"Fellow Travelers" And "Useful Idiots"

Jerry C. Brewer

Those of us who grew up during the Cold War often heard the terms “Fellow Travelers” and “Useful Idiots” applied to persons who, though not members of the Communist Party, were sympathetic to Communist ideals and aims. “Fellow Traveler” was a term most often used in the United States and Europe to describe individuals who sympathized with Communism and lent their influence, and sometimes money, to aid Communist causes, attending Comintern meetings and even speaking at Communist gatherings. Those same persons were useful to, and used by, Soviet Communists who pejoratively referred to them as “Useful Idiots.” But while Communist Party membership was outlawed in this country at the time, “fellow travelers” had nothing to fear from authorities since their Communist sympathies were not illegal.

Solomon wrote, “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun” (Ecc. 1:9). The introduction of mechanical instruments of music at Richland Hills in Fort Worth and Quail Springs in Oklahoma City, in reckless disregard for New Testament authority, is no new thing. Apostates like Rick Atchley at the former and Mark Henderson at the latter have come and gone through the centuries and like their predecessors—in religion and Communism—have their coterie of “fellow travelers.”

But there is a notable, Scriptural difference between what “fellow travelers” do politically and what they do as Christians. To lend aid and comfort to false teachers in religion—as a “fellow traveler”—is expressly forbidden in the New Testament (2 John 9-11). It is not enough to merely say, “I don’t agree with adding instruments into the worship of the church.” Inspiration says, “receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed” (v. 10) The “fellow traveler” who bids “God speed” to error is “partaker of his evil deeds” (v. 11) and is, therefore, as guilty as the one he aids.

“Fellow Travelers” Of Today’s False Teachers

The history of the church in North America is replete with “fellow travelers” in apostasy, and prominent among those is the college crowd. In 1999, Doug Varnado was fired by David Lipscomb University President Steve Flatt because the church where Varnado preached used instrumental music. Flatt’s action was reported in the Nashville Tennessean, and by Lindy Adams in the Christian Chronicle. Flatt told the Tennessean, “If Community Church is going to be an instrumental congregation, that’s not in accord with our policy...Our identity for the last 108 years has included acapella.” Flatt told the Chronicle that, “Our policy on acapella music reflects our primary constituents.”

Flatt’s last statement demonstrates theological subjectivism, not devotion to the objective authority of God’s word. The implication is that instrumental music would be approved at Lipscomb if it reflected “our primary constituents.” So, according to this “fellow traveler,” instrumental music is not necessarily a rebellion against God’s authority, but technically, a “108 year old tradition.”

The Christian Chronicle—the primary voice of today’s “fellow travelers” in apostasy, and a “fellow traveler” it-
EDITORIAL...

JERRY BREWER’S ARTICLE
AND MATTERS RELATING TO IT

Concerning the foregoing article by bro. Brewer, our readers are reminded that the matters dealt with therein are around ten years old. However, throughout the church during the intervening years (and long before) liberalism (doctrines loosing people from what God through New Testament authority binds on them) continues to grow. Brethren who would not have condoned the errors espoused ten years ago, such as what bro. Brewer documents in his article, are today extending fellowship to them and their “fellow travelers.” Thus, they have extended the “circle of fellowship” wider than what the New Testament teaches it is.

The following is only one example of the expanding fellowship borders broadened by false brethren in the church. These people love the praises of men and man-made innovations far more than the divine perimeters set out by the infallible pattern of New Testament authority (Col. 3:17; 2 John 9-11; Jude 3).

The following list of brief biographies of some of the speakers of the 2017 “Affirming the Faith Seminar” held annually in Oklahoma City, OK is an example of such false brethren as bro. Brewer dealt with in his timely article of ten years ago. Moreover, it further reveals the erroneous fellowship being practiced by brethren who continue to be known as faithful to the Lord’s cause. Please consider the following speakers.

Jeremie Beller has been with the Wilshire Church of Christ in Oklahoma City as Congregational Minister since 2002. Jeremie also serves as an Adjunct Professor of Bible and Communication for Oklahoma Christian University. He completed his BA, MA, and MDiv degrees from Oklahoma Christian. He also earned a PhD from the University of Oklahoma in Communication and Persuasion.

Dr. Gary M. Bradley, Sr. has preached in Alabama & Tennessee and has been the Minister for the Mayfair Church of Christ in Huntsville since 1979. Gary received his D. Min. degree from Alabama Christian School of Religion. He has been the moderator and producer of the “Abundant Living” television program for over 30 years. Gary is the Director of the Mayfair Church Growth Center and conducts weekend workshops on leadership, church growth and closing the back door. He has served on the Board of Directors at David Lipscomb University.

Dr. Bob Carpenter serves as a professor of ministry and missions in the College of Biblical Studies at Oklahoma Christian. He has a doctorate in Religious Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Bob has been teaching undergraduate and graduate courses at Oklahoma Christian since 1998 in the areas of missions, world religions, cultural anthropology, cross-cultural ministry, and comparative world-
views. Bob serves as an elder at the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Edmond.

**Thomas Jackson** has a doctorate of philosophy degree in Theology and Clinical Psychology and has been involved in behavioral health for 21 years. He is the author of several books. He currently serves as the Chair of the Department of Counseling and Family Studies for the School of Religious Studies (SRS) in Little Rock, AR., and as an Adjunct Psychology Professor for Freed-Hardeman University.

**Jeff A. Jenkins** serves the Lewisville church of Christ as the preaching minister. He is a graduate of Freed-Hardeman University, where he currently serves on the Board of Trustees. He also serves on the Lads-to-Leaders Board of Directors. He is co-founder and co-director of The Jenkins Institute which is committed to helping preachers.

**Aubrey Johnson** is the preacher for the Southern Hills Church of Christ in Franklin, Tennessee and a frequent writer for Gospel Advocate Magazine. Aubrey is the author of nine books designed for adult Bible Class study.

**Dana McMichael** and her husband BJ live in Stillwater, Oklahoma with their 8-year old Joshua. They worship with the Stillwater church of Christ, where BJ serves as Family Minister. Dana has worked with Abilene Christian University for the last sixteen years as an English professor, Director of Graduate Studies in English, and currently as the online Dissertation Manager.

**Dr. Howard Norton** at different times in his life has worked as: an elder, pulpit minister, associate minister, youth minister, educational minister, minister of personal evangelism, foreign missionary to Brazil and Honduras, Harding University Bible and missions professor, director of Harding’s annual lectureship, professor and dean of the College of Bible at Oklahoma Christian University, editor of the Christian Chronicle, Church & Family magazine, and the Arkansas Christian Herald. Howard serves as an elder of the College Church of Christ in Searcy, Arkansas. He is also one of the directors of the Pan American Lectureship.

**Melvin Otey** has served as an Associate Professor of Law at Faulkner University, and the Jones School of Law since August 2014. Prior to this, he worked for the US Department of Justice in Washington, DC as a trial lawyer and preached for the Georgia Avenue congregation in DC. He writes for Christian publications and preaches in gospel meetings, lectures and seminars. He received his formal education from St. Louis University (BS), Howard University School of Law (JD), and Amridge University (BS and MDiv).

**Denny Petrillo** has served as the President of the Bear Valley Bible Institute since 2004 and has been a full time instructor since 1985. He has preached in Mississippi, Arkansas, Nebraska and Colorado. He has taught numerous classes for the World Video Bible School and has authored several books and commentaries. He graduated from the Bear Valley School of Preaching (now Bear Valley Bible Institute), received an AA degree in Bible (York College, York, Nebraska), BA in Bible and Biblical Languages (Harding University), MA in Old and New Testaments (Harding Graduate School of Religion), and a Ph.D. in Religious Education (University of Nebraska).

The other speakers are: Billy Clabaugh, Dale Hartman, Philip Johnson, Bill Jones, Michael Mazzalongo, Keith Parker, Tim Pyles, Jeremy Roberts, and David Roper.

What kind of answers would these speakers give to questions concerning who is authorized by the New Testament to be married, or divorced, and remarried (Mat. 5:32;19:6, 9; 1 Cor. 7:1-15)? Does anyone think all of them would give the same answer (1 Cor. 1:10)? Are we not to walk by the same rule in matters of obligation to God (Phi. 3:16)? Do any of them not think that the use of mechanical instrumental music in the worship of God will cause one to be lost in hell? What is their belief about women in roles that necessarily cause a woman to exercise dominion over men (1 Cor. 2:11-15)? Do any of them believe that there are saved people among the pious unimmersed in denominational churches? Regarding the observance of the Lord’s Supper, do any of them not think that observing the Supper on any other day in the worship assembly of the congregation will cause one to lose one's soul? How many of them would have no problem whatsoever in financially or in any other way supporting Abilene Christian University, Pepperdine University, Lipscomb University, et al.—especially speaking on their lectureships, their chapel periods, and the like? Moreover, and particularly with what we are concerned about in this editorial, although brethren believe the truth on obligatory matters, and knowing that other brethren are in error, they knowingly fellowship them any way.

Please realize that Denny Petrillo and Bear Valley Bible Institute continue to be fellowshipped by Memphis School of Preaching, World Video Bible School, and no telling who else among the brethren who represent themselves as standing opposed to such innovations as mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the Lord’s church, etc.

In August, 2002, during an open forum in a lectureship in Longview, TX, bro. Petrillo was asked the following question,

Is it Scriptural to have a reaffirmation of the serving elders? If it is Scriptural, shouldn’t the reaffirmation use the same authority outlined in Timothy and Titus as when they were installed as elders instead of popular vote? So what about the reaffirmation of elders?

Bro. Petrillo answered:

I'm going to answer yes to that question. I do believe that it is a process that the church can enact. It’s not that there’s a book, chapter, and verse that we can turn to because there’s not—just like there’s not as far as the installation of elders to begin with. But we recognize in Acts chapter 20 that the Holy Spirit do that? The Holy Spirit does that by establishing the qualifications given in 1 Tim. and Titus chapter one. And it is the church’s responsibility to seek out and recognize those men who meet the qualifications that have been given by the Holy Spirit. Now, as time goes on, the possibility exists and

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TRIBUTE TO VICKI HIGHTOWER, A WONDERFUL CHRISTIAN LADY

Vicki McCullough Hightower, devout Christian lady and wife of our beloved brother, Terry Hightower, slipped into eternity January 25, 2017. She not only leaves behind her grieving companion of forty-seven years, but also a daughter (Kacy), a son (Bret), four grandchildren, and a sister. Her beautiful life on earth came to an almost shocking end because it came so abruptly. She was diagnosed with a stage four malignant lung tumor (although she never smoked) on December 26, 2016. Before oncologists could begin their attack on the tumor, she suffered a stroke on January 21 that took her life four days later.

Knowing that death was imminent, Vicki faced it with the courage and hope that only those in Christ can have. Her funeral was conducted in Amarillo, Texas, on January 28, with Gene Hill (former student of Terry’s at Florida School of Preaching) and Ted Billingsley (an elder of Bushland Church of Christ where Terry is [and Vicki was] a member the last few years).

The first time I was in the Hightower home was more than a quarter century ago. The last time I had that privilege was eighteen months ago. Through those years Vicki’s and my paths crossed numerous times as she would accompany Terry to various lectureships on which he and I were speaking. More than once in recent years Terry and Vicki “dropped in” to worship with us at the Northpoint congregation. At all times and in all settings, she consistently radiated thoughtfulness, kindness, and congeniality in demeanor.

Vicki was born in Dunedin, Florida, August 3, 1949. She was reared in a denominational environment, but through the teaching and encouragement of Terry and others, she obeyed the Gospel shortly before she and Terry were married September 5, 1969. Terry’s determination to faithfully “declare the whole counsel of God” brought trials to both of them through the years, but Vicki’s unfailing devotion to and support of both him and the Lord and His Word never faltered. Vicki was an avid Bible student, beginning each day by reading God’s Word, often marking and making notations therein for future reference.

Only good students can become good teachers, and Vicki was both. She had a special inclination toward and rapport with very young children. Accordingly, through the years, wherever they lived, she taught Bible classes for these little ones—through which efforts her influence lives on. At various times she was employed in day-care centers. Several months before her death she retired after ten years of full-time employment with a private school, caring for very young ones while their mothers taught older children. The little ones—and their mothers—loved Vicki for the loving care and attention she rendered. One young, inexperienced mother once told Vicki she had “learned how to be a mother” from Vicki’s example of care for her little wards.

The Lord’s church, and also to an extent, even the whole world, are made poorer by her passing. With Terry and his family we sorrow, but “not even as the rest, who have no hope” (1 The. 4:13b).

Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; But a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; And let her works praise her in the gates.”

Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:51-58).

—Dub McClish
TRIBUTE TO DUB MOWERY, FAITHFUL GOSPEL PREACHER

The Lord’s kingdom lost a strong, capable, consistent, and faithful voice for the Truth when our brother William Oliver (Dub) Mowery, Jr., slipped from time into eternity January 20, 2017. He had suffered from a malignancy in recent years that eventually spread and took his life. Charlotte, his beloved wife of 56 years, preceded him in death by two months almost to the day. Dub’s health decline was rapid and obvious following her death. Immediate family members surviving Dub are two sons, Paul and Lee. A few years ago he had made it known to brethren Jerry Brewer, Jesse Whitleck, and me that he wanted us to speak at his memorial service (should his passing precede ours), which we did January 28 in Idabel, Oklahoma.

Dub was born in Idabel on September 2, 1935, where he was reared and graduated from high school. Upon graduation, he joined the US Coast Guard, in which he served two years. My acquaintance with Dub dates from the fall of 1955, when he enrolled at Freed-Hardeman College (now F-HU). While this was the beginning of my second year, Lavonne (my late wife) and he were in the same freshman class. Following graduation in 1957, he supported himself in secular work while preaching part-time in various places.

Dub’s first full-time preaching work came in 1962 with the church in Clayton, Oklahoma. Most of the fifty-five years of his preaching life were spent working with Oklahoma churches. He was a very proud and loyal Oklahoman, once describing northeast Texas where he preached the last dozen or so years as “the back pasture of Oklahoma.” The final two years or so of his life he preached at Clarksville, Texas; he preached his last sermon only a few days before his passing.

If Dub had what might be called a “hobby,” it was researching and explaining the origin of chew the fat, can’t hold a candle to, and other colloquial expressions. He wrote a weekly newspaper column on such matters for several years and published a book of his columns (Colloquial Sayings and Expressions). He had a good sense of humor and enjoyed taking good-natured gibes at (and receiving them from) others whom he knew well. Because both of us were familiarly known as Dub, we frequently went back and forth regarding our common moniker. Several months ago I wrote a note to him and signed it, “The young, handsome, well-liked Dub.” His response: “There is you and me; who is that ‘young handsome’ Dub?”

He was, however, “dead serious” about everything related to serving his Master faithfully. Dub was a diligent student of the Word and a very able man in the pulpit. The last two or three years of his life, as illness and age slowed his physical activities, he began utilizing his years of accumulated Bible knowledge and practical experience to produce sermon outlines. These he generated on his computer and freely distributed via the Internet to numerous fellow preachers, both at home and abroad. At times he authored and published as many as three of these per week. Likely many preachers—and their listeners—will profit from his good material for years to come.

Personality-wise, our brother carried himself humbly and meekly, seeking none and receiving little public acclaim. However, anyone who mistook his quiet nature for weakness or timidity soon learned better when the Truth was under attack. He could be—and was—bold as a lion when it came to “contend[ing] earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3). With joy we can apply Paul’s words to this beloved brother: He was “...stedfast, unmoving, always abounding in the work of the Lord,” and we can know that his “labor is not vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). The Lord’s kingdom on earth has suffered great loss, even as Paradise enjoys great gain, in his passing.

Dub McClish
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But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thes. 4:13-18).
probably all of us who have been in the church any time at all know that there are men who do not stay qualified. What is the responsibility of the church for a man who is no longer qualified? I believe that passage in 1 Timothy five that I was referring to just a minute ago is in fact talking about what to do when an elder is in sin, and there needs to be activity taken in regard to dealing with that man who is sinning. But what about a man who is no longer qualified to serve as an elder? Does the church have any kind of means at all in which to, as the body of Christ, address the problem of a man serving who is not qualified? And the reaffirmation process is one of those. It is still heavily Bible based. It's using the qualifications that had already been given and identifying a man that is already serving as an elder as no longer one who is qualified to serve. If the Holy Spirit made him an overseer, then the Holy Spirit can unmake him one, and the church is recognizing that particular process. So I would say yes. It's a matter of fact, the congregation where I come from in Bear Valley recently did this. We did have a reaffirmation form based up the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

Present in that open forum was brother Maxie Boren (now deceased) who was the preacher for the BT church at that time and served as one of the Brown Trail elders in later years. Thus, bro. Boren was the preacher for the BT congregation during the last time it practised the R&R of elders. His comments in that forum began with “I concur,” referring to Petrillo’s answer to the question.

If it is a sin for a man to be appointed to serve as an elder who is not qualified to be an elder, it is also a sin for a man who was qualified when appointed to the eldership to become unqualified and continue to serve as an elder. What is difficult to understand about that? Furthermore, what are the other men or man serving in the eldership doing in dealing with a man serving as an elder who they know is not qualified for the office? If the unqualified “elder” will not resign when it is pointed out to him that he is unqualified, why wouldn’t the other men or man in the eldership deal with him as they would with any member of the church who sins and refuses to repent?

Bro. Petrillo and the late bro. Boren seemed not to recognize that to be unqualified to serve as an elder, but nevertheless serving in that capacity, is to commit sin. Thus, Paul's directive to Timothy, “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear” (1 Tim. 5:19, 20). Why is it not the case that once a scriptural elder always a scriptural elder as long as an elder remains scripturally qualified to serve and is faithfully discharging his duties of an elder? Where is the New Testament authority for anyone by any process to remove a man from the eldership who is scripturally qualified to serve in that capacity and is faithfully doing so? But that is exactly what the R&R of elders as twice practised by the BT Church of Christ, Hurst, TX did, and Dave Miller, Danny Petrillo, the late Maxie Boren, B. J. Clarke and other brethren seek and sought to justify the same. This whole process puts the eldership into the political ring where men qualified to be elders can be removed. And surely we realize that faithful elders would be the target of Satan’s erring members before anyone else. Indeed, in the ever advancing liberalism that has been and is growing by leaps and bounds, these false teachers would like nothing better than to put who serves and who does not serve as an elder to a vote of the members. That being the case, it would not be the faithful elders who would be kept by the membership.

Question: Does Southwest School of Bible Studies, Brown Trail School of Preaching, et al., support and/or fellowship FHU or Bear Valley Bible Institute? Certainly MSOP fellowships FHU and Bear Valley. The schools of preaching should explicitly (in just so many words) declare themselves one way or the other regarding who they fellowship and who they do not. If any of them in writing will explicitly state what they believe on the foregoing noted topics, CFTF will be glad to print the same. You can be sure of one thing, many such brethren have no problem explicitly telling people what they think about your editor and CFTF.

The Spiritual Sword, edited by Alan Highers, regularly and correctly bemoans and opposes error in the church, such error as women in leadership roles, mechanical instrumental music in the worship of the church, and denominationalism. However, while the foregoing is being done on the pages of the same journal, Freed-Hardeman University is promoted too. Why not mention such universities by name and deal with the specific problems in them? On the pages of the Spiritual Sword, bro. Highers certainly did not mind calling by name the Henderson Church of Christ, Henderson TN, when he and that church had a difference. But where do many of the FHU students attend worship and Bible study? And, do any of the FHU faculty have their membership in the Henderson, TN Church of Christ?

Concerning churches of our Lord and fellowship, please consider the following article from the pen of the late faithful gospel preacher, Bill Jackson.

May One Congregation Withdraw From Another?

This question is certainly appropriate today, for in observing discussions on discipline, and noting what is covered in question-and-answer sessions over the brotherhood, this comes up. While it is encouraging that men are interested in the discipline the Lord teaches, it is discouraging to note that many men very quickly answer the question, “No, one congregation cannot withdraw from another.” Let’s look at this for a brief time.

Really, the question is not basically centered on “congregational action” as revealed in the New Testament, but it centers on “discipline” and “fellowship” as the Lord reveals it. The rule of God is that we are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11); other information is given by John in telling us that we cannot fellowship, bid
Godspeed, to any who bring not the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). The works of darkness in Ephesians 5:11 are not specified as works done by one man, by several men, or by a host of men. The number involved in the darkness doesn't matter; we are not to fellowship such. And, in 2 John, do we really think that we are forbidden fellowship when one man teaches error, or six men, but somehow if they form a congregation of 150 men, the rules do not apply?

Brethren surely don't think before they speak, often times. Imagine the case in 1 Corinthians 5, and the fornicator at Corinth. Fellowship was to be withdrawn from this man. Suppose he persisted in his sins, and found 15 other couples also living in adultery, and they founded a congregation. In that congregation the work the people lived in adultery, gloried in their adultery, taught adultery as an acceptable lifestyle, etc. But a neighboring congregation in the same community could not withdraw fellowship from these adulterers; the supposition is that fellowship may be continued with them. Amazing! You cannot, then, maintain fellowship with an individual fornicator, but you can keep fellowship with 200 of them! Who can believe it?!

Once more we see where Satan is going with this. A rebellious and disobedient child of God can flee from one congregation and escape the applied discipline there, and he can find refuge in some other congregation. In that last congregation, he and others can be as sinful and ungodly as they wish, and escape all discipline in this life, for a faithful congregation in that same community—say two blocks away—cannot withdraw from them because of their sinfulness! We do not believe the Lord authored such a system. He tells us that our fellowship is restricted, and it is so whether we are speaking of one man, 6 men, 60 men or 600 men! We would ask, and await and answer: "Why will not the Lord's will apply broadly and yea, even worldwide?"

(Bulletin of the Southwest Church of Christ, Austin, TX. The Southwesterner, Vol. XI, No. 1, October 4, 1983)

Sadly, in the same area of Texas where the late brother Jackson did his last work on earth, and a very good one as a gospel preacher, just about 25 miles down the road in San Marcos, in a certain gathering sponsored by the University church, some took the position that the New Testament does not authorize one congregation to withdraw fellowship from an erring sister congregation, which congregation refuses to repent of error.

Where is the Southwest congregation in all of this today? Certainly not where brother Jackson was in October of 1983 when he wrote the foregoing article for their bulletin. It should be noted that since the death of brother Jackson in the Spring of 1991, the Southwest eldership has done its best to stay on the slippery slope of saying something without saying anything regarding specific issues of the day. Thus, from the facts in the case we have correctly concluded that while brother Jackson was their preacher, that it was not the Southwest elders who were strong in the faith, but brother Jackson who was strong, bold, and uncompromising in the work of contending for the faith (Jude 3). All one has to do to see the changes is to compare and contrast that congregation when brother Jackson was there with it today—over 25 years since bro. Jackson died. What a difference! Year by year, over the intervening years, they have run from controversy for fear of drawing any unfavorable criticism from those to whom they cater. Like some other preachers and elderships, they practice "consensus fellowship"—a fellowship with brethren that is determined on the basis of "who's who" in the brotherhood and that will not cause the loss of financial and good-will support of the school, church, and/or para-church works.

As to the speakers in the so-called "Affirming the Faith Seminar" given at the beginning of this editorial, we wonder (but not too much) where each one of them stands regarding, in general, the New Testament doctrine of Christian fellowship and more specifically, the withdrawal of fellowship from an unrepentant erring children of God, marking false teachers, one church withdrawing fellowship from a sister congregation when that sister congregation is involved in sinful conduct, and certainly brethren disagreeing with each other over obligatory matters, but continuing in fellowship with one another. With these comments we will herein insert the following excellent article bearing on fellowship.

**CAN A CONGREGATION REFUSE FELLOWSHIP TO ANOTHER CONGREGATION?**

In a time of liberalism, worldliness, and compromise with error, this question is critical. The following points need to be considered in answering this query. In the first place, God's people cannot, must not fellowship world religions, Catholicism, denominationalism, or sectarianism. In the second place, the church must beware of false teachers and prophets (Col. 2:8, 20-23; 1 John 4:1). "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," Paul commanded (Eph. 5:3-11). He refused "...to give place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5). Is it commanded for the local congregation not to have communion with the unclean, the defiled, the wicked, the dark, in the local congregation but yet permissible to fellowship other congregations which condone and/or teach the same (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1)? Can faithful congregations fellowship apostate churches?

In the third place, can churches depart from the faith? Can they cease their communion with God and Christ (1 John 1:3-10; 3:23-24); can they cease walking in the light; can they cease loving Jesus and abandon the truth (Rev. 2:4-5)? Can they bid God speed to false teachers (2 John 9-11); can they pervert the gospel and become anathema (Gal. 1:6-9)? Can congregations become partakers of their evil deeds by supporting and fellowshiping such other congregations (Rom. 1:32)? In the fourth place, churches are commanded to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). They salute one another (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:1ff). Is that fellowship to be maintained with apostate congregations? Indeed not! Brethren cannot maintain fellowship with those who no longer partake of the "common salvation" but rather partake of evil and false doctrine (Rom. 16:17, 18; 1
In the fifth place, churches can harbor and defend the wicked and the false teacher in clear violation of Scripture. Note the attitude of God toward those who hide their eyes from the wicked man; He sets His face against them and cuts them off (Lev. 20:1-5). In the sixth place, to mark or withhold fellowship from a church does not violate local autonomy. Rather, to attempt to deny a congregation’s right to do so would be to violate its autonomy and to cause it to transgress Paul’s command in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, “...withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.” Can people in a local congregation have fellowship with an apostate congregation, whereas it would be wrong to fellowship the same worldliness and false doctrine in the local church? Does God have a double standard? Is the command to, “...mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them” (Rom. 16:17), confined to the local congregation? Indeed, a church can refuse fellowship to another church; it violates the local autonomy of neither the disfellowshipped nor the disfellowshipping church.

Now, what are some practical considerations? One, the elders must discharge their responsibility of watching over and protecting their flock, whether from internal threats or from outside threats issuing forth from influences and teachings from other congregations (Acts 20:28). Two, the leaven of error can spread not only from member to member but also from congregation to congregation (1 Cor. 5). Three, marking a congregation may very well awaken members of the marked congregation of the false teaching and/or worldliness condoned therein [of which they may have been unaware] and move them to stand for the truth and to attempt to reform the church. It might very well save some of the members from destruction, and possibly, save the congregation. If the people are desiring to stand and wanting to do right, it will put them on notice that either the congregation needs to repent or they must [after finding out that they cannot help the situation] place membership elsewhere, dissociating themselves from the marked church. Four, the longer the delay in acting, the less likely the reformation.

Brethren must not forget that love for the truth of God, for the purity of the church, and for the brethren, as well as discretion and care, should characterize every act of discipline. Care must be given to being sure of facts and attitudes before this final step is taken. —Curtis A. Cates (Yokefellow, a publication of the Memphis School of Preaching, Vol. 27, No. 6, June 15, 2000)

As is the case with brother Bill Jackson, brother Cates has departed this life, as we all in time must, to stand finally before our Lord to be judged in the light of His Word on the basis of our conduct here (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; John 12:48). It is one thing to teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth of God’s Word, but it is entirely another thing to consistently, steadfastly, and with regularity practice it without compromise, without bias, or respect of persons as we truly contend for it (Jude 3). I am made sad and sorry to say that on at least one issue the late brother Cates and other brethren (some having departed this world and some who continue to abide here) when it came to the R&R of elders, as twice practised by the Brown Trail Church of Christ, Hurst, TX—preached, and defended by Dave Miller of Apologetics Press, et al., did not practise what he wrote in his preceding article. Moreover, from other events connected thereto and arising therefrom, the late bro. Cates and, yes, the late bro. Garland Elkins in full support of bro. Cates in this and related matters, continued to declare their opposition to the R&R of elders doctrine, but remained in fellowship with those who saw nothing wrong with it. Even the present director of the MSOP, bro. B. J. Clarke, disagreed with both Cates and Elkins (also bro. Robert Taylor)—bro. Clarke believing that the R&R of elders is not error, but only an option (method or manner) whereby a church can determine whether elders are qualified to serve in that capacity or not.

For over ten years, questions pertaining to the R&R of elders have been avoided in the MSOP. Indeed, the school’s reputation for being on the cutting edge of issues in the brotherhood is no longer characteristic of them (or for that matter, it is not as characteristic of any of the preacher schools as it once was). In the training of preachers, there was a time when the director and teachers fully supported by the elders of the old Knight Arnold Church of Christ, that became the Forest Hill congregation, expected the MSOP to deal with various errors—old and new—as a necessary part of preparing preachers to make full proof of their ministry (2 Tim. 4:5; 2:2). But what once characterized it from its beginning and for many years to follow, is no more. Indeed, it would be terrible if the powers that be in a preacher training school were to forbid students from asking the same questions of different instructors because the school is afraid the instructors will differ in their answers to the same question. It must be remembered that there are many older preachers who were trained many years ago at the MSOP. These men have been and are amazed, as well as deeply saddened, at the turnabout in the school. For many years it, as well as other preacher training schools, exemplified and trained men to be warriors of the cross and preachers who, without fear or favor, preached the whole counsel of God. But it has for some time now been an institution as soft as mush and fearful of crossing the pet beliefs of their supporters, including stating explicitly with whom it is in fellowship when at least it comes to other preachers training schools and colleges such as FHU.

In February of 2009, in the Forest Hill Church of Christ (home of the MSOP) bulletin, their preacher Barry Grider, had printed the old worn out article, I Drew My Circle Again. The article makes light of recognizing fellowship restrictions. It has long been used by those brethren who teach doctrines that when believed and practiced loose men from what God in His Word binds on them. But our brethren picked it up from the denominations who employed it to justify fellowshipping whatever came down the road.
The article implies that we are to make no judgment when it comes to whom we fellowship as Christians. However, as is usually the case, the article contradicts itself—*it urges its readers to exercise one’s judgmental powers to conclude that one should not use those same powers in judging what persons ought to be fellowshipped and what persons ought not to be fellowshipped*. The article completely ignores God’s Truth as the only standard for determining who Christians are to fellowship and from whom it is to be withheld (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; Jam. 1:25; Phi. 3:16b; Jude 3; 2 John 8-11). *Certainly, Grider cannot conceive of a fellowship circle large enough to include your editor in it.* However, as predicted, he continues to draw his fellowship circle larger and larger to include brethren who teach doctrines that in time past the MSOP, et al., opposed. Grider has never repudiated that article. Indeed, he continues to apply it in determining what brethren he will and will not fellowship. It is a matter of arbitrarily choosing what false teachers Grider, the Forest Hill elders, the MSOP, and their fellow travelers will fellowship or not. If one gradually introduces things that the brethren are not used to, then in time those things become acceptable. It works that way with obligatory matters as well as with optional matters. It is the change agents guiding light—three steps forward and two steps backward is exactly how they ever so gradually change the church from being faithful to being unfaithful. What is said about vice in the following poem is true about any error.

(Continued From Page 1)

self—reported “A Conversation With Royce Money” in its April, 2006 issue. In that article, Money said,

I would fight vigorously if instrumental music were attempted to be introduced into my home congregation. I am firmly within the acappella tradition. But I have a tolerance for those who make other choices, and I don’t see that it needs to constitute a complete severing of fellowship (p. 20).

During the 2006-07 school year, Rick Atchley and Mark Henderson spoke in chapel at Oklahoma Christian University. During this period, both of these men were in the process of leading efforts at Richland Hills and Quail Springs to introduce mechanical instruments of music in their respective congregations. Atchley preached a series of sermons at Richland Hills in December, 2006 in support of instrumental music and Henderson did the same at Quail Springs on January 28, 2007. At this writing, all of these sermons are posted on their respective websites (www.rhchurch.org and www.quailchurch.com).

Upon learning that Atchley and Henderson had been chapel speakers at OC, I sent the following email messages on April 20, 2007 to OC President Mike O’Neal and OC Bible College Dean, Lynn McMillon:

The Family of God At Quail Springs’ (which also calls itself a church of Christ) in Oklahoma City is apparently following the lead of Rick Atchley and the Richland Hills church near Ft. Worth. On their website http://www.quailchurch.com they have posted statements from Mark Henderson and their elders concerning their exploration of changes to be made at Quail Springs. Among those is adding an instrumental worship. Since you have utilized Mark Henderson as a chapel speaker at OC, you may be interested in this information which is on the world wide web.

Note the following answer from one of their “elders”:

We are in the process of examining ourselves and the family of God here at Quail as we consider what is next. We want to make it clear that we believe the concept of tearing down walls and removing barriers is one that is Spirit-led and comes from both elders and staff after much study, prayer, fasting and discussion.

There are rumors that we are planning significant changes to our Sunday morning worship. Indeed we have been meeting for some months to discuss a proposal to ADD an instrumental worship service at Quail. BUT—let me be very clear—we have no plans to do away with our acappella worship on Sunday mornings. In our deliberations, if we determine that God is leading us to do something different, it would be done as an ADDITIONAL service, not a replacement of our existing Sunday morning service.

We sincerely believe that God is UP TO SOMETHING in this church. We know when that is on the horizon, the enemy

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with it face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace!

As a change agent in the church, Grider knows well why in the same month that he printed the article, *I Drew My Circle Again,* that he also printed the article *I Got Used To It.*

If the brethren making up the MSOP have repented of anything we have written about them (this is the case for any person, paper, or school), or we have not fairly represented them, they can in writing plainly site the adequate evidence to the contrary and we will be more than happy to publish the same with our apology on the pages of *CFTF.*

From at least 2005, when several events collectively reared their heads, one can see that in general the schools of preaching, their lecturerships, and the elderships of the churches of which these schools are their work have done an about face from previous years in their stand for the truth and in their opposition to error. They and their fellow travelers rushed quickly to adopt the “Consensus Fellowship” attitude about which we have previously written. Thus, to this very hour, they continue down that broad and easy road with little hope of any significant change from their consensus fellowship state of mind and conduct that permits them to encourage the growth of the leaven of evil among themselves.

—David P. Brown, Editor
heightens his efforts among us, using rumors, gossip, accusations and falsehoods to bring about a sense of fear and to create confusion and discord within our ranks. We ask you to be patient with each other. Those of you who hunger for a particular change, please be patient with your brothers and sisters who have a different view. Those of you who question the wisdom of this or that change, please be patient with your brothers and sisters who long for just such a change. We stand before you feeling an awesome weight on our shoulders to align this congregation with God’s plans. We plead for your patience and prayers, both for us and for each other.

Please pray for us as your shepherds as we continue our deliberations. While we do not want to hurt or offend anyone, please realize that our ultimate accountability is to God. We call on each one of you to join us in this journey. We continue to welcome your letters, emails, visits, and so on. As we follow God’s lead and make changes, we hope you will be pleased to be a part of an exciting congregation bent on doing nothing but what will bring God’s pleasure.

You may read Rick Atchley’s Christian Church arguments for instrumental music at Richland Hills, as well as his arguments for Saturday night worship with communion, at www.rhchurch.org. It now appears that Atchley has been joined by Mark Henderson in Oklahoma City in his pursuit of “change.” Will Oklahoma Christian continue to turn a blind eye to these things?

On April 20, 2007, I received the following reply from O’Neal:

Jerry, thanks for your interest in OC and these important matters. The University has not yet addressed any official response to the matters you describe, but it is our plans to study the issues and formulate an appropriate response in the months ahead. I believe both of these men were invited to speak before the announcements were made. I personally do not support the changes they have announced but this is a matter that our administration and our trustees will need to address together after prayerful consideration of all viewpoints.

I don’t know if you have yet seen the May issue of the Christian Chronicle, but there is an excellent editorial in that issue that reflects much of my thinking though I had nothing to do with its composition.

On April 23, 2007, I received the following reply from McMillon:

Dear Jerry,

Oklahoma Christian is not involved in any way in the affairs of the two congregations you mentioned. As a University, we make a point to focus on our work and mission and not become involved in the local issues of congregations. Please do not read anything into my statement other than we respect the autonomy of each church. As to speakers, we select those who can point the students to Jesus and to inspire them to greater service but do not ask them to speak on matters that might be controversial in some other setting.

Prayers and Best Wishes,
Lynn McMillon

While Atchley and Henderson go merrily along their way offering “strange fire” unto the Lord (Lev. 10:1-4) their “fellow travelers” dutifully march in lockstep and bid them God speed. To Flatt, instruments are not used because “acappella” is a “108 year-old tradition” and “reflects our primary constituents.” Money is “firmly in the acappella tradition,” though he has a “tolerance for those who make other choices.” O’Neal needs to “study the issues and formulate an appropriate response in the months ahead...after prayerful consideration of all viewpoints.” He then cites the Chronicle editorial of May, 2007 as reflecting “much of my thinking.” That editorial says in part, “Churches of Christ have a long and deeply rooted commitment to acappella worship...Let us be known for musical worship that is part of a fabric of love and not a culture of divisiveness.” So O’Neal obviously believes we sing without instruments because of “a long and deeply rooted commitment,” and does not believe we should create a “culture of divisiveness” by opposing mechanical instruments.

It would also appear that O’Neal is now trying to head off any criticism of himself and/or Oklahoma Christian by taking to the road and assuring others of his “soundness.” The following announcement was made in the April 8, 2007 issue of the weekly bulletin of the Second and Adams Church of Christ in Elk City, Oklahoma:

On April 15th, Dr. Mike O’Neal, the fifth president of Oklahoma Christian University, will be our Sunday evening speaker. He requested an opportunity to preach at Second & Adams to let our congregation know of his commitment, and his soundness in the faith. Please make plans to attend.

Following his speech that evening, a member from a nearby congregation who was in attendance asked O’Neal about Quail Springs and their plans. Of Quail Springs, he replied that, “they had their place in the church,” which seems to echo Royce Money who has a “tolerance for those who make other choices.”

Then, to McMillon, the posting of error on the worldwide web by Richland Hills and Quail Springs is just one of the “local issues of congregations,” and believes those who preach error can “point the students to Jesus and inspire them to greater service.” This, of course, is the same man who was asked three times at a meeting in Lawton, Oklahoma whether Bible silence is “permissive or prohibitive,” and who, three times, refused to answer.

A “fellow traveler” with apostates is bidding “God speed” to damnable error and is a “partaker of his evil deeds.” In none of the above so-called “objections” to instrumental music was a single passage of God’s word cited. When matters of the faith “once delivered” (Jude 3) are regarded as “opinion” or “tradition” or “other choices” or “local issues of congregations,” those who so regard them are no longer just “fellow travelers.” They are themselves apostate.

—308 South Oklahoma Ave. Elk City, OK 73644
DEVIANATIONS FROM THE TRUTH
Roelf L. Ruffner

AGREEMENT IN STRANGE PLACES
Increasingly in churches in the United States, what is supposed to be the worship assembly has become more entertainment oriented. Many religious groups (including some claiming to be churches of Christ) are building stages at the front of their auditoriums rather than pulpits, complete with theatrical lighting and props. During their disorderly attempts at worship (cf. 1 Cor. 14:40), someone usually sings a popular “Christian” song or a chorus cranks out a trendy song as the audience claps and sways its arms to the music as if they were at a rock concert. The speaker’s message is short and emotion packed, with few if any scriptures quoted or read. Usually the children are shuffled off to a “children’s church” or a “children’s Bible hour,” supposedly so the adults can concentrate. This is not scriptural worship (John 4:24; Col. 3:17), but “vain” worship (Mat. 15:9), with man and his feeble attempts at applause being the center of attention rather than God and the Bible. As someone once wrote, “Only God has the right to applaud in worship, not the audience.”

Oddly enough I read where some Southern Baptist “scholars” seem to somewhat agree with me on this matter. At a recent meeting of the Evangelical Theology Society in San Antonio, Texas, certain Baptists presented papers which seemed to chastise churches for forsaking “congregational singing” and not having “multi-generational worship services.” Jonathan Welch wrote that when individuals do not sing in corporate worship they violate theological functions concerning singing in the New Testament.

This scholar made some good points (others not so good), but he failed to mention that unaccompanied congregational singing is a COMMAND: “Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19—ASV, 1901). Obviously “speaking one to another” (you speak to me as I speak to you) cannot be obeyed by a soloist, a singing group, a choir or a mechanical instrument of music. They become the performer with the audience not participating.

Concerning multi-generational worship, Robert Pendergraft in his paper quoted from developmental psychologist Erik Erikson who suggested “all generations within a church would benefit from attending corporate worship together.” Pendergraft adds, “Age segregation in worship stunts maturation and growth of the congregants by not embracing the needs of those at varying developmental stages.” He then quotes Erickson again,

The presence of children with their parents in worship allows the infant to develop ... trust [in parents] ... and allows the congregation to be constantly reminded of “its need to trust God” in the same manner.

Students of the Bible came to this conclusion long ago without the aid of psychology or considered modern scholarship. The COMMAND of the Holy Spirit is for Christians to assemble as a body for worship (Heb. 10:25). What are they teaching their children when they are shuffled off out of the assembly? Contrary to Hebrews 10:25, they are teaching them that forsaking the assembly of the church is alright.

I pray that all those who read this article would give up trying to sinfully tinker with worship and go back to the New Testament for their authority and pattern for worship. Jesus once said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Where is the “truth” in not worshipping God according to the pattern we find in the New Testament? Where is the “spirit” when we disregard the commands of the Holy Spirit found in the Holy Bible? “But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat. 15:9). (http://bpnews.net/48128/music-and-worship-draw-focus-of-baptist-theologians-as-of-January-12, 2017).

WHERE IS THE AUTHORITY TO CLAIM THAT BAPTISM IS NOT NECESSARY FOR ONE TO BE SAVED?

And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders, And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? (Luke 20:1, 2).

It comes as a shock to many people that Jesus Christ COMMANDED they be baptized in order to be saved. He told a confused Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

In an explicit (in just so many words) direct statement the Lord said to His disciples before He left this world, “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). Thereby He authorized (obligated) his followers to preach the gospel and baptize those who obeyed it. How much clearer can you get?

The baptism authority is not sprinkling or pouring “holy
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The prophet Moses and the Holy Spirit said this to the Israelites to warn them of any dealings with the heathen of the land of Canaan. Such fellowship would lead them to participate in the same ABOMINATIONS that these child-sacrificers-idol-worshippers were guilty of.

For the child of God the same principle of non-fellowship applies to the denominations. The Lord’s body, the church of Christ, is not divided; it is not a denomination. Denominations, however pious sounding and respectful, are in violation of our Lord’s plea for unity (John 17:20, 21). The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not divided, each doing their own thing, yet claiming unity.

Now I beseech 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 judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).

Denominations are the enemy of Christian unity. However, for more than a generation apostate brethren have jumped into the religious pluralism play pool splashing around like giggling babies. A case in point is a group who claim affiliation with the Churches of Christ—Lipscomb University (LU) in Nashville, TN. I saw a notice from their “Hazelip School of Theology” the other day telling of the goings and comings of their staff. I noticed two of the faculty spoke at “Christian Church” meetings recently. I wonder if they sang along with the harpsichord? But what caught my attention was the announcement of a conference June 25-27, 2017, called “Intergenerate.” The announcement explained,

Leaders in evangelical churches, emerging churches, mainline churches, missional churches, charismatic churches, Catholic churches—all types of Christian communities—are asking the same question, “How can we bring the generations back
In answer to their initial question, “How do we bring the generations back together?” I say to the apostates at LU, “Repent and go back to the Bible and do Bible things in Bible ways with scriptural authority!” None of this ungodliness is authorized by one word of the New Testament (Col. 3:17). David Lipscomb, James A. Harding, E. A. Elam, H. Leo Boles, Batsell Baxter, and others associated with LU from the past would be weeping right now if they knew what the Christian educational institution they cherished and built up was doing. “If any man loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. Maranatha” (1 Cor. 16:22—ASV, 1901). (http://www.intergenerateconference.com as of December 23, 2016)

“DID I USE LIGHTNESS?”

When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay (2 Cor. 1:17, 18).

Have you noticed how diplomatic some folks are nowadays about the Gospel? Perhaps it is the penchant not to hurt anyone’s feelings. Perhaps it is the acceptance of the idiocy of religious pluralism by our society and even some in the church.

A few years ago, I watched one rather well-known brother on television bewail the rising level of cohabitation (living in sin) by couples in America today. He mentioned a few Scriptures but mainly his objections were based on statistics, opinion polls, and studies. This is the tendency today among some preachers and defenders of Biblical morality. They do not dwell on the Word of God, but upon the opinions of men. They do not dare call something “sinful” because that might be “judgmental.” Someone might actually begin to think in negative terms about their eternal destiny or Hell!

Yet, the apostle Paul pulled no punches when he spoke to a bunch of educated hedonistic heathens in Athens.
And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:30, 31).

Likewise, we should not be afraid to speak the Truth from God’s word to this generation.

“JESUS LOVES ME THIS I KNOW…”

This verse from that simple children’s song reverberates through the ages. Our world sinks ever more quickly into a morass of sin and ungodliness. But Jesus loved it enough to die for it (John 3:16). To do such a thing He had to come among us and be in the world while not being a part of it.

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:7,8).

With a world population approaching SEVEN BILLION souls Jesus loves ME. This reflects the love of the Father in Heaven who made each one of us in His image. We are not just a mixed bag of chemicals or intelligent animals walking around.

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour (Ps. 8:4, 5).

“You mean poor ole sinful me?” The “me’s” of this world have hated, envied, lusted and murdered for thousands of years. In our pride and vanity, we imagine ourselves “master of our fate and captain of our soul.” We have taken the one true religion of Christianity and either made it into a staid, dusty, sour tradition or a silly, emotional circus.

And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God (Luke 16:15).

In spite of all that Jesus still loves me. He loved me so much that He sacrificed Himself on the cross in my stead. I deserved to be on that cross, not Him! Through the Good News He has provided a way of salvation for me—salvation from sin and eternal damnation. “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:13-14).

Yet, the beautiful truth of this song’s verse is that I can “know” that Jesus loves me. In our age of doubt and cynicism, this is a great blessing. This knowledge is not just some subjective catharsis but THE TRUTH. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). With this truth we can overcome life’s challenges unafraid with the “peace” of Christ’s love in our hearts (John 14:27).

Do you know the love of Jesus Christ? You cannot find it in books of devotion, philosophy, meditation, or the thoughts of men. I invite you to turn to the pages of the New Testament and find the love of Jesus Christ—“for the Bible tells me so.”

—2530 Moore Court
Columbia, TN 38401
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April 20-23, 2017

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Denver—Piedmont Church of Christ, 1602 S. Parker Rd. Ste. 109, Denver, CO 80231, Sunday: 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. www.piedmontcoc.net, Lester Kamp, evangelist. (720) 989-8155.

-England-

Cambridgeshire—Cambridge City Church of Christ, meeting at The Manor Community College, Arbury Rd., Cambridge, CB4 2JF. Sun., Bible Study--10:30 a.m., Worship-- 11:30 a.m.; Tue. Bible Study--7:30 p.m. www.CambridgeCityCoC.org.uk. Contact: Inside the U.K.: Joan Moulton - 01223-210101; Postal/mailing Address - PO BOX 1, Ramsey Huntingdon, PE26 2YZ United Kingdom

-Florida-

Ocoee—Ocoee Church of Christ, 2 East Magnolia Street, Ocoee, FL 34761. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7:00 p.m. David Harbarger, Evangelist, (407) 656-2516.

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, Sun. 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Michael Hatcher, evangelist, (850) 455-7595. http://www.bellviewcoc.com/

-Montana-

Helena—Mountain View Church of Christ, 1400 Joslyn Street, Helena, Mt. 59601, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Matt Bidmead (406) 461-9199.

-Oklahoma-

Elk City—Northeast Church of Christ, 616 N. Locust Ave., Mailing address P.O. Box 267, Elk City, OK 73648-0267, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m. Wed., 7:00 p.m. Jerry and Nathan Brewer, evangelists. The church building is one block east of North Van Buren, on East Avenue C in Elk City, Oklahoma. FaceBook : www.facebook.com/nechurchofchristecok. Phone: (580) 225-4395

Porum—Church of Christ, 8 miles South of I-40 at Hwy 2, Warner exit. Sun. 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. Allen Lawson, evangelist, email: allenlawson@earth-comm.com.

-South Carolina-

Belvedere (Greater Augusta, Georgia Area)—Church of Christ, 535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841,www.belvederechurchofchrist.org; e-mail belvecoc@gmail.com, (803) 442-6388, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m.,

-Texas-

Denton area—Northpoint Church of Christ, 4224 N. I-35 (Greenway Plaza, just north of Cracker Barrel). Mailing address: 4224 N. I-35, Denton, TX 76207. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Website: www.northpointcoc.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 1:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: (940) 218-2892; dubmcclish@gmail.com.

Houston area—Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, (281) 353-2707. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, evangelist. Home of the Spring Contending for the Faith Lectures. www.churchesofchrist.com.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (936) 438-8202.

Richwood—1600 Brazosport, Richwood, TX. Sun. 9:30; 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (979) 265-4256.