

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

FLORIDA SCHOOL OF PREACHING BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND/OR TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

David B. Watson

A published piece (of junk) appeared in the April 2009 issue of *The Harvester*, the official publication of the Florida School of Preaching in Lakeland, Florida entitled “To Whom It May Concern” (*The full statement appears following Watson’s article at the bottom of page 6.* —Editor). The piece began by stating:

Occasionally the Florida School of Preaching receives requests for information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given issue. The questions may come to a faculty member or a member of the Board of Directors.

I would certainly hope that the school would receive requests for information regarding the policy or position of the school since the school solicits the support of the brotherhood. In that very same issue of *The Harvester* Brian R. Kenyon published an article in which he solicited support for the school saying:

Since 1969, the Lord’s work through us has faithfully involved training men to preach the Gospel and preparing souls to better serve the Lord. We thank our supporters for making this possible. If you are not familiar with this work and would like to know more, feel free to contact the school. Gene Burgett or I would be happy to visit and inform you or your congregation.

Also, that very same issue of *The Harvester* printed “Special Thanks To Our Wonderful Supporters in February 2009,” naming “Florida Churches of Christ,” “Out of State

Churches of Christ,” “Individuals,” “Memorials,” and “Special Gifts” that were contributors to the school.

The published piece (of junk) continued:

One dismissed faculty member of years gone by addresses us through publications that we do not receive. However, others send it to us desiring that we see the great love and concern our former traveler has for us.

Would the “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by” happen to be brother Terry Hightower? Would “the publications that we do not receive” happen to include the *Defender*? Would the address happen to be brother Terry Hightower’s “Open Letter to Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board” that was published in the September 2008 issue of the *Defender*?

If so, the reference to brother Hightower as “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by” sounds very much like the attempts made by the Pharisees and lawyers who rejected the counsel of God against themselves (Luke 7:30) when they tried to discredit what John said by saying “**He hath a devil**” (Mat. 11:18; Luke 7:33). This snide remark concerning brother Hightower also sounds very much like the attempts made by those same Pharisees and lawyers who rejected the counsel of God against themselves (Luke 7:30) when they tried to discredit what Jesus said by saying that He was “**a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners**” (Mat. 11:19; Luke 7:34).

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

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

Editorial...

OF UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOOLS OF PREACHING

All properly concerned Christians are for obtaining as much correct Bible and related education as one can get. Assuredly this is the case with those who would be teachers of God's Word. The same is true regarding secular education. Freed-Hardeman University's motto, "How to live and how to make a living," ought to be the guiding philosophy for all educators no matter the subject matter taught or the school operated by the brethren. Of course, the emphasis should always be on spiritual matters rather than the affairs of this present world (Mat. 6:33). Sadly, and to her shame, F-HU has followed her higher education sisters' examples in moving ever so slowly away from the Old Paths of having Bible authority for all she believes and practices (Col. 3:17). This has been the case with the brethren's institutions of higher learning for many years and is nothing new.

Of such schools in the 19th Century we find the following recorded:

...L. F. Bittle pointed out as early as 1873 in his letters to Jacob Creath, it had...been the tendency of colleges to fall in line behind the popular sides of issues in the brotherhood. Colleges, as a general rule, will as a matter of policy pursue for a time a midway "safe" course until it is known which side will be the most popular, and then will jump with full force on that side.... Consciously or unconsciously, this has been the tendency. The reason is clear: colleges must have money to operate, and if they get too unpopular, they will not have enough funds to run [As quoted by Earl Irvin West, *The Search For The Ancient Order*, Vol. 2 (Ann Arbor: Cushing Malloy, Inc., 1950), p. 461]!

Although Bittle wrote 136 years ago, he wrote the truth about what is all too often the attitudes of the brethren who made up the university boards, administrations and faculties of the institutions of higher education operated by members of the churches of Christ then and now. In fact, when Bittle pointed out that "as a general rule" and "as a matter of policy" they, "for a time" pursue "a midway 'safe' course", he defined exactly what all too many brethren mean when they call for *balanced* preaching, *balanced* fellowship and *balanced* conduct. But, this "midway 'safe' course" loses sight of seeking truth for truth's sake in all issues and topics no matter the sacrifices one must undergo to find, uphold and defend it. *Nothing is balanced if it is based on something other than the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.*

It should be emphasized that Bittle also pointed out that these educational enterprises only remain "for a time" in what they consider to be a "midway 'safe' course." With all candor he tells us when they have determined which "side will be the most popular," they "will jump with full force on

that side....” Then, Bittle noted, “The reason is clear: colleges must have money to operate, and if they get too unpopular, they will not have enough funds to run.” Bittle was not just “whistling Dixie” when he made his astute observation about the thinking and conduct of those who operate the schools of higher education among the churches of Christ. For almost 200 years this has been the track record of such schools founded and operated by the brethren. *Does anyone think brethren will ever learn the lesson that should be obvious to anyone who can see through a ladder as to where such schools always end up in the scheme of things?*

The previous information about schools of the brethren is all very well known for those who are familiar with the history of the same. But, the schools of higher education are by no means the only educational institutions that are infected with this spiritual “swine flu”.

Take a good close look at the schools of preaching. The first schools of preaching were begun forty plus years ago to counteract the weaknesses found in the Bible departments of the colleges and to give older men an opportunity to study the Bible in a systematic and thorough manner. Today, more and more, they too are calling for *balance* that is best defined and understood when one considers where the brotherhood colleges stood about forty years ago. Although some of them are much farther down the apostasy trail than others, the preacher training schools are walking in the footsteps of their accredited big sisters in conducting themselves according to Bittle’s inciteful description of the colleges of his day in that they:

...as a matter of policy pursue for a time a midway “safe” course until it is known which side will be the most popular, and then will jump with full force on that side.... Consciously or unconsciously, this has been the tendency. The reason is clear: colleges must have money to operate, and if they get too unpopular, they will not have enough funds to run

By them the proverbial corner has been turned, and unless there is some quick and drastic work done to sever the gangrenous portions of these preacher training institutions, it is only a matter of time before such schools become nothing more or less than pastor factories for apostate churches.

As a general rule I seriously doubt that the elderships and boards governing these schools, along with their administrations, faculties and many of their supporters, have enough concern for right and wrong as the Bible defines and uses those terms to recognize the difference between unjust critics who seek their demise, from the just critics (their friends) who simply desire for the schools to be in harmony with the New Testament in all they do and teach. As far as they are concerned any criticism of them is destructive criticism, and must be opposed in such a way as to ruin their critics reputations. Washington political machinations have nothing on many of the school men who love to be called Rabbi and occupy the chief seats.

Thus, we are facing about the same thing today in the attitude of those operating the preacher training schools as we

did when I was a much younger preacher dealing with the wrong-headed attitude of the college people of that day.

With the general ignorance of the Bible, the disrespect for Bible authority, the lack of interest on the part of church members to learn how to ascertain the same and correctly apply it, the profound and stiff-necked ignorance and haughtiness of unqualified elders, the desire of the schools of preaching to pattern themselves after their higher education big sisters, and as the churches whose works these schools for the most part are, incrementally lower their standards in their attempts to keep members, we can expect things to get worse with them rather than better.

—David P. Brown, Editor



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Would Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board be willing to publish a full and complete account concerning the “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by”? Would Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board be willing to make it known that the “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by” was dismissed simply because he was ready to give an answer (1 Pet. 3:15) to every man that asked him a reason concerning his position on the subject of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? Would Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board also be willing to make it known that Jackie Stearsman holds and teaches the same position on the same subject as does the “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by”? Would Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board further be willing to make it known that the “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by” who was dismissed by the former Director of the school has since then been employed by the current Director of the school (Jackie Stearsman) to do “the Lord’s work” by “faithfully . . . training men to preach the Gospel and preparing souls to better serve the Lord?” Would Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board be willing to tell people that the “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by” has since then been repeatedly invited to write and speak for and on the Florida School of Preaching Lectureship? Would Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board be willing to document the fact that the “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by” has since then been used repeatedly to substitute teach for Brian Kenyon? Would the Florida School of Preaching Board members who are also elders of the South Florida Avenue congregation be willing to reveal the fact that they have repeatedly used the “one dismissed faculty members of years gone by” since then in a few VBS series for the South Florida Avenue congregation? *How hypocritical they are!*

Several years ago when I was serving as the Associate Editor of the original *Gospel Journal*, I received a published piece from Jackie Stearsman. The published piece was Stan Crowley’s Beeville, Texas lecture wherein he set forth his errors on the subject of marriage and divorce and remarriage. Jackie Stearsman called this published piece a “masterpiece.” Jackie Stearsman suggested that this piece be published in the original *Gospel Journal*. Now, if I were to stop right here and say no more concerning this incident I would be doing Jackie Stearsman a great disservice. It is true that I received a copy of Stan Crowley’s Beeville, Texas lecture from Jackie Stearsman. Further, it is true that Jackie Stearsman called this published piece a “masterpiece.” It is also true that Jackie Stearsman suggested that this piece be published in the original *Gospel Journal*. But, it is not true that Jackie Stearsman agreed with the material. Jackie Stearsman did all of this with sarcasm. Jackie Stearsman actually viewed the published piece of Stan Crowley as error. I am sure that Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board would not want to be done such a disservice. Yet they now do such a disservice to “one dismissed faculty member of years

gone by.” *How despicable!*

The published piece (of junk) went on to say: “However, others send it to us desiring that we see the great love and concern our former traveler has for us.” I believe that this statement is saturated with sarcasm. But whether it is or not, it is still the case that brother Hightower’s address did indeed express great love and concern for Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board. I quote from brother Hightower’s opening remarks:

Beloved Jackie and Board of the Florida School of Preaching: I pray that this Open Letter will be received with the recognition of my love for you and the school not as some hostile critic, but as one who has been privileged to teach for eight years part-time and two wonderful years (84-86) full-time at Florida School Of Preaching (hereafter FSOP), as one who has encouraged many persons over the years to contribute financially to this much-loved and valuable institution begun so many years ago by brother B. C. Carr, and as one who has even fairly recently encouraged a young man to move from Texas to central Florida to attend classes with you. Surely through your request that I write chapters for and return to speak at numerous FSOP lectureships you have implied and recognized my high regard for you and the school you oversee. Thus, you know that my attitude toward you is that of Paul’s when he wrote to the Galatian brethren: “So then am I become your enemy, by telling you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16).

Is this published piece (of junk) in *The Harvester* a display of the great love and concern that Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board of Directors have for brother Hightower? To say that the person who wrote this published piece (of junk) was/is lower than a snake’s belly might seem too harsh to some so instead I will quote the words of Jesus who said: “**Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers**” (Mat. 23:33).

Notice also that this published piece (of junk) called brother Hightower their “former traveler.” The Bible says that two cannot walk together except they be agreed (Amos 3:3). Obviously, Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board are admitting that they are no longer in agreement with brother Terry Hightower as they once were. The fact is that Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board have changed from the path that they once walked concerning fellowship of false teachers (like Dave Miller). That change of path is what prompted brother Hightower’s open letter.

The published piece (of junk) went on to state: “Each year at the annual lectureship, time is spent studying topics and responding to written questions on these topics.” Does this mean that “requests for information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given issue” will be addressed at the annual lectureship? Would Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board be willing to publish a full and complete account of the time a prospective student from Texas traveled to the Florida School of Preaching annual lectureship to request information regarding the policy and

position of the school of the given subject of fellowship of false teachers (like Dave Miller)? Would they be willing to reveal that the prospective student was, in a very unchristian like manner, told that his questions would not be answered at all? So much for Jackie Stearsman and/or the Florida School of Preaching Board responding Biblically to requests for information regarding the policy or position of the school on any given subject.

The published piece (of junk) next stated: “Those who are truly interested in the position of the school on a given issue may consult the school publication, *The Harvester*, for insight into such matters.” Would Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board be willing to publish a full and complete response in *The Harvester* to requests for information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given issue? The fact is that if they had done so there would have been no need for brother Hightower to write and publish his open letter. It is also a fact that since brother Hightower published his open letter Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board have made at least three attempts to “answer” brother Hightower in *The Harvester*. The first attempt was when they published an article by Wayne Jackson on “Church Controversies” in October 2008. That article had already received a review by brother Bruce Stulting in the September 2008 issue of *Contending For The Faith*. A second attempt was made when Jackie Stearsman published “Some Reflections On The Interrogation Of Jesus” in the same October 2008 issue. Obviously they were not satisfied with their first or second attempts so a the third attempt was made when Jackie Stearsman published his article “Is the Bible Vague? Can We Learn by Logical Implication?” in the November 2008 issue. Notice that all three of these articles are referenced in the published piece (of junk) under review.

The published piece (of junk) made the following claim: “It has been a principle of the school to avoid, as much as possible, the controversies that may arise from those whom the Board considers to be sowing discord among brethren.” This claim is known to be false to anyone who has any knowledge of the school since its beginning in 1969 under its original Director, brother B. C. Carr. Do the publishers of this piece (of junk) not know the history of the school they work for and with, or are they purposely ignoring the facts of history? A refresher course can be provided to them if needed.

This published piece (of junk) stated: “Men have been dismissed in the past from being faculty members whom the Board considered lacking in wisdom and unwilling to comply with the judgments of the Board and Director of the school.” Is this another reference to the “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by” in an attempt to discredit his open letter without even identifying him by name or having to deal with his request for information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given subject (such as fellowship of the false teacher Dave Miller)? What a smear tactic!

This published piece (of junk) continued: “Some who have spoken on lectures and even taught classes for the school

would not be used today. Why? Because the Board does not have confidence in them...” I can certainly understand why they do not want brother Terry Hightower or a number of other faithful brethren speaking on their lecturership or teaching classes for the school now since they know that he/they would expose their fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness as the Bible demands (Eph. 5:11). The fact is they do indeed have confidence that brother Hightower and other faithful brethren would obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). They do in fact have confidence that brother Hightower and other faithful brethren would be unwilling to comply with the judgments of the Board and Director of the school to extend fellowship to false teachers (like Dave Miller). They have not lost confidence in brother Hightower or in other faithful brethren. They have lost confidence in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11).

This published piece (of junk) further stated: “...and the Board will not be dominated by any individual or group of individuals whether near or from afar in whom the Board has no confidence.” Since when do “requests for information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given issue” constitute an attempt to “dominate”? The fact is that they cannot respond truthfully to requests for information regarding the policy or position of the school on the given issue of fellowship of false teachers (like Dave Miller) without involving themselves in obvious inconsistencies concerning their preaching and practice. Thus they claim that such requests coming from faithful former and prospective students, and from faithful former faculty members, and from faithful truly concerned brethren constitute an attempt to “dominate.” How pathetic!

The published piece (of junk) proclaimed: “When asked questions, we must make a judgment as to the purpose and objective of the questioner.” Jesus commanded that such a judgment be righteous and not be according to appearance (John 7:24). Yet they have made an unrighteous judgment concerning the “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by” and they have attempted to mislead the readers of their published piece (of junk) into making a judgment according to appearance concerning the “one dismissed faculty member of years gone by.” When they receive a request for information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given issue, why not just answer the question and then cite Bible to back it up? How hard is that for the Director and/or the Board and/or a faculty member of a school of preaching?

The published piece (of junk) declared: “However, we will not violate our conscience (Rom. 14:23; 1 John 3:20-22) in order to provide a momentary acceptance to those whom we do not trust or with whom we may have lost confidence.” This is an amazing statement! Are they now saying that if they respond to a request for information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given issue (such as fellowship of false teachers like Dave Miller) that such a response will violate their conscience and damn or condemn their souls (Rom. 14:23; 1 John 3:20-21)? Are they now saying that if

they respond to a request for information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given subject (such as fellowship of false teachers like Dave Miller) that a refusal to respond is actually according to God's commandments and is actually pleasing to God (1 John 3:22)? If that is what they are now saying then they have departed from the faith, they have given heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, they have started speaking lies in hypocrisy, and their conscience has been seared with a hot iron (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

The published piece (of junk) continued: "Therefore, when questions are ignored from the school administration or Board it should not be considered as cowardice, fearfulness, or ignorance." The questions of brother Hightower and others are obviously not being ignored. This is now the fourth time an attempt has been made to deal with them but not in the way that the Bible would demand. These men are not ignorant of what the Bible teaches. Their knowledge of what the Bible teaches is, in fact, the very reason they will not deal with the questions, as they should. But their actions do indicate cowardice and fearfulness.

The published piece (of junk) claimed: "Only one reason would keep the Board from responding to questions from any inquirer, 'The Board does not trust nor have confidence in the questioner'." What difference does it really make as to

whether the Board trusts the inquirer? What difference does it really make as to whether the Board has confidence in the person or persons making the request for information? Are Jackie Stearsman and the Florida School of Preaching Board claiming omniscience when it comes to making "a judgment as to the purpose and objective of the questioner"? The apostle Peter said: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

The published piece (of junk) concludes: "This is not a new policy, and it has characterized the school for forty years." This is not true! Their present policy is in fact a new policy. Their policy has not characterized the school for forty years. I know this from the following facts: I have been a student of the school; I am a graduate of the school; I am a former instructor for the school; I am a former director of an extension branch of the school; I am a former supporter of the school; I am a former speaker on the school lectureship program. I have been associated with the school since 1973 and thus go back to within just a few years of the schools beginning.

—2940Larkspur Ave
Middleburg, FL 32068



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

*Occasionally the Florida School of Preaching receives requests for information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given issue. The questions may come to a faculty member or a member of the Board of Directors. One dismissed faculty member of years gone by addresses us through publications that we do not receive. However, others send it to us desiring that we see the great love and concern our former traveler has for us. Each year at the annual lectureship, time is spent studying topics and responding to written questions on those topics. Those who are truly interested in the position of the school on a given issue may consult the school publication, *The Harvester*, for insight into such matters. *The Harvester* is published monthly, and it may be viewed in its printed form or at www.fsop.net, where back issues may be retrieved and read.*

It has been a principle of the school to avoid, as much as possible, the controversies that may arise from those whom the Board considers to be sowing discord among brethren. Men have been dismissed in the past from being faculty members whom the Board considered lacking in wisdom and unwilling to comply with the judgments of the Board and Director of the school. Some who have spoken on lectures and even taught classes for the school would not be used today. Why? Because the Board does not have confidence in them, and the Board will not be dominated by any individual or group of individuals whether near or from afar in whom the Board

*has no confidence. Again, principles that express this policy may be seen in published materials in our lectureships and from *The Harvester* items.*

*When asked questions, we must make a judgment as to the purpose and objective of the questioner. The Lord did not answer every question asked Him. (See *The Harvester*, October 2008.) He considered the source and answered accordingly. The Book of Proverbs abounds in admonitions to avoid becoming embroiled in the questions that service no good and in fact may cause harm. (See *The Harvester*, November 2008.) We realize this is a judgment matter, and our judgment may not be that of another. However, we will not violate our conscience (Rom. 14:23; 1 John 3:20-22) in order to provide a momentary acceptance to those whom we do not trust or with whom we may have lost confidence.*

Therefore, when questions are ignored from the school administration or Board it should not be considered as cowardice, fearfulness, or ignorance. Only one reason would keep the Board from responding to questions from any inquirer, "The Board does not trust nor have confidence in the questioner." This is not a new policy, and it has characterized the school for forty years. It has governed the afternoon forums during the lectureships, and it will characterize questions posed to us either in person or in writing.

—***FSOP BOARD OF DIRECTORS***

A CLASSIC DEMONSTRATION OF *AD HOMINEM*

Terry M. Hightower

A Florida School of Preaching article entitled “TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN” was published in the April 2009 volume of *The Harvester*, a paper that I was entrusted to put out for about two years when I was a full-time instructor there. Though no personal name is attached, I must assume this article (included in full in this issue of *CFTF* at the bottom of page 6) was written by the Director on behalf of the Board of Directors, given the points made and its style of writing. It would have been much more admirable and courageous to have signed it, leaving no doubt as to its authorship, but I (and others) have found out of late that these two traits seem to be in short supply with some brethren who are part of (or aligned with) this school. Before reaching this point in its history, this institution has in the past done much good for the Lord’s church. I have known and loved the majority of these brethren for many years and will always remember their fellowship and the great opportunities afforded to me as a part-time instructor for eight years and especially the privilege and honor which was mine to work with them full-time from 1984-1986. While there are some names of Board members which are new to me, I note with fondness the names of brethren Jackie Stearsman, Brian Kenyon, Gene Burgett, Ted Wheeler, Gordon Methvin, J.H. Blackman, George (Kenny) French, Robert McAnally, Bill Norton, and Phillip Lancaster. I have shed literal tears over this matter. Once again, this article is being written by me with the attitude set out in my open letter in *Defender* back in September of last year: “**So then am I become your enemy, by telling you the truth?**” (Gal. 4:16).

Questions and Answers?

The generic article begins by saying:

Occasionally the Florida School of Preaching receives requests for information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given issue. The questions may come to a faculty member or a member of the Board of Directors.

Yes, and this is in accordance with the Biblical principle of sanctifying in your hearts Christ as Lord by “**being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear**” (1 Pet. 3:15). Thus, the Bible does not uphold “stonewalling” (i.e. behaving in an obstructive, uncooperative manner, as by refusing to answer when questioned). But strangely, in e-mails written by myself and others (who also had earlier close connections with FSOP) wherein we simply asked for information regarding the policy or position of the school in regard to the Director of Apologetics Press in Montgomery, Alabama—namely, brother Dave Miller—instead of being given answers, we were met for the most part with silence. No matter how hard we tried, we were unable to get answers to three simple questions concerning where FSOP

stood with regard to the given issues of: (1) elder re-evaluation and reaffirmation, (2) the Biblical doctrine of intent as it applied to MDR, and (3) if one’s support, defense, and fellowship of Mac Deaver in his teaching of a Direct Operation of the Spirit upon the heart of a saint constituted grounds for disfellowship.

All of these related centrally, of course, to Dave Miller. I did receive from bro. Jackie a forwarded statement written by bro. Miller which I had already seen and studied and knew to be not only inadequate, but actually contradictory to his previous verbalizations and practice in regard to Eldership R & R (as it has come to be called). [It is not merely a theoretical doctrine, but a damnable one which has caused Biblical elders to be “voted out” of congregations wherein they once served]. Provision was made of the contrary evidence and proof to Jackie and others employed by FSOP. The mystery is how and why previously right thinking FSOP brethren are determined to “stay with” bro. Miller in his false positions, especially my friends Jackie, Gene, and Brian! I have even made the offer that two or three of us would be willing to fly to Lakeland at our own expense to go over the facts of the matter—with or without Dave Miller’s presence. Documentation has been provided in the form of a CD [see the free offer of this elsewhere in this issue—Editor] directly to the South Florida eldership which owns the building where the school meets, including a letter from the founding Director of FSOP in which the late bro. Carr agrees with us that Dave Miller is in error!

What’s Going On Here?

Could it just be, folks, that the reason the FSOP Board refuses to answer my three simple questions asked of them in my open letter (appearing in *Defender* of September, 2008) is because either the school: (1) upholds false doctrine in regard to the three issues addressed and is in agreement with Miller, or (2) knows that while they are in disagreement with Miller with regard to these same issues—they are involved in a contradictory practical application of fellowshiping him and his sympathizers in spite of such disagreement? [Who can imagine B.C. Carr by word or practice declaring that Eldership R & R, MDR as to intent to marry, and the teaching of a Direct Operation of the Spirit as being NON-Heaven/Hell issues?]. Unless certain folks also repented of their error, I recognize that the school’s relationship with several well-known brethren would be forced to change—namely, FSOP’s relationship with every brother who signed the infamous Letter of Support for Apologetics Press. Since 2005 I have almost been forced to conclude that Jesus was not the only one “**who did no sin**” (1 Pet. 2:22), but that this number also includes such “untouchable” signees as Tom Holland, Winford Claiborne,

Earl Edwards, William Woodson, and Jody Apple. Though the Board seems to have no real problem cutting me off (or anyone who dares question their positions), one wonders just what it would take, or if it is even in the realm of possibility, for them to censure ANY of these brethren (who have never been on the faculty and thus lack the emotional ties and background with the school that some of us possess). I realize also that the school's relationship would be required to courageously change toward former graduates like Ryan Roark, who has chosen to have Dave Miller speak at his lectureship with bro. Jackie Stearsman for the past two years, and which in 2008 included Jackie's son—FSOP graduate David Stearsman—who works with Jody Apple in Pennsylvania.

Ad Hominem?

Common to all arguments that commit Fallacies of Relevance is that they are logically irrelevant to their conclusion. The phrase *argumentum ad hominem* translates literally as "arguments directed to the man." "To the man" referring to the speaker or writer, instead of being directed to the point at issue. Its structure takes the form "P is false." "Why is P false?" "Because he who asserts P is a certain kind of person." In its Abusive form, the second person responds to the first person's argument by verbally abusing that person. In a classic demonstration of this, the author of said article in *The Harvester* wrote:

One dismissed faculty member of years gone by addresses us through publications that we do not receive. However, others send it to us desiring that we see the great love and concern our former traveler has for us...Men have been dismissed in the past from being faculty members whom the Board considered lacking in wisdom and unwilling to comply with the judgments of the Board and Director of the school.

[If these good brethren will treat me in such fashion, I would certainly hate to be one asking questions as an outsider!].

One will notice that certain "negative facts" are left out of this pejorative presentation. First, given the fact that numerous previous attempts to receive "information regarding the policy or position of the school on a given issue" by means of the Director, Co-Director, and the Director of Public Relations involved the "sounds of silence," just about the only avenue left for me or others (e.g., Dave Watson and Gene Hill) to pursue was by an Open Letter. As I remember it, a *Defender* (and *CFTF, Editor*) bundle used to come to the school to be distributed to students, but now I suppose a lot of "screening" must go on in materials made available to them. Second, the fact of the school and South Florida Avenue church USING me during the many years since my "dismissal" is conveniently ignored. Reference was perhaps made to my "motormouth," but not once in being introduced at the FSOP lectureship was I ever referred to as a "dismissed faculty member of years gone by." Third, the fact of MY using brethren Jackie and Gene with their full fellowship during those same years as lectureship writers and speakers is also overlooked. One thing for sure, I deny being dismissed for being unwilling to comply with the Board and Director of the school, a fact that anyone who was then involved already

knows. I did lack the wisdom to see that by upholding my own view of the indwelling of the Spirit when challenged and refuting differing views would lead to my dismissal.

Ad hominem (abusive) occurs whenever a person has given up attempting to persuade a person or an audience as to the logical or Biblical reasonableness of a position and is now resorting to mere personal attacks (cf. John 8:41; 9:34). As one logician says:

A person who can only make their case by attacking others probably doesn't have much of a case to begin with. Something objectionable is identified [and in this case resurrected from the burial vault of time!—tmh] about a person and the arguer then goes on to conclude that, just because of this objectionable fact, what they say about a particular topic should be ignored. Instead of showing where a person has made an error in any of his statements, the 'argument' simply attacks them for who they are, and claims dismissal of anything said without even considering it. But this objectionable fact is not related to the subject at hand.

It is a subtle attempt to undermine the person viewed as the attacker. Abusive ad hominem attempts to make someone appear suspicious, ridiculous, or just inconsistent, whereby people will start focusing on that rather than anything else. Thus, the argument is based on the failings of the adversary rather than on the merits of the case, and is committed when one engages in a personal attack as a means of ignoring, discrediting, or blunting the force of another's argumentation. Jackie, I know that you, Gene, and Brian know exactly what abusive ad hominem involves!

Did the reader see the shameful, subtle attack upon motives inherent in the facetious statement about other brethren who sent *Defender* "to us desiring that we see the great love and concern our former traveler has for us"? Also, notice this statement: "Those who are truly interested in the position of the school on a given issue may consult the school publication, *The Harvester*, for insight into such matters (emphasis mine—tmh)" The Bible teaches that only God can look upon and absolutely know the motives of the human heart (1 Sam. 16:7; John 2:24-25). How does the author or anyone else on the Board know that I do not have a great love and concern for FSOP, or if I am "truly interested in the position of the school"?

If to question or to criticize the school is a betrayal of

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love and concern, even when it involves telling the faculty and Board the truth, please explain to me the principle of the watchman's warning of Ezekiel 33:7-9. Fact is, if I am right about Apologetics Press and Dave Miller, then I am among the best friends FSOP has! One gets used to rank liberal brethren using similar abusive tactics and motive judgments, but he does not expect it from one's longtime friends who have always desired Bible authority for what they preach and practice. So far as I know, the motives of the Board derive from their love and concern for the school, just as do mine. So let us get on to the Bible and the facts wherein we differ, and dispense with "couching the contender" by means of abusive ad hominem statements. I HAVE consulted *The Harvester*, but failed to find information there which set out the position of the school on either Eldership R & R or marriage intent as related to MDR. I did find one article by the Director opposing a Direct Operation of the Spirit as error, but this flies in the face of the school's practice of presently koshering Dave Miller, who says that since brethren have differed on this issue, it, therefore, should NOT be made a test of fellowship.

Sowing Discord Among Brethren?

The FSOP article continued by saying that "It has been a principle of the school to avoid, as much as possible, the controversies that may arise from those whom the Board considers to be sowing discord among brethren." I have noticed over the years that when one demonstrates their error, rank liberals are quick to use the old "you're sowing discord" mantra of Proverbs 6:19. Some on the Board will no doubt remember that Milo Hadwin did exactly that when B.C. Carr, James Huggins and I proved publicly his (and his brother's) doctrine to be false in a face-to-face confrontation. The school could never be rightfully accused of "witch-hunting," but when error reared its ugly head—be it Crossroadism/Bostonism, the Soul-Winning Workshop in Orlando, or other damnable falsehoods, FSOP stood tall in its opposition to such. I only hope the Board recognizes as do I about myself, that its consideration and declaration that a brother is sowing discord WITH NO EVIDENCE OR PROOF amounts to nothing more than an empty Vatican papal bull and is in fact a form of bearing false witness (Luke 18:20). The true principle for which FSOP has stood is that all division is not wrong, and that some division is demanded by the Bible (Rom. 16:17-18; Eph. 5:11). Without evidence, this whole approach amounts to nothing more than another exercise in an additional use of a Fallacy of Relevance in which the Board misuses its God-derived position by An Appeal to Authority which takes this form: "Source A says that P; Source A is authoritative; Therefore, P is true." ACU did much the same with its in-house investigation of a brother who accused them (rightfully as it turned out) of teaching evolution and they also resorted to an ad hominem attack on their accuser. Presentation of Scripture coupled with the facts would be much better, then and now.

When Does FSOP Lose Confidence?

The article then goes on to affirm that some who have spoken and even taught classes for the school would not be used today because the Board does not have confidence in them. But when did the Board lose confidence in this evil old "dismissed faculty member"? Jackie, was it when you asked me to write chapters and speak at the annual lectureship? Was it when you asked me to write a front-page *Harvester* article as a tribute to the passing of Thomas B. Warren in 2000? Was it when before I left Florida in 2004 you asked me about my willingness to preach your funeral? Gene, was it when I was asked to recommend logic books and materials for your classes? Was confidence lost when I repeatedly invited both of you to write and speak on lectureships which I directed? Brian, was it when you wrote in February of 2004:

Greetings my brother! Thank you very much for "filling in" while I was gone. The students thoroughly enjoyed the classes (and were amazed that you quit on time!). You are a blessing for us to have nearby. I will be singing the blues if and when you go back to the Lone Star State....Again, I appreciate and love you, brother!?

I might ask Ted Wheeler at what point he lost confidence in me—was it sometime AFTER I sent boxes of free lectureship books to you for distribution in Ghana? Speaking of these books, perhaps someone needs to remove from the school website's "Textbooks and Materials" pages the listing of my two volumes on Rightly Dividing the Word lest anyone might get confused in this matter of your confidence in me.

It is surely a shameful thing to allege with regard to myself, David Watson, or Gene Hill that "When asked questions, we must make a judgment as to the purpose and objective of the questioner. The Lord did not answer every question asked Him...He considered the source and answered accordingly", as if we were prevaricators and longtime opposers—even haters of the school. I have found that from merely asking some simple doctrinally-oriented questions of the powers that be, one can morph from being a "blessing" into an ogre. It is at least possible that some questions are not answered, not because said questioner is serving no good and in fact may be causing harm, but because the questions cannot be answered without contradicting one's practice (Mat. 21:24-25; Luke 11:19). It seems that you had complete confidence in me up until the point that I asked serious questions about Dave Miller.

Reversal of Blame

What is happening here is not unlike the Old Testament cases of Potiphar's wife and that of King Ahab. You will remember that the good captain's wife explained to the men

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of the house what had transpired between Joseph and herself in exactly the reverse of how it really happened (Gen. 39:14-16). Joseph was to be blamed, not her! Similarly, Ahab tells Elijah: "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" (1 Kings 18:17) to which Elijah rightfully responds by answering: "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed the Baals" (18:18). Instead of using FSOP's evasive tactics (i.e., excuses), at a later put-up-or-shut-up meeting between himself and the false prophets followed by Ahab, Elijah PROVED who was the actual troubler of Israel. To merely repeat phrases such as "whom the Board considers...the judgments of the Board...the Board does not have confidence in them...those whom we do not trust or with whom we have lost confidence" is not only to set up the Board as if it is the final arbiter of truth but to invert reality as to whose confidence has rightfully been shaken. The question for those who know the Bible and can see the practice of the school is whether sound brethren can or ought to still have confidence in FSOP! Jackie, I can just imagine your response if Chuck Lucas and the Crossroads elders had responded to your written materials as you have done above! Just substitute "Chuck and the elders" in place of "the Board" above in order to see your error. It is true that the Board runs the school, not me, just as it is true that elders run the church. But we best remember that God is going to judge both the Board and elders by Christ's Word (John 12:48).

Is It Really "Much Ado About Nothing"?

Perhaps the most upsetting statement in this entire article is: "We realize this is a judgment matter, and our judgment may not be that of another." Do we have in this statement the Board's real answer to the three questions asked of them? I flatly deny that Eldership R and R or either of the other two issues questioned are to Biblically end up as mere matters of judgment! I am certain many others in our brotherhood will agree with this assessment and until and unless this situation is cleared up by you, no attempted transfer of blame over onto myself (or Dave Watson or Gene Hill) will alleviate the troubled spot into which you have placed yourselves. Are you brethren so weak as to say and really mean it, that "the Board will not be dominated by any individual or group of individuals whether near or from afar?" Can three easily answered Biblical questions "dominate" you? Buck up and face the real issue like men, instead of attempting a cheap campaign of character assassination. When you do this, I have great hope of a reconciliation based upon truth. Despite my differences with you, I will always love you for what you have meant to and done for me.

—P.O. Box 244
Vega TX 79092.



THE SIN OF BEING NEUTRAL

B. C. Carr
(deceased)

If there was ever a time for men to be taking a stand for Truth and right, it is now. The church is facing troublesome times in its battle against sin in the face of a new liberalism and softness toward doctrinal error. We see efforts of brethren on every side trying to take a neutral stand. They think they can win the struggle for right by failing to take a stand. Evidently, they feel that by being quiet the devil will go away. Not so.

Recently, in a forum discussion, I received a question, supposedly from an elder, wanting to know if elders should occupy a neutral position on such things as which version and the marriage and divorce dilemma. This shows the soft thinking of those who are trying to walk on both sides of the fence concerning truth and error. I believe this to be sinful. It is time for those who want to be on the Lord's side to take a stand for Truth. Read Exodus 33:26.

THE SIN OF BALAAM

You will recall that the prophet Balaam tried to be neutral, but failed. Balak wanted him to place a curse against God's

people. Balaam knew, and confessed, that he must speak that which the Lord put in his mouth (Numbers 23:12). At the same time, he seemingly wanted to please Balak. Balak's doctrine is stated in Numbers 23:25, "And Balak said to Balaam, neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all."

Strange as it may seem, this is the philosophy espoused by many preachers and church members today. They want to straddle the fence or walk on top of it so as to appease all parties. This cannot be done. We are either for the Lord or against Him (Matthew 12:30).

Let it be understood, we are not talking about personal disputes where there is the possibility of both parties being in the wrong. Instead, we are thinking of doctrinal matters. For instance, one preacher said that he is not a premillennialist, but neither was he "anti-premillennial." Another has said, he was not advocating instrumental music, but that he was not "anti-instrumental music." There are many who would disclaim false doctrine in their own preaching, but they will embrace those in fellowship who teach and preach false

doctrines. Brethren, let us get off the fence.

THE SIN OF PILATE

When Jesus was brought before Pilate, this Roman governor knew that our Lord had done nothing worthy of death. He knew that for envy the Jews had delivered Him, but the mob cried, "Let him be crucified." In an attempt to appear neutral (and perhaps to soothe a guilty conscience), Pilate took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person."

Brother, tell me, was Pilate really innocent? We have for a long time accused this man of being guilty of moral cowardice. This was one of the sins that crucified Jesus. When we allow the Word of God to be trampled underfoot today and show contempt for the blood of the covenant are we any less guilty? It's time for us to get off the fence and take a stand for Truth.

THE SIN OF MEROZ

In Judges 5:23, we read, "**Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;**

because they came not to the help of the Lord, to help the Lord against the mighty." God's people were in a battle for their lives. God was mightily concerned, but where was the house of Meroz? They were still abiding in their sheepfolds. They were content to remain idle and let others do the fighting, but God was displeased. He ordered a curse be placed against them.

What was their sin? The same as many of our brethren today. They wanted to remain neutral. They wanted others to do their fighting.

There are those even now who will not join in the battle against error in the church. They look upon themselves as lovers of peace. They even become critical of those who are known as "fighters" or "brotherhood watchdogs." Some of these are trying to do a balancing act on the fence of neutrality. If the truth prevails on some issue and error is exposed to the point that it is unpopular, they will fall off on the side of the majority and proudly claim, "We have won the victory"—yes, and "we killed a bear, but papa shot it."

—*The late director of The Florida School of Preaching.*



A WARNING TO ALL!

Roelf L. Ruffner

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:11-12).

The apostle Paul was dealing with any human activity which involves shameful or sinful conduct. In our age it certainly applies to the homosexual lifestyle. For almost forty years the homosexual agenda has been to gain full acceptance of their sexual perversion by society. Using their sympathizers in the media and politics they have surmounted the many barriers of decency which American society once had in place. The homosexual "community" is now a force to be reckoned with in our nation. They have vast amounts of money and influence at their command.

One of the main goals in their political agenda is to have themselves legally listed as a "minority" along with racial and ethnic groups. They would then use this designation to have all resistance to their activities listed as a "hate crime" and so prosecute and silence their opponents. This is already underway in Canada, Australia and Western Europe where critics of this filthy lifestyle are heavily fined and even imprisoned by "Human Rights Commissions." It is about to happen in the United States of America UNLESS we, the people, speak up.

A few weeks ago the majority political party in the U.S. House of Representatives used its muscle to ram through a monstrosity called the "Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Act." It would punish anyone (including preachers of the Gospel) who spoke out against homosexual behav-

ior or any of the other 30 acts of sexual deviancy listed. If, for example, someone heard me preach (or read an article of mine) against these sins, then went out and committed a violent crime against someone because of their supposed "sexual orientation," I could be fined, imprisoned or both. Brethren, this is the reality we face!

I thank God our Founding Fathers saw fit to slow the legislative process by having two houses of government which a bill must pass through before going to the President's desk. Presently this bill has been introduced in the United States Senate under the name of "The Matthew Shepherd's Hate Crimes Act" or S.909. Our President has already said that he is ready to sign this bill into law if it reaches his desk.

As a preacher of the Gospel I humbly request that each of you do the following:

1. Pray that this bill be defeated and pray for our nation and its leaders.
2. E-mail your Senators at www.senate.gov.
3. Encourage everyone you know to do the same.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov.14:34).

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

—421 East Eighth Street
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82007

SECULARISM—AN IMPORTANT DEFINITION

Jed Babbin

“Secularism is a euphemism for a set of beliefs that are the antithesis of faith. Boiled down to its basic elements, secularism is man’s subordination of morality to his own earthly judgments, scientific and otherwise. ...[T]he secularist catechism holds that truth is subjective, relative or contextual; because it demands that rationality can solve moral and ontological questions about man’s nature, that discrimination is the greatest of all evils and that patriotism is the only social disease that isn’t sexually-transmitted. ... Obama’s thesis ... is that our moral code can exist in the absence of a religious foundation. ...[S]ecularism – and its cousin, multiculturalism – are the primary causes of the weakening of western society at a most dangerous time in history. The

weakness results ... because secularism turns the bedrock of western society – the moral code derived from Judeo-Christian faith – into sand. By divorcing our societies from faith, we render every man’s morality equal to every other’s, and thus make them all valueless. When President Obama says we are a nation bound by ideals and values, he postulates an impossibility: where do those secular ideals and values come from if – as liberal dogma requires – every man makes up his own?” (From “Secularism vs. Civitas” in *Human Events*, 5/13/2009, <http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=31827>)
[Mr. Babbin is the editor of *Human Events* and HumanEvents.com. E-mail: jbabbin@eaglepub.com.]



“RELATIONSHIP; NOT RELIGION” (?)

Brad Green

While driving past a denomination’s lit message sign I recently read the following, “Relationship; Not Religion.” Many different versions of this sentiment exist, but all attempts convey the same idea. The concept being promoted by the denominations that post this message is that religion, or your beliefs, faith, and practice, are not what’s important here; what’s important to us is personal relationships (i.e., social networking and interaction). This “doctrine” is one espoused by many in the religious world in order to “fill the pews” and increase the number in attendance on Sunday mornings. The message, “Relationship; Not Religion,” informs would-be visitors that they will not be “harassed” by anyone to conform to a single standard, that God says is the New Testament (John 12:48). Neither will they be asked any questions about their spiritual relationship with God. They will only be comforted and welcomed without any regard to their religious beliefs and practices.

No one attending our services has been or ever will be harassed or badgered, but we do humbly and unapologetically teach that Jesus is **“the way, the truth, and the life”** and no man can come to the Father without being obedient to Him (John 14:6, emphasis B.G.). The “Relationship; Not Religion” is, in and of itself, a religion that allows a congregation to accept gladly into fellowship anyone, including those who are living in adultery, those who have been Scripturally withdrawn from, and those who teach and practice things that are not in harmony with God’s Word. If this sounds eerily familiar, sadly, it is because some one-time faithful churches of Christ are now practicing this doctrine that is heavily publicized by the denominations. The denominational mind-set is that adherence to God’s Law is unnecessary and too burdensome (cf. Mat. 11:28-30) and should be

replaced with the more palatable “do what you want as long as you don’t tell me I’m wrong” philosophy and “just enjoy the development of personal relationships and friendships while you are here.”

A saved relationship with the Lord is extremely important in God’s plan, but not divorced from the teaching and practice of the Truth (John 17:17). Our first priority must be to have a right relationship with God. The Bible teaches that one “gets right with God” when he obeys the Gospel – hearing the Word (Rom. 10:17), believing it (Heb. 11:6), repenting of one’s sins (Luke 13:3), confessing one’s faith that Christ is God’s Son (Rom. 10:9-10), and being baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16). This is God’s plan that all must believe and obey in order to be saved and thereby reconciled to Him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-19). The Bible also teaches that one stays “right with God” by remaining faithful to the commands and teachings of the New Testament pertaining to living the Christian life (1 John 1:6-10; Rev. 2:10). All individuals who obey the Gospel are added by God to the church of Christ (Acts 2:47) and are all in fellowship with one another because of their obedience to God (1 John 1:7) and because **“all speak the same thing,”** there are no divisions in matters of RELIGION (beliefs and practice) and all are “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). This is God’s plan for relationships and religion. The denominational doctrine, “Relationship; Not Religion,” is foreign to God and is another tool of the Devil to separate men from the soul-saving Truth of God’s Word (Rom. 1:16).

—P O Box 22441
Knoxville, TN 37933

“...a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God ...”
(Titus 1:7)

ELDERS: Who Are These Men?

Elders and Deacons (6)

“...the saints in Christ Jesus ... with the bishops and deacons” — Phil. 1:1

The lament, so often heard, is that “*the preacher is doing the elders’ work, the elders are doing the deacons’ work, and the deacons have nothing to do!*” It is obvious that could not be said of the condition of the church in every place, but it is clearly true that it can be said of the church in some places - and it is a shame! If God has provided for all of these functions within the Kingdom, then there is work for all to do. If the above criticism is true, then the greater fault does not rest with the deacons, but with the elders! We hope, in this part of our study, to state some things and make some suggestions that can be of aid to those places where the parties wish to do better.

Deacons Are Servants: Specially Selected

The word “*deacon*” is “*servant*,” and thus one doing the work of a deacon is “*erving*.” But, every child of God is a “*servant*” of God; every member of the church is one who renders “*service*.” In this regard, one chosen to be a deacon in the church has already been “*in service*” to God and indeed, he must have already demonstrated that prior to his being selected as a deacon! (1 Tim. 3:8-13 and especially noting verse 10).

All of God’s children being “*servants*,” and deacons themselves being “*servants*,” means that from the gathering of servants making up the congregation, these men are chosen to be “*servants specially selected*” to do work above and beyond that laid upon every member of the church, with such work being given them by the elders. And once more, the point on such work **TAKING TIME!** If one cannot give the time and/or will not make the time to put the Kingdom first and truly **SERVE** as a deacon, he should refuse the work when it is offered to him! Deacons are **TO SERVE!**

At Their Appointment, Deacons Have No Work To Do!

As of the day deacons are appointed, they are servants especially chosen, but when two or twelve of them are announced to the congregation as being deacons “*as of this day*,” they still have no work to do! The work must be **assigned** to them, and this is the task of the elders. No congregation should have a deacon who does not have some assigned responsibility in the ongoing work of the Kingdom at that place.

Thus, elders should insure that deacons have some assigned work, and there should be a meeting of the elders with the deacons with some frequency. Those

meetings should have as their main purpose the getting of reports from the deacons as to the work accomplished in their assigned areas, and then to give them further assignments. We are not stating that elders should not hear from the deacons as to suggestions and recommendations concerning the overall work of the church. Indeed, make time for that. After all, deacons and their families are members of the congregation, and from the deacons the elders can get an idea of the “*pulse*” of the congregation. Many worthwhile suggestions can thus be made before the elders.

We would suggest to elders these things, as pertains to deacons and their meetings with them:

- (1) Have those meetings, and let it be understood that reports from the deacons (and assignments of new work) will be the main item on the agenda. After these, perhaps then some general discussions.
- (2) Do not make the deacons elders for that hour. This has been done in some places where the elders always met with the deacons, and there was equal expression given on matters from elders, with deacons then “*out-voting*” the elders! Elders should hear any recommendations and suggestions, making notes of it all, and then have it understood that they will weigh it and make a decision on it, as elders! Deacons are not overseers!

Suggested Areas Of Work for Deacons

Most certainly, this is not an exhaustive list, and an item being on the list certainly does not mean that a particular task could not be done by another man of the congregation, even though he has not been selected as a deacon! The list contains items of work we have known to be assigned to deacons:

- (1) Teaching of some classes
- (2) Maintenance: buildings. grounds
- (3) Treasurer of the congregation
- (4) Seeing to teacher/classroom needs
- (5) Buying of materials needed for the church
- (6) Seeing to ordering and placement of literature
- (7) Maintaining a list of teachers, approved by the elders, to obtain substitutes and fill-ins
- (8) Work in evangelistic and/or hospital visitation
- (9) Taking care of printing needs
- (10) Seeing to the answering of benevolent calls
- (11) Maintaining lists of those available for various forms of service: Singing at funerals, sitting up with the sick, shut-ins, etc.
- (12) Taking class and worship attendance counts, or seeing that such is done.

- (13) Maintaining the permanent attendance records
- (14) Seeing to song books, attendance cards, etc. in the auditorium
- (15) Seeing that ushers are on hand, and functioning
- (16) Being in charge of men who will serve at the Lord's table, read Scripture, word prayers (and from lists approved by, and frequently updated by, the elders)
- (17) Making announcements and themselves participating in the worship along with the other men
- (18) Aiding in the counting of the contribution, and perhaps one deacon responsible for making the deposits
- (19) Dividing up and seeing to performed tasks at called work periods
- (20) Seeing to the ordering of, and placement of, books for the church library.

As previously stated, some of these tasks will be given to those not appointed as deacons, and some of these (library work, some work at the building, some benevolence and sitting with ladies, ordering of class literature, etc.) may be given to capable ladies of the congregation. We are merely suggesting the range of works open for assignment to deacons, and really, IS THERE A PLACE WHERE THERE IS NO WORK FOR DEACONS TO DO? No, the answer is that there are some places where the elders have not as yet assigned deacons the work they should be doing!

Some Brief Warnings

(1) Deacons are not overseers. We have stated the point before, but it is important enough to mention again, especially when we still hear some of our men, in prayer, state, that the Lord should *"bless the elders and deacons as they oversee the work here."*

(2) Being a deacon is not necessarily a step toward the eldership. It is true that very often one who has faithfully served as a deacon, and has developed in every spiritual way, and has demonstrated his ability to lead his children to the Christ, etc" has so been of influence; that it has become clear that he should be considered to serve as an elder. Our caution here is that no deacon should

consider that he is in a line that will automatically lead him to the eldership.

(3) We would advise against an elder training class" – Yea, why follow any course that will make tremendous problems? Those in the congregation should be advised as to the eldership: The men, their qualifications, and their work, through the general Bible class and pulpit teaching that is done. A few places have tried the *Elder's Training Class*, to find that some men (or their families) think in terms of the "diploma" being appointment to the eldership! Then, in process of time, when a man in the class is appointed, comes the criticism, *"They're appointing Herman as an elder, when my Henry also took the course! If Herman's appointed, then Henry should be!"* It is far, far better that the instruction be given in the normal teaching work of the congregation, and wherein all are given the same Biblical information. Some common sense is always helpful as we work in the Kingdom, and among people!

As God planned the church from eternity (Eph. 5: 10-11), he planned those to function therein: Saints, elders, deacons (Phi. 1:1). When elders are appointed, they have a great spiritual work to do, and should not be burdened down with many of the details needing attending to day-by-day. God, in His wisdom, has ordained deacons, and thus the elders have servants specially selected to function under their oversight. They should have work to do, and on a permanent basis, and should be required to give accounting regarding the work. Then, they will TRULY be deacons, and not just deacons *in name only.*"

—Deceased

"If you wish to be miserable, you must think about yourself, what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay you, and what people think of you."

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“SUCH A GOOD PREACHER”

Alton W. Fonville

It was when I tried to point out the error in so many denominational preachers when I was quite young that I first remember hearing the statement serving as the title of this article. As you started to show their teachings regarding “baptism,” for instance, some one would come back at you with, “but, he’s such a good preacher.” I guess that comment meant that since he was “such a good preacher,” he was immune from being in error? Through the years since then, I have heard the same statement used many times in referring to gospel preachers. And, sometimes, it was the end of the discussion.

The very disturbing thing about that statement, since we now have so many “good preachers,” is the fact that I finally realized the truth of the matter. People equate a good orator with “truthfulness.” If he has a good voice and can persuade the audience, he is considered to be a “good preacher,” whether or not he can speak the truth. This was well demonstrated when the Jews brought along Tertullus, their best “orator,” when Paul was brought before Felix to defend himself (Acts 24). He had a way with words and was very “smooth,” yet, the whole truth was not presented.

We have had some “good sounding” preachers in the world around us. Billy Graham was a good preacher in the sight of the denominations. Oral Roberts was a “good preacher.” Jerry Falwell was a “good preacher.” Pat Robertson, J. Frank Norris, Charles Spurgeon, T.L. Wilkinson and many others have been good orators. The point that I would like to make clear in this article is how wrong I have been in stopping short on my arguments when that statement was made. Instead of taking it and running with it, the matter was discontinued. Shame on me!

Every one of the previously listed “good preachers” were and are not such. And, how can I say that about such well known men? Read carefully the following words. When one professes to speak for Almighty God, but refuses to preach the “whole counsel” of God, he is NOT a “good preacher.” Each of the previously listed men did not and do not teach on certain subjects, but they have wrested and do twist the Scriptures in order to make them mean something other than what they do. Such a person is not God’s man.

Jesus Christ gave us the best example. He spoke the very words which God gave him to speak. During his ministry, he often declared, “I came to do thy will, Oh God.” This should be the attitude of every “good preacher.” But, we see in the Lord’s kingdom today, men who profess to be ministers of God, who are actually serving themselves and keeping their jobs. Some of these men openly refuse to teach on certain subjects for fear of their jobs. Others refuse to preach on them because it is a “controversial subject,” as Graham has said so many times.

But, in the present apostasy of the Lord’s body, it is especially heart-breaking to see so many of our members defend a preacher who refrains his tongue from certain subjects by saying, “but he is such a good preacher.” When our preachers fail to teach the truth about fellowship,” as 2 John 9-11, Ephesians 5:11, and Romans 16:17 teach us. It matters not how eloquent their speeches may sound, they are not “good preachers.” When they refuse to speak the Truth of God about marriage and divorce, fornication, adultery, covetousness, immodesty, drinking, use of drugs, homosexuality, stealing, lasciviousness, witchcraft, seditions, heresies and a host of other things which disgrace the Kingdom of Christ, these men are definitely not “good preachers,” regardless of how smooth they sound.

Our continued “fellowship” with them is contrary to the command that God gave us, mentioned earlier in this article. It makes us guilty right along with the sins of others when we “go along to get along,” rather than reprove, rebuke and exhort them. Some may become our enemies, but, we have obeyed God in our efforts when we “**reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine**” (2 Tim. 4:2-3).

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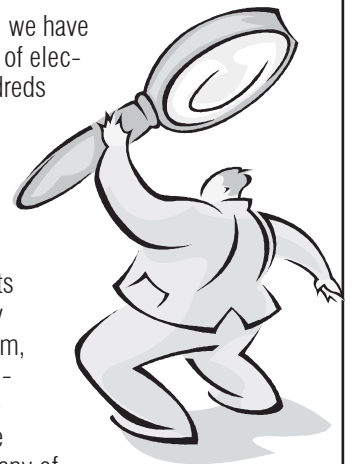
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—Dub and Lavonne McClish



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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.

-Colorado-

Denver—Piedmont Church of Christ, 1602 S. Parker Rd. Ste. 109, Denver, CO 80231, Sunday: 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. www.piedmontcoc.net, Lester Kamp, evangelist. (720) 535-5807.

-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.ocoeeccoc.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.

-South Carolina-

Belvedere (Greater Augusta, Georgia Area)—Church of Christ, 535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841, www.belvederechurchofchrist.org; e-mail belvecoc@gmail.com, (803) 442-6388, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Evangelist: Ken Chumbley (803) 279-8663.

-Oklahoma-

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

- Tennessee-

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

-Texas-

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

Evant—Evant Church of Christ, 310 West Brooks Drive, Evant, TX 76525. Office: (254) 471-5705; Jess Whitlock, evangelist (254) 471-5717.

Houston area—Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, (281) 353-2707. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, evangelist. Home of the Spring Contending for the Faith Lectures beginning the last Sunday in February. www.churchesofchrist.com.

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

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9 a. m., 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., 1:30 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