

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

WHAT THE CHURCH MUST DO TO BE SAVED

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The Following Sermon was Preached in War Memorial Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee in 1939 (68 years ago). The Meeting was Under the Auspices of Chapel Avenue Church of Christ. We Edited the Sermon for our Purposes in CFTF. In so Many Ways it is as up to Date as Today's News. The Complete Sermon May be Found in Wallace's Book, "The Gospel for Today," 1967, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, pp. 291-305.—EDITOR

TEXT

For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I mourn; dismay hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered (Jer. 8:21-22, ASV)?

The prophet Jeremiah in these words pictures the condition of Israel in a lurid light. Doubtless he was regarded a pessimist; soured on society; a disgruntled prophet. But the fact remains that the trouble was in Israel, not in the prophet. His burning words describe the people of God today. The church is sick. And the sad part is, as with Israel, without reason; because the Physician of Gilead and the healing remedy are available. **"Why then is not the health of my people recovered?"** Because they will not come to the physician and they will not take his remedy.

I. ELEMENTS OF STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

The health and strength of the church are to be found in the Truth and the defense of it; its infirmity and weakness are manifest in compromise. Of the mighty host of Old Testament valiants a New Testament writer

remarked, **"Out of weakness they were made strong."** Through the fewest and weakest of all nations on earth, God made Israel the strongest, and through them he championed the cause of universal righteousness against empires of iniquity and defeated the most powerful nations of antiquity. Standing for the Truth, the church has nothing to fear. But when we compromise with error, we become of all people the most vulnerable.

The history of Israel repeats itself in the church today. Observe what the strength of the church was a few generations ago and compare it with the present. Their plea was the Bible itself. Today we hear much of "what the church believes and teaches." The church was brought to us in an undenominational, non-denominational, anti-denominational spirit. The spirit of the early Gospel crusaders was antagonistic to denominationalism. The attitude toward error was consistent—all error looked exactly alike. Bishop Purcell's Roman Catholicism looked to Alexander Campbell about like Robert Dale Owen's socialistic atheism—he debated and defeated them both. But Nathan Rice's denominationalism did not look any better; he debated and defeated it. Nor did error within the church receive more toleration, he squelched the menacing speculative movement of

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917 – October 10, 2001

Editorial...

**“THE WAY OF THE WICKED IS AS DARKNESS: THEY KNOW NOT AT WHAT THEY STUMBLE”
(Prov. 4:19).**

Among other matters, in our editorial for February 2007 we noted that Tom Holland was slated to speak on this year’s Tennessee Bible College Lectures and also scheduled to speak at the 2007 Memphis School of Preaching Lectures. We pointed out that by implication the action of Holland appearing on said lectureships placed each church, school, and the lectureship speakers in fellowship with each other. Since then Holland has removed himself from said lectures (Phil Sanders and Ancil Jenkins also removed themselves from the TBC Lects. Roger Jackson refused the invitation to speak on said Lects. Thus, we wonder if the regular writer for the *Spiritual Sword* and speaker on said Lects., Hugh Fulford, will go ahead and speak on TBC’s Lects.). As best we can determine brother Holland removed himself because one East TN preacher talked to a middle TN preacher, indicating that their cause regarding the support and fellowship of Dave Miller et al. would be hurt tremendously if Holland appeared on the TBC Lectures. Thus, it seems that somebody needed to explain the facts of life to brother Holland. Did brother Holland remove himself because he was persuaded that the Scriptures do not authorize his appearance on the TBC Lectures, or because it is best for MSOP, GBN, AP, et al. in their support and fellowship of Dave Miller for Holland not to speak on said lectures?

No doubt the powers that be at MSOP, GBN, et al. breathed a collective sigh of relief when Holland, along with the other previously mentioned men, removed himself from the TBC lectures. Thereby they headed off being forced into spinning another convoluted and even more fantastic far fetched explanation than they have heretofore been forced to weave in their efforts to justify their own particular brand of “unity in diversity.” However, in view of what has come from these brethren in their lame efforts to justify their previous errors, it would have been interesting to say the least, to have heard what they and their supporters would have concocted in an effort to provide a “Scriptural explanation” for Holland, TBC, Deaver, MSOP, et al., to appear “arm in arm” with each other.

Do they not realize that their urging brother Holland to remove himself from the TBC Lectures *proves they do not understand implication* and they can identify what is implied—at least what is implied if Holland spoke with Mac Deaver, Malcolm Hill, et al. on TBC’s lectures, with him also speaking on MSOP’s lectures? But when it comes to their support of Dave Miller, these same men ignore the implications of their actions—their own violation of 2 John 8-11. However,

if Holland's speaking on TBC and MSOP's lectures implied his fellowship with Deaver, TBC, and MSOP (and it would and certain ones realized it), then it is also true that when MSOP, et al. appear on a lectureship (Spiritual Sword Lectures and others) with Dave Miller, they are implying their support of Miller. They are either (1) in agreement with Miller or (2) they do not consider his erroneous doctrines a problem, or (3) his appearance at liberal churches to present his apologetics sermons without exposing and refuting the errors of said churches, are of no consequence to them at all. MSOP, GBN, et al. see what they desire to see and are blind to that which does not agree with their spiritual digestive system. Thus, once again these spiritually lame brethren prove they are **"double minded"** and **"unstable"** (James 1:8).

COLOSSIANS 3:9 AND JAMES 3:14

On Tuesday, July 26, 2005, in response to an email to him from Kent Bailey on the same day, brother Tommy Hicks responded in kind to Bailey. The entire email exchange between Bailey and Hicks is found in the Oct. 2005 issue of *CFTF*.

In part Hicks wrote:

Thank you for your e-mail message and for your concerns relative to *The Gospel Journal*. Please allow me to refer you to brother Curtis Cates, President of the Gospel Journal Board. If you will contact him, I am sure he will openly discuss with you the matters you have raised.

Neither Dub nor David was "fired." Furthermore, neither was asked to resign." By their own volition, both did resign. I cannot speak as to how Dub and David perceived their situation relative to TGJ Board, but if *anyone* says, "They saw the handwriting on the wall and resigned," I can assure you that TGJ Board had done no "writing on the wall." No vote was ever taken, therefore, no decision was ever made, by TGJ Board to "fire" them or to ask them for their resignations.

Kent, no TGJ Board member, let alone TGJ Board as a whole, has "jumped on board a band wagon in support of a work that has a false teacher as its director." *Anyone* who says we have is either misinformed or dishonest. If someone says, "Well, it looks like ...," I would remind them of John 7:24. Specifically, regarding the false doctrines in which Dave Miller involved himself (i.e., elders "re-evaluation" doctrine and the marriage/divorce "intent" doctrine *a la* Everett Chambers), we stand with you and every other sound brother—in opposition to them. Right now, we, like a whole lot of other brethren (and, I would think you included), are taking a "wait and see" stance regarding Apologetics Press.

Dub and I have been friends since 1971. Having known him for 34 years I do not exaggerate when I tell you that I would trust him with my life. In matters of judgment, Dub and I do not always share the same opinions. But, in matters of faith we speak the same things and are of the same mind, and the same judgment. Dub

has never taught or done anything of which I am aware that would cause me or any other TGJ Board member to question for *a moment* being in fellowship with him. In fact, each TGJ Board member has individually conveyed this to Dub and to David. Kent, there are absolutely no fellowship issues involved.

Be assured, TGJ has nothing to hide and is seeking to be only what it was established to be.

Hicks comments were ridiculously inaccurate at the time he wrote them, but with TGJ Board and their friends' unChristian conduct regarding Dave Miller's and Stan Crowley's errors, et al., over the intervening 21 months, said comments, along with he who articulated them, have been proven to be absurd, ludicrous to the nth degree, and palpably false. It is no wonder that brother Curtis Cates said to the rest of the TGJ Board regarding the need for solidarity among and between said board members over the matter of McClish's and Watson's forced resignations from *TGJ*: **"We must all hang together or we'll hang separately."** How sad it is said board's part that there is no evidence of a contrite heart, a pricked conscience, or shame for the sins that they have committed.

CORRECTION

In our February 2007 editorial we stated that brother Neal Pollard, the preacher for the Bear Valley Church of Christ, Denver, Colorado, was a graduate of MSOP. We were wrong. He is a graduate of Faulkner University.

—David P. Brown, EDITOR



HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE GOD, HIS TRUTH, AND MY SOUL?

If you are my friend, if you are concerned about my soul, give me the Truth. Do not flatter me. Do not praise my virtues while remaining silent about my vices. Do not fear the Truth will offend me. Do not treasure our friendship, our friendly relations, above my salvation.

Do not think by ignoring my sins, you can help me. Do not think that being blind to my sins will prove you charitable. However I may react to it, whatever may be my attitude toward you after you have done it, GIVE ME THE TRUTH. For the Truth, and only the Truth, can make me free from the shackles of sin, strengthen me in the pathway of righteousness, and lead me to heaven's joy.

If I am wavering, weak, lukewarm, indifferent, neglectful, rebellious, hypocritical; if I have been overtaken in a trespass; if I have been drawn into the pleasure of the world; if I have left my first love; if I have been led astray by error; or if I have done none of these, but simply need to grow in knowledge and be edified, **GIVE ME THE TRUTH!**

—Author Unknown

"If you tell the truth you don't have to remember any thing." —Mark Twain

(Continued from page 1)

Jesse B. Ferguson—in the church.¹ The strength of the church has ever been in the maintenance of distinctive, New Testament principles. It loses its strength and is reduced to utter weakness when it loses sight of these things, raises the white flag to the foe and signs a truce with error.

II. THE PRINCIPLE OF PECULIARITY

Israel was a peculiar people—a separate people. They had a separate origin. God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees that he might raise up a separate family. Get thee out, God said. Later when the posterity of Abraham settled in the land of Egypt God demanded that Pharaoh should let the people go **“that they may worship me.”** He required of Israel a separate nation. Today God demands a separate church—**“be ye separate, saith the Lord.”** A separate family in Abraham; a separate nation in Israel; a separate church in Christ.

(1) The Church Must Be Kept Separate.

We must keep the church separate in speech. The nomenclature of the denominations can have no place among Christians—such as “our church,” “our pastor,” “Doctor Blank, LL.D.,” “our institutions,” “our organizations,” “our Young People,” and “Lord, may Brother Eloquent ‘bring us a message’,” *ad infinitum*’s string of borrowed sectarian Ashdodic language, which is fast becoming the common vernacular of professed Christians.

We must keep the church separate in doctrine. It is not a matter of what “the church believes and teaches”—it is wholly and solely a question of what the Bible teaches, the all and only divine creed. There is a crying need for Bible preaching today, instead of “canned sermons” filched from sectarian sources.

We must keep the church separate in worship. Unscriptural innovations are sinful and invalidate the worship. If it is wrong to use instrumental music in worship, it is wrong to worship where it is used. In fact, in so doing, the effort would be in vain—**“in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrine the commandments of men.”**

Between Christians and innovators there is no basis of fellowship, nor even negotiation. Nehemiah refused Sanballat’s unity-meeting proposal which he wanted to hold on the plains of Ono. He wanted to stop Nehemiah’s work. Digressives today are modern Samaritan Sanballats—that is all. They would love to lure us to let the sound of the hammer cease and come to the plains of Ono ... and talk unity. ... The affiliation itself is wrong, the negotiations are wrong; it can only weaken the church and serve to dim the lines which should be the tauter drawn. All the advantages in such meetings, even if some loyal preacher “tears the rag off the bush,” are gained by the digressives—and they know it. We have neither time nor place for pseudo-unity conferences.

(2) The Church Must be Kept Evangelistic.

There has been over-emphasis on missions and missionaries and an under-emphasis on New Testament evangelistic work. Let a gospel preacher announce this week that he sails to Japan, China or Timbuctoo, and he is no longer a preacher—all at once he has become a missionary! The apostles did not establish missions they preached the gospel; people obeyed it, and in doing so became Christians, and that is the church. “Once a mission always a mission.”

Scripturally speaking, the “missionary” abroad is an evangelist of the Gospel so why not call them foreign evangelists, and send the word “missionary” back to the Catholics, from whence it was borrowed. It is significant that the word missionary is not in the Bible, nor is there a corresponding word in the Greek text. But one preacher said that the word *missionary* is derived from the same original textual word as the term *apostle*, and is therefore Scriptural. When he was asked if he would be willing to call the *missionaries* by the name *apostle*, he had not thought of that! The preachers of the Gospel in any country, clime or language are evangelists; so why not call them that—it is a Bible word, which may be the reason some would want to call them something else!

(3) The Church Must Be Kept Militant.

The spirit of pacificism (pa-cif-i-cism) is taking the fight out of the church. But the conflict between Truth and error is unending. Victory does not come by truce. God’s terms are unconditional surrender. A questionnaire and survey, to determine what kind of writing and preaching a “brotherhood” wants, bear on the face of them a total lack of knowledge of the spirit and genius of the Gospel, or else a gross disregard for it on the part of the promoters. To receive such a thing is an insult to a Gospel preacher; and its circulation in the name of Gospel preaching and writing is a travesty on the spirit of Christ, Peter and John, Stephen and Paul. The church grew when the fight was waged and the battles raged. When the let-up came in the fight, the let-down came in the church. It is said that the denominations do not fight any more. That is because the church has quit fighting and they have nothing to fight. If Gospel preachers will fight now as Gospel preachers fought then, the denominations will fight now as they fought then, and Truth will triumph now as it triumphed then. Shall we yield to line of least resistance, or shall we challenge error in its strongholds and citadels?

III. SOME IMMEDIATE DANGERS

In summing up the immediate dangers around the church, we should name the following things:

(1) The Marked Tendency Toward Institutionalism.

Today any man or group of men can start any institution they please to start, put it in a benevolent basket, label it “Your Baby,” and place it on the

doorstep of the church with the appeal “Please, take care of it”! That is taxation without representation. Again, I say, the delegate system of the digressive is better than that, for in that case there would be a voice in what is started.

The church is about to become the unwitting and unwilling victim of institutionalism, and institutionalism is about to become a racket. Am I against taking care of orphans? I am not. And I am not opposed to orphanages nor homes for the aged. But I am against an institutional racket. It is the duty of the church to care for their dependents—and they should provide the means of doing so under their own supervision. In so doing the church may use the facilities of such institutions, but it is not within the function of the church to operate an institution of any kind. Institutions should be privately owned, endowed and operated. The churches may use them in the care of the sick and infirm, orphan and aged, according to circumstances of judgment and expediency.

If individuals wish to operate hospitals, inns, homes or schools, it is their right to do so, but the church cannot operate institutions. If the church can do its benevolent work through a board of directors, why not its missionary work through a board of directors? If one is a society, why not the other? There is therefore no such thing as “our institutions” if by “our” you mean the church. *

*** (Note: The foregoing statement was made in this special address in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1939, and has been used in recent years in an attempt to connect me with the current defection from the church known as the anti-orphan home faction. But no one in Nashville or anywhere else thought of my statements in any such connection at the time they were made. Being made in connection with the comparison to the Missionary Society the application clearly is to a Board Of Benevolence such as operated by the Christian Church along with its Board Of Missions, or the Missionary Society. The congregations of the Christian Church contribute charity funds to its Board Of Benevolence which receives and controls all such funds merged into their organization, and according to their own policy, determination and decision they apportion the funds to the various eleemosynary institutions whether charitable and benevolent or educational. This Board Of Benevolence is, of course, parallel in its operation with the Missionary Society into which the churches contribute their funds to be apportioned by the Society to the various mission fields at their own determination and decision. There is no such general practice, nor any thing akin to it among the churches of Christ. An orphanage is not parallel with the Missionary Society, proof of which can be cited from the anti-orphan home factionists themselves, who aver that an individual may contribute to an orphan home but they will**

not admit that the individual may contribute to a Missionary Society—so they are not therefore parallel by their own admission, which cancels their own parallelism. Any honest man among these factionists knows that these statements of this lecture of twenty-five years ago were not intended to condemn orphan homes, and no one so understood it at that time. The present faction did not exist at that time, but their predecessors known as the “Sommerites” were rampant, and in the same period of time these lectures were being delivered I was also joining my efforts with others of that time in opposing and exposing the anti-orphan home and anti-college movement of the Sommers and I disclaim and disavow any connection whatsoever with their successors, the current anti-orphan home agitation movement.—F.E.W. Jr.)

Institutionalism was the tap-root of digression through colleges and missionary societies and is always a potential danger. It has always been the fatal blow to congregational independence. We come to love the institutions more than the church. Schools, for instance—and this is the test: Criticize the church, and it brings no rise from these devotees of certain institutions; but criticize their school and it stirs resentment. The college is not the church nor can the church own and operate it. It is private and secular and belongs to the man or group of men who organized and chartered it. It is an adjunct of the home, not of the church; auxiliary to the family, not to the congregation; parents and interested people, not churches, should sponsor and support them.

Recently in a popular American magazine, the publisher, said: “Because of my frank and sympathetic criticism of labor, publications devoted to union interests have declared I am an enemy of unions. This statement is false, absolutely! But I believe in Americanism to the *nth degree*. That means, if a worker wants to join a union he should have that right; but if he desires to depend on his own efforts and does not want to join a union, he should have that privilege.”

With equal force the words of this publisher can be applied to the present criticisms. Because we have criticized the course and conduct in the teaching and the practices of certain schools, we are branded as an enemy of the schools. With the same vehemence of Liberty’s publisher we say: “This statement is false, absolutely”! We merely insist that the schools stay in their place, keep their hands off the church, cease trying to control preachers and form dominating influences in churches. The church must be kept independent and free.

...

(3) Still Another Danger in the Church Now is the Pseudo-Unity Movement.

On the very threshold of unconditional surrender, after hard-fought battles over the innovations, we now face the effort on the part of some to sell the church down

the river by a truce with digression. The digressives have lost in the battle. They now seek victory in strategy and negotiation. But the victory Truth has won in debate should now be sealed in the unconditional, surrender of their innovations and errors and a complete right-about-face which will bring them back to the New Testament in all things. That would be unity in accomplishment. It would be automatic. New Testament unity comes not by resolutions, conferences, mutual admiration meetings, handshakings and backslapping. It exists in the church now which is loyal to Christ, and those who left unity can return and find it here—where they left it. There is no basis for compromise. **“They went out from us because they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us”** (1 John 2:19).

(4) The Steady Inflow of Worldliness Constitutes Another Ever-Present Danger to the Church.

We are living in an intensely secular age. There is an all-absorbing pursuit after ‘the’ things of the world. The pulpit and the press are all but subsidized by the secular spirit. Newspapers reek with crime; churches seethe with worldliness. The masses in the church and out of it are going to hell on, the pleasure route. There are no danger signals anywhere to check the, crazed victims of fun and frolic in their frenzied rush to the resorts of sin. Neon signs flicker “welcome” at places where red lanterns should swing “danger here—keep out.” The public mixed swimming resort is the nursery of promiscuous conduct. The salacious movie is the doorway through which the slime and slush of Hollywood gains entrance to our parlors. The dance is the preparatory school of prostitution. Liquor drinking and cigarette-smoking are first steps in the course which blunts the moral and spiritual sense of boys and girls. The woman or girl with a cigarette in one hand and a liquor glass in the other loses dignity in the eyes of people of sobriety. The church where all these things are prevalent among prominent members, ceases to be a spiritual power in any community. Preachers who refrain from the mention of these evils have either yielded to the line of last resistance or have been influenced by public sentiment or else popular practice has blunted their own spiritual perceptions. Thus merrily we roll along.

IV. THE REMEDY

Then what is the remedy for these immediate dangers? We believe the presence of these ills in the church are alarming and a scriptural correction of, them the only thing that will save the church, or at least salvage a remnant from a new tidal wave of digression.

(1) The Rejection of False Teachers Is Necessary.

Paul said: **“The factious man after the first and second admonition reject.”** (Titus 3 :10). ... Paul said,

Reject them. John said, Let them go out.

...

(3) The Repudiation of Soft-Pedal Journalism is Another Necessity.

Naming the men who teach error and practice deception in religion, even in the church, “can be done in a courteous and Christian manner”—but it should be done.

To talk and write of courageous, dignified, courteous methods of religious journalism is to deal only in broad generalities. For some of our old landmarks as Gospel papers to recede from former drastic policies and retreat behind the verbiage of carefully worded resolutions of editorial committees to restrain the power of pens, is a keen disappointment to many of us who have looked to these papers to take the lead in a major fight, without generalities, getting personal when necessary, in relentless offensives against false movements and the men who promote them.

Whether some “temptation or scheme of intimidation” has “seduced” and “provoked” the editors and publishers to modify policies we cannot say, but it is obvious that something has caused them to seek retrenchment. Our only point here is that it is no time to be saying pretty platitudes and dealing in generalities. We are in a fight for the Truth and the cannon-fire cannot cease until the enemies of the church stack arms.

Calling names of false teachers and their aides and sympathizers is neither undignified nor discourteous, because Paul did it—and he was courteous, dignified, and educated. He said: **“Demas forsook me having loved this present world.”** It was hard on Demas for Paul to say that publicly. He should have taken that up with Demas privately! Again, he said that Hymenaeus and Philetus had shipwrecked their faith and were overthrowing the faith of others by their theory of the resurrection and he wrote it down in the New Testament (a rather dignified book) that he had turned those brethren of his over to Satan. He clashed with Barnabas upon one occasion and withstood Peter to his face and rebuked him publicly. Neither incident ruined the church, nor marred the dignity of the New Testament. He further said that Alexander the coppersmith did him much evil and declared that the Lord would reward him for what he did. Paul did not seem to covet the kind of a reward he intimated Alexander would get. He told a perverter of the Truth one time that he was full of guile and villainy, called him a son the devil, and asked him if he ever intended to quit perverting the way of the Lord. When a paper develops better manners than the New Testament and a preacher becomes more dignified than the apostles, neither is worth anything to the defense of the Truth nor to the cause of Christ.

(4) The Renouncement of Compromise in Preaching and Practice.

A mere innovation in teaching and practice is seldom the real trouble. Rather it is the symptom of the trouble. Back of the instrumental music innovation was the change in attitude toward the authority of the New Testament in matters of worship, the majority rule and political views of church government, guided by a dominant spirit of worldliness in

the church.

There has been a softening of the brain, and also of the spine, of preachers, elders, and teachers in the church. There has been a let-up in that type of study sermons of the positive, and negative character of earlier days. Today our “ministers” are joining the “Ministerial Alliance,” and have been the President and Secretary-Treasurer of these pastor organizations in various towns and cities. These organizations not infrequently give banquets in honor of one of our resigning and departing ministers. It simply stands to reason that when a Gospel preacher does his duty in a community the ministers of sectarianism will not give a banquet in his honor. They would, on the contrary, hold a jubilee over his departure. That is one of the pronounced evidences of the doctrinal weakness developing among churches and preachers.

Then there is the growing practice of giving recognition to sectarian preachers and calling on them for prayer in our meetings. It shows definitely that a general doctrinal weakness is back of certain issues which are seized upon, like instrumental music, premillennialism, and other hobby horses they always ride out on.

I have yet to find the first premillennialist or premillennial sympathizer who is not weak on doctrine, the fundamentals of the gospel, the first principles. They have the sectarian sympathy and complex. Therein is the trouble. When they get into the schools, it is bad. But when they take leadership in the churches, it will be *too bad*.

(5) The Rejuvenation of the Spiritual Life of the Church Must Be Had.

To be saved, the church must retrieve its spiritual life. New Testament discipline must be enforced. We must wage war on worldiness as well as on error. In short, the complete return to the New Testament standard in our attitude toward error, in maintaining the peculiar features of the church of Christ, and in the rejuvenation of its spiritual life, is the only hope of salvation for the church in our secular and sectarian society. We must wage war on everything inimical to the essence of the gospel of Christ.

V. THE BENEDICTION

Psalms 133 is a song of unity. **“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”** There is nothing more stifling and stultifying to the emotions of the soul than strife and division. There is nothing more soothing and beneficious to the spirit than peace and unity.

Unity among brethren is like **“the precious ointment upon the head,”** in the psalmist’s refrain. The Easterns perfumed with fragrant oil. Unity perfumes the church and sweetens the atmosphere like the precious oil **“that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.”**

Unity among brethren is like **“the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.”** Lofty Hermon was far to the north, yet its fragrant dews descended upon the lesser hills of Zion, spreading over hillside

and vale. So unity, as an emblem of grace and benediction, will make the church a center of fragrance and a fount of blessing.

The book of Psalms has been appropriately called “the hymn book of the Bible.” There are more than twenty-five hundred verses in its one hundred and fifty chapters, and doubtless that many songs have been composed from them through the centuries and millenniums since their sentiments swelled the bosom of Israel’s sweet singer.

Many of these verses were chanted in the worship of early Christians, and they will be sung in every generation wherever people are found worshipping God until we learn the “new song” in heaven, “when all the redeemed singers get home.”

To rob our modern productions of the sentiments and psalms of David would be, indeed, to impoverish our worship of praise.

Exhorting the brethren to **“keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,”** Paul outlines, in Ephesians 4:4-6, the basis of unity. **“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”** The **“unity of the Spirit”** is the unity the Spirit teaches, or that results when the Spirit’s Word is obeyed.

There is one God—unity in worship. A divided worship cannot be rendered **“in spirit and in truth.”** Wherever and whenever rendered, true worship must have the two elements—the right spirit and the right act; for God is one and **“seeketh such to be his worshippers.”**

There is one Lord—unity in authority. Human authority in religion is wrong. Christ is Lord, and his Word only is authority.

There is one faith—unity in message. The Spirit, which guides **“into all truth,”** does not impart conflicting messages. The Gospel promotes unity; and where there is division, something else has been preached.

There is one baptism—unity in practice. Modes of baptism! As well talk about shades of white. There is no such thing.

There is one body—unity in organization. The church is one body. It is impossible to have “spiritual unity” and “organic” division. Unity is both spiritual and organic.

There is one spirit and one hope—oneness in mind, unity in life, in desire and expectation.

Thus Paul outlines the only basis of unity. Let the world cease their efforts toward amalgamations, federations, alliances, and unions, and adopt the divine standard and basis of unity—oneness in Christ.

—Deceased

THIS ENDNOTE BY THE EDITOR.

¹ Like a meteor which flashes across the horizon, making a trail of glorious light behind it, and then suddenly disappearing and leaving nothing but darkness in its wake, so Jesse B. Ferguson came above the horizon and shone as a great pulpit orator in the church of Christ at Nashville, Tenn., and then as suddenly disappeared and dropped into obscurity. Perhaps no preacher of the gospel ever stood so

high in the estimation of the people and received the plaudits of the populace and then dropped so low as did this man. ...

In 1842 the church at Nashville, Tenn., which numbered about five hundred members, was growing rapidly. Alexander Campbell had frequently visited the church and had greatly strengthened it. Dr. Wharton was serving as elder and also preacher of the church at that time. Philip S. Fall had labored with the church until he had built up a very strong congregation. In May, 1842, Jesse B. Ferguson was invited to hold a series of meetings. He had become quite prominent in Kentucky at that time. He came and preached for two weeks. He captivated his audiences, and his fame soon spread throughout the city and surrounding country. His audiences increased in number until the church house was filled to overflowing. He had many additions to the church during this meeting. At the close of the meeting he was invited to come and work with the church in Nashville. He was greatly flattered by the invitation, but did not accept it. Again, in 1844, by invitation, he visited the church and held another meeting, which was even a greater success than his former meeting. From the time that he closed the meeting in 1844 until February 24, 1846, he was constantly implored by letters to come and take up work with the church in Nashville.

He left his family in Southern Kentucky and came to Nashville in February, 1846, and remained with the church one year. At the close of the year he was waited upon by a committee of the church with a unanimous request that he accept the work for another year. He took a month's vacation and brought his family, in March, 1847, to live in Nashville and work with the church. For five years he preached for the church and enjoyed almost unexampled success. The church continued to increase in number and popularity in the city until it was necessary to erect a larger house. The church of Christ in Nashville, with Jesse B. Ferguson as its preacher, enjoyed a greater prominence and popularity than any of the denominational churches. During this time Brother Ferguson was looked upon as the greatest pulpit orator that ever visited Nashville, and he enjoyed the fame of being the greatest and most eloquent pulpit orator in the South. He was popular with all the churches of Christ in Tennessee and the South. He is described as a man of fine personal appearance, a very fluent writer, and a very fascinating and eloquent speaker. ...

During the era of his popularity he was made a member of the Board of Trustees of Franklin College. His name appears on the list of the members of the board of Franklin College for 1848. No man had more honors thrust upon him by the brotherhood in Nashville and in Tennessee than did Brother Ferguson. He was the preacher for the largest congregation in the State; the most popular preacher in Nashville; a member of the board of trustees for Franklin College, which was presided over by Tolbert Fanning, who was a prince among educators in the brotherhood at that time; and the editor in chief of the Christian Magazine. Brother Ferguson had the qualities of a successful politician. He flattered all and was flattered by all. For several months he enjoyed the honor and distinction of being the youngest preacher in the city and the most famous one.

In April, 1852, in giving an exposition of 1 Pet. 3:19, he expressed the sentiment that all "whose place of birth and external circumstances prevented the hearing of the gospel in life would not be condemned without hearing it." This was published in the Christian Magazine, in the April issue. Alexander Campbell took issue with this exposition. Brother Ferguson became irritated and highly incensed that any one should contradict anything that he should write or preach. He began at once to defend his position vigorously, and finally took the position that 1 Pet. 3:19 taught that people would have a second chance after death to obey the gospel. Alexander Campbell exposed his theory, and finally Brother Ferguson went into Universalism and spiritualism. He was so popular that he carried a very large percentage of the church in Nashville with him. Many other churches in Tennessee were affected by his teaching. Alexander Campbell continued to expose him, and he continued to flounder and drift until he left the tenets of the faith and blasphemed the church of our Lord. One says of him that he "rose to such a height in the estimation of his hearers, and especially his own, that his head became giddy, and, being no longer able to preserve his religious equilibrium, he was precipitated doctrinally into the region of departed spirits, where he immediately attempted to immortalize himself by new discoveries." The church in Nashville was completely destroyed by his influence.

There were a few brethren in the church who continued to hold to the faith of the gospel. They were driven from the church house and were not permitted to worship in the house. Suit was instituted by these brethren to claim the house. The matter went into court and was finally decided in favor of the few brethren who had remained loyal to the New Testament teaching. A day or two after the suit was decided, April 8, 1857, the church house was burned. The fire was discovered about six o'clock that morning. Many thought that it was set on fire by some of Jesse B. Ferguson's admirers. Mr. Ferguson continued for a while in Nashville, but began to lose his influence. He published a book on "Spirit Communion," in which he gives a record of some supposed communication which he had had with the "spirit spheres." Later he went to Mississippi, and thence to New Orleans, preaching the doctrine of spiritualism and then Universalism. He continued to lose his influence and finally quit preaching. He dropped out of public notice and died in obscurity. ...

Brother D. Lipscomb wrote of him in the Gospel Advocate, September 22, 1870:

It may be a matter of sad interest to our readers to know the fate of this once honored but erratic man. He was the most popular preacher in the Southern country at one time. He was almost worshiped by his admirers in this city, where he ministered as preacher of the church of Christ. He had not that humility of soul and strength of character to stand flattery and adulation heaped upon him. He apostatized from the faith and adopted latitudinarian views in his faith and with reference to morality. He attempted to build up a congregation of adherents on his loose views. He failed, turned politician, veered to different points of the compass as the popular winds seemed to blow. He lost respect of all parties here. Once no citizen of Nashville but felt it an honor to be recognized by him. In later years he was

scarcely recognized by his former acquaintances even of the world when met on the streets. The contrast was too painful to be borne by one so ambitious of popular applause as he. So, although his family resided in the vicinity, of late years he was seldom upon the streets of Nashville. He died on Saturday, September 3, 1870. On Lord's day he was buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery. The funeral services were performed by Dr. Baird, of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

His death attracted scarcely a passing notice from the daily press and hardly a remark on the streets of Nashville of one who at one time was the most honored and esteemed pulpit orator. His life and death should teach a sad lesson to popular preachers and those who depart from the word of God to gain the plaudits of the world (Biographical Sketches Of Gospel Preachers, H. Leo Boles, c. 1939, pp. 186-191)

EDITORIAL NOTE

[We have taken occasion by Wallace's mentioning of Ferguson's error in the church, the error's exposure, refutation, and his being marked, to remind the brethren of at least three things: (1) because a man was once sound and exceedingly popular for his soundness in the faith does not guarantee he always will be, (2) the importance of remembering and applying Paul's admonition found in the following Scriptures to our own lives— **"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"** and **"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. ..."** (1 Cor. 10:12; 2 Cor. 13:5a), and (3) the need of exposing and rebuking men who are in error, no matter how Godly they have been in the past or whose friends they may be. —EDITOR]



GOSPEL ADVOCATE, JANUARY 17, 1929

Excerpt from an article by James A. Allen

The thing that lies like a dead weight upon the churches of Christ and that keeps them from making any material progress is organized religion and institutionalism. We think of the New Testament church in the terms of a human denomination and want to model the work of the church after the institutions of denominationalism. They have no proper concept of the primitive church. They are zealous to "do" something, but what they want to do is to "organize" something in which the local congregation and the individual are lost in the institution.

Jesus Christ, who was so poor that He had "no where to lay His head," could not have had any weight on any of the Boards of the various Institutions that are depending

upon the churches of Christ for support today. A man with no more money than the great apostle Peter, who said, **"Silver and gold have I none,"** would but be a laughing stock on any of the Boards of anything that has to have a Board.

—Deceased

GOSPEL ADVOCATE, 1937

H. Leo Boles, PAGE 170

No one has a right to organize any human institution, it matters not what may be the purpose or mission of that institution, and fasten it upon the church of Christ. No one has a right as a Christian to form a corporation, educational institution, orphan home, or any other human agency, and impose these upon the church for support.



WHILE MEN SLEPT AN ENEMY SOWED TARES

Before reading brother Kent Bailey's article to follow these remarks, please notice the previous two quotes from the *Gospel Advocate* by the late brethren James A. Allen and H. Leo Boles. They pertain to one of the points made in the previous article by the late brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Specifically note Wallace's definition of *institutionalism*—*what he meant and did not mean by said term*. Especially notice what all three men wrote regarding *institutionalism*.

James A. Allen, H. Leo Boles, and Foy E. Wallace, Jr. were men who were noted for their Biblical knowledge, ability as preachers, writers, debators, and educators. As far back as the 1920's these brethren had recognized a problem with "institutionalism" in the church, *which problem had not one thing to do in any form or fashion with the errors that came to be and continue to be known as "antism."* Brethren Allen and Boles were dead before the anti-orphan home and anti-cooperation brethren turned matters of an optional nature (expedients) into matters of obligation and thereby divided the Lord's church in the 1950's, which division continues to

this day.

As Wallace explained, when he used the word *institutionalism* in his 1939 sermon, he was referring to the societies and such like that developed in the Lord's church in the 19th century among those who in their departures from the divine pattern formed the apostate Christian Church. This is that with which Allen and Boles were concerned when they made their previously quoted comments.

The concern these brethren of yesteryear had about said topic continues to be a real concern today. In Bailey's brief article to follow he focuses on that which Allen, Boles, and Wallace dealt in their sermons and comments of many years ago — *institutionalism*. However, as Bailey shows in the following article, today we are in far greater peril from *institutionalism* as defined previously than was faced by said three late brethren in their time.

Today there is far less respect for Bible authority and much more Biblical ignorance in the church than existed three quarters of a century ago. With the growth of secularism,

materialism, and their attendant evils, members of the church, yes, even and especially elders and preachers, are unwilling to be questioned about why they believe what they do. If a question is raised about a certain work, it is more than likely met with disdain, no answer, and a concerted effort to vilify and silence the one(s) posing such pointed questions. With many, if one seeks to evaluate a cooperative work on the basis of God's Word, that person is considered a crank, a malcontent, a sorehead, a factionist, and one who opposes

good works. Yes, today certain brethren are following men and their institutions. Church members are judging what is right and wrong on the basis of personal friendships and how the world determines the worth of anything. Thus, with the preceding remarks, we invite you to thoughtfully read the following material.

—EDITOR



A PROBLEM OF LONG-STANDING IN THE CHURCH

Kent Bailey

The entire issue regarding the defense of Dave Miller is contingent on two factors: *power* and *control*. *The real issue is not that of cooperation and working together.* After more than fifty years of debates regarding the concept of church cooperation, many still do not understand the issues that are involved in the current controversy.

1. We do not oppose brethren either collectively or individually encouraging one another in a Scriptural work.
2. We do not seek to either discourage or destroy any work that is authorized by the New Testament.
3. We do not deny that one local church may financially assist from its treasury another local church in accomplishing the work that God intended for it to do.

The problem that has brought about controversy among brethren who at one time stood together goes back to the defense of a false teacher, namely Dave Miller; fueled by a desire by certain brethren to exert a control over local churches. We see this demonstrated in the following points:

1. A determination to control whatever particular effort is worthy of financial support by local churches.
2. The centralization of such efforts.
3. The control of preachers going out to seek congregations with which to work.
4. Opposition to any preacher or any local church that will not fall into line and submit to the powers that be.

This centralized control of preachers and local churches will not be satisfied to ignore the opposition in working around them. *The ultimate goal of this centralized effort is the total destruction of their opponents.* The entire basis of this movement is a pseudo-fellowship view that brought us the Unity in Diversity Movement.

A CASE IN POINT

MSOP continuously demonstrates that the purpose for their very existence is that of *power* and *control*. While the concept of a local church training men to preach the Gospel is certainly within the purview of the Scriptures, and while it is indeed according to the New Testament pattern for other local New Testament churches to give financial assistance to such an effort, it seems to me that a great many brethren have gone beyond the concept of local church cooperation and have accepted the unscriptural concept of church centralization.

Take a close look at what is referred to as BIG cooperative projects. *Again, the issue is not that of cooperation. The issue is that of centralization.* There are many today who are not satisfied with the concept of the locally organized autonomous, independent New Testament church. While these individuals profess to advocate such, it is not uncommon to find an individual or group of individuals starting a particular work, dress it up, and put it in a basket, label it "your baby," place it on the door step of the local church and then argue, "You have the obligation to financially support it. If you do not support it you are not as faithful as you ought to be." As the late brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr. used to state, "That is taxation without representation."

When specific works grow so large and powerful that they seek to control a group of preachers and local churches, they have outlived their usefulness. All of this humbugging by Curtis Cates, B. J. Clarke, and Keith Mosher at the 2006 Sunny Slope, Kentucky Lecture's Forum is just exactly that—humbugging! And any individuals or group of individuals that will be motivated to line up with that group demonstrates that either they are too dishonest to look at the facts, or are so cowardly that they are afraid of what they will discover by a close examination.

All of this Memphis, et al., humbuggery is designed to do nothing more than to intimidate and scare. It is amazing how certain persons will demonstrate their blatant dishonesty by purposely misapplying words. If Keith Mosher is as brave as he desires to appear (re. his conduct at Sunny Slope Lectures' Open Forum), then let him stand up and respond to precisely worded questions in addition to demonstrating where Dave Miller has been misrepresented by me or others who stand with me. When brethren have their political clout threatened it is amazing how riled up they become. Those brethren at MSOP (GBN included) and elsewhere need to be very careful. When one considers the direction in which they are moving regarding unity-in-diversity, they may end up having a big book-burning down in Memphis, and then host a dinner honoring Mac Deaver at some future letureship.

—124 Executive Meadows
Lenoir City, TN 37771
KBailey385@aol.com

COMPLETE EXCHANGE BETWEEN DUB MCCLISH AND BARRY GILREATH, SR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GBN

MCCLISH TO GBN

On February 26, 2005, I regretfully wrote the following e-mail message to the office of GOSPEL BROADCASTING NETWORK concerning the ad they had ordered for the March issue of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*:

Dear brethren:

I regret that we will not be able to repeat the Gospel Broadcast Network ad in the March issue of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*. From the first issue of our paper (January 2000), our advertising policy has included the following statement: "The editors and publishers of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL* are eager to advertise and publicize every endeavor that we deem to be in harmony with Truth and righteousness." I have very recently received word that you are planning to use some brethren to provide content for the Network's broadcasts whom *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL* cannot endorse through its pages, particularly brother Mack Lyon and one or more from the staff of Apologetics Press. If my information is incorrect concerning their participation in GBN, I will gladly stand corrected.

My purpose in writing is not to attempt to control or dictate your programming. Nor is that the purpose of my electing not to repeat the GBN ad. You brethren must decide whom/what you will use in your programming. I do fear that your use of the brethren I have mentioned above will prevent a number of brethren (me among them) from supporting your plans. Let me be clear: I do not know of any false doctrine taught by the brethren to whom I alluded above (except brother Dave Miller on the staff of Apologetics Press, who is the source of my problem with that organization). However, we teach by our behavior as well as by our tongues, and the aforementioned brethren are teaching the wrong message by associating with certain false teachers in such a way as to endorse them.

Yours for the one faith,
Dub McClish, Editor
THE GOSPEL JOURNAL

CATES-MCCLISH E-MAIL EXCHANGE RELATIVE TO GBN AD REFUSAL

Upon writing my e-mail message to the GBN office on February 26, 2005, informing them that I could not run their ad in *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*, I sent a copy of the message to Curtis the same day. I also called him that day (2/26) and told him I had turned down their ad. He was in full agreement in our phone conversation, which agreement he indicated in his e-mail message on March 2 (see below). On the phone he told me of additional concerns he had with GBN, especially

the Bank of Scotland life insurance program through which GBN hoped to reap considerable financial support. Curtis also told me he was not happy that Forest Hill was getting so deeply involved in GBN, and that he only hesitantly agreed to allow an evening presentation of the GBN plans during the upcoming MSOP Lectures, on the condition that Jim Dearman did not make an appeal for money.

From: THE GOSPEL JOURNAL <tgj@charter.net>

Date: Wed, 02 Mar 2005 10:37:04 -0500

To: <CCates3310@aol.com>

Subject: Re: GBN ad for TGJ

Curtis:

Thanks for the note and for the enjoyable phone visit Saturday. I have not heard one word of response from anyone at GBN. Nor has Mack Lyon responded.

Godspeed,
Dub

PS I called Sherry and talked with her about our TGJ dinner. She had already assumed we would have it and has told the caterers so. I like her!

on 3/2/05 10:30 AM, CCates3310@aol.com at
CCates3310@aol.com wrote:

Dear brother Dub:

I think your letter is a good one.

Our prayers are with sister Lavonne.

I appreciate you!

Curtis

MCCLISH TO TGJ BOARD AND DAVE WATSON

On March 20, 2005 (after writing Barry Gilreath, Sr., my lengthy letter on 3/17/05, explaining in detail my reasons for refusing the GBN ad), I sent an email message to all of the TGJ Board members and to Dave Watson, with the foregoing exchange between Gilreath and me pasted in the message and with my 3/17/05 letter to Gilreath attached. I did this so that all of them (not just Curtis, to whom I had already sent them) might see the basis of my turning down the GBN ad and that they might have all of the exchanges that took place on the subject. No Board member ever criticized me for refusing the GBN ad or for writing the March 17 letter to brother Gilreath.

GILREATH TO MCCLISH

Brother Barry Gilreath, Sr., addressed the following response to me by standard mail (I have keyed it in below, including His misspelling of my name). You will note that

he wrote on March 7, but mailed it to the *TGJ* Business Office in Cibolo, TX. I did not receive the forward from there until March 16. I must say that the 13-page questionnaire he enclosed, containing 93 questions (many of them with 2 or more parts, thus, actually making well over 100 questions) is impressive, but nonetheless, incomplete. Brother Gilreath's letter:

Dub McLish
C/o *The Gospel Journal*
P.O. Box 219
Cibolo, TX 78108-0219

March 7, 2005

Dear brother McLish:

Thank you for your input on potential speakers of GBN. I would appreciate your sending information on the specific problems you have with the two men you mentioned. We agree that the men used on the television network should be sound in the faith. The eldership at Highland wants to insure, to the best of our ability, that speakers for the network are faithful men. The enclosed questionnaire is required. We would like you to review these questions and give us any additional questions you would recommend. Let me thank you for the work you do in the kingdom and, especially, for *The Gospel Journal*.

Yours in Christ,

Barry Gilreath, Sr.
Elder and Executive Director, GBN
BGS:jrd

**MCCLISH TO GILREATH, TO WHICH
GILREATH NEVER RESPONDED
THE GOSPEL JOURNAL**

Dub McClish, Editor

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Website: thegospeljournal.org

March 17, 2005

Mr. Barry Gilreath, Sr.
Gospel Broadcast Network
P.O. Box 23604
Chattanooga, TN 37422

Dear brother Gilreath:

Thank you for your recent letter. Since it was sent originally to our Business Office (300 miles from me) instead of to my Editorial/Advertising Office, I received it only yesterday. Let me say first that I appreciate the spirit in which you wrote. I was sincere in my expression of regret (in my e-mail message of 2/26) at not being able to repeat the GBN ad in the pages of the March *GOSPEL JOURNAL*. (By the way, thank you for your kind comments on this journalistic effort.) In fact,

I very much regretted having even to write that message. I want you to understand that I do not consider myself to be in an adversarial position toward GBN, only in an inquiring and reticent one, at present. Because of the factors I have already mentioned (and some additional ones, as I will note later), I simply do not feel that I can at this stage "put all of my weight down" in favor of these plans. (I do not intend to imply that I have much "weight" to put down; the success or failure of your plans surely will not rest on my support or lack of it.) It grieves me sorely even to entertain these reservations, but my conscience at present requires me to do so. I assure you that I have not mounted any sort of campaign against GBN. I admire the vision of the eldership at Dalton and of other brethren working with you who are launching this project. Although I do not recall having met you or your fellow-elders, I have no reason whatsoever to doubt the nobility and purity of your motives or your soundness in the one faith. All of the principals connected with GBN whom I know, I consider to be faithful brethren.

As I stated in my earlier message, "I do not know of any false doctrine taught by..." either brother Mack Lyon or any of the staff of Apologetics Press (except brother Dave Miller, as I will later specify). Please note carefully that I am not making any accusation that the aforementioned brethren (with the exception noted) have taught, now teach, or will teach any false doctrine—on their respective programs or elsewhere. Moreover, from what I know of them (I do not know all of the brethren at Apologetics Press personally), I am confident that they will not do so (again, with the exception noted). I also stated in my earlier message wherein my real problem lies with these (and perhaps others) you might contemplate using on the air: "However, we teach by our behavior as well as by our tongues, and the aforementioned brethren are teaching the wrong message by associating with certain false teachers in such a way as to endorse them." Thus, the primary issue I raise is not concerning the faithfulness of the men themselves you contemplate using, but with the alliances some of them maintain and the implications of said alliances.

Now let me get to some specifics. At the risk of boring you, I reemphasize that I know of no doctrinal errors brother Lyon has ever taught or teaches on the "Search" program. However, I cannot see how his apparent amicable association with some men and institutions that are unsound does not amount to implied endorsement of false doctrine, apostasy, and Change-Agent hermeneutics. The very congregation that hosts the "Search" program (i.e., Edmond, OK, Church of Christ) is the campus church for Oklahoma Christian University. As you may know, OCU owns *The Christian Chronicle*, the major mouthpiece of liberalism in the church. The leadership of the congregation (including its "senior minister," its "staff" of six additional ministers [one female], and at least some elders) is closely allied with OCU and with the *Chronicle*. A case in point is Glover Shipp, one of the present Edmond elders, who, until his recent retirement, was the

Senior Editor of the *Chronicle*.

OCU's actions have given faithful brethren increasing concerns in recent years, especially in its immediate (and major) area of influence—Oklahoma and surrounding states. The hiring of Mike O'Neal, Vice Chancellor of Pepperdine University, to be OCU's fifth president in 2002, did not exactly instill confidence in the fidelity of the Board to the Old Paths. (One does not get to be the vice chancellor of a major university by opposing its core credo—theological ecumenism motivated by gross liberalism. "If brother O'Neal could accommodate the apostasy represented by PU on the West Coast, is it not also likely that he would bring to OCU those same blinders toward Change Agency?" some of us mused. Apparently, our musings were not unfounded.)

The 2004 OCU lectureship was so loaded with liberals (including one from Max Lucado's church) that widespread protests from concerned brethren (by the hundreds) occurred. In fact, the vast majority of the slate of speakers was so awful that Mack Lyon himself boycotted the lectureship (for which I have expressed my appreciation, by the way). However, although the school still had several notorious liberals on the lectureship again this year (e.g., Randy Harris, Mark Henderson, Don McLaughlin, Jim McGuiggan, Ronnie Norman), Mack (strangely to several) lifted his boycott and resumed his annual "Search" dinner there. When I inquired about this seemingly contradictory behavior, he told me that some OCU administrators assured him of their plans to do better and that the school was going to issue a public statement to this effect. OCU chose a strange way to implement this policy change in this year's lectureship, as indicated above. No public statement has yet been forthcoming from the school, concerning which Mack has expressed disappointment in our correspondence. But, it gets worse: One of OCU's graduate religion professors (Glen Pemberton) was exposed last year as a modernist, at least on the subject of Biblical inspiration. The administration (as ACU did almost 20 years ago with its evolutionist biology professor) chose to deny that he taught what he taught (although a student in his class provided a recording of Pemberton's teaching in his own voice) and has defended him.

The connections between the theological direction of the *Chronicle* and OCU are indisputable. Lynn McMillon is both Dean of the OCU College of Biblical Studies and President/CEO of the *Chronicle*. As dean, OCU's Lectureship falls under his oversight. I hardly see how he can attempt to put a conservative face on OCU's lectureship and/or religion department and not do something about the liberal complexion of the *Chronicle* (since he is in charge of both). On the other hand, if he keeps the *Chronicle* on its liberal loving track, he can hardly make any credible claim for moving OCU back to its founders' roots. Brother McMillon's wife, Joy, an Assoc. Ed. of the *Chronicle*, has also been closely connected with OCU at various times (as a teacher in the past and now in other roles). She has demonstrated a strong and open affinity for

liberalism. For example, Rubel Shelly has published numerous articles written by her in *Wineskins*. Further, Pepperdine awarded her its Distinguished Christian Service Award at its 2003 Spring Lectureship, citing her for "contributions to Christian education, Christian journalism, and mentoring of Christian young people." (And these ivory-tower academics almost go into "denial shock" when we accuse them of being "liberals." They must take us "ordinary" folk for abject fools!)

The foregoing information demonstrates the close ties the Edmond Church has with extremely liberal institutions nearby (i.e., OCU, the *Chronicle*). These factors make the congregation itself extremely suspect doctrinally. Furthermore, right along with the links on its Website (www.edcofc.org) to the "Search" program are links to OCU and the *Chronicle*, with no disclaimers I could find. Once more, in no way am I accusing—implicitly or explicitly—Mac Lyon of being a liberal. However, as a member of the Edmond Church (sponsor of "Search"), he is (I know not how else to say it) part of a congregation whose leadership endorses, tolerates, and encourages liberal and apostate causes and brethren. Brother Lyon circulates freely among them, and he cannot avoid being in a fellowship relationship with them. He apparently sees no incongruity in having "Search" listed on the same level as OCU and the *Chronicle* on the church's Website. Let me now summarize my problems with brother Lyon: (1) The congregation of which he is a member is closely allied with the liberalism-promoting *Christian Chronicle*. (2) The congregation of which he is a member is closely allied with OCU, whose President and Dean of the College of Biblical Studies apparently either see no problem in providing apostates an audience or are unable to recognize an apostate when they see one. (3) Brother Lyon is therefore a member of a liberal congregation and draws his livelihood from it. (4) Likewise, the "Search" program is sponsored by a congregation that is extremely tolerant of liberalism. Given these facts, although brother Lyon preaches the Truth on the "Search" program, his close relationship with so many negative elements tarnishes his otherwise good influence and reputation and those of the "Search" program. How can anyone work so closely with liberals (especially as brother Lyon does in the Edmond Church) without either being a hypocrite on the one hand or bidding them Godspeed on the other, or perhaps both? Perhaps the more pertinent question you brethren should consider is whether or not any baggage he may bring with him will become baggage for GBN. Others have already expressed to me similar and additional concerns regarding the use of "Search" on GBN.

As indicated above, my objections to the use of men at Apologetics Press are most certainly not aimed at all of those men. I have known Bert Thompson on a first-name and very amicable basis for more than twenty years and have never questioned the soundness of his doctrine. I know of others on the AP staff only by name, but certainly have no reason

to question their loyalty to God's Word. The problematic matter with AP relates to its hiring and unqualified endorsement of brother Dave Miller, who joined AP August 1, 2002. Before this time, he worked for several years in various capacities with the Brown Trail Church of Christ, the Brown Trail School of Preaching, and the Brown Trail-sponsored "Truth in Love" TV program in the area where I have lived for more than thirty years (near Fort Worth, TX). In 1990, as the preacher at Brown Trail, he helped plan and inaugurate the unscriptural "elder reaffirmation" practice there, which procedure the church employed that year (for documentation see my chapter in the Bellview Lectures book, *Leadership*, [Pensacola, FL: Bellview Church of Christ, 1997], pp. 83–103). He has never repented of that, and in fact, did not raise his voice against it when it was employed a second time in 2002, while he still worked there as director of the school. The "reaffirmation" procedures were executed in an effort to quiet serious internal church problems that revolved around brother Miller and brother Everett Chambers (see below), but they only intensified the problems, resulting in the loss of many members in both cases.

Additionally, Miller (along with the Brown Trail elders and preacher at the time, Maxie Boren) justified an unscriptural and deceptive "marriage" scheme in which one of his students participated. The student, Everett Chambers, a Jamaican, "married" (i.e., went through the ceremony and signed the marriage certificate) with a female relative who lived in the U.S. as a ploy for obtaining his "green card," allowing him to remain in this country. After achieving his goal by virtue of this "marriage," he promptly had the "marriage" annulled, having never intended to be the woman's actual husband. In spite of this situation, according to some of Miller's former associates at Brown Trail (including a former elder and a long-time fulltime instructor in the school), he not only accepted Chambers as a student, but later employed him as dean of students. Brother Miller's defense of this practice was that brother Chambers lacked prior "intent" concerning actual marriage, so it did not "count." What a "can of worms" such "reasoning" opens, hardly distinguishable from the Roman Catholic doctrine of "mental reservation." These, along with accusations (from faculty, students, and some of his elders) that Miller was extremely dictatorial and intimidating in his role of director eventually so effected the school that it lost all of its fulltime faculty and most of its students. These and related matters also so divided the Brown Trail eldership that three (those who could not agree with brother Miller's behavior) of the seven elders resigned. These matters also led to a division in the congregation, with approximately forty percent of the congregation leaving.

When brother Thompson announced he had employed Miller, some (including congregations and individuals) who had knowledge of these matters and who had long supported AP financially, brought these matters to Thompson's attention. He refused to consider seriously the evidence of the charges

against Miller, whereupon these accusing brethren reluctantly ceased their support of AP. Here we see a great irony: Brother Thompson has assumed the very same "deny and defend" posture toward Miller and his accusers which Thompson found so odious when ACU administrators assumed the same stance in 1986 concerning their evolutionist biology professor and his chief accuser (i.e., brother Thompson). Unless he has done so secretly, brother Miller has not repented of his error on the phony "marriage" he defended or of his active part in the elder "reaffirmation" procedure. The last time I checked, moving 700 miles and/or the passage of time do not assuage the guilt of one's sins or correct one's errors.

I know that men can be maligned and falsely charged. Anyone who has preached the Truth without compromise very long will be on the receiving end of such things somewhere along the way. However, the charges against brother Miller are rather widely and well known, especially in these parts, and are not mere hearsay or fabrications from one or more who have a vendetta. It is regrettable that AP has seemed determined to defend this brother at whatever cost. AP's embracing and defending him with no repentance on his part has tarnished its formerly sterling reputation for some and has given Miller credibility that he does not deserve. I admit that I am a bit puzzled as to why brother Miller has not been tapped for airtime on GBN. Surely, among the AP employees he is measurably the most qualified, with likely hundreds of hours of camera time to his credit. Could it be that AP did not offer his services for fear of the immediate protests such would provoke? Your Website indicates that brother Kyle Butt will be the AP staffer with a segment on GBN. I have never met this young man, but his writings indicate that he is very intelligent and strong in the faith. If you are going to use someone from AP anyway, however, I suggest you go ahead and take advantage of brother Miller's obvious talents and broadcast experience. I fail to see the difference in using brother Miller and in using brother Butt or another man from AP as long as all of the AP fellows treat brother Miller as if he has no doctrinal problems. Therefore, I question the use of someone from AP for about the same reason that I question the use of brother Lyon: In both cases, these brethren work hand in glove with and defend those who have doctrinal clouds over them.

I noticed in one of your newsletters on-line that brother Eddie Parrish and the "Truth in Love" program will also be on the schedule. As with brother Lyon and the AP fellows (except for Miller), I know of no doctrinal error that brother Parrish has ever taught or now teaches. Nor do I know of any doctrinal error that has ever been taught on the "Truth in Love" program. He did something a few years ago, however, that made many of us who know him (including some of his close associates) seriously question his judgment, maturity, and knowledge of the Scriptures. He voluntarily wrote brother Mac Deaver a letter, telling him that, while he did not agree with his speculations about the direct operation of the Holy

Spirit, he did not believe this issue was one over which fellowship should be severed. Predictably, Deaver pounced upon the opportunity to publish said letter in his *Biblical Notes Quarterly* in an effort to bolster his following. This action by brother Parrish shocked many who had formerly esteemed him highly. I do not know if he has changed his views on this subject. I do know that the present Brown Trail eldership has been very tolerant of brother Deaver and of some of his supporters. Brown Trail has thereby been supportive of the dangerous Holy Spirit doctrine Deaver has seemed determined to force upon the church the past eight or nine years. As I am sure you know, brother Parrish not only hosts the “Truth in Love” program, but is also the preacher at Brown Trail, as of last summer. This congregation once had an excellent reputation for standing for the Truth and for producing capable and strong preachers. With changes in leadership and personnel over the past fifteen or so years, however, the complexion (and direction) of the congregation has changed considerably. In connection with Miller, I mentioned that the church has twice used the elder “reaffirmation” process (invented by and widely used by liberal congregations). These were employed basically to get rid of certain elders, not by proving their lack of Scriptural qualifications, but by tallying a certain percentage of votes cast by the members who chose to participate in the arrangement. While brother Parrish was not employed by Brown Trail when either of these programs was executed, he moved there soon after the last one and was doubtless well familiar with the first one, being a graduate of the school. If he has any problem with what the Brown Trail Church did in either of these “reaffirmations,” he has not let anyone around here know it. A few months ago the Brown Trail elders issued an extremely weak, self-justifying “explanation” of their latest employment of this unscriptural scheme, but it was difficult to see any clear-cut repentance or acknowledgement of Scriptural violation in it. This congregation has been such an enigma, to say the least, over the past several years that many faithful brethren, both near and far, have not felt comfortable endorsing it or the school. It is further said that some who would have supported the “Truth in Love” did not feel that they could and some who once supported it have discontinued doing so because of these factors. While I certainly have nothing personal against brother Parrish (or any of the Brown Trail elders) in any way, their involvement in GBN will undoubtedly turn some brethren off on GBN itself.

I realize that some might argue that to make an issue of those with whom a man associates, when he himself is sound in the faith, is going too far. I believe it is a vital and valid issue, however. We indicate the strength of our convictions by our behavior as well as by our words. Our behavior is likely the stronger and more accurate indicator, in fact. When we extend our fellowship and tacit approval to men or institutions that have gone astray, we become partakers of their sins (2 John 10–11). We must decide at which degree of

compromise we must stop. The situation regarding brother Lyon illustrates these various degrees: If I know Mack Lyon, he would not think of endorsing such men as Randy Harris or Mark Henderson. Yet OCU and the *Chronicle* editors and reporters have no problem with these men. As I mentioned earlier, the Edmond Church is closely allied with OCU and the *Chronicle*. Mack Lyon is a member of the Edmond Church (sponsor of “Search” and of brother Lyon). Thus, while Lyon professes to utterly oppose liberalism, in practice he is endorsing it through the aforementioned links that take him to some of the most blatant apostates among us. It appears to me that if GBN uses him, it will be in the position of encouraging in deed that which it opposes in word— just one more link removed. I believe the same fellowship/endorsement principle applies in the circumstances involving the use of men from AP and brother Parrish.

I appreciate your enclosing the copy of the questionnaire that all proposed speakers on the program must complete, and complete satisfactorily. I read all of it, and the questions are well-worded and to the point. I applaud the Highland elders for taking this necessary measure. Since you asked for any suggestions of additional questions I might have, I offer the following for your consideration:

1. Check each school below that you would NOT recommend to Christian parents for their children’s undergraduate college education:

- Pepperdine University
- Abilene Christian University
- Lipscomb University
- Harding University
- Oklahoma Christian University
- Freed-Hardeman University
- Faulkner University
- Rochester College (formerly Michigan Christian College)
- Heritage Christian University (Florence, AL)
- Harding Graduate School of Religion
- Southern Christian University

Explain why you answered as you did

2. Would it be sinful to have spiritual fellowship with those who openly support liberals and apostates in the church, even though one did not agree with said liberalism or apostasy?

Yes ___ No ___ Not sure ___

3. Would it be sinful for a congregation to implement the elder “reaffirmation/reconfirmation” procedure?

Yes ___ No ___ Not sure ___

4. Would it be sinful to have spiritual fellowship with one who has taught and still holds that the “reaffirmation-reconfirmation” of elders is Scripturally authorized, although the one in error is otherwise doctrinally sound?

Yes ___ No ___ Not sure ___

5. Would it be sinful to dissolve a marriage on grounds of a

prior “lack of intent” to actually be married?

Yes ___ No ___ Not sure ___

6. Would it be sinful to have spiritual fellowship with one who has taught and still holds that one may Scripturally dissolve a marriage on grounds of a prior “lack of intent,” although the one in error is otherwise doctrinally sound?

Yes ___ No ___ Not sure ___

7. Do you consider yourself to be in fellowship with such Change Agents in the church as Rubel Shelly, Carroll Osburn, Royce Money, Alton Howard, Lynn Anderson, Steve Flatt, Mike Cope, Douglas Foster, Marvin Phillips, Joe Beam, Rick Atchley, Randy Harris, and F. LaGard Smith?

Yes ___ No ___ Not sure ___

8. Is the annual “Tulsa Soul-Winning Workshop” in Tulsa, OK, a good work that builds up the kingdom?

Yes ___ No ___ Not sure ___

9. Does the Holy Spirit directly or immediately—in addition to His Word—provide strength and wisdom for Christians?

Yes ___ No ___ Not sure ___

10. Does the Holy Spirit directly or immediately—in addition to His Word—enable Christians to bear spiritual fruit?

Yes ___ No ___ Not sure ___

I have one other question relating to GBN involving somewhat of a practical problem: When people respond to the broadcasts, will they be referred to the nearest group that has “Church of Christ” on its building, regardless of the congregation’s soundness or lack thereof? Will there be some mechanism in place to direct them to a faithful congregation and/or will faithful congregations be put in touch with such inquiring individuals? I realize that it will be humanly impossible to do such follow-up work perfectly, and that in many cases people will respond (I trust) where no congregation even exists. Will GBN follow up on such contacts through the mail or by other means? Will GBN solicit and/or accept funds from liberal congregations? If such contributions are accepted, will GBN feel an obligation to send respondents to contributing liberal congregations?

I apologize for writing at such length. I would not have been so verbose, but I wanted you to know not only that my concerns are real about some of your planned programming, but also the reasons and rationale for those concerns. The task you brethren have undertaken is a daunting one. I can only imagine all of the details you are having to work through in the start-up process. I know that you are seeking programming sufficient to fill all of those hours and days that will constitute 24/7 airtime. I pray that you will not lower the standards one iota in order to do so. It would be far better to have some “down time” than to fill the time with questionable programming. Thank you for considering my questions, concerns, and suggestions.

Yours in the one faith,

s/Dub McClish

Dub McClish, Editor
THE GOSPEL JOURNAL



1 Kings 18:16b-17

“And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?”

And he answered, I have not troubled Israel, but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim”

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E-MAIL EXCHANGES BETWEEN DUB MCCLISH AND CURTIS CATES WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS

Compiled by

Dub McClish

**Dub McClish's e-mail to Curtis Cates,
June 10, 2005:**

Dear brother:

I hope you had a good meeting at Mablevale. I know you are aware of all of the stir about the AP/Bert Thompson scandal. I have sent you and the other TGJ Board Members a summary of the information that has come to me, along with some of my reactions to that information. I did not put this together for distribution, but to make notes on these sad events while they were fresh. I have sent my summary to only a very few, with the request that they not distribute it. I am not on any sort of crusade to hurt AP. In fact, I believe it to be a good and necessary work. However, there is no way that I can support AP under the present circumstances, for with Dave Miller at its head, **“there is death in the pot”** as far as I am concerned. I note in the “explanation packet” that AP has mailed to supporters (past and present) that your name and the name of Joseph Meador appear on the “Statement of Support” list.... I know you will correct me if I am wrong, but I have difficulty believing that either you or Joseph (I know you can't speak for him) would have signed on to this statement had you known Dave Miller would be the new head of AP.

I am confident that you are aware that Miller was one of the principals (he was Brown Trail's preacher at the time) who pushed Brown Trail's first elder reaffirmation debacle in 1990, which I documented fully in my chapter in the 1997 Bellview book. He was still there when Brown Trail did its second elder reaffirmation in 2002, and although he was not the Brown Trail preacher by this time (he was Director of the SOP), Dave defended its recurrence. (Marvin Weir documents Dave's involvement in his article in *TGJ*, October 2002, pp. 25–26.) If Dave has changed his tune concerning these procedures, he has kept it very quiet. He has now had several years in which to do so.

Yet he **did not** keep his support of them quiet at all. Further, Dave defended the mock marriage of a Jamaican student to a cousin, the purpose of which was to gain entry to and residency privileges in the U.S., fully intending to legally dissolve the marriage upon gaining entry and resident status, **which he did** (D. Brown wrote a lengthy article in *CFTF*, April 2004, pp. 7–10, describing and exposing that which Everett Chambers did and which Dave defended, even in BTSOP classes, among other places). Miller even promoted Chambers to be his assistant director of the school, which act produced all kinds of turmoil and almost destroyed the school

altogether. (Incidentally, Chambers drives up from Fort Worth and preaches for a little splinter group about five miles north of Denton.) Before he moved on and became Bert's great prize catch for AP, Dave ended up having secret meetings with only a few of the elders and engineered the ouster of those who dared question him. These form the “legacy” of Dave's work in our area that hang as a heavy cloud over what good he did in the twelve or thirteen years he was at Brown Trail. I know that Joseph was well aware of Dave's behavior near the close of his tenure at Brown Trail, because some of the Brown Trail folk (including at least one BTSOP instructor) talked to him about it, and Joseph discussed these matters freely with me at the time they were occurring. If memory serves me, Joseph accepted some of the BT students who left BTSOP in disgust over these matters.

All who dared question Bert about Dave Miller's hiring were shot down as dodos who did not know what they were talking about, or worse, personal enemies just trying to make trouble for him and Dave. Ironically, Bert treated all such querists in the same way ACU treated him and Wayne Jackson in 1986 when they blew the whistle on the evolution being taught in the biology department: Deny, defend, and try to discredit the accusers and/or witnesses. Bert's egomania really came out in his responses (one would have to be an egomaniac to believe that he could engage in homosexual behavior for 20 years under the delusion that he was above being caught or exposed). In the AP explanation packet, Dave Miller's letter admitted that AP is in a financial bind and has been doing “deficit spending”...“for months.” I know at least one reason that they are in a financial crunch. I can

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add up approximately \$1,000.00 per month in support that AP lost almost immediately upon the hiring of Dave Miller, some from congregations and some from individuals. I have already been told of one congregation and of two individuals who stuck with AP in spite of Dave's hiring, but who cannot abide his being "ED" of AP, so they have summarily ceased their support. I fully expect there are already and will be several more. Dave's appointment is the third big blow to AP in as many years. The first was Miller's hiring. The second is Bert's "personal sins" and removal. The third is Dave's elevation to "ED." Actually, there is a fourth blow: The "explanation packets" will hurt instead of helping AP. In the first place, the news of Miller's appointment will hurt them. In the second place, the Palm Beach Lake elders and AP chose to stone-wall and tip-toe, and I believe their letters will raise more questions than they satisfy. It may not be significant, but I think it is very interesting, to say the least, that the names of those on the AP Board **ARE NOT** listed on the new AP letterhead the packet contained. However, they do appear on the AP Website. Of the three men on the Board, **Dave Miller is one of them.**

Now I am in a bit of a quandary. *TGJ* has carried an expose of some of Dave Miller's serious doctrinal problems. As editor, I stand behind this expose because I know it to be factual. All kinds of pressure was put on me by some of my then fellow elders [at Pearl St.] to write a statement of disclaimer concerning the article, which I steadfastly refused.

The Brown Trail elders also hounded me, with more than one phone call from one of them, both to me and to Joe Chism [one of the Pearl St. elders], demanding a meeting of the elderships or at least with me, in attempt to force a retraction. Again, I withstood them all because I knew what Marvin wrote was the truth. While the material exposing Dave Miller's weird (and convenient) MDR position relative to Everett Chambers did not appear in *TGJ*, nonetheless, it is a part of the public record in *CFTF*. I have not kept it a secret that I believe Dave Miller is a false teacher. So, on one hand, we have the editor of *TGJ* involved in opposing Miller and unable to support AP under his direction, but on the other hand we have the President and Vice-President of *TGJ*'s Board appearing to endorse Miller by signing the "Statement of Support." This circumstance is one of apparent contradiction, as you can see, and it will doubtless become apparent to others, if it has not already. In fact, if one thinks about it very much, the appearance of yours and Joseph's names on the "support" statement implies that brethren should ignore what *TGJ*'s editor has printed about Dave Miller's conduct and doctrine. I have not discussed this seeming contradiction with other Board members, except Ken. When the news of the AP scandal first broke, several days before Miller's appointment was known, Ken talked with me about it and indicated that he does not favor even handling any more AP books when the present stock is sold. AP sent the Schertz elders a packet because the church was supporting AP on a monthly basis.

Upon learning of the appointment of Dave Miller and its oblique descriptions of what had occurred involving Bert, the Schertz treasurer was instructed to cease any further support immediately. I therefore know that he cannot support AP or urge others to with Miller at its head. In the packet, Ken saw yours and Joseph's names on the support statement, of course. Ken is aware that I am writing you about these matters. What shall we do about this apparent difference of opinion in our ranks?

Your friend and brother,

Dub

Curtis Cates e-mail to Dub McClish, June 11, 2005:

Dear brother Dub:

Thank you for yesterday's email. I am answering quickly before heading to Chattanooga to start a gospel meeting in the morning at Ooltewah. I thought the meeting at Mabelvale went well. Thanks! I trust that sister Lavonne is doing well; she is constantly in our prayers.

The actions of Bert Thompson, evidently for some time, are tragic beyond description for him and his family, for those directly affected, and for the Cause of Christ. When one has a high profile and influence, the tragedy is greatly exacerbated. The way of the transgressor is indeed hard. I fear its effects will be felt for many years. I am deeply saddened about it.

When I was contacted about trying to save Apologet-

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ics Press, I had already heard about the nature of the sins of brother Thompson; however, I knew nothing of what the future organization might be. I was simply told that they were going to try to save AP, that the eldership of Palm Beach Lakes were on top of things, and that they hoped that I might be willing to sign my name to the statement you have seen. Since I did—and do—hope AP can continue as a viable work, I gave them permission to use my name.

I guess my experience in learning of the events leading up to the dismissal of Bert, etc., was different from yours. I did not get the idea that they were trying to cover up anything, although those from whom I heard used the expected discretion in discussing it. I also was told that Bert had made a confession at Panama Street, but that they deemed it expedient that discretion be used in anything going into print, especially on the internet, so that the enemies of truth [who might greatly rejoice in and get mileage from these events] might not use these things to blast those truths which have been propagated and defended by AP. [That may explain, in part, the reticence of some to go into details, as I understand it.]

Brother Dub, several of our former students are connected with AP, Eric Lyons and Michael Cortez, men in whom I have great confidence. Relative to Dave, I cannot defend anything in which he has been involved which is wrong; I cannot do that in myself. I had been told by brother Keith Mosher that he asked brother Dave at Pulaski this year at the lectures about the re-affirmation of elders, and that Dave told him that was a “mistake.” So, I take it that he would not now sanction such. [Perhaps it would be very helpful for him to make that known.]. Incidentally, several times, brother Dave has written or talked to me since he got into Montgomery, asking me what my thoughts were on...or how I would answer regarding...or what my position is on...some issue—which I felt was very positive. But, I had no idea what his position would be at AP. I take it (according to their web site) that he is now serving as interim director. I do think that his time in Montgomery has been a growing experience for him; that is my personal impression.

I, like you, see the great need for AP, and I have great confidence in brethren Lyons and Cortez; Brad Harrub has impressed me favorably, as well as have some others connected with AP. I learned that he had been re-hired. I also have confidence in the Palm Beach Lakes elders, who oversee AP, and I have confidence in brother Frank Chesser, a trusted friend, and Panama Street, whom I have known for five decades. These things impacted my desire to help save AP, and I thought that the very fact that Dave called me and asked me to sign was positive.

Dear friend, I pray that this matter will not serve to affect adversely the loving, close relationship of those of us who serve on the Board and on the Editorial Staff of THE GOSPEL JOURNAL. “We be brethren.” “This too shall pass,” and we shall fight greater battles....

Godspeed, brother Dub. Sincere regards to sister Lavonne.

I appreciate you.

Fraternally, Curtis

Dub McClish e-mail to Curtis Cates, June 11, 2005:

Dear Curtis:

Thanks for your prompt reply.... Please be assured that these matters have not affected my esteem and appreciation for you, and, as far as I am concerned, I trust that they will not effect my relationship with other Board Members. I hope that I said nothing in my message to you to leave the impression that they had/will. My great concerns were/are two:

1. Dave Miller’s directorship of AP.
2. More particularly, the questions some will ask about TGJ’s President and Vice-president’s implied endorsement of Dave Miller, whom *TGJ* has identified as propagating error.

I am glad to hear that Dave has sought your advice and counsel. I hate to appear overly suspicious, but what better way to deflect what was said in the pages of *TGJ* about him than to seek counsel from the President of TGJ’s Board? Keith told me at Bristol that he had visited with Dave at Pulaski, and that Dave had said he “made a mistake” regarding the reaffirmation business. I was glad to hear that admission, but, as we both know, that which has been shouted from the rooftops cannot be corrected in a corner. If possible, Dave’s MDR position relative to Everett Chambers is more damning than his propagation and defense of the elder reevaluation error.

I know Eric, but not as well as you do. I know him mainly

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• • • • •

as the son of Cliff and Marty, both of whom I love dearly, of course. I have been well impressed with him also, my only slight disappointment's being that he somehow felt compelled to deny Dowell Flatt's advocacy of the Q theory when it was exposed a couple of years ago. I don't know Michael Cortez or Brad Harrub, although I have been well impressed with the things Brad has written. It seems passing strange that Brad, who has the PhD in a field of science and who (I believe) had seniority on the AP staff, would be passed over even as "Interim Executive Director" in favor of one who has a PhD in a field of religion....

I also have confidence in and appreciate Frank Chesser, who I know, but not as well or as long as you. What is so strange to me is that there seems to be almost a conspiracy, for whatever reason, among AP principals (including Frank) to reject out of hand even a consideration that accusations against Dave might have some credibility. Bert reacted extremely harshly to such, and even termed *TGJ* "a yellow rag" in correspondence with Marvin Weir concerning Dave's doctrinal aberrations. Frank has apparently decided to "observe the passover" concerning any such information, as well. I know he has been given such and I know that when I mentioned Dave's "baggage" two weeks ago in our phone conversation he made no response whatsoever. When Wayne Jackson and I were discussing these matters about 10 days ago, I mentioned Dave's problems without elaborating, and he simply responded that he knew nothing about any of that. In one e-mail exchange with Eric over the Flatt stuff, Eric admitted that AP had received some criticism of the hiring of Dave, but he indicated it was "very little," or words to that effect. Obviously, the AP staff dismissed all such with "a wave of the hand." I don't know any of the Palm Beach Lakes elders. However, if they allowed Bert to "talk his way out of" the homosexual charges, as Wayne Jackson put it to me—the very reason Wayne said Eastern Meadows withdrew its oversight of AP—then it seems not very likely they would listen to any accusations of "mere" doctrinal problems in their new "Executive Director." Several of us out here are nonplused concerning why brethren seem bent on defending Dave Miller. The tragedy of all of this is that, if Dave's errors are ever fully exposed and brethren lose confidence in him, it could easily prove to be the dagger to the heart of AP. Again, I just don't understand why these brethren in charge of AP (both the board and the elders [and some of us are a bit puzzled about which of these groups really is in charge and to whom AP's operations are accountable]) seem determined to give Dave Miller a free pass.

I didn't mean to write this much. I pray for you a safe journey to and a great meeting in Chattanooga.

Your friend and brother in the greatest cause,

Dub

PS Perhaps we will know more about all of this by the time of our meeting in July.

SOME OBSERVATIONS

Note the dates on these e-mail messages: June 10–11, 2005. As soon as I saw the names of Curtis Cates and Joseph Meador on the AP "Statement of Support" list, I expressed my concern to Curtis. Curtis asked me to keep his note of June 11 confidential, and I initially agreed to do so (I edited these and a few other extraneous comments from the messages, as indicated by ellipsis dots). However, I later concluded that the right of brethren to know that he had already begun defending Dave Miller as early as June 11, 2005, superseded maintaining secrecy and shielding him from the searchlight of truth in this case. I reached this conclusion on the following bases:

1. My understanding of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:15–17 concerning approaching an offending brother is that, if when he is told of his fault, he repents, the matter need go no further—it should remain undisclosed. However, if he will not repent, the Lord said that the brother's offense was eventually to be told to the church. I approached Curtis in my e-mail messages concerning his name on the AP "Statement of Support," a matter in which he was culpable, letting him know that I was perplexed, confused, yea offended, by it (I believe the Lord and all right-thinking brethren were also offended by it). Had he been willing to repent of his offense, I would never have disclosed our messages. However, instead of repenting, he defended his sinful behavior. I then decided, as the Lord decreed, I should make his compromise known to "the church," hoping he might be moved thereby to repentance. Although a host of brethren have urged his repentance he has continued to deny his sinful compromise. I would have been complicit with his sin had I sought to conceal his defense of a false teacher.
2. Curtis indicated in his June 11, 2005, e-mail message to me that he did not know Dave Miller was going to be appointed the new Executive Director of AP at the time Miller solicited his name for the AP "Statement of Support." This statement implied that, had he known it, he might not have signed it. (If this was not his intended

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implication in saying that he did not know what the “future organization” of AP would be when he gave his name to its support, I can’t imagine what he meant by it.) If Dave Miller’s errors and if Miller’s being appointed AP’s Executive Director had made any difference at all to Curtis, he (as any of the 60 men who signed the AP statement) could easily write and publish a disclaimer to the effect that as long as Dave Miller is at AP, he could have no fellowship with that institution and would not support it. Instead, the behavior/attitude of Curtis (and his 59 cohorts) toward Miller and AP reminds me of the Corinthians’ behavior/attitude toward the incestuous brother among them, until Paul got hold of them: **“And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you”** (1 Cor. 5:2). Would that fornicating brother have ever repented had they not rebuked and withdrawn from him? No wonder Miller has not repented. A great number of brethren have chosen to defend, endorse, and continue to use him **in spite of his error**. Would to God Paul could “get hold of” those who are so “puffed up” with their own pride that they are determined to give this erring brother a free pass.

3. Curtis revealed his initial fellowship compromise relating to Dave Miller in the fact that he was willing to converse freely and congenially with him and apparently discuss various Biblical issues and brotherhood situations with him from the time he became an employee of AP (2002). Curtis well knew all of that time (actually from many years earlier) that Miller had taught and practiced error and had been a primary factor in two major divisions in the Brown Trail congregation. However, Curtis gave no indication that he even once hinted to Dave in any of these conversations that he needed to repent. It should not have mattered whether or not Miller was Executive Director of AP. Miller’s being on the staff as a writer or speaker brought Bert Thompson (who angrily opposed Miller’s critics when Thompson hired Miller) and all of the other AP staff members into fellowship with him and his errors. Many brethren ceased their financial support and other avenues of fellowship with AP when Miller went there. Curtis apparently took his first step of compromise on fellowship regarding Miller in 2002 because of the two MSOP alumni who were on the staff (as mentioned in his 6/11/05 message above). He should have tried to use his influence on them to alert them to their fellowship compromises when Miller joined AP. Instead, their compromise with Miller at AP apparently influenced Curtis to compromise toward Miller and praise the two alumni. A relevant question: “Do these examples (concerning fellowship with Dave Miller) of Curtis and of the MSOP alumni who work at AP represent what MSOP students are being taught on the NT doctrine of fellowship?”

4. Note Curtis’s admission of his close and trusted friendship with Frank Chesser and Panama St. in Montgomery, where the Millers, Thompsons, and other AP staff were/are members. Ironically, at the time I stated (in my 6/11/05 message to Curtis) that I had confidence in Frank Chesser, I was unaware that he was even capable of writing such a vituperative and malicious letter to anyone, as was the one he wrote to me (and circulated to “hundreds”). He dated his letter June 17, 2005, so he was conceivably already working on it at the very time I was expressing my genuine (albeit terribly misplaced) confidence in him to Curtis. As it turned out, Curtis apparently thought his vicious attack was wholly justified. Doubtless, Chesser’s letter and his long-term friendship with him had considerable bearing on Curtis’s turning on me with such passion. I pointed out in the meeting of the TGJ Board at which Dave Watson and I “resigned,” that, by his action, Curtis and the Board was handing my head to Frank Chesser on a silver platter.

5. Curtis’s statement that he “cannot defend anything in which he [Miller] has been involved which is wrong” is utterly disingenuous. He knows (and he knows that others know) that this implication is transparently false. At the time Curtis made this statement, he knew of at least two fatal errors Miller had advocated. (He made this same statement in the presence of all of TGJ Board and Dave Watson in the meeting in which Dave Watson and I were ousted [7/20/05].) At the very time he made the statement, he had already chosen to ignore Miller’s

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—Dub and Lavonne McClish



errors. Moreover, as early as September 2005, Curtis (along with the new Director of MSOP, Bobby Liddell) began **defending** Miller and claiming that the elder r/r program at Brown Trail was justified and authorized as a mere expedient. Note the information below in which I personally exposed brother Miller's errors numerous times, with which exposures Curtis was well familiar over a period of many years.

6. Although I did not know it at the time, Keith Mosher's claim that Miller had said his part in the elder r/r procedure was "a mistake" (which Moser not only told Curtis, but me and others as well) turned out to be baseless hearsay. Miller subsequently told some who called him that he does not recall making any such statement and that he would repeat the elder r/r procedure again, if necessary.

These e-mail messages were exchanged a **full five weeks** before I was forced to resign as Editor of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL* on July 20, 2005. Curtis was present at Bellview when I delivered my lecture on the elder reaffirmation procedure in 1997, in which I implicated Dave Miller and Brown Trail (in fact we both spoke on the same day). He praised me for the lecture. Further, when we ran Marvin Weir's article in the October 2002 issue of *TGJ*, which implicated Miller and Brown Trail in a second elder reaffirmation program in April 2002, if Curtis had any criticism of that article, I never heard a word about it. One Board member (I do not recall which one) read the entire issue in advance of publication (as one did every issue) and had not the slightest objection to any of its content. The "meeting in July" referred to in my 6/11/05 PS above was scheduled in March of 2005 and was originally intended to be a relaxed and enjoyable planning meeting for all of TGJ Board and Editors. Instead, removal of *TGJ* Editors was its focus and outcome. There is no doubt in the minds of those privy to these matters (including Michael Hatcher, TGJ Board Secretary, who resigned from the Board over my departure as Editor) that my questioning Curtis Cates about his implicit support of Dave Miller in the AP "Statement of Support" played a large part in moving Curtis to convince the Board that I must be replaced. Note his attempts to excuse and defend Dave Miller in his message of June 11 above.

My questions to him concerning Dave Miller forced him to choose between Miller (and Curtis's host of friends in Montgomery, AL) and his Editor. He made it very clear in the TGJ Board meetings of July 19–20, 2005, that he valued Dave Miller and AP more than he did me. He has steadfastly defended Dave Miller ever since. Curtis (with others) is apparently employing (as a "talking point") the assertion that I had not opposed, exposed, marked, or withdrawn from Dave Miller as a false teacher until **after** I was ousted from *TGJ*. Brother B.J. Clark has used the date, "August 2005," as the time at which I became so concerned with Dave Miller's errors. He doubtless based this date on my conversation with him at Power Lectures in early August 2005, begging him to cancel his appearance on the "Polishing the Pulpit" program, which occurred the following month. His father, brother Ted Clark, told me later that he had done the same, and neither of us knew the other had done so until after the fact. As many know, B.J. rejected the pleas of both of us. While it may be true that B.J. was ignorant of my objections to Dave Miller before I thus approached him, it is not true that my appeal to him was my first expression of concern relating to Miller or that I had not previously marked him. Whether brother Clark made his statement in ignorance or not, his assertion is patently false, as the list below amply indicates. It is beyond doubt that Curtis (and at least some others who are making this silly assertion) **knows** it is false:

1. I, along with five or six others, first expressed my concerns in response to a letter from Goebel Music on May 23, 1990, a **full sixteen years** before I was ousted by TGJ Board. Goebel had witnessed the reaffirmation/reconfirmation procedure at Brown Trail, was concerned about it, and wrote to several of us for our reaction to it. (These letters and lengthy quotes from them are documented in my chapter in the 1997 Bellview Lectureship book, *Leadership*.)
2. I then exposed the elder r/r program as practiced by Brown Trail (and marked Dave Miller for his principal part in promoting it) in my lecture at the Bellview Lectures in June 1997, a **full eight years** before July 2005.
3. As Editor of *TGJ*, I approved the article by Marvin Weir in the October 2002 issue of *TGJ*, in which he

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named Dave Miller as one who approved Brown Trail's 2002 elder reaffirmation procedure. This public marking occurred a **full three years** before TGJ Board replaced me.

4. I rejected an order for a full-page ad in *TGJ* from the Gospel Broadcasting Network in an e-mail message on February 26, 2005. In response, Barry Gilreath, Sr., Executive Director of GBN, inquired concerning my specific reasons for the rejection (03/07/05). I wrote a detailed response to brother Gilreath on March 17, 2005, explaining the rejections, one of which was Dave Miller and his errors. Not only did Curtis not criticize my rejection of the ad, he applauded by email (3/2/05). I sent all of the correspondence in this exchange to each of TGJ Board members. Not one of them had any word of criticism of either the rejection or of my basis of rejecting the ad, including the long, detailed letter in which I pointedly referred to Dave Miller's errors. Note that this exchange took place **almost five months** before I was replaced as Editor of *TGJ*—and Curtis knows this well. (Incidentally, Barry Gilreath, Sr., has still not responded to my March 17, 2005 letter.)

5. As my e-mail exchange with Curtis (reproduced above) demonstrates, a **full five weeks** before I had any inkling I would be ousted as *TGJ*'s Editor, I contacted Curtis with my concerns about his implicit support of Dave Miller, only to see Curtis defend Miller in his reply.

6. Consistent with my marking and exposure of Dave Miller **before** I left *TGJ*, I have continued to oppose and expose Dave Miller's errors **since** departing *TGJ*.

Curtis is the one who has changed in his attitude toward Dave Miller. Here are the facts of the matter: Until the AP scandal broke (upon which Dave Miller was elevated to Executive Director as Bert Thompson's replacement), Curtis apparently realized that Dave Miller had involved himself in erroneous doctrine and practice, of which he had not repented. Curtis therefore rightly agreed with every exposure of Dave Miller's errors of which I am aware. The "tipping point" for Curtis regarding Dave Miller came when Curtis's loyalty to AP (and some of his ex-students who are AP employees and friends, such as Frank Chesser) clouded his concept of Truth, error, and fellowship. In order to support AP he was forced to accept an impenitent false teacher as its director. For more than a year now, Curtis has not only accepted Dave Miller, but he has defended him. Had I decided to sweep Miller's errors under the rug and hop on the AP bandwagon, doubtless I would still be Editor of *TGJ*. I repeat: Curtis is the one who has changed his attitude toward Dave Miller and his errors; I have not.

—908 Imperial Dr.
Denton, TX 76209
tgj@charter.net
March 27, 2007

In 1994 Garland Elkins wrote:

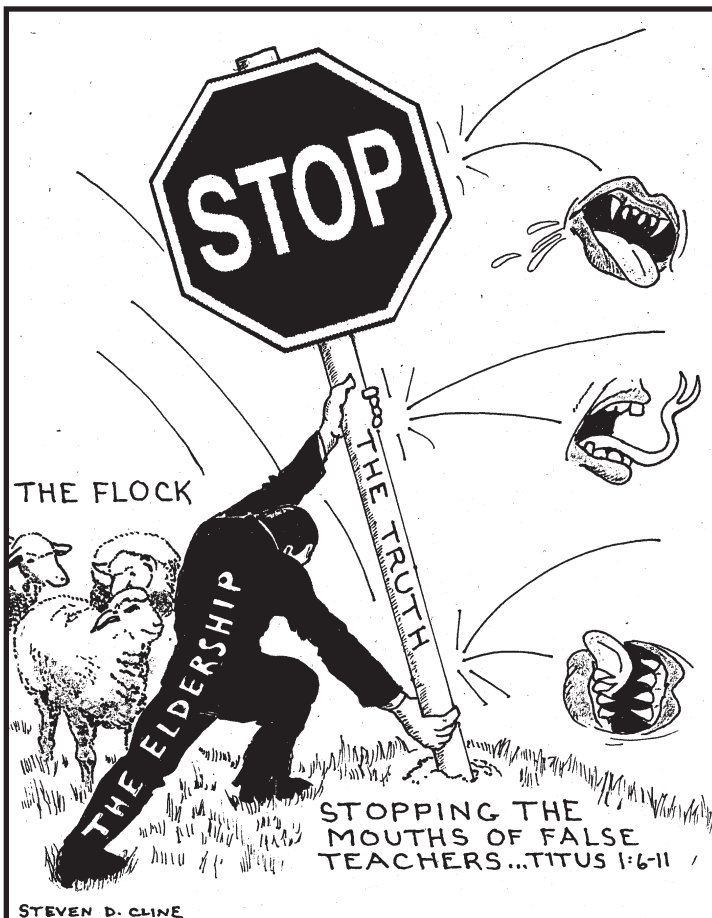
...Many false teachers seek to remain in the fellowship of the church by demanding that they not only be permitted to teach their error, but also that they be granted immunity from exposure. They "**wrest**" (2 Pet. 3:16) the passages in Matt. 18:15-17. Thus, "**by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent**" (Rom. 16:18, ASV)

The truth is that Matt. 18:15-17 applies to a matter between brethren having to do with a personal matter, and is not dealing with the public teaching of a false teacher. If Matt. 18:15-17 forbade the exposure of the public teaching of false doctrine, then, if a true gospel preacher heard such teaching and was offered the opportunity to arise and refute it, he could not do so! Any view of Matthew 18:15-17 that would permit a heretic to teach error publicly, but forbid a public answer immediately, is absurd! Such a view would grant immunity to false teachers!

Paul knew what Matt. 18-15-17 taught, and yet he wrote, "**Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear**" (1 Tim. 5:20, ASV). He made public, for all time, the sins of Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20). He even publicly exposed Peter's error at Antioch (Gal. 2)... [Changes in the Church of Christ, "Changing Attitudes Toward Fellowship," (Bobby Liddell, Ed., 1994 Bellview Church of Christ Lecs., Pensacola, FL), p. 161.]

In view of the truth bro. Elkins taught in 1994, how in all good conscience can he extend fellowship to those who are in fellowship with the false teachers Dave Miller and Stan Crowley in 2007? What good is accomplished by complying with 1 Tim. 5:20, but then disobeying 2 John 8-11?

—EDITOR



Directory of Churches...

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Holly Pond—Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (256) 796-6802, (205) 429-2026.

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-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 Hartbarger, Evangelist, (407) 656-2516, ocoechurchofchrist@yahoo.com, www.ocoeccoc.org.

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.

-Georgia-

Cartersville—Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris Pkwy NW 30120-4222. 770-382-6775, www.cartersvillechurchofchrist.org. Sun. 10, 11a.m., 6:30 p.m. Wed. 7:30 p.m. Bobby D. Gayton, evangelist- email: bdgayton@juno.com.

-North Carolina-

Rocky Mount—Scheffield Drive Church of Christ, 3309 Scheffield Dr., Rocky Mount, NC 27802 (252) 937-7997.

-Oklahoma-

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: lawson@starnetok.net.

- Tennessee-

Lenoir City—Lenoir City Church of Christ, 1280 Simpson Road West, P.O. Box 292 Lenoir City, TN 37771 . Sun. 9:30, 10:30AM, 6:00PM, Wed. 7:00PM., Kent Bailey, Evangelist Tel: 865-986-3223 or 865-986-5698).

Murfreesboro—Church of Christ, 837 Esther Lane, Murfreesboro, TN, Sun. Bible class 9:00 a.m., Worship 10:00 a.m., Fellowship meal 11:00 a.m., Devotional 12:00 p.m.; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. For directions and other information please visit our website at www.murfreesborochurchofchrist.org. evangelists: Gary Grizzell and Steve Yeatts.

-Texas-

Denton area—Northpoint Church of Christ, 5101 E. University Dr. (Greenbelt Business Park). Mailing address: Northpoint Church of Christ, Greenbelt Business Park, 5101 E. University Dr., Box 12, Denton, TX 76208. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 6:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: 940.323.9797; tgj@charter.net.

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., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, evangelist. Home of the Spring Contending for the Faith Lectures beginning the last Sunday in February. www.churchesofchrist.com.

Hubbard—105 NE 6th St., Hubbard, TX 76648, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Delbert J. Goines; DJGoines@Valornet.com.

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

Hurst (Fort Worth area)—Northeast Church of Christ, 1313 Karla Dr., P.O. Box 85, Hurst, TX 76053. Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. (817) 282-3239.

New Braunfels—1130 Hwy. 306, 1.5 miles west of I-35. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7 p.m. Lynn Parker, evangelist. (830) 625-9367. www.nbchurchofchrist.com.

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

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