

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

FELLOWSHIP PRACTICES

David P. Brown

Writing in the March 2013 *Defender*, Michael Hatcher, editor, made the following salient observations in a timely and much needed article then as now:

A TANGLED WEB OF FELLOWSHIPING ERROR

A good illustration of the fellowship problem has recently been seen. The website Brotherhood News lists as its publisher, editor, Randal Matheny. He recently wrote about an article (one which most all would agree with) appearing on the website *Biblical Notes*. “This website is the work of Weylan Deaver and the article was written by him.” Randal Matheny has given his stamp of fellowship on both the article and its author. Weylan Deaver has taken the position of his father, Mac Deaver, regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit (that has been exposed in the pages of *Defender* by brother Daniel Denham). However, it does not stop there, Randal Matheny is also the editor of *Forthright Magazine*. He is also listed as one of the writers on the *Biblical Notes* website and in his biography there it has him working with Forthright Press along with being the editor of *Forthright Magazine*.

Now, even if Randal Matheny does not personally hold to the false Holy Spirit baptism today doctrine and direct work of the Spirit on the Christian today doctrine of Mac Deaver (all the other writers on the *Biblical Notes* website do), he is in fellowship with those who hold these false doctrines. Thus, all those who are associated with Forthright Press, *Forthright Magazine*, and *Brotherhood News* are brought into fellowship with the Deaver false doctrines of Holy Spirit baptism and direct work of the Spirit on the heart of the Christian. Will these other brethren **“come out from among them, and be ye separate”** (2 Cor. 6:17) or will they continue in their fellowship errors?

However, it does not stop there. In the January 2013 issue of *The Spiritual Sword* the editor, Alan E. Highers, carried an article by Randal Matheny (28-32). There is no disclaimer regarding brother Matheny and those with whom he fellowships. How does this not place brother Highers and those who are associated with *The Spiritual Sword* in a compromising position regarding their fellowship? (Would brother Highers publish an article written by Mac Deaver? If not, why not?). Also, in the January 2012 issue of *The Spiritual Sword*, brother Highers ran an article by Ed Wharton (45-47) and simply stated that he is “a long-time instructor at Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas.” How has brother Highers not extended fellowship to Sunset? Yet, Sunset has long been known for their liberalism and for their false views regarding grace and on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. In extending fellowship to this “long-time instructor,” how has he not extended fellowship to those errors? In extending that fellowship to Ed Wharton, how are not all those associated (in fellowship with) *The Spiritual Sword* not tainted with the fellowship compromises in which brother Highers has engaged?

Brethren, how long are faithful soldiers of the cross going to tolerate these fellowship compromises? These brethren can claim to be faithful, sound, conservative brethren all they wish, but they are compromising God’s Word by their fellowship practices. The other question is, “Where will these compromises end or where will they lead to?” (Via *The Defender*, March, 2013, Ed. Michael Hatcher).

Your editor posted the foregoing article on his Facebook page several years ago for the same reason it was originally written and published. Christians are forbidden to fellowship or give God’s speed to those brethren teaching false doctrine as

Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher
dpbcftf@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS received by CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH and/or its Editor are viewed as intended FOR PUBLICATION unless otherwise stated. Whereas we respect confidential information, so described, everything else sent to us we are free to publish without further permission being necessary. Anything sent to us NOT for publication, please indicate this clearly when you write. Please address such letters directly to the Editor David P. Brown, 25403 Lancewood Dr. 77373 or dpbcftf@gmail.com. Telephone: (281) 350-5516.

FREE—FREE—FREE—FREE—FREE—FREE

To receive CFTF free, go to www.cftfpaper.com and sign up. Once done, you will be notified when the current issue is available. It will be in the form of a PDF document that can be printed, and forwarded to friends.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES
FOR THE PAPER EDITION
Single Print Subs:**

One Year, \$25.00; Two Years, \$45.00

**NO REFUNDS FOR CANCELLATIONS OF
PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS**

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH exists to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7,17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we will not knowingly print anything to the contrary.

**CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH
25403 Lancewood Dr., Spring, Texas 77373
Telephone: (281) 350-5516**

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

well as those who, though they do not teach false doctrine, extend fellowship to those who do and/or those in fellowship with them (2 John 9-11). On my Facebook page following said article Johnny Oxendine aptly posted: “You can expose the errors until you are blue in the face but even driving it (nail like) into the heads, hearts, and minds of many brethren [they] won’t change their actions or reactions. The fundamental understanding of fellowship is just not grasped, nor its eternal implications.” Certainly, brother Oxendine’s remarks hit the proverbial nail squarely on its head.

Hatcher ended his missive with, “Where will these compromises end or where will they lead to?” Good question. Whether the foregoing errors treated in the Hatcher piece contributed or not to the error about to be noticed, it is at least another error we may add to the list of beliefs and practices of certain brethren who “claim to be faithful, sound, conservative brethren.”

Some brethren teach the following error: If a Christian member of one’s fleshly family commits sin, refusing to repent of it, all that faithful family members must do to scripturally withdraw fellowship from the unrepentant sinner is to: 1) point out the sin to the family member who is guilty of the same, 2) let said sinner know if he/she dies guilty of sin such a one will suffer eternal punishment in hell, and 3) urge and exhort said erring family member to repent before it is too late (before one dies). These brethren teach that the Lord requires nothing else of them in withdrawing their Christian fellowship from an erring unrepentant fleshly family member. Furthermore, they teach that once having accomplished the foregoing with their erring said impenitent family member the faithful family members are authorized by the New Testament to continue to be with them as though they were faithful to the Lord. Mind you, they teach that only faithful fleshly family church members wherein at least one family member is an impenitent sinner are authorized by the New Testament to act accordingly toward their impenitent fleshly family members. However, they teach faithful children of God who are **NOT** fleshly family church members must cease and desist all fraternal association (fellowship) with such a previously noted sinner. Thus, taught by some brethren are two rules of action guiding the faithful child of God toward those who have had Christian fellowship scripturally withdrawn from them—(1) what is required of fleshly family church members in their conduct toward one of their own who has had Christian fellowship scripturally withdrawn, and (2) what is required of brethren in general concerning their conduct toward the same.

Everyone is somebody’s mother, father, son, daughter, sibling, uncle, aunt, grandparent, or cousin, etc. As to whether this doctrine includes in-laws or how far into the extended family it applies, I do not know, and these brethren have not told us. However, it is not difficult to see that in many

congregations where there are family relationships existing throughout the congregation one “kind” of action from faithful family members toward the previously mentioned scripturally withdrawn from sinner is authorized, but another “kind” of action governs the conduct of faithful non-family church members. If not, why not?

It is interesting to note that in treating this subject the New Testament addresses faithful brethren’s treatment of erring brethren who have had Christian fellowship withdrawn from them. There is no difference put between the way faithful fleshly family church members are to deal with one of their own withdrawn from fleshly family members and another way that non-fleshly family church members are to deal with the same said sinners. If there is such a difference made in the sacred writings, where is it?

There are obligations authorized by the New Testament that people are to discharge in becoming Christians and in living Christian lives in the Lord’s church. The same is the case regarding marriage and the home (Col. 3:17). Via the teaching of the New Testament, God directs the organization and conduct of those members thereof without either organization usurping the place of or hindering the obligations of the other. Thus, when inspiration directed Christians to withdraw Christian fellowship from impenitent sinning church members, it certainly did not mean that the home was absolved from its God-given obligations to its own family members or the church discharging its said obligations regarding the same. Therefore, a fleshly family member who is a Christian must continue to discharge his/her duties toward other family members wherein and to the degree such is required even when a family member has Christian fellowship withdrawn from him/her. Who is it that will affirm that a home composed of Christians (a Godly institution) is not to bring its influence to bear on a fleshly family member from whom the church (a Godly institution) has withdrawn Christian fellowship? God expects both institutions to aid and cooperate with each other in living godly lives in a sinned cursed world. A home composed of Christians ought to be the first to support the church in its scriptural efforts to correctively discipline an impenitent church member especially if said impenitent church member is also a member of a home composed of Christians. If parents may correctly discipline a child by withholding Internet privileges, cell phone usage, visiting with friends, etc., please explain why said parents violate the teaching of the scriptures in meting out corrective discipline toward an unrepentant child from whom the church has scripturally withdrawn fellowship? Certainly, such children ought to be informed, talked to, visited with, and the like, and in so doing clearly told about their lost condition and urged to repent before they die. However, is that all that is necessary on the part of faithful family members in dealing with members of their own fleshly family who are out of

fellowship with God and faithful brethren. The foregoing is right and wholesome as far as it goes, but it certainly does not fully constitute all that is involved in withdrawing Christian fellowship from one who needs it.

For a long time, some brethren have lamented and protested the fellowship compromises of erring church members (and rightly so). However, they have now concocted a doctrine that deceives them into thinking they can continue to treat their own impenitent fleshly family church members as we have previously noted. Thus, they continue to associate (fellowship) with them as if they were faithful to God. Imagine, if you will, an erring impenitent fleshly family church member being informed by a faithful fleshly family church member of the latter’s sin, his/her need to repent, and to do so before it is too late (hell being their eternal abode if repentance is not forthcoming). As the erroneous doctrine goes, having told said sinner the foregoing, they may then go on vacation with them, have them over to their home for Thanksgiving dinner, fellowship them in other family gatherings, and the like as if they were faithful to the Lord. Remember, they also teach that faithful non-family church members may not extend such fellowship to sinning impenitent church members who are out of fellowship with God. Anyone ever heard of a double standard?

Of course, faithful church members, whether in a fleshly family relationship with erring impenitent children of God or not, should do all they can to bring said sinners to repentance. However, continuing to engage in activities with said impenitent fleshly family church members as if they are faithful to God in no way helps them be ashamed of their sin, see their lost condition, and hopefully bring them to repentance—if such can be done at all.

What is right to do is not always easy to do and we may personally suffer for doing it, but when we are willing to comply with God’s Will, we will do it for one reason and one reason only, it is the right thing to do—as God defines the right. That is all we need to know. Remember God’s command for the loving father Abraham to offer his only son Isaac as a burnt offering (Gen. 22:2-13). There are more church members than I would like to think who consider themselves faithful to God and stalwarts for the truth who have failed their own tests of faith regarding how God said they ought to treat their own impenitent fleshly family church members.

Thus, we end with brother Hatcher’s question, “Where will these compromises end or where will they lead to?” Of course, in answer to Hatcher’s question, as far as this life is concerned, we close with another question, “Who knows?”

—25403 Lancewood Dr.
Spring, TX 77373

Contending For The Faith
25403 Lancewood Dr.
Spring, Texas 77373

