivety concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, was absolutely ignorant of the denominational view of that text? The only difference in Bob's mishandling of the text in the 1999 piece and that of Augustine of Hippo is that the latter would have called that "operation" the baptism of the Holy Spirit! And Bob later did so claim!

In the February 2004 issue of *The Gospel Journal*, edited at that time by Dub McClish, several articles were published under the heading "Examining a Deadly Holy Spirit Doctrine" and dealing especially with the "direct help" heresy of Mac Deaver and company. I addressed and refuted the new teaching by Bob Berard on Spirit baptism. Later in the Spring of that year, Mac Deaver

responded to that issue with his own special edition of *BNQ*. In doing so, he tried to offer a pathetic defense of Bob Berard's material (14-19). For one now professing to have not been convinced and on board with Bob and others on this matter until 2006, he seemed awfully eager to vindicate it all the same!

Even More Problems For Mac's Story

But this alone does not supply all of the evidence causing us to question the aforementioned story from Mac as to how he came to accept his new error. He makes reference in his book to the 2001 Robertson County Lectureship and Glenn Jobe's lecture thereat defending the present-day Spirit baptism doctrine (*Holy Spirit* 294-295). He even notes that Glenn had been wrestling with this issue for some time before the lecture, though Mac does not state clearly whether or not he knew of this **before** that event. Yet, he does imply that he was opposed to the notion up until 2006!

Mac states that Glenn "was given the assignment of speaking on the baptism of the Holy Spirit" on that occasion. Mac, later in his book, refers to "the intensity of the initial shock of Glenn's presentation" (296).

Interestingly, in a letter to me, Mac would not identify the brother at Robertson County whom he claimed made the assignment implying that neither he himself nor his father, Roy C. Deaver, had any prior knowledge of the nature of it before Glenn delivered his material. He wrote:

Fifth, you will have to ask Glenn Jobe as to who invited him to speak on the baptism of the Spirit at Robertson County. I didn't do it; my father didn't do it. Some member at Robertson County asked him to do it (December 14, 2004, 2).

Mac Deaver, however, was the

director of that lectureship and surely ought to have known who had been asked to speak and what had been assigned as to his topic. Thus, on January 12, 2005, I responded to his statement as follows:

Fifth, so you directed a lectureship that involved a man who was assigned to speak in defense of present day Spirit baptism on your watch, while supposedly you were not then in agreement with that position, is that what you are now positing? Are we to assume that you took him to task on that occasion or shortly thereafter, or that he so overwhelmed you with his logic that you immediately acquiesced to his view? Neither explanation will not [sic] even pass the smell test, Mac. Who was the brother in charge of making the assignments? Please, forward his name and address. I am sure that the good brethren at Robertson County would be able to help put me in touch with him, especially with your cooperation. Was he one of the elders? Was he Roy McConnell? Did you have any input at all in the program before, during, or after as to who spoke, what was said, and what was done about what was said? And what about that 1999 article [the aforementioned Berard article on Colossians 2:12-13, HDD] that preceded all of this? Strange, indeed, if you have but recently come to your current view (2). Mac responded with a very brief

reply on January 15, 2005, claiming that he would not even read the entirety of the letter after reading my "first sentence." Actually, it was my fourth sentence that bothered him: "Mac, the very nature of Spirit baptism as described in the Bible demands a miraculous connection, [and] even Baptist and Presbyterian theologians and philosophers who are cessationists relative to the signs of 1 Corinthians 12-13 recognize that fact" (January 12, 2005, 1). To this date I have yet to receive a response from Mac answering the questions relative to his proposed timetable.

The Final Piece of the Evidence

Finally, as to the timeline and Mac's claims of coming to accept the view in 2006, it will be observed that in a letter from Mac to me dated September 28, 2004, he expressed his willingness, though with some weird and stifling limitations, to defend present-day Spirit baptism in a written debate (3). A number of people have copies of this exchange, including the elders of the Sherman Drive congregation (formerly Pearl Street) in Denton, TX and Malcolm Hill, former President of Tennessee Bible College, and can verify this fact. Now, I may be mistaken, but did not September 2004 come before 2006? But, maybe Mac has a calendar that

works backward. Either that or else we have been simply treated in his book with another example of his "Biblical, ethical deceit."

Conclusion

The purpose of this first article is to set the background for the review and refutation of Mac's new hobby on Spirit baptism by showing that credibility is something woefully lacking in his book on the Holy Spirit. It calls into question his many assertions and textual assumptions at the outset. It also shows that the Deaver doctrine is in a perpetual state of flux and ferment, one so convoluted that Mac cannot even get his story straight as to how and when he came to accept his current teachings.

From the time Mac introduced the phrase "supra-literary influence" relative to the work of the Holy Spirit into the milieu, he has been dodging, hedging, adding, subtracting, modifying, and altering his positions on an ever-growing range of subjects, including the areas of sanctification, salvation, and the Trinity. Todd has evolved into a full-fledged postmodern liberal by way of his special leadings doctrine. Mac and company are headed down the same road. Brethren need to wake up to where it ultimately is taking them.

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Moral Issues We Face

Outsourcing the Great Commission

Brad Green

Since 1994 and the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), there has been much debate about the outsourcing of American jobs to other countries which offer a much cheaper labor force. The outsourcing debate today centers on the possibility of a large tax increase upon United States job producers.

Sadly, there has been a slow digression in the Lord's church towards outsourcing the responsibilities and obligations of the local congregation to another larger entity. Recently, I read an invitation from the Gospel Broadcasting Network (GBN) wherein it was stated, "the world is rapidly approaching seven billion souls; the United States alone has a population of 325 million souls.

In order to address this challenging command [the Great Commission, BG], large events like this one... **simply must take place**" (emphasis BG). The logical implication then is that without "large events like this one," the command to "go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16) cannot be addressed. This is as unscriptural as it can possibly be.

When the Great Commission was

given in the first century, there were no television or radio stations, and Jesus gave no stipulation that "large events like this one...simply must take place" for this command to be obeyed. Just the opposite is taught in the New Testament.

The apostle Paul told the Colossian brethren that the Gospel had already been "preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23). Also in the first century, many congregations that were small

shameful and unscriptural.

God's design for the church is that each local congregation be autonomous and therefore able to obey God's commands irrespective of other local congregations. Scriptural authority exists for local congregations to work together in fulfilling the work of the church (Phi. 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:8), but it is sinful to imply that the local congregation cannot obey God's commands without the help of some larger entity. If each

local congregation will follow God's pattern faithfully, the work of the church will be done. If local congregations choose to send the Lord's money to another organization to do the work of evangelizing for them, then the work of the church will not be done in their respective communities.

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enough to meet in members' homes were commended for their faithfulness to God (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Phm. 2). The apostle Paul called upon Titus to "ordain elders in every city" (Tit. 1:5), with the understanding that they could oversee and perform the work of the church in their respective local communities. The New Testament is very clear that the local congregation can very effectively and efficiently do the work of the Lord and fulfill the Great Commission. To say otherwise is

This idea of outsourcing the Great Commission to others is dangerous and harmful to the success of the church of Christ. Evangelism, benevolence, and edification are works of the church for which each local congregation, individually, is responsible. Though congregations may work together, the work of the church cannot be outsourced. The *GBN Newsletter* (May 2009) states, "our present annual budget is \$2,100,000; but, for the money, we know of absolutely no other way to reach as many people as

effectively.” Do you know how many new local congregations could be planted all across the United States with 2.1 million dollars? If the church of Christ had more faithful congregations in more areas of need, the work of the church would be done infinitely more effectively and efficiently than by spending the money on rent and people’s salaries.

Local congregations should never think that just sending money to a “large event” or cooperative work is enough to satisfy God’s command to evangelize. Nor should anyone *guilt* local congregations into thinking that if the congregation does not send money to support their event or cooperative work that the local congregation is not fulfilling God’s Great Commission.

Another sad statement in the aforementioned invitation also caught my eye. The guest speakers at this large event were introduced as “**premier preachers in the Lord’s church today**” (emphasis BG). In 2002-2003, I was first introduced to the wealth of Scriptural publications, which included commentaries and lectureship books and to the names of those who authored or edited said material. I remember the jubilant feeling of excitement and edification which followed and the great appreciation I had for the men who had dedicated their time and study

to such good works. I held those men in high regard, but I never thought that they would begin introducing themselves as “premier preachers in the Lord’s church” just 6-7 years later.

Premier means “first in rank, chief, or leading.” When the Lord’s disciples disputed among themselves who would be the greatest in the Kingdom, Jesus responded, “if any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all” (Mark 9:35). Later, when James and John sought preeminence in the Kingdom, the Lord reminded them, “whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all” (Mark 10:44). The apostle Paul’s humble attitude is seen in the fact that he referred to himself as the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15), and “less than the least of all saints” (Eph. 3:8). To the Corinthian brethren, Paul stated, “**we preach not ourselves**, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor. 4:5, emphasis BG). God neither desires nor wants “premier preachers in the Lord’s church today”; He wants humble servants who preach “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2) and not themselves. Though there is nothing wrong with having high regard and much respect for preachers, God does not desire an arbitrary preacher *ranking* system

be employed, nor does He want His preachers to be considered chief among brethren. It is this dangerous “premier preacher” attitude that has led many to follow what the preacher says rather than what God says. Many individuals have used the excuse, “it can’t be wrong, preacher so-and-so is involved.” This appeals to the wrong source of authority (preachers rather than God, cf. Acts 5:29) and is cultivated by a mentality that gives ranks and titles such as “premier preachers in the Lord’s church.”

Let us never choose to *outsource* the work that God has given each of us (you and I) to do. Let us gladly teach the soul-saving message of Christ, by word and example, to all we come in contact with—our friends, co-workers, neighbors, family, etc. Let us seek only to be humble servants of God and let God do the exalting (Mat. 23:12).

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Mac Deaver and the Doctrine of Present-Day Holy Spirit Baptism

Daniel Denham

At the close of chapter 19 in his book *The Holy Spirit (Center of Controversy—Basis of Unity)*, Mac Deaver, while seeking to answer some objections to his view on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Christian, states: "Sinners become saints by virtue of the Spirit's regenerating spirit (Tit. 3:5), and then moving inside it to indwell there (Gal. 4:6)" (290). He further states, "Christians are not sons of God by miraculous conception. Jesus clearly was" (290). He elaborates a bit on this point then, by writing:

We, however, are sons of God by regeneration (Tit. 3:5) which takes place at baptism (John 3:3, 5; Eph. 5:26). Conversion involves the supernatural, but it is no miracle (290).

In the very next chapter, he equates this act of regeneration by the Holy Spirit to Holy Spirit baptism. He says:

But before man can be given the indwelling of the Spirit, he must be regenerated by the Spirit so that his nature is changed. And this is clearly when a man is baptized in water. As a man's body is lowered in the water, when it is submerged in the water, the Holy Spirit submerges that

man's human spirit within himself to change his nature. And at that precise moment when God considers that man no longer a sinner but now saint, at that precise instant, the regenerating submerging Spirit moves from the outside to the inside of that heart (Tit. 3:5; Gal. 4:6). Less than this we cannot write; more than this we do not know (301).

The fact is Mac does not know even **this** to be true. In fact, it is likely that he has written far more than wishes he had to write on this aspect of things, because he has now opened a whole new "can of worms" for his faction to have to consume. Mac admitted in his book that an alien sinner cannot receive the Spirit and, therefore, cannot have the Spirit. In fact, he states expressly:

Alien sinners can be influenced by the Spirit through his word (Acts 7:51; 2:41). But only Christians have the Spirit himself (Gal. 4:6; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Eph. 1:13-14) (233).

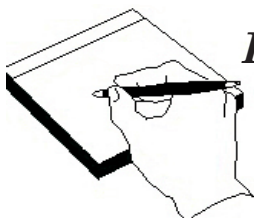
So, the alien sinner cannot receive the Holy Spirit, yet he must receive the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in Spirit baptism to be cleansed and then regenerated.

The Problem of Regeneration

Prior to regeneration (i.e., the New Birth) the alien sinner is not a Christian. He is not a saint, and is, therefore, not saved. He has not entered into the kingdom or the church (John 3:3, 5; Acts 2:38, 41, 47). But Mac has Spirit baptism as being necessary to regenerate the sinner. Thus, Mac implies direct Holy Spirit contact with the un-regenerated human spirit of the alien sinner to save him! That obviously entails Holy Spirit upon human spirit contact! Thus, in some sense the alien sinner does receive the Holy Spirit directly, according to Mac's new doctrine. This is clearly then a self-contradiction with his statement on page 233. Already he is in grievous error here. But it is going to get worse—much worse.

Now, Mac certainly may quibble that the alien sinner does not have the indwelling of the Spirit, but that does not avail his case. He nonetheless has the Holy Spirit in direct contact with the human spirit of the alien. The John 14:17 text, however, is not limited to the

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Notes From The Editor

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Change

It is hard to deny that the church has and is changing. Over thirty years ago someone used the illustration of a Rip Van Winkle having gone to sleep twenty years earlier and waking up at that time. He would have seen the evident change that had taken place in the church. It was noted at that time that even in more conservative congregations, change was taking place. In the succeeding thirty plus years since that writer lamented the change in the church (even in conservative congregations), there has been far more changes take place—and not for the better.

We recognize that not all change is negative. Some change is for the good and needs to take place. However, when the changes strike at the heart of Biblical authority, the worship of the church, the plan of salvation, the organization of the church, the church's work, its teaching, and morality, then liberalism has crept into the church. In such cases, change has taken place (and continues to) and those changes are not for the better. The Lord's church has become denominationalized.

Decades ago Lynn Anderson stated the church was a "big sick denomination and I mean big and sick and denomination." Anderson was wrong concerning the church. It is not a denomination! It has never been a denomination and it will

never be one. There is nothing sick about the Lord's church! However, many congregations of the church of Christ have become nothing but a denomination and denominational wannabes and imitators. Even many of those congregations once known as being *conservative* are "gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core" (Jude 11). They are becoming or have become clouds "without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 12-13).

Through the years, we have not heeded the warnings of Inspiration through the apostle Paul when he said, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:2-4). Elders did not take the warning Paul gave the Ephesian elders, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased

not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

I know this; elders could have put a stop to this departure decades ago. However, we have appointed elders who did not have any backbone or Biblical knowledge. They were good businessmen and good ole Joe's, but they were not Scripturally qualified men for being elders. So many in elderships across America today have no idea about "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Tit. 1:9-11). Many of them would not know false teaching if it slapped them in the face. They are allowing their congregations to be led down a primrose path to destruction. The Holy Spirit expressly stated these things would take place: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

I know this; members of the Lord's church could have put a stop to this departure decades ago. So many members of the Lord's church are content

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

to ride along on the coattails of others. They have no interest in studying the Bible, working in the Lord's vineyard, or doing anything of a spiritual nature. They think attending a few services a week makes them a Christian and fit for heaven. They see no need to study God's Word in spite of Paul's statement: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). They are not like the noble Bereans: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). So many no longer care if something is done according to God's Word or not. They are no longer asking the penetrating question: "Where is (this action or teaching) authorized by Christ?" If we had really been people of the Book, we would not have allowed so much of the nonsense that is going

on in the name of Christianity.

I know this; if preachers had been preaching the Word like God wants, the departure and denominationalism of the church would not be taking place. Preachers have substituted the preaching of the Word of God to moralizing little after-dinner speeches. This way they never preach error, but the congregation starves for spiritual nutrition. A multitude of preachers will preach the truth, but they would not touch a truly controversial subject in the pulpit with a ten-foot pole. They could not say with Paul, "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house... For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:20, 27). They have forgotten or ignored that when Paul charged Timothy to "Preach the word," he also said to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).

These pulpiteers (they have shown they are not truly Gospel preachers) would never think of reproof and rebuking. Sadly, it seems that most preachers of congregations that are now known as conservative fall into this category. They are allowing the church to be denominated. They do not want to ruffle the feathers of any of their worldly-minded members because they desire big numbers and big salaries. Sadly, this is the type of preacher that our preacher training schools are now putting out onto the congregations of the church.

We, as a people, must return to God's Word and having authority for all we say and do. Paul wrote, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). Do not allow anyone to bring about those negative type of changes that will end up making the Lord's church nothing but a denomination.

MH

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matter of indwelling only, as Mac would have to assert in that case. But that is not his only problem here, as the following from Bob Berard shows.

In the previous installment to this series, I noted two seminal articles written by the late Bob Berard (one in 1999 and the other in 2002). The former article, at least, was published by Mac Deaver in his paper *Biblical Notes Quarterly* (hereafter *BNQ*), which has functioned of recent as the chief organ for his doctrinal speculations on the Spirit. In the first article, Bob Berard wrote:

Summarizing, one remains spiritually dead until he is baptized even

though he has willingly submitted to the Spirit's word and was thereby "indwelt" (as some imply) by the Spirit solely by means of the Spirit's word. The Spirit's word and man's submitted will leave man lost in sin until that man is immersed (Acts 22:16). It is in that immersion that God operates in addition to His word according to Colossians 2:12-13. At baptism (not before by the word alone) spiritual life is attained and this is simultaneously with the Spirit's personal entrance into the heart (Rom. 8:9; Col. 2:12-13). Since spiritual life is a working of God occurring at baptism (Col. 2:12-13) and since the indwelling Spirit is identified as the Divine Person giving life (John 4:10-14; 7:37-39; Rom. 8; [sic] 11, 13), the Holy Spirit is the

Person of the Godhead who personally imparts spiritual life in the heart of the person being baptized (*BNQ* 1999/16).

Thus, Bob affirmed that the Spirit directly "imparts spiritual life in the heart" of the alien sinner. It is therefore an operation that may begin on the outside, but it is effected completely only inside the alien's heart, according to this statement. It also must be the case, if such were true, that the Spirit *influences* the alien sinner in some fashion directly *in addition* to what He does through the Word, despite Mac's proviso on page 233 of his book.

It will also be recalled, as noted in our first article, that Mac Deaver

himself endorsed Bob's statements, and, as editor of *BNQ*, even added parenthetically his own comments which were designed to elaborate by purportedly providing more "precision" on Bob's point. Thus, Mac added:

(If the reader would require even more precision, it could be said that the Holy Spirit changes the heart during baptism [Titus 3:5] and then moves into the heart to take up His indwelling after the heart is cleansed [Gal. 4:6], Editor) (16).

It will be observed that Mac does not correct any of Bob's comments, but is actually elaborating on this central point. In doing so, he adds his stamp approval on Bob's teaching that the Holy Spirit directly and immediately infuses ("imparts" is Bob's word) spiritual life into the heart of the alien sinner in addition to what the Spirit does through the Word of God. Thus, the operation moves from the outside to the inside of the heart even in the process of regeneration. Then, according to Mac, that is when the Spirit moves into the heart to indwell the saint. However, the position also implies that the man is a saint prior to be indwelt, if only for the briefest point in time. He is cleansed and then indwelt. The two acts are not, according to Mac's theory, really simultaneous. We shall see in a later article that Mac even implies a distinction in time relationship between cleansing from sin and regeneration. In fact, he will have the alien sinner cleansed of the sins that condemn him but still unregenerated!

The Plot Thickens

We also noted in our previous article that Bob Berard later equated this operation by the Spirit with Holy Spirit baptism in his 2002 article.

Now, let us bring in another interesting statement from Mac Deaver. In a letter to me dated December 14, 2005, Mac wrote the following:

Fourth, what happens in baptism is, as far as I can understand the Bible, differentiated from what takes place before it and what takes place after it. Do you disagree, brother? What happens in baptism should never be confused with the Calvinistic claim for miracle working in the heart of a sinner in order to bring him to repentance regardless how similar you think the language is! Be careful here. Does God forgive, in baptism, a sinner or a saint? He forgives a sinner in order to make him a saint. God cleanses the heart by the Spirit in order to make the heart a fit dwelling place for the Spirit. **If that is heresy, do what you can with it!** You may think you have a great point here, but I assure you, brother, that you do not. **If you think you have me in a bind over my position, then just sign up for the oral debate or get Dub to run our written debate in his paper. (You never did tell me why Dub will not endorse you and run the debate in his paper). If you could get that done, we could have the written debate. Is this such an ungetoverable hurdle? Or if you can't get that done, then we can have the oral debate!** (emphasis his, HDD; 1-2).

As to his rant at the close of the paragraph, we see that Mac was willing to defend Holy Spirit baptism in debate prior to 2006, which he claims in his book when he really came around to accepting the idea of present-day Spirit baptism. In fact, in the same letter he admits that even then in 2005 he saw "better now how it all fits" with his particular view of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1). Further, as concerns his demand that Dub McClish publish in *The Gospel Journal*, the paper to which Mac

alludes, was simply ignored on my part. Mac loves to call the shots, and is fond of making ludicrous demands utilizing others' resources while seeming prone to ignore anything that appears to inconvenience him. Whether or not Dub would publish the written debate had no real bearing on whether a written debate could and should occur. There were many other papers available through which to publish the debate. In fact, there still are—if Mac will agree.

But, returning to the current point at hand, Mac affirmed in his letter that Holy Spirit baptism is the means by which God cleanses the heart of the alien sinner **in order to make him a saint!** Thus, he affirmed that at the point of contact by the Holy Spirit upon the human spirit of the baptismal candidate he is still an alien sinner up until God cleanses his heart and so now considers him a saint, rather than a sinner. Folks, if that is not a direct operation on the heart of the alien sinner, then what is it?

Furthermore, it implies that one can be cleansed of his sins—sins that condemn him—and yet not be a Christian! He has not entered the kingdom or the church, because he still must be regenerated or "born again" by water and the Spirit (John 3:3, 5). He has no sins to condemn him, but he is still an alien sinner—**a sinner without any sins!** Thus, people are saved from their sins without being in the Lord's church, according to this implication of Mac Deaver's doctrine of present-day Spirit baptism. The alien sinner is a still a sinner because he is not a saint. Yet, he is a sinner without sins. He is an accountable non-saint who has no sins for which God holds him any more to account, but he is not a Christian. So, he is saved from his

sins, but he is not among that class of beings called Christians, who are the disciples of the Lord (Acts 11:26) and are thus those who “are being saved” (Acts 2:47—ASV). Talk about a convoluted mess! A pathetic one, at that! This is what Mac’s error has made of the plan of salvation! Who can believe it? Evidently, those who are among Mac’s sycophantic followers have no problem with this inanity. Or else they cannot see beyond their noses.

Also, that the operation must necessarily be miraculous, despite Mac’s claims, was my precise point in comparing his teaching to some holding the teachings of John Calvin and Jacob Arminius. Those who believe in the teachings of these men at least have the sense to know that such an operation, whether they connect it with water baptism or not, would necessarily involve a miraculous working of the Spirit upon the human heart. This seems to be something that Mac just cannot grasp. There are also many neo-Calvinists and Arminians who, like Mac, believe and teach that **in water baptism** there is a direct operation of the Spirit in which the heart of the alien sinner is immediately cleansed and regenerated. Many of these folks are particularly of the Wesleyan/Arminian branch of Protestant denominationalism, which includes many Anglicans (Episcopalians), Methodists, Holiness, Pentecostals, and Charismatics, including those belonging to the Third Wave Movement. One would think that Mac would be aware of this fact. At the very least, his cohorts in Cookeville’s Tennessee Bible College ought to be. If not, then why not? Do they not have any one capable of teaching classes in the area of Systematic Theology? (I have observed a woeful dearth in reason-

ing from their previous president on the subject of providence. Maybe this dearth has become endemic to their entire academic program.)

But Mac’s current view accords with this false doctrinal system. The only difference is that the denominational commentators and scholars who teach it would laugh at Mac’s contention that the operation envisioned is non-miraculous. They know what **their** system implies! Mac is deceiving himself, if he earnestly believes that his view does not implicitly entail the teaching of a miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit on the alien sinner’s heart. His youngest son, Todd, is now partnering with those who believe in present-day miracles, including some claiming to possess apostolic authority. I wonder if Todd now believes that the operation he thinks occurred when he was converted was miraculous in nature? Some within his current fellowship most certainly do!

The Underlying Premise to Mac’s Theory

The underlying premise of Mac’s new present-day Spirit baptism theory that he does not openly address is the affinity of his view of the sinner with that of Augustine. Mac is more affected by his teaching, than he may even know. The connection is hinted at in Mac’s statement:

As a man’s body is lowered in the water, when it is submerged in the water, the Holy Spirit submerges that man’s human spirit within himself to change his nature (*Holy Spirit* 301).

Mac is now implying that man has a “sinful nature.” Shades of Calvin, Luther, and Augustine!

If man’s literal nature has been so marred or corrupted as to demand this direct operation, then how so? By sin? If by sin, when? Is it totally

or only partially corrupted? How far is Mac willing to go with his doctrine? The underlying assumption involved in Mac’s theory is a view of man that closely resembles the notions of hereditary total depravity affirmed by Augustine and codified by John Calvin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, most commonly summarized as the “T” in forming the acrostic T-U-L-I-P of Calvinism.

To be certain, Mac does not yet accept—or, at least up until the present has not accepted—the doctrine of hereditary total depravity (or at least, the hereditary part), most commonly expressed by Augustine as the state caused by Original Sin, but he is sliding toward it at an alarming pace.

Conclusion

We shall see if in his response to my claim (assuming that such will be forthcoming), whether this will continue to hold true or whether he will resort to the hackneyed quibbles of Missionary Baptist preachers like Ben Bogard and D. N. Jackson to try to bolster his doctrine. Mac has asserted that Bogard actually taught the truth on some matters over that of N. B. Hardeman. It would be interesting for Mac to enlighten us a bit more in this regard.

Surely, one would have hoped that no brother in Christ, especially one professing to be a preacher of the precious Gospel of Christ, would believe that man’s innate nature as an alien sinner is so tainted with some literal, ethereal filth that it required a direct and immediate scrubbing by the Spirit to clean it up! But, alas, that absurdity is an essential to Mac Deaver’s new view on Spirit baptism. He has premised that doctrine upon it. We shall address this a bit more in our next installment.

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How to Recognize a Liberal Congregation

Tim Cozad

There are numerous self-help books on the market today, everything from how to cook, how to restore an automobile, how to repair an appliance, to even how to build your own house. Likewise, travel books give advice to the traveler in what hotel they recommend to stay in, what restaurants to eat in and what site one should see to make their traveling experience more enjoyable. Well, what about material to help brethren when they are traveling or on business to recognize a liberal congregation. It has always been wise for faithful brethren to plan ahead before traveling to locate a faithful congregation, but it is not always possible to know in advance what congregations are remaining faithful and which ones have fallen away. Never has this been more true than in the present digression away from God's Word, especially considering how many have turned from the old paths to fellowship a known false teacher, Dave Miler, and those who continue to support and fellowship him. In the process they have completely disregarded the numerous warnings dealing with false teachers as in 2 John 9-11 where 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.

It is a sad state of affairs that the majority of churches of Christ are no longer faithful to the Lord. In most of these congregations they

have turned liberal in one area or another. The simple definition of a liberal congregation is one that has loosened God's Word where God has not loosened it. What God has bound in heaven, we here on earth have no authority to loosen (Mat. 16:19). A good example of liberalism taking place would be the addition of mechanical instruments of music in the worship services, women taking a lead in the worship, fellowshiping false teachers, and a general attitude of contempt toward the authority of the Scriptures. With that being said, how can one recognize a liberal congregation?

The list is actually rather long and the more you talk to faithful brethren the list grows even longer. So, without being able to exhaust this list we will name just a few. When one walks into the church building a congregation usually has tracts or pamphlets that speak of the faithfulness of that congregation. A tract that teaches error or a tract written by a false teacher speaks volumes, because that congregation is actually supporting the one who wrote the tract that is contrary to the Word (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). The problem today is that so many tracts are written by men who once were faithful, but are no longer. However, they can and should be replaced by tracts written by faithful brethren, even if they have to write them themselves.

Along with tracts, there are bulletins and periodicals written by brethren around the country. Many of these have and continue to be very liberal. *The Christian Chronicle*, *Firm Foundation*, *Herald of Truth*, *Gospel Advocate*, and newer ones

like *House to House Heart to Heart*, and *The Gospel Journal* are just a few examples of papers that are liberal in one area or another. Although some may teach some of the truth, some of the time, they do not stand for it by fellowshiping those who are no longer in fellowship with God, i.e., Dave Miller and other false teachers. Paul wrote:

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:17-18).

When a congregation displays bulletins, periodicals, or any brotherhood paper that is written by a false teacher or a liberal congregation, they are lending their support to that work, knowingly or not. They are also advertising to the brethren of that congregation and any visitor that this paper is sound, when it is not. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil" (Isa. 5:20).

The works that a congregation is involved many times will determine whether or not a congregation is liberal or not. If a congregation has a web site, it frequently will include those works or missions it supports. Along with the old list of liberal brethren and their works, there is a new list which includes previously faithful works, as in Apologetics Press, Gospel Broadcasting Network, Polishing the Pulpit, Lad to Leaders and Leaderettes, Florida School of Preaching, Tri-Cities School of Preaching, Memphis School of Preaching, and Southwest School of

Biblical Studies to name just a few. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Eph. 5:11). There's not a whole lot of reproving going on in many a church. Also, the Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Fund is an organization that is unscriptural for it does the work of the local congregation in the area of benevolence. A church that continues to support such works is in fellowship with them, whether knowingly or unknowingly, and ignorance is not a good Christian trait. Remember the words of Hosea: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6).

With so many perverted versions of the Bible prevalent in our time and so many liberal congregations using them, this is another area that tells the tale on many churches. The King James and the American Standard (1901) are still very reliable versions a congregation can use to put in its pews for visitors to use. While the American Standard (Old and New Testaments) may be hard to find that is not the case with the King James. However, many liberal congregations love the New International Version or as a friend of mine would say, "the non-inspired version." Why would a congregation want to place a perversion of the Bible that is full of error for others to read? It is usually be-

cause they do not care and like Judah of old "love *to have it so*" (Jer. 5:31).

Worship is another way to recognize a liberal congregation. We know that "God *is a Spirit*: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Most congregations do not worship God with the right attitude or according to His instructions. The sermons have very little Bible teaching in them, sin is not preached on like it should and it is usually nothing more than some feel-good story to pamper the wicked and tickle their ears. Paul wrote, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

Bible classes may be even worse. One brother mentioned a Bible class teacher who taught from the *Readers Digest*. You simply cannot make this up! Many liberal congregations have Children's Church which is not authorized in the Scriptures, but that is why they are liberal. When you have no respect for the authority of the Scriptures or the pattern found within them, you are free to do whatever you want to do. The Bible tells us that the brethren met to worship God together and in one

place (1 Cor. 11:18, 21). Children learn how to worship God "in spirit and in truth" through sitting with their parents and learning from their example and instruction.

At times the size of the church building and surrounding facilities may be an indication that said congregation is liberal. A thousand-seat auditorium with a gymnasium may be a warning. Today, if a congregation is preaching and standing for the truth it simply will not have that many members. Most do not want to enter through the strait gate as Jesus stated:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

As mentioned at the beginning of this article these are only a few examples of how to recognize a liberal congregation. The prudent Christian will plan ahead to try and find a faithful congregation. Anymore that is like finding a needle in a haystack and may involve meeting in someone's home to worship God faithfully. There is another guidebook to follow by which we can recognize unfaithful brethren. It is the only one that counts and it is God's Holy Word.

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Mac Deaver and the Doctrine of Present-Day Holy Spirit Baptism

Daniel Denham

As we noted in our previous article on the current Mac Deaver error on present-day Holy Spirit baptism, Mac is affirming a view of man that is dangerously akin to that held by Calvinists and Arminians relative to the false doctrine of total depravity. As I observed, his doctrine depends upon the premise that the alien sinner's moral nature, in fact his very spirit, is so corrupted that a direct and immediate Holy Spirit upon human spirit is called for to effect the latter's cleansing. In other words, there is attached to the human spirit of the alien sinner some form of literal filth that requires direct and immediate (without medium) contact by the Holy Spirit to cleanse it.

Some will, without doubt, deny that such must be the case for Mac's new theory to be true. However, unless such is the case, then Mac has no justification for asserting that the cleansing **must** be direct. In denying this premise, he forfeits his assertion. I suspect that, at least at present, he will not do so.

The Problem of Cleansing

The sad fact of the matter is Mac **does** affirm in his book on the Holy

Spirit a view that in some fashion demands that the literal human spirit is substantially, essentially corrupted with some form of ethereal filth. This is the basis for his view of the necessity of Spirit upon spirit contact, as we have stated. Again, hear him:

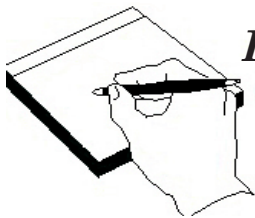
But before a man can be given the indwelling of the Spirit, he must be regenerated by the Spirit so that his nature is changed. And this is clearly when a man is baptized in water. As a man's body is lowered in the water, when it is submerged in the water, the Holy Spirit submerges that man's human spirit within himself to change his nature. And at the precise moment when God considers that man no longer sinner but now saint, at that precise instant, the regenerating submerging Spirit moves from the outside to the inside of that heart (Tit. 3:5; Gal. 4:6). Less than this we cannot write; more than this we do not know (*Holy Spirit*, 301).

Further, it is equally clear that he does not treat those passages dealing with man's condition as involving the use of simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or any such figure of speech emphatically depicting

the malignity of sin, but takes them as literal. He speaks of the alien sinner's spirit in terms implying that it is substantially (in the sense of its real, actual substance) and thus essentially (i.e., pertaining to its literal essence) corrupted, marred, filthy, et al. This is crucial to understanding the thinking of Mac Deaver on the subject, and yet, I suspect, he has actually devoted relatively little time working through the texts dealing with the constituency of the human spirit. He is more Baptist or Methodist in his theology regarding the nature of man than he realizes! As a result, it affects his view of the work of the Godhead.

It is possible that he came to this view of man in reverse order, by way of his speculations on the work of the Holy Spirit. If so, then he is following a path taken several centuries ago by John Calvin himself. Augustine came to his conclusions by way of the former process. He saw himself, especially due to his own immoral behavior, as being innately incapable of doing good and so concluded that God had to

Continued on Page 4



Notes From The Editor

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Change

Many, if not most, congregations of the Lord's church are changing. While all change is not bad, some change is. Congregations are becoming more denominational than anything else. Brethren have appointed men into the eldership who have so little knowledge of the Bible that they would not be able to fight their way out of a wet paper sack, as the old proverbial statement goes. Additionally members no longer have knowledge of God's Word. Preachers have stopped filling their sermons with Scripture and now simply tell nice moralizing stories. Let us consider some of the manifestations of the changes we are witnessing in the church.

Bible Itself

The attitudes of the Bible have changed through the years. At one point in time, brethren wanted to make sure there was "book, chapter, and verse" for everything we taught and practiced. This was simply another way of saying we wanted authority from God for everything as Paul taught, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). We are now seeing brethren (including elders and preachers) who do not have any clue as to Bible authority or how to ascertain that authority. Sadder still is that fact that many brethren simply do not

care whether we have Bible authority for our actions.

This attitude of the Bible is also seen in the fact that so many of those who profess Christianity have so little knowledge of the Bible. As a people we no longer have that love for God's Word that causes us to read and study it. We do not do our due diligence in learning the Scriptures. Paul's instructions to Timothy are just as valid for each one of us today: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). This lack of knowledge is destroying us as a people just as it destroyed Israel of old. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hos. 4:6). God's ways are just as strange to numerous Christians today as it was to them. "I have written to him the great things of my law, *but* they were counted as a strange thing" (8:12). Today far too many do not call for a searching to make sure everything is according to the Truth and far too many would not even know where to start such a search. They are not like the noble Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

The Church

More and more are treating the church as nothing more than a social institution. Members of the church seldom understand the true beauty, glory, uniqueness, purpose, significance, and exclusivity of the church today. They place the church

on the same level or maybe just a little bit above that of civic clubs, lodges, and man-made organizations. They look for the church to be an instrument of social change and charitable organization rather than a spiritual institution with a spiritual work. Because they do not realize the true nature of the church, congregations involve themselves in "church league" ball teams such as softball or volleyball, where they can get together with all the other denominations and enjoy sports with one another (the Lord's church is not a denomination but these congregations have become such).

When they reach a sufficient size and monetary income, they build their own "family life center" or what is in reality a gymnasium. Through these sports activities they are going to try and get others to change from their former denomination to a new one (while they call it *converting* someone, this is the only actual conversion that takes place).

Many think they are doing the Lord's work when they have special classes on parenting, how to deal with money, coping with life's changes, self-esteem, growing old together, ad nauseam. They seem to think Christ's religion is to "minister to the whole man."

These have never learned what Jesus told Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Jesus also said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

was lost”(Luke 19:10). He did not come to rescue the poor from their poverty. In fact, Jesus said, “For ye have the poor always with you” (Mat. 26:11). Nor did Jesus come to right some social injustice. The work of Christ and of His church is the salvation of souls from an eternal hell and into an eternal bliss with God in heaven. Inspiration wrote that we might “know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).

Spiritual Worship

In many local congregations, the type of worship God has authorized has been replaced with a please me entertainment style of *worship*. Some are trying to parrot the denominations in the entertainment they provide. They will have solos, quartets, and their praise teams to put on a show for the members. Their worship has become man-centered instead of God-centered. They have not come to pour out their hearts praise and worship to the Creator of all, but instead they are there to see what they get out of it. If they knew what genuine worship was all about and truly came to worship God, they would get something out of the worship. Tying in their man-centered *worship* with their lack of knowledge of God’s Word, we can understand why many congregations have no problem bring mechanical instruments of music into their worship—it provides more entertainment for them. They care not that Inspiration only authorizes singing (Eph. 5:19, et al.).

Nor do these congregations care what God says concerning our prayers. While God states to pray to the Father through the mediator-

ship of Jesus the Christ, they have no problem praying to Jesus or the Holy Spirit. The lack of spirituality is also seen in the failure of so many to preach Bible based lessons (some do not see much need for preaching much of anything as is evidenced by the shortness of their *sermons*—as the old saying goes, they preach sermonettes for Christianettes who smoke cigarettes). They think preaching is more after dinner speeches than plain Bible messages. Others opt for dramatic presentations, puppet shows, et al. instead of preaching the Word (2 Tim. 4:2). So many no longer have any concept of worshiping the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

Attacks on Eldership

Since the beginning of the Lord’s church here on earth, there have been attacks against the leadership of the church. Paul told the Ephesian elders:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears (Acts 20:28-31).

At a later date, the church had trouble with one who wanted to have the prominence. He wanted superiority: “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not” (3 John 9). (It seems that many now think that if one stands for the Truth and defends it, that they are simply troublemakers

and then accuse them of wanting to have the preeminence.)

At work during the first century (2 The. 2), even though not manifesting itself fully till centuries later, there was a falling away that took place within the leadership of the church. This falling away resulted in the Apostate Church’s hierarchy.

Likewise all types of attacks have been brought upon the leadership within the church. There have been the attacks against the authority of the elders. Waymon D. Miller and Reuel Lemmons lead the silly idea that elders do not have any authority except by example. Some ungodly preachers who want the preeminence touted the idea of evangelistic authority. Alvin Jennings came up with the idea of having a citywide eldership over all the congregations in a particular city. This was nothing more than Catholicism warmed over.

Next came another subtle attack against the authority of the eldership by Dave Miller when he preached the propriety of reevaluating and reaffirming those who are presently elders. Unless those present elders received 75% approval rating by those who voted (others have used differing percentage amounts), then that elder was removed from the eldership (this removal took place whether the elder was Biblically qualified or not). If an elder received 75% approval rating, then he was reaffirmed as being an elder of the congregation (whether or not he was Scripturally qualified or not). This makes the eldership subject to the whims of the congregation instead of God-ordained obligation of leading the congregation (Acts 20:28; 1 The. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17). This certainly plays into the hands of those who have no respect for the

authority elders have been given by God, but for those who respect God, His Word, and those whom He has delegated authority to in the local congregation, this teaching is an

abomination.

Change has and is taking place within local congregations. They have and more are becoming nothing more than a denomination. Let

us, as a people, get back to a proper respect of God's Word, which means that each individual person must do so. Let us study the Scriptures and properly apply them to our lives.

MH

Continued from Page 1

do all of it for him. The former idea he brought over from his days as a Gnostic Manichean. Calvin, who had a severe bent of mind (so much so that his classmates called him, "The Old Objecting Case"), reasoned that God had to control everything absolutely or He was not really sovereign. This meant that even sin had to be something God ordained in His grand scheme of things. If He ordained sin, then He made men to sin and so also made them morally and totally depraved. Augustine's theory of Original Sin suited this concept for Calvin. Arminius and others have modified versions of these ideas within the scope of their respective denominational traditions, but common to all of them is belief in the total depravity and thus utter inability of the alien sinner.

While Mac has not gone quite that far, at least at present, he has gone to the point that: (1) he affirms that the Christian must have the direct and immediate impulsion of Divine power in his human spirit to enable him to do things that he otherwise would not or could not do, and now, (2) he also affirms that the alien sinner must have a direct and immediate infusion or impartation of Divine power from the Holy Spirit—in addition to whatever is accomplished through the Word and sufficient to cleanse and regenerate him. In short, he affirms the need for a direct Spirit upon spirit cleansing for God to cleanse the lit-

eral human spirit of the literal (Dare we say "material"?) filth attending it.

What then specifically is Mac's understanding about the nature of forgiveness itself—where does it take place? He really does not tell us. But this is a key question at the heart of the issue. Mac must have this bizarre scenario of **literal** filth attending the **literal** human spirit of the alien sinner in order to justify the **literal** Holy Spirit **literally** contacting, **literally** exerting cleansing power, and **literally** washing the **literal** human spirit of the alien sinner clean of this **literal** grime on its **surface** (what about the inside of the cup?). If cleansing and forgiveness contemplate one in the same action, simply viewed from differing perspectives semantically, then he removes forgiveness from being ultimately and finally an act in the Divine mind **in response** to man's obedience to the Gospel to the specific operation of the literal Holy Spirit directly in literally sprucing up the literally nasty human spirit. This is what his view entails.

Thus, Mac writes on page 302:

If to receive the Holy Spirit as indwelling is based on the Holy Spirit's regenerating the human spirit so as to change its nature, and if at one's baptism in water baptism in Spirit also occurs, then every Christian has been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Several questions naturally arise here. Is Mac alluding to Ephesians 2:1-4? If so, is he aware of the proper force of *phusis* here? What does Mac himself mean by *nature*? Does

he mean the same thing that Paul meant in this text? The answer to these by Mac, I perceive, would be most enlightening.

Pondering Other Salient Matters

We also wonder why the cleansing is not done on the **inside** of the human spirit, where one would think such ethereal slime would be more prone to be gathered. Bob Berard, at least, did affirm that the Spirit "imparts spiritual life in the heart of the person being baptized." So, he implied some sort of reaching into the alien sinner's spirit by the Holy Spirit to infuse life into him. But this then raises the question of whether or not Bob was headed into the Calvinistic doctrine of "imputed righteousness," wherein *imputed* is implicitly misconstrued as infused instead of its force of "accounted." Those who believe Calvin's error hold that God transfers to or infuses within the heart of the alien sinner the personal righteousness of Jesus Christ. At any event, Bob implied some form of operation of the Spirit imparting "in" the human spirit of the alien sinner spiritual life.

Does Mac disagree with Bob's supposedly Divinely-given wisdom on this matter? It would be interesting to know that answer. After all, he has not as of yet—as far as we know—accepted the supposedly Divinely-given wisdom of his son, Todd, in joining up with the Emerging Church folks and other rank liberals. We also wonder if the

literal blood of Christ is supposed to then be *literally* applied in the process. When the Scriptures speak of being cleansed by the blood of Christ, do we not understand that to be spiritual in nature rather than literal? When we say that the blood is applied in the waters of baptism, do we expect our auditors to understand that *literally*?

Also concerning Bob Berard, he believed his doctrine so strenuously that he had himself baptized again, because he believed, on the basis of his exposition of Colossians 2:12-13, that one had to have faith in God's work through this direct operation of the Spirit on the alien sinner in baptism for one's baptism to be valid. Now, has Mac been re-baptized? What about all of the preachers, elders, and members in good standing at Pearl Street, Sheffield, Cookeville, and elsewhere who profess support for Mac's theory? Have they all been re-baptized with this new understanding as part of their belief system? What of Weylan Deaver, Malcolm Hill, Kerry Duke, David Hill, Dick Sztanyo, Glenn Jobe, et al.? What of the elders, preacher, and members, as well as the speakers, who were involved in the recent Holy Spirit lectureship in Tilton, NH? If not, then why not? If so, then why are they so desirous to fellowship all of us who steadfastly refuse to believe their falderal, even despite the fact we refuse to believe it? By its very nature it pertains to salvation and thus salvational issues. It cannot then be treated as a matter of opinion or indifference. In his book, Mac Deaver asserts that to have any future, the church must adopt his nonsensical theories (334, 338). That does not sound like someone who believes these are simply matters of opinion or indifference

regarding salvation and fellowship.

The Primary Essence of Mac's Spirit Baptism Doctrine

Brother Mac's new doctrine is really nothing more than what has been termed "Scrub-board Theology," which implies that somehow the Holy Spirit has to put a hammerlock on the human spirit of the alien sinner and personally scrub him up and down in His #2 washtub to clean him up from all of that ectoplasmic goo encasing his spirit. This is where he is on the subject of Spirit baptism. This is essential to his position. By reducing it to its essence we better see the absurdity and the logical fallacies attending it.

Let Mac or his defenders then indulge us just a bit and address the following true/false queries:

1. True or False: The language used to describe the human spirit of the alien sinner as "dirty," "filthy," "scarlet," "black," et al. is to be taken literally.

2. True or False: The language used to describe the human spirit of the alien sinner as "dirty," "filthy," "scarlet," "black," et al. is metaphorical and hence figurative in nature.

3. True or False: The constituent nature (its literal essence) of the human spirit of the alien sinner is corrupted and marred by sin.

4. True or False: The language used to describe the condition of the human spirit of the alien sinner is metaphorical and hence figurative in nature.

5. True or False: The alien sinner's literal human spirit has literal filth or slime attached to it necessitating direct contact by the Holy Spirit to cleanse it.

6. True or False: The alien sinner's human spirit is forgiven in

the mind of God when he obeys the Gospel.

7. True or False: Forgiveness of sin refers to the same thing as being cleansed of sins.

8. True or False: Some sort of ethereal filth attends the human spirit of the alien sinner until the Holy Spirit directly washes it away with an infusion of His power.

9. True or False: The alien sinner is inherently a sinner.

10. True or False: The alien sinner is a sinner by practice or habit.

11. True or False: One can be forgiven of his sins without being in the Kingdom.

12. True or False: One can be cleansed of his sins and yet not be regenerated.

Conclusion

We shall see what further inquiry may result from this latter point, if Mac or any of his supporters respond. But suffice it to say that Mac's new present-day Spirit baptism heresy has created a reworking on his part of the Bible teaching on the nature of man as well as the Godhead.

He has most certainly restructured his teaching on the plan of salvation and has added one more step to that plan, whether he admits it or not as we shall see. He also is teaching the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the alien sinner in addition to and distinct from His work through the Word of God. Yes, indeed, this is heresy, and despite our brother's professed bravado, he thus far has been unwilling to deal with it!

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The Forest Hill Two-Step

Jess Whitlock

The “two-step” refers to a form of dancing, where you take a step, slide, and take another step. December 1, 2009 the *Forest Hill News*, demonstrated the Tennessee “two-step.” On page 1, Barry Grider marked brethren David Brown and Dub McClish for sowing discord and spreading lies (yet, not one lie could be exposed). On page 4, the “two-step” was completed when the Forest Hill elders marked David Brown and Dub McClish for sowing discord and spreading lies (again, not one lie could be identified—not the first one)!

Fellowship has been defined as “association, joint participation, partnership, sharing, et al.” The past several years have seen some strange views pertaining to New Testament fellowship. Some years ago, we were hearing some strange things about upper case “F” fellowship versus lower case “f” fellowship. Now, we are in the twenty-first century, and we are dealing with “finite case f” fellowship! This fallacious reasoning is seen among Christians, who at one time knew the Lord’s teaching on fellowship and practiced fellowship according to the teaching of our Lord. Nowadays, they have no problem in practicing open fellowship towards false teachers and false doctrines. This strange and weird fellowship has made for some strange bed (dance) partners! We know that we are not to fellowship Satan (1 Cor. 10:20), we know that we must not fellowship the works of darkness (Eph. 5:11), and we realize that we must not fellowship error (2 John 9-11). Yet, many Christians are extending open fellowship to known false teachers and their exposed false doctrines!

Jude 13 describes the end reward of false teachers: “to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.”

Apparently, many are confused as to whom the Christian can extend fellowship, and those from whom the Christian **must not** and **dare not** give fellowship. We cannot fellowship those who are **not** in fellowship with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to have fellowship with any who are not in fellowship with God! If one is not in fellowship with God, then the child of God’s cannot and must not be in fellowship with that worker of iniquity. Dave Miller is a false teacher, who adamantly refuses to repent of his teaching and practicing of error! If any wishes to challenge that this is a “lie,” I propose that we put this “lie” in the form of a proposition and have a public debate!

How can we know when and where that line of fellowship is to be drawn? Are you listening? The inspired Psalmist penned, “I *am* a companion of all *them* that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts.” (Psa. 119:63). If one fears God and keeps His commands, then we as Christians will have a common bond for fellowship. We **must** oppose, expose, try the spirits, do not bid them God speed, reprove, and rebuke in concern for the souls of men (Eph. 5:11; 1 Tim. 5:1; 2 Tim. 4:2; Psa. 119:104; 1 John 4:1; and 2 John 9-11).

The Forest Hill “two-step” has traveled from Tennessee to Texas. When false teachers in Texas saw how those who were upholding false doctrine and false teachers worked the “two-step,” (i.e., diverted attention away from known false teachers

by crying out, “Withdraw fellowship from faithful brethren”), then false teachers in Texas reasoned, “Well, that ‘two-step’ might work here also. Let us not repent of our false doctrines. We will simply withdraw fellowship from any of the faithful that challenge our false teaching!”

Joshua and Israel Rodriquez are false teachers associated with the Adam’s Street Church of Christ in Beeville, Texas. Some of the numerous false doctrines espoused in public by these men include: (1) the flood waters of Noah’s day were just a local flood and did not inundate the entire earth, (2) if you sing a song of praise to Jesus and use first person, that song is transformed into a prayer and thus cannot be sung, and (3) when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea there was no actual miracle involved. The Israelites found a shallow place and simply forded across. The Rodriquez brethren realized they had no Scriptural authority for their heresy, so they had to figure out another plan to protect their myriad of false doctrines!

In 2009, the *Forest Hill News* showed them another way, the Forest Hill “two-step.” The Rodriquez brethren wasted no time. In 2010,

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letters were passed out to the few remaining members of the Adam's Street congregation. The Rodriguez brethren have forbidden those who still support their false doctrines from having fellowship with any faithful Christians in that community. What these false teachers do not realize is

that faithful Christians are to have no fellowship with the works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). It is their teaching of error that is a "work of darkness." One who teaches that which is contrary to God's Word, or anyone who extends fellowship to a person that is teaching contrary to God's

Word, is most assuredly a "work of darkness." It could be a school of preaching, it might be a radio conglomeration, it could be a whole congregation, or it might be one false teacher. The Bible declares all of these as a **work of darkness!**

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"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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Godliness

Dub McClish

Near the end of Peter's inspired list of traits that characterize those who are partakers of the divine nature and who have escaped a corrupt world, is "godliness" (2 Pet. 1:6). We will first do well to define the term and then see some of its practical implications.

Godliess translates the Greek word meaning to be devout or pious, or revere or worship God, to be "characterized by a God-ward attitude, (one who) does that which is well pleasing to him" (Vine 162). Thayer says this term means "reverence, respect; in the Bible everywhere piety towards God, godliness" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* 262). When Luke describes the attributes of Cornelius, he uses a form of this same word, translated "devout" (Acts 10:2). Contrary to popular belief, *godliness* does not mean "godlikeness" or behaving like God. Rather, it refers to the respect, reverence, and even fear that one has for God which results in a pious life; a life devoted to serving God in every possible way.

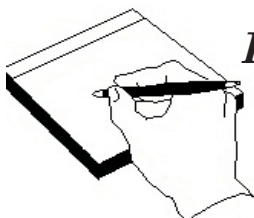
The world apart from God is and always has been steeped in ungodliness (Rom. 5:6). Secular man has no respect or reverence for God and His righteous will. If he did, man would not remain impious, irreverent, and

ungodly. The Christian is taught by the Gospel to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to replace all such impiety with sober, righteous, and godly behavior (Tit. 2:12). It should come as no surprise that Peter would include "godliness" in his inspired list of righteous traits. "Godliness" is a fundamental trait of the Christian personality having to do with the attitude and posture of the heart. True, one can appear to be godly by an outward show of piety or reverence; such was the case with the hypocrites of Jesus' day who practiced their religion to be seen of men (Mat. 6:1-18). However, such pretense is correctly labeled as but a "form of godliness" (2 Tim. 3:5). The need for godliness in our time may be illustrated in numerous ways. Belief in God as man's Creator and Sustainer has largely been cast off in favor of the wild conjectures of self-proclaimed experts. Understandably, men are not going to revere a God in whom they do not believe! In those areas of the world where the Bible was once accepted as the inspired Word of God, men have largely given up this conviction. The Bible has become a mere plaything for men to paraphrase, change, edit, and condense at their pleasure. Such

irreverence for the Word of God is a direct slap of the Creator's face (John 12:48). Man's impiety is also seen in his attitude toward sacred names. Tragically, the most common use of God's name nowadays is a vain use. It has become little more than a word to curse and swear by on the part of foul-mouthed men and women who seek to fortify their foolish and unclean pratings.

Our world has gone pleasure mad in ungodliness. Modern man, listening to the infidels who have cut men loose from God have decided the Humanistic world-view is correct "There is no higher being than man and no higher purpose than his own pleasure." Therefore, he reasons, whatever brings pleasure is good and whatever causes pain, discomfort, or inconvenience is bad. This ungodly attitude has led to outright rebellion against God's moral law. It is seen in the "sexual revolution" where sexual intimacy has been moved from the sacredness of the marriage bed to the area of unrestricted recreation. Not only is this true of sexual immorality, but dishonesty, drunkenness, indecency, and every form of crime, are glorified and laughed at by many.

Continued on Page 4



Notes From The Editor

Michael
Hatcher

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Catholicism?

Maybe the Catholics had it about right to begin with, but they were just ahead of their time and did not take it far enough. The Catholics set up an organization and structure within that organization resulting in a worldwide hierarchal setup. Ultimately, the pope is the head of their organization. Of course, this was the great apostasy from the Lord's church as built by Jesus the Christ. With the invention of the Internet and with the computer technology we now possess, the Catholics should have gotten some advice from some of our brethren and they would not have any problems with their hierarchal system.

Several years back the Boston movement (an offshoot of the Crossroads movement) implemented "house churches" that were all under the Boston Church elders. (Many congregations not associated with the Boston movement picked up this "house church" arrangement and began using it to break into smaller groups. These used this arrangement generally on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights but would all meet together on Sunday mornings.) They then expanded this concept to distant congregations. Those congregations, even though in different states and sometimes different countries were supposedly a part of the Boston Church.

There are two new ideas that are

tied together that some brethren are now implementing: (1) the Internet church concept and (2) tied closely with that is Internet membership. With the Internet church concept, there is the *mother* church with *satellite* churches set up in different locals. There would be no limit (at least with some) to either the number of *satellite* churches or their distance from the *mother* church. However, if you can have one *satellite* church, why can you not have thousands of them, or ten thousand?

Better yet, let us go the entire Catholic route and have one *mother* church and every other church a *satellite* church. This would take care of any preacher shortage that might take place, as there would only be the need for one preacher along with one song leader. The service would be piped into every *satellite* church all over the world. Since all the money would be sent back to the *mother* church, they would have all the money they needed to hire the very best public speaker available. His knowledge of God's Word would be unimportant because they would also have the money to hire speechwriters for him. Certainly the *satellite* churches would have no need of elders because the *mother* church and her elders would take care of all the decisions to be made.

Of course, there might be some caveats that would need to be overcome. It would be a very real possibility for one *satellite* church to be worshiping on a different day than what the *mother* church would be worshiping. Plus there might be the possibility of tape delaying the service for those whose time would be the middle of the night when the *mother* church is having its services. While the *mother* church might speak one language, they would

simply need translators for all *satellite* churches that did not speak the language of the *mother* church.

By setting this up we can out Catholic the Catholics. While you might think this is ludicrous, there is already a congregation in Texas that is setting up a *satellite* church and going to use the Internet to pipe in the services to their *satellite* location (about 25 miles away). If they can do it in one location, they can do it all over the world.

Internet membership is closely related to the Internet church concept. This is where someone in one location *places membership* with a congregation in another location. The desire to implement this practice is easily seen. Someone moves into an area where there are no sound congregations might seek out this type of arrangement. What we are experiencing more and more all the time is that once-sound congregations are leaving the moorings of God's Word resulting in faithful brethren having to leave those congregations for their spiritual well being. Faithful members find the isolation imposed upon them daunting, so they seek out fellowship and membership over the Internet. With the advance in technology, it is easy for a congregation to broadcast their services over the Internet. (Recently one of my sons moved to Brussels where I personally know of no congregation so I encouraged him to log onto the Spring Church of Christ

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Michael Hatcher, Editor

website and worship with them since they broadcast their whole service.) We are thankful for this capability for it is a help to many brethren and possibly gives us the opportunity to reach those who are not Christians.

However, *placing membership* is a whole other type of situation than simply signing on and worshipping with a congregation broadcasting their services. First, we need to realize that one can worship by himself if need be. Then they need to be encouraged to practice the great commission in preaching the Gospel to others. Build a faithful congregation where you are!

Paul told the Ephesian elders: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Elders are to "take heed" to the flock, oversee them, and feed them. Ask a shepherd if he could shepherd a flock of sheep if they were scattered over hundreds or thousands of miles. He would look at you as if you had lost your mind. In his wonderful exhortation to elders, Peter wrote: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5:2-3). Notice the phrase about their obligation to feed the flock; the flock was "among you." When a congregation decides to have Internet *membership*, those members might be scattered over the entire world. How, in all that is reasonable, can it be said that the members are "among you" if they are scattered over different states or even the world? They are to be

examples to the flock. Again, how is one to be an example to the flock of God among them when they oversee the flock over an Internet connection? The idea is ludicrous.

Elders have been given the responsibility to watch for the souls of its flock. Inspiration says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). It is impossible for elders to fulfill their responsibility regarding this matter when someone is simply a member over the Internet. There is no way the elders can truly know those members. Yet, the elders will stand before God and give an account of that person's soul—his spiritual well being. Likewise, members are specifically told to know the elders: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves" (1 The. 5:12-13). How can they know the elders, those men who are watching for their souls, when they might see them online every few weeks as they take a public role in the worship service?

Members need to be involved with the work of the congregation. How can someone who is an Internet member living in another area be involved in the work of the church? He is not going to be able to visit the sick, encourage the weak, and other aspects that are involved in the local congregation.

Years ago brethren would condemn those who would skip the worship services to go fishing, hunting, or other activities. With

Internet membership and Internet church, one can go do whatever he so desires and simply sign into the service while he is busy elsewhere. The hunter could be in the deerstand while signed onto the service with his smartphone or the fisherman on the lake continues fishing while engaging in the *worship* on his smartphone. Who knows, the hunter might even get them to pause so he can take the big shot then continue on with the services. Some would say this is ludicrous, and they would be right. However, this is what can take place with this type of arrangement.

Additionally, taken to its logical conclusion, there would never need to be another gathering of Christians. We can totally eliminate the coming together into one place as Christians to worship God. All that is needed is an Internet connection (and for those who do not have a high speed Internet connection, we can always hook you up by telephone).

Brethren, while some of these things seem ludicrous, yet the beginning points are already taking place. The Bible says, "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.... When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper" (1 Cor. 11:18, 20). Notice there is to be a coming together in the church and a coming "together into one place." Both the Internet church and Internet membership destroys a coming together into one place. Years ago we rightly condemned those who practiced a divided assembly. Brethren, this makes the divided assembly look trifling in comparison.

MH

Continued from Page 1

Even those who claim to be religions have no concern for the church of the Lord, its doctrine, worship, and practice. Modern man has almost totally cast aside any reverence for God and His Word in utter ungodliness.

Lamentably, godliness does not always describe the behavior of the Lord's people. The reckless, profane, and irreverent attitude of the world has seeped over into the church. In some congregations there is an unspoken (sometimes not unspoken) rule that certain subjects are not to be the object of preaching. In one church it may be divorce and remarriage; in another, church discipline; in yet another, drinking, dancing, and

immodest apparel, etc. Such prohibitions are a sure sign of the irreverence of ungodliness. Many brethren have a false view of religion that allows them to live a shameful life Monday through Saturday, as long as they "dress up and go to church" on Sunday. The craze that would make almost a theatrical production of our worship assemblies and that demands constant change and variety over the simple practices of scriptural worship is a sign of gross impiety. The determination to attract numbers of people by whatever means necessary is an indication of disrespect to the crucified Christ and all of those who have faithfully proclaimed Him across the centuries (John 12:32;

1 Cor 2:2). By the way some sisters dress (or undress) during the warm seasons they advertise their ungodliness, or their disregard for God's will.

Let it be emphasized once more that godliness is respect and reverence toward God which cannot be measured except by respect for His Word. It is a life-principle for the Christian that will cause him ever to seek the Father's good pleasure. Godliness will not allow one knowingly to speak, act, or even think irreverently or impiously. It is no small matter that we constantly cultivate godliness because the very wrath of God is already revealed against all ungodliness, whether in saint or sinner (Rom. 1:18).

908 Imperial Dr; Denton, TX 76201

Work in the Philippines

Danny Douglas

On October 4, 2010, my wife and I, along with our two children, were privileged to travel to the Philippines by the providence of our gracious God. This trip enabled us to strengthen the churches there, and to visit loved ones. The first week of our stay centered in Alaminos City (a city of about 80,000), in the province of Pangasinan, some five hours travel time north of Manila, and about two miles from the Pacific Ocean and not far from the Lingayen Gulf, the setting of heavy fighting during War World II. Travel around a typical provincial city involves getting in the car of a "tricycle," which is a motorcycle with a covered side-car.

Work in Alaminos

While there we stayed in the home of Laarni's parents. We had the opportunity to make contact with the Lord's church in the area

and presented KJV Bibles and teaching materials to them. On the Lord's Day of October 10, I had the privilege of proclaiming God's Word at the Paraiso Church of Christ. The members were kind and friendly toward us, and expressed appreciation for the messages presented: *Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ* and *The Unchanging Christ*.

As usual, the Philippines was unusually hot for those not used to it. It is hot year round, but with some cooler days during the rainy season. A typical day in this tropical climate means, at least to this writer, early to bed, and arising around 5:00 a.m. to the sound of roosters crowing. Philippine time is twelve hours ahead of Central Standard Time, thus there are sleep adjustments to be made. The American dollar is equal to a little over 43 Philippine pesos, according to the current exchange rate, which helps with finances. More-

over, English is pretty much the universal language throughout the Philippine archipelago of some 7,700 islands, located in the southeast Pacific. Two weeks later, the day before our departure for home, a super typhoon hit, and specifically it hit very hard in Pangasinan and Ilocus Sur, where we labored. Thanks be to God, we were able to return home in a safe and timely manner.

Work in Galimuyod and the Candon City Area

In the second week, our work was concentrated farther north in the Candon City area (Ilocus Sur province). The Galimuyod Church of Christ meets in the community of Galimuyod on the outskirts of Candon. This is a faithful congregation of the Lord's people. Brother Samuel Bagsangi, Sr., and brother Reynaldo (Rey), are the faithful preachers of this congregation. Brother Samuel

is to be highly commended for his stand in the truth, and for the effort that he put forth to organize these lectures, along with brother Rey and other sound brethren.

After arriving there, I had the opportunity to teach Wednesday night Bible class, and on the following day, October 13, we began the: **1st Illocus Bible Lectures & Forum**, with the Theme: *Walking in the Light of God: A Study of Scriptural Fellowship*. This lectureship went from Thursday through Sunday. In addition to the lectures, we were able to present several teaching materials and handouts on various topics, and lectureship books from the **Spring Contending For the Faith Lectures** and the **Bellview Lectures**. The brethren were very appreciative of this.

Several faithful brothers and sisters in Christ were present, along with a number of small children and infants. Six gospel preachers attended the lectures: Brethren Samuel Bagsangi, Sr., Francisco, Reynaldo, Daniel, Samuel, Jr. ("JunJun"), and Paul, representing the churches of Christ at Galimuyod, Pagudpud, Burgos, and Legleg. Meeting with the Lord's people at Galimuyod reminded me of New Testament times, when the church met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla (cf. Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19). We met in the house of brother Dionysius Estrero and his good family. Outstanding and enjoyable was the Christian hospitality and food provided by the good sisters in Christ, and the uplifting fellowship that we enjoyed was like unto that as recorded by Luke:

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and hav-

ing favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:46-47).

The Topics

The singing, praying, and study of God's Word during these lectures, and the worship on the Lord's Day, was very encouraging and edifying for all involved. Moreover, the question and answer forums, involving discussion on various Bible questions, proved to be informative and beneficial. No doubt, the brethren were strengthened in their resolve to stand for God's Truth and to refuse compromise, in regard to unity and fellowship (unlike many brethren in America and also the Philippines), and in other areas. These brethren in northern Luzon are determined to withstand liberal influences, as well as those who are promoting anti-ism in their country.

These brethren understand the need to oppose the false teaching of Dave Miller, namely: the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders, and the marriage intent doctrine. They also see the importance of withstanding the new "unity in diversity" movement, as promoted by certain schools, such as the Memphis School of Preaching and their defenders, whose influence is felt in the Philippines, and other brethren, who once were highly regarded as sound in the faith.

Revolving around the theme of: *Walking in the Light of God* (1 John 1:5-7), the topics were: "Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9); "The Unity of the Spirit" (Eph. 4:3); "What Scriptural Fellowship Is and Is Not"; "Fellowship & Bidding God Speed"; "Fellowship & Eating a Common Meal"; "Fellowship & Liberalism"; "Fellowship & Anti-ism"; "Can We Have A Company

Without Fellowship?"; "Have No Fellowship With The Unfruitful Works of Darkness"; and "Fellowship & Unity." There were a total of fourteen lectures in all, and six question and answer forums.

Our studies included: the nature and meaning of Scriptural fellowship and the kind of unity which Jesus and the apostles taught (John 17; Eph. 4:1-6), in contrast to false unity and forbidden fellowship; the importance of abiding in the doctrine of Christ and thus, having a right relationship with the Father and the Son (2 John 9); the need to refuse fellowship with darkness and those in error (2 John 9-11; Eph. 5:11; Rom. 16:17-18); the fact that those who are supporting false teachers and upholding those who disregard 2 John, verses nine through eleven, are in error; the fact that fellowship with God is the basis of all Scriptural fellowship and that those who are in fellowship and unity with God may extend fellowship only to others who are in fellowship and unity with God (1 John 1:5-7; 2 John 9-11); and the symptoms and dangers of liberalism (1 Kin. 12:28-31; Jude 4, 8) and anti-ism (Acts 15:1, 5, 24; Gal. 1:6-9; 2:3-5). Indeed, these brethren appreciated the fact that only by walking in fellowship with God, in obedience to His will and abiding in the doctrine of Christ, may we truly walk in the light with God (1 John 1:5-7; 2:3; 5:3; 2 John 9; John 8:31-32).

The "Mountaintop" of Truth

Tirad Pass, a large and beautiful mountain, and one of historical significance in the Philippines, can be easily seen from Galimuyod. Although it did not seem very far away, around six hours travel distance is required to reach there. This

physical figure is a spiritual reminder that the mountaintop of truth is reachable but that great effort must be made to reach it. Nevertheless, it is the will of God for: "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). The **1st Ilocos Bible Lectures and Forum** represents efforts in this direction, and the brethren involved therein are to be distinguished for their determination to stand on the "mountaintop" of truth, regardless of the cost. God demands that His children put truth above friendship and earthly comfort.

The truth is important because it is the Word of God (cf. John 17:17). Jesus taught that only those who hearken to His voice (Word) are of the truth: "every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18:37b). He also stated: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Paul declared: "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Cor. 13:8). John wrote to the elect lady and her children: "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father" (2 John 4). The wise man counseled: "Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding" (Pro. 23:23). "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4). John taught that the truth "dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever" (2 John 2).

Lessons Seen

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mat. 5:6). The desire to grow in Christ and learn of His will was clearly seen. For example, many present, including gospel preachers, traveled for hours and were present from around 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day. For example, brother Francisco Moreno, a gospel preacher with the Lord's church in Pagudpud and also a farmer, was to leave Candon City at 10 p.m. on Saturday night and then travel some 7 hours to reach his destination by bus and then preach on the Lord's day. Brother Daniel Basangi left on Sunday for a 5-7 hour trip across the mountains in order to preach at Legleg on the Lord's Day.

These brethren are not only to be commended for their sacrifice of time and effort, but for their stand for the truth. Such brethren in the Philippines, like those in America who refuse to compromise, have forgone financial support and favor among many brethren, by refusing to be hirelings. They will have to undergo personal sacrifice in order to stand for the truth on God's law of fellowship. However, the Lord will richly reward those who put Him first, as He has promised: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mat. 6:33).

Indeed, we should be willing to undergo hardship and depravity in

order to do the right. The words of Paul to Timothy ring ever true:

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:1-3).

These godly brethren are committed to being strong in the Lord and enduring hardness as good soldiers of Christ. They are also involved in training others to declare the truth of the Gospel!

Let us refuse to bid God speed to those who have departed from the doctrine of Christ, but by all means let us uphold those who are abiding in His doctrine (cf. 2 John 9-11). Therefore, let sound brethren pray for them, and if you are interested in supporting the work of Christ in the Philippines, please contact: Danny Douglas, preacherdd@sbcglobal.net; (931) 215-7801.

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36th Annual Bellview Lectureship

June 11-15, 2011

Moral Issues We Face

True Value

Michael Hatcher

A man was walking across a field, and he accidentally finds a treasure that had been hidden there. Realizing the value of it, he covers the treasure up, immediately sells all that he possesses, and buys the field. This valuable treasure was now his. What joy the man possessed at the obtaining of this great treasure. Jesus uses this parable to show the values of the kingdom of heaven (Mat. 13:44)—His spiritual kingdom.

When people come across the Lord's spiritual kingdom today, how do they react? Some fail to see the value of the kingdom. Others, while recognizing the value of it, want to change and alter the treasure to make it something it was never intended. There are many who recognize its value, but the cares of this world and/or the pleasures of sin are more important to them, so they allow it to slip through their grasp.

There are some who recognize the value of it, and do what is necessary to buy it, but then allow pride, popularity, prestige, money, and other things to get in the way of that spiritual kingdom. Brethren, the kingdom of God is far too valuable to allow anything to cause us to get in the way of obtaining and retaining it. Let us continue to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mat. 6:33).

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