

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

BROWN TRAIL SCHOOL OF PREACHING WEBSITE SOME OBSERVATIONS

Dub McClish

Introduction

The information one can glean from Websites—whether operated by individual brethren, congregations, or schools—is often truly revealing. In fact, it may be that some Websites reveal more than they were intended to reveal. For example, the links placed on a Website sometimes speak volumes concerning the direction, emphasis, convictions, endorsements, and affiliations of the owners (especially when such links lack any disclaimers). A case in point is the Website of the Brown Trail School of Preaching (BTSOP) at www.browntrailsofpreaching.com, sponsored by the Brown Trail Church of Christ, Bedford, Texas.

Some Historical Perspective

This congregation (and BTSOP), admired by faithful brethren for decades, forfeited the fellowship of hundreds of brethren (and scores of its members) in 1989–1990, when its eldership underwent drastic changes for the worse. One elder resigned because of health problems, another elder (administrator of BTSOP at the time) was dismissed from his role and resigned as an elder, and yet another elder resigned because he was rendered powerless by the five remaining elders. The remaining elders, all liberal or willing to compromise with the liberals, faced rebellion from the members, and their first elder r/r program was instituted in April 1990 as damage control in an effort to stop the membership exodus. This program was planned and promoted principally by brethren Dave Miller and the late Johnny Ramsey (along with Maxie Boren), both full-time workers at Brown Trail at the time. In 2002, another crisis came to a head in the eldership, which numbered seven at the time, four of whom were recent ap-

pointees. When informed of major problems that had been festering for at least five years, relating to BTSOP, two of the new elders, along with one who was already serving, set about to resolve these lingering difficulties, which threatened both the school and the congregation. Briefly, these problems centered on the following:

1. Brother Miller's direction (or lack thereof) of BT-SOP
2. His justification of the fraudulent marriage and divorce of Everett Chambers, a Jamaican who had married his naturalized cousin in order to obtain his Green Card, thereafter immediately divorcing her
3. His not only admitting Chambers as a student, but eventually giving him practical direction of the school.

Four of the elders were determined to support Miller and Chambers, while the remaining three understood that these men were the root of the long-standing problems. The majority of the elders decided to remove the impasse by conducting a repeat of their 1990 elder re-evaluation/reaffirmation program, led this time by the Brown Trail preacher, Maxie Boren, but endorsed by Miller, principal advocate of the 1990 program. This reincarnation of the 1990 program caused another upheaval among and exodus of Brown Trail members (reportedly in excess of 100).

Yet another specter has hung over the Brown Trail church and school for the past decade. They have given no indication of any disagreement with or disavowal of brother

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

RECIPE FOR APOSTASY

Please note the following cogent remarks concerning the false teachers' success in selling their message of a false peace to a hard hearted people.

II. THE PRETENSIONS OF FALSE PEACE ARE PLAUSIBLE. The prophets dissuaded their hearers from attending to the warning words of Jeremiah, and endeavored to make them believe that they were in no danger. There is much that is very popular in arguments such as theirs.

1. They agree with the wishes of the hearers. Men are always inclined to believe what they wish.
2. They flatter the pride of the populace. The people are told that they are too great and too favored of Heaven to suffer any serious calamity, and they are only too ready to believe it.
3. They claim the merits of charity. They promise pleasant things. This looks more charitable than the threatening language of stern censors. Hence the prophets win favor for their apparent geniality and liberal sentiments.
4. They require no sacrifices from those who accept them. The doctrine is popular because the practice flowing from it is easy. The flattering prophets called to no reformation of character.

5. They have appearances in their favor. At present all looks fair. Is not this a presumption that the future will be happy? The sun is rising in gold and crimson; why, then, prophesy the approach of a storm?

III. THE PRETENSIONS OF FALSE PEACE ARE RUINOUS.

1. These pretensions do nothing to secure the peace. They simply lead men to believe that they are to enjoy it. Such a belief cannot alter facts. If there is no peace we do not make peace by crying, "Peace, peace!" This is the language of folly and indolence.
2. These delusions only aggravate the danger. They prevent men from preparing for the calamity by blinding them to the near advent of it (*Jeremiah*, Pulpit Commentary, 6:4).

Thus, the false prophets gained their influence with the Jews of the time because they appealed to their natural desire for peace at any price—they told them what they wanted to hear. They were the prophets who possessed the "irenical spirit," the positive message, "the loving disposition" and they satisfied the "felt needs" of the people. How balanced they must have appeared to a gainsaying, backsliding and rebellious people. *The combination of the false prophet's message and the people's desire for it produced in the people a false peace.* This combination continues to work well for the devil today.

—David P. Brown, Editor

"In war there is no substitute for victory"

General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964)

To a Joint Meeting of Congress, April 19, 1951.

(Continued from page One)

Mac Deaver's fatally erroneous views relating to the direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of Christians and his doctrine that baptism in the Holy Spirit is part of the plan of salvation. Rather, they have remained on very amicable terms with him. A few years ago he spoke for the student graduation ceremony. In recent years they hosted a debate in which he was a combatant. In 2003, several of the church and school staff extended fellowship to the Pearl Street congregation in Denton, Texas, by preaching in a Gospel meeting-type lectureship, knowing that its eldership was in full sympathy with the Deaver doctrines. (Brown Trail had openly distanced itself from Pearl St. for the 13 years prior to this meeting.) More recently, the Brown Trail church made brother Goebel Music, an outspoken supporter of Deaver's doctrines, its honoree during Fort Worth Lectures. In the fall of 2007, the Brown Trail church bulletin advertised the Gospel meeting at Sherman Drive Church of Christ (formerly Pearl St.) in Denton. Mac Deaver is the preacher for this apostate congregation and Glen Jobe, a long-time and outspoken disciple of Deaver, preached in the meeting.

Addressing the Causes of Alienation

All of the above items are heavy burdens of error that faithful brethren cannot tolerate, which the Brown Trail brethren surely must know by now. Recognition of the need to address these issues is evidenced by some comments on the BTSOP Website, mentioned earlier. We will do well to notice some of their statements. All of the statements quoted below will be found by clicking on the "Our Conviction" button (the center button immediately under the photo) on the home page of the Brown Trail School of Preaching Website.

Statement Concerning Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage:

We believe that marriage is intended to be enjoyed by one man and woman until they are separated by death. We believe that the only exception to this arrangement is outlined in Matthew 19:9—namely, that a fornicator may be put away by the innocent spouse, thus allowing that innocent one the freedom to contract another marriage. All other divorce and remarriage situations constitute adulterous unions—Romans 7:1-3. We do not believe that marriage may be a matter of convenience or in the "doctrine" of "mental reservation" relative to marriage. It is our belief that when a man and woman commit themselves to marriage, regardless of why they do so, they are married.

Consider the following observations on the foregoing statement:

1. I find nothing with which to disagree in this statement, and I commend it.
2. The last two sentences are obviously aimed at and are an attempt to disavow the Dave Miller doctrine of "intent-only" marriage, as applied to the case of Everett Chambers, without using the Miller "intent" terminology.
3. The Brown Trail elders defended Miller and his "marriage intent" doctrine when he applied it to Chambers, admitted Chambers to BTSOP, and allowed Miller, director of BTSOP, to appoint him as the practical director of the school.

4. Note that the statement refers to a marriage such as Chambers' marriage to his cousin (in order to secure his Green Card) as a marriage of "convenience"—not a bad way to describe it.
5. The statement correctly implies that a marriage for the sake of "convenience" is **nonetheless an actual marriage**.
6. The statement correctly refers to the "marriage intent" doctrine (without using that term) as a form of "mental reservation," a tacit admission that the very way some of us, in our exposure of the Miller error, have characterized it all along is correct.
7. The last sentence of the statement is a strong repudiation of the "marriage intent" error, which the BT elders defended on behalf of Miller, even misusing some of brother Tom Warren's statements in their feeble defense. The doctrine alleges that, although Chambers and his cousin applied for and received a license to be married, went through a marriage ceremony, signed all of the documents making them husband and wife, and had to get a divorce to dissolve their marriage, they still were never married because there was no "intent" on their part to be husband and wife.

Either the BT elders agree with this statement on the BTSOP Website (if not written by brother Robert Stapleton, BTSOP director, at least approved by him), or they do not. If they agree with it, they have altered their position. They owe it to the brotherhood (and especially to Dave Miller) to make their change of conviction known far and wide, accompanied by a statement of repentance for ever sanctioning such an ungodly and ridiculous position.

Statement Concerning Re-evaluation/Reaffirmation of Elders:

We believe that elders in the local congregation setting have authority over that congregation in matters of expedience, and that the congregation should have input regarding who serves

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as elders—Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–11; 1 Peter 5:1–3. We do not believe it Scriptural to practice elder “reaffirmation” in view of the dismissal of qualified elders. Elders who sin should be rebuked **“before all, that others also may fear”**—1 Timothy 5:20.

Consider the following observations on the previous statement:

1. As far as it goes, I have no problem with this statement.
2. However, this disclaimer on elder “reaffirmation” is only a qualified disclaimer, rather than an outright repudiation of the practice. It provided for some wiggle room. (This is sort of like brother Curtis Cates’ bold denunciation of elder re-evaluation/reaffirmation “as practiced by the liberals.”)
3. This statement does not agree with what Brown Trail practiced, not once, but twice, whereby any of their elders then serving who received less than 75% of the “votes” cast were to be turned out, **even if they were qualified.**
4. This statement does not agree with the written statement issued by the BT elders in 2005, in which they said they “could not cite Scripture that would direct them in the removal of elders who refused to step down for the benefit of the congregation.” (Note, they did not say the elders they wished to remove were unqualified.) They excused their 2002 procedure by “the end justifies the means” philosophy (“What else could we do?”). In other words, the elders argued that the elder r/r program they conducted was an expedient method for removing unwanted elders, which implies that they still believed (at the time they issued their statement) that the program was authorized. In their statement, the elders promised never to conduct such a program again. But why not, if it is authorized and if a third occasion arises in which some of the elders desire the resignation of one or more other elders, even though they are still qualified? While they admitted to making “mistakes” in their 2002 procedure, this admission is far from admitting that it was sinful.
5. This statement (on the BTSOP Website) does not agree with Dave Miller’s addition of a new qualification for elders (i.e., he must be “perceived as a leader”) or he should not be reaffirmed/reconfirmed, **even if he met the Scriptural qualifications.**
6. Whereas Miller and BT excused the practice by claiming there is no Scriptural method set forth to dismiss unqualified elders, and therefore the elder r/r procedure is simply an expedient method, at least some of the BT brethren have now obviously discovered what many of us have been saying all along: **1 Timothy 5:19–20 gives the Scriptural remedy for dismissal of unqualified elders.**

Either the BT elders agree with this statement on the BTSOP Website (also written and/or approved by brother Robert Stapleton, BTSOP director), or they do not. If they agree, their agreement represents an outright denial and re-

pu diation of that which they formerly authorized and have staunchly defended. If they have altered their position, they owe it to the brotherhood (and especially to Dave Miller) to make their new convictions known, accompanied by a statement of repentance for ever sanctioning such an ungodly and ridiculous position and unauthorized practice.

Statement Concerning the Holy Spirit

The nearest the Website comes to mentioning the Holy Spirit is the following:

We believe that the Bible is the complete, inerrant and inspired word of God, and that it is all-sufficient for the purpose God intended—2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:3.

Consider some observations on the preceding statement:

1. The statement is good, again, as far as it goes.
2. The qualifying clause regarding the all-sufficiency of Scripture (*for the purpose intended*) allows much latitude of belief, however, depending the way one defines the “purpose” of Scripture.
3. Mac Deaver could have written this statement, and certainly, he would readily “Amen” it. In fact, it is exactly what he has been saying for more than ten years concerning the all-sufficiency of Scripture when we have charged that his Holy Spirit error in fact denies this crucial Biblical doctrine.
4. Given the very close and cozy relationship BT has had for many years with the Deaver family, and has continued to have with Mac Deaver in recent years (as referenced above), it is hard not to believe this statement was worded so as not to offend this erring

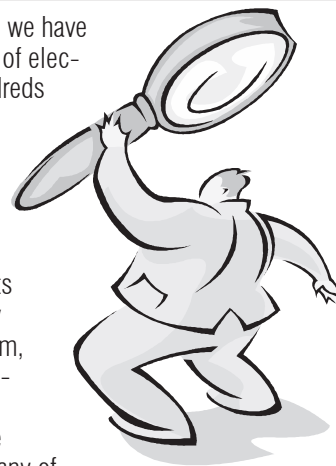
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—Dub and Lavonne McClish



brother by contradicting his error.

5. Suffice it to say, BTSOP has had numerous opportunities to distance itself from Mac Deaver's errors in the past decade, but it has chosen not to do so. The school missed another golden opportunity to separate itself from Deaver's errors in its statement on the Website, but most certainly failed to do so.

Conclusion

If the BT brethren think that such statements, short of open acknowledgment of the errors they practiced, taught, and/or defended on more than one occasion since 1990 will restore the confidence of faithful brethren in what was once a congregation and school of unquestioned soundness, they deceive themselves. The lump under the rug is piled very high from the various things they have swept under it, going all the way back to 1989 when they lost the three conservative men in the eldership, mentioned earlier.

Why should these matters be of interest to or even the "business" of brethren generally? What "right" do brethren remote from Brown Trail have to call attention to such things? These are good questions, and the answer is not difficult to ascertain. Brown Trail is involved in at least two programs of work ("Truth in Love" TV program and BTSOP) for which they solicit and receive funding from brethren throughout the country. Those who thus solicit funds for their works must recognize their accountability to brethren generally. The Brown Trail elders, through these works, as well as through the annual Forth Worth Lectures, are in a position of unusual influence. Because of their past and continued defense of Dave Miller (and the elder r/r program and his "marriage intent" doctrine, both of which bear his principal imprint), they are equally culpable with Miller for the fellowship crisis that now grips a once united brotherhood. Their continued fellowship with Mac Deaver only intensifies their blame.

FREE CD AVAILABLE

Contending for the Faith is making available a CD-ROM free of charge. Why is this CD important? ANSWER: It contains an abundance of evidentiary information pertaining to Dave Miller's doctrine and practice concerning the re-evaluation/reaffirmation of elders, MDR, and other relevant and important materials and documents directly or indirectly relating to the Brown Trail Church of Christ, Apologetics Press, Gospel Broadcasting Network, MSOP, and more.

To receive your free CD, contact us at *Contending for the Faith*, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, TX 77383-2357, or email us at cftfdpb@gmail.com.

If you desire to have a part in the distribution of this important CD you may make your financial contributions to the Spring Church of Christ, P. O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383.

Faithful brethren do not seek the destruction of Brown Trail, but the forthright, unqualified repentance of her elders. All who have been alienated from her since 1990 would rejoice greatly at such and we would encourage these men to our utmost if they would do so. The statements on the BTSOP Website are a step in the right direction. It would be wonderful indeed if the elders would not only "catch up" with these statements, but come full circle in their repentance. Until they do, faithful brethren will have no choice but to obey Paul's injunction: **"Be not ye therefore partakers with them..., and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them"** (Eph. 5:7, 11).

—908 Imperial Dr.
Denton, TX 76209

MY KUWAITI TIMES

Andre Washington

During my three and a half years in Kuwait as a contractor in support of the American troops in our country's fight in the war on terrorism, there was not a time that I did not feel proud to be a Christian from the greatest nation on the planet. To say the least, my time there was interesting and very educational. As most would expect, there are vast differences between the American and Arab worlds, culturally, religiously, and socially. Missteps away from our American military base, while out in the general population, could get one in some serious trouble in a very non-accommodating jail. Being ignorant of the laws that govern this Muslim state can do it. During my time in Kuwait there were vast amounts of American expatriates who found themselves on a one way ticket back to the states for different violations. Before arriving in the country, and as one might expect, all expatriates are well indoctrinated about these differences, especially the religious ones, by their respective companies. They are constantly made aware of these differences, especially during Ramadan the annual Muslim holy time of the year. This means no eating, or drinking liquids of any kind, or even chewing while away from the base during their holy month. Many of these differences were shocking if not outright insulting to many Westerners. But of all the shocks, insults, outlandish laws and behaviors I observed, my greatest shock was yet to come.

Before arriving in the Middle East and being warned by company officials to refrain from "proselytizing" while out in the general population, I often wondered when I would engage in religious dialogue with Muslims. Well, my first opportunity came, of all places, out in the general population. An Egyptian security guard at our villa invited me to the mosque and offered me a Koran. For me it was quite tempt-

ing to began to engage him about spiritual matters regarding Christ. While the conversation went nowhere, I was reminded of the dangers of that type of talk away from the base.

On base there were various religious beliefs of expatriates (Westerners) and foreign nationals from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Kosovo, and Bosnia, as well as other parts of the world. Many of the foreign nationals on base were very humble, shy and reluctant to express themselves about very much except their job responsibilities. Muslims and Hindus were comfortable with my personality and from time to time they would engage me in religious conversation about the differences between our religions. For the most part these folks were courteous and, although very immovable in their faith, they knew how to disagree without being disagreeable.

The Muslims I communicated with believed that Jesus, Isa in Arabic, was a good man and a prophet of God. They seemed to have a healthy respect for Him as a good man, but made it clear that Muhammad was the last and greatest of the prophets. There were a series of questions I usually asked of them that always seem to keep them backpeddling. Those questions were; Why, as Muslims, do you give Jesus (Isa) any credibility at all as a prophet of God? Why not consider Him nothing but a liar and a fraud? Who was it that died on the cross? Where is your proof that it was not Him? They in turn asked me why do you question why we speak of Isa in a respectful way? I communicated that if I was a Muslim, how else would I view Him when what He says contradicts the Koran, such as when He stated and acknowledged that He is the Son of God (John 10:36). I reminded them that the Koran states that Allah has no Son. Regarding Christ death on the cross, their answer was usually that someone else died on the cross and it was made to appear that He died on the cross. My question back to them was: "Who made it appear that He died?" From that question I usually received no response. I communicated that Jesus was no hermit and was known by the people throughout the region of Judea, and Galilee, including the Jewish religious leaders who wanted Him dead. The Roman soldiers knew who He was and certainly his mother knew Him as he was dying for the sins of the world on the cross of Calvary. There were similar disagreements with Hindus and those who felt there was nothing wrong with their religion. For them, the qualification that one must meet in order to enjoy eternity with God was just primarily being a good person.

What was most appalling were the American expatriates who claimed a belief in God, the Bible, and were "self" professed Christians. At times they would come in on these discussions, saying to me in front of these folks, "What's the big deal as long as you believe in God and have a good heart?" "Besides," they would say, "we all serve the same God anyway". I often wondered, "What ignorance," as I thought about what the scripture teaches in Hosea 4:6— "**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge**". They in turn would take up the debate with me sometimes. One man denigrated our Lord to a mere man who made mistakes just like anyone else. Wow! What a force for Satan, this particular American

expatriate was. He ranted and raved about the years of Jesus between ages 12-30, suggesting our Lord, no doubt, had a wild life during those years. He made such a ridiculous statement before a devout Hindu with whom I had been working with for months. What a discouragement, but I understood as I recalled what our brother Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 4:3, "**If our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that who are lost**". One woman who was known on the project to carry her Bible with her, stated to me that she was not interested in any of the apostle Paul's opinions. All she needed was what Jesus said. Looking at her in horror, I asked here how she felt about II Timothy 3:16-17. After I quoted the verses with a smile, she gave me an honest reply that I wish all men would do when corrected by the Word of God. She stated, and I quote, "I stand corrected".

There were also other American expatriates who stated that it did not matter who or what you believed in, whether it was Muhammad, Krishna or Buddha just as long as your heart was right and you did the right things in life. The shock of such ignorance was overwhelming to me. I would ask such individuals, "Do you believe in what the Bible says?" And, "Do you believe in Jesus and what He says?" The answer to these questions were always an emphatic, "Yes." When I reasoned with them that such could not possibly be the case in light of their statements, they accused me of being narrow minded. I communicated to them in no uncertain terms that I was proud to be labeled narrow minded because our Lord was also narrowed minded in His approach to salvation. I would quote to them what Jesus said in John 14:6— "**I am the way the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me.**" I would reason with them that Jesus leaves no room for Muhammad, Krishna, Buddha or any other man or thing. He was very clear in stating in Matthew 28:18 that all power in heaven and earth had been given to Him and Him alone. After making these statements I would only receive blank stares as I would remember what the Scriptures teach in such passages as Titus 1:10-11 which reads, "**For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.**" And, also in 2 Tim. 2:15, "**Study to shew thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightfully dividing the word of truth**". Let us all be on watch for the opportunity to teach and defend the word of God.

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RECOMMENDED READING: *UNITY—FROM GOD OR MAN?*

Gary W. Summers

Some of the best resource tools published in the past decade have come from the Spring Church of Christ, whether in association with Houston College of the Bible, Spring Bible Institute, or Contending for the Faith. Excellent analysis and comprehensive coverage has been provided for Calvinism (1998), Pentecostalism (1999), Roman Catholicism (2000), Mormonism (2001), Jehovah's Witnesses (2002), Islam (2003), Judaism (2004), and Anti-ism (2006). The subject of Morality (2005) has also received thorough attention. Last year and this year, the subjects have been related: Fellowship (2007) and Unity (2008).

Once again, *Unity—From God or Man?* furnishes the reader information that can be of great value at determining with whom to (or not to) be united. Consider this insight from brother Guy N. Woods:

The first step away from the Truth on a topic is the most significant. This is the case, because on that first false step away from the Truth, is the foundation on which all the other erroneous steps to a false doctrine system are built (1).

This observation may seem obvious, but brethren often overlook the obvious, waiting for someone to take a giant leap away from the truth, but Woods is right; people tend not to notice small steps, or perhaps they discount them. By the time someone adopts a position that is blatantly false, either people fail to notice, or they have ceased caring by that time.

Yet this hindrance to unity is pointed out quickly. Also mentioned is the excellent illustration about Eddie Rickenbacker and his crew—why it was necessary for them to land in the sea and wait for rescue (2-3). And this is still just the introduction to the book, which serves to foreshadow the rich material that lies ahead. These marvelous illustrations have a bearing on the important subject of unity.

That brethren cannot enjoy unity with each other is demonstrated by the first chapter, "Is the Church of Christ in Crisis?" The answer is yes. Part of the chapter outlines how a church begun in 1958 in Virginia slowly digressed over the years until now it bears no resemblance to the body of Christ. The details and names are included in the book, but this review will only mention that the name of the state and that, instead of reverent worship, they now offer "rock and roll," which ought to please a certain segment of the church that thought that all of the emphasis on spirituality (reading, studying, praying, evangelizing) was a bit too stuffy anyway (11). One would have to see the emphasis on such carnal activities as dancing to believe it.

After discussing some fundamentals concerning the Restoration Movement, the author comments on para-church organizations, instrumental music, the 1906 census, and Carl Ketcherside, who was one of the architects of modern liberalism. He was of the "anti" persuasion, but in 1951, in

a small village in Ireland, he decided that fellowship should be broader than what he was practicing at the time (27). In only 23 years, he had decided that baptism no longer needed to be for the remission of sins (29). Men such as Rubel Shelly have followed in the footsteps of this apostate.

Not all of those who are headed for Camp Liberalism, however, have so obviously renounced Biblical principles. Some are still wearing the label of "conservative." Dave Miller, for example, has a reputation for being a conservative, largely due to his excellent book, *Piloting the Strait*. But what about his justification of the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders, which the Scriptures do not authorize (Col. 3:17)? What about his "marriage intent" doctrine? And what about all of the brethren who continue to fellowship him and refuse to encourage him to repent? As brother Woods said, "The first step away from the Truth is the most significant." Several other departures are also mentioned.

After "God's Plan for Unity" is set forth, according to Biblical principles, the next chapter answers the question: "Is the Church of Christ a Sect?" The author reviews some of the statements made by Ketcherside and others who have made this charge. Of particular interest is the rationale used by a lawyer who is a member of the church to prove that Max Lucado is not a false teacher (97-98). Needless to say, the "evidence" would not stand up in a court of law. Also included is an open letter to certain representatives of a school of preaching to discuss statements they made, charging brethren with lying and being vile. The invitation was ignored even though they could have selected the location and the men to take part in the discussion (101-102). It seems that "the sounds of silence" have become more intense.

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After a discussion of “The Restoration Principle of Unity,” the subject is “Unity and Doctrine,” and the writer presents outstanding information concerning 2 John 9-11, which many (specifically false teachers and their followers) are attempting to make null and void. The views of ten Greek scholars are presented (132-35). A thorough refutation of “A to Z” fellowship is also presented (135-38). Some do not want to be considered “guilty by association,” but they continue to fellowship the guilty. Would we not regard anyone as silly who said, “Joe robbed a bank five years ago, has never repented of it, and is living off the proceeds of the crime; but he and I are just good friends, you can’t think that I approve of his actions?” “Really?” one might ask. “How would things be any different if you did approve of his actions?”

“Love, the Authority of the Word, and the Unity of the Church” covers more important, fundamental teaching on this subject. The need for a standard is emphasized, and a humorous illustration involving an orchestra is included which bolsters the point (154). The writer also provides an interesting comment on the often-heard saw, “We should always err on the side of mercy” (155). The next chapter, “Godly Fear and Unity,” furnishes the reader with a number of Biblical examples on this topic.

Another appropriate analysis for a book on unity is; “Causes of Division.” Some ought to meditate on this subject a long while. Many whom we once thought were as sound as the day is long have changed. One writer once correctly wrote: “It would be more accurate to say that one of the first major apostasies that beset the Lord’s church came in the area of church government” (215), but now he is defending the one who is teaching the elder re-evaluation/reaffirmation heresy (which involves church government)! (Of course, the current error is different than that of the second century, when one elder began to be exalted over another, and then those men became spiritual rulers over an area—none of which was authorized in the Scriptures. But how ironic is it that the same individual who would denounce one departure in church government would then end up defending another departure from what the Bible teaches!)

“The Responsibility of Elders....”

Who has the job of guarding the flock from wolves? Whose work is it to see that unity is maintained in the local congregation? Elders (and the deacons who serve under them) have this responsibility. If there is one chapter from this book that ought to be required reading for all elders, it is this one. There are 36 endnotes for the forty pages of material, thus making it a well-documented treatise. It begins with an analysis of Ephesians 4:1-6 and then argues from the Scriptures that unity needs to exist with some but not with others (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11). The author next examines the qualifications and appointment of elders.

Then the writer deals with this topic: “The Removal of Unqualified Elders,” which involves the error of Dave Miller and the re-evaluation/reaffirmation heresy. Sixteen objections are offered to the idea, as practiced by “conservatives” (235-36). Elder-deacon relationships are also examined, as

well as elder-trustee relationships. Another crucial aspect of this topic is the authority of elders. Their work also receives extensive treatment. Any congregation thinking of appointing elders (or if simply in search of good information on the subject) should obtain this material.

After “Gospel Preachers and Unity,” is “An Informed Membership and Unity.” The fact that elders have the responsibility to guard and protect the flock does not excuse individual members from their own duty in this regard. The author provides two historical accounts that occurred 140 years apart in which brethren from the United States warned brethren in Britain of false teachers coming to them. The first instance involves Alexander Campbell alerting the British churches about Dr. John Thomas (297-300); the second concerns “the Boston” movement (300-304). The comparison of these two situations proves interesting. Also included are some pertinent comments about The Christian Chronicle and the current advertisement policy that they have (304-308).

“The Autonomy of the Church and Unity” contains a study of New Testament passages showing the fellowship and unity that existed among churches in apostolic times. By the end of the first century, however, even Jesus threatened to withdraw fellowship from at least one congregation, which emphasizes that all congregations have the responsibility to evaluate where they are and what they need to do to improve.

Mac Deaver’s heresy of the direct influence of the Holy Spirit is cited as an example of that which disrupts fellowship between brethren. Deaver’s own words are quoted, which should be sufficient for anyone to understand regarding the dangers of his doctrine (326). Another section about para-church organizations carries the subtitle, “Show Me the

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Money.” Have brethren ever totaled up all of the educational, benevolent, and evangelistic organizations that we operate and wondered how much money it takes to support all of these? How many millions are spent annually on these works?

“Church Discipline and Unity” evaluates the shortcomings of Achan and the need for God to “withdraw” from him (336-39), even though he made the percentage of evil quite small among the Israelites. Seven purposes for withdrawing fellowship are mentioned, and four types of sin which necessitate exclusion from the Lord’s church are presented.

“How Does Repentance Relate to Unity?” references J. W. McGarvey’s sermon on the subject and his opinion that “the greatest obstacle to salvation is man’s obstinacy, man’s stubbornness” (360). The writer also cites a lengthy quote by David Lipscomb, in which he argues: “Nothing can keep two persons in Christ separate” (368).

“A History of Unity Movements in the Church of Christ” would be profitable reading for many brethren, including even some comments about Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli (374). The section on “The Legacy of L.L. Pinkerton” is definitely must reading for all (380-81). One church has posted the following “argument” on its Web site in favor of instrumental music:

We make use of instrumental music in our public worship services, contrary to the practices of the Churches of Christ (non-instrumental). We believe that worship using instruments has biblical precedent in the Old Testament and that instruments, while not explicitly mentioned in the New Testament, are nowhere forbidden or condemned in the Scriptures (386).

Now substitute for worship using instruments the following phrases: worship using incense, worship that involves dancing, or the practice of polygamy. None of these are condemned in the New Testament, and all of them were practiced under the old covenant. The above quote actually acknowledges that the New Testament does not authorize the use of instrumental music, and that authority, according to Colossians 3:17, is essential. This chapter also contains a “Marks of Identity” section for the Disciples of Christ (390-91).

The next chapter explores the deficiencies of “Union in Diversity.” After a consideration of the seven “ones” in Ephesians 4, the writer presents a lengthy quotation by Dallas Burdette, in which he laments: “Unity among many Churches of Christ is based upon conformity...” (409). How awful! Apparently, some brethren have the temerity to read and abide by 1 Corinthians 1:10—something which Burdette, Shelly, Lucado, ACU professors, and others would not deign to do.

“The ‘New Hermeneutics’ and Unity” examines Biblical authority and the ways in which God authorizes us to practice or teach the things we do. A quote from The Second Incarnation is refuted, as is the ideology of those associated with “the scholarship movement.” Many of these deny that the New Testament is a blueprint or pattern to follow; they fallaciously argue that it is simply “a love letter,” which proves that liberals frequently parrot one another.

“The Influence of the Colleges on Scriptural Unity” is painful to read, since these institutions were once forces of

stability for churches but now are at the forefront of apostasy. The first institution mentioned, for example, is Rochester College (formerly Michigan Christian College). Last year they hosted their Second Annual Diversity Dialogue (which practices precisely what the title implies). Can anyone have imagined 20 years ago that a woman would be a speaker at a lectureship?

Carol Van Hooser, a member of the Apostolic Church, was one of two female Keynote speakers.... This biology professor admitted that she taught evolution in her classes.... She also said that it didn’t really matter if a student in her class believed that God created the universe in six literal days or if they thought He took eons of time to create it. She asked the question, “What would be the big deal?” (439).

One wonders how she could be oblivious to a subject over which debate has raged for 150 years! This would be analogous to someone saying, “Oh, do we have a problem with illegal aliens?” Some of the same scholars are also at the forefront of leading brethren astray from Biblical morality, which “Immorality and Unity” demonstrates. Many no longer find fault with lying, divorce, fornication, or other acts condemned in the Scriptures.

“Bible Versions and Unity” comprises about 40 pages of the book, and it does highlight some key issues in various translations, but entire books have been written on this subject; so it can only scratch the surface. Nevertheless, it contains many important principles for selecting a good translation.

“Money and Unity” includes a section on fund-raising and its lack of authority in the Bible. “Worship and Unity” considers the Biblical view of all aspects of worship and then discusses hindrances to unity in all those areas. “Biblical Unity and the Lord’s Supper” receives a chapter of its own, however, as does “Music in the Worship of God and Unity,” which contains quotations from church historians that show what kind of singing was offered to God in the early centuries after Christ (574-75). The quote by Guy N. Woods on humming is also based on Scriptural principles (581).

“The Christian Home and Unity” completes the book—except for the two chapters written for ladies: “How Christian Women Destroy Unity” and “How Christian Women Build Unity.” Christian women will enjoy and profit from this thought-provoking material. The writer includes a warning about The Golden Compass (627).

The book was published this year, and its 658 pages make for profitable reading; it contains a blend of Biblical information with examples of current apostasy and is well worth the price of \$18.50. Congregations ordering five or more copies can receive a discount of 30%. It may be ordered from Contending for the Faith, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas, 77383. To order by telephone, call (281) 350-5516.

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Keith A. Mosher, Sr. and Paul Vaughn Correspondence

During April 2007 brother Paul Vaughn spoke on a lectureship in Madisonville, Kentucky. Among the other speakers was brother Keith Mosher, long time teacher at the Memphis School of Preaching. Since Vaughn's lecture topic was "Liberalism" he decided to deal with brother Dave Miller's errors. After informing the lectureship director of what he intended to do in his lecture and having received the director's approval to do so, he delivered it accordingly. Keith Mosher heard his lecture and disagreed with what Vaughn said concerning Miller. In conversation with Vaughn following the latter's lecture, Mosher cited Miller's widely circulated September, 2005 statement to the brotherhood as proof that Miller had repented at least of his teaching and practice of the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders as taught and practiced by Miller and the Brown Trail Church of Christ in 1990 and again by the B.T. Church in 2002, as Miller was in the process of moving to his present position with Apologetics Press (See Dub McClish's article beginning on the front page of this issue of *CFTF* for more information on this subject). Brother Vaughn indicated to Mosher that he did not know of any such letter of repentance from Miller. Mosher then stated that he would send a copy of Miller's letter to Vaughn. Some time later the following letter (the original

is in cursive) from Mosher with a copy of said Miller article came to Vaughn. The following is Mosher's letter to Vaughn. —**Editor**

KEITH A. MOSHER, SR.

Brother Paul,

I told you at Madisonville that the issue is not about Miller. He believes he made a "mistake" in 1990 not that he sinned (1 Jn. 3:4). You say he needs to repent so you are obligated to go to him. We are not his P. R. men here. He has appeared on numerous lecturships since 1990 with various of the brethren who now say he is the problem. I am interested to know how 90% of the brotherhood could apostatize in a few months because of one brother's actions 17 years ago. It is your right not to believe David, but how do you treat those who come forward and tell you things they did or did not do? Do you believe them or split the congregation over those who don't ?

I, too, love you Paul. But, I have no power to tell a man to repent.

/s/Keith

[Vaughn's reply to Mosher is reproduced below.—Editor]

Paul Vaughn
1415 Lincoln Rd.
Lewispport, Kentucky 42351
May 14,2007

Mr. Keith Mosher
Memphis School of Preaching
3950 Forest Hill Irene Rd.
Memphis, Tennessee 38125-2560

Dear Brother Mosher,

I pray that this letter finds you and sister Mosher in good health. I thought you had an excellent lesson at the Madisonville lectureship and I appreciated being able to talk with you, though it was for a short time.

Brother Mosher, I received the letter you sent me with brother Miller's statement. After reading it more than once, I can only come to the conclusion that it is not a letter of repentance—if it is please point out were he repents. It reads more like a letter of statement of actions and justification of those actions. In the letter, brother Miller places all the blame on the elders, including his actions (even if the elders directed him in those actions, they cannot direct him to sin). In the postscript of additional rumors, I had never heard of any of those comments. They read as if he is seeking sympathy or trying to draw away attention from the issues.

Brother Mosher, I have nothing but the greatest respect

for you as a teacher of God's word and have stated that before many times. Please help stop this division that is taking place among so many good brethren. Brother Miller's past teaching on "Elder Reaffirmation" and "Marriage Intent" have been fully documented. Time will not erase his actions, but repentance will. I believe you have the ability to help put this division to an end and I pray it is within your power to help.

Brother Mosher, again I plead with you to influence brother Miller to put all this behind us by stating the error of his teaching, repenting of those things, and then we can all work together to bring about the unity that is needed in our brotherhood. There are many struggles ahead of all of us that a united brotherhood will be needed to overcome. Liberalism is taking its toll and influencing many Christians to leave their first love. Your actions are greatly needed. I will pray for you to help the truth to be seen clearly.

Keith, thank you for your years of faithful service. I pray that we can work together to mend the breach that is destroying the unity among our brethren.

Sincerely,

/s/Paul Vaughn

[Mosher did not answer this letter. Hence, on Oct. 10, 2007 Vaughn mailed it to him a second time with a brief cover letter pleading with him on the basis of 1 Peter 3:15 to answer him. To date no answer has come from bro. Mosher.—Editor]

Editorial Remarks Concerning the Mosher/Vaughn Exchange

In brother Mosher's first letter to brother Vaughn (the letter that accompanied the Miller statement), Mosher stated that "the issue" is not about Miller. Maybe Mosher, who has been known to sometimes speak before he thinks, must have missed Hicks' email comments to brother Kent Bailey back on Tuesday, July 26, 2005 regarding Miller. We printed that email exchange in the September 2005 issue of *CFTF*, pp.14-16 with our editorial remarks. Hicks declared:

...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 (e.g., 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. **[DPB's response: If the Lord wills time to continue, in the coming days we shall "wait and see" if Hicks' views regarding AP will remain the same as set out by him in the preceding paragraph.]**

The previous quote is almost three years old. Much water has gone under the proverbial bridge regarding this issue since Hicks wrote the foregoing words. So, today are we correct to conclude that brethren Curtis Cates, Kenneth Ratcliff, Tommy Hicks, the MSOP (including Mosher), et al., agree with the following statement from Hicks?

I would remind them of John 7:24. Specifically, regarding the false doctrines in which Dave Miller involved himself (e.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 (Bold mine—DPB).

On July 26, 2005 Hicks thought Miller was a false teacher and he spoke for the rest of TGJ Board saying, "we stand with you and every other sound brother—in opposition to them (Millers false doctrines—**Editor**).” Thus, "the Gospel" according to Hicks regarding Dave Miller is that TGJ Board stood "in opposition to them."

However, in writing to Vaughn about Miller's practice of the R&R of elders, Mosher wrote: "He believes he made a "mistake" in 1990 not that he sinned (1 Jn. 3:4)." But Hicks wrote that Miller taught false doctrine when he taught his views concerning elders re-evaluation doctrine and the marriage/divorce 'intent' doctrine *a la* Everett Chambers." Well, well, Hicks says Miller taught false doctrines, but Mosher tells us that Miller said "he made a 'mistake' in 1990 not that he sinned" (1 Jn. 3:4). *Are we to conclude from these men of integrity that one may teach false doctrine and not sin?*

Mosher also wrote, "He has appeared on numerous lectureships since 1990 with various of the brethren who now say he is the problem." Hicks thought Miller was a problem

in 2005 after brethren McClish and Watson were given "the boot" by TGJ Board. But he also was very opposed to Miller long before 2005 for the same reasons. This is no great revelation concerning Hicks's position regarding Miller. Obviously from the previous quote from Hicks pertaining to Miller, Hicks thought the rest of TGJ Board opposed Miller too and that because Miller teaches false doctrine.

Also notice that Mosher wrote to Vaughn saying the following about Miller, "He has appeared on numerous lectureships since 1990 with various of the brethren who now say he is the problem." Tommy Hicks said Miller was a problem and he said it after the departure of McClish and Watson from *TGJ*. Further, Hicks said Miller was a problem for the same reason we continue to say he is a problem.

Nevertheless, Hicks stands with Mosher, et al., in opposition to us, although we agree with Hicks' 2005 position that Miller is a false teacher. As noted, Mosher says Miller did not sin, but Hicks says Miller is a false teacher. Does being a false teacher constitute sin? Moreover, Hicks wrote in 2005 that the rest of TGJ Board were opposed to Miller too.

These brethren are able to remain united in their diversity on obligatory matters in the Dave Miller errors and attendant issues because they have adopted the false doctrine of "unity in diversity". Rubel Shelly applies the same "unity in diversity" error to about any issue that could divide believers in Christ from one another and, thus, he is where he is today. And, that is the primary and fundamental difference in Shelly and those who defend fellowshipping Miller.

Then Mosher, who likes to publically announce that he is a logician and a teacher of logic, attempts to say we are wrong because some who oppose Miller now, appeared on lectureships, etc. with him before the dismissal of McClish and Watson. This is one of Mosher's efforts to defend himself and others in the practice of "unity in diversity" in fellowshipping Miller. He is simply pointing out that one's opponent does the same thing he is doing, so his opponent

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is wrong to criticize and oppose his (Mosher's) fellowship of Miller. In doing this, Mosher is engaged in the use of an informal fallacy known as *Tu quoque*: Latin for, "You also." It is related to the *ad hominem* ("to the man") fallacy, that is committed whenever someone attacks the person, rather than his argument. Mosher knows (after all he is a teacher of logic) the "You also" informal fallacy is no defense of his position, in this case Mosher's and his friend's fellowship of Miller at all. The *ad hominem* and *Tu quoque* fallacies are favorites of many of the learned MSOP brethren, some of her alumni and other brethren who are seeking to fellowship Miller and oppose those who constantly hold before the brotherhood the errors of Dave Miller.

Having said the above, let it be said that the charge that those of us who oppose Miller and have no fellowship with him, ONLY took that position after McClish and Watson were removed from their positions with TGJ on July 20, 2005, is false.

Daniel Denham withdrew from Miller a few years before 2005. Brother Wesley Simons spoke out against Miller and the R/R of elders at the Bellview Lectures, Pensacola, FL in June of 2005. The Tri-Cities School was originally started because Wesley and those who stood with him thought that Curtis Cates had compromised on certain matters in dealing with FHU, Faulkner U. and the former Southern Christian U., then Regions U. and now Amridge U. It also might interest brethren to know that Miller has no problem with brother Mac Deavers' view on the direct work of the Holy Spirit on the heart (inward man) of the Christian, or Deaver's position on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit being a part of the New Birth process (John 3:5). As has been noted on numerous occasions, Dub McClish publically opposed Miller in the 1997 Bellview Lectureship, with most of the MSOP faculty a part of that lectureship. Glenn Colley, among others, sees nothing wrong with extending fellowship to Sunset School, Pepperdine U. and Lipscomb personnel, including the DLU president, at the Lake Tahoe Family Encampment. Colley was scheduled to appear with Gary Bradley of the Shelly/Lucado camp until he withdrew due to some personal reason.

Further, two hundred plus people left the Brown Trail congregation due to BT's practice of the R&R of elders doctrine. Whether they will now admit it or not, in the late 1990's the Roanoke, TX congregation located about 15 miles from the BT church ceased to announce, support or encourage any of the works of the BT church. In those days the same was true of the now defunct Pearl Street church and continues to be true of the Rowlett, TX congregation.

For Miller, MSOP, et al., to pretend that the trouble with the R&R of elders only started after July 20, 2005 is ludicrous to those who know what was and is going on regarding these and related matters. Further, at the old Annual Denton Lectures and, for that matter, the MSOP Lectures and from the MSOP staff, opposition was registered concerning the Miller situation prior to Miller's move to AP.

Keith Mosher was as vocal as anyone else (what's new about that?) in opposing Miller's doctrine and against Dave

Miller himself before July 20, 2005 and he knows it. If fact, is it not interesting that in defending Miller to Vaughn in the previously quoted letter from Mosher to Vaughn that the last thing Mosher wrote was, "Incidentally, David (Miller—**Editor**) has never been on MSOP's lectureship." If there is no consequence to using Miller, why would Mosher make such a statement? Mosher, Cates, Liddell, Elkins, Bland have had no problem appearing with him on various other lectureships. Moreover, videos of Miller teaching have been shown at the Forrest Hill congregation. Further, the preacher of Forest Hill, Barry Grider, is as big of a supporter of GBN and Miller (who appears on GBN) as anyone could be. So, why not have Miller on the 2009 MSOP Lectures? This is "unity in diversity" in obligatory matters at its best. As I previously wrote, the only difference in Mosher's, et al., practice of it is, at least for the time being, employed by them in defending Miller and those who fellowship him.

QUESTIONS: If McClish was wrong when he publically spoke and wrote against Miller's errors many years before July 20, 2005, seeing that Mosher, Cates, Liddell, et al., accompanied with and praised McClish, et al., while McClish et al., opposed Miller's false doctrines, *why did these same men not oppose McClish et al., in those days? Why did they wait until after July 20, 2005 to register their complaints against us?*

If everything is okay with Miller's false doctrine, why did brother Garland Elkins via telephone express to Daniel Denham that he wished Miller would come out with a clear and concise statement renouncing and repenting of he views on the R&R of elders? Here is the stalwart senior preacher Garland Elkins, who stood so strong against error in the 1973 Memphis Meeting regarding the Herald of Truth's departure from the faith, who opposed Rubel Shelly and the late James D. Bales and so ably defended the Faith on the Donahue TV Show back in the 1980's, but now he extends fellowship to Miller. Brother Elkins knows that he does not believe and has spoken against Miller's false doctrines. Why toward the end of his days on earth is he going against the way he has lived and preached, serving as such a good example to the rest of us?

Brother Mosher wrote to Vaughn, "I have no power to tell a man (Miller—**Editor**) to repent who says that if he does he would be "lying to God" because he has not sinned." Where does the Bible teach such a view as Mosher expressed in the previous sentence? The Bible is full of accounts where the faithful informed the sinners, who did not think they needed to repent, that in actuality they did need to repent.

Further, Tommy Hicks thinks Miller sinned. Elkins and brother Robert Taylor at least think his R&R of elders doctrine is wrong. Certain Memphis Alumni say that none of the MSOP faculty believe Miller's doctrine. Why do they feel compelled make that point? Especially, when all of them extend fellowship to and defend him, while all the time telling us as Mosher wrote to Vaughn, "We are not his P.R. men here." We cannot help but wonder what MSOP would have to do differently regarding Miller in order to become

his “P.R. men”.

Mosher wrote to Vaughn: “I am interested to know how 90% of the brotherhood could apostatize in a few months because of one brother’s actions 17 years ago.” How Mosher arrived at “90% of the brotherhood” going into apostasy I do not know. Obviously Mosher’s comment is designed to say that the majority could not go wrong so quickly. I will remind Mosher that all it took was the faithless report of ten wimpy Israelite spys to turn far more than 90% of the nation of Israel against God and cause the whole nation to wander in the wilderness for almost 40 years (Num. 13:26-14:24). And why so a long a wandering? Moses gives the answer in Number 14:21-24. Paul said those Old Testament accounts were written for our learning (Rom. 15:4). We would encourage Mosher and those who think as he does to remember such Old Testament accounts for their own good and the good of those they teach.

Further, was the great majority of the world before the flood wrong? In the case of Sodom and Gomorra, was the majority of the people in the right as God defined the right? Also, what did Moses have in mind when he wrote, “**Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil: neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment**” (Ex. 23:2)? Regarding the case of Miller’s errors and those who fellowship him, in the light of Rom. 15:4 and 1 Cor. 10:1-12, surely there is some thing Mosher and friends can learn pertaining to his and their reasoning in all their efforts to promote, support and fellowship Miller or any other false teacher?

Mosher wrote that he could not understand how “90% of the brotherhood could apostatize in a few months because of one brother’s actions 17 years ago”. Focus in on “one brother’s actions 17 years ago” (now 18 years ago). How many times must a brother sin before it separates him from God and thus, he needs to repent of it? Obviously, Mosher is saying since it is only one sin committed so long ago it cannot be that big of a deal. Is this what Mosher teaches the students in his classess at the MSOP? Does the Bible teach when one sins, but no repentance is forthcoming, that with the passing of a stipulated period of time, the guilty of sin person will not have to repent of it? God does not think that way and Keith Mosher and the rest of MSOP know that. Therefore, the following question may help Mosher in his understanding of such matters. How many years intervened between God’s promise to Moses that he would destroy the Amelkites and the time when He kept His promise (Ex. 17:8, 14; 1 Sam. 15:2-3)? It was far more that 17 years. That account is in the Old Testament so that we might learn things that are spritually good for us as we faithfully serve God in the church (Rom. 15:4). What is at least one thing that we should be learn from it that will better help us to obey God today? To ask the question is to answer it.

Brother Bobby Liddell Sixteen Years Ago

It is interesting to note what Bobby Liddell wrote 16 years ago. And, I do not think that because it is 16 years old, the truth found therein has faded or become any less important with the passing of the years. We trust that Mosher, as

well as Liddell, will take the following message to heart.

Finally, we must stop attacking faithful brethren who would, out of genuine love for Christ and His church, sound the warning against uncertain sounds and deceitful workers. Instead, let us focus our energies on the real problems and the real troublers of Israel (1 Kin. 18:17-18). It has always amazed me how some who claim to be “balanced” will either uphold error and false teachers or will refuse to stand in opposition to it and them. Are they not guilty (2 John 9-11)? Yet, that same “balanced” brother will viciously and maliciously attack and publicly vilify one who has the intestinal fortitude to stand up and say: “This is wrong and those who teach it or practice it are wrong.” God help us to have courage to face in faith the current crises (*Defender* Editorial, 1992)!

The following quotation was placed on our Contending FTF Yahoo chat site by Roelf Ruffner, the faithful preacher for the High Plains Church of Christ, 421 E. 8th St., Cheyenne, WY 82007. It is from brethren David Lipsomb’s and J. W. Shepherd’s commentary on 1 and 2nd Thessalonians, Titus and Philemon, pp. 100-101. As brother Ruffner noted, “I found it appropriate for the times we live in. It shows that things have not changed much in the last 100 years.”

In view of brother Mosher’s and other’s efforts to “sweep Dave Miller’s sins under the proverbial rug”, the quotation fits well at this place in *CFTF*.

The number of men who are willing to work on either side of a question that will pay would be surprising to those not in position to know and who have not become accustomed to such things. It is the discouraging feature about the work of the churches today. So few men are willing to stand to their convictions – nay are willing to have convictions on any subject that will interfere with their worldly success. But truth can never be maintained, save by those who are willing to honor their own convictions, cherish a keen sense of right, are afraid of the least participation in that which is wrong, and will honor and maintain the truth, let it cost what it may of popularity or private prosperity. Let us, then, drink, deeply of the essence of the spirit of Christ. Without it the Christian religion cannot exist.

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The New Wesley Simons and His New Doctrine: A Call To Defend a Morbific Position

Darrell Broking

Wesley Simons has been known for his skill and ability as a debater and a contender for the faith. When I debated Patrick Donahue and Thomas Thrasher in Galax, VA in 2002, I was honored to have Wesley Simons as my moderator. The skill and personal instruction imparted to me by Wesley will always be cherished. I am saddened that the once stalwart brother Simons, who has an earned M.A. in apologetics, has now made the decision to use his keen cognitive abilities to hinder the Gospel of Christ. What drove brother Simons to radically change his doctrinal correctness as abruptly as he did? We may never know the answer to that question, but what we can and do know is that Wesley Simons, elder of the Stoney Creek Church of Christ and director of the Tri-Cities School of Preaching & Christian Development, has made shipwreck of the faith and is now using his influence to hinder those who strive for doctrinal purity.

Wesley In Transition

In 2005 Wesley Simons, like many of us who love the church, was opposed to extending fellowship to Dave Miller because brother Miller is a known false teacher. On August 16, 2005, Wesley sent Tommy Hicks an email in which he removed himself from the up-coming Lubbock Lectures because of the fellowship problems pertaining to Miller. Simons wrote:

I will be looking forward to how the board and TGJ will be dealing with the David Miller & AP issue. I pray that the right thing will be done. There is also the M-D-R issue which must be addressed. I pray to God that all these things can be resolved scripturally. I love all who are involved in this issue on both sides. I would to God that all would get on God's side. (Simons 2005).

To further emphasize the point, notice the following email that Simons sent to a number of brethren, myself included, on August 17, 2005:

Brethren,

I am going to call Dave Miller. I hope to do all I can to fix a terrible situation. I wish to be fair, but get to the point. The problems I wish to address are these; (1) The marriage issue which involves (I believe his name is Erick [*sic*, the brother's name was actually Everett Chambers, DB]); (2) The elder reevaluation/ reaffirmation issue; (3) The Calhoun, Ga. issue.

Do you know of others. What questions would you ask? I need documentation on these issues. I know where I can find some of the material.

Please send me web-sites, etc. I need any material that you have. This is not a witch hunt. I truly want to be of service to our great brotherhood. This problem has gone on too long. I realize that Dave and Dave only can fix it. I am going to try to get him to do that!

Pray that this effort will be successful.

In Christian love,
Wesley. (Simons 2005).

In August of 2005, Wesley Simons was clearly opposed to extending fellowship to Dave Miller, and he was working toward a Biblical resolution to the fellowship problems created by Miller.

The dark cloud of October 30, 2005 still hangs over the brotherhood. It was on that day that the Highland church of Christ in Dalton, GA, withdrew fellowship from the elders of the Northside

church of Christ in Calhoun, GA. (Elders, 2007). This controversy centered on Highland's fellowship with and promotion of Dave Miller. As noted by Gary Summers in a 2006 article:

When the elders at Highland in Dalton withdrew fellowship from the Northside elders in Calhoun, in effect they withdrew from all of us who stand with the Northside elders in opposing Dave Miller until he repents and repudiates the errors he has committed. (Summers 2006).

When Highland drew their proverbial line in the sand, it put Wesley between a rock and a hard place. Highland was using some of Wesley's WVBS materials on the Gospel Broadcasting Network. Additionally, the GBN was also featuring "Biblical Viewpoints" and "T.V. Sunday School," both of which are produced at the C-Street church of Christ building in Elizabethton, TN. Many of Wesley's friends in the Tri-Cities area were deeply involved with the GBN in October of 2005. Wesley had also been a great friend to the Northside church of Christ and had been complimentary of their stand for the Truth.

As this tremendous fellowship problem intensified, Wesley's efforts to resolve this problem intensified. It was during this process that Wesley began to reposition himself doctrinally. By 2006 Wesley must have been frantic over this mess in which he found himself. An eleventh hour attempt to repair the ruptured fellowship between those who fellowship Dave Miller and those who do not fellowship him was concocted by Wesley. Brother Simons presumptuously prepared a set of "unity letters" in which he attempted to have the Northside elders assume responsibility for the disrupted fellowship with Highland and to sue for peace. The "unity letters" (worded by Wesley Simons) follow:

Letter #1—From the Northside elders to the Highland Elders:

To the Highland elders,

Brethren, we would like to say that we did not mean to cause any division or problems in releasing the correspondence between the two congregations. We felt that some people were confused because they were hearing conflicting stories. We thought that the best way to solve this problem was to let each congregation speak for itself. It was our view that the writings of each congregation did that.

However, since you say this caused division and trouble, we would like to say we are sorry for that. We certainly were not trying to do that. We love you as brethren. We pray that Biblical unity can be enjoyed by the two congregations. We plan to do our part in this effort.

Elders of the Northside church of Christ

Letter #2—From the Highland elders to the Northside elders:

To the elders at Northside,

We have received your statement and accept it. We also want Biblical unity. We know that some thought that we withdrew fellowship too quickly. We want you to know that we, too, are sorry if you felt by our withdrawal that we were trying to abuse or mistreat the Northside elders. This was not our aim or goal. We rejoice because this problem has been solved. Thank you for helping to resolve this problem. We hope that we can move forward to the glory of God.

Elders of the Highland church of Christ

Letter #3—From the Highland elders to the brotherhood:

Dear brethren,

We are writing to inform you that fellowship between the Northside elders and Highland elders has been restored. We ask that you extend full fellowship to both the Northside elders and the congregation. We are thrilled that this problem has been resolved. Please, send this information far and wide so that all will know that we are in fellowship with the Northside elders. Please support them in any and every way you possibly can. We love and respect them very much.

The Highland elders. (Hall & York 2006).

The aforementioned letters do not need a lot of commentary. Even the blind can see that Simons' letters totally ignored the fellowship issue created by Miller and his errors. They shifted all of the blame to the Northside elders.

By late 2007, the Simons transition was finally complete. Verification of this fact lies in an email that Joshua Day sent to the CFTF email discussion list on February 11, 2008. Day was attempting to affirm the elder reevaluation and reaffirmation error by seeking a written debate with Michael Hatcher. As questions began to arise about Stoney Creek's support of Day's error (Day labors with the Stoney Creek church of Christ where Simons also serves as a preacher, elder, and director of the Tri-Cities School of Preaching & Christian Development), Day was quick to answer:

I have spoken candidly with Wesley Simons about my discussions with Brother Hatcher, my position regarding what Dave Miller taught, and my challenge to Brother Hatcher. After I read Brother Miller's sermon of April 8, 1990, and concluded that he had taught nothing unscriptural with regards to their process of reevaluating the elders, I called Brother Simons and asked if he agreed with me (this was at the end of last year, shortly before the Mountain City Unity Forum [Nov. 30–Dec. 2, 2007, DB]). He said that he did. He has agreed with me throughout our discussions. If you wish to know further what he believes, contact him. Not one elder of the church nor one instructor of the school have asked me to retract my statements, nor my challenge. (Day 2008).

Thus the transition that began toward the end of 2005 was completed within a two-year span.

The New Wesley Simons

The new Wesley Simons uses his apologetic skill to destroy those who stand exactly where he did in August of 2005. Wesley Simons has been a ringleader in the assault against the Mountain City, TN, church of Christ because the Mountain City elders are firm in their resolve against Miller. Simons justifies his antagonism by alleging that the Mountain City elders are not qualified to serve. Is this an evolution of the Elder Reevaluation and reaffirmation doctrine Wesley now affirms? Has Wesley gone so far from the truth that he is now blessed with the keen insight to **reevaluate** the elders of a **neighboring** church and refuse to **reaffirm** them?

Recently, the new Wesley Simons preached at the Lenoir City, TN, church of Christ near Knoxville, TN. Kent Bailey and Brad Green formerly preached in Lenoir City. Because of problems with liberalism, the church in Lenoir City divided. Kent Bailey moved on to work with the Northside church of Christ in Calhoun, GA, and the new congregation that grew out of that division invited Brad Green to become its preacher. Brad Green, in my judgment, is the best preacher to come out of the Tri-Cities School of Preaching & Christian Development. He is sincere and faithful to king Jesus. He also remembers the day that Wesley Simons opposed Dave Miller in classes that he took at the T-CSOP&CD. Typical of the new Simons, he bade the liberals at Lenoir City Godspeed while he branded Brad Green and Kent Bailey as the source of the division.

One of the amazing things about the new Wesley Simons is his "public" silence. Until Joshua Day tested the waters earlier this year, Wesley refused to allow his new doctrinal stance to be placed before the public eye. The great Wesley Simons has been as timid as a white-tipped Sicklebills. In 2001, Wesley was primed and ready

to debate Malcolm Hill on the issue of consistency in fellowship. In the January 2002 issue of *Defender*, Michael Hatcher asked Malcolm Hill the following questions because of Hill's refusal to debate Simons.

Why will brother Hill not debate brother Simons? Is there something that brother Hill does not want us to find out? Is there something that brother Simons knows about brother Hill that he does not want revealed? Brother Hill, what are you hiding? Brother Hill, come forth and accept the debate challenge to do exactly what you have challenged the "entire brotherhood" to do? Stop being a coward! (Hatcher, 2002).

The time has come to ask similar questions of Wesley Simons. Why does Simons refuse to defend what he now affirms to be the Truth? If Wesley now knows the Truth and can present that Truth with his apologetic skill, why will he not step forth and teach the brotherhood about his new found hope (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15)? If Wesley really loves the brotherhood and brethren on both sides of this issue, why does he bury his exegetical and polemical talent in the sand and allow this division to harden? What is it that we know about Wesley Simons that he wants to keep hidden? Wesley tried to fix this problem for the entire brotherhood through an unscriptural compromise. Now he claims to have new truth on the subject but PDF RESEARCHABLE wants to keep it hidden. Wesley, where are you and why are you hiding? Wesley are you ready to heal this ugly division? Please sign the following:

Resolved: *The Scriptures authorize the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders as taught by Dave Miller and practiced by the Brown Trail Church of Christ in 1990.*

Signed: _____ (Will you sign this Wesley?)

Resolved: *The Scriptures do not authorize the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders as taught by Dave Miller and practiced by the Brown Trail Church of Christ in 1990.*

Signed: s/Darrell Broking

When will the new Wesley Simons love the brotherhood enough to unveil his new doctrine and help the church to heal from the current division?

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-Alabama-

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.

-England-

Cambridgeshire—Ramsey Church of Christ, meeting at the Rainbow Centre, Ramsey, Huntingdon. Sun. 10, 11 a.m.; Wed. (Phone for venue and time); www.Ramsey-church-of-christ.org. Contact Keith Sisman, 001.44.1487.710552; fax:1487.813264 or Keith.Sisman.net. Research Website of 1,000 years of the British Church of Christ; www.Traces-of-the-kingdom.org and www.Myth-and-Mystery.org.

-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, ocoeechurchofchrist@yahoo.com, www.ocoecoc.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.

-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.

-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; tgjoriginal@verizon.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; djgoins@gmail.com.

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

New Braunfels—225 Saenger Halle Rd. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7:30 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.

-Wyoming-

Cheyenne—High Plains Church of Christ, 421 E. 8th St., Cheyenne, WY 82007, tel. (307) 638-7466, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tel. (307) 514-3394, evangelist: Roelf L. Ruffner

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