

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

THOSE WHO LOVE DARKNESS AND HATE THE LIGHT (JOHN 3:19)

DAVID P. BROWN

The following e-mail exchange is between Michael D. Greene, preacher for the Elizabethtown Church of Christ, Elizabethtown, Kentucky, and Gary Holloway, Bible teacher at David Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tennessee. The e-mail exchange pertains to Gary Holloway's article entitled "Circle of Fire: Barton Stone and a Spiritual Model of Unity" that was printed in *New Wineskins*, January – April, 2006. Holloway's original article that precipitated the following correspondence may be found at www.wineskins.org. The e-mails are self-explanatory.

From: Mike Green3 [churchofchrist@kvnet.org]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2006 11:55 AM
To: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)
Subject: Article in Wineskins
Brother Holloway,

I recently read your article "Circle of Fire" on line in the Wineskins magazine. I was left wondering about several things in the article and I am writing to you in hopes you can clear some things up for me.

There were a couple of things that I was wondering about. First, after discussing what Stone called "water union" you conclude the paragraph with the statement "Many of us cannot deny that there are many devout Christians who are unimmersed." Who is the "us" here? Would you include yourself in that number? Secondly, you wrote: "My own experience teaching in a university where 70% of the students are from a cappella Churches of Christ confirms this cultural shift away from the importance of denominational labels to a deep concern for relational and spiritual union. It is not unusual in a typical week for our students to attend a Monday night instrumental (!) praise worship at a local Church of Christ, a Tuesday night ecumenical teaching session at First Baptist downtown, Wednesday night church at a fairly traditional Church of Christ, and Thursday night Taize worship at a Presbyterian church - all before going home on the weekend to their parents' Church of Christ where many

think we are the only Christians!"

Then you concluded: "Are my students merely confused? Are they searching for the "right" church? No. Instead, they are pursuing the Spirit of Christ wherever they may find him. Generally, I find their descriptions of their spiritual, relational ecumenicity extremely healthy."

Do I understand you correctly that such is good for young folks? Do you encourage such in the classes that you teach at Lipscomb? Would the description you give of this "pursuing the Spirit of Christ" be accurately applied to your own practice?

Since you seem to (sic) interested in looking at how Restoration leaders viewed and discussed such matters, how do you think David Lipscomb, who founded and whose name the school you teach at bears, would view your comments?

I am anxiously awaiting your responses to these inquiries.

Michael D. Greene, minister
Elizabethtown church of Christ
Elizabethtown, Kentucky

From: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)
To: Mike Green3
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2006 2:26 PM
Subject: RE: Article in Wineskins

I'm simply saying what I have been taught all my life in Churches of Christ, "We are Christians only, not the only Christians."

Exactly what that means I think we must each discover for ourselves.

God bless.
Gary Holloway
Lipscomb University
3901 Granny White Pike
Nashville TN 37204

(Continued on Page 5)

Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher
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CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH is published monthly. P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357 Telephone: (281) 350-5516.

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

Editorial...

LOVE, AUTHORITY, AND GODLY CONDUCT

Whatever other great and needful component parts of love (Greek: *agape* or *agapao*) there are, all of those parts never contradict or set aside one another. To the contrary, all of the component parts that comprise *agape* are in flawless harmony with each other. Therefore, every constituent element comprising “agape” does not contradict, alter, or nullify the following constituent element of love. However, some who speak and write much about love seemingly never have known, or they have forgotten, or possibly ignored the following salient identifying mark and constituent element of love. In the words of Paul: Love “**Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth**” (I Corinthians 13:6). To better understand what the preceding passage means in our lives, please consider the following brief study of “love” in First Corinthians thirteen. The study originally appeared in the *Spiritual Sword* magazine.

GROW IN LOVE

The subject of love is one of the most abused, corrupted and misunderstood Biblical subjects. By many it is thought of as a romantic, subjective, sick, sentimental mush. In the name of “love” every vice of man is committed and all manner of wholesome activities omitted. Hence, before one can grow in love (by grow I mean to increase or expand), there must be a fundamental understanding of the subject as it is revealed in the Bible (I Corinthians 2:9-13; II Timothy 3:16, 17).

In the English language the word “love” is singular in expressing what it takes four Greek words to do. We shall now briefly note and define them. *Eros*: from whence the English word “erotic” derives, expresses sexual desire and does not appear in the Bible. *Storge* does not appear as such in the Bible. However, it combines with other words and means family affection. *Phileo*, Thayer says, “denotes an inclination prompted by sense and emotion” Lenski says: *phileo* is “the love of affection and personal attachment.” *Agape* is not an emotional, affectionate, passionate response. Lenski says it is “love of intelligence, reason and comprehension, coupled with corresponding purpose.” *Agape* is a determination of the mind producing deliberate conviction and policy of life. It is the love of doing right simply because it is right. Therefore Jesus could command: “**Love your enemies**” (Matthew 5:44). He did not command family affection (*Storge*) or

“personal attachment” “prompted by sense and emotion” or tender affection (*phileo*). He did command a mental resolve, an exercise of the will, to seek the highest good of any who would dislike him.

Jesus loved (*agape*) the scribes and Pharisees when he said to them, “**Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites**” (Matthew 23). Paul loved (*agape*) the church at Corinth when he said, “**For ye are yet carnal**” (I Corinthians 3:31). Peter manifested his love (*agape*) when he referred to false prophets as “**natural brute beasts... spots... blemishes... wells without water... speaking great swelling words of vanity... they themselves are the servants of corruption**” (II Peter 2:2,12ff). In each case the truth was taught manifesting our Lord’s and his apostles’ desire for their highest good (John 8:32; Galatians 4:16). Hence, *agape* does not change when the emotions and passions surge and wane. Such is indicative of its relationship to an objective standard. It always leads one to obey without question the commandments of God (I John 4:18; 5:3). Through the gospel “*agape*” proves the faith of man by soliciting him to choose between God and Satan (Joshua 24:15, 22; Psalms 119:30; Proverbs 1:29; Isaiah 7:15; Acts 2:41, 42; I Corinthians 15:1-4).

Agape is the highest love because it regulates with saneness and sobriety the emotional forms of love. Therefore no form of love, no matter how emotional, rises higher nor in any way sets aside the love that always leads to obedience to God’s law. Jesus said, “**If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments**” (John 14:15).

If one expands in greater family affection (*storge*) he must cultivate *agape*. This alone will prompt obedience to the precepts of the Lord in all areas of family affection and life. If one would increase in “the love of affection and personal attachment” (*phileo*) he must nourish “*agape*.” By this way alone will God’s truth guide one to greater heights of *phileo*. Unless the regulatory power of *agape* over the forms of love is recognized and employed, the sobering effect of the Bible will be discarded for a life of emotional instability (subjectivism).

Too many relationships, including marriages, are developed on the basis of *eros*, *storge*, and *phileo* with little, if any, *agape* present. All such relationships are doomed to failure. Passions and emotions are not enough to cement close friendships and intimate family ties in times of illness, poverty and the dire calamities that are the common lot of mankind. In “sickness and in health and for better or for worse” *agape* is the prime mover behind being “**stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord**” (I Corinthians 15:58).

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A perfect illustration of the position and power of *agape* in the life of a mortal is recorded in Genesis 22:1-14. Through the eye of faith we see Abraham obey God as he takes Isaac, his son, his only son, whom he loves, and rising early in the morning journey to the land of Moriah to offer his son of promise for a burnt offering. Finally the place is reached and the father of the faithful lays the wood on his beloved son. Abraham takes the fire and knife and together they go to the appointed place of sacrifice. What fatherly emotions must have pulsed in the heart of the old man when Isaac asked where the sacrificial lamb was! *Agape* replies from Abraham’s lips. “**God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.**” Abraham built the altar “**and laid the wood in order.**” As he bound “**his son,**” Isaac then knew what must be. More than this is the fact that Abraham fully realized that Isaac knew. While his arm was outstretched and the knife poised to do the bidding of Jehovah, the angel of the Lord stayed the aging father’s hand.

Can we not see that Abraham controlled the emotional love of *storge* and *phileo* by being willing to do what God said? *Agape* did this for him and it will do the same for us because *agape* “**rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth**” (I Corinthians 13:6). To grow in love is to learn that God’s will and *agape* are never mutually exclusive in the Bible or the life of a faithful Christian; that no form of love ever rises higher than our obedience to God’s authoritative word (Matthew 26:39, 40; Hebrews 5:8, 9). Now we understand why Paul concluded his love chapter with: “**But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love**” (*agape*) (I Corinthians 13:13). This is also why John wrote, “**but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love (*agape*) of God been perfected**” (I John 2:51) (Warren, Thomas B., editor, David P. Brown, January 1981, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 16-18).

With the preceding points in mind let us continue with our study of love by briefly examining Paul’s discussion of “*agape*” in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Of love the inspired apostle to the Gentiles declares:

1. No matter how kind and longsuffering love is, it never rejoices in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth (verse 4)

2. No matter how much love does not envy, or vaunt itself, or is the opposite of being puffed up, it never rejoices in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth (verse 4)

3. No matter how much love does not “**behave itself unseemly,**” or divorces itself from “**seeking her own,**” or stops itself from being “**easily provoked,**” or refrains from thinking “**evil,**” it never rejoices in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth (verse 5)

4. No matter how much love “**Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,**” it never rejoices in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth (verse 7).

Thus, if someone’s concept of longsuffering and kindness leads one to engage in and/or support iniquity and not the Truth on any subject, such longsuffering and kindness is perverted and is not authorized by the Bible—it is sinful. No matter how soft spoken, eloquent, highly educated (according to today’s academic standards), handsome, well-scented, and sweet spirited one appears, if such a person does not submit to the authority of Jesus Christ as set out in the meaning of the Words of the New Testament, such a person is a hypocrite, a charlatan, and a fake. Moreover, if in the name of love one commits a sin of omission (leaving undone what God obligates one to do in order to be saved from sin or to be a faithful child of God), it is never an omission motivated by “*agape*.” Hence, so-called Gospel preachers who never or seldom deal with those church mem-

bers who are looked upon by our Lord as vomit-eating dogs and washed sows that have returned to the stench of the putrid mud of the hog “waller” are not motivated by the love of God, the love of His Word, or the love of those who need such preaching (II Peter 2:20-22). As the late Franklin Camp once preached: “The Lord was not crucified for preaching “**Consider the lilies...**” but for declaring “**ye have made my Father’s house a den of thieves.**” We were privileged to hear the last Gospel sermon the late B. C. Goodpasture preached. In that sermon he discussed the preaching of John the Baptist’s condemnation of the adulterous marriage of Herod and Herodias (Herod’s brother, Philip’s wife). He referenced the preachers of today who failed to preach the truth on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, saying something to the effect: “It would be better for our heads to end up where John the Baptist’s head did because we preached the Truth to those who needed it than to keep our heads on our shoulders and omit the Truth that people need to hear.” Therefore, a perverted longsuffering and kindness are not the products of the love Paul defines and describes in First Corinthians thirteen, which love is to characterize the faithful child of God.

As surely as love is devoid of envy, of vaunting of itself, of being “**puffed up,**” of “**behaving itself unseemly,**” of seeking “**its own,**” of being “**easily provoked,**” or of thinking any evil, it also does **not** bear, believe, hope, and endure all things **to the point** of engaging and/or rejoicing in iniquity (false doctrine/teachers, sinful conduct whether they are sins of commission or omission).

If any constituent element of love, as listed in the preceding sentences, allows for one to engage in iniquity, it is a perversion of that particular component part of love and, therefore, sinful (I John 3:4; James 4:18). Love always and in every case upholds the Truth and rebukes the erroneous doctrine and sin as well as the sinner. Any concept of love that allows for false doctrine, false teachers, and sin to go un-rebuked and uncorrected **is not** the love about which Paul wrote in First Corinthians thirteen.

Thus, as Paul concluded, Love “**never faileth**” (verse 8). And, in the light of the foregoing study, now we know one great reason why this kind of love “**never faileth**”—it always seeks another’s highest good; that highest good being: doing God’s Will, no matter the sacrifices to be made by us in order to obey Him (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Thus, Paul wrote, “**And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him**” (Colossians 3:17).

We may therefore correctly conclude that *to act without the authority of Jesus Christ, which authority is revealed only in the meaning of the Words of the “rightly” divided New Testament, is to act without love, and to act*

without love is to act without Christ and to act without Christ is to act without God. The apostle John put it this way: **“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God, He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and Son.”** Thus, when one comes teaching something other than the doctrine of Christ on any subject the inspired apostle John (the apostle of love) states, **“If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds”** (II John 9-11). Thus, John earlier wrote the brethren saying, **“He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”** (I John 2:4).

When brethren, in order to be faithful to Christ, abide by John’s directive of I John 2:4, it may very well be that pretentious “pious brethren” will label the faithful person unloving, hateful, unfriendly, unkind, rude, mean, and guilty of slander (along with other toxic and hateful terms), but in reality, and in contradistinction to such hollow false brethren, God pronounces those who from the heart obey His Will to be good and faithful servants. This is the case because they will not allow a perverted view of love to lead them into condoning, promoting, and partaking of **“evil deeds”**—not even one evil deed or false doctrine (I John 4:1; Revelation 2:2). A person who brings **“not this doctrine”** as defined and described by the apostle John in Second John eleven does not love God.

“Evil deeds” are evil because they are the product of some doctrine other than the doctrine of Christ. **“Evil deeds”** are evil because they are either (1) forbidden by the doctrine of Christ or (2) they are not authorized by the doctrine of Christ. Thus, those who commit **“evil deeds”** lose their fellowship with God. Thus, any member of the church who supports a false teacher in any way whatsoever is a partaker of that person’s **“evil deeds.”** And, by their unauthorized support they, too, are no longer in fellowship with God. Therefore, we may correctly conclude that **deeds that are unauthorized by the New Testament of Christ are not deeds of love—they are “evil deeds.”** Furthermore, we may also correctly conclude that **deeds done by the authority of Christ are deeds of love.** Moreover, we may conclude that **the love principle never rises higher, sets aside, countermands, or nullifies the authority principle. The love principle always leads us to submit to whatever the Lord authorizes us to do and leave undone what is not authorized and that which is forbidden (John 14:15; I John 2:3-5; 3:24; 5:2, 3).**

—David P. Brown, Editor

From: Mike Green3 [churchofchrist@kvnet.org]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2006 2:03 PM
To: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)
Subject: Re: Article in Wineskins
Gary,

I am sorry. I must not have communicated my concerns properly. Your statement “Many of us cannot deny that there are many devout Christians who are unimmersed.” is quite different than saying “We are Christians only, not the only Christians.” Your statement in the article implies there are some in the churches of Christ that do not believe immersion is necessary to being a Christian. Gary, we both know that there are seismic changes going on in our brotherhood in many areas. I would have to agree that there probably are some in the brotherhood churches of Christ who do not see the necessity of baptism.

I am simply asking if you place yourself in that number? (sic)

By the way, I have been in the churches of Christ for 36 years. I have attended many lectureship programs and I think I have read a variety of brotherhood journals. I have seen where folks have referred to that saying “We are Christians only, not the only Christians” as a “restoration saying.” I know Cecil Wright who taught me Restoration History at FHC and Earl West who taught the same class at Harding Graduate School used it that way. But I do not believe I have ever heard that taught as a principle to guide our thinking today.

I would also like to get your responses to the other questions that I asked.

One final question on a personal level. Did you attend Freed-Hardeman back in the 70’s?

Mike Greene

From: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)
To: Mike Green3
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2006 3:04 PM
Subject: RE: Article in Wineskins
Yes, I did attend FHU from 1973-1976.

As far as your other questions, I don’t think answering them would edify you nor me. I do think we must wrestle with the answers. I also know unity is a central teaching of the Bible.

Gary Holloway
Lipscomb University
3901 Granny White Pike
Nashville TN 37204

From: Mike Green3 [churchofchrist@kvnet.org]
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2006 2:25 PM
To: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)
Subject: Re: Article in Wineskins
Gary,

Then you and I were in school together.

The answers to my questions are not for my or for your edification it is for my information, in answer to a question that was raised by something you wrote and posted on the internet. As a teacher at a brotherhood school that appeals to the brotherhood for students and for support it seems that you could honestly answer that question. Especially when it was put out in a publication over the internet for public consumption.

Do you not think that folks like me have a reason or a right to know what is being taught to our young people in our brotherhood schools?

Again, Gary, neither of us are ignorant of what is going on in the brotherhood. I would ask another question, why are you hesitant to answer a simple, straightforward question as to what you believe and what you teach at David Lipscomb University?

Mike Greene

P.S. I appreciate your quick responses to my previous emails. However, I am about to leave my office and I will be away from the computer until Tuesday. Please respond and I will read your response Tuesday morning.

From: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)

To: Mike Green3

Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2006 3:44 PM

Subject: RE: Article in Wineskins

Ephesians 4:29 (King James Version) 29

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

Gary Holloway

Lipscomb University

3901 Granny White Pike

Nashville TN 37204

From: Mike Green3 [churchofchrist@kvnet.org]

Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2006 11:04 AM

To: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)

Subject: Re: Article in Wineskins

Gary,

As I told you in my last email, I have been out of town since Thursday, so I did not get your last response until today, Tuesday, Feb 21st.

I am totally at a loss to know what this response has to do with my questions. I try to keep any of this kind of communication out of my mouth, but maybe you will at least explain how this relates to my questions.

Again, why are you unwilling (I know you are not unable) to answer these simple inquiries about the article you published on the internet? Are you afraid to do so? Are you ashamed to do so?

I will tell you why I need to know the answers. I am often asked about the problems in the brotherhood that are leading us headlong to another division, similar to the one of the late 1800's and early 1900's. You and I both know the reality of this division and its causes. Someone cannot be in your position and not know such. As a minister, folks often ask me the causes. When I tell them that much of this is coming from the colleges and academia, they often ask which colleges and then often about specific colleges, like DLU. Gary, I have had several inquiries about what is being taught at DLU in the last year. What should I tell them?

You have put something out for public perusal on the internet that raises questions about your beliefs. It also raises questions about what is taught in the Bible classes at DLU. It seems to me only right that as a member of the Lord's church, to which DLU looks for support and students, that I can reasonably expect an answer to some very clear and simple questions about what you have written. Do you not agree with this?

So I ask again. Here is the pertinent paragraph from my original post: “There were a couple of things that I was wondering about. First, after discussing what Stone called “water union” you conclude the paragraph with the statement “Many of us cannot deny that there are many devout Christians who are unimmersed.” Who is the “us” here?

Would you include yourself in that number?”

Gary, it seems a simple thing to answer. Would you include yourself in the “us” who believe that there are many devout “unimmersed Christians?”

Sincerely,

Mike Greene

From: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)

To: Mike Green3

Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2006 1:32 PM

Subject: RE: Article in Wineskins

Mike:

I do not want to be divided from any Christians. You seem to think that my answering will divide me from someone. So...

Gary Holloway

Lipscomb University

3901 Granny White Pike

Nashville TN 37204

From: Mike Green3 [churchofchrist@kvnet.org]

Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2006 1:00 PM

To: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)

Subject: Re: Article in Wineskins

Gary,

You have assumed incorrectly. What I want is to (sic) united with you. I want to stand shoulder to shoulder with you and all who are my brothers wherever I may find them, i.e. on a college campus or anywhere else. But before I can do that I need to be sure that we are on the same page. “**Can two walk together except they be agreed?**” (Amos 3:3). The answer to the plain, simple question I have asked you, which is motivated by the article you wrote, goes to the very heart of your own statement. I do not wish to be divided from any Christians either. But the question of immersion and its role in salvation goes to the very heart of your statement, would you not agree? If you do not want to be divided from any Christian, you must first determine what makes a Christian.

So I ask again, do you place yourself in the “us” who see the unimmersed as Christians, as brothers in the Lord?

Please, Gary, I do not have time to play games. I am sure you do not either. This is serious business. Whether or not souls will spend an eternity in a devil's hell or in the glories of heaven depends upon how we, as authority figures and teachers of God's word answer these elementary questions.

Mike Greene

From: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)

To: Mike Green3

Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2006 3:04 PM

Subject: RE: Article in Wineskins

I am a brother for whom Christ died, as are you. Is that not enough to unite us?

Gary Holloway

Lipscomb University

3901 Granny White Pike

Nashville TN 37204

From: Mike Green3 [churchofchrist@kvnet.org]

Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2006 1:00 PM

To: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)

Subject: Re: Article in Wineskins

Okay Gary,

As I said, I do not have time to play games and dance around. It is obvious that you refuse to answer my question which was asked in all sincerity and seriousness.

I must, by your obfuscation and flat out refusal to answer my question, assume that you are unwilling to (surely not unable to) answer my question because you are either afraid to or ashamed to. If that is not correct, please correct my misunderstanding and give me an answer to my original question.

Without such, here is my future course of action. The next person who asks me about what is being taught at Lipscomb will receive the following response: "Gary Holloway, who teaches Bible, refused to answer my questions as to whether or not there are such things as unimmersed Christians. This of course casts doubt on the necessity of baptism in becoming a Christian. These questions were in response to an article he wrote that appeared on the internet. I have a copy of that correspondence and the article that precipitated it if you would like to see it." If that is not fair, let me know.

Gary, It (sic) is a shame that someone like yourself has risen to the level of influence you have and is unwilling to defend or explain what he believes. Most gospel preachers and every Bible teacher you and I had at FHU could have answered that question with a very few words. David Lipscomb must be spinning in his grave, as he was never unwilling to defend or explain himself. And, if you are teaching that there are "unimmersed Christians" (an oxymoron if ever there was one) you are not being faithful to the purpose and legacy of David Lipscomb and the school that bears his name.

BTW, I will pursue this matter with three other folks, the new President of Lipscomb, the chairman of the Bible department, and the Board of Directors.

All of which could have been avoided had you simply answered the question honestly.

I regret it and it saddens me more than you will ever know. I will pray for you, brother.

Mike Greene

From: Holloway, Gary (Faculty - hollowaygn)

To: Mike Green3

Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2006 1:32 PM

Subject: RE: Article in Wineskins

And I will pray for you.

Gary Holloway

Lipscomb University

3901 Granny White Pike

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With Holloway's February 21, 2006 2:28 PM e-mail, the correspondence (as one sided as it was) ended. Why is it that people will not be frank, candid, plain, clear, and forthright in their answers to questions? However, I will say this for Holloway, he at least responded (such responses as they were) to Green's e-mails. While the Memphis School of Preaching staff and faculty along with the Forest Hill Church of Christ elders, and company, are not to be charged with the rank liberalism of Holloway and the apostate tribe of which he is an active part, it is interesting to note that MSOP and their "buddyship" did not attempt any kind of a response to questions sent to them as Holloway did to Green's questions. People with things to hide never do like questions. They run from and refuse to answer questions because candid, frank, and honest answers to properly asked questions shed light on subjects; and in so doing, bring

to light what otherwise would not be exposed and assuredly some brethren do not want made known. Herein is the reason that those who love darkness and hate the light abhor concise, pointed, frank, and properly worded questions.

No, MSOP and company are not where Holloway is in his digression into rank liberalism. However, the hatred of properly worded questions is an identifying mark of those who are walking the path that leads farther and farther away from Truth and Godliness. Whether one has just entered the broad way through the wide gate to begin his journey down the broad way, or is far from the wide gate through which they began their walk down the broad way so long ago, one important identifying mark possessed by the novice and the seasoned digressive, is their shared abhorrence of pointed, frank, and candid questions that, if honestly answered, would bring to light what otherwise would remain in the darkness. Someone needs to write a book dealing with the identifying marks of the digressive. It could be titled: "Piloting the 'Wide Gate' and the 'Broad way'—Digressive Steps into Complete Apostasy," or "Seeking the Wide Gate and the Broad Path."

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REFLECTIONS ON THE “RESTORATION SUMMIT”*

DUB MCCLISH

On August 7-9, 1984, a meeting billed as a “Restoration Summit” was conducted at Joplin, Missouri. The “Summit” was first conceived and suggested by brother Alan Cloyd of Nashville, Tennessee, in a 1983 issue of *Restoration Leadership Quarterly*. As he proposed in that issue, the “Summit” consisted of a meeting between 50 men from the churches of Christ and 50 men from the Independent Christian Churches. (Brother Cloyd left the Independent Christian Church and identified himself with us several years ago.) The dual purpose of this meeting was to discuss the matters that divide the two fellowships from each other and to explore the possibilities of uniting the two groups. The meeting was conducted on the campus of Ozark Bible College. The 100 men from both groups were “hand picked” by those who planned the “Summit,” thus the program was attended by “invitation only.”

BACKGROUND OF THE “SUMMIT”

A few words of explanation concerning the identity of the “Independent Christian Church” are necessary (this is the designation that most of their 50 men at the “Summit” preferred). These churches are not affiliated (nor do they wish to be confused or identified) with the Disciples of Christ/Christian Church. Their choice of the adjective “Independent” is intended by them to indicate the distinction. When their speaker who was assigned to make this distinction clear neglected to do so, another one of their men was later assigned a special place on the program to point this out. They did not want any doubts left about the matter. The objections they raised against the Disciples/Christian Church as reasons for having no fellowship with them are many of the very same objections most of us hold— theological liberalism, indiscriminate ecumenism, open membership, etc.

What are the principal differences between the Independent Christian Church and us? There are apparently three: (1) use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, (2) use of missionary organizations and associations distinct from local churches for evangelistic work, and (3) use of women in leadership roles in the worship and work of local churches. However, the real problem behind these matters relates to their attitude toward scripture and how to establish scriptural authority. While most of these congregations are identified by the name “Christian Church,” there are many such congregations (especially in the midwestern and north central states) that use the name “Church of Christ.” These Independent Christian Churches have their roots in the restoration efforts of the Campbells, Stone, et al. They were among those who were carried away by the innovations of the missionary society and the instrument in the last half of the 19th century. Division eventually took place, congregation by congregation, between those who favored these innovations and those who held to the simple

and primitive pattern of singing with no instruments and allowing only the church to do the work of evangelism. This tragic division was recognized by separate statistics for the respective groups in the federal census of 1906.

Those who thus departed have since become two separate groups. The Disciples of Christ/Christian Church has marched deliberately and openly into full-fledged theological liberalism and denominationalism. The Independent Christian Church has maintained a comparatively conservative stance concerning inspiration and revelation, the plan of salvation, etc., but not with the role of women and the use of instruments and missionary organizations. (For this reason it is sometimes referred to as the “Conservative Christian Church” as distinguished from the “Disciples.”) These two separate groups have no organic ties and little fellowship with each other.

The format of the “Summit” was a combination of lectures, followed by dispersal into 10 groups of 10 men each for discussion of the lecture content and related matters. Each group had a chairman and a reporter who gave periodic reports of the discussion in each respective group to the entire assembly.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

I did not attend the “Summit,” but I have viewed the eight hours plus of video tapes that recorded the main speeches and the reports of the discussion groups. I have listened a second time and even more to some of the speeches. I have also had a lengthy telephone conversation with brother Alan Cloyd who planned the “Summit” and with one of our brethren who spoke on the program, as well as with a third participant. Additionally, I have heard taped reports and/or read written reports from five other brethren who attended this program and have conversed in person with one brother who was present. With this background I offer the following observations and impressions of the “Summit.”

REVIEW OF THE SPEECHES

The first speaker was brother Monroe Hawley on the subject, “History and Current Profile of Churches of Christ.” He presented an interesting summary of Restoration history. He emphasized that he was speaking only for himself and that he would likely say some things with which other members of the church would disagree. While in the main I found myself in accord with his speech, there were some insinuations and observations voiced which I believe were unfounded and unnecessary, to say nothing of harmful. He joined the rank of those among us who have of late taken delight in reproaching the Lord’s church for its alleged “sectarian” attitude. He first said that in choosing the distinctive names “Church of Christ” and “Christian Church,” respectively, as the division became a reality, a

sectarian attitude was manifested. This we deny concerning the designation “Church of Christ,” since it is innately scriptural (Romans 16:16; Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22, 23; etc.). I would agree that “Christian Church” is in fact a sectarian name. Brother Hawley also listed a “sectarian spirit” in Churches of Christ as one of his greatest concerns. If he is talking about a growing tendency to make the church into nothing more than a sect or denomination, indistinguishable from the patchwork of denominational ideology, I would agree with his concern. But if he is talking about the efforts of those who are bold and strong in the proclamation of the truth and the exposure of error (which seemed to be his reference), I strongly disagree. The church was restored and continues to maintain its distinctiveness and exclusiveness only by powerful and plain preaching and defense of the truth (II Timothy 4:1-4; Jude 3; etc.). Such is not “sectarianism” but the very opposite.

Brother Hawley listed some “promising signs” among us. First, he mentioned a deep commitment to the authority of the Word of God. Then he indicated this wish that we were more committed to Christ, saying that we are generally more committed to the Bible than to Christ and that the two are not the same. However, one of *my* greatest concerns is a *lack* of commitment to the authority of God’s Word. A large scale failure to seek authority in the Word for both doctrine and morals is perhaps our major problem at present. This distinction between our commitment to Christ and to the Bible is theological doubletalk. One cannot separate loyalty to Christ from loyalty to his Word. Christ exercises his authority only through his Word and one who is deeply committed to His Word is, by definition, deeply committed to Christ. If to reject the Word of Christ is to reject Christ himself (John 12:48), it must follow that to honor and respect his *Word* is to honor and respect *Him*. Brother Hawley’s statement plays into the hands of those who like to call Jesus “Lord, Lord” without honoring his Word (Luke 6:46).

Brother Hawley decried the spirit of contentiousness he sees in the church and apologized to the Christian Church men for it. He assured them that it was only a “small vocal minority” that was making a noise all out of proportion to its size through certain journals. He said he did not question the integrity of these contentious brethren, but then immediately proceeded to charge them with a lack of love. It seems that he had difficulty deciding whether to judge or not judge their motives.

The next speaker, Boyce Mouton, was assigned to speak on the “History and Current Profile of Independent Christian Churches.” He was a very entertaining speaker, telling many humorous anecdotes and drawing many laughs. However, he rarely got even close to his subject. In fact, he failed to such an extent, especially in drawing a distinction between the Independents and the Disciples, that another speaker was added to the program and given a special assignment to do this very thing. One statement made by Mouton especially caught my attention. He referred to the prophecy of the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-33) and stressed that it was not written on paper or stone, but on the heart. I do not know anything about Mouton except what I heard in his introduction and his speech, but this seemed

to be a statement impossible to harmonize with any great measure of respect for the *written* word.

Furman Kearley spoke next on “Exegesis and Hermeneutics as They Relate to the Unity Question,” emphasizing that unity depends upon correct and unified exegesis and hermeneutics. He strongly emphasized the truths that what God has bound we must bind and that we must not bind what God has loosed. I appreciated his speech and wholly agreed with its content, but I could not keep from wishing he had used this great opportunity to emphasize the authority of the silence of scripture and the scriptural law of exclusion by positive command as these laws relate to the instrument and to missionary organizations. To my disappointment, brother Kearley expressed agreement with a most dangerous suggestion from brother Wayne Kilpatrick in their first small group discussion. More about this later.

The next speaker was Fred Thompson who was assigned to speak on the same subject as brother Kearley from the Independents’ perspective. About the best that can be said for his speech is that it was a waste of everyone’s time, including those who invited him, *by their own admission*. He came up with such gems as the following: “We are united in confession of Jesus, not in hermeneutic agreement” and “every text must be understood in reference to, not necessarily in agreement with, every other text.” He suggested that the main thing about the Bible is that it is a “story.” He affirmed that Genesis 1-3 might be true without being historical. He suggested that we needed and had available the illumination of the Holy Spirit as we read the Bible. He labored to impress everyone with his scholarship by the use of high-sounding, “hip” theological terms and phrases, but he failed. More than one of the study groups reported their questions concerning and disagreements with what he had said. I gathered that he was not at all representative of the Independents present for the occasion and that they were somewhat ashamed of his speech.

“Authority—Where Does it End?” was the topic assigned to Hardeman Nichols. This was the strongest speech and the most to-the-point speech of the “Summit.” Brother Nichols filled his speech with scripture which exalted the authoritative nature of God’s will. He correctly pointed out that while the Bible contains the story of redemption, it is not merely a “story” (a la Fred Thompson), but rather is a book of authoritative law. He placed powerful emphasis on the authority of the silence of scripture, using illustrations from both Testaments. He correctly emphasized that authority ends with what Christ authorizes and that we dare not presume upon the silence of scripture. The principles so well prepared and presented in this speech would completely remove the barriers to fellowship that separate these brethren from us, if they would but apply them, for neither instruments in worship nor missionary organizations can stand before these biblical principles of authority. However, once again, the application to these issues could have and should have been much more pointed and specific, in my judgment.

Immediately following brother Nichols, W. F. Lown of the Christian Church spoke on “Liberty—Where Does it Start?” He advanced the thesis that “silence gives us freedom to speak” and “liberty begins where scripture stops.”

In areas of silence he advocated following “consensus fidelism,” a sort of majority opinion of “the faithful.” These represent the typical responses and arguments of those who would justify their additions to the practices or organization of the New Testament church. I suggest that these principles so “lower the fences” of God’s authority as to render them non-existent. Where does scripture speak of the counting of beads, the use of “holy water,” the baptism of infants or the use of cookies and milk on the Lord’s table? If “silence gives us freedom to speak,” then these and 1,000 things like them must be accepted without protest. Are not our brethren in the Independent Christian Churches generally too conservative to accept such inevitable consequences of such a liberty principle? The “consensus fidelism” principle is somewhat of an application of the situation ethics principle applied to doctrine. Both the time span and geographical area under consideration would greatly affect any consensus. And who is to decide who “the faithful” are? Does not this principle leave doctrinal authority resting on the shifting sands of human judgment and subjectivism?

The final major speaker was brother Reuel Lemmons whose topic was “Where *Can/Where Do We Go* from Here?” Sadly, the self-contradictions that have become his trademarks over the past few years were much in evidence in his speech. He implied that the issues which divide us are really only matters of personality and opinion by calling them “spite fences” which we have built “sky high.” Did the Christian Church brethren understand him to be referring to our rejection of such things as the instrument and missionary societies? He likened us unto sectarian groups of the 18th and 19th centuries out of which men came in answer to the Restoration Plea. He generously applied “sectarian” to the Lord’s church. (Really, hasn’t this charge been overworked just a bit by those who have jumped on the latest unity bandwagon?) Brother Lemmons accused us of converting people to our “cause” and our “clan” rather than to Christ, a charge which bears a marked resemblance to the old “man, not the plan” insistence of some loose-thinking brethren of 25 years ago. He harshly criticized our “shallow understanding of baptism” and our desire to be a separate religious body!

Space forbids discussing many other things in brother Lemmons’ speech, including some misapplications of scripture which resulted in some absurd implications, especially pertaining to the Lord’s Supper. He advanced the idea that unity *already exists* between the two groups because members of both groups have been born again and all that is left is for us to acknowledge said unity! In fact, he said that those who do not recognize this unity commit sin. It should be obvious to even a spiritual neophyte that brother Lemmons has confused the fact of being brethren with a state of unity. I have no hesitancy to call those who have obeyed the gospel plan of salvation in the Christian Church my brethren, but this in no way is tantamount to unity or fellowship between us. If unity already exists, why was a “Summit” meeting needed to discuss how to achieve unity? Incidentally, brother Cloyd told me in a telephone

conversation that he thought this speech was “outstanding.”

Some plans and suggestions for the future have been formulated. One report is that a meeting is scheduled to coincide with the Abilene Christian University Lecture-ship in February, 1985. Another report indicates that a meeting is scheduled for March of 1985 in Tulsa. And there has been some talk of having annual “Summit” meetings “as long as they are needed.”

OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

All men who love the Lord and His Word would surely encourage and applaud any move toward unity that is earnestly and uncompromisingly based on the authority of the Bible. However, I must confess to having some serious reservations about this “Summit” and its successors for several reasons.

First, I am concerned about the type of men who were invited, for the most part. There were some unquestionably solid men in attendance, but they were decidedly in the minority (perhaps 5 or 6 out of 50). Upon inquiring of brother Cloyd how our participants were selected, he said it was by an “ad hoc committee.” He added that the main concern was that “good, sound gospel preachers” were there. I have some difficulty with his understanding of these terms! True, there were a few such men present, but very few. Several of the men were those who over the past few years have been in the forefront of a revived “unity” movement and whose sounds of softness and uncertainty on the “Crossroads Philosophy,” baptism, fellowship and even the use of instruments in worship have caused widespread concern. Several others were there (at the recommendation of the ones just mentioned) who have not been as outspoken as these men, but who have not exactly distinguished themselves for their doctrinal soundness. One of our brethren who participated, and with whom I talked, told me that he came away feeling that there were more of our men present who would be willing to compromise and use the instrument than there were men from the Christian Church who would be willing to give the instrument up. He came away from Joplin in distress over what the “Summit” portends for the church.

A case in point is brother Rubel Shelly’s view that those who use the instrument do not have to renounce it as wrong and sinful; all they need do is lay it aside as a barrier to unity. From a taped speech in Memphis in late 1983 or early 1984, I quote:

I think of a brother of mine for example. He preaches for a group that calls itself the Christian Church....A while back he came to the conclusion that he was willing to give up that instrument, not because he believed it was wrong. He wasn’t convinced of that yet. but for the sake of unity, so that the body of Christ in that area where he was working—he could give that up.... (He) went to the preachers’ meeting in that town and five preachers in town, four of the five said that wasn’t good enough. He had to renounce it as wrong and sinful.... Maybe the four handled it correctly. I don’t think so!

My question is this: what point was there in brother Shelly's meeting with those who use the instrument, purportedly to convince them that its use is wrong, when he does not believe they have to acknowledge the sinfulness of its use in order to have full fellowship with us? It seems to me that brother Cloyd bent so far over backward to get men who would in no wise offend the instrumentalists that he invited several men who would be willing to treat the instrument as a matter of expediency and opinion. At least two other participants (Calvin Warpula and Bill Minick) have publicly stated since the "Summit" that they do not believe use of the instrument in worship is a damnable practice.

My second concern has to do with those who were not invited. Were just enough conservative and unquestionably sound men invited to give a token representation and to forestall expected criticism because of the number of less-than-conservative brethren who were invited? Only brother Cloyd can answer. Sam Stone, editor of the *Christian Standard* (prominent journal of the Independents), was invited. Why was brother Guy N. Woods, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, not invited? Why were there no men present characterized by the combination of unquestionable scholarship and uncompromising temperament of brother H. Leo Boles, who brought a similar effort involving the "Disciples of Christ" denomination to a rapid climax with his speech in Indianapolis, May 3, 1939? Interestingly, copies of brother Boles' speech in tract form were made available at the "Summit," but brother Cloyd openly repudiated the speech and has since admitted removing the tracts because they were "not appreciated" and contained "abusive and crude" language. It is also interesting to note that a packet of four compromising documents on fellowship, three of which were written by Carl Ketcherside, was supplied for each participant by one of the Christian Church men. These were *not* removed by brother Cloyd. Why not?

Third, I am concerned because of recommendations that were made to all of the men present at the close of the "Summit." The participants were urged to go home and make contact with men "on the opposite side of the keyboard" to the end that combined worship periods might be arranged. The encouragement was given to exchange pulpits, articles in periodicals and speakers on lectureships. If such is done with no real admission of sinfulness in the use of the instrument (the primary issue of division) and they continue using it (perhaps except when some of us are present), what has really been accomplished? What is the difference between this and the old-fashioned "union revivals" that were once held by Methodists, Presbyterians, and Disciples, except the fact that several years ago no church of Christ would have any part in them? It all appears to be an "agreement to disagree" and a "contrived union where there is no unity," and I see no advantage to it.

As eager and well intentioned as we may grant such efforts to be, I do not see them leading to a real unity based on submission to the authoritative gospel. On the other hand, such efforts have a tendency to become overwhelmed with more emotion than reason and can easily

lead to compromise and to the abandonment of biblical authority for the sake of a state of "peace." Real unity or peace can come only if (1) we capitulate and begin using the instrument with them (or at least allow that it is no longer a sin or a fellowship barrier, in which case we may as well use it!), or if (2) they admit that the instrument is sinful and unauthorized and give it up, not merely for the sake of unity but in order to worship God acceptably. In either case there could be *actual unity* (assuming there are no other doctrinal differences obtaining), but *only the latter case* could be harmonized with scripture. My fear is that the recommendations coming from the "Summit" will be much more likely to produce the former type of unity, when the thinking of several of the participants is carefully weighed.

In the fourth place, I am concerned about an exceedingly dangerous suggestion that came from brother Wayne Kilpatrick in a discussion group. The following exchange occurred between brethren Kearley and Kilpatrick.

Kearley: "The aspect of the isolation is lack of knowledge of our history. If we could start in our congregations doing some more studies in Restoration history outside of our own branch and look at the distinctions between the conservative instrumentalists and the Christian Church..." [sentence unfinished].

Kilpatrick: "I wonder, too, if bringing Christian Church preachers in for a class like this might be good. Let them come in and tell their history in a *class* situation. *I think rut, could ease from the class to the pulpit*" [emphasis added].

Kearley: "Right! And you could get by with telling history."

Kilpatrick: "Yeah."

Kearley: "...whereas if they were telling doctrine -*heh, heh, heh.*"

Kilpatrick: "And while they are telling history, they could tell enough doctrine to let us know that, hey, we believe alike—so much of it. So that may be a beginning point: in the classroom."

I gravely fear that just such a procedure would be allowed, if not welcomed in many congregations and with no exposure of any erroneous doctrine presented. (Have not many congregations already invited sectarian preachers such as James Dobson and Charles Swindoll into their classrooms and/or pulpits?) Such a plan has a deadly potential for subverting the faith.

My fifth concern is the attitude expressed by some of our men who participated. Not only do I reject the accusations of brethren Hawley and Lemmons that the Lord's church is "sectarian," I cannot see how such a denigrating attitude toward the church can help those who are enmeshed in an erroneous practice see the need for coming out of it to be one with us! What gain is there in leaving one "sect" to be united with another?

I was sadly disappointed in brother Cloyd's stance before, during and since the "Summit." His remarks concerning brother Boles' tract and his removal of same at Joplin indicate his attitude toward a "good, sound gospel preacher" of a previous generation. When brother Cloyd apologized for brother Boles' tract at the Joplin meeting,

he said it was perhaps “reprinted by someone who does not understand that distinction between the Independent Christian Churches and the Disciples of Christ.” After his apology he asked, “How did I do?” My reply is that he did badly!

Brother Garland Elkins was chiefly responsible for the reprinting of brother Boles’ sermon in tract form, with the encouragement of brother Guy N. Woods. Does brother Cloyd imagine that these scholarly men do not “understand that distinction” between the Disciples and the Independents? However, if brother Cloyd was intending to indicate his attitude toward the principal issue that distinguishes the Lord’s church from the Independent Christian Church in his apology, perhaps he did well! He prefaced his apology by saying that the tract under discussion was “quite old,” but he did not know how old. The inference I gathered was that the matters addressed and the principles taught therein have now been outgrown. I suggest that brother Cloyd would do well to become more familiar with brother Boles’ great sermon. If he had only read the tract more carefully he would have known that the sermon was delivered on May 3, 1939, at Indianapolis in a “unity meeting” similar to the “Summit” (p. 33). In case brother Cloyd has already burned all of those tracts he recalled at the Joplin meeting, he can read it in installments in the *Gospel Advocate*, beginning with the issue of October 4, 1984. The tract is also available from Getwell Church of Christ, 1511 Getwell Rd., Memphis, TN 38111 and is entitled, *The Way of Unity Between “Christian Church” and Churches of Christ*. Every member of the church would do well to read it in this age of compromise and tolerance.

In his introduction of Reuel Lemmons, I was disappointed in brother Cloyd. He praised him and his work as follows:

For 29 years he edited the *Firm Foundation*, a paper that was read by people in many fellowships.... by people on both sides of the keyboard. It served as a very constructive bridge. It was a clearing house for thinking and we miss it (“amens” audible in background). Reuel is an independent thinker. He parrots nobody’s party line.... That’s the kind of iconoclastic sort of individual we wanted to come and sort of challenge our thinking in this iconoclastic sort of meeting.

Perhaps this statement from brother Cloyd is more revealing than he had intended about his own doctrinal convictions. In his closing remarks at the “Summit,” brother Cloyd made the following disparaging remarks:

We need as quickly as possible...to go back to 100 localities across the United States and set up similar local “Summit” meetings. That one scares me. I’ve got to tell *you*, that one scares me.... The local one scares me because every “knucklehead” in the country is going to get in on these. They won’t be nearly as cordial as this has been.

He is right about one thing: if these local meetings develop—there will indeed be some of us “knuckleheads” present (if we know about the meetings) to

raise some questions and sharpen some issues relating to fellowship, doctrine, worship and the principle of scriptural authority! Perhaps brother Cloyd revealed more than he actually intended about his own attitudes by his “knucklehead” statement. Since brother Guy N. Woods has written a superb editorial in the *Gospel Advocate*, expressing serious misgivings about the “Summit,” I presume that he would qualify as one of the “knuckleheads.”

Since the “Summit,” brother Guy N. Woods wrote brother Cloyd (September 5), inquiring if he (Cloyd) did in fact remove brother Boles’ tract from the meeting at Joplin and burn or otherwise destroy the copies of same. Brother Cloyd’s reply was:

I did in fact remove the tracts in question. They were uninvited materials which were not appreciated. Brother Boles’ language is abusive and crude. I did not feel that these tracts would be in the best interest of the meeting....

Brother Woods quoted the statement just given in the *Gospel Advocate* editorial of October 4, 1984. However, I have before me the remainder of brother Cloyd’s response in that same letter (September 6):

Those who ignorantly distribute such tracts apparently are not aware that the Christian Church has in fact done 2 of the 3 things Boles called for. To continue to call for what has been done already is redundant at best. Please see enclosure.

Whoever distributed (and sent for distribution) said tracts at Joplin, was not only a “knucklehead” but “ignorant” besides! (Brother Garland Elkins sent 100 tracts by brother Paul Crockett who delivered them to Hardeman Nichols who set them out at the “Summit.”) I wish brother Cloyd had been more specific about the “2 of the 3 things” that the Christian Church has “already done.” Why (and how) has this been kept such a secret? I strongly urge brother Cloyd, if indeed he has such evidence, to publish this material far and wide that we may rejoice. Surely, this would be grand and glorious news to all lovers of truth! But, in fact, the Independents have only repudiated one thing Boles called for (the denominational status of the Disciples) while still retaining the other two (mission associations and the instrument), and have added other errors besides. (Brother Woods has indicated in a phone conversation that brother Cloyd’s enclosure was a mimeographed manuscript by brother Kearley, which quotes favorably from brother Boles’ tract! Brother Woods said that it contained nothing to show that the Independent Christian Church has made any move toward the truth on matters that divide us.)

Sixth, I am concerned about how some of the Joplin participants have talked and written since they returned home. Randy Mayeux of Long Beach, California, wrote: “But we each learned of the integrity, the sincerity, the true but honest difference of opinion.” It seems that for some of our men at the “Summit” it is already just that, a “difference of opinion.”

Brother Calvin Warpula of Houston, Texas, spoke to the Houston preachers’ meeting on September 18, 1984,

concerning the “Summit.” Among the statements at Joplin that really impressed him were: “The Reformers asked, ‘In *whom* do you believe, not *what* you believe!’” and “we are generally more committed to the Bible than to Christ and the two are not the same” (Hawley speech). He also said:

I think there are still some of our people who would say, “If *you* use the instrument you will go to hell.” *I used to be there* [emphasis added]. I don’t think that’s where most of the church *is* today [so what? DM].... We’ve got to be careful about taking baptized believers and then sending them to hell over something like this where God doesn’t say.

Even more plain spoken was brother Bill Minick in *Good News*, the bulletin “Published for The Family at Woodland West,” Arlington, Texas, on August 19, 1984:

Our meeting in Joplin was a very profitable one.... When we admit to ourselves and others that we have been too unbending on our traditions and opinions there is hope that we may work with ALL segments of the brotherhood, and not with just one. What we all have in common *is* our oneness with Jesus Christ because of our new birth. *If* Jesus can save *us*, surely we can accept one another. Do *we* really believe that one will be lost eternally because he does not agree with *us* on divorce, Sunday School, communion *cups*, going to war, instrumental music, missionary associations, covenants, formula for baptism, ladies wearing pants in the assembly, etc., etc.? We need to take a good hard look at what *is* essential to salvation.

I had not heard of any such compromising position from brother Minick before. Let’s analyze his statement. He seems to be calling all of the things he lists matters of “our traditions and opinions.” This is nothing short of a capitulation of the distinctive pattern for the church in worship and organization at the very least! If matters of worship and organization are negotiable (as mere opinions and traditions should be), then what about terms of membership (the new birth itself)? And what about morals (divorce)? What right does he have to judge those as saved who have refused to submit to the authority of scripture? Did not the Lord say the opposite in Matthew 7:21-23? Did you ever see such a list of “apples and oranges” as our brother has put together? The very idea of one’s equating instrumental music and missionary associations with communion cups and Bible classes! Throwing instruments and missionary associations into the list was a subtle, but obvious attempt to place them in the same category as matters that are mere expedients. I’ll agree with the last sentence quoted: brother Minick has shown that he, especially, needs to restudy the essentials to salvation!

My seventh concern is the consequence of the meeting. As well meaning as the planners and participants may be, and as much as we grant their sincere desire for unity, I see some fearful consequences. If most, or even many, of the Joplin participants returned home with a message like that

of brethren Warpula and Minick, I do not see unity on the horizon. At least, if a unity results it will be one based on compromise rather than on truth. In fact, the song these brethren are singing has the direst notes of dissonance and discord, yea division. There are many of us who *will not* yield the ground on the instrument or societies, any more than the faithful pioneers before us did.

We can no more have fellowship with those who want to remain in the Lord’s church and hold matters of obligation to be matters of mere option than we can with those *outside* the Lord’s church who hold such. Will the Joplin “Summit” be the impetus needed to get many unstable, wavering elders, preachers and professors to finally “come out of the closet” and declare their true convictions in such matters? Will this “Summit” be the springboard needed for many brethren to seek peace at any price in this age of tolerance and permissiveness? Will, in fact, the Joplin meeting prove to be the catalyst in a repeat of the division that was taking place a full century ago over the same issues? While not at all wanting to encourage such a development of division, and while earnestly hoping that it will not occur, I greatly fear that the Joplin “Summit” and its successors has all of the ingredients for just such a dire consequence.

CONCLUSION

There has been a growing chasm in our beloved brotherhood over the past 20 years between those who have adopted a pragmatic and non-authoritarian approach to their doctrine and practice and those who are “set for the defense of the gospel” (Philippians 1:16, ASV). Ironically, many who were bold defenders of the faith 20 years ago (and less) have become equally bold in their repudiation of those who are still thus minded. A number of astute observers have seen the ominous clouds of heartbreaking division on the horizon for some time as more and more of our brethren have drifted ever further from the Way. It seems not to be a matter of “if,” but “when.” While lauding any scripture-based move toward unity, I greatly fear that this latest move is largely in the wrong hand: and that the cause we love will ultimately suffer rather than profit from it. If division must come (and sometimes it must—I Corinthians 11:19), regardless of what others may do, those who stand for the truth will continue on with the Lord’s work. The Lord’s faithful remnant found itself “starting all over again” almost a century ago, and before many years had transpired they prospered far beyond the compromising element that left the Truth. I am confident that we can do it again if we have to.

***CFTF** carried brother McClish’s article in the February 1985 issue, pages 8-13.

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GLORY IN DETROIT*

CLED E. WALLACE

The *Christian Standard* is highly pleased over the results of “that meeting of brethren at Detroit in the interest of greater unity.” [May 3-4, 1938—*Editor*]. The *Standard*, [Christian Church paper—*Editor*], thinks the meeting “has been rewarded beyond all expectations” and seems inclined to break into paeans of praise over “the glory of the Detroit meeting” and such “hopeful signs” as a “desire for better mutual understanding” which seemed to everywhere abound. I don’t think I need to make a long expensive trip to Detroit to understand the *Standard* or make it understand me. I am opposed to the use of instrumental music in worship and other digressive innovations for good and sufficient reasons that have been advanced over and over again, and which up to date, the *Standard* has been unable to answer. I will not fellowship those who corrupt the worship and compromise the doctrine of the New Testament order. If the *Standard* contemplates a surrender of the things that divide us, there is nothing on the horizon thus far to indicate it. “The glory of the Detroit meeting” did not consist in any pressure brought on the digressives to give up their innovations. I think it consisted rather in the absence of such pressure. In view of the divided condition of the church, and the presence in Detroit of so many bad actors along that line, it looks like somebody ought to have called mourners. I have no evidence thus far that the *Standard*, guilty as it is, has any intention of going to the mourners bench. The *Standard* has a *record*, you know! In my rogues gallery of innovationists who by smooth and fair speech make instrumental music in worship appear as an innocent expedient, the *Standard* heads the list. In a glorious meeting where Claud Witty, Don Carlos Janes and the editor of the *Standard* exchange courtesies, brotherly greetings, bows and smiles, I do not see how the *Standard* stands to lose anything or the cause of truth stands to gain anything.

HANDSHAKING AND PANTOMIME

It must have been a pretty bit of pantomime when DeForest Murch and H. H. Adamson advanced to the middle of the stage and laid their hands on the same Bible in the presence of a large assembly. Fervent amens were doubtless heard and tears splashed on creased pants. But the fact remains that Murch is a digressive and an avowed premillennialist, a corruptor of both worship and doctrine and will doubtless remain so after the shows are all over. What the *Christian Standard* evidently wants and is angling for is a “better mutual understanding” and *fellowship* between churches that use instrumental music and those who do not. Instrumental music is to be made a sort of no man’s land, discussion of the question shall cease, and congregations shall use it or not use it as they see fit, with impunity. After years of discussion the opposers of instrumental music shall subside, and take a stand which would have given the hornblowers in the church the right of way and prevented division in the first place. Brother Witty must speak out on this phase of “the problem” sooner or later, or everybody shall know the reason why. As long as churches use instrumental music, those of us who consider it a corruption of true worship will be conscience-bound to cry

out against it, and refuse fellowship to those who practice it. It will take more than handshaking and pantomime to bring peace on the question.

ON A HIGH PLANE

The *Standard* confesses that there was some fear that “we might come to such discussion of differences in more or less of acrimonious spirit. This was the chief reason for approaching the matter so carefully.” Such a fear was of course groundless. The meeting was called for an exchange of love licks. The “spirit of humility and love” and a minimum of backbone steered the discussions. They stepped lightly around over the issues like barefooted boys in a grass-burr patch. This, I take it, is what the *Standard* calls discussing “the matters on which we differ . . . upon the highest possible plane.” It must have been pretty high for they walked it as though they were afraid they’d fall off and get hurt. It would help considerably to descend to less dizzy heights and discuss real issues with greater vigor even if it should detract somewhat from the “glory of the meeting” in the eyes of the *Standard*.

WRESTING THE SLOGAN

The *Standard* fears that perhaps we who have so long “recognized that human creeds are divisive” have made a creed out of “an aphorism” to-wit: “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”

“What we have, therefore, is a division in our ranks over the interpretation of an aphorism—and an aphorism that originated with fallible human beings when they were in the twilight of the dawn of this movement, just beginning to see the way out of denominationalism.”

Well, anyhow, these “fallible human beings” saw more clearly “in the twilight” than the *Standard* seems to be able to see in the middle of the day. They voiced their determination in “an aphorism” to believe and practice nothing the scriptures do not authorize. It outlawed sprinkling and pouring for immersion, infant baptism, party names and divisive speculations embalmed in creeds; and it kept instrumental music out of the churches for fifty years “after the dawn.” It was rather late in the day when the *Standard* crowd discovered something new in “interpretation” and read into “Where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent” the following declaration of freedom to go beyond what is written.

“To some of us it means that where the Scriptures do not give a command as to what we shall do or shall not do, we are free to act on our own best judgment, in harmony with the spirit of the New Testament.”

That is the *Standard’s* “interpretation” of “an aphorism” which reduces it to an absurdity. The “aphorism” should read:

“Where the Scriptures speak we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we speak anyhow if in ‘our own best judgment’ we think we should keep on talking.”

“Interpretation” is not the proper term to describe the *Standard’s* violent treatment of the “aphorism.” I know, and I think the *Standard* knows, that the “fallible human beings”

who “originated” that statement of loyalty to the word of God would be shocked at some of the uses it has been put to. The *Standard* calls attention to “the possibilities of division within such a pattern of words.”

“One brother has undertaken to state the same principle by radically altering the aphorism: ‘Where the Scriptures speak, we are silent; where the Scriptures are silent we speak.’ When a slogan can be twisted in such fashion to state one attitude, it is assuredly dangerous to follow it slavishly.”

There isn’t anything wrong or “dangerous” about the “slogan” which is only a devout declaration of loyalty to the word of God. The *Standard* locates the danger in the wrong place. It is in the twister. Peter says that “ignorant and unsteadfast” men twist the scriptures to their own destruction. It isn’t dangerous to follow the scriptures even “slavishly” because there are men who are so ignorant, unsteadfast or devoid of the spirit of loyalty as to “wrest” them. Such men should be marked for what they are. During the last fifty years about everything twistable has been twisted to lend some support to the practice of instrumental music in worship. “Some of us” want it and we are going to have it, aphorism or no aphorism, scriptures or no scriptures, and the authority we plead is our freedom “to act on our own best judgment, in harmony with the spirit of the New Testament.” Whatever we want to do that we have no command for, no example of, and no necessary inference for, in short no scriptural authority whatever for, comes under “the spirit of the New Testament.” With such latitude the *Standard* ought to get by with about anything it wants to do in religion.

THE LINE THAT DIVIDES

The *Standard* further says:

“We are all agreed that there is a freedom in Christ; that there is an area for our best Christian judgment. The question after all is one of drawing the line that divides the area of the commanded from the area of freedom and our judgment.”

The *Standard* has come to see, I think, that any authority for instrumental music in worship must come from “the area of freedom and our judgment.” It is not to be found in “the area of the commanded.” It is an abuse of whatever “freedom” we have “in Christ” and mighty poor “judgment” to presume to add something to the worship of God the scriptures do not authorize. The scriptures no more authorize the use of instrumental music in worship than they do the burning of incense, or the washing of feet. If they did, the *Standard* would talk more to the point and not do so much talking around.

Here is a final plea that betrays what the *Standard* hopes for out of such meetings as the one in Detroit. That will be “glory” if such a goal can be reached.

“Can we not recognize as brethren in Christ and in this

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propaganda of unity all those who, having accepted Christ and obeyed Him in the terms of salvation, sincerely seek to attain unity upon the basis of New Testament doctrine and order, even though they may differ in their understanding of what the New Testament teaches in certain details.”

Instrumental music, of course, comes under “certain details.” The *Standard* shows no disposition whatever to surrender the music. It is a clear case of “love me, love my dog.” It is a diplomatic appeal to churches that do not use instruments for conscience sake to tolerate and fraternize with those that do; even if they do show clearly that they prefer the unauthorized instrument to the fellowship of their brethren “who having accepted Christ and obeyed him in the terms of salvation, sincerely seek to attain unity upon the basis of New Testament doctrine and order.” In short the *Standard* asks us to surrender our fight on the music question and seems to think the Detroit meeting is a step in that direction. And maybe so it is.

Finally, the *Standard*’s talk about “what our consecrated judgment tells us is the teaching of the New Testament” sounds a lot like “the sanctified common sense” that introduced the organ and divided the church in the first place. Personally, I have no more confidence in the “consecrated judgment” of slogan twisters who cling to the organ than loyal defenders of the truth a generation ago had in the “sanctified common sense” of the men who introduced it into the worship. The division that was caused by the organ will stay as long as the organ stays—I hope.

*Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *The Present Truth*, (1977), pp. 495-500.

—Deceased

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THAT NOBLE “SYMBOL OF UNITY”*

FOY E. WALLACE, JR.

It will be remembered that not long ago the *Bible Banner* called attention to an editorial in the *Christian Standard* by Edwin Errett commending E. L. Jorgenson and his premillennial songbook. The *Christian Standard* announced editorially that it had adopted the Jorgenson songbook and urged all the Christian Churches to buy it and use it as “a noble symbol of unity” between the “two groups” Christian Churches and Churches of Christ.

It will also be remembered that the *Bible Banner* called attention to the fact that in the Lexington Unity Meeting E. L. Jorgenson paid flattering tributes publicly to S. S. Lappin, one of the leading evangelists of the Christian Church, stating that he would like to go around with him and lead the singing in his meetings. That sort of back-slapping and mutual admiration was the order of the great (?) unity meeting! Except that it was not altogether mutual—because as previously remarked the group of digressive preachers there were said by eye-witnesses to actually turn and give each other the wink while Claude F. Witty and others of our brethren were making their speeches. These Christian Church preachers knew that our preachers there were being taken in, but they were so gullible as not to know it, or else knowing it were willing to be taken in.

It will not be forgotten that the *Bible Banner* also pointed out that the results of such meetings would be the abandonment of the issues entirely and that before long the digressive preachers would be holding meetings in the churches where the brethren participating in these meetings live and preach.

It has come to pass. The following announcement was taken from the daily paper in Louisville, Kentucky:

S. S. Lappin, former editor of the *Christian Standard*, will preside at a series of tent meetings beginning Sunday at Highland Church of Christ, Bardstown Road. Mr. Lappin was a professor at Bethany College and is author of several books. The meetings will be held at 7:45 p.m. daily except Saturday.

The following ad also appeared in the Louisville press:

HEAR THIS GREAT GOSPEL PREACHER ! S. S. LAPPIN JULY 13 to 27 Highland Church of Christ Bardstown Road near Longest Avenue Three Sunday Mornings in the Church House Every Evening (Omitting Saturdays) in Tent on Lawn.

The “Highland Church of Christ” mentioned in the above newspaper announcements is the church where E. L. Jorgenson preaches. It is the church in which Don Carlos Janes is a leader. Thus these two men, concerning whom the brotherhood has been repeatedly warned, have now come out into the open in their affiliations with the Christian Church. They believe in “fellowship” so strongly that they fellowship everybody—except loyal preachers and Christians who oppose their millennial teaching. It was this same church, under the direction of E. L. Jorgenson and Don Carlos Janes, that “withdrew fellowship” from such men as C. A. Taylor and those who compose one of the best churches in the whole brotherhood today, (the Bardstown Road Church in Louis-

ville) because they stood against the premillennial teaching of E. L. Jorgenson and Don Carlos Janes. But they extend full fellowship to S. S. Lappin, a digressive evangelist, and have him to hold the meeting for the Highland Church of Christ.

Brother H. Leo Boles exposed the affair in a manner worthy of the old *Gospel Advocate*. He did not mince words. In the same article he exposed the modernism of Walter W. Sikes, and his Christian Church connections and sympathies. Walter W. Sikes is my brother-in-law, married a sweet sister of mine and led her astray. He received his start toward modernism and digression in Abilene Christian College under the influence of such men as G. A. Klingman, David L. Cooper, and others whom Brother Sewell retained on his faculty over the warnings and protests of some of the strongest men in the church who knew where these men stood. And it was Brother Sewell who so recently did everything in his power to fasten Clinton Davidson on the churches and colleges of the West. It was also Brother Sewell who held a similar meeting with a digressive preacher, with a digressive church cooperating, at Waxahachie, Texas, a meeting similar to the Jorgenson-Lappin meeting in Louisville. Yet Brother Sewell recently demanded that anybody name anything in which he has been “unsound.” Well, he is the one who started such young men as Walter Sikes on the road to digression and modernism through Abilene Christian College. So Walter Sikes now writes an article for a magazine published by a Christian Church College, in which he avers that the “Church of Christ” and the “Christian Church” are two denominations that have grown out of the same movement! In other words, because those who first formed the Christian church departed from the New Testament order of things and went away, the church itself thereby became a denomination. If the church was not a denomination before the Christian Church came into being, why should the fact that some who were not loyal to the New Testament went out from us make it a denomination now? According to that idea of it, when John the apostle said some in his day “went out from us,” that made the church that John belonged to a denomination! The “church of Christ” is just what it was before some went out for one thing or another—whether digressives or premillennialists. I am glad Brother Boles exposed the fallacies of Walter Sikes in his article. More is needed and the editor of the *Bible Banner* will join Brother Boles in doing it.

Surely honest brethren, even those who have been misguided, can now see that E. L. Jorgenson’s songbook actually has a digressive and sectarian affiliation, being held as “a noble symbol of unity” between his group and the digressives. The Christian Church is now his medium of promoting his book. It should certainly be abandoned by all loyal churches. The reasons are obvious.

With digressive preachers holding meetings for Jorgenson’s church in Louisville, and Jorgenson holding a meeting in return for a digressive church in Indiana, the purpose of the Unity Meetings is now revealed. No further argument should be necessary. The course of the premillennialists is

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also manifest. It is the common ground of these men. They are all unsound on every vital issue before the church, both in doctrine and worship.

The next *Bible Banner* will review more fully the report of the Jorgenson-Lappin meeting in the *Christian Standard* by S. S. Lappin and in the *Christian Messenger* by Don Carlos Janes. But knowing these things now—will the churches of Christ continue to aid E. L. Jorgenson in the promotion of his errors by the purchase and use of his hymn books? And will they continue to send missionary money to Don Carlos Janes who has proved so unfaithful in teaching and practice? I cannot believe loyal churches will do it; but if in certain instances they do, loyal members should protest and continue to protest until their protests become effective. Truly, “by their fruits ye shall know them.”

*Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *The Present Truth*, (1977), pp. 738-741.

—Deceased

From the Pen of T. R. Burnett of Texas

This **Budget** becomes more and more convinced every day that it will become necessary to establish churches of the apostolic order in every town in the state where the so-called “Christian Church” now holds sway. The lawless determination of the society and organ people to rule or ruin every church with which they have connection, and either put in the unscriptural things or put out the brethren who oppose them, makes this plainly evident. The loyal brethren need not waste any valuable time waiting for a reformation, for there is none in prospect. Ephraim is joined to his idols, and he would rather have his society and music idol than any kind of Christian union known to the Bible. Brethren, proceed to re-establish the ancient order of things, just as if there was never a church of Christ in your town. Gather all the brethren together who love Bible order better than modern fads and foolishness, and start the work and worship of the church in the old apostolic way... It is better to have one dozen true disciples in a cheap house, than a thousand apostate pretenders in a palace who love modern innovations better than Bible truth.... (T. R. Burnett, “Burnett’s Budget,” *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 19 (May 9, 1895), p. 291. As quoted by Earl Irvin West, *The Search For The Ancient Order*, Vol. II. [Ann Arbor: Cushing-Malloy, Inc., 1950], p. 437.

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THE DESIRE FOR UNITY AND FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO ACHIEVE IT

LLOYD GALE, JR.

It is the will of our Lord and Savior for all Christians to be in unity. This He clearly taught in (John 17: 20-21):

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Jesus first prayed for the unity of His Ambassadors, the Apostles, and then for all others who would believe upon Christ as a result of their teaching. It was a prayer for the unity of all true Christians. The type of unity that Jesus prayed for is the kind that exists between Jesus and His heavenly Father. It is not an agreement not to disagree, or a unity in diversity.

THE CONSISTENT FAILURE OF SO CALLED UNITY MEETINGS

I have no account of the many so-called unity meetings that have taken place, yet there is no unity. The amount of time and money squandered by such attempts are exercises in futility and I believe are sinful. What has taken place in these meetings is an attempt, by those who have transgressed God's laws, to seek acceptance among those who have kept God's law. If the law violators are successful, then all involved are in error (II John verses 9-11). To bid "God speed" to those in error makes one a partaker of their evil deeds.

What is evident in such meetings is that the rule violators do not want to discuss or attempt to show authority for their innovations, they want to talk about all the things we agree upon. That is a subtle way of making the unacceptable, acceptable. Those who have gone onward and who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ have no desire to give up their innovations. They want others to follow after them. This is the only reason they will not meet with those who have not yet compromised.

If there is a sincere desire for unity, then the doctrines of men must be the subject of discussion, otherwise such meetings are sinful and a waste of time. It is man-made innovations that cause division and until such are removed unity is an impossibility (John 8:31-32). The road to unity is not that complicated. Those who have introduced instruments of music and missionary societies must be willing to give up that for which there is no New Testament authority. Those who today support THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST DISASTER SOCIETY, if they do not want to be the cause of further division, must give up their para-church organization. When they were invited to meet with faithful brethren and have the meeting video taped with fair and equal representation on both sides, they refused. They refused because they know that there is no New Testament authority for such an organization to claim to represent, with their board of directors, the churches of Christ. Those who are willing to accept this benevolent society might as well join with the Christian Church and all of their innovations because they have forfeited the principal of New Testament authority.

Consider for a moment two men who are following a blueprint in constructing a building. One of the builders notices that the other builder has added some innovations that are not included on the original plans. So they have a conference and the builder who has failed to follow the blueprint only wants to talk about the parts of construction where he has followed the blueprints. Now if the builder who is following the blueprint just goes along to get along with the other builder, would not the architect hold both parties responsible? I think you know the answer.

The Lord's church has but one Architect. His plan is perfect (I Corinthians 13:10). He has total authority (Matthew 28:18). His authority is set forth by His own instructions, and those of His Ambassadors, the Apostles, and it is complete. Any attempt by man to improve upon perfection will only mar that perfection and cause division.

The Apostle Paul in writing to the church in Corinth pled for the unity of all believers (I Corinthians 1:10).

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

There can be no unity when some are advocating things not authorized by Jesus Christ. All of the sentimental pronouncements in the world cannot make things that are unscriptural acceptable to those who truly love the Lord and who respect His authority. It is an undeniable fact that unauthorized beliefs and practices are the causes of all division.

The restoration of pure undenominational Christianity depends upon a willingness and a desire for all Christians to have a "thus saith the Lord" for everything we teach and practice. Abandon this Biblical principle and unity becomes an impossibility. There is an observable tendency today among the churches of Christ to copy the innovations of the denominations and not to look to the Scriptures for authority. Where did Children's Worship, youth directors, church leagues, devotionals, and gymnasiums originate? Not only have many adapted the language of Ashdod, but they have followed their innovations. No longer is the Word of God sufficient for salvation but clowns, meals and recreation must be the incentive. Worship is no longer about giving praise and thanksgiving to God for His manifold blessings and His unspeakable gift, but it is all about what the worshiper desires to make them feel good about themselves. We are no longer going in and out of the doors as authorized, but many are jumping out of the windows of human innovation with the denominations. Has the day now come when we need a restoration of the churches of Christ? What do you think?

—1186 Martha Leeville Road
Lebanon, TN 37090-8262

FELLOWSHIP AND TRUTH

BROCK HARTWIGSEN

The boarders of our fellowship declare the truthfulness of our teachings. In I John 1:7 we read:

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." In verse 3 John tell us "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

If our fellowship is broader than Christ's, then our fellowship is too broad. If our fellowship is narrower than Christ's, then our fellowship is too narrow. If our fellowship is too broad or too narrow then we are not **"walking in the light as he is in the light."** If we are not **"walking in the light,"** then we **"walk in darkness"** (verse 6). **"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth"** (verse 6).

In Revelation 22:18-19 God tells us that it is wrong to add to His Word or to take away from His Word. It is also wrong to try to add to God's fellowship those He does not fellowship or to try to remove from God's fellowship those He does fellowship.

In I John the word "fellowship" is translated from is *koinonia*. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance says that *koinonia* comes from *koinonos* which means a sharer, associate, or companion. Those with whom God is not a sharer, not an associate nor a companion are not in "fellowship" with God.

If we, on a spiritual level share with, associate with or are companions with those whom God does not "fellowship," then God does not "fellowship" with us. If our "fellowship" is with God, then our "fellowship" will be with only those whom God fellowships.

If we, on a spiritual level, refuse to share with, associate with or be companions with those whom God does "fellowship," then God does not "fellowship" with us. If our "fellowship" is with God, then we will "fellowship" all those whom God fellowships.

Who does God "fellowship?" God only "fellowship" with those who love and obey Jesus. **"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"** (John 14:23).

If our "fellowship" includes any who are outside of Christ or those in Christ who **"walk disorderly"** (II Thessalonians 3:6), then our "fellowship" is too broad and we will have no **"fellowship with him, and walk in darkness"** (I John 1:6). If our "fellowship" excludes any who are in Christ and living obedient lives, then our "fellowship" is too narrow and we will have no **"fellowship with him, and walk in darkness"** (I John 1:6).

The scope of our "fellowship" is determined by the doctrine we teach. If we teach association and acceptance of people who teach and practice things contrary to God's Word, then we **"do not the truth"** (I John 1:6). If we **"do not the truth,"** we have no **"fellowship with him, and walk in darkness"** (I John 1:6). If we teach withholding "fellowship" from people whom God fellowships because of matters of opinion and not **"thus saith the Lord,"** then we **"do not the truth"** (I

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John 1:6). If we **"do not the truth,"** we have no "fellowship with him, and walk in darkness" (I John 1:6).

There is no such thing as "big 'F' fellowship" and "small 'f' fellowship" as some brothers teach. There is either association and companionship with God and His people or association and companionship with those who have no association and companionship with God and His people.

Jesus said there are only two roads in life; the narrow road leading to life and the broad road leading to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14). Likewise, we either "fellowship" with Him and His or we do not. If I "fellowship" with those whom Jesus does not "fellowship," I am traveling with the wrong people on the wrong road. If I withhold "fellowship" from those whom Jesus has "fellowship" with, then I am not traveling with Him. I'm traveling on the wrong road.

Does your teaching and/or practice include association with, companionship with or "fellowship" with those whom God does not "fellowship?" If it does, you need to repent and narrow your teaching and/or practice to be in line with God's Will. Does your teaching and/or practice exclude association with, companionship with or "fellowship" with those whom God does "fellowship?" If it does, you need to repent and broaden your teaching and/or practice to bring it in line with God's Will.

—12521 Holly Springs New Hill Road
Apex, NC 27502

DISCUSSION GROUP

Contending for the Faith magazine announces the formation of a computer based discussion group called ContendingFTF, hosted at Yahoo.com. This discussion group is for members of the church of Christ only. Among the purposes for starting such a discussion group is to provide a forum to discuss Biblical doctrine, defend the Truth, and review current issues among churches of Christ. You are invited to join this group and participate in the discussions. ContendingFTF is "FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR."

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNITY MEETINGS BETWEEN SOME IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

DAVID P. BROWN

Beginning in about 1917 until 1923 there was an effort to bring about unity between the Christian Church and the Lord's church. Certain prominent men in the Christian Churches approached certain members of the church of Christ about reuniting. Various efforts were made by the *Tennessee Christian's* editor John B. Cowden of the Christian Church to sell the reunion idea to churches of Christ.¹ A move to dissuade Gospel preachers from opposing mechanical instrumental music in worship to God concluded with the Hardeman-Boswell debate in Nashville, Tennessee in 1923. With the victory for Truth by brother N. B. Hardeman, this debate for the time being effectively ended the "unity" efforts of the Christian Church, especially in middle Tennessee, because they were not about to give up their "Golden Calf" in the form of mechanical instruments of music in worship along with other biblically unauthorized conduct in order to have biblical unity.²

From 1934-39, Claude F. Witty, a preacher working with the church of Christ in Detroit, Michigan along with James DeForest Murch, of the Christian Church, made a second move to bring about unity between the Lord's church and the Christian Church.³ Several "unity meetings" resulted from these efforts. However, H. Leo Boles was invited to speak on unity in the Indianapolis, Indiana "unity meeting." On May 3, 1939 brother Boles presented his material on Christian unity. In that address to the Indianapolis "unity" meeting he made clear what the Scriptural grounds for Christian unity was and is. He pointed out that:

1. Denominational paraphernalia must be put aside.
2. All denominational machinery and apparatus must be destroyed.
3. The denominational spirit permeating the Christian Church must be condemned.
4. Those who make up the Christian Church must come back to the New Testament and once again take up the "plea" of the pioneers for New Testament unity.
5. Only in this way will biblical unity prevail between those who make up the Christian Church and the churches of Christ.

In his address to the meeting Boles made it clear that the Christian Church knew where they left the church of Christ and, therefore, they knew where to find them. He made it clear that if the Christian Church would come back to the Truths they once believed unity would be the inevitable result. He also pointed out to the meeting that as long as the church of Christ is loyal to the New Testament, they cannot compromise on this or any other point so clearly taught in the New Testament.⁴

In the late 1950's and the early 1960's, another unity effort was started by the late W. Carl Ketcherside and Ernest

Beam. About the only thing that came out of that effort was that Ketcherside and close co-worker Leroy Garrett, started to work with the Christian Church. Now in his 80's and living in Denton, Texas, Garrett continues to work with the Christian Church and promote any and all kinds of Biblically unauthorized activities to lead brethren away from the Truth of the Gospel.

With the "Restoration Summit" 1984 meeting at Ozark Bible College in Joplin, Missouri the latest effort at unity between the Christian Church and the churches of Christ began. (As reviewed elsewhere in this issue of *CFTF* by Dub McClish—Editor) The prime promoters of that effort from the churches of Christ were Alan Cloyd, the late Reuel Lemmons and Rubel Shelly. From the Christian Church it was the late Don DeWelt who led preachers from the Independent Christian Church. Today Rubel Shelly, Calvin Warpula, Rick Atchley and their cohorts are promoters of these unity meetings among churches of Christ and Victor Knowles is one of the leaders from the Christian Church.

From 1984 till the present the men in the churches of Christ who are championing these unity meetings are men who have repudiated every signal aspect of primitive, pure, New Testament Christianity. They are apostates. They love compromise and are ready to give up or take on just about anything some kind of agreement to disagree. Bible authority means nothing to them. And, thus it is not even considered in their attempts to find grounds for unity between churches of Christ and the Independent Christian Church.

Back during the Witty/Murch move for unity, brother H. Leo Boles confronted brother Claude F. Witty with six very important questions:

1. Are you not a self-appointed representative of the churches of Christ?
2. Have you told Murch and his brethren there can be no unity until he puts the organ aside and gives up the missionary societies?
3. For union you say that both sides must move. Now what will the churches of Christ have to give up?
4. What will they have to begin teaching that they are not now teaching?
5. What will they have to begin practicing that they are not now practicing? What will they have to quit teaching and practicing in order to effect this union?
6. The Christian Church has gone off. It has organized measures to "perpetuate the cause of division." How can it come back without abandoning these things? How can we "go to them till they abandon the things which caused the division?"⁵

We have learned that brethren with hidden agenda's do not like forthright and pointed questions put to them. This refusal to answer questions is one of the identifying marks

“THREE UNIQUE AND DISTINCT FELLOWSHIPS”*

Today the churches of Christ, the Independent Christian Churches, and the Disciples of Christ form three unique and distinct fellowships with no religious ties to each other. They share only a common heritage in the Restoration movement which emerged from the united efforts of Barton W Stone, Alexander Campbell, and their associates. Since 1968, the Independent Christian Churches have severed all ties and share no religious affiliations of any kind with the Disciples of Christ.

The churches of Christ, which achieved a separate identification in the United Religious Census of 1906, have no formal religious contacts whatsoever with the Disciples of Christ and very few with the Independents. The members of the churches Christ regard both groups as erring brethren who are engaged in unscriptural practices. The churches of Christ have remained constant in their commitment to the keynote of the Restoration movement “to speak or remain silent as the Scriptures dictate.”

The Independents have abandoned the endorsement of missionary society for reasons already stated. They have clung to the organ since the latter part of the nineteenth century and continue to do so without remorse. Both fellowships share in a common alienation from the Disciples of Christ, but otherwise share little in common. Since their break with the Disciples of Christ, the Independents jealously guard the autonomy of the local church. There are no societies, boards, agencies, or executive committees exercising control or authority over the local churches. There are organizations, such as boards of trustees, which manage their schools and benevolent institutions. There are organizations similar to the North American Christian Convention, which provide open forums for discussion and direction of church affairs. The Independents boast, without justification, that they are the *bona fide* inheritors and custodians of Restoration principles and traditions.

The churches of Christ find it difficult to distinguish between the Independents and the Disciples and hold both in common distrust for deserting the Restoration plea. To the outsider looking in, the Independents and the Disciples are much like the divorced couple who have never accepted their separation yet there is no prospect for reconciliation. The Independents are no more likely to give up the organ for the sake of Christian unity than the Disciples are to abandon modern theology. The churches of Christ are not apt to accept either.

*Adron Doran and J.E. Choate, *The Christian Scholar*, [Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1985], pp. 188-189.

of those who are determined to persist in one or more errors rather than repent of them—they always have hidden agendas that they dare not allow to come to light. However, brother Boles’ questions continue to be appropriate for those in the churches of Christ who are continually promoting these “unity meetings” (better known and described as apostasy meetings). Brother Boles’ questions are almost seventy years old, but they are as relevant and important as they were when brother Boles originally put them to Claude F. Witty. Will they receive an answer from those in the church of Christ who are so high on these unity meetings. I do not expect an answer to Boles’ questions to Witty. Or, if they are answered they will be “answered” about like Gary Holloway’s answered the questions put to him by Michael D. Greene in the article beginning on the front page of this issue of *CFTF*.

We are interested in the unity that comes through submitting to the authority of God’s Will and no other kind (Colossians 3:17). This is the unity for which Christ prayed and of which Paul wrote and for which we must contend (John 17:20, 21; I Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4: 1-6; Jude 3). It is the unity that Shelly and company have left and repudiated in order to have some sort of humanly devised union with the Christian Church as well as various other sectarian denominational churches

ENDNOTES

¹ Herman Norton, *Tennessee Christians* (Nashville, Reed and Co., 1971), pp. 250-251.

² William Woodson, *Standing for Their Faith* (Henderson, TN: J & W. Publications, 1979), pp.78-79.

³ James DeForest Murch, *Adventuring for Christ, An Autobiography* (Louisville: Restoration Press, 1973), pp. 128-130.

⁴ H. Leo Boles, *The Way of Unity Between “Christian Churches” and Churches of Christ* (Memphis, TN Getwell Church of Christ, 1984) pp. 15-16.

⁵ Leo Lipscomb Boles and J. E. Choate, *I’ll Stand on the Rock: a Biography of H. Leo Boles* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate, 1965), p. 20.

—P. O. Box 2357
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Green’s Video Service, operated by Jim Green, has the audio and video recordings from the Spring Church of Christ’s Lectureship on Anti-ism and the Spring Open Forum. If you wish to obtain any of those recordings, available in various formats, contact Jim Green at 2711 Spring Meade Blvd., Columbia, TN 38401, 931-486-1364, www.jgreen-coc-video-ministry.com / or email at jgreencoc1986@yahoo.com — Editor.

“Can two walk together,
unless they are agreed?”
(Amos 3:3)

Directory of Churches...

-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.

Somerville-Union Church of Christ, located on Hwy 36, one mile east of Hwy 67, Somerville, Alabama, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tom Larkin, evangelist, (256) 778-8955, (256) 778-8961.

Tuscaloosa-East Pointe Church of Christ one block from Exit 76, off I-20, I-59, Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed., 7 p.m. Abiding in God's Word—The Old Paths. U of A student, visitor, or resident? Welcome! (205)556-3062.

-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.

-Georgia-

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

-Indiana-

Evansville-West Side Church of Christ, 3232 Edgewood Dr., Evansville, IN 47712, Sun. 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 6:30 p.m., Larry Albritton, evangelist.

-Louisiana-

Chalmette-Church of Christ, 200 Delaronde St., Chalmette, LA 70044. Mark Lance, evangelist, (504) 279-9438.

-Massachusetts-

Chicopee-Armory Drive Church of Christ, 26 Armory Drive; Chicopee, MA 01020, in-home, (413) 592-4834, Ken Dion, evangelist.

-North Carolina-

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

-Oklahoma-

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

- Tennessee-

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

Murfreesboro-Church of Christ, 837 Esther Lane, Murfreesboro, TN, Sun.

Bible class 9:00 a.m., Worship 10:00 a.m., Fellowship meal 11:00 a.m., Devotional 12:00 p.m.; Wed. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. For directions and other information please visit our website at www.murfreesborochurchofchrist.org. 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; tgj@charter.net.

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

Hubbard-105 NE 6th St., Hubbard, TX 76648, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Delbert J. Goines, evangelist; djgoines@writeme.com.

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

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

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

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

-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., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tel. (307) 635-2482. evangelist: Tim Cozad.

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