

Defender

“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXXVI

2007



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Defender



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Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

E-mail: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Honor to Whom Honor Is Due

Elders: Bellview Church of Christ

Brother Bill and sister Iris Gallaher moved to Pensacola, Florida, and began to attend the Bellview Church of Christ in 1955. In December 1965 brother Bill Gallaher was one of the first two men to be appointed to the eldership of the Bellview Church of Christ. Brother Gallaher served from 1965 to 1973 when he resigned. Five years later he was reappointed and has served continuously from 1978 to December 2006.

It was with sad hearts that on December 24, 2006, we heard brother Bill Gallaher announce that he was resigning from the Bellview eldership effective December 31, 2006. He said that there were a number of reasons why he considered it necessary for him to do so. He is now legally blind and can no longer read or drive a car. Other physical problems, including a hearing loss, also hinder his effectiveness to serve as an elder.

In Romans 13:7 the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." In the above verse, one of the things we are admonished to do is to give honor to whom honor is due. Surely



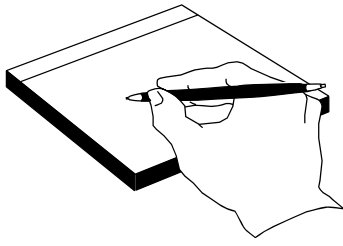
faithfully dedicated service as an elder of the Lord's church is worthy of the honor to which Paul referred in the above verse. Accordingly, at this time, the Bellview Church of Christ honors brother Bill Gallaher for his faithful service of 37 years as an elder of the church. We also want to honor sister Iris Gallaher for her faithful service as brother Bill's helpmeet. Without her, brother Bill could not have qualified to be an elder, or to remain as an elder throughout his

years of service.

From 1965 to the present, brother Gallaher and his fellow elders have fought against worldliness in its various forms both within and without the church. Specific brotherhood problems such as "Anti-ism" and "Liberalism" have at times had their divisive effect upon the congregation. In all of these, brother Gallaher and his fellow elders stood firm and united in accordance with the Scriptures to protect the souls of the congregation.

We are happy to honor brother Bill and sister Iris Gallaher for their godly lives and great influence for good as they have labored in the cause of Christ with the saints at Bellview throughout the years.

Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
mhatcher@gmail.com

Middle-Of-The-Road

It seems as if everyone wants to be in the middle. It seems extremism on either side of the middle is taboo in our society. No one wants to be identified with the radical right or the liberal left. Everyone wants to be in the middle. We even have a cliché which states: "The truth is between two extremes." Even though oft stated, it is not always true. However, what liberals have successfully accomplished through the years is to move what is considered to be the middle. What used to be considered middle-of-the-road is now considered the radical right. We have seen this shift in the social, political, moral realms, and it is being seen in the spiritual realm also.

Allow me to illustrate what takes place. The Gateway Church of Christ in Pensacola has been a liberal congregation for many years. The Bellview congregation withdrew fellowship from them back in the 1970s. Their liberalism continued to grow. A few years ago there were some in the Gateway congregation that wanted to be even farther left than some of the others were willing to go leading to a split within that congregation. If I may use a scale of 1 to 20 with 10 being middle-of-the-road and 20 being the rankest liberal. To illustrate what I mean, say that the Gateway congregation prior to the split ranked around 17. Those who left and formed the First City Church would be around a 19 and the Gateway church now ranks about a 15. The Gateway church has stated that they are conservative while the ones who left are liberal. They moved the middle-of-the-road from a 10 to a 16 or above (making them conservative, at least in their own mind). This provides a good example of what is taking place.

We have seen this in the moral area. Consider the speech we hear today. What is accepted by many *Christians* today would have been censured by the world a few years ago. What took place? At one time cuss

words and filthy language would not be allowed in movies and television. However, things slowly changed with the inclusion of one word in *Gone With The Wind*. This slowly opened the floodgates for moving the "middle-of-the-road" from where it was to a totally different place so today just about anything is accepted—not only in movies and television, but also in society as a whole. Another area which vividly displays the change in what is the "middle" would be the hemlines of ladies dresses. At one time the *middle* for women's dresses would be at the ankles. Slowly through the years the "middle-of-the-road" for the hemline of dresses and skirts slowly went to the lower calf, then the middle of the calf, and on up to where some had practically no hemline at all and show everything there is to see so nothing is left to the imagination. The liberals over time slowly moved what was the middle to a different place (a more liberal and now often immodest place).

We are seeing this in the beautiful bride of Christ. Actions which were once opposed because they are unscriptural are now being accepted by brethren in general and those who still stand where we once stood are labeled as being radicals. However, we are standing right where we always stood. The liberals have slowly re-defined the middle to what would have been extremely liberal years ago. A few examples would serve well.

In October 2006, William Woodson spoke in Jacksonville, Florida, at the Wesconnett congregation.

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.

In speaking of the change agents among us, he spoke of the effect of that movement in the Nashville area. He stated, "You will find very few churches of Christ in Middle Tennessee that are very much interested in or supportive of the change movement.... By and large most people are now aware and are very very resistant." He spoke of being in "New York, in Michigan, in California, in Texas, and Colorado, and Georgia, and Alabama this year, and very few brethren are experiencing much difficulty." In speaking specifically of the Nashville area, he said, "Well, in middle Tennessee it is not very effective. The churches of Christ in Davidson County and Nashville, 106 of them, the highest number of that group they ever got into change agency was 19. The number now is, I would say, maybe 12 to 15 of them." While the "change agency" might not have gotten congregations to bring in the mechanical instrument of music and/or change the name on the building, they have had such influence that, as one preacher/elder stated, you would be hard-pressed to find a faithful congregation in Nashville. (I do not know all the congregations in Nashville and would not say that there are no congregations which are faithful, but they would be few and far between.) This has also become the problem for many in that as long as a congregation has not brought in the instrument or changed the name on the sign, then they will fellowship them and think nothing is wrong. Yet, years ago the congregations in that area would not be caught dead doing what they are doing now. The middle has been moved by the liberals.

Another illustration of this move to the liberal side and making it the middle is seen in a recent issue of *The Gospel Journal* titled "The Danger of Extremism." In one article written by Mike Winkler (another article cautioned against naming individuals by name) titled "The Road to Balance" (16-17) brother Winkler defined for us the characteristics of radicalism. In his first point he writes, "the Pharisaic attitude of today, like that of Jesus day, seems to be less concerned about the lost and more interested in controlling others." Every Christian is to be about doing what we can to bring the lost to obedience. We are subject to the great commission of our Lord, and we should be preaching the Gospel to the lost (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-20). All Christians should also realize that God is to control what we do and what we say. His Word is the controlling factor, not the ideas and thoughts of man. Man can study and learn what that Word teaches (he is under obligation to do so) and thus determine what God authorizes man to do. Those things which God has not authorized are sinful and should be taught and preached against (is this controlling others?). What good is it

to teach the Gospel to someone and they obey that Truth being saved, then do those things which God did not authorize and end up lost (cf. 2 Pet. 2:20-22)?

Under this first point brother Winkler goes on to state, "Jesus characterized the radicals of His day as people who exalt themselves, assuming the responsibility of telling others what they should and should not do, while hypocritically not complying themselves." Every Christian has the responsibility of obeying all that God authorizes man to do. However, what if I am not doing what God says (maybe I have added to God's Word or taken away from it in my life), if I teach what God says, does my disobedience alleviate your responsibility to do what I teach correctly from God's Word? Listen to Jesus concerning the hypocrites, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Mat. 23:3). Jesus clearly states concerning these hypocrites that what they tell you to do, you are to do it.

In the next sentence brother Winkler states, "Today, how many have been criticized or 'written up' because it was decided by an eldership to build a multi-purpose building ['gym'] that serves many functions, including: church fellowships, Bible classes and other church related activities?" There is Bible authority for the Lord's church to build a building in which to worship, and in that building they would have the right (expediency) to build it in such a way as to provide for "church fellowships, Bible classes and other church related activities." However, would someone please provide us with the Bible authority to build a "gym." In the past every one of the members of the board of directors of *The Gospel Journal* (Curtis Cates, Joseph Meador, Kenneth Ratcliff, and Tommy Hicks) has spoken out and "criticized or 'written up'" congregations for building a gymnasium. Were the board members radical at that time but no longer, and if we continued to stand right where we have always stood in opposition to this, we are now radicals? The problem is that what is considered the middle has moved to the left so those who continue to stand where we have always stood (while once considered in the middle) are now considered radical.

As brother Winkler continued to inform us of the "Characteristics of Radicalism" he reaches his third point in which he states, "The Pharisaic attitude of today, like that of Jesus' day, seems to have confused traditions with truth (Mark. 1:1-13; cf. John 17:17) and the unimportant with the important (Mat. 23:14, 23-24)." Traditions can be good and can be bad. Traditions of God (2 The. 2:15) are *traditions* which we must

observe. However, there are *traditions* of man also. Simply because something is a tradition of man does not make it wrong, but to elevate it to the standard of God's Word is to add to His Word and is sin. However, as an illustration of this point, brother Winkler writes, "Today, how many have been attacked, verbally and by the pen, because of the translation they have chosen to use?" Again, all the board members have at times condemned the use of the *New International Version* along with other perversions of God's Word. Were they radical then, but have since learned better? At least some of these board members have supported brother Robert Taylor and his book *Challenging Dangers of Modern Versions* and brother Foy Wallace's book *A Review of the New Versions*. Are they now going to withdraw their support for brother Taylor and his excellent book and brother Wallace's great book? In opposing those per-

versions of God's Word (we are not opposed to translations of God's Word whether old or new, but when those supposed *translations* write false doctrine into the text which if believed and/or acted upon will cause one to be eternally lost, then we remain opposed to them), are we now radical? At one time we were considered "middle-of-the-road" for opposing such, but now the middle has moved and we are now considered radical by these brethren.

While the liberals have moved what is considered the middle by some, and some brethren have bought into such liberal tendencies, it should be the determination for every Christian to remain exactly where God wants him to be. He should remain upon the solid foundation of the Word of God and never deviate to the right or to the left (even if we are called names and ridiculed for being out of touch or radical). *MH*

Bill Gallaher

Michael Hatcher

Brother Gallaher resigned from the eldership of the Bellview congregation effective at the end of 2006. The present elders have included many of the details in their article, so I will not reiterate those. He was one of the elders when I moved to Pensacola and has served this congregation faithfully the entire time I have been working with this congregation, and for many years prior to that.

The Bible teaches us to give honor to those are due honor. "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Rom. 13:7). Brother Gallaher (along with his good help meet, Iris) deserves to be honored for the many years of service to the greatest cause on earth. His wisdom (along with the others who have served with him in the eldership) has helped make this congregation what it is and has helped to keep it faithful to the Lord.

Brother Gallaher is one who knows the Book. In this day when so many professed *elders* have little to no Bible knowledge, brother Gallaher was one who knew God's Word and could effectively wield it to teach and stop the mouth of the false teacher. He took seriously Paul's admonition: "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). Every one of the elders who has served this congregation though the years I have been here have been very capable in this area.

Not only did brother Gallaher know the truth and could expose false doctrines, he wanted to know what was taking place in the brotherhood and also wanted all members to know. An incident a few years ago illustrates this very thing. On a Sunday morning as I was preaching, I had decided to run the tape of Max Lucado asking people on the radio to pray the sinner's prayer. As the tape concluded, brother Gallaher stood up and stopped me. He said something along the line that this was important and that everyone needed to hear it (the tape was not loud enough when it was played so people had difficulty understanding it). Thus, brother Gallaher asked for the tape to be replayed and the volume increased so everyone would be able to hear it clearly. He wanted to make sure that sound doctrine was preached and that error was exposed, and to make sure the congregation would know error when it might rear its ugly head.

Another aspect that is unusual for today is that brother Gallaher always wanted Bible authority for all we teach and practice. He knew and practiced what Paul stated, "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). He, along with the other elders, made sure that the church here had Bible authority for all we did. He also recognized the importance of teaching this important principle so the entire

congregation would also demand such.

While much could be said and written about brother Gallaher, he was an important part of this congregation and its being what it is today. His knowl-

edge and wisdom will be missed in the eldership. Personally, I am better for having known and been able to work with brother Gallaher and all the elders of this congregation.

A Lectureship and Book that are greatly needed for our time.

2007 Bellview Lectureship

Theme:

A Time To Build

June 9-13, 2007

Twenty-nine faithful men will be speaking on various subjects concerning the building up of the Lord's church. With all the problems we face in the church, we need to be constantly reminded that it is not only our duty to defend the Truth against all error, but to build up the bride of Christ. Thus, make your plans now to attend.

"The Sounds of Silence"

Gary W. Summers

Elijah proposed a gathering of all Israel at Mount Carmel. King Ahab agreed and summoned 450 prophets of Baal, as he had been requested to do. Before the nation, Elijah spoke: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him." Should that be a difficult decision? What other things are as important in life as knowing who God is? Which of these two choices would the people select?

"And the people answered him not a word" (1 Kin. 18:21). Why were they silent? Was the reason that they knew that Queen Jezebel, King Ahab's wife, was supporting the false prophets? Were they intimidated, therefore, by Ahab's presence? Or did Elijah unnerve them by posing this question to them? It is unlikely that the people did not know whom they had been worshiping. They were afraid to admit it. If they answered Baal, the prophet of God would certainly have taken them to task. If they claimed to worship Jehovah, they risked the wrath of the king. So they remained silent.

For years, brethren have rightly termed their actions *cowardly*, because they refused to stand for whatever convictions they held. In 1993, it was this writer's privilege to write on chapters 14-18 of 1 Kings for the Annual Denton Lectures. Following are the two paragraphs that comment on the silence of the Israelites:

The people had been vacillating for some time; they could not decide who to follow. They limped back and forth between the two like a staggering drunk with no sense of direction. Elijah said, "Make up your minds!" They were as silent as those Jews Jesus faced centuries later when He asked them, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" They too held their peace (Mark 3:4). The next verse says that Jesus looked at them with anger, being grieved with their hardness of heart. How tragic that God's people will not wholeheartedly embrace the truth! How can anyone logically neglect to defend error but at the same time refuse to give it up? Yet the same pattern is repeated in the Lord's church to this very hour. How often do friends of false teachers balk at defending their heresies and blasphemies yet refuse to break fellowship with them? How many times have God's people heard moral purity proclaimed by godly preachers and never protested the message but then gone ahead and dressed immodestly and engaged in worldly and sinful activities? They act as cowardly as those at Mount Carmel (114).

This scribe believes the same thing thirteen years later that he penned back then. But many others have changed—men who once would have said Amen to the sentiments recorded above. They have instead joined the ranks of the silent. Some of these same preachers

once decried the response of Jim Woodroof when he was invited to debate certain errors that he promulgates. He said he did not wish to puke with buzzards. Using his metaphor, and judging from the non-responsiveness of many brethren on certain issues, buzzards need to be placed on the endangered species list.

A Few Examples

Although some will undoubtedly consider it “buzzardly,” a few examples of the current *silence* are in order. At least two brethren have written letters of concern to one brother at the center of a controversy; he has neither acknowledged nor answered either one. These inquirers were not strangers to this man; he knows both men well.

Another preacher sent out to several members of the body of Christ **two** letters complaining about the actions of a particular brother. This recipient of the “poison pen letters” wrote back to explain his misunderstanding of the facts. When no response was forthcoming, he called and left a message on his answering machine in his office. The call was not returned, either. Anyone who can write two popular books ought to be able to communicate by telephone or letter. How is one to interpret these sounds of silence?

In order to know how to deal with certain problems, some brethren overseas have tried to resolve a situation by communicating with various preachers here who were involved in the situation. Only two out of seven have responded fully. One individual has ignored several letters and admittedly deleted telephone messages. This behavior has definitely made an impression on the young Christians in the mission field.

Recently, some brethren have sent messages to the faculty members of a school of preaching—only to receive no reply whatsoever to questions of importance. The parents of one prospective student asked certain questions of this same school; they too received no reply. Forty years ago, Paul Simon included these words as part of the lyrics of “The Sounds of Silence”: “Silence like a cancer grows.” At the current rate of growth, we should soon be hearing silence in four-part harmony.

The Example of Jesus and the Apostles

Many are not surprised that Max Lucado remains mute in the face of all of his critics, but we are surprised to find such responses from once-credible brethren. Many have avoided complete silence, but they are obviously the strong, silent type—men of few words. Yup! One school of preaching recently said concerning an issue, “We’ve already made our decision; we have no plans to discuss it further.” Another individual with a certain organization said, “There’s no purpose in having a meeting. It’s like beating a dead horse.”

All should consider the following question: “When did Jesus or the apostles act in such a manner?” When did Paul ever say, “We’ve already legislated on this Judaizing teacher problem. There’s no need to discuss it any more.” No, Paul debated it with those who challenged him; he did not “hide under his desk,” as Bill O’Reilly frequently refers to it. Paul took the opportunity to “reason” with the Jews and the Gentiles. By what authority do people refuse to speak today?

Certain brethren are behaving the way someone who is guilty of sin acts. Jesus said that, when one is sinned against, he should take one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be established. Many of us have tried that procedure with wayward church members, but the person in question will neither meet nor discuss the situation. Usually, in light of such a hostile attitude, the church has withdrawn fellowship anyway. Now, what about a school or organization that does the same thing? Should members of the body of Christ just ignore the problems, or should they quit supporting them?

Communication

The church is likened to a body. Is it possible for there to be a lack of cooperation between the members of the body? If a brick were to fall off a table onto a person’s foot, a signal of pain would immediately be sent to the brain. The other foot immediately takes over; all of the standing (and perhaps hopping) will be done upon it. Soon the person is seated, and the arms are holding up the foot to examine it with the eyes. Now what if the eyes said, “I’ve dealt with sore toes before; my position is well known. I have nothing more to say”? What if the arms said, “No, I’m not going to hold any ice on the swelling; it’s not my problem”?

Is this the church for which Christ died? Should there be no communication between the members? What is it that people are afraid of? Are they afraid to take a stand? Are they afraid that others will know where they stand? Are there some King Ahab’s who will frown with disapproval if they speak up?

Or is it the case that some have determined to act the role of Diotrephes? The apostle John said: “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not” (3 John 9). Such was the arrogance and high-handedness of this “brother.” He was accountable to no one (or so he thought). Possibly, he ignored John, refusing to acknowledge his letter. Either he said nothing or sent him a message along the lines of: “Mind your own business.”

Whichever it was, the message was clear. John was not at liberty to ask questions or make comments about *his* church, just as today many will not brook being

asked questions about *their* congregation, *their* school, or *their* organization. Such attitudes are not Christian.

Jesus answered a question with a question in Matthew 21:23-27. When His adversaries did not have enough nerve to answer truthfully, *then* Jesus refused to answer their question. Jesus answered questions about divorce (Mat. 19:3-12), paying taxes (22:15-22), the woman married to seven brothers (22:23-33), and the great commandment in the law (22:34-40). Are the questions that brethren are being asked today about their schools and institutions tougher than these?

When someone refuses to answer pertinent inquiries

from a brother or sister in Christ, there is a reason. The reason is either that of cowardice (he has something to hide) or arrogance. Someone might say that Jesus did not answer the question asked Him at His trial. The reason is that hard hearts had already determined to crucify Him. He did answer it truthfully, when He was adjured. At any rate, He had already taught and proved His Deity. By whose authority are brethren refusing to speak today? What biblical principle are they following? Perhaps they could enlighten all of us who are puzzled by their sounds of silence.

3671 Oak Vista Lane; Winter Park, FL 32792

HEAVEN

Joseph H. Terry

When I was a boy I used to think of Heaven as a glorious golden city, with jeweled walls, gates of pearl, with nobody in it but the angels and they were all strangers to me. After a while my little brother died, then I thought of Heaven as that great city full of angels, with just one little fellow in it that I was acquainted with. He was the only one I knew there, at that time. Later another brother died, and there were two in Heaven whom I knew. As time passed on, an acquaintance also died, the number of friends in

Heaven grew larger all the time. Not until one of my own little ones was taken that I began to feel I had a personal interest in Heaven. Then a second, and a third, and a fourth, and so many of my friends along with loved ones I knew, seemed as if I knew more in Heaven than on earth. Now, my thoughts are not of a city of gold, jewels, pearls but the loved ones there. It is not the place so much as the company that makes it seem all the more beautiful.

4861 Northlake Blvd.; Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418

Updated CD

The 1988-2005 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2004, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. 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 \$70 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25 (total is \$71.25) in which you receive all the lectureship books (less than \$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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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Pensacola, FL 32526**

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Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

E-mail: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Think on These Things

Brad Green

Paul, writing to the Philippian brethren, sets forth a list of qualities by which the Christian's life should be patterned: "whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report" (Phi. 4:8), as well as any other attributes of virtue and anything worthy to be praised. Paul concludes this statement with an exhortation: "Think on these things." Paul exhorts the brethren to permeate their lives with all things that are characterized by these moral attributes. He compels them to make these virtues the object of careful attention and study, "so as to put them in practice; to think what they are; think on the obligation to observe them and to think on the influence which they would have on the world" (*Barnes' Notes*). "Think" is translated from the Greek word, *legizomai*, which means "to make a conclusion by logical deduction; to take an inventory of; or to reckon or reason" (*Strong's*). Paul is making an intense proclamation that Christians should and must reason through the things which he taught. He expected them to take inventory of the meanings of the words he used. He expected them to examine the evidence and make a logical conclusion based on facts.

God has always required man to use his mind, assimilate information, and make proper conclusions based on his findings. God made man in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27). Just as God is Spirit (John 4:24), man has a spiritual nature and the soul of man will live eternally. But also, God made man so that man could communicate and understand. God made man a being with which He, Himself, could communicate. In time past, God used holy prophets (like Isaiah) to convey His message and will to the people.

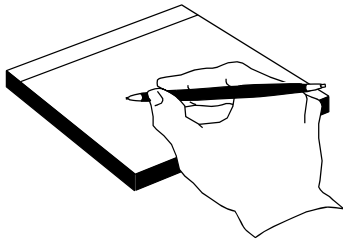
Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it* (Isa. 1:18-20).

God expected man to be able to *reason*. Israel had turned from God. God used this time to chasten His people as well as to reprove them. This process of reasoning together would have been useless and meaningless without man's mental capacity to ingest information and ability to make a rational conclusion from the information given. The people could use their past experiences to know that they had nothing without God. All blessings came from Him. They were also able to apprehend the fact that their idol worship was doing them no good; it was only angering the God who would save them. These evidences in hand, they could properly discern—obey God and "eat of the good of the land"; rebel against God and "be devoured with the sword." The people had to make a choice. They could not serve two masters (Mat. 6:24). The people had the mind and ability to make that choice and God required it of them.

It was customary for the apostle Paul to preach in the synagogues of the Jews. On one occasion, he "went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17:2-3). Paul used the Old Testament Scripture to set about a rational

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Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
mhatcher@gmail.com

Evidence

God created man with the ability to think and to reason. It is one of those higher properties which man possesses and the animal kingdom does not—it is one of the things which sets us apart from them. While not stated specifically, you can observe man's ability to reason from the beginning of time. God placed man in the Garden of Eden and gave him certain commands. One of the commands given by God was negative in nature (do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) with a punishment attached to the command if violated (they would die). After eating of the tree they sewed fig leaves together to make for themselves aprons (which is more than some wear today). They were able to **reason** that they were naked and thus to try to cover their nakedness. When Adam and Eve "heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" they hid themselves from God. They reasoned that they were in trouble with God. They also reasoned correctly that even though they had sewed fig leaves together they were still naked (we could only wish that people would correctly reason about this today). God had given them the proper evidence and they correctly reasoned regarding that evidence.

Isaiah urged the people of his day: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18). The Israelites needed to reason correctly that God would pardon their sin if they would cease doing evil and live faithfully to God. They also needed to reason properly that if they obeyed God, then they would be able to eat the good of the land. Sadly, the Israelites did not reason correctly concerning these matters and were eventually destroyed by God. God had again given them the proper evidence (throughout

the history of the Israelite nation) to where they could reason correctly about these matters.

In the process of becoming a Christian, reason plays an important part. We are informed by the Hebrews writer, "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (11:6). We also know: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Let us also notice: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). When putting these statements together, we start learning about evidence and correct reasoning. We must have faith if we are going to be in a right relation with God. While the denominational world misuses Ephesians 2:8 to attempt to teach that God gives us faith, faith comes by man examining the evidence—the Word of God—and drawing the proper conclusions from that evidence. God has provided man the proper evidence to reason correctly that He exists. God has provided ample evidence in nature (Psa. 19:1; Rom. 1:20) and in the Bible itself (Psa. 19:7ff).

Man must also believe that Jesus is the Son of God (God manifested in the flesh) and the Savior of all those who obey Him. Again, God has provided ample evidence to man to determine upon proper reasoning these facts. When man gathers the evidence and reasons correctly concerning that evidence, then there is no alternative but to believe. Thus, faith (the evidence of things not seen) comes by hearing God's Word (the evidence which has been provided) which leads to eternal life (John 20:30-31).

If God has provided man with abundant evidence to bring man to faith, why do we have multitudes who do not believe? While there are, no doubt, many reasons which could be given, one would be that some refuse to consider the evidence. The evidence is available, but they refuse to consider it for whatever reason. They desire to stay in the position they presently hold, thus they refuse to consider anything which someone may present to them. If they honestly examined the evidence, they might have to switch what they believe and change their lifestyle. There are some who also will at least look at the evidence and then pass it off for one reason or another as being false or trumped up. Sometimes they will allow others to present lies to offset the truth. Some of these will be honestly misled by the lies while others will follow the lies because they have a desire to go that way. Some individuals will only listen to one aspect and not consider all the available evidence, yet they will proudly proclaim that they have examined the evidence and come to the proper conclusion.

As Christians we have the obligation given to us by God to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 The. 5:21-22). We have seen in recent times the total lack of examining the evidence and reasoning correctly concerning that evidence in the Lord’s church. It has been amazing to me that in the latest brotherhood problems that seeming reasonable individuals have refused to examine any evidence that might hurt the cause which they are going to support no matter what the consequences. There are those who have previously urged people to look at the facts but now they simply refuse to do what they have preached and encouraged others to do for years. So many have simply listened to their friends and simply accepted what they were told without examining any evidence (surely their *friend* could not be wrong about a subject especially seeing they have known them for many years and they have in the past stood for truth). Some will accept evidence from only the *side* they want to support and then proclaim whatever those whom they have listened to have told them. Sadly, some will make political decisions based on what they deem will be in their own best interest.

When the Holy Spirit stated through John: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1), trying the spirits is not simply accepting what someone tells you (or they tell of themselves). Let us always be honest enough to examine all the evidence, and then draw the conclusions that is warranted by the evidence and only those conclusions. MH

(Continued from page 1)

discussion about Jesus Christ. Paul knew his audience and their needs. He also knew that they were well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul not only offered Scripture to prove his premise, he expounded upon their meaning and set forth a logical argument from those passages that proved that the Jesus, about whom Paul preached, was that Messiah who fulfilled prophecy. This discourse demanded rational and logical thinking on behalf of the audience. The audience was expected to examine the truth of God’s Word in correlation with evidence, presented by Paul, about Jesus. The result: “some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few” (Acts 17:4). Many people made the logical conclusion that this Jesus was the Christ. Their conclusion led

them to believe and follow the teachings set forth by Paul and Silas.

Many, today, have totally ignored and disregarded rational thought in matters of religion. Some have misdefined faith as merely a “leap in the dark” when God clearly defined faith as obedience based upon and resulting from solid facts and evidence (Heb. 11; Jam. 2:17, 24). Others have claimed that religious matters are only governed by emotion (i.e., *love*). Jesus says, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Faithful Gospel preachers preach love when they preach obedience to God’s will. Though the world and liberals among us would like to make love and law mutually exclusive; they simply are not. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God loved man so much that He sent His Son to die for man’s sins. In return, God only requires that we submit to His will. Man can know God’s will (John 8:31-32). In order for man to know God’s will, which is truth (John 17:17), man must use his God-given abilities to make logical conclusions based upon deductive reasoning. Once man realizes that he is in sin and separated from God (Isa. 59:1-2), he will desire to be reconciled back to God. Reconciliation is only found in the blood of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18-22) and man can only contact the blood in Jesus’ death.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4).

The logical conclusion, then, is that to contact the blood of Jesus, which can reconcile man back to God, man must be baptized. The apostle Peter proclaims “baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21). It is not the water, alone, that saves. It is also not a meritorious act or work that will save. It is, however, acts or works of obedience to God’s Word that will save.

God has never required man to act without facts. God has never left man to his own devices (Jer. 10:23) nor in need to make a “leap in the dark.” God has always communicated His will to man in a clear fashion that can be easily understood—easily understood, **if** one will honestly weigh the evidence and make only such conclusion as are warranted by that evidence.

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129 Lane Rd; Lenoir City, TN 37772

Spring 2007 Lectureship

“Fellowship: From God or Man”

February 25 - 28, 2007

Elders: Kenneth Cohn, Buddy Roth

David P. Brown, Director

Sunday, February 25

9:30 AM	Bible Authority—The Basis for Christian Fellowship	David P. Brown
10:30 AM	Should the church of Christ Fellowship the Christian Church?	Robin Haley
5:00 PM	OPEN FORUM	David P. Brown
6:00 PM	By What Bible Authority Does One Church Extend Fellowship to another Church?	Darrell Broking

Monday, February 26

9:00 AM	Should Error Regarding the Five Acts of Worship Disrupt Fellowship Between Christians?	Bruce Stulting
10:00 AM	Fellowship Scriptures: 1 Cor. 5; Rom. 16:17 & Eph. 5:11	Dennis Francis
10:00 AM	** Fellowship in the Home (1)	Martha Bentley
11:00 AM	What Fellowship is and What Fellowship is Not	Danny Douglas
1:30 PM	How Does the Bible Teach Scripturally Broken Fellowship is to be Restored?	Wayne Blake
2:30 PM	Fellowship in Restoration History and a Study of Unity Movements in the Church	Paul Vaughn
3:30 PM	OPEN FORUM: General Theme, Matters of Judgment	Moderators: Dub McClish & Dave Watson
6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 PM	Fellowship & Suffering	Raymond Hagood
8:00 PM	Church Discipline and Christian Fellowship	Lynn Parker

Tuesday, February 27

9:00 AM	In the Light of Rom. 15:4, What May be Learned About Fellowship From Deut. Seven?	Terry York
10:00 AM	Is the Ecumenical Movement the Way to Biblical Unity?	Ben Justice
10:00 AM	** Fellowship in the Home (2)	Martha Bentley
11:00 AM	The Autonomy of the Church and Fellowship	Roger Jackson
1:30 PM	Book Review: I Just Want to Be a Christian by Rubel Shelly	Brad Green
2:30 PM	Fellowship and Respect of Persons	Taylor Hagood
3:30 PM	OPEN FORUM: General Theme, Matters of Judgement	Moderators: Dub McClish & Dave Watson
6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 PM	When With Feigned Words They Will Make Merchandise of You	Terry Hightower
8:00 PM	Do the Certain Associations of Brethren Imply Fellowship?	Johnny Oxendine

Wednesday, February 28

9:00 AM	By What Authority Does One Church Withdraw Fellowship From a Sister Church?	Michael Hatcher
10:00 AM	Current Views of Fellowship in the Churches of Christ	Lester Kamp
11:00 AM	Book Review: Together Again by Rick Atchley and Bob Russell	Geoff Litke
1:30 PM	Fellowship Scriptures: John 17:20-21; Eph. 4:1-6; Mark 9:38-41	Kenneth Chumbley
2:30 PM	Book Review: Who Is My Brother? by F. LeGard Smith	John West
3:30 PM	OPEN FORUM: General Theme, Matters of Judgement	Moderators: Dub McClish & Dave Watson
6:30 PM	CONGREGATIONAL SINGING	
7:00 PM	Should Organizational Error in the Church Disrupt of Fellowship Between Christians?	Kent Bailey
8:00 PM	Should Error Regarding MDR Disrupt Fellowship Between Christians?	Daniel Denham

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Balance: What it Is and What it Is Not

Lynn Parker

There is nothing mystical here, and if you poll enough folks you might find this to be a common thread. Several in the church screaming for balance really mean: “Do things the way I do them because I’m the epitome of balance.” No, thanks. We do not owe an allegiance to any preaching school or big names. We do not make yearly worship trips to Austin or Memphis. We feel no need to protect a brotherhood journal or any other paper. That is not our idea of balance.

Balance is not nearly as subjective as some might think. By *balanced* we mean avoiding untenable, extreme positions. By *balanced* we mean sane, reasonable, and not crazy. By way of example we point people to Jesus, the perfectly balanced Son of God. The standard by which we judge balance is the Word of God. That said, there is always a need for folks to be balanced in heaven’s sight. What God said; what Jesus did—go, and do thou likewise, and you will be biblically balanced.

Balance is loving souls. Jesus is our example. He loved the souls of men (Mark 10:21; John 3:16; 15:13).

Balance is responding appropriately to situations and hearts. Jesus was compassionate and tender (Mat. 11:28ff). At times Jesus was stern (Mat. 23). Our Lord responded to people differently, depending on the situation. “And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart” (Mark 3:5). Jesus was patient then with those who would learn (see the life of Peter). Jesus was angered and grieved when those that should have known better hardened their hearts. That is the balance our Lord teaches us. The same Bible gives us these precepts:

And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all (1 The. 5:14).

Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching (2 Tim. 4:2).

For there are many unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons. This testimony is true. For which cause reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith (Tit. 1:10-13).

Follow the principles set forth by God and He will

approve.

Balance is not approving of everything. It involves testing and proving (1 The. 5:21; Phi. 1:10; Eph. 5:10). Even if my best friend of 30 years pronounces his blessing on a belief or practice, I still must scrutinize it in light of the Truth.

Balance is not fellowshiping some people. It is not biblical balance to overlook the sins and false doctrines of friends, favorite congregations, family, or supporters. That is called respect of persons and it is sinful (Acts 10:34; Jam. 2:1). If he is a false teacher and will not repent, I cannot fellowship him. Neither can I fellowship the ones who support the false teacher (2 John 9-11).

Balance is a healthy diet of both positive and negative as needed. Balanced preachers do not withhold anything profitable and balanced congregations would have it no other way. Paul reminded brethren, “how I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable” (Acts 20:20). It was because he preached “the whole counsel of God” that he was able to truthfully state, “I am pure from the blood of all men” (Acts 20:26-27).

Balanced preaching not only preaches the whole counsel but does so in a way that even the most unlearned can make application. What is the point of preaching against false doctrine and false teachers if there is no application to the doctrines and teachers that are false? I can proclaim in thunderous tones: “I’m against false and damnable doctrine!” But what doctrines are being referenced? Balance preaching often demands specifics.

Balance recognizes the differences between matters of faith and matters of opinion. Not everything is an obligatory matter. Some things are matters of judgment. If the pendulum is swinging it is swinging farther left where some that were formerly sound are now lumping every issue as a mere “Paul/Barnabas/John Mark” disagreement. Again, the Word of God determines fellowship matters. Absent of real, honest Bible study, folks may very well mistakenly classify expedient matters as obligatory, and obligatory matters as opinion.

Balanced people are not afraid to engage in real examination of their positions. They really want to know if they are wrong. This is no game! Souls depend on being right. The devil would love for all in sin to continue proudly bull-doing a path to hell. But it

takes a real man (woman) to say, "Let me hear the evidence that shows wherein I have erred." The wise man says, "Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, But he who hates correction *is* stupid" (Pro.

12:1—NKJV).

Actions and time (if it remains) will show who indeed is spiritually balanced.

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Voices from the past:

This article appeared in "Defender" June 1974

The Sounding of the Trumpet

William S. Cline

The Word of the Lord came to Hosea much in the same manner that it did to Isaiah. Isaiah was told, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto my people their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1). To Hosea God simply said, "Set the trumpet to thy mouth." Thus those words set in order the instruction for God's preacher—declare unto the people their sins. God has always used His preachers to make known to His people their transgressions. As evidenced by the records of the Old Testament the people did not always appreciate the preaching and there were times when they asked the prophets to prophecy **smooth** things, or to **not prophecy**, but God's command has always been to **set the trumpet to the mouth and preach the Word** in season and out of season—when they like it and when they do not.

Hosea was to warn the nation of imminent judgment, which he did in one short sentence: "*He shall come*

as an eagle against the house of the LORD" (Hos. 8:1).

It is the next word in Hosea 8:1 which states the reason for the rebuke and warning. They were to be warned, "**Because**":

1. They had **transgressed and trespassed the law of God** (Hos. 8:1). Think back of the history of the Jewish nation. A great number of times they are referred to in the Scriptures as a "stiff-necked and rebellious" people. Time and again they would turn their very noses up at God as if to say, "Do for us what you will, but we are going to do what we want regardless of what you say." They had been punished over and over again (recall the period of the Judges), but every time they received Divine deliverance and protection they seemed determined to disobey the God who kept them.

2. They had **rebelled against God** as evidenced by their setting up kings and princes which was contrary to God's plan for them (Hos. 8:4). When the people wanted Samuel to give them a king, he told God

they had rejected him (Samuel) from being judge over them. But God told him that in all truth they had rejected Him from being God over them. Thus they had rebelled against the authority and rule of God.

3. The Jews had **set up false gods** (the golden calf, the gods of the heathen nations) and worshiped them (Hos. 8:4-5). In the very shadow of Sinai they had worshiped the calf, and as a continual, repetitive thing the Jews set up idols and worshiped them instead of the true God of heaven. In 1 Kings 12:28 when idols had been set up at Dan and Bethel, the decree went out, "Behold thy gods, O Israel."

4. They had demonstrated a **lack of faith and trust in God** by seeking forbidden alliances with other nations (Hos. 8:8-9). One of the messages of several prophets was that of warning against the evil alliances with other nations. But the Jews would not listen. When a power round about them became strong, they sought comfort, protection, and security by seeking alliances with other nations. They would not obey the instructions of God as given to them by His preachers.

5. They had **erected false altars**, and desecrated those of Jehovah (Hos. 8:11-13). They erected many altars and offered to God unacceptable sacrifices.

These were things which God commanded them not,

but the law of God was to them as some "strange thing" (Hos. 8:12).

Thus, in a few short sentences the prophet had declared unto Israel her sins and warned her of the coming judgment. Finally he described the whole situation as to national sin and Divine retribution in these words: "Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and builded palaces; and Judah hath multiplied fortified cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the castles thereof" (Hos. 8:14). When God is forsaken, ruin is inevitable! A nation or an individual may for a time, dwell in luxury, building palaces, and enjoying life; a sense of security may prevail; but sooner or later there will be Divine judgment.

Nations and individuals are following in the steps of the ancient Jews. Notice that they (1) Transgressed the law of God, (2) Rebelled against God, (3) Worshiped idols, (4) Demonstrated a lack of faith in God, and (5) Desecrated the worship of Jehovah. Men today are doing the exact same things and expecting peace and security as did the Jews. But dear reader, it will not work. The nation or the individual does not live that can shake a fist in God's face and get away with it. "Except Jehovah build the house, They labor in vain that build it: Except Jehovah keep the city, The watchman waketh but in vain" (Psa. 127:1).

Deceased

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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It Is High Time to Awake!

Lester Kamp

“And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13:11).

It is a dangerous thing to be asleep spiritually! In the parable of the tares, Jesus stated that “while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares” (Mat. 13:25). We are admonished repeatedly in the New Testament to “watch” (see Mat. 24:42; 26:41; 1 The. 5:6; 1 Pet. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:5). It is impossible to “watch” and sleep at the same time. The devil and his cohorts are always awake seeking opportunities to “devour” (1 Pet. 5:8) us through deception. Paul admonished us, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith” (1 Cor. 16:13). Sin can lull us into apathy, sleep. When we depart from the truth, sin has a deadening effect. Sin sears our consciences (1 Tim. 4:2) and causes us to sleep spiritually (1 Cor. 11:30). This can happen to individuals and to congregations (Rev. 3:15). To protect ourselves from evil and to keep in the narrow path that leads to life eternal we must be awake, alert.

Elders have a special obligation to be awake and watchful. The Hebrews writer tells us that they “watch for your souls” (Heb. 13:17). Paul tells us that these men are to protect the church from false teachers by “holding fast the faithful word” and thereby exhort and convict the gainsayers. Furthermore, he tells us that elders have the responsibility to stop the mouths of those who teach things they ought not, subverting whole houses by their false doctrines (Tit. 1:9-11). There are false teachers today. “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves

swift destruction” (2 Pet. 2:1).

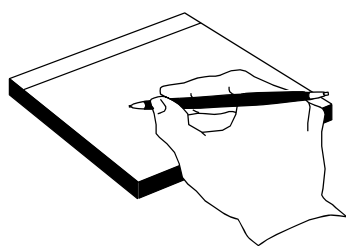
Individual Christians also have the responsibility to examine those things that they are being taught and to compare them to the teaching of Scripture (Acts 17:11). Members of the church must, therefore, be alert and wide awake. Even if the elders of the congregation of which they are a part are not watching and protecting the congregation from harm, every member has the responsibility to protect himself with the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17).

There are many elders, preachers, individual Christians, and congregations of God’s people who need to be told, “It is high time to awake out of sleep!” The devil is by no means sleeping, but he has been able to cause many of us today to sleep. We need to wake up regarding:

1. The danger of drifting. Often movement away from God and the Truth comes very gradually. It comes as a result of neglect more often than as a deliberate radical departure (Heb. 2:3). The warning is clear, “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 [lest haply we drift away from them—ASV]” (Heb. 2:1). There is the danger, which is ever present, of wanting to become like the nations round about us. When we yield to this desire, we can expect change to be slow and the result will always be destructive. The road to ruin is walked one step at a time. Trace the consequences of this desire in ancient Israel. God’s people today are called out of the world to be a people uniquely belonging to God. God’s people are to follow God’s Word and not the people of the world. Many congregations have be-

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
mhatcher@gmail.com

Spring Open Forum

It was my privilege and honor to speak at the 2007 Spring Contending For The Faith Lectureship at Spring, Texas, conducted February 25-28. The theme of the lectureship was "Fellowship: From God or Man." (You may view the video lessons online at www.churchesofchrist.com and click on either archived videos or 2007 Lectureship. If you do not presently subscribe to *Contending For The Faith* I would encourage you to do so. You can subscribe by emailing David P. Brown at jbrow@charter.net, writing PO Box 2357, Spring, TX 77383-2357, or by phone 281-350-5516.) I had the opportunity to speak twice on the lectureship. The first time my subject was "The Autonomy of the Church and Fellowship," and my second subject was "By What Authority Does One Church Withdraw Fellowship from a Sister Church?" Each afternoon of the lectureship there was an open forum in which a variety of matters were discussed.

On Tuesday of the lectureship, Barry Gilreath, Sr., sent an email in for the brethren to discuss. He signed the email with his name then as "elder and director of GBN." In signing his email in this way, brother Gilreath Sr., was speaking as an official voice for the eldership of the Highland Church of Christ in Dalton, Georgia, and also speaking for all those associated with GBN (Gospel Broadcast Network). If it did not carry that emphasis, then why sign the email in such a way? This is further emphasized by brother Gilreath's fourth point (and final one) when he writes, "The elders of the Highland church of Christ in Dalton, GA as well as the staff of GBN are praying for your repentance and restoration." While their concern is appreciated, they are the ones who need to repent for their fellowship and bidding God speed to a marked false teacher Dave Miller. God states through John, "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). The elders at Highland in Dalton, GA, along with those associated with GBN are as morally culpable as is Dave Miller for his false teaching on elder reevaluation/reaffirmation doctrine and his marriage intent doctrine. If standing for the truth of God's Word is something one needs "repentance and restoration" for, then all faithful soldiers of the cross need to do such.

The first two points brother Gilreath made were: "1. David B. Smith, preacher for the Northside church of Christ in Calhoun, GA, has agreed to speak on the Greer, SC lectures which includes Barry Gilreath, Jr., elder and preacher for the Highland church of Christ in Dalton, GA. Others to speak are Cliff Goodwin, who teaches on GBN, as well as other supporters of GBN. 2. Most fair minded brethren who have considered brother Dave Miller, including David B. Smith, preacher for the Northside church of Christ in Calhoun, GA, have concluded that Dave Miller is not a false teacher." Some might wonder why the emphasis in both of these points regarding David B. Smith and his being the preacher for the Northside church of Christ in Calhoun, GA? The elders of the Northside congregation exposed the Highland congregation error regarding the fellowship of Dave Miller. The Highland elders then **unscripturally** withdrew fellowship from the elders (not the preacher or the congregation) of the Northside congregation. Since brother Terry York was speaking at the lectureship and was there at the time, he immediately called brother David B. Smith. Brother Smith denied that he was speaking on a lectureship with Barry Gilreath, Jr., as stated by Barry Gilreath, Sr. When brother York asked brother Smith the second question, brother Smith said that it was not true. Both what brother Gilreath and brother Smith said cannot be true; someone is lying about it. However, why bring brother Smith into the discussion to begin with? It appears to be a wicked, vile, evil attempt to drive a wedge between the preacher and elders of the Northside congregation! Since brother Gilreath was representing the Highland elders and all of GBN, we are made to wonder if this is the type of wickedness that this congregation and organization supports and upholds?

Since brother Gilreath stated that most fair minded did not consider Dave Miller a false teacher, I challenged brother Gilreath to produce the evidence to show brother Miller is not a false teacher. I compiled a

mass of evidence to prove that he is a false teacher (the CD can be ordered for free from *Contending For The Faith*). The next day brother Gilreath emailed a two-page response. While I had challenged him to produce the evidence **proving** Dave Miller is not a false teacher, in those two pages there was not one word of evidence to prove such.

Instead of producing evidence to prove brother Miller is not a false teacher, brother Gilreath tried to divert attention away from the issue. He wanted to know when brother Miller became a false teacher. The answer is so simple it is amazing that someone who claims to be an elder in the Lord's church would not know! When one teaches false doctrine, he becomes a false teacher. Brother Miller taught false doctrine in April, 1990, he became a false teacher at that time.

Brother Gilreath then tried to divert attention by pointing out supposed inconsistencies in other brethren who have stood opposed to Dave Miller. What if all those who are now opposing Dave Miller because of his false teachings have been inconsistent? Does that prove that brother Miller is not a false teacher? Such an idea is ludicrous, but it is the best they have to offer.

Brother Gilreath brought out that I spoke on a lectureship with Dave Miller in 1996. It happened to be the "Truth In Love" lectures in Pulaski, TN. While that was a decision which I made at the time, I realize that it was a mistake, and repent of speaking with him on that one lectureship. It was wrong of me to do so. However, I will add that at that time I made the decision not to appear on another lectureship with that false teacher—Dave Miller—and I have not (this was also relayed to the director of that lectureship, Paul Sain, a few years later when he talked about having me back on the lectureship program). During the open forum, I pointed out that I had never asked Dave Miller or, to the best of my knowledge, anyone associated with Brown Trail School of Preaching on the lectureship program at Bellview. I did, however, invite those who had left Brown Trail during that period of time. Why would we invite one and not the other?

Brother Gilreath also tried to show inconsistency in other brethren by obtaining the records of publishing companies (the ones owned by Dub McClish and David Brown) as to the number of books of *Piloting the Strait* each one bought. It became obvious that Paul Sain of Sain Publications provided this information when brother Gilreath wrote, "Consider these facts that can be verified by Paul Sain of Sain Publication." While I do not know the legalities of such action, I do know that it was unethical to release such information to another individual. However, does selling brother

Miller's book (which is a good book in spite of the fact that he teaches false doctrine on elder reevaluation/reaffirmation and marriage intent) mean that these brethren do not consider Miller a false teacher? Again such an idea is preposterous, but such is the best that brother Gilreath could come up with to defend brother Miller. How many have recommended a book written by a denominational writer or a commentary written by them? Does your recommendation mean that you do not consider the author a false teacher? James D. Bales was a false teacher concerning marriage/divorce/re-marriage, yet he wrote many excellent books. The fact that brother Bales was a false teacher concerning that subject does not discount the excellent work he did in other areas, just as Miller being a false teacher does not discount the good book that he wrote.

It is still our prayer that brother Miller will see the error of his way and repent of his false doctrines. This could hopefully begin a healing process within our brotherhood. We pray that those who are defending brother Miller will repent and encourage him to do so also. Let us reunite this great brotherhood, but do so upon truth. Remember: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (Jam. 3:17). *MH*

(Continued from page 1)

come like the denominations and are no longer following God's Word. It is high time that these congregations and their elders wake up and return to the old paths.

2. The danger of false teachers. We have some smooth-talking (Rom. 16:18) ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing (Mat. 7:15) within the flock of God today. Instead of their mouths being stopped, their "good words and fair speeches" are itching the ears of multitudes. Sometimes our brethren will travel many miles to the Tulsa International Soul Winning (actually damning) Workshop, or the Orlando Spiritual Growth Workshop (actually a Spiritual Destroying Workshop), or to other places just to have their ears tickled with the *feel-good* philosophies of men and to be entertained by the showmen of the brotherhood, but will not go across the street to hear the Truth of God's Word proclaimed. It is high time that we wake up to the fact that it is the Truth that makes us free! The church of Christ is not in the entertainment business; souls are not saved by the teaching of error, even if these lies

cause the hearers to feel good. Sin deceives, and error destroys. We need to oppose false doctrine and false teachers, not support them with our money and our presence. We need to stop inviting false teachers into the flock to hold Gospel Meetings or otherwise fill our pulpits. We need to stop buying their books and going to hear them speak. We need to wake up!

3. The danger of fellowshiping those who are not in fellowship with God. Those who teach error and/or practice false doctrine are not in fellowship with God (2 John 9). Paul warned, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Eph. 5:11). Paul did not say we could have a little fellowship with error; he did not say

we could have much fellowship with error; he said **no** fellowship. Brethren who encourage by their words and by their behavior fellowshiping denominations and those who have gone out from us have departed from the truth. We cannot fellowship such without becoming partakers with them in their evil ways (2 John 11). Fellowshiping those in error is a departure from Truth; it is a departure from God. It is high time that elders, preachers, individual Christians, and congregations wake up to the error of such fellowship!

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men [Be courageous!—English Study Bible], be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13).

122 Nathaniel Gracie Dr; Statesville, NC 28625

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June 9-13, 2007

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Voices from the past:

This article appeared in "Defender" May 1972

"A Sad Day"

William S. Cline

"A Sad Day"

Israel was the chosen nation. They had the special watch-care of the God of heaven. Yet ingratitude seemed to characterize their relationship to Jehovah. As one reads the story of the nation of Israel, he is caused to wonder how anyone could have departed from God so many times. Even when they had been delivered from Egyptian bondage, they murmured against their deliverer in the very sight of the Red Sea. The period of Judges saw no improvement. When the kingdom divided so did their allegiance, and Israel went awhoring after other gods. Isaiah 9:16 reads, "For they that lead this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed." It is a sad day when leaders lead

their people into apostasy, but such was the case in Israel. They forgot their God and their salvation. They became a rebellious people bowing down to gods that had been made with human hands.

The prophet Hosea penned the words of God when he wrote, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee" (Hos. 4:6). God later said through that prophet, "my people are bent on backsliding from me" (Hos. 11:7). What sadder day ever dawned in Israel of old than that day when God had rejected them because of a lack of knowledge?

Spiritual Israel

Just as the nation of Israel went away from God in

the long ago, Spiritual Israel, the church, can depart from God today. The Israelites were destroyed because of a “lack of knowledge.” And **one untaught generation** is all that is needed today for the church to be destroyed for the same reason. Christians are charged to study the Word (2 Tim. 2:15), elders are enjoined to feed the flock (Acts 20:28), and preachers are commanded to preach the Word (2 Tim. 4:2). When Christians, elders, and preachers fail to fulfill their God-given responsibilities, then a sad day for spiritual Israel is on the horizon. God’s people **will apostatize because of a lack of knowledge.**

Preachers

Paul told Timothy, “I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:1-4). In the next sentence Paul said, “do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.” Earlier he had written, “Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching... Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all” (1 Tim. 4:13, 15).

The day that preachers cease to do the **will of God** and begin to **please** the members and “**pastor**” the congregation, is the day the church will cease being as strong as it could be, and **it will be** a sad day in Israel. Heaven knows we have enough of this among us today! We have preachers that are more concerned with the image they present than the Word they preach. We have preachers that know more about politics, social injustices, and the book of etiquette than they know about the Word of God. Pulpits are filled with “How to win friends and influence people” and stories from the leading magazines of the day while people are starving to death, spiritually, for the preaching of the Bible.

Congregations are generally no stronger than their pulpits. Note the congregation that is staying within the “old paths” and then note the kind of preaching they hear. You will find that the preacher they have is a student of the Word. You can listen to him preach or read what he writes and tell where he stands. There is no ambiguity in what he teaches. He stands solidly on God’s Word. He is a student of the Book and seeks to fulfill his God-given responsibility to preach the Word.

We are concerned that too many pulpits (one would be too many for that matter) are not being filled

with the kind of preaching that God wants. We firmly believe that churches are being led into apostasy by men who are supposed to be preachers of the Bible.

Elders

Elders are supposed to “feed the flock” (Acts 20:28). Among the responsibilities that are enjoined in that statement would be to see that the pulpit and the classroom have the right kind of teaching. It is sad indeed when preachers rebel against the command to preach the Word, however, it is sadder yet when elders refuse to **demand** that the **Bible be taught** by the preacher and classroom teacher. Elders need to tell the preacher that the Bible is going to be taught from the pulpit under their oversight or they are going to know the reason why. They then need to carry out their word. An eldership recently remarked that they were not hearing any Bible preaching from the pulpit at all. They had talked it over with the preacher, but it had done no good. And, they hated to replace him because **he was so well liked** in the congregation. How ridiculous can one eldership be? Any preacher that refuses to preach the Bible does not need to be **replaced**, he needs to be **removed!** (2 The. 3:6).

This writer recently saw a list of responsibilities that an eldership was using in the securing of the services of a preacher. That list demanded of him that he be the perfect “denominational pastor,” however, not a one of the more than a dozen requirements even hinted at his responsibility to **study** and **preach** the Word. Several Gospel preachers who have seen the list, some are known brotherhood wide, remarked in unison that the list was **ridiculous**. Brethren, do all elderships want the Bible in its entirety, taught in the pulpit?

If the church had preachers that would preach the Word and elders that would demand that the Word be taught, widespread apostasy would cease to be a problem. There is nothing that will cure going away from God like a well taught, rooted and grounded in the truth, brotherhood. Elders are going to lose their souls because they failed to feed the flock that was given under their oversight.

Christians

Even if preachers failed to preach God’s Word and elders failed to demand that the Word be taught, all would not be lost if Christians would fulfill their responsibility. They should see to it that the church is fed the Word of God. When a congregation becomes satisfied with the social gospel that never reproves or rebukes it becomes a **sad day indeed**. What more could you expect than full-scale apostasy? Nothing but destruction could come if preachers did not preach the Bible, elders did not feed the flock, and members no

longer cared for the teaching of God's Word.

An Admonition

We see the church in many areas of the brotherhood drifting away from the **ancient landmarks**. New sounds and uncertain sounds are coming from their ranks. At the tap root of this digression is the failure—either intentional or unintentional—to teach the Word of God in its purity, simplicity, and entirety. The Bible needs to be preached and its message must be proclaimed without fear or favor. It comes to an attitude that many hold toward the Bible. It is sad but true—some no longer have respect for its teachings. May we awaken before it becomes too late! **Preachers, preach the Word.** Be a student of the Bible. Spend

your time doing what God has commanded you to do! **Elders, demand that the Word be taught.** See to it that the flock over which you are overseers are fed. And when the Word is taught, stand behind it with all of your support. Christians, see to it that your preacher and elders know that you want, appreciate, and stand behind the preaching of God's Word. And if you are in a congregation where the Bible is not taught, let your disapproval be noted. The day the church fails to preach the Word is the day the church will begin its journey away from God. Remember Hosea quoted God as saying, "My people are destroyed for the lack of knowledge."

Deceased

Jesus or Mohammed?

Rod Rutherford

One of the fastest growing religions in the world today is Islam. Islam began in Arabia in A.D. 622. It was started by Mohammed, a camel driver, who could not read or write. Mohammed became discouraged with idol worship in his home city of Mecca. He had learned from Jews and Christians that there is only one true God.

Mohammed claimed the angel Gabriel came to him. He said Gabriel told him he had been chosen to be the last and greatest prophet of Allah. At a temple in Mecca called the "ka'aba," a black stone was worshiped. Three hundred and sixty idols were also worshiped there. One of these idols was "Allah," the moon god. Mohammed said Allah was the one true god that all men should worship.

Mohammed also claimed that Allah revealed his will to him. This message came to him in various ways, according to Mohammed and his followers. Sometimes Gabriel appeared to him. Sometimes he had dreams or visions. Mohammed's followers memorized these messages. After Mohammed died, they were written down. During the days of Caliphs Umar and Uthman, Mohammed's successors, these "revelations" were collected together to form the Qu'ran (or Koran). The Qu'ran is accepted by Moslems as their holy scriptures.

Mohammed and his followers were persecuted in Mecca. They ran away to Medina in 622. Here Mohammed became the ruler of the city. He formed an army and robbed the rich caravans going to Mecca. Before he died, Mohammed's army had conquered all of Arabia. Within a hundred years after his death, Mohammed's followers conquered a great empire stretching from Spain across North Africa and the Middle East all the way to India. People who refused to convert to Islam were either killed or heavily taxed. Therefore,

many became Moslems.

Is Islam the true way to God? Is Allah the true God? Is Mohammed the last and greatest prophet? Is the Qu'ran a true revelation from God or is it the words of men? These are important questions. Thousands of people are seeking the answers to them. Mohammed called Christians and Jews "people of the Book." He taught that the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the Gospels in the Bible are true revelations of God. What does the Bible say about these questions?

The Bible warns that a different message from the Gospel must not be accepted even though it comes from an angel: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8). Mohammed claimed Gabriel gave him his message, but according to the Bible, we must not accept another message even if it comes from an angel. Moslems say the Qu'ran is God's final revelation to man. But the New Testament, which was written more than 600 years before the Qu'ran, claims it is God's final revelation to man (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3). If the Bible is true, then the Qu'ran is false. Mohammed claimed the Bible was true, so according to his own claims, the Qu'ran must be must be false!

Was Mohammed the last and greatest of the prophets of God? Mohammed accepted the books of Moses (the first five books of the Old Testament) as being inspired of God. In one of them, God said He would raise up a prophet like Moses from among his brethren (Deu. 18:15-19). The brethren of Moses were

the children of Israel who were later known as the Jews. Mohammed was not a Jew—he was an Arab. Therefore, he could not be the prophet God raised up among His people. Who is the Prophet God raised up? The apostle Peter tells that this Prophet raised up by God was Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22-26).

Mohammed admitted that Jesus was one of the prophets of God. We know that a true prophet of God does not lie. Therefore, whatever Jesus said must be true. Please notice what Jesus said about Himself: “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). Jesus also said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

Is Allah the one true God? Is Allah the same as the God we read about in the Bible? The answer to both of these questions is “**No!**” The Bible teaches there is one God (Divine Nature or Godhood—Acts 17:29; Jam. 2:19). There are, however, three Persons who possess the Divine Nature. They are the Father (Mat. 6:9; Eph. 4:6), the Son (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 2:9), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3, 4). Moslems reject the teaching of the Bible concerning the Godhead. They deny that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God (John 1:18; 3:16). Moslems claim to accept the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but these books teach that Jesus Christ is God’s Son. The very books which Moslems

agree come from God disagrees with their teaching.

We have learned that according to Mohammed’s own teachings, the Qu’ran cannot be the true word of God, nor can Allah be the true God. Neither can Mohammed be God’s prophet.

Mohammed was a strong leader of men. He formed an army and conquered a great empire. However, he was a false prophet. Therefore, his teachings must be rejected. Mohammed has led millions of people astray. Those who follow him are lost (Mat. 15:13-14). Jesus Christ is the only Way to God (John 14:6). All spiritual blessings are to be found in Him (Eph. 1:3). He alone can give eternal life (1 John 5:11-12).

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Heb. 1:1-2). We must listen to God’s Son today in order to be saved (Acts 3:23). God’s Son, Jesus Christ, tells us we must hear and believe His Gospel (John 3:16; 8:24), repent of all our sins (Luke 13:3), confess Him before men (Mat. 10:32-33), and be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:15-16).

Which will you follow? God or Allah? The Bible or the Qu’ran? Jesus or Mohammed? You must choose! Your eternal happiness depends upon it.

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The 1988-2005 books, all *Defender* issues of 1970, 1972-2004, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided on the CD. 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 \$70 plus postage/handling fee of \$1.25 (total is \$71.25) in which you receive all the lectureship books (less than \$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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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

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Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

E-mail: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Mack Lyon and the Edmond Church of Christ

Ben Justice

I want to be in fellowship with all who are in fellowship with God. I never want to be in fellowship with those who are not in fellowship with God. The Bible issues this command: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). Paul would also write, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Eph. 5:11). Exposing error is never personal but purely doctrinal.

On the former *Let Us Reason List* (a discussion forum over the Internet), on March 15, 2005, one brother asks: "Brethren, I am in need of some help. In the past few weeks, I have been involved in many conversations concerning Mack Lyon and the 'In search of the Lord's way' TV program. In the past few days, I have sent an e-mail to the program to ask some questions and have received no reply. Can anyone give me some information concerning what is going on with Mack, the TV program and the congregation supporting the effort?"

Many are aware of the fact that Mack Lyon airs every Sunday. His program is called "In Search of The Lord's Way." The Edmond Church of Christ, located in Edmond, OK, oversees this work. Without a doubt, the Edmond congregation is **not** sound. The evidence is simply overwhelming. An investigation into their website revealed very quickly that they are not worthy of fellowship from sound brethren and congregations. If the congregation is unsound, then what does this say about the work they oversee—"In Search of The Lord's Way"? Additionally, what does it say about Mack Lyon? If the congregation is un-

sound, then the work is also unsound. Note the following things from their website:

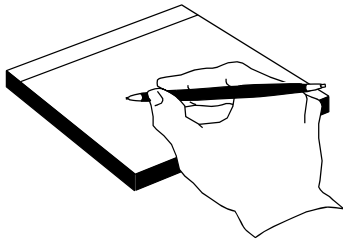
Their Close Ties with Oklahoma Christian University

Only those who have their head buried in the sand do not know about the liberalism that currently plagues Oklahoma Christian University (OCU). Either that or they simply have not been informed. OCU continually has false teachers speak there. They used Dan Bouchelle (preacher at the Central church in Amarillo, TX) as a lectureship speaker in 2005. He has bragged about his fellowship with denominations. Glenn Pemberton, a professor at OCU asserts that the book of Jonah is a "myth." Another teacher by the name of Curt Nicum endorses the TNIV (Today's New International Version). These are just a few of the many things which can be documented.

For years, "In Search of The Lord's Way" has had a luncheon held on the campus at OCU during their lectureship. This year, they changed from a luncheon to an evening dinner so more folks could be there. Of course, **Mack** spoke at the dinner. In 2004, Mack cancelled their annual luncheon during the OCU lectureship because of the protests coming from a large number of preachers over the use of false teachers they were having to speak. According to one brother: "Mack's rationale was that last year's lectureship was 'divisive.' Notice, he didn't object to a specific speaker or any speaker's error." Mack agreed to jump back in bed with the liberals at the 2005 dinner. He assured everyone that he was going to say some things that needed to be said. Mack's speech at the dinner was titled "Truth Is Fallen In The Streets."

(Continued on page 3)

Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
mhatcher@gmail.com

Accountability

The commissioner of the NFL, Roger Goodell, has suspended two players because of their off-field conduct. In handing down his decision, Goodell said, "These players and all members of our league have to make the right choices and decisions in their conduct on a consistent basis." These two players have failed to make those right choices and decisions and are now being held accountable for their actions. In a letter to each of the two players, Goodell told them: "Your conduct has brought embarrassment and ridicule upon yourself..." He is correct that it was their action which caused the events to take place resulting in their suspension.

Don Imus, a radio talk show host, made some comments on air concerning the Rutgers women's basketball team that were inappropriate. As a result of his comments, Imus has been suspended for two weeks. In addition his program has lost some of its advertising, and now looks as though he has lost his radio job. Dom Imus is being held accountable for his comments.

So many times today, people are not held accountable for their actions. These two illustrations seem to be the exception (there are many others) rather than the rule in our society. While what seems to be, might be deceiving, we do know of many situations where people are not held accountable for their actions.

God will hold each person accountable for what they do in life. Paul wrote, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). He would also write, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Peter likewise speaks of those who will give an account of their actions when he writes, "Who shall give account to him

that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (1 Pet. 4:5).

Elders are going to be held accountable to God for the flock. The Hebrews writer states: "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 the elders responsibility to oversee the flock of God: "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). In taking heed to the flock, elders must make sure that the flock is fed properly. They also have the responsibility to guard the flock against wolves. "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" (Acts 20:29-30). They, thus, have the obligation to stop the mouth of the false teacher. "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). Brother elder, you will be held accountable to God for those under your care.

Preachers will be held accountable to God for what they preach. Preachers have the God-given duty to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). In the preaching of God's Word, the preacher is to reprove, rebuke and exhort. *Reprove* is "to convict, to prove one I wrong and thus to shame him" (Zodhiates), or "rebuke, expose; refute, show one's fault, implying that there is a convincing of that fault" (Swanson). *Rebuke* is "to express strong disapproval of someone, rebuke, reprove, censure also speak seriously, warn in order to prevent an action or bring one to an end....Punish" (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich), or "rebuke, denounce, express strong disapproval...command, give a warning implying a threat" (Swanson). The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* states that "the word comes to mean 'to blame,' 'to reprove.'" The preacher is also to *exhort* which is "to aid, help, comfort, encourage" (Zodhiates), or "encourage, console, urge" (Swanson). Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich state: "to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage...to make a strong request for

something, request, implore, entreat...to instill someone with courage or cheer, comfort, encourage, cheer up.” It seems as if we have fewer preachers who will do these things which God sets forth for the preacher to do in preaching the Word. They certainly will be held accountable to God for allowing error to creep in while they sit preaching “peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). However, those (preacher, elders, members) who condemn the preachers who are doing what God says in reproving, rebuking, and exhorting will not escape the wrath of God. God will hold them accountable. When faithful brethren have reproved and rebuked the sins of Dave Miller (his false teachings) and those who would stand with him to support, aid, and fellowship him; those faithful brethren have been viciously attacked by those supporters of brother Miller. One brother said that publications had printed lies about brother Miller, although no one (including this preacher brother) has *stepped up to the plate* to **prove** that any lies have been printed. Brother preacher, you will be held accountable to God for what you preach and also whom you fellowship.

Members are going to be held accountable to God for what they do. While preachers are to preach the Word and elders are to feed the flock (including making sure that what the preacher preaches is according to Truth); members have a responsibility in these matters also. Luke records of the Bereans that “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). Every Christian (every person) has the duty to “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tm. 2:15). Then every Christian must follow that which is right—not simply what the preacher, elder, or someone else says.

So many in today’s world simply follow what they are told to do or follow others. We are also seeing this in the church today—elders, preachers, brethren simply following the crowd and doing what is popular or what will bring them adulation of man instead of God.

Right is seldom popular. However, if we have a desire to enter heaven one day, then we will have to do what God expects us to do. That will include bringing our mind and attitudes in line with God’s mind and attitudes, acting in accordance with the Scriptures, and speaking the oracles of God. This will also include our fellowshiping all those who are in fellowship with God and not fellowshiping (withdrawing our fellowship) from those who are not in fellowship with Him. Brethren, we will be held accountable to God for what

we do in our life. Let us make sure that we are acceptable to Him. MH

(Continued from page 1)

I have the transcript and have read his speech. The speech was a good one in that it addressed post-modernism and the moral decline of America. However, Mack touched neither top, side, nor bottom of any of the compromisers and false teachings occurring at OCU. The same brother mentioned above went to the speech and personally heard what Mack had to say. He noted that “Mack was silent as a tomb about any false teaching at OCU.” The fact is, Mack will not say a word about these things, because the Edmond church is so closely allied with OCU. In fact, Glover Shipp is one of the elders at the Edmond congregation. Shipp was the former editor of the *Christian Chronicle* (a paper put out by OCU), which has long been a mouthpiece for every liberal and false teacher in the church.

At the Edmond congregation, they have a big children’s ministry program. One thing that is a part of the children’s ministry is “Camp Impact.” Their website reports, “Oklahoma Christian University is the site of this great work of camp for children that have completed 3rd-6th grades.”

Children’s Ministry

I wish to elaborate further concerning Edmond’s “Children’s Ministry.” They have “Children’s Bible Hour,” otherwise known as “Children’s Church.” Their website states the following:

One of the highlights of our Children’s Ministry is Children’s Bible Hour. Children ages 3 years old through 2nd grade enjoy this exciting worship time designed just for them. Lively singing helps children learn more about God’s love and his work in our world. **Puppet friends** teach valuable lessons from God’s Word; children have opportunities to serve by bringing pennies for the penny jar and food for the Hungry Hippo.

Children’s Bible Hour is offered each Sunday during the second worship service and the evening service (emph—BJ).

Concerning Edmond’s Vacation Bible School, their website states: “We are proud to offer one of the most unique and exciting Vacation Bible Schools around. Children from 3 years old to 5th grade are the focus of our whole church family each year at this time. Nightly **drama presentations** teach the selected Bible story” (emph—BJ).

The above reveals that the Edmond congregation has no problem with puppets and drama presentations. These things are nowhere authorized in the New Testa-

ment.

The Edmond congregation also has another program for their young people called “Leadership Training for Christ,” or LTC for short. Their website states:

LTC...is aimed at developing Christian leadership skills in young people. Our teens spend weeks in preparation for various events like Bible Quiz, **Puppets, Chorus, Drama, Art**, Bible Reading, Song Leading, and Sermon Delivery. **On Easter weekend, we travel to Tulsa for the big LTC Convention** (emph—BJ).

Immorality at the Edmond Church

I saw an appalling thing on Edmond’s website. There is a picture of seven people. There are four men and three women. Three of the four men have no shirts on and one woman has a bikini top on. Get this: They named this page of their website “**sexycampers**.” This is beyond despicable. These people look no better than the world, in fact, they are no better than the world. Appalling indeed!

The Use of Non-Christians

The Edmond church is “ministry oriented.” They have “ministry that” and “ministry this.” As noted above, they have “**Children’s Ministry**.” They also have “**Campus Ministry**,” and “**Family Life Ministry**.” On their “**Ministry Highlights**” page of their website, it is noted that they use “**Financial Peace University**.” Nationally known financial counselor Dave Ramsey teaches a course on finances. I personally have listened to Dave Ramsey for many years on the radio and his material is absolutely excellent. He has written some excellent books that I encourage everyone to read. However, he has absolutely no place in the Lord’s church for he is not even a Christian. He belongs to a denominational church in Nashville, TN. I have heard many times from Dave Ramsey on the radio teaching that Christians have an obligation to “tithe” and many other false doctrines. Why in the world would a congregation of the Lord’s church use non-Christian, denominational people to teach for them? May I ask at this point, “How can a congregation support ‘In Search of The Lord’s Way,’ even though the overseeing congregation is liberal?” To support one is to support the other.

The Edmond Church Solicits and Receives Funds from Liberal Churches

“In Search of The Lord’s Way,” as we all realize, is an extremely large work which must be funded. It is true that the Edmond congregation gladly receives funds from anybody, even rank liberals. Brother Dennis Sargent wrote the following: “Not too far from Pomeroy is the congregation that serves to receive all the funds from area congregations who wish to support

the Search program. Never once have I seen any qualifying statement, soliciting participation from only sound brethren and congregations.” Brother Dennis also stated, “The receiving congregation for our area of the country is itself liberal. The TV scrolls the names of numerous erring congregations, mostly Moderate but some even Rank liberals, all of which send monies to support SEARCH.” The Bible teaches that fellowship between brethren consists of giving and receiving (Phi. 4:15), and since we are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11), how then can a congregation solicit and receive funds from erring congregations? If it does not make any difference, then we could solicit and receive funds from any denomination. If not, why not?

Mack Lyon’s Fellowship with Error

Mack Lyon regularly fellowships Oklahoma Christian University—an ultra liberal school. However, this is certainly not all that has been documented by sound brethren. It has been documented that Mack Lyon is erring with regard to the Christian Church. In August 2004, brother Darrell Broking wrote Mack an e-mail asking questions concerning his teaching and practices regarding events which had recently transpired with the Christian Church in Adairsville, GA. Brother Broking wrote the following:

Brethren, I just received the latest issue of The Search Light and noticed that someone who is unnamed, my guess is that it was Mack, went to Adairsville, GA, whereat viewers of Search from the Christian Church denomination came/are coming “to the church of Christ.” My question is how did they/are they coming to the church of Christ? Are they being baptized according to the Scriptures or are they simply repenting of being in error?

Darrell questioned brother Lyon as “how one comes out of the Christian Church denomination into the Lord’s church?” Mack Lyon wrote an e-mail back to Darrell. Darrell then e-mailed Mack again with further questions. Mack responded back. It was apparent after having personally read this e-mail exchange myself that Mack considers those in the Christian Church as “erring brethren” who only need to repent of worshiping in error. In other words, Mack does not believe they must be baptized. In this e-mail exchange it is obvious that Mack had led those Christian Church folk to believe their *baptism* was scriptural and that they needed only to repent of having worshiped in error. Too, the Northside brethren at Calhoun, GA, know very well what took place there at Adairsville. They, in fact, had some involvement in trying to clear up the confusion that Mack caused.

Way back in 1999, Mack Lyon was exposed and

marked in *Contending For The Faith* for speaking alongside false teachers. One such false teacher was Steve Flatt—the President of the ultra liberal David Lipscomb University. Steve Flatt has spoken alongside Rubel Shelly and other rank liberals at the now defunct “Nashville Jubilee.” It is documented that Mack spoke at the Lipscomb lectures, commending them for their “strong stand” and “contributions to the Lord’s cause.”

Mack Lyon’s Exchanges

There have been several letter exchanges between brethren and Mack Lyon. Several brethren have written him asking him questions. In reading Mack’s replies, it is quite apparent that Mack takes great offense in anyone questioning him. He will promptly rebuke you and give you a good slap on the hand. One brother stated that Mack’s reply to his letter was “very angry and inconsistent with his ‘public’ persona.”

On September 3, 2003, brother Ken Chumbley, local evangelist for the Belvedere congregation in Belvedere, SC, wrote Mack asking him some very important and pertinent questions. Brother Chumbley asked about the introduction to the Search TV program. In the introduction, one will notice that there is a statement that says, “The Bible is a revelation of God’s way.” As brother Chumbley aptly pointed out, “That statement is erroneous. The Bible is not ‘a’ revelation of God’s way, but ‘the’ revelation of His way.” Brother Chumbley also asked Mack several questions about fellowship. For example:

Does the Edmond church support the stand of the Christian Chronicle? Also, does Bailly McBride, the current editor, have his membership at the Edmond church? Does the Edmond church have fellowship with the church at Quail Springs that is known for its fellowship with denominationalism and has been featured prominently in the Christian Chronicle? Have the elders of the Edmond church spoken out against this false teaching of the Quail Springs church? Further, what association or fellowship does the Edmond church have with those involved with Oklahoma Christian University?

Brother Chumbley asked these questions directly to Mack. Brother Chumbley asked legitimate questions. If the Edmond congregation (and Mack) want congregations and brethren to support “In Search of The

Lord’s Way,” then they owe it to the brotherhood to answer these questions. Mack Lyon did write brother Chumbley back. Here is the crowning jewel of Mack’s reply to brother Chumbley. Mack let it be known that he did not want what he had written to be publicized. The Belvedere congregation was supporting “In Search of The Lord’s Way,” but after having read Mack’s response and noting that the tone of his letter was combative and that he outright avoided answering their questions, they promptly ceased their support of this work. However, brother Chumbley wrote a response back to Mack. Brother Chumbley rightly asked Mack, “Why would you not want brethren to know what you have written? Might it offend some of your friends and supporters? Could such damage your ability to raise funds because of the nature of the matters discussed?” I believe brother Chumbley hit the nail on the head!

The above examples are just a few of the many angry replies of Mack to other brethren. This is typical, though, of the *loving* liberal. It is unfortunate that congregations continue to support “In Search of The Lord’s Way” with Mack Lyon and the Edmond Church of Christ. It may be true that many are not aware of their errors and compromisers. However, when an eldership (leadership) of a congregation is not aware of these things, then shame on them! They ought to be! They ought to take the time to thoroughly investigate works before deciding to support them. However, many have the attitude that “the end justifies the means.” Many look at Mack’s work as getting the truth out to the world, and so, it is worthy of support, no matter what compromises are present. Brethren, this is the devil’s doctrine, yet many brethren have swallowed this lie hook, line, and sinker.

I will admit that I have never heard Mack preach any error, but this is not the issue. The issue is fellowship! Fellowship is truly one of the biggest issues facing the Lord’s church today. Let me personally say that I have absolutely no ill will against Mack Lyon. This is not about personalities; it is about truth! It is my firm conviction, based upon the evidence, that Mack Lyon or the Edmond Church of Christ should in no way be supported by sound brethren!

10008 Moss Oak Rd; Sullivan, MO 63080

Silence is...Golden?

Dennis (Skip) Francis

The old adage “silence is golden” may be true in some settings and situations, but there are obviously times when such is not the case.

When a person is prone to inappropriate speech,

silence can be *golden*. “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile” (1 Pet. 3:10). In such a

(Continued on page 7)

A Time To Build

June 9 - 13, 2007

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7:45 PM	A Mind To Build	Geoff Litke

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10:00 AM	Building Better Worship	Michael Hatcher
<i>Lunch Break</i>		
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<i>Dinner Break</i>		
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7:45 PM	Building While Battling	David Brown

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11:00 AM	Building Better Elders	Terry York
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AUDIO, VIDEO TAPES, AND DVD

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes, video tapes, and 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.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the Bellview elders and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, bookstores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

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.

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case, silence would be the appropriate mode and method.

Silence may be *golden* when one is prone to foolish words. "O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom" (Job 13:5). Foolish people can even improve their reputation by silence. "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: *and* he that shutteth his lips is *esteemed* a man of understanding" (Pro. 17:28). It was once said, "It is better to keep your mouth shut and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt." Benjamin Franklin wrote, in his *Poor Richard's Almanac*, "It is ill-manners to silence a fool, and cruelty to let him go on."

There are times when silence is **not** *golden*, though it may fade into a paler color similar to gold (yellow?). There are many today that seem to believe that remaining silent is *golden* when they are confronted with problems of inconsistency or downright error.

Almost two years ago, the erudite co-editors of *The Gospel Journal* were forced to resign from their positions. Many sound and faithful men attempted to ascertain the reasons behind this resignation by writing to the various board members of that publication. They were told, as I was, to "ask Curtis," a reference to Board President Curtis Cates. Curtis was asked repeatedly, by me and many others, to answer for the Board as to why these resignations happened. To date, no answer is forthcoming.

Brother Cates, along with Board Vice President Joseph Meador also agreed, in writing, to continue their support of Apologetics Press with false teacher, Dave Miller, at the helm. When asked about said support, brother Cates continues his "silence is golden" rule, even to the dividing of the brotherhood.

Not even an eldership can force a preacher or member that they oversee to violate the Lord's injunctions. The Scriptures plainly teach that we are to "*be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Brother Cates has been asked repeatedly for a public response to his public support of a known false teacher, yet refuses to "give an answer." We are told that

he will answer "privately," however, the support letter he signed was not done "privately." He must wrongly believe this "let sleeping dogs lie" policy will ultimately result in the problem just going away. Unfortunately for brother Cates, this dog is not asleep!

A similar situation occurred recently when brother Terry York, elder for the Northside Church of Christ in Calhoun, GA., had his reputation publicly sullied by Barry Gilreath, Sr., Director of Gospel Broadcast Network. In an email to the Contending for the Faith Lectures Open Forum, brother Gilreath implied that brother York lied about his conversations with David B. Smith, the preacher under his shepherdship. The previous day, brother York had made several statements regarding a telephone conversation he had with brother Smith, and it was these statements to which brother Gilreath referred to when he said that he "stood by" what he had said the previous day. Subsequently, Chad Dollahite, employee of GBN, continued this character assassination on the "Sons of Demas" e-mail list. He was given irrefutable evidence that brother York had **not** lied and was fairly characterizing brother Smith's reactions to what had been said. Brethren Gilreath and Dollahite have, like brother Cates before them, suddenly developed a case of *lockjaw*.

Terry York's good name and reputation has been put under a shadow by allegations made via brethren from GBN, and these allegations have been proven false. Good Christian practice would dictate that those who made such allegations would retract them, yet these brethren have continued to allow these allegations to stand.

Is silence **really** "golden" when the brotherhood is divided because of it? Is silence **really** "golden" when the names and reputations of good men are spoken evil of because of it? Such silence is merely an attempt at keeping oneself out of the spotlight. Regarding such, we should all remember the words of our Lord and Savior: "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:20-21).

105 Robin Lane, Suffolk, VA 23434

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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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Fellowship Between Bellview and Milestone

Introduction

In the March 2007 issue of *Banner of Truth*, Alan Adams, the associate editor, wrote an article titled “Fighting for Their Rats,” along with a section titled “Reluctant Addendum” (14-16). In the article brother Adams identified himself as a teacher in the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies and an elder and member of the Milestone Church of Christ. This article, and in particular his “Reluctant Addendum,” was very critical of the Bellview Church of Christ and its elders. Thus, we feel obligated to respond to his erroneous remarks. At the close of this response, pages 8-27, will be supplemental documents including a copy of brother Adam’s article, “A Review of Fellowship Actions Between the Bellview and Ensley Congregations,” and pertinent letters.

The War Between The States

Much of brother Adam’s article “Fighting for Their Rats” is unworthy of comment because it relates to his uncomplimentary remarks about the Confederate soldiers, their unsophisticated language, and their poor economic state. However, brother Adams states: “Speaking only of those I know about, there have been so many battles waged between brethren during my thirty plus years of preaching. Such conflicts are apparently inevitable (cf Matt 18:7), and I concur that sometimes it is the right thing to ‘fight’ and ‘war’ (cf. 1Tim 6:12; 2Co 10:4). Let us be sure, though, that we are not marching into battle on someone else’s pretext, or for that matter, pretense.”

In his “Reluctant Addendum” brother Adams speaks as if he were on the front line when he speaks of “the late Max Miller and friends’ rebellion in 1988.” In reality, he was on the opposite side of the world in Taiwan when he began “marching into battle on someone else’s pretext, or for that matter, pre-

tense.”

Fellowship

In brother Adam’s “Reluctant Addendum,” he is reviewing an article written by David P. Brown in the February 2007 issue of *Contending For The Faith* (a publication to which we would recommend every concerned Christian subscribe). He quotes brother Brown saying, “Milestone and Bellview congregations have had no fellowship for years.” This statement by brother Brown is an accurate statement which reflects the situation here in Pensacola between the two congregations: Bellview and Milestone (formerly Ensley).

Erroneous Examples of Fellowship

Brother Adams cites some examples which he appears to believe show that fellowship has been restored. However, scriptural restoration of fellowship requires repentance on the part of the Ensley (Milestone) elders who initially broke it.

Brother Adams appeals to the fact that “several Bellview members have several times attended our lectures and meetings” and “several Milestone members have likewise attended Bellview functions.” We cannot say about the Bellview members attending their “lectures and meetings” as we have not attended. They have attended some of our functions. Brother Adams needs to realize that attendance at meetings such as he describes does not restore fellowship nor indicate fellowship. Brethren, if an atheist or a member of a denominational group attends one of your Gospel meetings or one of your regular services, does that place you in fellowship with that atheist or denominational group? When the apostles went into the synagogues during the early church, did their presence mean they were in fellowship (in a spiritual aspect) with Judaism? Certainly not! What if

(Continued on page 3)

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The lectureship book, *A Time To Build* will be available to those attending the *Bellview Lectures* at a reduced rate of \$10. Others may purchase the book at the pre-publication price of \$12 prior to June 30, 2007, or afterwards at the regular price of \$15. It will contain 30 chapters and approximately 440 pages. Everyone will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

AUDIO, VIDEO TAPES, AND DVD

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes, video tapes, and 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.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the Bellview elders and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, bookstores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

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.

(Continued from page 1)

wayward members of the church from whom fellowship had been withdrawn began attending services once again. They would not be in fellowship with the congregation until repentance on their part takes place.

We encourage members of the community who are not Christians to attend our functions, but that does not mean that we are in fellowship with them if they accept our invitation. Simply because brethren Adams, Burleson, and others from Milestone have attended a few of Bellview's meetings or lectureships, or some of Bellview members attend their functions does not mean that Bellview is in fellowship with Milestone.

Brother Adams then twists a situation that took place during a funeral several years ago. He states: "Milestone's preacher, Kenneth Burleson, was asked by a now deceased Bellview elder to speak at his wife's funeral. At that service, Milestone members were asked to stay and 'eat' with Bellview members." The funeral under consideration was that of Hairston Brantley's wife, Inez Brantley. First, at the time of the funeral, brother Hairston Brantley was no longer an elder of the Bellview congregation as is implied by brother Adams. He had resigned August 30, 1995, and his wife passed away on October 5, 1998. Although he had been a longtime elder of this congregation, when his wife died and Ken Burleson "was asked...to speak," he was not an elder. Second, brother and sister Hairston Brantley had three sons: Elward, Paul, and Ervin. Paul Brantley is one of the elders at the Bellview congregation and was at the time of Inez Brantley's death and Elward Brantley was/is one of the deacons. However, Ervin Brantley, at the time of his mother's death, was one of the elders of the Ensley (now Milestone) congregation. Paul and Elward Brantley did not know that Ken Burleson was to have any part of the funeral till the day it took place. Brother Paul Brantley stated that if he had known beforehand that brother Burleson was to speak, he would have tried to prevent him from having any part in the funeral. Since no one from Bellview knew of his participation till the funeral, the family asked brother Michael Hatcher to inform brother Burleson to **only** read the obituary and **nothing else**. Brother Hatcher informed brother Burleson what the family requested—to only read the obituary—a request brother Burleson ignored.

Third, brother Adams tries to imply fellowship between the two congregations because some Milestone members were asked to stay and eat. He writes,

"At that service, Milestone members were asked to stay and 'eat' with Bellview members." Brother Adams statement is misleading at this point. The Bellview congregation prepared a meal for those attending the funeral. A general statement was made which invited **all** of those who attended the funeral to stay and eat. This invitation was not restricted to just Bellview and Milestone members, but also included nonmembers. Additionally, because Ervin Brantley, a member and elder at Ensley/Milestone, was a member of the family, he along with some of his friends from Ensley/Milestone came to eat at the family meal to which **everyone** had been invited. This meal cannot be considered a determination of fellowship, and if anyone did, they should not have stayed to eat.

After this meal, brother Ken Burleson and brother Michael Hatcher stood out on the parking lot of the Bellview building for over an hour and a half and discussed the problems between the two congregations. Brother Hatcher reiterated at that time the same thing which the Bellview elders had been telling the Ensley elders for several years as to what was necessary to restore fellowship between the two congregations. Brother Hatcher also asked brother Burleson what Ensley considered necessary on Bellview's part to have fellowship restored. Brother Burleson replied that he did not know, but would find out and send brother Hatcher the information. The only information brother Hatcher received from brother Burleson concerned Ira Rice and events in California. Why have such discussion if, as brother Adams implies, the two congregations have always been in fellowship with each other?

Withdrawal Of Fellowship

Next brother Adams' states: "On top of all that, in recent times we received a communication from the Bellview church which among other things, explicitly says Bellview has never withdrawn fellowship from Ensley [Milestone]. Being an elder at Milestone, I know for a fact that Milestone has never withdrawn from Bellview." The "communication" which brother Adams probably refers to is titled "A Review of Fellowship Actions Between The Bellview and Ensley Congregations." This "communication" was included in a letter sent to the Milestone elders on January 18, 2006, at the request of brother Tony Edwards "to make one more attempt to restore fellowship with you, the Milestone elders." If there was fellowship between the two congregations, then why would there be any need to make another "attempt to restore fellowship"?

Please carefully consider the review of fellowship which will be reproduced immediately after brother Adams' article. The purpose of the *review* was to keep a chronological record of the "actions which have been taken by the Bellview and Ensley elderships to restore the fellowship which has been broken between the congregations since 1987." Why did brother Adams not mention that part of the "communication"? The first entry is from April 1987, which is where brother Adams takes his statement. A split had taken place in the Bellview congregation with some members leaving Bellview and going to Ensley. The Bellview elders "received four letters, signed by several of those members who had left, in which it was stated by these individuals that they were no longer in fellowship with the Bellview elders." If you withdraw fellowship from the elders of a congregation, you also withdraw from the congregation of which they oversee. These former members of Bellview "were accepted as members of the Ensley congregation by the Ensley elders, this resulted in breaking the fellowship which previously existed between the two congregations." When questions were asked by the Bellview members about fellowship with the Ensley congregation, the Bellview elders made a public announcement to the congregation that "Bellview did not withdraw fellowship from the Ensley congregation, but Ensley did withdraw from Bellview, as is evidenced by four letters from members at Ensley stating that they were withdrawing from the Bellview elders." This is brother Adam's *proof* that Bellview has never withdrawn fellowship from Ensley/Milestone. However, that statement was made in April 1987. There is more to the story than simply what was stated to the congregation at that time, and brother Adams knows it.

Brother Adams raises the question as to whether or not fellowship has been withdrawn. He states that as one of the Milestone elders he **knows for a fact** that Ensley/Milestone has never withdrawn from Bellview along with his statement about Bellview having never withdrawn from them. There is the recurring problem for brother Adams which comes from Ensley's own letters. In numerous letters sent from Ensley to Bellview, the elders at Ensley recognize that Ensley and Bellview are not in fellowship. The same is true in the letters Bellview elders sent to the Ensley elders. As early as August 4, 1991, the Ensley elders knew there was no fellowship between the two congregations when they wrote that they were "willing to meet with your

Elders to attempt to work out the things that have caused the two congregations to have no fellowship with each other." Staying with just what the Ensley elders have written to the Bellview elders through the years, we skip to their letter of October 19, 1994, in which they write, "We have been informed that it is Ensley which does not want the broken fellowship which exists between the two congregations restored. Although there may not have been any formal breaking of fellowship, in actuality, there is no fellowship... Brethren, we, the Ensley Elders, sincerely would like to have all matters which now divide us cleared up and forgotten so we could again have the fellowship between us which God demands." Then in their letter of March 8, 1995, they write, "fellowship does not now exist between the two congregations." To try to imply as brother Adams has in his "Reluctant Addendum" that the two congregations are in fellowship with each other and always have been appears to be insincere at best.

Now consider what Bellview has written to Ensley. These statements also show that even as Ensley realized there was no fellowship between the two congregations, so did Bellview. In the letter dated August 6, 1991, in response to a request to meet, the Bellview elders write, "In an attempt to work out the things which you mentioned 'have caused the two congregations to have no fellowship with each other.' we [sic] request you send us a list of those things which you believe need to be discussed." There is the recognition and acceptance of the fact that the two congregations have no fellowship with each other. Then on August 14, 1991, Bellview responded to the letter from Ensley stating, "we restate our desire to see an end of those things which you mentioned 'have caused the two congregations to have no fellowship with each other.'" Again there is confirmation that Bellview recognized there was no fellowship between the two congregations. Also, in this letter the Bellview elders state: "We are happy to meet and, as you said, 'discuss a basis by which all these differences may be resolved.'"

August 23, 1991 Meeting

Once again, brother Adams has spoken as one who was on the front line of "the late Max Miller and friends' rebellion in 1988" when the Ensley (Milestone) and Bellview elders met on August 23, 1991. However, he was only recently appointed as an elder of the Milestone congregation. He was not present at the August 23, 1991, meeting between the Bellview and

Ensley/Milestone elders.

This meeting was for the expressed purpose of seeing what it would take to restore fellowship between the two congregations. If the two congregations are and have been in fellowship all this time (as brother Adams implies), there would have been no reason for the two elderships to meet to discuss the restoration of fellowship. There are two important aspects of the fellowship situation which took place at that meeting.

In that meeting there was a discussion of certain letters written in 1987 and signed by some of the members who had left the Bellview congregation and placed membership at Ensley withdrawing fellowship from the Bellview elders. During this meeting, brother Paul Brantley asked the Ensley elders if they agreed with and supported the letters withdrawing fellowship from the Bellview elders. Each one of the Ensley elders affirmed that they were in support of those letters. By such affirmation, the Ensley elders did withdraw fellowship from the Bellview elders/congregation. Brother Paul Brantley stated that if the Ensley elders supported those letters, then the Bellview elders and congregation can have no fellowship with Ensley.

Now notice the Bellview letter to Ensley dated October 26, 1994, in which it was stated: "The Bellview elders have never withdrawn fellowship from the Ensley congregation. Ensley has withdrawn fellowship from Bellview as is evidenced by Bellview's receipt of four letters from members of the Ensley congregation in 1987 in which they stated their determination to withdraw from the Bellview elders. One of those letters was even received from and signed by one of your present elders. At a meeting with you elders in the fall of 1991, all five of you confirmed your agreement to that withdrawal letter. Therefore, the Ensley elders have withdrawn fellowship from the Bellview elders." In their response to this statement, Ensley wrote in their letter to Bellview dated March 8, 1995: "You also say you have never disfellowshipped [sic] Ensley. If you mean you have never sent a formal letter of withdrawal of fellowship then you are correct, but fellowship does not now exist between the two congregations." Thus, there is the recognition that there has not been a "formal letter of withdrawal" sent from Bellview to Ensley withdrawing fellowship, there is a recognition that Bellview did not and does not have fellowship with Ensley. One of the two reasons there is no fellowship is that the Ensley/Milestone elders' agreed to and supported those letters of withdrawal from the Bellview

elders/congregation.

The other important aspect of that meeting concerned those from whom Bellview had withdrawn fellowship. In 1988, the Bellview elders scripturally marked and withdrew fellowship from Max Miller (who has since gone on to his reward), Mike Kiser, and Ernest Underwood. Between the withdrawal from these men and the meeting in 1991, Ensley gave support and continued to fellowship in particular brethren Miller and Kiser. (This fellowship continued after that 1991 meeting as well.) When one fellowships individuals who have been withdrawn from, they cannot stay in fellowship with those who withdrew from the individuals to begin with. Thus, Bellview and Ensley cannot be in fellowship because Ensley fellowshipped those from whom Bellview withdrew. Therefore, in the 1991 meeting with Ensley, the Bellview elders told the Ensley elders that if they continued to fellowship those men from whom we withdrew, we (the Bellview congregation) cannot fellowship them (Ensley elders and congregation). The Ensley elders stated their intention to continue to fellowship and use these men. Again, the Bellview elders let it be known to the Ensley elders that as long as they continued to do so, Bellview could not have fellowship with them. Again, while there has not been a "formal letter of withdrawal" sent from Bellview to Ensley withdrawing fellowship, they were told in the meeting which took place between the two elderships in 1991 that Bellview could not fellowship Ensley.

Letters Following The Meeting

Following the meeting in 1991, there were no letters written between the two congregations for a few years. Upon receiving a letter from Ensley dated October 19, 1994, the Bellview elders responded on October 26, 1994. The Bellview elders wrote, "If you elders truly want to improve fellowship between Bellview and Ensley congregations, we suggest the following: 1. As an eldership, repudiate and see that the above mentioned letters of withdrawal are retracted. 2. Stop using the three preachers, brothers Miller, Kiser, and Underwood, in your meetings and lectureships.... We encourage the Ensley congregation to recognize this action [Bellview's scriptural withdrawal from these men] so the souls of these three men may possibly be saved." These are the same two points made during the meeting with the Ensley elders in 1991. These two points have remained consistent through the years both in letters Bellview has written to Ensley/Milestone along with letters written to others about the fellowship situa-

tion between the two congregations. In fact, these two points were made as late as January 18, 2006 in a letter to the Milestone elders at the request of Tony Edwards to “make one more attempt to restore fellowship.”

Additional Letter

Recently some have used a letter written by brother Ervin Brantley to *prove* that all the problems between the two elderships have been corrected. He wrote a letter to the Bellview elders dated July 25, 2004, in which he as an individual repented of having written a letter of disfellowship from the Bellview elders (Hairston Brantley, Bill Gallaher, and Fred Stancliff). His individual action had nothing to do with the Ensley/Milestone eldership. He was not writing on behalf of the eldership but on his own behalf. In the meeting in 1991 the Ensley/Milestone eldership confirmed their agreement with the letters (more than just brother Brantley’s) withdrawing fellowship from the Bellview elders. Even though brother Brantley repented of “having written the letter of withdrawal,” the Ensley/Milestone eldership has never repudiated their support of those letters. In Bellview’s response to Ervin Brantley’s letter dated August 1, 2004, we pleaded with brother Brantley to use his “influence to encourage your fellow elders at Milestone to do as we suggested in our letter to the elders of the Ensley Church of Christ on October 26, 1994.” We then quoted what had been stated in that previous letter to Ensley, showing that these two matters have remained constant through the years. We then added, “Since brother Miller has died since the date of the above letter, we believe that it would now be appropriate for the Milestone eldership to acknowledge its error in extending fellowship to these three men in the past, and to express its determination not to extend fellowship to brother Kiser or brother Underwood in the future unless they repent of their actions toward the Bellview congregation.” Thus, fellowship has not been restored.

Brother Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

Brother Adams turns his pen to attack Ira Y. Rice who has passed on to his reward and is no longer able to defend himself. He states that brother Rice “was by a church in California charged with specific sins and withdrawn from, and [no] repentance [was] forthcoming...” Please read on page 27 the actual letter and charges to which brother Adams refers. As you can see the Downtown San Francisco Church of Christ withdrew fellowship from Kaan Y. Chin (who later re-

pented). The withdrawal letter only mentions brother Rice (along with a few others) as aiding the formation of a new congregation. The letter actually states: “We will have no further fellowship with brother Chin,” but does not say that about brother Rice. Additionally, brother Rice flatly denied the charges that he had been withdrawn from. In 1989, the elders of the Pearl Street congregation in Denton, Texas, offered to pay the travel expenses of those who were making these charges against brother Rice to come to Texas and discuss the situation. Those in California refused the offer. Since others were making these erroneous charges (like brother Adams has made), brother Rice made a trip to California at his own expense to try and meet with them and work out all the problems. Upon his return, brother Rice stated that the ones making the charges refused to meet with him.

Bobby Liddell

Brother Adams turns his attention to our former preacher when he writes, “Brother Bobby Liddell preached at Bellview for a number of years, and according to Milestone’s preacher of many years, Kenneth Burleson, he and brother Bobby had a cordial relationship including mutual participation in preachers’ gatherings initiated by brother Burleson; this again belying brother Brown’s ‘no fellowship’ assertion.”

Brother Liddell served well as the Bellview preacher for over six years. During that time we know that he sometimes met with brother Burleson in an effort to restore fellowship between the congregations. Notice also that brother Adams’ statement says that these *gatherings* were initiated by Burleson. All this shows is that brother Liddell was maintaining a “cordial relationship.” It does not show that fellowship had been restored. Brother Liddell was maintaining this “cordial relationship” in an effort to **encourage the restoration** of fellowship. This is exactly what 2 Thessalonians 3:15 teaches us to do: “Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.” However, until repentance on the part of the Milestone elders takes place, fellowship cannot and will not be restored.

Lectureship Speakers At Milestone

Brother Adams then states: “Brother Brown charges that the son [Bobby Liddell’s son, Tony] was speaking with people ‘...that sought the undoing of Bellview all of the time Bobby was their preacher.’ As said, I am an elder at Milestone; and, if brother Brown can point out anybody here, or on our lectureship, who has sought the demise of a sister church, I will do my

duty.”

The Ensley/Milestone elders supported those letters which unscripturally withdrew fellowship from a sister congregation. Those who spoke on the lecture-ships at Ensley/Milestone, knowing that they had unscripturally withdrawn fellowship from their sister congregation, are a partaker with them in that unscriptural withdrawal (2 John 9-11). Thus, as brother Brown stated they did seek the undoing of the Bellview congregation.

Does brother Adams not believe that he is contributing to the possible demise of any congregation when he writes his article about them such as his article “Fighting for Their Rats” with his “Reluctant Addendum”? If brother Adams truly means what he wrote: “I will do my duty,” then we suggest:

1. He should start by repenting of having written what he did in his article “Fighting for Their Rats” and with his “Reluctant Addendum.”

2. He should encourage his fellow elders to take the following actions which have been consistent through the years and again noted in our letter to the Milestone elders dated January 18, 2006:

- a. The Milestone elders have not yet repudiated the four letters which were signed by nine mem-

bers of the Ensley congregation in April 1987 in which they stated their determination to withdraw from the Bellview elders. The Ensley elders (now Milestone) verbally confirmed their agreement with those withdrawal letters in their meeting with the Bellview elders in the fall of 1991.

- b. The Milestone elders have neither acknowledged their error in extending fellowship to brothers Miller, Kizer, and Underwood in the past, nor have they expressed determination not to extend fellowship to brother Kizer and brother Underwood in the future unless these two men repent of their actions toward the Bellview congregation.

Conclusion

It is our fervent prayer that the Milestone elders will take care of these two matters so fellowship can be restored. As of the date this is written, neither one of the two things necessary for fellowship to be restored has occurred. Till such time as they are scripturally taken care of, there remains no fellowship between Bellview and Milestone.

Signed by the Elders

Paul Brantley

Fred Stancliff

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Fighting for Their Rats

The Killer Angels is a historical novel about the horrible carnage at Gettysburg, that decisive battle of the Civil War. Our title is actually a sadly humorous quotation from that book.

At one point during the battle, a subordinate tells Union Colonel, Lawrence Chamberlain about an exchange he had had with a Confederate prisoner:

...you want to hear a funny thing? We were talking to these three Reb prisoners, trying to be sociable, you know? But mainly trying to figure 'em out. They were farm-type fellers. We asked them why they were fighting this war, thinkin' on slavery and all, and one fella said they was fightin' for their 'rats'... They kept on insistin' they wasn't fightin' for no slaves, they were fighting for their 'rats.' (Shaara, 170-171).

Further conversation, the subordinate said, had clarified that the Rebs were fighting for their "rights"—which to the unsophisticated non-southern ear may sound like "rats"—but, that they could not identify the specific rights which they believed were being violated.

When the battle was over and the field was strewn with corpses, yet another subordinate said to the same colonel: "How can they fight so hard, them Johnnies, and all for slavery?" (Shaara, 343). Then the first subordinate said,

When you ask them prisoners, they never talk about slavery. But, Lawrence how do you explain that? What else is the war about?... If it weren't for the slaves, there'd never have been no war, now would there?" (*Ibid.*).

Even granting that other factors contributed to this awful war, it would be hard to contest this man's conclusion. What a horrible irony that most of the Southern blood that was shed in that war was by people who could not have afforded to buy and take care of slaves had they wanted to. No, that horrible commodity was purely the prerogative of the powerful few. Reckon, then, who convinced average Southern men to die by the tens of thousands, and to do so thinking they were in fact "fighting for their rats"? As a Southerner, I think about that and wonder what I would have

done? There is little value in subjunctively declaring: I would have done thus and so.

It so often is the same old thing: Big man's war, little man's fight.

Jesus implied that the "sons of light" can learn some things via the "sons of this world" (Luk 16:8). Let us do so.

Speaking only of those I know about, there have been so many battles waged between brethren during my thirty plus years of preaching. Such conflicts are apparently inevitable (cf. Matt 18:7), and I concur that sometimes it is the right thing to "fight" and "war" (cf. 1Tim 6:12; 2Co 10:4). Let us be sure, though, that we are not marching into battle on someone else's pretext, or for that matter, pretense.

The latest battle royal has been dubbed by one of the power brokers as "the current raging fire." Not only has this pronouncement been made, but the pronouncers have decided that truly *faithful* people must fight with them. Before, however, you cut cordwood for some burning issue stop, think, ask: How long has it been burning? When did the fire start? What started it? Who are the folks putting wood on the fire? Why? Good preaching friend: Do not so readily be a joiner, lest you find yourself being cannon fodder for someone else. Be mightily careful with whom you "strike hands" (cf. Prov 22:26). Things are not always as simple as "fighting for our rights," or even, "truth."

When observing warring sides and their battles, there is nothing wrong with looking at who the principals are. Can it be, in this present slugfest, other than odd to see folks who were former confederates in sticking it to others, now sticking it to each other? As a having-been-by-both-sides-stuck one, this whole thing gives me a surreal sense of watching the *Gingham Dog and Calico Cat* eat each other up. It is not at all unlike the Pharisees and Sadducees, who, where Jesus and his disciples were concerned, could go from common cause to enmity and back again. Some comic relief in all this has been to recently hear one side say of their former confederate: "He really pulled the wool over our eyes"; and, then ↴

days later to hear from the ostensible wool-puller that he has had “his eyes really opened.” Whom should one follow into the fray? The wool-puller, or the eye-opener? It is folly to “strike hands” with people like this.

There can surely be a no more pathetic sight than that of preachers flitting around looking for relevance and so attaching themselves to a “somewhat” (Gal 2:6), or that *somewhat’s* cause or fight. Let your sense of relevance and worth come from thinking for yourself and working hard to build up the congregation where you preach. The Lord, through Jeremiah, invited Judah to go and check out “Shiloh” and see what had become of her (Jer 7:12). It would be enlightening — actually depressing — to go and check out the state of some of the churches where these relevance-seekers and their power brokers work. I am thinking of a church that played a big role in my life. She was once thriving and vital with over two hundred in attendance; she is now barely a shell of her former self. To hear those responsible for her demise tell it: It has all been for a noble cause; we’ve been fighting for “rats.”

I humbly speak as one who does not have an unblemished record in these matters of relevance and attachment. My moment of clarity came roughly twenty-threes ago in the city of Manila. I attached myself to an entourage whose leaders I admired. We went forth to challenge some folks who indeed needed challenging. I challenged them. Right in the middle of a tense, yet civil, meeting of brethren, any sense of civil discourse was destroyed. It came several rows behind where I was sitting. A raucous bellow turned eyes, including mine, back to the source. There was a man — and by extension, his cause — to whom I had attached myself; eyes bulging, face red, and jowls quavering, he was literally yelling at the brother who had the floor. Like I said, it was a moment of clarity. I determined to never be such a groupie again.

Fight for the cause of Truth? Yes. But, you let it be your own study and conviction and not because someone told you to join up. You be sure that you really are, spiritually speaking, “fighting for rights,” and not for “rats.”

—AA

Shaara, Michael (1993), *The Killer Angels* (New York: Ballantine).

Reluctant Addendum

In connection with the preceding article (Page 14), if I have the cast straight — a roster, I might add, would be helpful — the “eye-opener,” as opposed the “wool-puller,” has taken a less than charitable view of the recent *Labourers Together With God* lectures, which were held at the Milestone church of Christ. Brother David Brown says, “...the whole Milestone lectureship is manifesting the spirit of compromise on several issues” (*Contending for the Faith*, Feb. ’07, p. 3; and so, all following quotations). The lectures are an adjunct of the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies, and both are works of the church at Milestone. Since I am teacher in the school, and a member and elder of the church, the comments concern me.

Brother Brown says, “...Milestone and Bellview congregations have had no fellowship for years...” I have been here nearly six years, during which time several Bellview members have several times attended our lectures and meetings. Several Milestone members have likewise attended Bellview functions. Milestone’s preacher, Kenneth Burleson, was asked by a now deceased Bellview elder to speak at his wife’s funeral. At that service, Milestone members were asked to stay and “eat” with Bellview members. What part of this does not bespeak fellowship?

On top of all that, in recent times we received a communication from the Bellview church which, among other things, explicitly says Bellview has never withdrawn fellowship from Ensley [Milestone]. Being an elder at Milestone, I know for a fact that Milestone has never withdrawn from Bellview. Brother Brown, Where’s the beef?

Brother Brown links his erroneous claim of “no fellowship” to “the late Max Miller and friends’ rebellion in 1988...” and their having been “withdrawn from.” He calls it “this mess”; I concur. To many brethren, equally as astute and well-intentioned as the gentleman — and certainly closer to the events and facts — the best one could conclude about “the mess” is that many things were done by many people that ought not to have been done.

Brother Brown is not prescient; he knows no more or less about “the mess” than anyone else. He knows what he has been told and he has decided to believe that. He surely knows that it is not as easy as asserting that “*So ‘n So* has withdrawn from *Thus ‘n So*.” If it were, what then of brother Brown’s predecessor, the late Ira Y. Rice? He was by a church in California charged with specific sins and withdrawn from, and “[no] repentance [was] forthcoming...” Perhaps overtaken by “the spirit of compromise,” brother Brown did not himself “withdraw” from brother Rice?

Brother Brown also spearheaded efforts several

→

years ago in defense of the practice of women, as translators, taking the floor to address assemblies of the saints. One of brother Brown's protagonists just recently said that a false teacher becomes a false teacher when he teaches false doctrine. That means that these brethren have been false teachers since—I believe—back in 1994. To this day “no repentance has been forthcoming” on brother Brown's part.

What of those in brother Brown's present coterie of contenders? Do you uphold brother Brown in this? Have you read brother Brown's highly illogical attempt to formulate a composite, or constitute element argument? — “The Constituent Element Argument and the Female Translator” (*CFTF*, Feb. '96)? First, he includes things that **are not** constituent, and omits the main one. Most glaringly, were his argument sound, it would warrant the conclusion that a woman could preach in assemblies of the saints. One of brother Brown's writers (p. 14) implies that a woman may “wait on the table,” as long as she does not speak; that it, does not speak other than to translate. This is why we should all be mighty careful about joining ourselves to, or attaching ourselves to others' causes. “To put it mildly [this whole thing] is manifesting the spirit of compromise on several issues.”

Brother Brown fixates on “Bobby Liddell,” more particularly his son, who spoke on our lectureship. Brother Bobby Liddell preached at Bellview for a number of years, and according to Milestone's preacher of many years, Kenneth Burleson, he and brother Bobby had a cordial relationship including mutual participation in preachers' gatherings initiated by brother Burleson; this again belying brother Brown's “no fellowship” assertion. Brother Brown charges that the son was speaking with people “...that sought the undoing of Bellview all of the time Bobby was their preacher.” As said, I am an elder at Milestone; and, if brother Brown can point out anybody here, or on our lectureship, who has sought the demise of a sister church, I will do my duty.

Milestone is a sound and active church. Our pulpit and classrooms are second to none when it comes to “reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all long suffering and doctrine.” We send forth more soundly and clearly the “whole counsel of God” than many who just talk about it. —AA

A Review of Fellowship Actions Between the Bellview and Ensley Congregations

Introduction

This review is to chronologically consider the actions which have been taken by the Bellview and Ensley elderships to restore the fellowship which has been broken between the congregations since 1987. This will include consideration of withdrawal actions, articles in publications, letters between the congregations, and meetings between the elderships of both congregations.

April 1987

In April 1987, some members of the Bellview congregation became unhappy with some of the decisions made by the Bellview elders and held an unauthorized meeting at the Bellview building to discuss their plans. Shortly thereafter some of those individuals left Bellview and began worshiping with the Ensley congregation.

The Bellview elders then received four letters, signed by several of those members who had left, in which it was stated by these individuals that they were no longer in fellowship with the Bellview elders. Since there is no scriptural authority to withdraw fellowship from an eldership without withdrawing from the whole congregation, these individuals had withdrawn fellowship from the Bellview congregation. Also, since these individuals, who were not then in fellowship with the Bellview congregation, were accepted as members of the Ensley congregation by the Ensley elders, this resulted in breaking the fellowship which previously existed between the two congregations.

In response to questions that came before the Bellview elders in regard to fellowship with the Ensley congregation, a public announcement was made by the Bellview elders to the Bellview congregation at a scheduled meeting. The congregation was informed that Bellview did not withdraw fellowship from the Ensley congregation, but Ensley did withdraw from Bellview, as is evidenced by four letters from members at Ensley stating that they were withdrawing from the Bellview elders. The congregation was further informed that you cannot withdraw fellowship from the Bellview elders without withdrawing fellowship from the Bellview congregation.

September 1987

In September 1987, the Bellview elders, in their *Defender* publication, published an article entitled "Let

The Facts Speak." As stated in the introductory comments of the article, the elders had considered the misinformation which had been disseminated among the brotherhood to be of such nature as to not deserve any comment; however, since so much which is not true about the Bellview Church of Christ, its elders, and some of its members had been spread to so many, they were left with no alternative but to set the record straight and let the facts speak.

February 1988

In February 1988, the Bellview elders, in their *Defender* publication, published an article entitled "The Final Word." As stated in the article, because of the actions of three individuals to sow discord among brethren against the Bellview congregation, the Bellview Church of Christ no longer extends its fellowship to: Max Miller, Mike Kiser, and Ernest Underwood.

August 4, 1991

On August 4, 1991, a letter was sent from the Ensley elders to the Bellview elders. This letter reported a mutual effort by both elderships to attempt to work out the things that have caused the two congregations to have no fellowship with each other.

August 6, 1991

On August 6, 1991, a letter was sent from the Bellview elders to the Ensley elders. This letter reported that August 23, 1991, would be an acceptable date for a meeting between the two elderships. It also stated the following "moot" issues which were not to be discussed:

"We consider the following items to be moot; therefore, we do not wish to enter into discussion concerning them.

- A. Brothers Miller and Kiser disagreed with us as to some individuals whose names were being considered for elders.
- B. Brother Kiser called the elders "liars" and would not retract his statement. Brother Miller upheld Kiser in this.

Both the above issues are moot items because:

- A. The elders withdrew all consideration of names for elders. This should have settled that matter; however brothers Miller and Kiser refused to drop the matter. We do not wish to discuss that matter further.
- B. We fired brother Kiser because he would not

retract his statement that we were liars. We certainly do not plan to rehire him even if he did retract his statement now, so this issue is moot also.

Our basis for the withdrawal of fellowship from brothers Miller, Kiser, and Underwood is clearly set out in the February, 1988 issue of the *Defender*. It did not relate to the issues above.”

August 11, 1991

On August 11, 1991, a letter was sent from the Ensley elders to the Bellview elders. It stated that the time and place of meeting by the two elderships was acceptable, but the Ensley elders questioned what would or would not be discussed.

August 14, 1991

On August 14, 1991, a letter was sent from the Bellview elders to the Ensley elders. It clarified how the initial contact had been made for a meeting between the two elderships. It restated the agreement of the Bellview elders to the proposed time and meeting place, and again noted the issues that would not be acceptable for discussion.

August 23, 1991

On August 23, 1991, a meeting between the two elderships was held at the Pensacola Blvd building to discuss the issues which have caused the two congregations to have no fellowship. During that meeting the Bellview elders outlined two things which must take place for there to be fellowship between the two congregations: (1) They must repudiate and see that the letters of those attending Ensley who wrote to the Bellview elders withdrawing fellowship from them were retracted, and (2) They had to stop using (extending fellowship to) the three men from which Bellview had withdrawn fellowship (Max Miller, Mike Kiser, and Ernest Underwood.) During that meeting the Ensley elders refused to agree to those two requirements.

The Ensley elders insisted that for fellowship to be restored, the Bellview elders would have to agree to meet with them and have a group of unbiased individuals hear and decide the differences between the two elderships. The Bellview elders would not agree to this because to do so would be unscriptural. It would create a decision making body which would have authority over the eldership.

October 19, 1994

On October 19, 1994, a letter was sent from the Ensley elders to the Bellview elders. The letter contained an offer that the two elderships meet and try to solve their problems. If this was not possible, they

further suggested, “We need to have impartial people to hear and decide as in the matter of a private sin of one against another when the one will not listen.” The letter further proposed how the three suggested individuals would be appointed.

It should be noted that this offer is basically what the Ensley elders had insisted upon in the August 23, 1991, meeting. To have impartial people “hear and decide” what the Bellview elders must do would be unscriptural. It would create a decision making body which would have authority over the eldership.

October 26, 1994

On October 26, 1994, a letter was sent from the Bellview elders to the Ensley elders. The letter stated, “The Bellview elders have never withdrawn fellowship from the Ensley congregation. Ensley has withdrawn fellowship from Bellview as is evidenced by Bellview’s receipt of four letters from members of the Ensley congregation in 1987 in which they stated their determination to withdraw from the Bellview elders. One of those letters was even received from and signed by one of your present elders. At a meeting with you elders in the fall of 1991, all five of you confirmed your agreement to that withdrawal letter. Therefore, the Ensley elders have withdrawn fellowship from the Bellview elders.”

“In regard to your present proposal, it should be noted that we, the Bellview elders, already have met with you, the Ensley elders, in the fall of 1991 in an effort to resolve any differences between us. The meeting was not fruitful. If you elders truly want to improve fellowship between the Bellview and the Ensley congregations, we suggest the following:

1. As an eldership, repudiate and see that the above mentioned letters of withdrawal are retracted.
2. Stop using three preachers, brothers Miller, Kiser, and Underwood, in your meetings and lectureships. The Bellview Church of Christ took appropriate action in applying scriptural discipline to these men in February 1988. The Bellview congregation has not extended fellowship to these men since that time. We encourage the Ensley congregation to recognize this action so the souls of these three men may possibly be saved.”

“In our meeting with you in the fall of 1991, you refused to agree to the above. If you have changed your mind since that time, please advise us. Otherwise, another meeting with you would not be productive.”

March 8, 1995

On March 8, 1995, a letter was sent by the Ensley elders to the Bellview elders. Basically, this letter is a repetition that the Ensley elders insisted upon in the meeting on August 23, 1991, and their subsequent letter October 19, 1994, except that this time they have stated that they have contacted the members at Ensley who withdrew fellowship from the Bellview elders in 1987 and the three individuals from which Bellview withdrew fellowship in 1987. They further state, "...all of these have said they would abide by the decision of the three men if Bellview would do the same, even to the repenting of any wrong done by them."

Please note that this time the Ensley elders are proposing to bring in three faithful men and they expect the Bellview elders to "abide by the decision" of these men. We have stated previously that this is unscriptural and we will not agree to do so.

A statement is made in the last paragraph of the letter in which they threaten to publish our letters to them unless we request that they not be made public.

March 15, 1995

On March 15, 1995, a letter was sent by the Bellview elders to the Ensley elders. We stated that if the Ensley elders truly wanted to improve fellowship between the two congregations, they needed to do as we suggested in our letter dated October 26, 1994. Also, we said, "You need to stop trying to circumvent the scriptural discipline that we have taken against brethren Miller, Kiser, and Underwood, as was published in 'The Final Word', *Defender*, February 1988 (copy attached). Instead, use your influence to encourage these three brethren to repent of their sins so that their souls may be saved."

May 1995

In May 1995, a publication entitled *Labourers together with God* was mailed by the Ensley elders to those on their mailing list. This publication included an article written by one of the Ensley elders which was very critical of the Bellview elders. Without getting approval to do so from the Bellview elders, this publication included copies of the Bellview letters to Ensley. Not only were Bellview's letters published without approval from the Bellview elders, but one of the letters was not published in its entirety.

May 12, 2004

The unresolved fellowship issues which existed in May 1995, still have not been resolved as of the current date. Therefore, there continues to be no fellowship between the Bellview congregation and the Ensley (presently called Milestone) congregations.

July 2004

In July 2004, the Bellview elders received letters from two of the members now attending the Milestone congregation. These individuals were two of the nine individuals who had signed four letters in April 1987, in which it was stated by these individuals that they were no longer in fellowship with the Bellview elders. (See the previous paragraph dated April 1987, in this document for more details.) The two individuals stated in their letters dated July 2004, that they were repenting of writing the letters of disfellowship from the Bellview elders and also stated that they should have left quietly.

August 2004

In August 2004, the Bellview elders responded to the letters received from the two Milestone members in July 2004, and said that they were glad to have received their letters. They also stated that they understood their statement of repenting for having written the letters to mean that they were repudiating what they wrote. Also, they understood their statement about leaving quietly to mean that they were repenting of all their actions which were detrimental to the Bellview elders.

It should be noted that the above letter written by these two individuals have little bearing on the fellowship between the Bellview and Milestone congregations because of the following:

1. The Milestone elders have not yet repudiated the four letters which were signed by nine members of the Ensley congregation in April 1987, in which they stated their determination to withdraw from the Bellview elders. The Ensley elders (now Milestone) confirmed their agreement with those withdrawal letters in their meeting with the Bellview elders in the fall of 1991.
2. The Milestone elders have neither acknowledged their error in extending fellowship to brothers Miller, Kizer, and Underwood in the past, nor have they expressed determination not to extend fellowship to brother Kizer and brother Underwood in the future unless these two men repent of their actions toward the Bellview congregation.

August 25, 2004

Letter sent to John Priola with a copy of "A Review of Fellowship Actions Between the Bellview and Ensley Congregations."

January 18, 2006

Letter sent to Tony Edwards, preacher at Monroeville, Alabama, with a copy of "A Review of Fellowship Actions Between the Bellview and Ensley Congregations."

Ensley Church of Christ

ELDERS:
E. R. Brantley
D. R. Orr
H. W. Thompson
W. D. Wells
W. L. Word

57 E. HANNAH CIRCLE
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA 32534-3415
PHONE (904) 476-1417

Kenneth Burleson, Evangelist

DEACONS:
R. Brantley
C. Bush
D. Parson
R. Pierce
B. Thompson
C. Word

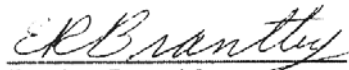
Aug. 4, 1991

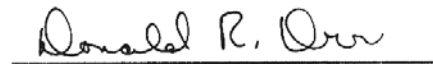
Dear Brethren:

As requested by one of your Elders and your minister, per Bro. Middlebrooks, the Ensley Elders are willing to meet with your Elders to attempt to work out the things that have caused the two congregations to have no fellowship with each other. We are requesting that you meet with us at Pensacola Blvd. Church of Christ on Friday, August 16, 1991, at 7:00 p.m. that we may discuss a basis by which all of these differences may be resolved and that there may be unity and peace in the Lord's Church, as he prayed for.


If we do not hear from you, we will expect to see you at the above named place, time, and date.

In Christian Love,


Ervin Brantley


Don Orr


Homer Thompson
W.D.W.


David Wells


W. L. Word

cc. Bro. Middlebrooks

BELLVIEW
Church of Christ
4850 Sauflay Field Road
Pensacola, Florida 32526
Phone (904) 455-7595

Bobby Liddell/Minister
Hairston Brantley • Bill Gallaher • Fred Stancliff/Bishops
Henry Born • Edward Brantley • Paul Brantley • Jerry Caine •
Bill Crowe • Charles Garrett • Louis Hemington • James Loy •
Harold Maxey • Richard Parker • Dusty Wilkes/Deacons
Ira Y. Rice, Jr./Missionary

"A Friendly Church With A Vital Message."

August 6, 1991

Elders
Ensley Church of Christ
57 E. Hannah Circle
Pensacola, FL 32534-3415

Dear brethren:

As per your request that we meet with you at the Pensacola Blvd. Church of Christ building, we regret that we shall not be able to meet on the suggested date of Friday, August 16, due to a conflict; however, we shall be happy to meet with you on the following Friday, August 23, 1991 at 7:00 P.M., if agreeable.

In an attempt to work out the things which you mentioned "have caused the two congregations to have no fellowship with each other," we request you send us a list of those things which you believe need to be discussed.

We consider the following items to be moot; therefore, we do not wish to enter into discussion concerning them.

A. Brothers Miller and Kiser disagreed with us as to some individuals whose names were being considered for elders.

B. Brother Kiser called the elders "liars" and would not retract his statement. Brother Miller upheld Kiser in this.

Both the above issues are moot items because:

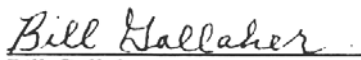
A. The elders withdrew all consideration of names for elders. This should have settled that matter; however, brothers Miller and Kiser refused to drop the matter. We do not wish to discuss that matter further.

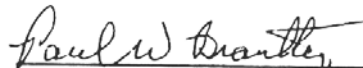
B. We fired brother Kiser because he would not retract his statement that we were liars. We certainly do not plan to rehire him even if he did retract his statement now, so this issue is moot also.

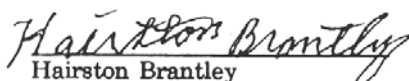
Our basis for the withdrawal of fellowship from brothers Miller, Kiser, and Underwood is clearly set out in the February, 1988 issue of the Defender. It did not relate to the issues above.

With the above information in mind, the elders at Bellview will look forward to hearing from you as to matters to be discussed and to a discussion with the elders from Ensley.

Sincerely,


Bill Gallaher


Paul Brantley


Hairston Brantley

Fred Stancliff (now in Singapore)

BELLVIEW
Church of Christ
4850 Sauflay Field Road
Pensacola, Florida 32526
Phone (904) 455-7595

Dobby Liddell/Minister
Hairston Brantley • Bill Gallaher • Fred Stancliff/Bishops
Henry Born • Elward Brantley • Paul Brantley • Jerry Caine •
Bill Crowe • Charles Garrett • Louis Herrington • James Loy •
Harold Maxey • Richard Parker • Dusty Wilkes/Deacons
Ira Y. Rice, Jr./Missionary

"A Friendly Church With A Vital Message."

August 14, 1991

Elders
Ensley Church of Christ
57 E Hannah Circle
Pensacola, FL 32534

Dear brethren:

In response to your letter of August 11, 1991, we restate our desire to see an end of those things which you mentioned "have caused the two congregations to have no fellowship with each other." We are happy to meet and, as you said, "discuss a basis by which all of these differences may be resolved." Subject to the approval of the brethren at Pensacola Blvd., we look forward to meeting with you Friday, August 23, 1991, at 7:00 P.M.

In our previous letter, we did not agree to discuss "all issues that have divided God's people here and elsewhere"; but, rather, were specific in those areas which we shall not discuss. We do not ask that you "attempt to solve these problems by mail," but we do request you send to us or bring to the meeting a list of those items which you wish to discuss listed in the order in which you wish to discuss them.

We do appreciate the request in your letter of August 4, 1991; however, we wish to clarify the statement in the first sentence. Our response has been to an initial contact made through brother Larry Middlebrooks by one of your elders. Brother Hairston Brantley in conversation with brother Middlebrooks stated his earnest desire to see the problems solved as he, and we, would like to see all the problems in the brotherhood solved. Brother Liddell, at the instruction of the elders, relayed a message from the Bellview elders through brother Middlebrooks in which the elders at Bellview responded to a request for a meeting by asking the elders at Ensley to send a letter giving date, time and place of the meeting.

Again, we look forward to meeting with you at the above stated time and place. Should that not be agreeable with the Pensacola Blvd. brethren, we shall be happy to host such a meeting at the Bellview building. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Bill Gallaher
Bill Gallaher

Hairston Brantley
Hairston Brantley

Paul W Brantley
Paul Brantley

Fred Stancliff (now in Singapore)

Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies

ELDERS:

E. R. Brantley
D. R. Orr
H. W. Thompson
W. D. Wells
W. L. Word

57 E. HANNAH CIRCLE
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA 32534-3415
PHONE (904) 479-4405

Kenneth Burleson, Director

DEACONS:

R. Brantley
C. Bush
D. Parson
R. Pierce
B. Thompson
C. Word

October 19, 1994

Elders,
Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, Florida 32526

Brethren:

We have been informed that it is Ensley which does not want the broken fellowship which exists between the two congregations restored. Although there may not have been any formal breaking of fellowship, in actuality, there is no fellowship and Bellview still tries to influence men not to be a part of meetings, lectureships, etc., which are conducted by the Ensley congregation.

We, the Elders of the Ensley congregation, make the following offer to the Elders of the Bellview congregation.

1. That we first meet and have an open and complete discussion of the grievances which each might have, one against the other, and see if the problems can be solved by brotherly love and a desire to do the will of the Lord. (2 John 5; I Pet. 3:8).

* 2. If we cannot, among ourselves, resolve the problems which exists then an excellent example of settling matters is shown in the scriptures. To bring in others that they may hear the matters and then give witness to the truth of the matter and make recommendations for repentance and the restoration of fellowship as the Lord said in John 5:31 "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." We need to have impartial people to hear and decide as in the matter of a private sin of one against another when the one will not listen. (Matt. 18:15-16). We need to learn to forgive. (Matt. 18:21-35).


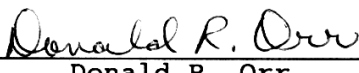
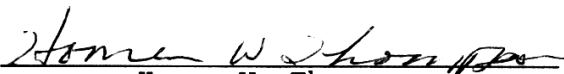
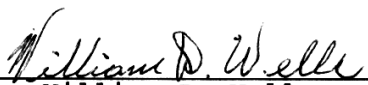
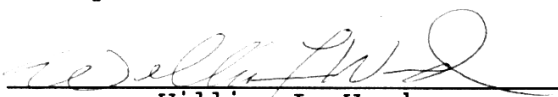
Continued Page 2
October 16, 1994
Elders,
Bellview Church of Christ

Brethren, we, the Ensley Elders, sincerely would like to have all matters which now divide us cleared up and forgotten so we could again have the fellowship between us which God demands. The only way to resolve those matters is to walk in the truth of what happened and then those who need to repent do so. (I John 1:7).

May we hear from you at an early date concerning this proposal, for we are not given assurance of the morrow. (James 4:14).

* If this proposal is used then you will select one, Ensley will select one, and there will be one appointed which is acceptable to both sides.

Elders, Ensley Church of Christ

 Ervin R. Brantley	 Donald R. Orr
 Homer W. Thompson	 William D. Wells
 William L. Word	

Elders/dh

Certified No. Z 270 023 017 - RRR

Bellview Church Of Christ

4850 Saufley Road
Pensacola, FL 32526
(904)455-7595

BISHOPS: Hairston Brantley, Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
DEACONS: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Jerry Caine, Bill Crowe, Charles Garrett,
Louis Herrington, James Loy, Harold Maxey, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr. SECRETARY: Denise Mowery

A Friendly Church With A Vital Message

October 26, 1994

Elders,
Ensley Church of Christ
57 E. Hannah Circle
Pensacola, FL 32534-3415

Brethren:

We received your certified letter dated October 19, 1994 and were glad to see that you, as well as we, are interested in the improvement of fellowship between the Bellview and Ensley congregations.

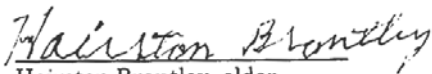
The Bellview elders have never withdrawn fellowship from the Ensley congregation. Ensley has withdrawn fellowship from Bellview as is evidenced by Bellview's receipt of four letters from members of the Ensley congregation in 1987 in which they stated their determination to withdraw from the Bellview elders. One of those letters was even received from and signed by one of your present elders. At a meeting with you elders in the fall of 1991, all five of you confirmed your agreement to that withdrawal letter. Therefore, the Ensley elders have withdrawn fellowship from the Bellview elders.

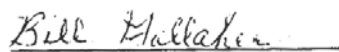
In regard to your present proposal, it should be noted that we, the Bellview elders, already have met with you, the Ensley elders, in the fall of 1991 in an effort to resolve any differences between us. The meeting was not fruitful. If you elders truly want to improve fellowship between the Bellview and the Ensley congregations, we suggest the following:

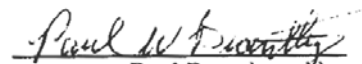
1. As an eldership, repudiate and see that the above mentioned letters of withdrawal are retracted.
2. Stop using three preachers, brothers Miller, Kiser, and Underwood, in your meetings and lectureships. The Bellview Church of Christ took appropriate action in applying scriptural discipline to these men in February 1988. The Bellview congregation has not extended fellowship to these men since that time. We encourage the Ensley congregation to recognize this action so the souls of these three men may possibly be saved.

In our meeting with you in the fall of 1991, you refused to agree to the above. If you have changed your mind since that time, please advise us. Otherwise, another meeting with you would not be productive.

Sincerely,


Hairston Brantley, elder


Bill Gallaher, elder


Paul Brantley, elder


Fred Stancliff, elder

Certified No. Z 270 026 452 - RRR

Ensley Church of Christ

ELDERS:

E. R. Brantley
D. R. Orr
H. W. Thompson
W. D. Wells
W. L. Word

57 E. HANNAH CIRCLE
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA 32534-3415
PHONE (904) 476-1417

Kenneth Burleson, Evangelist

DEACONS:

R. Brantley
C. Bush
D. Parsons

B. Thompson
C. Word

March 8, 1995

Elders,
Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, Florida 32526

Dear Brethren,

Under date of October 19, 1994 we wrote you a certified letter suggesting that (1) we meet to try and resolve the differences which exist between Bellview and Ensley, or (2) that we bring in some brethren who were not familiar with the matters and who were sound in the faith and who were not prejudiced concerning the matters and let them hear the facts and then make recommendations as to how the matter can be settled and fellowship be restored between us.

Under date of October 26, 1994 Ensley received a certified letter from Bellview stating that they had met with the Ensley Elders previously and the said meeting was not fruitful; therefore, we understand by said letter that you do not want to meet again. You did not even mention option two. We know that Brother Rice said it would be stupid to do so. We wonder what Bellview has to hide by refusing to have good faithful men who have not had their minds poisoned by the articles and telephone calls by you elders to come in and hear the matter and to help resolve the differences. Ensley is willing to do this and we pray that you will also accept this proposal. We know that Bellview has practiced this procedure before.

Also in your October 26, 1994 letter you attempt to create a smoke-screen by saying the Bellview Church of Christ took appropriate action in applying scriptural discipline to brothers Miller, Kiser and Underwood in February 1988. If reading about your withdrawal of fellowship in the "Defender" or one of your publications and never trying to get the men to repent is scriptural discipline then you practiced it. But long before you

Continued page 2
March 8, 1995
Elders,
Bellview Church of Christ

did your so-called scriptural discipline you had done all in your power to try to deny Brother Miller and Kiser a place to preach after you fired them. If discipline was to be practiced on these brethren the proper time would have been while they were still at Bellview. You elders have called several preachers who have been invited to preach meetings or speak on lectureships at Ensley and tried to persuade them not to come. You told one of our invited speakers that he would be removed from the editorial staff of "Contending For The Faith" if he would speak on our lectureship. He told you to remove his name. You also cut off the support of one of the missionaries in Taiwan who would not bow to your demands for a blind faith in the Bellview Elders. You also used your influence to have others drop their support to the same missionary and you boast about your missionary efforts. You also say you have never disfellowshipped Ensley. If you mean you have never sent a formal letter of withdrawal of fellowship then you are correct, but fellowship does not now exist between the two congregations.

We want Bellview and the church as a whole to know we want this matter settled, but not at the price of truth. We again ask the Bellview Elders to re-consider their rejection of a plan to bring peace to the two congregations and also the church as a whole.

We have contacted the three men mentioned in your letter and also the members at Ensley who withdrew fellowship from the Bellview Elders and all have said they would abide by a decision of three faithful men who were not prejudiced in the matter and would abide by the decision of the three men if Bellview would do the same, even to repenting of any wrong done by them. This matter can be resolved if you are really interested in resolving the matter.

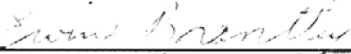
If you choose not to have the matter completed in a satisfactory manner as listed in our letters or by a suggestion from you as to

Continued page 3
March 8, 1995
Elders
Bellview Church of Christ

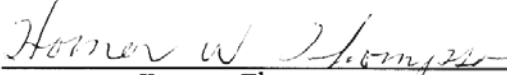
how to resolve them then we intend to publish the letters so the brotherhood may know that we have tried at Ensley to restore fellowship. We intend to publish your letters unless you request that they not be made public. We also grant you the privilege of publishing the letters if done in the entirety.


For the cause of Christ,

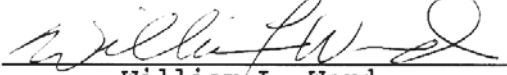
Ensley Elders


Ervin Brantley


Donald Orr


Homer Thompson


William D. Wells


William L. Word

Elders/dh

Certified # Z 362 208 375

Ervin Brantley
7332 Dahlia Drive
Pensacola, FL 32526

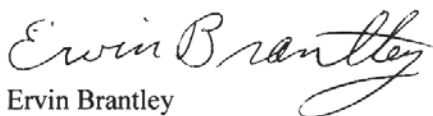
July 25, 2004

Elders of Bellview Church of Christ
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526

Dear Brethren:

I am sorry that I wrote the letter of disfellowship from the elders (Hairston Brantley, Bill Gallagher, and Fred Stancliff) of the Bellview Church of Christ. I therefore, repent of having done so. I should have left quietly, when asked by one of you elders, as others did.

In Christian Love,


Ervin Brantley

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, Florida 32526-1798
(850) 455-7595

Web Page: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>
E-mail: bellview@bellviewcoc.com

BISHOPS:

Paul Brantley
Bill Gallaher
Fred Stancliff

August 1, 2004

PREACHER:

Michael Hatcher

Ervin Brantley
7332 Dahlia Drive
Pensacola, FL 32526

DEACONS:

Henry Born
Elward Brantley
Jerry Caine
Bill Crowe
Louis Herrington
James Loy
Richard Parker

Dear bro Brantley:

MISSIONARY:

Lee Davis

SECRETARY:

Denise Mowery

We were glad to receive your letter dated July 25, 2004 in which you stated that you repented of having written a letter of disfellowship from the elders of the Bellview church of Christ (Hairston Brantley, Bill Gallaher, and Fred Stancliff). When you state that you repent of having written the letter, we understand this to mean that you desire to repudiate what you wrote in the letter. Likewise, when you state, "I should have left quietly," we understand this to mean that you are also repenting of having written various letters, articles in publications, statements, and all other actions that were detrimental to the Bellview elders. Based upon this understanding, we now encourage you as an individual to use your influence to encourage the other individuals who wrote letters of disfellowship from the elders of the Bellview church of Christ to repent of their actions as we understand that you have done.

If we are correct in our understanding of your intended repentance, we stand ready to let those throughout the world know of your desired correction of your past actions.

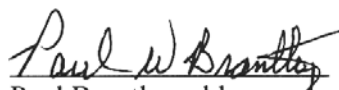
At this time you are in a unique position as one of the Milestone elders. You will recall that in a letter to the elders of the Ensley Church of Christ dated October 26, 1994, reference was made to a meeting of the Bellview elders and the Ensley elders in the fall of 1991, in which each of the Ensley elders was asked individually and collectively if they upheld the letters of withdrawal of fellowship which their members had written to the Bellview elders. Each one of the Ensley elders individually and as the eldership for the Ensley congregation indicated that they upheld the letters of withdrawal from the Bellview elders. Now, to improve fellowship between the Bellview and Milestone congregations, we encourage you to use your influence to encourage your fellow elders at Milestone to do as we suggested in our letter to the elders of the Ensley Church of Christ on October 26, 1994:

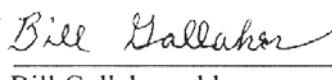
"1. As an eldership, repudiate and see that the above mentioned letters of withdrawal are retracted.

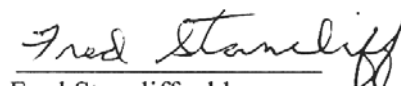
A Friendly Church With A Vital Message

2. Stop using three preachers, brothers Miller, Kiser, and Underwood, in your meetings and lectureships. The Bellview Church of Christ took appropriate action in applying scriptural discipline to these men in February 1988. The Bellview congregation has not extended fellowship to these men since that time. We encourage the Ensley congregation to recognize this action so the souls of these three men may possibly be saved.” Since brother Miller has died since the date of the above letter, we believe that it would now be appropriate for the Milestone eldership to acknowledge its error in extending fellowship to these three men in the past, and to express its determination not to extend fellowship to brother Kiser or brother Underwood in the future unless they repent of their actions toward the Bellview congregation.

Sincerely,


Paul Brantley, elder


Bill Gallaher, elder


Fred Stancliff, elder

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, Florida 32526-1798
(850) 455-7595

Web Page: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>
E-mail: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

BISHOPS:

Paul Brantley
Bill Gallaher
Fred Stancliff

January 18, 2006

Elders
Church of Christ at Milestone
4051 Stefani Rd.
Cantonment, Florida 32533-2911

PREACHER:

Michael Hatcher

Brethren:

DEACONS:

Henry Born
Edward Brantley
Jerry Calne
Bill Crowe
James Loy

In recent correspondence with brother Tony Edwards of Monroeville, Alabama, he asked us, the Bellview elders, to make one more attempt to restore fellowship with you, the Milestone elders. In making this attempt, he further asked that we define what actions it would take to restore the desired fellowship. Although we have enumerated in previous correspondence with you several times in the past, what it would take to restore fellowship between the two congregations, we told him that we would make one more attempt to do so.

SECRETARY:

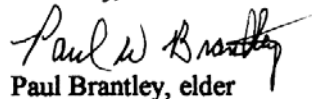
Denise Mowery

Attached to this letter is a copy of "A Review Of Fellowship Actions Between The Bellview And Ensley Congregations". As noted in the August 2004 entry to the attached document, in order for full fellowship to be restored it will be necessary for the Milestone elders to take the following actions:

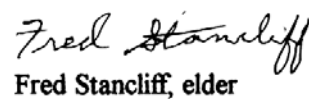
1. The Milestone elders have not yet repudiated the four letters which were signed by nine members of the Ensley congregation in April 1987 in which they stated their determination to withdraw from the Bellview elders. The Ensley elders (now Milestone) verbally confirmed their agreement with those withdrawal letters in their meeting with the Bellview elders in the fall of 1991.

2. The Milestone elders have neither acknowledged their error in extending fellowship to brothers Miller, Kizer, and Underwood in the past, nor have they expressed determination not to extend fellowship to brother Kizer and brother Underwood in the future unless these two men repent of their actions toward the Bellview congregation.

Sincerely,


Paul Brantley, elder


Bill Gallaher, elder


Fred Stancliff, elder

cc Tony Edwards

A Friendly Blessing To All At The Milestone



DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO

PHONE: 861-5292
250 VAN NESS AVENUE
MAIL TO: P.O. BOX 585
S. F., CA. 94101

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Donald W. Hinds
Minister

Windell R. Fikes
Assistant

Churches of Christ
Every where.

Dear Brethren:

The church of Christ of Downtown San Francisco, is commanded by Christ, to "mark", "turn away" from, "avoid", "reject", and "have no fellowship", with brother Kaan Y. Chin. ~~This~~ we are doing in accordance with Rom. 16:17; II Tim. 3:5; Tit. 3:10; Eph. 3:11; And II Thes. 3:3, 14.

Over a period of one year, we have been to brother Chin trying to get him to see the errors of his way and correct them. He refuses to hear good brethren here any more, though they have acted in a "spirit of gentleness".

Brother Chin has sinned in that he has:---

1. Become "factionous", being filled with "strife, jealousy and wrath", shown to be wrong in the following: Tit. 3:10; II Pet. 2:10; II Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:20; and James 3:14-16.
2. Become "disobedient" and "reprobate" to the good works of the Downtown church of Christ. (cf. Tit. 1:16.)
3. Caused division in the church, leading away disciples after him. (cf. Rom. 16:17 and Acts 20:30.)

This faction, (Or "schism", I Cor. 11:18 or 12:25), which brother Chin leads, meets at 1529 Mission St., and calls itself "The East-west church of Christ." It is only about 4 blocks from our building. This rebellious movement was aided in its formation and continuance by Ira Y. Rice, Jr., the Bethel church of Christ, Athens, Alabama, and Charles Ben der.

Therefore, we will have no further fellowship with brother Chin; and we urge brethren in Christ to do the same until he has repented of and confessed the sins named above and dissolved the faction according to the Scriptures. At that time we can pray that God will forgive.

In the Name of Christ,

Windell R. Fikes
Donald W. Hinds
Hugh Taylor
Vale E. Frazier
Daniel C. Bowring

Guillermo C. Endena
Eddy Sueher
Conrado H. Cabrera
Robert J. Campbell
Geardo R. Rios
Benjamin F. Farnsworth

Whoever will
may come

Defender



"I am set for the defense of the gospel"

Volume XXXVI

July 2007

Number 7

Web Site: <http://www.bellviewcoc.com>

E-mail: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Voices from the past:

This article appeared in "Defender" February 1972

Elders Can Stop the Spread of Liberalism

William S. Cline

We firmly believe that the elders of the local congregation have the divine right and responsibility to determine what shall be taught and who should do the teaching (Acts 20:28-31). Much of the trouble that we are presently experiencing could be avoided if elders of local congregations would be more careful of who does the teaching and preaching and what is taught. Preachers known for their liberal views should not be used in meetings, lectures, youth rallies or any other function that the church has. It is time that the elders take away their audiences. But not only do we need to take away audiences; it is high time we heed the command of John. By inspiration he 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" (2 John 9-11). Throughout the brotherhood it has been the common practice in many circles to use men for meetings, lectureships, youth meetings, etc., who are known to espouse liberal views. One day elderships will answer for their flagrant disobedience to John's injunction. There can be no right in fellowshiping false teachers.

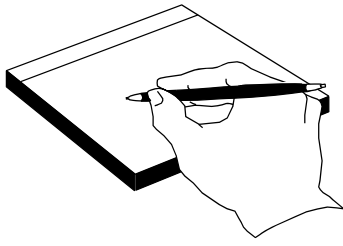
The church needs elders who will stand up and be counted; elders that will stop the mouth of the gainsayer. Thus, elders that are following New Testament doctrine will not only cut off the false teacher's audience and pay, they will mark him as such and will

have no fellowship with him. In Romans 16:17 Paul said, "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." In Titus 3:10-11 he said, "A man that is an heretick [false teacher] after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." We have no choice in the matter! If we fellowship false teachers, we disobey God. When will elders be as concerned about obeying Romans 16:17 and Titus 3:10-11 as they are about obeying Acts 2:38?

The elders that tolerate false teaching and corrupt practices share the guilt of the false teacher or the evildoer (2 John 11). I recently read of an eldership that would not fire their preacher, even though they knew him to be a rank liberal. Their excuse was, "If we let him go, we are afraid he will leave the church of Christ and go into some denomination." Their first responsibility, as we see it, was not to fire him, thus letting him go to some other congregation of the Lord's people to teach his false doctrine. This has been done too many times during recent years. The elders should first seek to convert him to the truth of the teachings of Christ. If that cannot be accomplished, then they have no alternative but to withdraw fellowship from him (thus firing him at that time) and mark him as a false teacher. If this act of New Testament discipline fails to bring him to repentance for the salvation of his soul then he may as well be in a denomination. Elders must obey New Testament teachings. And if following the will of Christ

(Continued on page 5)

Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
mhatcher@gmail.com

Response

An individual sent this article in response to the material we published in the April issue of *Defender* concerning Mack Lyon. I am reproducing the article intact, and then will make some comments concerning it.

The Greatest Problem in the Church

Johnie D. Fredman

What is the greatest problem facing the church today? Obviously there would be a wide range of answers to this question. Some might say liberalism, others might say postmodernism, while others might say traditionalism. There is no one “right” answer, but I think there may be another “ism” that is doing more damage to the Lord’s church than the ones listed. In fact, it is a malady shared by people holding to each of the belief systems mentioned, as well as others.

I received a copy of an article from a brotherhood publication last week. I have received several such articles in the past few years. They have been from various publications but each has been written for the same purpose. Each has been written for the purpose of condemning a brother in Christ. There are many publications which seem to exist for this one sole purpose. Each issue chooses another brother to criticize and condemn, or to rehash the same old argument and information. Much of the time the information presented is not corroborated or documented in any way. Someone “heard” that a brother believed false doctrine, spoke at a liberal/conservative/denominational congregation, etc. That information is then written as fact, published, and mailed to anyone willing to read and

believe it. Unfortunately, much of the time the information presented is blatantly false.

The recent article I was given was criticizing Brother Mack Lyon and the Edmond congregation. One of the criticisms leveled regarded Brother Lyon’s involvement with the Oklahoma Christian lectureship. It detailed his involvement at this year’s (2007) lectureship. Unfortunately, the author never bothered to find out that Oklahoma Christian did not hold a lectureship this year! Other articles were given to me because they also criticized brothers in Christ whom I knew or was associated with. These particular publications are from what would be typically termed the “conservative side”. They criticize the brethren for teaching in the “liberal” churches. It seems the only two passages these criticizing brethren know in the entire New Testament are Ephesians 5:11 and 2 John 9-10. Over and over they repeat these passages to show that anyone who steps foot inside a “liberal” church is automatically guilty by association of being “liberal” and a false teacher. How dare a brother attempt to teach truth to those who may be in error! Apparently these brethren have never read Luke 15, where the Pharisees criticized Jesus for the exact same thing (Luke 15:2). Apparently they have never read the book of Acts where the Apostle Paul made a habit of “fellowshipping those in error” by going to the synagogue every Sabbath. If these brethren are going to criticize for teaching truth to those who may be in error, they are going to have to start ‘writing up’ the Apostle Paul and the Son of God!

These types of articles and attacks are not limited to “conservative” brethren. The “liberal” brethren have their own publications with very similar articles bashing and attacking brethren who don’t agree with them. These articles often don’t limit their attacks to individuals, but condemn entire congregations because of an individual’s beliefs or associations.

Often these publications use the lack of Biblical authority as the basis for criticizing the beliefs and practices of others. While approved example is a valid hermeneutic, my question for these brethren is, where is the Biblical example for writing up and publicly condemning your brethren? I don’t read where Paul wrote a cover article for the “Jerusalem Journal” criticizing and condemning Peter for refusing to eat with the Gentiles (Gal. 2:11ff). Neither did he write up Barnabas in the “Antioch Answer” for fellowshipping with Mark, who had already proven to be a ‘quitter’ (Acts 15:36-40). Can you imagine our brethren today in New Testament times? Rather than small periodicals, they would be writing encyclopedias on congregations like

Corinth!

My friends, I believe the greatest problem the church is facing today is not liberalism or traditionalism, it is negativism. I am in no way suggesting that we should compromise the truth of the gospel in any way or that truth is unimportant. However, if we spent the same time, energy, and money fighting Satan that we spend fighting each other, the Lord's church would be growing and converting people by the thousands! Instead, we wind up being more concerned about what one side is going to think or if the other group is going to write us up. Many congregations have a shadowy element on one side of the their congregation trying to insidiously spread the seeds of liberalism, yet on the other side is the Biblical KGB just waiting for an opportunity to crucify someone in their periodical of personal opinion. Is it any wonder we are losing so many preachers?

I realize that there is a point at which individuals or congregations have strayed so far from the truth of God's Word that we can no longer support or fellowship them as brethren. However, I have to admit that at times I don't know exactly where that line is. In some situations, it is obvious that line has been crossed. In others it is more difficult. We have examples in scripture where fellowship was broken because one party left the faith. However, we also have several examples in the scriptures of brethren who disagreed with each other, yet continued in fellowship.

A preacher's mailing list I am a member of has recently been discussing whether a congregation can have deacons if there are no elders. There have been some very strong arguments from both sides of the issue. However, all involved have repeatedly stated that it is not an issue worth breaking fellowship over! It has been a wonderful (and educational) discussion to watch and learn from. If only we could have that kind of love and fellowship in all differences of opinion!

Once again, let me state that not all differences are matters of opinion. Many are legitimate differences in doctrine which will affect our fellowship. However, every issue we disagree on is not an issue of doctrine. Every issue we disagree on is not an issue of fellowship! My friend, until the world sees us loving each other they aren't going to care what we believe (John 13:35)! In striving to keep the purity of our doctrine, we have forgotten that doctrine teaches love for the brethren! We have forgotten we are commanded to go to each other when we disagree and have problems, not write each other up and show the world we aren't practicing what we preach! My brethren, let us all return to the

pure gospel. While avoiding false teachers and false doctrine, let's again practice the love for the brethren that the gospel teaches.

This brother begins by asking a question to which he admits there is no one right answer. However, his whole article is informing us what the greatest problem happens to be—as is seen by the title he gives his response. He admits that some would say liberalism and others post-modernism and some might say traditionalism, but he is going to reveal the “ism” that is the greatest problem in the church today—negativism. While this matter could certainly be debated, he bases his entire article on his views. The question we have to ask though deals with his view of what is negative. Does brother Fredman consider reproving and rebuking as per 2 Timothy 4:2 negative? By the thrust of his article this God-ordained action has been relegated to being negative. Instead of being negative, doing what God commands us to do is very positive.

In moving on in his article he begins to deal with the article concerning Mack Lyon in *Defender*. We immediately notice his hypocrisy even though he might not recognize it. He criticizes and condemns those who criticize. He writes an article criticizing the writing of an article criticizing someone else. He does the very thing he says is the greatest problem in the brotherhood today. Brother Fredman, you are the one guilty by your own words and your own standard.

Brother Fredman makes a very serious charge when he writes with his poison pen: “Much of the time the information presented is not corroborated or documented in any way. Someone ‘heard’ that a brother believed false doctrine, spoke at a liberal/conservative/denominational congregation, etc. That information is then written as fact, published, and mailed to anyone willing to read and believe it. Unfortunately, much of the time the information presented is blatantly false.” He has played the hypocrite because he does not document a single occurrence of this taking place. He simply sits back in his lofty towers and says, “trust me.” Instead, brother Fredman, **prove** your accusations or retract them!

When brother Fredman goes to criticize the article dealing with Mack Lyon, he cannot find anything factual to say that was stated in the article which is wrong. The only thing he mentions is something he misread. He claims that the article had Mack Lyon speaking at the OCU lectures in 2007 (which they did not have). A

careful reading of the article shows that the lectureship brother Justice was speaking of was the 2005 lectures at OCU. Yet, this is the **only** point that brother Fredman could find with which to argue. Brother Fredman simply does not like exposing a brother—as he exposes a brother.

Brother Fredman seems to think that the only passages of Scripture that “conservatives” know are Ephesians 5:11 and 2 John 9-10 (he should have included verse 11 also). If these were the only two passages concerning this subject and our activities, then we would be justified in doing what we do (God only has to say something once to authorize any action). However, there are other passages which teach these same principles. Our Lord said, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mat. 7:15). We need to remember: “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Peter said, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation - slumbereth not” (2 Pet. 2:1-3). Thus, it is our duty to put people to the test: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). This trying the spirits includes elders as Paul would tell 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). Paul tells the young preacher, Timothy, that there will be false teachers and his responsibility was to put the brethren in

remembrance: “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; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.... If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained” (1 Tim. 4:1-3, 6). Jude adds, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Paul tells us, “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).

While brother Fredman claims that we only know the two passages, we could also discuss what true love is. Maybe he does not realize that we are to love one another: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35). Does brother Fredman not realize that true love rebukes. “And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Heb. 12:5-6). Maybe a lesson in the need to save souls would be profitable for brother Fredman. Brethren, what good does it do to convert one to Christ by their obedience to the initial commands of the Gospel (upon hearing, faith, repentance, confession, and baptism), to then allow that person to be lost eternally because of false teachers who were not exposed by brethren who knew better. Saving souls will include warning faithful brethren of those who would destroy their salvation. This is the type of soul saving to which brother Fredman objects.

Brother Fredman then misrepresents those who oppose speaking at places which are unsound in their teachings. I know of no one who opposes going to a denomination or a liberal congregation and speaking there on the condition that they are allowed to deal

with the errors in which they are engaged (and deal with them in such a way that the hearers know they are in sin and need to repent). What is opposed is when one goes to one of those places and does not deal with the error they are in but instead makes it appear as if nothing is wrong. Brother Fredman mentions the apostle Paul and his going into the synagogue as if Paul fellowshiped those in error. Paul did go into the synagogues but not to fellowship those in error but to show them the error of their way. The general result of was that while some repented, others tried to destroy or even kill him. Do we see these types of results from the preaching of those whom brother Fredman is defending? That which is opposed is when a sound man goes to a congregation which is no longer following the truth and makes it appear as if nothing is wrong.

Then brother Fredman asks the question: "My question for these brethren is, where is the Biblical example for writing up and publicly condemning your brethren?" He then uses two illustrations which contradict the point he is attempting to make (and he is apparently oblivious to the fact that he has disproved the point he tried to make). His first illustration is that of Paul rebuking Peter. He idiotically has Paul doing exactly what he is condemning. He says that Paul did not write a cover article for the "Jerusalem Journal" condemning Peter. How do we even know this event took place? Did not Paul write it in a letter and send that letter to all the churches in Galatia (and all this being done by inspiration of God)? God saw fit to have this written down in an inspired letter for everyone of all times to read. Since then, everyone knows about Peter and his sin of dissimulation. He then mentions Paul's conflict with Barnabas over Mark. How did brother Fredman know about this conflict? The only reason that we know about this conflict is because inspiration (Luke) wrote it down for us. Brother Fredman tries to condemn the writing up of a brother by using an imaginary publication, but the very thing he ridicules is what God was having the New Testament writers do.

Brother Fredman makes a glaring admission when he says that while some matters are worth breaking fellowship over, he does not know how to determine what they are. Notice exactly what he says, "I realize that there is a point at which individuals or congregations have strayed so far from the truth of God's Word that we can no longer support or fellowship them as brethren. However, I have to admit that at times I don't know exactly where that line is." That line is exactly where God draws it. It is our duty as Christians to determine where God has drawn that line so we do

not fellowship those who are out of fellowship with God and fellowship those who are in fellowship with Him. It appears as if brother Fredman needs to learn how to ascertain Bible authority regarding fellowship. We agree when he writes, "let me state that not all differences are matters of opinion. Many are legitimate differences in doctrine which will affect our fellowship. However, every issue we disagree on is not an issue of doctrine." There are many issues which are simply matters of opinion and to allow those to affect our fellowship is to sin. However, the matters discussed in the original article concerning Mack Lyon do not fall into that category of opinion but fall into that realm of doctrine which, for love's sake, must be exposed.

To close out his greatest problem article, brother Fredman says that we are commanded to go to each other when we disagree. Please notice that he did not give any Bible for this "command"? Probably he has reference to the settling of personal disputes recorded in Matthew 18:15-20. However, it is a misuse of this passage to apply it to matters which are of a public nature. The passage deals with one person committing a private sin against another. Then it is the obligation of the one offended to go to that person to try and get the offender to repent. However, this has nothing to do with things which are of a public nature (activities which are placed on the web site, sinful practices, associations with liberals, sermons preached, etc.).

Brother Fredman wants us to return to love for the brethren. Yet, he fails to realize that true love for the brethren includes exposing and rebuking the sin so, prayerfully, they will come out of it and others will not be drawn into the sin to fellowship the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). MH

(Continued from Page 1)

drives a man to a denomination, then to a denomination he must go. False teachers cannot be tolerated or harbored in the church of Jesus Christ! May God have mercy on such spineless elders!

Never has there been a time when those who have the oversight of the Lord's church should be more careful in what the church is being taught then and now. Elders should know every person that teaches both from the pulpit and in the classroom. They should be acquainted with every piece of literature that is being used. When some of our literature is copied from sources that do not believe in the inspired Word it is easy for error to creep in. It would be a giant step in the

right direction if elders would refuse to buy any material from those who are printing false doctrine. When they learn that they cannot sell their material then they will stop printing it.

Among the qualifications of elders is the one that states, "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" (Tit. 1:9). Paul continued in verse eleven talking about these false teachers and the responsibility elders had to them by saying, "Whose mouths must be stopped." Not only must elders know the Word and be able to correct the false teacher, they first of all must be able to recognize error when it is taught. Just recently I heard of a preacher who taught from the pulpit the direct opera-

tion of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the Word. There were elders in that audience that did not even notice that error was being taught! If that is the caliber of elders the Lord's church has today then may God help us! I am thankful for godly elders that know and love the truth. They are willing at any time and in any way to defend it. May their number increase and their faith and courage wax strong in these days of trial and turmoil.

Elders, the question as I see it resolves itself around this point. Shall the church continue to teach and practice a "thus saith the Lord," or shall we change our teaching and practice to suit the whims of contemporary man. You overseers hold the answer.

Deceased

How Good and How Pleasant it Is for Brethren to Dwell Together in Unity!

Tim Smith

"Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore" (Psa. 133:1-3).

A study of the biblical subject of *Unity* is ever a timely one, and now is no less the case. There is now, and there always has been since shortly after the beginning of the church, much division within the ranks of those who purport to be followers of Jesus Christ. The Psalmist declared that it is a good and pleasant thing when brethren are united, but is this always the case? Is there any set of circumstances wherein unity is not good? Biblically speaking, the answer is yes. Let us take a few minutes to consider these matters.

Unity is Shared Between Brethren

As the Psalmist declared, unity is a family thing. We enjoy unity with each other based on our kinship with each other, and that kinship is based on our relationship with the Lord. We are brethren with each other because God is our Father. The point at hand is well illustrated in Paul's dealings with the brethren in Corinth. He had condemned extending fellowship to "fornicators...covetous...idolaters" and the like (1 Cor. 5:9-10). That he was dealing with a family relationship was punctuated in verse 11: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called

a **brother** be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." Clearly the point is that we do not "keep company with" (fellowship) those of this world in a spiritual sense. We do not have family responsibilities to those not in the family of God. Hear Paul again: "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth" (1 Cor. 5:12-13). We have family duties toward those in the family of God, no more, no less, and none else.

Unity Between Brethren Is Predicated Upon the Brethren Respecting the Principles of Truth

We are granted salvation upon proper immersion (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), and we are granted entrance into the body of Christ at the same time (Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13). But to maintain our salvation and our good standing in the body of Christ we are obligated to be faithful and true to the truth which saved us (Jam. 1:21). Should we, in the course of time, leave the truth and replace it in our lives with error, what happens? Consider the case of the Thessalonians: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 The. 2:10-12). The sin under consideration in this passage warranted the ones guilty of it to be

“damned,” but what was it? Murder? Extortion? Per-
 version? No, it was their lack of love for and submis-
 sion to the truth. When they left the truth, they left
 their salvation. What was to be done with them? Were
 they to continue to enjoy the benefits of the family
 relationship afforded them in Christ? Hear the same
 inspired writer in the next chapter: “Now we command
 you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that
 walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he
 received of us.... And if any man obey not our word by
 this epistle, note that man, and have no company with
 him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count *him* not as an
 enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother” (2 The. 3:6, 14-
 15). This man who left the truth lost his privileges as a
 member of the family of God and was to be “with-
 drawn from” by the faithful. He was no longer in
 “good standing” with God, and Paul demanded that
 the church recognize that fact. We may not, with the
 approval of God, enjoy *unity* with those who have left
 the truth.

The Prayer of Our Lord for Unity

Our Lord prayed that his followers might be
 united, and in this wonderful prayer He linked unity
 with acceptance of the Word of God. Hear him: “Nei-
 ther 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). Notice
 that the unity for which he prayed was linked with the
 acceptance of (belief in) the Word of Christ as revealed
 through the apostles. To this Paul adds: “Now I be-
 seech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus
 Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there
 be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly
 joined together in the same mind and in the same judg-
 ment” (1 Cor. 1:10). To do our part in answering the
 prayer of our Lord for unity and in obeying the com-
 mand of the Lord through Paul, we must believe in and
 obey the truth.

It truly is a “good and pleasant” thing for “breth-
 ren to dwell together in unity,” but it is only brethren
 who are so to dwell, and specifically brethren who are
 faithful and true to the principles of truth. All others
 are excluded from this relationship. We love the lost,
 whether they be lost as unfaithful Christians or as alien
 sinners; but our love for them is demonstrated by
 teaching them the truth; not extending fellowship to
 and dwelling in unity with them in their sin.

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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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Recommended Reading: *A Time To Build*

Gary W. Summers

One of the most practical and scriptural volumes ever written about building up the Lord's church is this latest lectureship volume from the Bellview Church of Christ: *A Time To Build*. It is not just a book on evangelism, although one on that topic is always timely. It instead takes a holistic approach to building up the body of Christ.

The book contains 30 chapters, consisting of 431 pages, and begins with, "A Mind to Build." This attitude is much better than "the status quo" thinking that often characterizes many congregations. Successful building incorporates at the outset attitudes that will bring forth fruit. Next, brethren must realize: "It is Time to Build." The writer of this chapter correctly says:

There has never been a greater need to do so than today as we are completing the first decade of the twenty-first century! Sin is having a field day both in and out of the church of my Lord! (14).

Reasons are provided to support the assertions given in the above quote. A poem by J. T. Marlin, titled, "Wreckers" (26) explains why we never get off the ground in building.

"Principles of Building" follows. The perspective of this chapter is to view the church as one would a physical building. Given consideration are the architect, the price for the building, the foundation, the crew, and the building materials. Problems dealt with physical buildings are also found in the church: moisture problems, atmosphere problems, communication, and patience. Both this chapter and the preceding one emphasize the two passages that deal with conflict resolution in the church (Mat. 5:23-24; 18:15-17). The former passage says that if a person knows that someone has something against him, he should

go to that brother. The latter passage charges the offended brother to go to the one who wronged him.

"Building While Battling" is patterned after the time of Nehemiah when God's people followed precisely that course of action. One of the subheadings is both amusing and true: "If You are God's Builder, Trouble Knows Where to Find You" (43). The material here is both realistic and encouraging to those trying diligently to do the Lord's will.

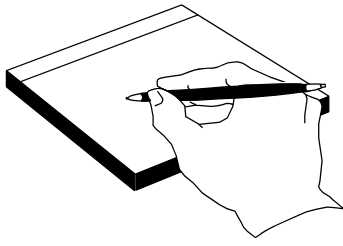
Another dose of realism is found in "Tearing Down to Build Up," as God charged His faithful prophet Jeremiah (1:9-10). Seven specific areas are listed, in which there needs to be some tearing down to build properly; these are followed by further suggestions.

"Building All Things According to the Pattern" is crucial if anything is to be constructed properly. The writer of this chapter came out of a denomination; thus, the pattern is of great importance to him (as it should be to all). He presents a biblical study of the word *pattern*, exhorts brethren to follow that pattern, and then sets forth some current departures from that pattern, including the unity meeting that some apostate brethren had with members of the Christian Church at last year's North American Christian Convention (83-86).

"Building on the Proper Foundation" accents many fundamental teachings in the New Testament and is followed by "Building Better Homes." As the reader might expect, the writer talks about the home in general, marriage, parents, children, and grandchildren. The reader will particularly want to find out about ODD (106). "Building Better Young People"

(Continued on page 4)

Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
mhatcher@gmail.com

A Cause

In a speech made by Patrick Henry to the Virginia House of Burgesses on March 23, 1775, Henry concluded his speech by saying: "Give me liberty or give me death." Henry realized the truth that there were some *causes* which were more important than life itself. The cause of Christ is certainly one of those causes that is worth more than physical life because it deals with life eternal.

In the long ago, David heard the challenge of Goliath and asked, "What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 Sam. 17:26). After a rebuke by his brother Eliab, David says, "What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause?" (17:29). There was a cause, but sadly, the Israelites were not *stepping up to the plate*. They sat idly by while the uncircumcised Philistine reproached God's people. David was willing to defend the right and went to battle Goliath. He trusted in God to give him the victory, even over a force that would seem insurmountable.

There have been causes that are worth more than dying for throughout time. Today we have many who have laid down their armor and not only surrendered but are now aiding and abetting the enemy. There are also causes today that means more than life.

Bible Authority

The Bible is God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). In Jesus' prayer to the Father, He prayed: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Paul would write, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest 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). Notice

that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth which is God's Word. It is the duty of the church to defend God's Word. Yet, today the Bible is attacked on every front. We have always known that those outside the body of Christ were going to attack the Scriptures. What is sad is that today, those inside the church have so little respect for God's Word. We are to do only what the Bible authorizes (Col. 3:17). Yet, many Christians have no concern whether or not God authorizes what they do anymore. If they want to do it, they go ahead and do it. They have no more respect for the Bible than the denominational folks all around us, although they claim that they love God's Word (just like the denominations). We need to have a respect for the Word of God and be a people of the Book.

The Church

The church is a divine institution which was planned before the creation of the world (Eph. 3). Those of the premillennial persuasion have denigrated the church into an afterthought with God. Those in the church have a cause to fight for knowing that the church was in the eternal purpose of God. Denominationalism destroys the uniqueness of the Lord's church. Our Lord built His church: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18). He did not build many churches; He built one. Paul writes "*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4), and he identifies that body as the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Sadly, some in the church have accepted denominationalism and have even thanked God for the divisions that have taken place. Yes, we have a cause for which to fight.

Within the Lord's church, He has instituted certain things for us to do and be. We are to worship God (John 4:23-24). God has authorized us to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Spirit has to do with our attitude as we worship, and truth has to do with it being according to the pattern God has established. That pattern which God has set is that (1) we are to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to Him. (2) We have been commanded to pray to the Father through the mediatorship of Christ. (3) Each first day of the week (Sunday) we are to remember the sacrifice which our Lord made by partaking of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper. (4) Each first day of the week we are to give of our means into the church treasury. (5) God has instructed that there be the preaching of the Word.

The denominations have perverted each of these

areas—which is to be expected from them. However, what is surprising is that we must stand against those who claim to be members of the Lord's church now. Congregations like Richland Hills in Texas have added mechanical instrumental music to their worship. Before that, the way was paved by groups like Acapella who made their voices sound like instruments of music (neither action has authority from God and they are thus sinful). We have those who claim and practice praying to Jesus (addressing their prayers to Jesus). There is as much authority for praying to Jesus as there is for praying to the Holy Spirit, Mary, one of the apostles, or anyone else. Christians have been changing the day God authorized. Some have taken the Supper of our Lord on Saturdays, Thursdays, and other days of the week. The church has long had trouble with those who would not give liberally of their means. Preachers have gotten farther from God's Word in their preaching and teaching with brethren wanting their ears tickled instead of desiring the meat of the Word. Yes, there is a cause for which we need to be standing.

There are many in the church today who have perverted the mission of the church. The Lord's church has one mission—saving souls. The saving of souls is accomplished through preaching God's Word to the lost, edifying of those who are saved, and benevolent actions to those who are in need. However, congregations all across the brotherhood have changed the mission of the church from the saving of souls to recreation, entertainment, and a social and physical emphasis instead of a spiritual emphasis. Congregations have wasted millions of dollars on “family life centers” which are nothing more than gymnasiums to attend to the social and physical. We have a spiritual cause for which to stand.

There are those who have altered the organization of the beautiful bride of Christ. The Catholic Church setup an organization where one man was over their entire denomination. Other denominations set up boards to be over their group or the preacher is the one in charge. There are those in the church who have changed the organizational pattern of the church. There are those who teach that elders have no authority except for their example. Now we have those who have advocated and practiced placing the elders under a certain percentage of the members by practicing elder reevaluation (i.e. if more than x% do not approve of the elder, they do not remain within the eldership, whether qualified or not). The organization which God set forth is something for which we must stand.

Discipline

In our society, discipline has almost become a joke. Children, instead of being disciplined (both preventive and corrective), are allowed to run loose. Children so often control the home instead of the parents controlling the children. When the children get out of line and need corrective discipline, often no discipline comes. Parents who truly love their children will properly train them in the way they should go, and will practice corrective discipline when needed.

In the Lord's church, discipline (both preventive and even more so corrective) has almost been forgotten. Elders fail to make sure the preacher preaches the Word and only the Word and all of the Word to prevent brethren from going astray. When brethren do go astray, elders are to lead the congregation in corrective discipline—withdrawing fellowship from that one in a loving effort to save their souls. Yet, God's command to withdraw fellowship from those walking disorderly is basically an ignored command in most places. However, God's people have a cause for which to stand.

Fellowship

Fellowship with God is utmost. Those in fellowship with God are in fellowship with each other. God will not fellowship some individuals. We must not fellowship those whom God refuses to fellowship. God will not fellowship those who transgress His Word—those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). For those who are in fellowship with God to begin fellowshiping those whom God will not will cause them to be separated from God also. Yet, it seems so many care nothing about fellowship today. They will fellowship those who they know have taught and practiced false doctrine (and have not repented of it). We have congregations who will advertise whatever is going on in the area whether a congregation is faithful or not. Preachers freely run articles in their bulletin (if they even run articles anymore) when they knew the writer is not what he should be. The concept of standing alone with God no longer seems to be around for so many in the church today. Today it seems as if it is more follow the crowd, no matter what. We need more elders, preachers, and members who realize there is a cause for which to stand and then take a stand.

Conclusion

The cause of Christ is the greatest cause there ever could be. This is the only cause that deals with the eternal destiny of the soul. Let us be willing to die for it, but even more so, let us live for it. *MH*

(Continued from page 1)

expands on the previous material, discussing the qualities that are so much needed in young people.

The tenth chapter takes us back to the body of Christ: "Building the Church (Spiritually and Numerically)." Amidst other good information, the penman discusses four "Pseudo" means of trying to bring about church growth (137-42).

In "Building World Evangelism" the writer covers quite a bit of territory, including: "Trials in Mission Work," "Campaigns," and "The Cost of Evangelism." The next two chapters are devoted to something that cannot be overlooked: "Building Peace Among Brethren" and "Building Unity in the Church." The first of these deals with the scriptural basis for unity, which must be considered first and foremost. The latter one mentions a few works that many brethren do not feel comfortable having fellowship with. The reader is exhorted:

Brethren, we can build unity in the church by encouraging the faithful. May we thoroughly investigate that in which we intend to invest the Lord's money, so as to insure just that (170).

"Building Better Bible Schools" covers four important aspects of a congregation's education program. It examines the purpose for having a Bible school and sets forth the qualifications for a teacher, including a sample questionnaire that may be used to make sure that teachers are qualified to teach either young people or adults (200-206). Choosing decent Bible school materials has often proved to be a nightmare for many education directors. A sample of a Bible lesson used by all the classes in a congregation is included in the book (196-200). These will soon be available on a DVD or in printed form. Another section of this chapter shows how a computer flash card system can be used to make sure that students are remembering the material and not forgetting all that they have studied (183-95). This material is very practical and may be of interest to several congregations.

"Building Better Bible Students" and "Building Your Personal Library" are related topics with more excellent and practical advice. The former chapter include three prerequisites for building better Bible students (210-212), which is followed by suggesting adequate preparations be made. The "library" chapter gives advice for keeping the cost of books low and lists several reference works that are helpful to the Bible student—by category. A serious student will profit from the list of books published here (225-30).

The next four chapters deal with building better worship. The first of these defines worship and lists six things that pertain to God's love of us. If we understand the nature of God, then we can better understand how we ought to worship Him. "Building a Better Prayer Life" should be of interest to all Christians, and the acronym, A-C-T-S is handy for one's own use or to be able to explain to others (249). "Building Better Singing" contains an examination of what was practiced in both the Old and the New Testaments, but one of the greatest values is encouraging brethren to sing "in truth," as well as "in spirit." Many songbooks contain verses written by those spiritually in error, and various songs contain concepts that are not taught in the Scriptures. Some errors brought to light are found in songs such as, "Just a Little Talk With Jesus," "He Lives," "Jesus is Coming Soon," and various others (272-77).

"Building Better Givers" rounds off this section; the author is not afraid to say that this topic is often much neglected. The writer uses humor to make some very sharp points, by which many could profit.

The next five chapters deal with leadership: the first of these defines the work of elders; the second considers both the qualifications and the work of deacons. The one on preachers gives some practical suggestions of ways to improve. Particularly of interest were these two sentences:

This preacher graduated from the Memphis School of Preaching and two universities before really understanding why some brethren do not listen. A man can know the Book and quote it all day long and still not be an effective preacher (323).

"Building Churches that are Concerned about Preachers" is a topic that one does not hear much about, but it is one that a few congregations need. "Building Tomorrow's Leaders" is always of vital interest. The biggest mistake that the church could make would be in failing to train men to be elders, deacons, teachers, and servants. A variety of suggestions is provided for helping congregations carry out this important endeavor.

"Building Better Attitudes" is something we all can use perennially, and the author specifically looks at how to develop better attitudes toward God, toward our brethren, and toward the lost. "Building Better Members" has an intriguing section: "We Are Made Better Through God's Recipe for Victory"; fourteen aspects of victory are presented (376-77). Eight points about Jesus are offered from Isaiah 53 (379-82).

One thing no congregation should be without can be found in "Building Better Love One for Another."

Few are those who do not know this principle, but many have difficulty applying it. This chapter can help rekindle the kind of love that ought to characterize every church of Christ.

Another topic that often goes neglected in many congregations is taken up in "Building Better Discipline." The writer encourages both preventive and corrective discipline and sets forth the reasons that the Scriptures give for doing so.

The final chapter is anything but a disappointment: the book is capped off with material we need for

"Building Courage." After scriptural examples of courage are listed, there is an important section on "What Courage is Not" (429-30).

As the reader has seen by this time, this book is well-rounded—in terms of setting forth what it means to be a Christian and a builder. The wealth of material far exceeds the price of \$15 (plus postage and handling); it may be ordered from the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. Their telephone number is (850) 455-7595.

3671 Oak Vista Lane; Winter Park, FL 32792

"Easy to Entreat"

Lynn Parker

Sometimes we differ with brethren in matters of opinion. Over these matters, brethren may either compromise, or they may never see eye-to-eye, and fellowship continues. Other situations center squarely on doctrinal matters—those obligatory matters set down by authority of Heaven. In this latter area of doctrinal matters, compromise is sinful and division is inevitable if no repentance is manifested (1 Cor. 11:18-19). How can the division be prevented or rectified? Surely we understand that all must be on the same doctrinal page (1 Cor. 1:10). However, one particular ingredient to resolving such difficult matters is found in James 3:

Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not *a wisdom* that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace (vv. 13-18).

Please note that James describes the heavenly, God-approved wisdom as "easy to be entreated." The phrase under consideration is translated from the Greek, *eupetithes*, meaning "good for persuasion, easily obeying, compliant, approachable, persuadable." Now there are but two types of wisdom—that which is "earthly, sensual, devilish," and that wisdom which is "from above." One or the other will be employed by folks in a dispute.

In doctrinal matters where fellowship is based on speaking the same thing, there must be a heart that is easy to entreat. Perhaps you have studied the Bible with

a Protestant only to hear the study conclude with the words: "I just can't see that baptism is essential to salvation." Yet, after being adequately taught the truth, evidence now points to a hardened heart. He could see the truth **if** his heart was open to instruction and correction.

One couple in a congregation—both of whom had taught Bible classes—taught error on church discipline and God's laws of fellowship to some in the church. Repeated requests to meet and study the matter were met by this couple with a stubborn refusal, and they finally left the congregation. In this sad case, hearts refused entreaty.

As we think about matters that have hurt the church and divided brethren, surely the past years of dealing with (1) elder re-evaluation and re-affirmation; (2) the peculiar marriage, divorce, remarriage error that deals with the intent to be married (among other facets); and (3) errors regarding fellowship, as taught, practiced, and condoned by Dave Miller and others, will go down in church history as another especially trying time for the brotherhood.

An indicator of the mind-set and heart condition of those supporting and thus condoning Miller's errors is that they refuse to be entreated. They have had opportunities to meet and discuss that were not to their liking and thus rejected. I listened to Curtis Cates and Keith Mosher on the Internet at the West Kentucky Lectureship open forum at the Sunny Slope congregation in Paducah, Kentucky, in which they described those that oppose them (and Dave Miller) as both liars and "vile" (Mosher's description). In response to this, on April 3, 2007 at 8:38 P.M., using as the subject: "Re: Recent statements;" I sent the following email to them both at the addresses listed on the web site for Mem-

phis School of Preaching.

AN OPEN LETTER TO BRETHREN CATES AND MOSHER

Brethren:

During an Open Forum, you made a charge that brethren opposing you were “vile” and lying. You defended Dave Miller. You rejected the opportunity offered you at the Spring, Texas Open Forum. By way of this email, I am proposing that the two of you, on behalf of FH and MSOP, appear on a forum of your design at the Forest Hill building or some other mutually agreeable location.

I offer to be one of two or more speakers representing opposition to your practices (especially regarding fellowship) and claims. If I am not acceptable to you, please name the man or men who would be. I would stipulate that the forum be (1) public and (2) video or tape-recorded with copies available to anyone who requests one.

The purpose of this forum would be to present the truth, expose error, and inform the brotherhood. Details of the discussion topics, dates, and times can be arranged mutually but we still would say that we are asking you to begin arrangements since our proposals have not been acceptable to you.

Surely you believe that truth has nothing to fear from exposure (1 Thess. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:15). “The ball is in your court.”

For the brotherhood and the truth,
Lynn Parker

Brethren, to date there has been no response from

Cates or Mosher. Some months ago I wrote a letter of concern to a once dear friend, Garland Elkins, also with Memphis School of Preaching. To date, I have heard nothing from brother Elkins.

Brethren, these matters will not go away with time—repentance is necessary. But first hearts must be easy to entreat. Lacking that type of heart and exhibiting a calloused refusal to meet, we can draw certain conclusions—a righteous judgment, if you will (John 7:24). **These brethren simply have no desire for resolution, unity, or a frank discussion of the doctrinal matters that divide brethren.** They are not easy to entreat. Thus, their wisdom, we properly conclude, is not from above!

1650 Gander Slough Road; Kingsbury, TX 78638

Editor’s Note: I would also be willing to meet with these brethren in a public meeting that is taped such as brother Parker suggested. I would add one other stipulation which is that the forum be fair (to both sides). Since they (Curtis Cates, Dave Miller, et. al.) have rejected two offers of which I am aware to meet, we urge them to set up a meeting themselves where everything can be put before the brethren. If they are not willing to set it up at Forrest Hill congregation, then possibly at some other congregation. Brethren, we desire unity, not division. However, we can only have unity when it is based on truth. We refuse to compromise the truth to stay in the *good graces* of brethren. Brethren, let us all do what is biblically necessary for unity to be restored. It is too precious for it not to be and we must remember that souls are at state.

Did He Say “Vile”? Did He Say He Meant to Say “Vile”?

Jess Whitlock

Keith Mosher: Speaking at the Open Forum, West Kentucky Bible Lectures—2006 Sunny Slope in Paducah, KY

This statement is typed [showing it to the audience], which means the brother or sister had it made up before they got here. I call those set-up questions. And I’m speaking for myself—not the Memphis School of Preaching. I teach logic, and this is the kind of question that says, “Have you stopped beating your wife?” It doesn’t matter what we say; somebody’s going to write about us. I’ve been preaching for 42 years, brethren, and I stand right where I stood 42 years ago. And my friends will

believe that, and my enemies won’t, but 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. They want to destroy about nine good works in the brotherhood just to prove a point [Emphasis mine—JW].

Danny Douglas: Speaking at the Bellview Lectures in Pensacola—2007

In responding to the above, brother Douglas asked brother Mosher:

When you and the Memphis School of Preaching opposed Malcolm Hill and TBC (and rightly so), for upholding Mac Deaver in his false doctrine of the

direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian, did that make **you** vile??? Did that mean you were trying to destroy good brotherhood works?

Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Webster defines *vile* as: "a. morally despicable or abhorrent, b. physically repulsive, 2: of little worth or account, 3: tending to degrade, 4: disgustingly or utterly bad." I see a tremendous contrast between what Paul wrote and what brother Mosher said in light of Webster's definition of *vile*.

Most brethren are aware that all of this bitter controversy surrounds one simple question. Is brother Dave Miller a false teacher? That question can easily be answered by any person who has studied this issue with a simple "yes" or "no." It seems that those who know that Dave Miller is a false teacher do not want to know anything about Matthew 7:15, Mark 13:21-22, Acts 20:28-31, Romans 16:17-18, Galatians 1:6-7, Ephesians 5:11, Colossians 2:4, 8, 2 Timothy 3:6, Hebrews 13:9, 2 Peter 2:1-3, 1 John 4:1, and especially 2 John 9-11. God had previously recorded in Psalm 119:104: "therefore I hate every false way."

When preachers, elders, and teachers of the Word adamantly refuse to warn against false teachers and

false doctrine, we have abandoned a holy charge given of God (Acts 20:28ff; 2 Tim. 4:1-4). It breaks the heart and brings tears to the eyes to see the Lord's body ripped asunder. It will always be right for the faithful to stand against false teachers and false doctrine (2 The. 2:15).

PO Box 127; Cheyenne, OK 73628

Editor's Note: At the end of brother Mosher's comments about Dave Miller, he said: "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 very easy to get up in a friendly environment and make accusations against someone. It is another matter to **prove** the accusations. I am presenting a challenge to brother Mosher to **document** and **prove** any lies *Defender* has printed about Dave Miller!

Brother Mosher knows very well how to document material since he has an earned doctorate degree. Thus, he should have no difficulty in documenting any lies *Defender* might have published. Those associated with the West Kentucky Bible Lectures should hold him accountable for the statements he made at their lectures as should Memphis School of Preaching where brother Mosher teaches. If he cannot document and prove the charges he has made, then he needs to retract them and repent of them.

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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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Email: bellviewcoc@gmail.com

Good People in Bad Churches

Dub McClish

Introduction

Numerous brethren have asked me what they can/should do about the liberal congregation of which they are members. When God announced the coming destruction of "Babylon," He warned His people: "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). This warning applies to God's people in the "Babylons" of every age and species, including the many apostate congregations of our time that have rebelled against Heaven. What can/should they do? The answer from Scripture is clear: "**Come forth, my people.**" Many good brethren have obeyed this warning and have left such corrupt bodies in recent years, but I believe thousands of unhappy saints yet remain in them.

"Come forth"—The Fellowship Factor

The Heavenly voice warned God's faithful people to "come forth" because they must "have no fellowship" with Babylon's sins. Fellowship refers to sharing in common or jointly participating with others. Those who stay in a liberal congregation are in fellowship with its errors. God has **never** approved of His children's having fellowship with His enemies.

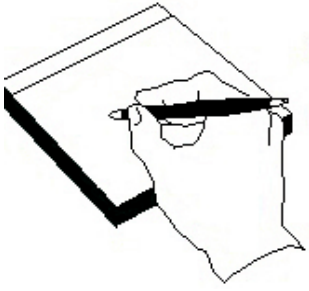
Zero fellowship permitted: *Some* fellowship with sin and error is not an option. The consistent rule of Scripture is "**no fellowship**": "Have **no** fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11; cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-18). In these passages, both the Lord and Paul addressed fellowship with unbelievers, but the teaching is the same concerning apostate brethren: "**receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting**; for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (2 John 10-11; cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 The. 3:6).

God's Word knows nothing of the Rubel Shelly scheme of "Big F" and "Little f" levels of fellowship—the doctrine of "limited fellowship" (which apes the heretical Ketcherside/Garrett "Gospel/doctrine" dichotomy). Those who remain in a church bent on error violate the Lord's "no fellowship" prohibition.

Contributing money on the Lord's day is one means of fellowship with a congregation. Contributors in a bad church help support false teaching from its pulpit, liberal missionaries, and all of the erroneous doctrines and practices of that church, even if they object to them. Liberal elders and preachers (and most Christian university administrators) pay little attention to verbal opposition. The one language they understand is **M-O-N-E-Y**. We cannot eradicate the current digression so many congregations now manifest, but it might be significantly slowed if thousands of objecting brethren would "come forth" from them and cease supporting them financially.

Besides their financial **fellowship**, good brethren who remain in a bad church also implicitly **endorse** the congregation's errors. All of the objections one might offer to digressive elders and preachers begin to sound hollow and insincere after awhile when one stays in spite of the doctrinal departures. Merely registering objections is insufficient. Verily, as long as one is a member of an apostate church he is endorsing its apostasy. **For this reason** John forbade extending any indication of encouragement or endorsement to false teachers; to do so is to have fellowship with their evil works (2 John 10-11).

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Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
mhatcher@gmail.com

Work of the Church

God planned the church before the foundation of the world. Paul writes, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:10-11). When the Second Person of the Godhead came to this world, He came with the purpose of building that church or kingdom which had been prophesied through time. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). After His death and resurrection, we observe its establishment on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2.

Jesus died and shed His blood to purchase the church as Paul stated to 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). As the purchaser of the church, He is its head as Paul would write, “And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23). Being the head of the church, Christ has the right to establish all things relating to it. This He has done in the Bible. He has established how man enters the church, the worship which we are to offer, the organization it is to possess, and, among other things, the work which it is designed to perform.

Our Lord gave it the same work which He came to this earth to do—save souls. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Christ also showed that His kingdom/church is not a

physical organization but has a spiritual thrust when He says to Pilate: “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).

Several years ago the denominational world changed the spiritual emphasis to a physical and social emphasis. They wanted to *save* the planet more than save souls. They were concerned more about pollution (water and air) and poverty than in the pollution of sin and poverty of the soul. To provide socialization they provided entertainment and recreation for their members and particularly “for the kids.” Denominations grew in numbers by appealing more and more to these physical desires. Soon, as is always the case, what happens in denominationalism makes its way into the church. The “church” started trying to compete with the denominations to get the numbers (to some numbers are more important than Truth).

Some within the Lord’s church began wanting to offer socialization for their members. It became the church’s responsibility to provide these things for their members and especially “for the kids.” Congregations hired “youth ministers” which often were nothing more than recreation directors to organize activities for their young people. To have more organized events, congregations began joining “church leagues” so they could have more opportunities to compete with others. At first some would pay for all expenses out of their own pocket. However, they were out there in the “church league” playing ball or other sports with the denominations. What does the denominational world think when they see us out on the ballfield (or in other sporting events) playing in the “church league”? How could they think of *us* as anything but a denomination just like they are? (If fact, many if not most, of those congregations have become nothing but a denomination.) Can you imagine Paul going to the churches of Galatia and saying to them: “Let’s get up a church ball team so we can go out and play ball with the Judiazing Denomination, the Pharisee Denomination, the Pagan groups, and etc.”? To suggest such nonsense is absurd. Instead, Paul would be out teaching them the error of their way in no equivocal way. They would not be enjoying a ball game but hearing the Word of the Lord and the sad state of their soul. He would not be “fellowshipping” those denominational groups in a “church league.” (The fact that it is a *league* shows that it is fellowship.) Or can you imagine the apostle John telling the church at Ephesus and Pergamos to get a ball team together and join in with the Nicolaitanes in playing in

our “church league”? Or maybe he would tell the church at Smyrna that they should join the “church league” with the synagogue of Satan (every denomination is a *synagogue* of Satan today). Surely no one would think that these faithful men would do such. Why then would we think that a congregation which promotes such today is faithful?

What we need to do is get back to our Father’s business and our Savior’s business. The Father sent the Son to save souls (John 3:16-17). Christ came to save souls (Luke 19:10). He gave His apostles a great commission to go teach the Word to the world: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen” (Mat. 28:19-20). Mark records this in this way: “And he said unto them, 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). Thus, that commission which Christ gave His apostles is equally valid for every member of the Lord’s church today. We are to teach others the Gospel. Paul told Timothy: “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” (2 Tim. 2:2). We must each feel a personal obligation that as we go, we teach others: “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).

We need to realize that the work of the church is not fun and games, recreation and entertainment, but the saving of souls. It will not be accomplished through “church leagues,” but by boldly proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, exposing sin, and informing the lost what they must do to accept God’s saving grace.

MH

Continued from Page 1

“Come Forth”—The Danger Factor

The Lord stated a second significant reason His people must exit “Babylon”: He was going to bring plagues upon her, which those—good and evil alike—who remained in her would also suffer. One dare not assume that God will hold only the **leaders** in today’s “Babylons” responsible. While their responsibility is greater, their supporters are likewise culpable, and will suffer the same judgment rendered against their leaders. Even the apostles would have been “rooted up” or would “fall into the pit” (i.e., be lost) had they followed or supported erroneous

leaders (Mat. 15:13-14).

Had Lot, his wife, and his daughters not fled Sodom, God would have destroyed them with that wicked city. The Lord urged their **hasty departure** to escape God’s judgment (Gen. 19:12-17; cf. 2 Pet. 2:7). Likewise, the Lord would have His faithful ones to “come forth” from corrupt congregations to escape the *plagues* that God will surely visit upon them (Rev. 2:20-23; 22:18-19).

One who remains in an unfaithful congregation also runs the risk of becoming *desensitized* to error. Though at first he might strongly object to the departures he sees, by staying in such a church one may be lulled into complacency toward them—the “boiled frog” syndrome. He may begin to rationalize the errors and to exalt sincerity over Truth.

Further Motivations to Move

Revelation 18:4 furnishes two reasons, but there are additional sound reasons why saints should flee modern “Babylons.”

- **To Support Truth and Righteousness**

One who remains in a digressive church not only supports error, but he robs God and His faithful people of the fellowship and support due them. Not only should one **not** want to support false doctrine, he should greatly desire **to support** only sound doctrine. As long as one remains in a liberal church, he robs God (and His faithful people) of time, talents, money, and every means of his support and endorsement. This reason alone should be sufficient to cause one to “come forth” from an apostate group.

- **To Save One’s Soul**

One should flee a liberal congregation for the sake of his own soul. Remaining in a “Babylon” church makes one subject to God’s eternal judgment against it. As already noted, although Lot objected to Sodom’s sins, had he remained in it he would have perished with its perverted populace. Similarly, for the sake of spiritual survival, every Christian who objects to the errors in his “home” congregation should leave it. We all need to be in a congregation that constantly urges us to honor God’s Word in everything we do. We need to hear error identified and refuted. These things will help us to serve Christ faithfully and reach Heaven at last. In a liberal church, not only are none of these found, but their opposites abound.

- **To Save One’s Children**

Parents of small children who remain in an apostate congregation are very unwise and short-sighted. They (especially fathers) have the responsibility to nurture their

children “in the chastening and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Parents who stay in a liberal congregation fail in this duty, even if they teach their children correctly and provide a good example at home. Their influence will likely not be able to counteract the acceptance of “social” drinking, dancing, unscriptural marriages, theistic evolution, instrumental music in worship, fellowship with the denominations, worship innovations, and such like. Also, the “peer pressure” of other children will work against the parents. Lot lost at least two daughters and their families in Sodom’s destruction. Although he urged, “Up, get you out of this place,” they had been so influenced by their surroundings that they refused his plea (Gen. 19:12-14). Lot sacrificed them by foolishly rearing them in Sodom. Some today are as obstinate as Lot—even if it means the loss of their children to error. They, as Lot did, continue to linger when they should have fled (19:15-16).

Otherwise good parents in liberal churches may at home point out the errors the children are encountering in “Bible” classes and worship assemblies, but eventually those children will figure out that their parents are being hypocritical to stay in such a church. If parents want their children to grow up with any semblance of strong convictions in the Truth, they dare not linger in a liberal congregation.

Excuses, Excuses

In spite of the numerous compelling reasons why Truth-loving brethren should have nothing to do with an apostate religious body, a large number of them continue to do so, offering various excuses.

- **We Can Help:**

“We don’t agree with what’s going on, but we hope we can correct these things by staying.” Admittedly, some congregations have not reached the “point of no return” in their digression. In such cases, those who are zealous for the Truth should stay and “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3). However, when congregational leaders have obviously succumbed to liberalism, it is practically impossible to reclaim them. To them, those who criticize erroneous doctrine or practice are just pesky “trouble makers.”

Most of the larger urban congregations are either well on their way to, or have reached, the “point of no return” doctrinally. Their leaders have taken a leftward course. As the consuming flame draws the moth, so the “broad way” that ends in destruction has enticed them (Mat. 7:13). They have money, power, and worldly ambition, and they roll over any who get in their way. One is terribly naive who believes that he can redirect them. To

stay with them is to contribute tearing down that which the Lord wants us to build. In doing so, one only wastes effort, time, influence, and money on a lost cause—and will lose his soul in the bargain. The Lord’s command concerning hardened apostate religious leaders is: “Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit” (15:14).

- **Family and Friends**

“Although I don’t approve of this congregation, I can’t leave my kindred and best friends.” We should all possess “natural affection” (Rom. 1:31). However, **all** other affections must be secondary to one’s affection for the Christ and His Word (Mat. 6:24, 33; 10:34-36; 22:36-37). We correctly appeal to members of denominations to come out of those sinful institutions, even if it means sacrificing family and friends. It is no less appropriate to appeal to brethren whose family ties and friendships bind them to digressive “churches of Christ.”

- **Too Much Invested**

“I have been a member of this congregation for years, and I have invested too much money and time to walk away from it.” It is painful to lose investments, but it is sometimes necessary. Spiritual issues far outweigh mere material ones. That one is so concerned over money or time is a “dead giveaway” that the priceless treasure of Truth and one’s eternal destiny are not one’s priorities (Mat. 6:21). One whose house is in the path of a raging flood is a fool if he tells would-be rescuers he has invested too much time and money in it to leave. In both cases, these folk have **already** lost their *investments* **whether they go or stay**. The member of the liberal church has lost his *investments*, and by remaining in it, he compounds those losses. He had better be concerned with the far greater loss of his soul if he continues to support error and sin (Mat 5:30; 16:26; 2 John 9-11). Some cannot bear to leave behind the building their money and/or hands helped to build. A brother once asked me what he should do about the liberalism in the church of which he was a member, which had earned its well-deserved reputation over several years. He told me many sad details about their departures. I knew he had at one time been an elder there, but he told me he had resigned some time earlier because his objections were repeatedly ignored. I had assumed he agreed with the liberalism because he had continued to stay there. When I asked why he stayed he said that he (and some others) did not want to “give up” the building. He failed to comprehend that the liberals long before gained control of the building (as his resignation indicated). In such cases, it is folly to think that one

is “saving the building” by staying.

A building is only a building. It can be replaced, but a soul that stays in a digressive church may be lost and never recovered—for the Truth or for eternity. As I would unhesitatingly urge a man to flee his fire-engulfed house as a lost cause, so do I counsel brethren who remain in liberal-infested churches in their vain attempt to “save the building.”

- **Fear of Division**

“I don’t approve of the corruptions and innovations I see in this congregation, but I might cause division if I leave.” One should be cautious and concerned about division, but one dare not favor a false “peace” or “unity” above Truth and godliness. Liberals have falsely accused many a devoted saint of “causing division” when all they did was stand for the Truth and object to unauthorized doctrines or deeds.

I confess to encouraging division **when the Truth is at stake**. Our Lord is “the Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6), but He rules with a “sword” that is often divisive (Mat. 10:34; Luke 12:51-52; Eph. 6:17). When some in a congregation refuse to submit to God’s Word and others are determined to do so, division is inevitable. The Lord anticipated such divisions, and they have His blessing (1 Cor. 11:19). **Those who have abandoned the Truth are the culprits in such cases**, regardless of accusations to the contrary. Brethren should not let the “church divider” charge intimidate them.

- **Nowhere to Go**

“I don’t agree with the preaching and practices of this congregation, but where can I go?” This problem especially perplexes those who live where the only congregation designated “church of Christ” has apostatized. In such cases, it is time to begin a new congregation. Brethren in hundreds of places did so a century or more ago when digressives forced the instrument and the missionary society into almost every congregation. Many sacrificed greatly as heartless heretics, operating as religious bullies, forced them to choose between compromising or leaving.

Those faithful spiritual ancestors understood the spiritual application of Solomon’s words: “Better is little, with the fear of Jehovah, Than great treasure and trouble therewith” (Pro. 15:16; 16:8). Some of these godly folk began congregations in their homes with only their own family unit as members, but they were determined to be faithful to God. The time has come again to demonstrate such grit and character for those in unsound churches who would “worship in spirit and truth” and maintain a “good conscience” (John 4:23-24; Heb. 13:18). While

the modern innovations are more varied than those of the past, they represent the same kind of rebellion against New Testament authority. God-fearing brethren who live in areas where sound congregations exist have **no excuse for remaining in unsound congregations**. They cannot sincerely ask, “Where can I go?”

- **We Like the Youth Program**

“Many of the things being done in the church here are unscriptural, but it has a large group of children the ages of ours.” As I suggested earlier, having children should be a compelling reason for **leaving**, rather than for **staying in** a liberal church. What parents *gain* in peers and programs for their children they more than lose to the harmful influence, emphasis, and teaching, as already enumerated. It would be far better for one’s children to be reared in a congregation that provides wholesome doctrine and spiritual emphasis with only one or two others (or even none) their ages than in a congregation with a multitude their age where scriptural teaching and example are absent. Remember Lot’s folly—and losses. [editor’s note: How many will pay good money to see that their children have personal teaching (hire a private tutor) for their child, but then complain when they receive that personal teaching in a smaller congregation? As the old saying goes: “Consistency, thou art a jewel.”]

- **No Perfect Congregation**

“I know this congregation has many problems in doctrine and practice, but so did the church in Corinth, and Paul still called it a ‘church of God.’” Liberals have so often repeated this prattle to justify their apostasies that some otherwise sound brethren now parrot it. Such is a classic illustration of comparing “apples” with “oranges.” True, Paul addressed the defective Corinthian brethren as “the church of God” (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1), but this is hardly the end of the matter. The **principal aim** of Paul’s letters to them was to **correct those errors and their purveyors**. He believed—correctly—that the church was salvageable. Most of the Corinthians were penitent (2 Cor. 7:5-16), and Paul warned the few who were not that he would deal with them when he arrived (12:20-21; 13:2-10). Had the church refused his reproofs, he could not have continued in fellowship with them and been consistent with his own teaching (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; Eph. 5:11; Tit. 3:10; et al.) or with the Lord’s (Mat. 7:15-16; 15:13-14; 16:6, 12; et al.). One who concludes that Paul’s address of the Corinthian church as “the church of God” somehow justifies a congregation’s apostasy is sorely mistaken. Paul dealt with these errors as soon as he learned of them—before their perpetra-

tors had become entrenched and had gained unbreakable control. Unlike many present-day error-plagued congregations, the Corinthian errors did not represent a long-standing pattern of liberalism and disregard for the Truth. Numerous faithful brethren have again and again exposed and rebuked the errors of modern apostate congregations, only to see them resolutely march further into radicalism. Unlike the Corinthian church, there is no realistic hope that they will return to the Truth. Anyone who would appeal to the Corinthians as an excuse for apostasy and/or for remaining in an apostate church

Voices from the past:

This article appeared in "Defender" November 1973

A Time to Build Tents

William S. Cline

We are neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet therefore we do not consider ourselves a voice crying in the wilderness. Yet one needs nothing more than to casually observe the situation to deduce that the church of our Lord is heading toward a **testing**, the likes of which she has not seen since the restoration movement of one hundred-fifty years ago.

We are concerned that the **liberal philosophies** of the educational, political, social and denominational worlds are becoming the governing undercurrent in the kingdom. Preachers who contend earnestly for the "Old Paths" wavering neither to the right nor the left are not nearly so popular as they once were among a people that claims to "Speak where the Bible speaks." Scripture quoting, sin condemning preachers are fast becoming out of step and out of style in a church that wants to "win friends and influence people" so long as we do not **upset** them. **Feeling and friendship** instead of **doctrine and fellowship** have become the enigma of the day and political, love everybody, condemn nothing, Joke telling, good God, good Devil, good heaven, good hell, entertaining preachers have become the desired order of things on the parts of many. Where in the name of heaven are we headed?

Almost unnoticed among some brethren is the fact that a great number of sound Gospel preachers are quitting the pulpit to go into some type of secular work. For certain some have quit because preaching was harder than they supposed. Others surely have quit because

should be ashamed.

Conclusion

In appealing for good brethren to leave bad churches, I am not encouraging "sheep-stealing." I am simply encouraging godly men and women to have the courage of their convictions and to make Truth their priority. Although it may require sacrifice, the Lord's command to them is: "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

908 Imperial Dr; Denton, TX 76201

they found out they simply were not cut out for preaching. While others may have been so poorly supported or cared for they had to go into some other type of work to adequately support their families. But there are large numbers of preachers who have quit because brethren **would not stand** for sound, doctrinal preaching and having been associated with one or more such congregations they became discouraged and went into secular work.

Brethren can be mean when they want to. Just now preachers who exposed the sins of members in their respective congregations comes to mind. They are no longer preaching. One preached against adultery. One in the congregation set out to "get him." His reputation was severely damaged by the gossips and he quit preaching. The gossip, the unkind remarks to wives and children, the mockery, the refusal to participate in programs of work, the cutting off of the dollar in the contribution, the constant wrangle in classes, etc. are some of the things that are putting preachers into secular work. One able preacher of the Gospel who quit preaching told this writer that he was sick and tired of his family's welfare depending upon the **whims of the brethren**. Only the Lord Himself knows how many others have harbored the same feelings.

Statistics that have come to us indicate that we have approximately 800 fewer preachers today than we had five years ago! Perhaps each of us can name several preachers we have known over the years that have quit preaching and taking note of those that have quit recently

one can only become concerned because of the present situation. We know of one city that has at least 19 men in it that were faithful Gospel preachers, yet today they are not preaching. There are more than two congregations for every preacher, yet our number of preachers is decreasing. Where are we headed?

As liberalism continues to infiltrate the congregations of the church of our Lord, more and more faithful preachers are going to become tired of beating their heads against the brick wall of this old philosophy which has gotten such a strong hold on the minds of modern man and they are going to leave preaching to engage in some other form of work. Perhaps the time is fast coming when a preacher who intends to “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto my people their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sins” (Isa. 58:1) is going to have to “build tents” if he is to be supported in his preaching the whole counsel of God.

When Paul went to Corinth to preach he supported himself by building tents (Acts 18:3). There is a certain **independence** that comes with tent building. A preacher that is self-supported will not feel the need to keep one eye on the contribution and attendance while he preaches the Gospel. Many do this very thing because they know when the contribution and attendance drops they are in trouble. Since brethren use these as gauges, the preacher is tempted to preach that which will keep those two

thermometers high and rising. On the other hand, the selfsupported preacher can keep both eyes on the Bible and preach the whole counsel without fear of being cut off. There is certainly nothing wrong with preachers being supported and supported well by congregations as long as they do not allow that support to hinder their work as an evangelist.

There are congregations that use the salary to buy the kind of preaching they want and some preachers are more **concerned** about their **salary** than they are their **soul**. If the time comes when preachers have to build tents in order to preach the Word of God as revealed in His verbally inspired book then may God be our stay and our strength to do what we have to do to preach the unsearchable riches of the Christ. God forbid that we ever let the whims and the philosophies of what may well be the **outspoken minority** keep us from preaching the Word without fear or favor.

Preacher, “preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2) and if and when that time comes for you, for the sake of Christ, the kingdom and all that is pure and holy begin building your tents. It looks like that time is coming, but when you start building tents **don’t stop preaching** the Word. That is what the devil wants and God forbid that we ever conduct our lives in such a way as to give victory to the Prince of Hell.

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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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Email: bellviewcoc@gmail.com



An "Open Letter" to The "New" Gospel Journal Board *Jess Whitlock*

Queries from concerned members of the Lord's church in Wyoming caused me to re-read an issue of *Defender* (Vol. 26, # 11, Nov. 1997). T. J. Hicks had rightfully addressed an "Open Letter" to "Cline (Paden) & other Sunset Elders." In the second paragraph Tom Hicks made this very timely and scriptural request of the Sunset elders:

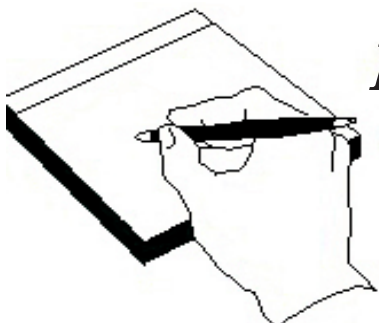
Because my previous and latest correspondence (to Cline Paden, a man for whom I once had the highest respect) goes unanswered, I feel that I have no choice but to begin communicating by means of "OPEN LETTERS" (open for "all brethren" to read), but addressed to Sunset (her elders, various ministers, and faculty members in the School). I feel that these matters should be conducted "in writing" because "oral" discussions can be forgotten, denied, and/or otherwise flawed. Furthermore, if it is in print, one cannot deny that he said something that he did say, or say that he said something he did not say. Truth, integrity, and moral conviction have nothing to fear when exposed to the light. The same cannot be said for false doctrines, unethical dealings, and immoral behavior. Rather than to retreat into darkness, Sunset needs to "shed some light" in answer to questions that fall into all three of these categories.

Did I hear someone say, "Amen"? When I read that entire correspondence in 1997, I said an audible "amen" in my office. I cannot think of any faithful brother in Christ who would not say that such was fair and needed. It is now 10 years later. Let us try this today:

To the "New" Gospel Journal Board and the Current Co-editors

Because previous attempts to set up meetings and discussions (relating to matters such as: reaffirmation of elders, Miller's false doctrine of "intent" to marry, et al, and extending fellowship to false teachers and false doctrines) remain unanswered and unmet, we have no choice but to open up communications by means of "OPEN LETTERS" (open so that all brethren can weigh truth against error). However, these letters should be directed to the current board members and editorial staff of *The "New" Gospel Journal*. The direction of this **new** monthly is not what it was under the capable editorship of brother Dub McClish. I was thrilled to receive my first copy of *The "Original" Gospel Journal* in January of 2000. I looked forward to every edition through July of 2005. Then a sad set of circumstances forced me to send in our cancellation. I had marveled at the 9 editorial aims of The "Original," especially editorial aim number 5: "Oppose and expose both doctrinal and practical error from all quarters" (Cf. Mat. 7:15; Eph. 4:14; 5:6; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 6:20-21; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 John 7-11). But, as John Moore (co-editor of *T"N"GJ*) stated at the 2005 Schertz Lectures, "We are going to do the very best that we can to bring to you issues that are encour-

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Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
mhatcher@gmail.com

Battling

When God created Adam and Eve, He knew that man's lot would be battling. God placed them in the Garden of Eden with certain commands to keep. He knew that Satan would come and tempt them to violate His commands. He knew there would be a battle coming for them, a battle to remain faithful to what He said and not to succumb to Satan's temptation. However, they lost that battle, and sin entered the world. The battle between Satan and man had begun and will continue as long as time exists.

During the days of Noah, the people had stopped battling Satan and given in to him. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:4) and as such had to continually battle against Satan but also the people of his day. The same is seen regarding Lot. He "pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Gen. 13:12) and as a result had a ferocious battle on his hands. Peter writes of him that God, "delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Pet. 2:7). Lot had to battle Satan and his temptations, but he also had to battle those who were wicked—the people who lived there, and some of those were from his own family.

Joseph had to continually do battle. While his father had special feelings for him as his coat of many colors show, those affections of his father caused his brothers to hate him. Additionally, God gave him certain dreams which caused additional hatred by his brothers. His brothers sold him into slavery with him ending up in the house of Potiphar. Potiphar's wife wanted him to commit fornication but he refused, so she lied about him causing him to be put in prison. While in prison he interpreted

the dreams of the butler and baker, but after the butler was restored to his position, he forgot about Joseph. Joseph had to battle the temptations of Satan, the evil of others, but also the circumstances in which he found himself. We could examine the entire Old Testament in this way and see that there are always battles to be fought. Allow me to mention one other in the Old Testament and then move to the New Testament.

In Judges 7 the Midianites were subjugating the Israelites. God had determined to deliver Israel by the hand of Gideon. While Israel started out with 32,000 soldiers, God said there were too many. When the army of Israel is pared down to 300 men, God delivers Israel from the Midianites. It appeared (especially from a human standpoint) that there would be no way that Israel would be able to defeat them with such a small number as: "the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude" (Jud. 7:12). However, as Israel entered into the battle, they knew God was with them, and thus they would defeat the enemy. In any battle, the numbers do not matter; it only matters if God is with us or not. If He is with us, we will be victorious no matter what the odds might be.

The apostle Paul was one who faced many battles in his life. He faced battles with various circumstances (jail, shipwreck, etc.). Notice how he speaks of some of his battles: "Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; *In* weariness and painfulness, *in* watchings often, *in* hunger and thirst, *in* fastings often, *in* cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11:24-27).

However, as much of a battle as those physical things were, he was more concerned with the spiritual battles he had to fight. Notice the next verse: "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). Paul had a continual battle with false teachers. Notice how Luke puts it: "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them" (Acts 15:2). Paul would put it: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5). This specifically referred to the Judaizing

teachers of his day, however Paul recognized that false teaching (any false teaching) would not and could not save anyone. Truth saves: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Paul knew that false doctrine originates with the devil. Notice how Paul speaks of it: "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; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Toward the end of Paul's life he encouraged Timothy to "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:12). Then he tells him: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3). Then he would write of his own life: "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. 4:7-8). Paul had to constantly battle, but by doing so, he would receive the reward of a crown of life.

Paul also battled against the forces of Satan over the souls of man. Paul worked constantly in trying to convert lost souls to Christ. This desire to save souls prompted several trips to preach the saving message of Christ to those who were in the clutches of Satan. Paul felt that he owed all men: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Rom. 1:14-15). He knew that the Gospel was God's power to save, so he had that overriding desire to preach it to all men. In preaching the Gospel to the lost, Paul was battling Satan.

We also are in a battle. It begins when we reach that "age of accountability" (Deu. 1:39; Isa. 7:15-16; Jonah 4:11) and continues on through our life till death takes us home. We must battle against the temptations which Satan places in our way. Peter describes him as our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). He is going to use all the temptations that he has at his disposal: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride (vain glory) of life (1 John 2:16). While we should not be ignorant of what Satan will use against us (1 Cor. 2:11), yet the sad fact re-

mains that many are. We must constantly do battle with him so we will not be consumed by him.

We will also fall into circumstances within our lives in which we must battle. We can allow the circumstances which come upon us to strengthen us in our resolve to do the Lord's Will, or we can allow them to destroy us. It has been well stated in the past that the same sun that melts butter will harden clay. We need to realize that suffering will ultimately be good for us if we endure them properly (Jam. 1:2-12; 1 Pet. 1:6-7). We must battle so we do not allow our hearts to be hardened by the circumstances we might fall under.

We must also battle false doctrine. False doctrine is so prevalent in our society and in the church. Those doctrines which are found in denominationalism soon make their way into the church. Paul informed the Ephesian elders: "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" (Acts 20:29-30). Jesus told us to "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mat. 7:15). The apostle of love commanded us: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Those in the church will be in a constant battle with Satan's henchmen—teachers of false doctrine.

There is a great battle taking place today in the church. Some are standing firm upon Truth and Truth alone. Others have become traitors to the cause of Christ by bringing in and advocating false doctrines. They have perverted the beautiful bride of Christ. There are some others who would never teach false doctrine themselves, but instead of battling those who teach such, they have given aid and support to those who are false teachers by fellowshiping them. They have, thus, become a partaker with them of their evil and are as morally responsible for their false teaching as those who teach such. "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). It seems as if many have forgotten this, thus they do fellowship false teachers by appearing with them, supporting them, and in other ways helping them out.

To receive heaven's home, we must battle. It might

appear at times that we are in a great minority (even in the church), but we must remember that when we are on God's side, the victory will be ours. Paul wrote, "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?" (Rom 8:31). Let us continue to fight that good fight of faith to receive the crown of life (2 Tim. 4:7-8), because truth and right will prevail no matter how overwhelming the odds might appear.

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Continued from Page 1

aging, that edify, that instruct, that build up people, that are good for the church, every member of the church..." Notice, not one word about exposing error!

Some brethren have said that such things as the false practice of the so-called elder reaffirmation, the false doctrine of the "intent" to marry farce, and the fellowship of false doctrine/teachers, etc. are about "matters that don't matter" or as one eldership said, "an unnecessary issue over marriage and divorce." Brethren, **God inspired Scripture does matter!!!** I am reminded of the words of my Lord in Matthew 23:23: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Is it possible that we are encouraging, edifying, and building up people, all of which are good and noble, and have omitted the weightier matters of "opposing and exposing both doctrinal and practical error"? These matters should

be addressed "in writing" and/or in "oral" form that is recorded and preserved by tape, CD, DVD, etc. so they cannot be flawed. If it is recorded in print (or preserved by tape, CD, DVD), one cannot deny that he said something that he did say, or say that he said something he did not say. Barry Grider (co-editor of *T"N"GJ*) said at the 2005 Schertz Lectures, "doing our best to provide for our brotherhood a paper that is Biblically sound, one that is well-balanced..." Once more, no mention is made of exposing error or speaking of New Testament authority for what we practice, i.e., reaffirmation of elders.

Truth, integrity, and moral conviction have nothing to fear when exposed to the light of God's Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 17:7-8; Rom. 3:2; Psa. 119:105, 140; Pro. 30:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 4:12-13; Mat. 24:35; 28:18; Col. 3:17; Jude 3). The same cannot be said for false doctrines, unethical dealings, and immoral behavior. We shall see what we shall see when T"N"GJ Board of directors and the co-editors are asked whether they will stand on the side of truth, integrity, and moral conviction; or shall they side with false doctrines (teachers), unethical dealings, and immoral behavior? Rather than to retreat into the darkness, *The "New" Gospel Journal* needs to "shed some light" in answer to questions that fall into all three of these categories (but which 3 shall it be)?

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so: **and what will ye do in the end thereof?**" (Jer. 5: 31).

Awaiting your reply,
A concerned brotherhood

Will We Be Soldiers or Sissies?

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

The apostle Paul insisted that he had "fought a good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7). The same apostle instructed Timothy to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ" (2 Tim. 2:4). Paul used the term, *stratologeesantai* (translated "soldier"; which term means one who volunteers for the army) when the apostle instructed Timothy. Paul knew that as long as sin existed there would be enemies of righteousness and as long as enemies existed, God needed volunteer soldiers in the battle. Volunteers (not sissies who would run away at the sound of the first shot) are those kinds of soldiers needed in the war against sin.

There is a work to be done for God that requires strong Christians. "Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit you like men; be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13). "Finally my

brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10). Even though the Bible is clear on the subjects of soldiering and strength, many Christians, including elders and preachers, have no stomach for battle. Are there causes for such indifference toward the enemy?

Consider Fear

There are many illustrations of abnormal fear (anticipation of danger) in God's Word. Consider the account of the twelve spies sent out by Moses (Num. 13-14). God spoke to Moses and Moses spoke to the twelve spies who were "everyone a leader in Israel" (13:1-2). Moses specifically named the men, not one of whom was a non-talented, neer-do-well (13:3-16). The twelve spies did exactly what they were told to do, even staying at their task for

forty days (13:17-25). The spies then brought evidence that they had accomplished their task and they reported to the people (13:26-29).

Caleb, one of the spies, was ready to go to battle (Num. 13:30). The ten sissies, other than Joshua (14:6), were not going to the fight, however, for “We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we” (13:31). The abject fear of the cowardly spies caused them to lie (13:32); their fear caused the congregation of Israel to fall back, for fear is contagious (14:1). In fact, the lack of faith on the part of the ten spies caused the majority to think incorrectly (i.e. “grasshoppers against giants,” Num. 13:33) and caused the great army of Moses to stand still and to quit (14:2-3).

Every Christian who is unwilling to join the battle against sin, false teaching, and all other enemies of the church is one with those ten, ancient spies. Such a coward has failed to trust God, has no back-bone of faith, and is a hindrance to the cause of Christ. The church is wandering in the wilderness in many places because of sissified, frightened Christians who lack the courage to speak up and act. “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty” (Jud. 5:23). “The fear of man bringeth a snare” (Pro. 29:25a). “Wither shall we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, the people is greater and taller than we;” (Deu. 1:28a). Curse the sissies who discourage the hearts of God’s people because of fear.

Consider the False Views of God

Two false concepts about God come to mind, which hurt the church: (1) God has only the characteristic of love. (2) God cannot be pleased.

Some seem to think that no matter what a person does or says, such actions and speeches must be tolerated because anything else would not be love. This thinking is the consequence of nearly a century of neoorthodox beliefs that any text indicating justice or punishment or harshness can not be from God, but is human addition; and that only those parts of the Bible referring to “gentleness” and “peace” are about Christ or God. Sadly, *all* of Protestantism believes such neoorthodox nonsense about God to some degree; and even more grievous is that many members of God’s church believe the same today. Such “sissies” have a false view of God (Rom. 11:22). The Christ challenged the false teachers, drove out money changers, chastised his apostles, and warned of judgment (Mat. 23-25; Mat. 18; et al). The Christ was a soldier who carried

out His Father’s orders (John 8:29).

In the second place, many would-be soldiers of Christ fail to carry out their marching orders (Mat. 28:18-20) because they are afraid of God for the wrong reasons. The Israelites of Micah’s day were called by God to give reasons for their rebellion (Mic. 6:1-7). The Israelites argued that God could not be pleased with “burnt offerings,” “thousands of rams,” “ten thousands of rivers of oil,” or “my first born” (Mic. 6:6-7). Micah insisted that God’s instructions on how to please Him were clear and easily obeyed. “He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy; and to walk humbly with thy God” (Mic. 6:8). A New Testament character, the so-named “one-talent man,” also had a false view of God, which view caused the man’s fear to be so great that he did *nothing* (Mat. 25:24-29). Jesus said that such a “sissy” should be cast into “outer darkness” (Mat. 25:30).

“God is love,” says the “sissy,” “So don’t call names, don’t be militant; don’t preach hard sermons; don’t discipline; and don’t ever think that the church is the only one.” The “sissy” further thinks that God’s laws are too hard to keep anyway and the best course is to do nothing. God is both severe and good (Rom. 11:22). A proper soldier of God balances love and a sword (Mat. 10:34). A soldier of Christ knows he can keep his commander’s orders and strives diligently to win the battle (1 John 5:3).

Conclusion

The fearful, “sissified,” back-boneless who masquerade as Christians are types foreign to the Bible. Christians must fight the good fight and not discourage their brethren in battle (2 Tim. 2:1-4). May God give us soldiers who will not desert to the enemy. Dub McClish asked: “Christian friend, do you have on combat boots or pink booties?” the same question is asked here!

3950 Forest Hill Irene; Memphis, TN 38125

(Editor’s Note: This article appeared in the March 1997 issue of *The Plumblin*. It had great value then because so many had become “sissies” then. However, it seems to have even more meaning now because so many who use to be strong in their defense for Truth—true soldiers in the army of Christ—have of recent times lost their backbone and have become “sissies” instead of soldiers. It is our prayer that they will return to their strong stand for Truth and that which is right.

In the August issue of *Defender* we challenged brother Mosher to document and prove any lies we had published concerning brother Dave Miller. To this date, there has been no effort made to produce any lies. Why would that be, brethren?)

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The Need to Answer Error

Tom Wacaster

Every child of God has the sacred obligation to “be ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). We are to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Our Lord told us to “beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves” (Mat. 7:15). Our responsibility is no less than those Christians of the first century who were told: “believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). The past twenty years have seen an ever increasing defection of once-faithful, stalwart soldiers of the cross. Men who once stood in the gap and wielded the sword of the Spirit with skill and effectiveness have gone over to the enemy.

A once faithful brother wrote: “It is not possible to over-emphasize the damage done by perverse preceptors. They not only cause division (a thing God hates), but the ultimate outcome of their treachery, whether that treachery be witting or unwitting, is eternal loss to all who are led astray by their influence.” With regard to our Lord’s admonition, “beware” is a forceful word. It is a warning. It says to us: “Look out, danger, peril, jeopardy, risk, hazard.” It screams at us: “Pay attention. Be on guard.”

We are locked in a battle with error. Truth will prevail, of that we are certain. But we must do our part to uphold that truth, moving neither to the left nor to the right. There is always the danger that a little compromise will eventually

lead to wholesale apostasy. Hence the need to answer false doctrines forcefully, faithfully, and forthrightly. Time is of the essence, souls are at stake, the cause of Christ must not suffer! Unfortunately the ranks of those who will address the issues continue to diminish. If we are to pass the torch to the next generation, we dare not waver in our sacred duty to uphold the truth at all costs.

The late F.B. Srygley was right on target:

Fighting for the Truth is almost a lost art. Men who are enjoying the benefits of the Gospel unmixed with human error, are enjoying these benefits because our fathers fought for the Truth. Every inch of ground from that mysterious way of being saved, which was better felt than told, to the plain conditions of pardon as taught in the New Testament, was fought out for us by our fathers. If someone before us had not fought for the Truth, most of us might yet be in the fog of denominational teaching. This is not the time to temporize or make friends with error (19).

False teachers have been tolerated, ignored, and in some instances embraced by unfaithful elders, preachers, and members. Far too little has been done in answer to the false teachers presently assailing the walls of Zion. We only pray that it is not too late to take our stand and defend the truth.

801 West 11th St; Clarksville, TX 76426

Endnote:

Srygley, F. B. *In Word and Doctrine* (Oct-Dec 1992).

Originally in *Gospel Advocate* 1928.

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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 Compromisers Never Say Anything New

Wayne Coats

Over one hundred years ago brother Moses E. Lard wrote about the defectors in the Lord's church. The traitors in the Lord's army apparently thought they had discovered something new including a new language. Brother Lard wrote:

This is not the language of a resolute soldier, but of one who has lost his place in the ranks, lost sight of his Leader, lost his musket, and became "a straggler," wandering through the fields and forests. He is in no condition to *sing*; he had better *pray*, that new courage may be put into him, and new resolutions, and that he may be enabled again to get his eye on his Commander, and keep it on him. Nor do we want him to sing about "those gloomy doubts that rise," but to rise up into the region of faith—the "full assurance of faith"—that shall support him in life, and bear up his soul in death. We want to see the grand army enlisted, sworn to eternal allegiance to King Jesus, equipped, panoplied with the whole armor of God, thoroughly drilled, and with triumphant war songs, moving in solid columns, all along the lines, under the command of the great Head of the Church. This army is backed up by the armies in heaven, by the King Eternal and Immortal, the Only Wise God, and bid to move upon the works of the enemy. The strong holds of sin must be assailed; the enemies works must be carried; His authority must be asserted and maintained everywhere. The war must be vigorously prosecuted, and the King's arms carried forward till the last enemy

shall put down his arms and surrender.

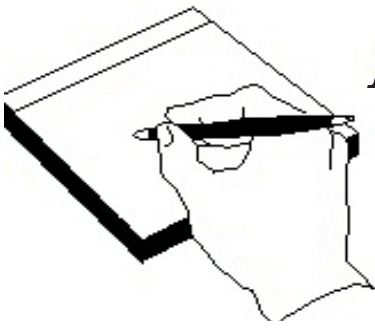
But now, to carry on war successfully, there must be several points guarded.

1. There must be no *traitors* in the ranks. If men are *traitors*, send them through the lines to their friends, thus ridding the army of their demoralizing influence. If allowed to remain among the true soldiers, they will demoralize them, create panics, mutinies, cause dissensions, and paralyze the army generally. They will divert attention from the genuine means of war and success, and turn it to insipid, powerless and ineffectual means, and thus destroy the power of the whole army.

2. We must guard against men who are cowardly and afraid of the issue, and desirous to keep it out of view. We want the issue to appear clear, sharp, and well defined, so that we can know precisely what it is, and never to be kept in the background. If there is difference between the gospel and everything else, as there certainly is, as clear as the difference between day and night, *let it appear, and let the world know what it is.*

3. Look out for men in *collusion with the enemy*. When Judas was ready to betray his Master, he was off in a close and quite talk with the priests. Here the plan was laid, the iniquity was done, and ruin was brought down on him. Look out for men in close consultation with the enemy. They are in *bad company*. No good will come of their keeping such company. They are

Continued on Page 3



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
mhatcher@gmail.com

Challenges

Challenges are a part of life itself. From the beginning of our lives we are faced with challenges. When a baby begins to sit, then stand, and finally walk, he faces a challenge as he progresses to each one. Certainly the challenges do not stop there. As one enters school, he is challenged to develop his mind and learn new things. He is challenged by tests administered by the teachers to determine if he is learning or not. Challenges abound as one tries to get employment, making payments on that which he buys. One's entire life is made up of challenges and the way he deals with those challenges determines his success or failure in life.

Christianity is also made up of challenges. We first have the challenge as to the existence of God. The atheist tells us that God does not exist, while the agnostic tells us there is not enough information to determine if God exists or not. (We can know, because of adequate evidence that God does exist.) We face one of the biggest challenges in becoming a Christian in the command God has given us to repent. Some have described repentance as the most difficult command. To many baptism is a challenge because of all the false teaching about it. Denominationalists have convinced the majority of the world that baptism has nothing to do with salvation. Thus, to be baptized "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) is a challenge to them.

As a Christian, we face constant challenges. Those in the world present us a challenge in living the life God authorizes. They are always trying to get us to conform to their lifestyle instead of thinking, acting, and speaking according to God's Will. The Christian must transform his mind to harmonize with God which, in turn, transforms his actions (Rom. 12:1-2). The world will then persecute the Christian trying to force him to conform to

their ways. Peter writes, "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*" (1 Pet. 4:4). When young people face this, we call it "peer pressure," but all Christians face it. We are challenged as to whether or not we will remain faithful to God or cave in to the pressure of others.

Christians are challenged to always be ready to give a defense. Peter would write, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). The challenge to be ready demands certain things from us. It demands that we study. Paul instructed Timothy: "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). Study is important because without it, we would not be ready to give that answer. We also need courage. Without the necessary courage, we might have knowledge of the answer but would not proclaim it.

Christ, in His earthly ministry, was constantly challenged. The devil challenged Him at the beginning of His earthly ministry (Mat. 4). When He was hungry, the devil tried to get Him to ignore the spiritual and concentrate on the physical alone by turning rocks into stone—the lust of the flesh. Satan then challenged both His knowledge of the Word by misapplying what the Psalmist wrote and His pride by telling Him to cast Himself down off the temple—the pride of life. When that failed the devil took Him to a high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and told Him that he would give them to Him if He would fall down and worship him—lust of the eyes. Jesus overcame all these challenges by Satan by the proper use of the Truth.

While Jesus was constantly challenged in His earthly ministry, He continually challenged others also. He challenged the Jews of His day: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" (John 8:46). He could stand before them with this challenge because He knew He had the truth. He had not committed any sin, He knew it, and He knew they could not convict Him of any. Thus, He challenged them.

Once Jesus was challenged to provide for the people the authority by which He did things. "And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" (Mat. 21:23). While Jesus had many times answered this, He knew their motives so He turned around this challenge and made His own challenge to

them. "And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" (Mat. 21:24-25). He knew the truth on this matter and He also knew their motives for challenging Him. When challenged by Jesus, the chief priest and elders reasoned correctly and decided not to answer Him. "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell" (Mat. 21:25-27).

On another occasion the Jews ganged up on Him. "Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk" (Mat. 22:15). They first sent the Herodians out to trip Him up. Jesus did not run away. He did not complain that they were trying to gang up on Him. He did not use an excuse like He would not get a fair hearing or a fair shake with those Pharisees and Herodians (also the Sadducees). Instead, He stood there and answered their questions like a man (cf. 1 Cor. 16:13). He was, no doubt, willing to stand there and answer their questions (even though His opposers had done their best to stack the odds against Him) because He possessed the Truth. Truth has nothing to fear; error on the other hand does.

Some today seem to think they are above being questioned about what they do and say. One person reportedly told someone who was questioning him that when he got his PhD he could talk to him then. Others are asked questions concerning their beliefs or practices and they simply refuse to answer. (I do realize that not everyone deserves an answer as is seen by Jesus refusing to answer any questions Herod asked Him; Luke 23:7-9.) Why would they do this if the truth is on their side. At one time Rubel Shelly challenged others and accepted challenges as seen by the debates he undertook. He taught the Truth and would take his stand on it and it alone. Things changed through the years, and he departed from the Truth. In 1991, Memphis School of Preaching and the then Knight Arnold elders (now Forrest Hill) issued a challenge for him to publicly debate the subject of God's grace and man's obedience, but he refused. He no longer stood upon Truth, but those at Memphis School of Preaching were taking their stand only upon the Truth. They were unafraid because truth has nothing to fear.

At present there is a controversy in the brotherhood

that has caused brethren who were once in fellowship with each other to separate from each other. This controversy has centered around Dave Miller and his teaching of elder reevaluation/reaffirmation and his marriage intent doctrines. (These are not the only issues regarding brother Miller but two of the main ones. There is also a problem with his fellowship practices.) Memphis School of Preaching and Gospel Broadcasting Network have been called into question for their support and continued fellowship of Dave Miller. After these matters came to light, they were invited on two different occasions to meet with brethren in an open forum to discuss these matters and try to work out these problems. They refused to meet. The offer was then made for them to set up their own meeting and we would come to it provided that it was fair to both sides, taped, and open to all who wished to come. Again, there was no response. Now there is another attempt being made, this time by the Mountain City Church of Christ (Mountain City, TN). They have a forum set up for November 30-December 2 and have invited brethren from the Tri-Cities area to discuss the problems between them and specifically the subject of fellowship. Will the brethren from the Tri-Cities area accept? If they do not accept, why will they not? Brethren, things will never be worked out and fellowship restored without some discussion and humility on the part of all. Repentance will be needed from some, but if our desire is to glorify God and attain heaven's home, there is nothing that would prevent those who need to repent to do so. We pray for just such an outcome.

MH

Continued from Page 1

seeking *recognition*. We want no recognition from any who will not take our King as their only spiritual Head, and his law as their *only law*. *The trouble is not to get them to recognize us, but for us to recognize them*. We can recognize them in no sense, only as *sectarians, schisms, factions, heresies*; not one of them as the *body of* (Christ, nor all of them together as the *body of Christ*. (There may be those in some of them who are members of the body of Christ, but certain it is that not one of them, nor all of them together, is the body of Christ). We can recognize them in no sense, only as belligerent sects. A man who is a genuine soldier of the cross cannot be on an equal footing with a man in one of the sects; nor can a preacher of Jesus come down on a

level with a man on a human platform. The divine foundation is above all human platforms, and we cannot come on a level with a man on the human.

4. Beware of men who sympathize with the enemy; are always running down their fellow-soldiers, and praising the enemy. They may tell fine stories about *getting the ears of the enemy*, but there is nothing in it. They have not got his *ears*, but his *heart*. He is *one with them*, all but the independence to *go over*. We want the true soldier, who has no king but Jesus, no law but the law of God, no cause but the cause of God, no kingdom but the kingdom of God. This cause, as the apostles advocated it, and nothing else, is the cause of the genuine soldier of Jesus. He has not a prayer for any other; or a dollar; nor will he lift a hand to fight a battle for any other. He is for this cause living and dying, for this world and the world to come. Side by side, and shoulder to shoulder with every other man that is for it he stands, and intends to stand till the last. He has his settled convictions, his abiding purposes, and is strong in the Lord and the power of his might. He

looks with delight to the time when the King shall come, with all the holy angels, and when he will exclaim to those who shall have overcome, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Sit down with me in my throne, as I have overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne." "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels."

May we fight the battles of the Lord so that we can say, with an old soldier, "I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith; I have finished my course; henceforth there is a crown of righteousness laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day; and not to me only, but to all those who love his appearing." May we be among those who shall be accounted worthy, and be accepted on him in that day.

The above is as fresh as a gentle breeze. The devil still has traitors as was true in the days of brother Lard.

705 Hillview; Mt. Juliet, TN 37122

Voices from the past:

This article appeared in "Defender" June 1972

Why

George E. Darling, Sr.

Maybe, it is because I am a little older, or maybe it is because I appeal to the younger preachers as a sounding board. Many times I have preachers come to me bemoaning the fact that they are mistrusted. These men are sad because the brethren seem to have so little confidence in them. They condemn the elders and others for being skeptical of them and their actions.

There is a remedy for just such situations. It can be remedied once and for all by this method. (The same remedy will work for the congregation that is wondering "why" they do not have the fellowship and cooperation of sister congregations.) When someone doubts your orthodoxy just come out into the open, hiding nothing, and make a clear statement of just where you stand. If one makes a clear statement of his position, then both the Christian and the modernist and liberals know where he stands. There will be no doubt anymore, but as long as a

man persists in playing in both camps, and carrying water on both shoulders, riding two horses at once, and doing the "Split," he can expect to be treated with "Care."

The reason why men are mistrusted is almost invariably because they refuse to take a definite stand. One day they are **totally convinced** that participation in certain questionable projects are "**wrong**," and they are going to openly oppose and cut off all support to such. The next day they are **again** upholding this very thing that was wrong the day before. They had rather be mistrusted than they had to take a definite stand one way or the other. It takes courage to meet the enmity of people, but as sure as one comes out in the open and aligns himself with the cause of **truth** he is going to meet opposition.

An honest man does not mind being investigated, but a crook always hollers. An honest man does not mind

telling inquirers just where he has been, where he has worked, or where he has slept, but a crook always resents investigation. A true and faithful Gospel preacher does not mind being investigated, and a **crook** ought to be investigated whether he likes it or not!

It is better to come clean, to be safe than sorry, to be definitely on one side than to try to play both sides and have everybody liking you. The world hated Christ because He testified that its works were evil (John 7:7). **Brother, take a stand on the Lord's side**, and be definite!

A man is known by what he promotes, condones, and opposes! More commonly you hear this expressed, "A man is known by both his friends and his enemies." If a man (please keep in mind that the same rule applies to a congregation or an eldership) upholds unscriptural works or heretical teachers, whether this be in the form of a denominational ministerial association or a project concocted by our brethren designed to draw away disciples from the **old paths**, taking his place among them, recognizing them as his brethren in Christ, you can know that that brother does not promote New Testament Christianity! If he merely condones this mongrel association and says nothing for or against, you can know that his convictions do not run deep enough to cause him to cry out with a voice like a trumpet against the sin and division caused by these rebellious leaders (?) and that he is refusing to abide by the divine revelation of God.

On the other hand, if a man openly opposes the ring leaders of digression, refuses to attend their hodge-podge assemblies, obeys the Lord's injunction to **mark** them that are causing division and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which was learned, and **turns** away from them...and preaches with all his might that there is **but one church** and not 300 plus, people know where this man stands.

The world is watching to see what you promote, condone, and oppose. They watch the man who opposes the bringing into the church an organization that proposes to be Christian, while teaching doctrines that are designed to eat the very vitals of the Lord's body. The devil is as subtle today as he was in the Garden of Eden. The world is watching to see if you have the same spirit that Jesus had when He said, "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil" (John 7:7). Preachers who have taken their stand to denounce the world and its evil doings are watching other preachers to see if they are promoting, condoning, or opposing those things which they know to be of the devil. It is a smart thing to take time out and before God, examine your program of life and see into what

waters you have drifted. Do you promote, condone, and support the efforts put forth by the unconverted in your congregation to get members into the church through an appeal to their fleshly desires? Are you converting them to a program that appeals only to their emotions? Do not think that you can sit back and scratch your head in deep meditation, while trying to excuse yourself for not being the **Christ man. You are known, preacher friend, by what you promote, condone, and oppose.**

From what we have said, you can surely see what a **dangerous** thing it is to take chances with the Devil and play around with the enemies of Christ. When you do, you are going to lose the respect of the godly and the fellowship of those who are desirous of following the "Old Paths." You may make your overtures of reconciliation, you may write letters and send out invitations, but you need to read Nehemiah 4 through 6. Sanballat, with others, sent to Nehemiah saying, "Come, let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono" (Neh. 6:2). Nehemiah realized it was a scheme to do him and God's work harm and his answer was, "Oh, No!"—I am too busy to come down to you... Nehemiah knew what a lot of preachers and churches have never learned, and this is you just do not **dare play around with the devil and the enemies of the Lord's work. If you do you will lose your head.**

I know that this article will fall into the hands of some Christians who want to do God's will, but who have been confused, or kept in the dark as to what has been condoned, upheld, supported, and promoted by the preacher and the leaders of their congregations. I pray that you will heed warning and stay at a safe distance from those who would pervert the Gospel and finally destroy the church for which Christ died.

Ministers of the Gospel have a tremendous responsibility in this present hour. They are working under the Great Commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot compromise with the desires or the demands of men.

The good minister of Christ Jesus is—

- An ambassador, not a diplomat;
- An evangelist, not an entertainer;
- A minister, not a dictator.

He must preach—

- The divine Word, not human wisdom;
- Christ, not culture;
- Conversion, not civilization;
- Regeneration, not reformation;
- Christians in action, not smug satisfaction.

Deceased

The Poisoners

Gary W. Summers

On a national talk radio program, the host for that day described an incredible event. We have no way of verifying the details he provided; we will assume that the research and the information are accurate accounts of what occurred.

A woman and her husband were divorced and not getting along very well. She was living with their eight-year-old son. One day she left him alone, during the day, just long enough to get a test taken at a hospital. When she returned, he was gone. Though she had limited resources, she tried to locate him and his father but failed. Finally, after 30 years, a detective found where he lived. She traveled to the city and location.

She knew her son was inside; she did not know what would happen next. She had searched for him for years; now she had found him, but what kind of reunion would this be? She left her car and knocked on the door. Perhaps her imagination was all over the place, considering the possible responses. Would her son be relieved at long last to find his mother, or would he ask her where she had been for the last 30 years? Needless to say, there was only one way to find out.

A female answered the door. The mother gave her son's name to the woman and asked if this was his home. The woman said that it was. She asked if his birthday was a certain date, and the woman replied that it was. Then she acknowledged, "I'm his mother."

From the back of the house came the demanding words: "Close the door!" The door was closed. The disappointed mother, heartbroken, returned to her car and left. Imagine, waiting 30 years to be reunited with your son—and being treated with less courtesy than Jehovah's Witnesses would probably have received. The mother said that, in a way, she was not surprised; she had reason to think that her former husband had poisoned their son against her.

Whose Fault Is It?

Most of us would probably accuse the husband of bringing about this horrible situation. Certainly, he has his share of blame. For 30 years he had poisoned his son against his own mother. What did he tell him all those years? Did he assert that the mother had abandoned the lad? Did he repeat this lie day in and day out so that eventually it became unquestioned. Did he produce some

kind of bogus evidence? Perhaps he showed the boy a letter, written in feminine handwriting, that proclaimed something to the effect: "I am in love with someone, but a child would just be in our way. Therefore, I am giving the rearing of my child up to his father." Or could it have been even worse? Might this imaginary letter have left him to a relative or to the state, in which case the father was able to rescue him, thus becoming the hero? Was there other corroborating evidence of the mother's alleged neglect or someone who claimed to verify all that had happened?

We do not know *the means* by which the father caused the son to think his mother was an evil person, but whatever he did, he succeeded completely. "A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends" (Pro. 16:28—NKJV).

Nevertheless, the son must bear a gigantic portion of guilt for being such a dolt. When a person fails to realize that he is being fed poison, the results are his own fault. To be sure, some are able to administer poison in very clever ways. "I'm your friend, and you know I hate to say anything bad about anyone, but...." The one who allows such drivel to affect his disposition toward someone is guilty of poisoning himself. The most amazing thing in the entire event describe is captured in another proverb: "The first *one* to plead his cause *seems* right, Until his neighbor comes and examines him" (18:17). Why has it not dawned on the son that for 30 years he has only heard one side of the story?

Who taught him to be so one-sided? Who taught him to respond emotionally to his mother rather than to maintain some semblance of objectivity? Who taught him to be so rude? Could it have been his father?

Anyone who refuses to consider a different point of view, a different perspective, from the only one he has been receiving, deserves to be robbed of the blessings of being reunited with his mother. She does not, however, deserve this kind of treatment.

Unfortunately, people take the word of a *friend*, loved one, preacher, or other trusted individual all the time without checking out the facts for themselves. Although this might work on little things of no major consequence, it is foolish to not hear both sides when something so important as a human relationship is involved.

On the basis of a few allegations and some circumstantial evidence. Othello murders the innocent Desdemona. The play is not titled *The Tragedy of Desdemona*, however. She was innocent of any wrongdoing. The tragedy is that Othello believed the slander against her (which came from the villain Lago).

How often has someone vilified another, knowing that individual had no opportunity to respond or perhaps never knew that he was a target in the first place? The mother, in the aforementioned example, could not respond to all of the charges against her because she was not present and did not even

know what allegations were made toward her. How many people today do not have any idea what is being said against them and therefore cannot offer a defense?

Manipulators can even twist good actions by ascribing evil motives to others who have no suspicion that they are under attack. A person might notice that a friend's affection has cooled but have no idea why this change has occurred. Someone has been busy poisoning the *friend's* mind so that he has now become convinced the victim of this assault is not the person he had always known him to

be.

The tragedy is that people allow themselves to be misled when they really know better! Othello ought to have known Desdemona better than to have believed the malicious things Lago said against her. Christians especially ought to know one another better than to believe the worst about someone—especially when it is unsubstantiated. Surely, we are cleverer than that.

Communication is the only effective remedy to this problem. When derogatory things have been said about someone, the best thing to do is to go to that individual

and say: "Do you mind if I ask you a couple of questions?" If the person is hostile or refuses to meet or talk or to answer a letter, then that will lend credence to the charges, but it just may be that the person is innocent and only needed an opportunity to know what was being said so as to be able to clear up the matter. Jesus recognized and taught this principle long ago (Mat. 18:15-17). Too bad the mother's son had never read this passage or (if so) failed to apply it.

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