

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

EASTERN EUROPEAN MISSION

Gary W. Summers

For several months now, Eastern European Mission (hereafter EEM) has been mailing out newsletters which plead for funds to distribute Bibles. On August 26th, 2006, they raised over \$1.8 million for Bibles and Bible curriculum to be “placed in all the public schools and libraries of Russia’s Omsk province,” according to the EEM December, 2006 Newsletter (2). Certainly, this goal is laudable. In letters dated August 9, 2007, EEM is again asking for funds to publish Bibles in the Russian language, but as representatives of EEM travel around the country, making contacts and soliciting funds, it is not likely that some information will be made available—unless the elders or the men of the congregation ask.

First of all, EEM is overseen by the Bammel Church of Christ in Houston, Texas. On their current Web site, www.eem.org, that information is included in the “About Us” section. Since those who support EEM are going to have fellowship with them because of the funds sent to them (Phil. 4:15-16), it is important that they know something about the group, the congregation that oversees the operation, and the President of the organization.

BAMMEL CHURCH OF CHRIST

Bammel Church of Christ has a reputation for being liberal, and it is well deserved. If one went to their Web page and clicked on ministries and then kids, he would find there is a baby dedication on September 23, 2007. During the month of August, 2007, one could find five speakers scheduled to speak on Wednesday evenings: Jeff Peterson, Phil Ware, Jerry Taylor, Charles Mickey, and Eddie Randolph. Who are these men? Phil Ware is President of Heartlight, Inc., which pub-

lishes an on-line magazine dedicated to encourage Christian living. Among its writers are Rubel Shelly and Lynn “big, sick denomination” Anderson. Ware is from the Southern Hills Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. Eddie Randolph is another writer for Heartlight and is with the Northwest Tampa Church of Christ.

Then there is Jerry Taylor, who is assistant professor of Bible and ministry at Abilene Christian University. He also shares the pulpit with Mike Cope at the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. Among his associates are Rubel Shelly and Lynn Anderson. Brethren, is there a *pattern* here? For more about Taylor, one can check this Web site: www.stone-campbelljournal.com. In the publication dated Volume 9, Issue 2, one can read about last year’s North American Christian Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, where Jerry Taylor spoke in one of the main sessions, along with Jeff Walling, Doug Foster, and Rick Atchley. These are the type of people Bammel Church of Christ brings in to speak. They oversee Eastern European Mission.

PRESIDENT MIKE ARMOUR

The President of Eastern European Mission is Mike Armour, and before anyone asks, the answer is, “Yes. I have spoken to him personally.” Just about all that anyone needs to know about his views may be found in a speech he gave in Lexington, Kentucky, on August 11, 2001, at the Lexington Theological Seminary. According to the Wikipedia, “Lexington Theological Seminary is an accredited graduate theological institution located in Lexington, Kentucky. Although the seminary is related to the Christian Church (Dis-

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

FLATTERY AND THEN SOME

Take a look at the article from *The "New" Gospel Journal* at the bottom of page three of this issue of *CFTF*. Talk about flattery gone to seed. *How they write in public the direct opposite of what they have said in private about Joseph Meador—especially is this the case with the T“N”GJ Board’s remarks.* The tributes of the T“N”GJ Board and T“N”GJ co-editors amount to what one would expect to hear from sectarian pastors in their “good words and fair speeches” funeral orations, the design of which is to ignore the facts in a person’s life. But we have come to expect such scripted applause from these self-proclaimed “balanced brethren.”

A little over two years ago Curtis Cates and Joseph resigned from The Gospel Journal Board, but were talked back on to it by the remaining board members. Then, as was intended in the first place, Dub McClish and Dave Watson were forced out of their respective positions with *The Gospel Journal*. *How very convenient for the defenders and promoters of those who caused McClish and Watson to resign under duress from TGJ to ignore questions that go to the motives or reasons behind the TGJ Board’s actions against McClish and Watson.* Further, these same collusionists continue to do all within their power to keep all the facts that bear on the case from the church.

Standing in pious mortification TGJ Board took and continues to take the attitude set out in the following statement—*The very idea that any member of the church would have the audacity to question our motives. We are the “balanced brethren”—Curtis Cates, Joseph Meador, Ken Ratcliff and Tommy Hicks.* But the T“N”GJ “balanced brethren” and their supporters immediately played the “motive card” regarding those of us who oppose their actions. This is their practiced mode of operation—you can’t do that, but we can. They conveniently ignore the real problems and are as busy as bees in labeling those of us who oppose their biblically unauthorized acts as villains of the baser sort. But what else can they do, for they certainly cannot deal with the facts in the case and they are too proud to repent? Thus, they continue to attempt to vilify those who oppose them. And with every move on their part to that end concerning us, they sear their conscience even more.

Why did the whole crowd “observe the Passover” regarding Joseph’s Gestalt Therapy, Oriental philosophy and his Yoga “doings”? However, their silence on those matters was expected. Remember, this has been the way they have dealt with Dave Miller’s and Stan Crowley’s doctrines from the beginning. *What else can they do, since they refuse to repent or publicly defend their position with an appeal to the facts and Scriptures bearing on the case?*

They are prime examples of what happens when people finally decide to make the turn from the consistent application of God's Truth to every facet of their lives, to a life of compromise. There is no end to what one will then say or do, or not say or not do, or with whom they will snuggle in order to promote oneself and one's pet projects. Indeed, they do not mind following the old Arab ploy that is, *The enemy of my enemy is my friend*.

Now all that is left on the T"N"GJ Board is the man who would be president—of the USA that is; a retired preacher training school director, who never saw much of anything that he did not praise and fawn over if he thought it would help his cause; and, the Lubbock Lulu, who gets tongue tangled from trying to talk out of both sides of his mouth at the same time without saying anything. No wonder Tom is "at large."

The Jewish Sanhedrin did not have a thing on these brethren when it comes to their duplicity. Such persons are a greater threat to the church than the Max Lucado's and Rubel Shelley's are. Sadly the average member of the church who is influenced by them is as blind as a bat (or worse) and many willingly refuse the eye salve our Lord offered to the Laodicean brethren that they might see clearly (Rev. 3:18; Also see Matt. 15:14). One reason for their sad state of affairs is this—they continue to appear to be with us doctrinally, but in practice their hearts are far from us.

For the most part all of us, as far as I know, teach the same on fundamental matters, but MSOP, AP, SWSBS, T"N"GJ, et. al, do not even pretend to be consistent in their application of the Truth to everyone alike. Further, they do all they can to make themselves feel good in their inconsistency by spending much of their time attempting to show that everyone is inconsistent in the application of the Truth to at least some real life situations. From their

actions up to this time it seems that the conclusion they desire for all to reach is that everyone is inconsistent, so why try to be otherwise? Are they advocating that all of us together should feel good in our inconsistencies as we rush toward Hell without our consciences bothering us at all? For some reason that kind of thinking does not appeal to me.

When all is said and done by those who are represented in their thinking and conduct by the T"N"GJ brethren, the end result is this—they are preparing those churches that they are influencing for the Lucado's, Shelley's, etc. They have so determined to reject adequate evidence, creditable witnesses and the proper Scriptures bearing on the Miller, Crowley, et al., cases that they have blinded themselves to the Truth regarding said matters.

Their example and its resultant bad influence on others when it comes to fellowshiping false teachers and those who fellowship the same; their biased actions brought about by their respect of persons, and their dogmatic determination not to repent of their sins, expose them to be charlatans and disingenuous persons. It seems they would misrepresent about anything or anybody to get whatever it is they desire. As one brother commented about them:

At least we know where Max Lucado and Rubel Shelley stand on issues. T"N"GJ crowd are comprised of neo-unity in diversity thinkers. There is no telling what they will do, where they will go, or how they will change. Then, to beat it all they will deceive folks into thinking that they oppose Liberalism.

With Paul we ask them, "**Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth**" (Gal. 4:16)? Obviously, in their eyes, we are their enemies—because we tell them the Truth. How sad, how sad!

—David P. Brown, Editor

A THANK YOU TO JOSEPH MEADOR

From the inception of *The Gospel Journal*, brother Joseph Meador has served effectively and sacrificially as Vice President of the Board of Directors of The Gospel Journal, Inc. He brought to the *Journal* scholarship and soundness in the Scriptures, administrative ability as the Director of the Southwest School of Bible Studies, and great ability as a gospel preacher. Effective July 22, 2007, brother Meador tendered his resignation as Vice President of the Board.

It is with sincere regret that we accept brother Meador's resignation. We express to him our gratitude for his nearly eight years of distinguish service to *The Gospel Journal*. It has been a pleasure for us to work with him, and we wish for him every good blessing from the Lord.

Curtis A. Cates, President

Kenneth E. Ratcliff, Treasurer-Business Manager

Tommy J. Hicks, Member-at-Large Board of Directors

As editors we send our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to brother Joseph Meador for his many years of faithful service as a board member of *The Gospel Journal*. His insight, experience and scholarship were an integral part of *The Gospel Journal* team. His love and concern for the Kingdom were keenly felt and exhibited through his many acts of kindness, expressions of good will, and biblically sound articles. We will forever be indebted to him for his many hours of service, sage advice, and constant encouragement. We thank God for brother Meador and want him to know that the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by his many talents and good works. He will be greatly missed.

Barry Grider, Editor
John Moore, Editor

[The following infamous quote from Joseph is one of his "acts of kindness and expressions of good will" made before we wrote our first word concerning him.
—Editor]

"A few who are in a small, but no less toxic, loyalty circle...a small negative faction, who if they gain control, will only rupture fellowship in the church even more than they already have."



Joseph Meador

(Continued from page One)

principles of Christ), it is intentionally ecumenical with almost 50 percent of its enrollment coming from other denominations.” Armour’s speech there, along with commentary, can be found on the following Web site: <http://www.piney.com/MuArmour.html>.

The Peter Ainslie lectures, at which Armour spoke, are conducted each year. Dr. Peter Ainslie III (1867-1934), was the minister of Christian Temple in Baltimore; he was also the first president of the Council on Christian Unity. In his speech Armour speaks of “our spiritual cousins in the Disciples of Christ.” Excuse me? According to the official Web page of this denomination, they believe the following:

- Freedom of belief. Disciples are called together around one essential of faith: belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Persons are free to follow their consciences guided by the Bible, the Holy Spirit study and prayer, and are expected to extend that freedom to others.
- Baptism by immersion. In baptism the old self-centered life is set aside, and a new life of trust in God begins. Although Disciples practice baptism by immersion, other baptism traditions are honored.

The reader should notice how well the one essential belief of faith in Jesus agrees with “the core gospel” concept upheld by those who argue that 2 John 9-11 does not apply to all New Testament teaching but only the doctrine about Christ. This erroneous notion fits in well with the philosophy of the Disciples. This statement also leaves the door open to total subjectivism in what a person believes in that it allows for him to be guided (apparently directly) by the Holy Spirit.

Other “baptism traditions are honored”? So, if someone has been sprinkled or had water poured upon him, the Disciples find this practice acceptable and will accept all such individuals into fellowship and as members. Although the president of EEM may regard the Disciples as spiritual cousins, this writer does not. One either believes, practices, and teaches what the Bible says about salvation, or he does not. Those who have had water sprinkled or poured upon them have not been baptized according to the New Testament definition of the word. They are yet in their sins and in the kingdom of darkness—and are not Christians, brethren, or members of the body of Christ.

BAPTISM

Armour takes issue with what most churches of Christ ONCE taught concerning baptism. He says: “At the same time the instrumental controversy was coming to prominence, a narrow view of baptism took root in a cappella churches.” He then ties the New Testament teaching on baptism to John Thomas, who began the Christadelphians, and claims: “Thomas insisted on rebaptizing anyone who had been immersed without an explicit understanding that baptism was for the remission of sins.”

Hardly anyone has heard of John Thomas today. We baptize for the remission of sins because that is precisely what Peter taught in Acts 2:38. John baptized for the same purpose when he began to preach and prepare the way for Jesus (Mark 1:4). Yet the president of EEM considers this

a narrow view. He thinks that, if anyone is baptized just for the purpose of obeying Christ, such a reason is sufficient. He disagrees with the Scriptures. Some in Ephesus had been baptized into John’s baptism (in other words, for the remission of sins)—and even that was not sufficient because it was not in the name of Christ (Acts 19:1-7). For baptism to be valid it must be for the right purpose and in the right name.

UNITY

The reason that Armour makes an issue of baptism is that our narrow view led us to be exclusive and not open to unity with others. “This was clearly a move in the direction of exclusivism and added significantly to the resentment of Churches of Christ and to their isolation in the twentieth century.” How much involvement does Armour want with other religious groups? He is all for working with denominations. In his speech he said:

Moreover, because of our emphasis on baptism in the plan of salvation, we were frequently not welcome to join others in the cause of evangelism. I experienced this firsthand, even though my convictions on baptism more nearly paralleled those of Campbell and Lipscomb than the editorial viewpoint of the early Firm Foundation. My repeated efforts to participate in interdenominational evangelistic programs were repeatedly rebuffed.

The reader should wonder, “Why was Mike Armour repeatedly trying to participate in interdenominational evangelistic programs?” Another excellent question would be: “Will his views affect the way that EEM distributes their materials, and will they be working with denominations when they do so?” He touts the Joplin Unity meeting of 1984 as a wonderful event and claims to have hosted two succeeding Restoration Forums himself. He speaks of “wonderful cooperative efforts between the two fellowships” and suggests that duplication of efforts could be avoided by sharing printed materials in Russia!

Congregations of the Lord’s church should ask themselves if they want to work with someone who carries such loose views of fellowship. Back in January, 2007, there was an e-mail exchange between Mike Armour and an elder of a congregation in Orlando. Apparently, Armour showed the e-mail to a representative of EEM in this area; so it was not regarded as private. He wrote:

No one has gone on record more clearly against speaking in tongues than I have. But would I use a person’s views on speaking in tongues as a test of fellowship? Not at all. No one has presented a more thoroughly argued defense of an amillennial interpretation of Revelation than I have. Does that mean I will draw lines of fellowship against someone who is premillennial? Again, not at all. Apparently one does not have to be “straight” on the doctrine of tongues to be saved initially; otherwise the New Testament would have made that clear. Similarly, despite a great deal of confusion about the nature of God’s kingdom in the first century, there is no indication that someone had to have a proper understanding of the millennium in order to become a Christian. In my reasoning, if one’s view on such things does not preclude a person from becoming a Christian

initially, neither does it cost a person his or her salvation once this individual becomes part of the body of Christ.

No wonder he can fellowship the Disciples of Christ; he does not consider hardly anything a barrier to fellowship! Such are the views of the president of EEM. Many are the doctrinal problems of those who oversee this work. This article contains only a smattering of information—sufficient, to say the least, but much more could have been presented, and the reader is invited to read the entire speech and verify the truthfulness of what has been herein presented.

Probably, many liberal churches are supporting these works due to their association with Mike Armour or the Bammel Church of Christ. But many congregations who would NEVER agree with the positions these brethren hold are probably giving generously because the idea sounds so appealing. Who could be against giving Bibles and religious materials to those who live in Russia and Ukraine? There are faithful

brethren in that region; Kerry Sword, for example, has worked in Kiev since 1992 and assisted in the operation of the Kiev Preacher Training School there (not currently in service). A great amount of work needs to be done in locations like these, but brethren need to funnel their gifts through men who still believe that baptism must be for the remission of sins, who will preach against the addition of instrumental music, and treat the church of Christ as it deserves to be treated—as the Lord’s body—not some denominational manmade organization. May brethren everywhere refrain from supporting those who no longer walk in the old paths but contribute generously to good works worthy of consideration.

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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF SECOND JOHN

Jack Stephens

INTRODUCTION

The Bible tells us that during the First Century, the early church enjoyed remarkable growth and spread throughout the world. The spread of the Gospel was such that Paul declared in Colossians 1:23 that it had been **“preached to every creature which is under heaven.”**¹ What accounted for this rapid spread of the Gospel?

We know of course that God chose the most appropriate time according to His will to bring His Son into the world because we read in Gal. 4:4 that **“when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”**

God decided the proper time in which the world would best facilitate the building of the kingdom—A time that was right politically, morally, economically, socially and every other way that God deemed the world to be ready for the kingdom as prophesied by Daniel and planned from before the foundation of the world (Dan. 2:44; Eph. 1:4-6; 3:10,11).

One such factor that helped account for the spread of the Gospel was certainly the “hospitality” of the early Christians. Philemon verse 22 is an example showing that Paul was able to travel and depend upon Christians opening their homes to him. In Third John verses 5-8, John also commended and encouraged those who provided lodging and support for teachers who traveled to spread the truth saying: **“We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.”**

There also existed then, as today, the natural desire to share fellowship with those of like precious faith. But showing such hospitality was not without its potential for supporting

false teachers and the spread of false doctrines. It would be easy for teachers of error to take advantage of the Christians’ natural tendency to be hospitable to strangers. Thus, it was necessary to counsel Christians to use proper discernment in sending traveling teachers on their way. The Second Epistle of John addresses this very problem, warning against receiving certain teachers. A study of this text is recommended for all Christians, especially those who seek to help spread the Truth through support of preachers, teachers and schools. Our prayer and hope is that we will always seek to walk in the Truth and support those who do the same.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

John’s epistles served to help the early church in the battle against false teachers and their doctrine. Today as we observe those among us who are teaching by their actions, if not by their words, doctrines concerning fellowship contrary to John’s simple and plain teaching, these books continue to serve the Lord’s church in that ongoing battle.

In this introductory study of Second John, we will begin by answering certain fundamental questions. First of all we will study who penned the book.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF SECOND JOHN

The letter does not bear any name, nor does it contain any indication of the author that can be considered conclusive.

The fact that the three epistles attributed to the apostle John make no specific identification of the author indicates that he apparently did not need to identify himself for his message to be accepted by those receiving the epistle. The

recipients evidently knew who wrote the letter. And, it is most likely that a person who had authority and recognition as the apostle John possessed, would write such a letter. A clear identification and statement of authority would have been needed if the person were not well known, especially if the recipients were to heed the message.

Yet, Bible scholars appear to be in agreement and the authorship is not really doubted in any meaningful way.

The Gospel according to John and the three epistles, are too closely linked together to be separated, and assigned, some to one author and some to another. And if they are all by one writer, that writer, beyond all reasonable doubt, is John the apostle.²

The author of both Second and Third John is identified simply as “The elder” (literally, the presbyter, *ho presbuteros* in the Greek text). Since the article “the” appears before “elder,” emphasis is given to the writer as a person rather than to an official position. Additionally, the term “the elder” would be a fitting description of the apostle John as the author writing in his old age if, as some estimate, the epistle was written as late as A.D. 90. John’s use of “*the elder*” could indicate that he alone of the apostles still remained alive.

The basis of the agreement among conservative scholars that the author is John is the abundant internal and external evidence. External evidence includes the fact that numerous writers of the early centuries assign them to the apostle John.

Clement of Alexandria cited them; Dionyseus noted that John did not name himself in his Epistles, “not even in the Second and Third Epistles, although they are short Epistles, but simply calls himself the presbyter.” Cyprian introduced a quotation from 2 John 10, as written by “John the Apostle.”³

We learn elsewhere that Irenaeus of Lyons, a pupil of Polycarp (who in turn was a pupil of the apostle John), twice quotes Second John as belonging to the apostle John.

The internal evidence is even more convincing. The three epistles of John embody the same language and the same ideas. “There is little that is peculiar to them, as distinct from the First Epistle, or the Gospel according to John; and of the Second Epistle, seven or eight of the thirteen verses are found in the First Epistle.”⁴

Some have proposed other authors, but they are all very obscure men of whom we have no clear identification. There is no clear evidence of any other “John” who Christians of the early church and recipients of the letter would consider to be a man of authority.

Also, there does not appear to be any motivation for someone to hoist a fraud upon the recipient through forgery. It would seem almost certain that a forger would have used, or even flaunted, the title of “Apostle” or the “Apostle John” in preference to the more humble designation of “elder.” Apparently the author of these epistles was so universally known, and his authority recognized, that he needed no other title.

The early reluctance to accept both Second and Third John as authentic was because of their private nature and limited

circulation, so they did not enjoy a widespread acceptance.⁵ However, it seems that from the time that the language, sentiments, ideas, and doctrines of the epistles were critically examined, no doubts entertained about their authorship.⁶

For example, Second and Third John are short letters, hence, the number of doctrinal subjects mentioned is small. Yet the subject of “Truth” is one that weaves its way from the beginning of First John 1:6, through Second John v4, to near the end of Third John v12, tying them all together, indicating common authorship. “Truth” also weaves its way through the Gospel of John further indicating common authorship with the epistles.

Lastly, the tone of authority permeates all of the Johannine epistles. It is an authority that is seldom put forward in a prominent way, but is present in such a way that would be difficult to assume if not actually possessed. The author of Second John had either done much to uphold his claim to be heard and obeyed such as would suit an apostle, or his authorship was common knowledge. If the criteria of reference by writers of the early centuries, vocabulary, style, ideas and language are ever adequate for determining authorship, then the epistle of Second John must be attributed to the apostle John.

THE RECIPIENTS AND OCCASION OF SECOND JOHN

The letter is addressed to “**the elect lady and her children.**” The question that begs to be answered is one that divides many scholars: Is this an actual person? Or, a figure of speech representing the church? The Greek phrase, *eklekte kuria*, translated elect lady, has several possible meanings. If the designation is personal, there may be three possible meanings.

First, *kuria* could be a personal name with “elect” as a descriptive modifier: “to the elect Cyria.” *Second*, *eklekte* could be a proper name as Clement of Alexandria regarded it⁷ with *kuria*, “lady,” a modification: “to the lady Eclecte.” Or *third*, it could be that neither *eklekte* or *kuria* is meant as a personal name and that both were meant to be descriptive: “to the elect lady,” with the person not being identified any further.

Against the idea that *eklekte* is a proper name is John’s use of the same word in verse 13 as an adjective, “**The children of thy elect (eklekte) sister greet thee.**” It does not seem likely that two sisters would have the same name.

Another possibility is that “elect lady” is not a person but rather a personification for the church. If it is to have this meaning, it would have to represent a local church and not the church universal. Trying to fit the meaning to the church universal presents difficulties with verse 13; What would represent the sister of the church universal? Our Lord has only one church (Ephesians 4:4). Additionally, the church universal includes all the elect— all the children. Who would represent the children of the elect sister? If the “elect lady” is to represent the church using the allegory of a woman,

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(Continued From Page Six)

“The children of thy elect sister” may possibly mean that the members of one local church are greeting another local church. However, it seems unlikely that in so short a letter that John would use allegorical language.

The late brother Guy N. Woods, writing in regard to the “elect lady” being figuratively designated using the allegory of a woman, stated:

To reach this conclusion, one must translate the Greek word *kuria* as “lady,” interpret the word “lady” as a church, and then construe the Greek word *tekna*, children, as members of the church! Only in highly figurative portions of the scriptures is the church ever referred to as a woman; and it seems very unlikely that the apostle, in this brief treatise, should have used the word thus figuratively.⁸

This appears to be a case where the literal meaning is the best one because the literal one makes sense and no difficulties confront the Bible student if we assume the elect lady to be an individual.

However, it is important to remember that no matter which opinion one may hold on the recipients of Second John, whether written to an individual and her children or to a local congregation of the Lord’s church, it makes no difference—it is addressed to New Testament Christians. Holding to either opinion does not affect the meaning, the force, nor the application of the epistle’s message.

As we now consider the occasion for this letter, like most of the epistles in our New Testament, the three epistles of

John are special, or specific, and occasional. The first epistle lays a foundation of Christian conduct and how to cope with false teachers and the dangerous seductions of Gnosticism that threatened the church at large. Second John deals with the same danger as it affected the elect lady and her children. The subject of what to do with false teachers who “**abideth not in the doctrine of Christ**” is at the heart of the epistle.

John expresses his appreciation for the elect lady’s loyalty to the truth as it manifested itself in the faithfulness of certain of her children. He also took this occasion to warn her of deceivers and false teachers, admonishing her to abide in the doctrine of Christ while refusing to aid and comfort those who had gone beyond the teaching of Christ. John is concerned with the hospitality, and consequently the fellowship, toward false teachers, that perhaps the lady with mistaken generosity had given a welcome. He urges them to cultivate a vigilance against false teachers and not to have anything to do with such a one who “**abideth not in the doctrine of Christ**” to avoid losing their reward.

THE DATING OF SECOND JOHN

Without any reference in the letters to use, it is not possible to speak with any certainty of the time or place the epistles were written. However, the most accepted view is that these documents were written by John for the Asian churches in the middle of the last third of the first century.⁹

From the many similarities of both Second and Third John, most scholars infer that they were written about the same time and possibly from the same place. John died near the end of the first century and appears to have been a rather aged man when the letter was written as indicated by using the term “**the elder**” in verse 1 and often referring to his readers in his epistles as his “**little children.**”

Most scholars believe that Second and Third John were written between about the years A.D. 80 and 90. Brother Woods wrote that, “in view of the known facts, that the date would be nearer A.D. 90 than A.D. 80, or earlier.”¹⁰

THE BACKGROUND OF SECOND JOHN

To understand the background of any Bible book is desirable and of immense value to understand the erroneous beliefs and errors with which John dealt. John wrote in 1 John 4:1, “**Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits**

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whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” It did not matter how educated or clever they were. It did not matter how popular they may have been or where they thought they may have stood in the brotherhood. It did not matter what they may have been or professed in the past. John even warned in 1 John 2:19, **“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”**

John said **“try,”** or prove, the spirits. Put them to the acid test of Truth. If it stands the test, it is acceptable; otherwise, it is to be rejected. He said in 2 John 7 that **“many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.”** Such a claim stands in opposition to the eternal purpose of the Creator.

Who were these deceivers who denied that Jesus came in the flesh? Those that taught such were known as Gnostics and their false teaching opposed the human and deity nature of Jesus the Christ. The Gnostics were not open enemies and persecutors of the church and Christianity. Yet their false teaching was deadly, not necessarily from a physical point of view; it was fatal in that it was not the teaching of Christ. This false doctrine, therefore, placed man out of fellowship with God (2 John 9).

The term Gnostic comes from the Greek word *gnosis* meaning knowledge. Gnosticism professed to give its approval and blessing to the gospel. The gospel was good as far as it went, but Gnostics professed to have a deeper and more genuine knowledge than that held by the ordinary (as they saw it) Christian. Merrill C. Tenney, in his *New Testament Survey*, described Gnosticism as “a system which promised salvation by knowledge.” The teaching of the Gnostic philosophy is in conflict with the apostles’ doctrine and is most acute at the point of the person of Christ. As with any false doctrine or system of religion, once it departs from the Truth of God, there is no way of telling where it may end up except that it will be far and away from the Truth. As Tenney explained the teachings of Gnosticism as it progressed over time, he wrote:

How, asked the Gnostics, could the infinite, pure spirit of God have anything to do with a material body? A complete union would, on their premises, be unthinkable. They proposed two solutions: either Christ was not really human, but only apparently so, or else the Christ-spirit did not actually inhabit the human Jesus until the baptism, and left Him before His death on the cross. The former theory was called Docetism, from the verb *dokeo*, meaning “to seem”; the latter was called Cerinthianism, from Cerinthus, its chief advocate in the first century...¹¹

The apostle John clearly takes exception to such Gnostic teachings as he insists that the Jesus he preached was audible, he was visible, and he was tangible and real as to be touchable. He wrote in 1 John 1:1, **“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands**

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have handled...” John went on to declare that those that did not confess that Jesus came in the flesh were not of God (1 John 4:2, 3). Evidently John is exposing those who took a position that closely resembled that of Docetic Gnosticism. John warns the readers of his first epistle about such teachers (1 John 2:18, 19).

Judaism denied that Jesus (the Messiah) *had* come in the flesh; Gnosticism, the current heresy at the time when John wrote his epistles, denied that he *could* come in the flesh. Either doctrine was heretical and a departure from the truth, and those that spread any such teaching were deceivers.

Second John deals with this problem from the standpoint of church discipline.

SUMMARY OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

As we approach the study of Second John, we want to notice how John encourages a steadfast and unswerving adherence to the teaching of Christ leaving no doubt about the seriousness of going beyond the Truth. This serious problem is not a problem relegated to John’s day only, it is a dangerous and grievous problem that has plagued the church of our Lord from the beginning. A. T. Robertson wrote the following about those who desire to go beyond the teachings of Christ and the Gnostic teachers of John’s day:

These Gnostics claimed to be the progressives, the advanced thinkers, and were anxious to relegate Christ to the past in their onward march. This struggle goes on always among those who approach the study of Christ. Is he a “landmark” merely or is he our goal and pattern? Progress we all desire, but progress toward Christ, not away from him.¹²

MAJOR THOUGHTS OF SECOND JOHN

The emphasis of this short book is love for the Truth and opposition to error by forbidding fellowship with false teachers. One cannot fail to notice that the key word in this brief

letter is *Truth*. In fact, verse two seems to sum up the theme of the letter very well: **“For the truth’s sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.”** In this verse John gives us the reason why all who know *the* truth, love those *in* truth: it is for the sake of the truth that abides in us.

John loved the elect lady and her children because of the Truth that dwelt both in him and in them. As expressed by others, only those who have love *for* the truth love *in* Truth.

With joy in his heart, John commends, and with a pleading voice, he exhorts. He commends them for walking in truth and he exhorts them to walk in love. John informs his readers that to walk in Truth is to **“love one another”** (5) and to **“walk after his commandments”** (6) which involves strict adherence to the teaching of Christ (9).

Though the key word in this epistle may be *truth*, John also stresses the importance of *love*. Upon closer examination, we have a commendation for walking in Truth (v4) and an exhortation to walk in love (5, 6).

Love and duty to abide in the Truth are two of the key themes of John’s writings. The one is an offspring of the other; love prompts one to the keeping of the commandments. **“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments,”** (1 John 5:3). This same thought is expressed in 2 John 6, **“And this is love, that we walk after his commandments.”**

But what if someone comes your way, teaching doctrine contrary to what you have learned from Jesus and His apostles? Should your desire to **“love one another”** (5) permit you to receive and support those teaching error? Can we do so, and still be **“walking in truth”** (4)?

In the remaining portion of his short letter, John (the “apostle of love”) is very explicit about such things. He warns the elect lady, and all New Testament Christians, in verse 7 to beware of deceivers and antichrists. He instructs her and

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her children in verse 8 to **“look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought.”** In 2 John 9, he continues by warning his readers of the danger of not abiding in the doctrine of Christ and the loss that could result in listening to the false teachers, the “deceivers” that he mentioned in verse 7. Any movement that results in moving away from the doctrine of Christ is a move in the wrong direction. It is movement away from Christ which results in the loss of God himself. John then tells his audience in 2 John 10 and 11 that they cannot support teachers who fail to teach the doctrine of Christ without sharing in their evil deeds.

The principle that John teaches here and elsewhere is simple. Supporting a teacher made one a fellow worker with him who taught. If the teacher is a faithful purveyor of the Truth of God, that would make one a fellow worker for the Truth. John says as much in his Third epistle. **“We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth,”** (3 John 8). But if his teaching is false, contrary to the doctrine of Christ, supporting him is to share in his evil deeds and makes us a fellow worker in his sin (2 John 11).

With this warning against receiving false teachers, John’s purpose in writing is fulfilled. He then signs off with a brief farewell, having so much more to write, but desiring to speak in person **“...that our joy may be full”** (12). Even today, despite the convenience of remote communication, such as writing letters, talking on the phone, or sending email, nothing surpasses the joy of talking face-to-face. He then sends greetings from **“the children of thy elect sister”** (13).

A PIVOTAL PASSAGE: 2 JOHN 8

Clearly there are two major sections to Second John. In the first section, John writes to the elect lady and her children, expressing an appreciation for their loyalty to the Truth as it was manifested in the faithfulness of certain of her children. He admonishes her to continue in love and obedience to the commandments of the Father for many deceivers and false teachers are in the world. In the second section, John admonishes her to abide in the doctrine of Christ while refusing to give aid and comfort to those who have moved beyond the teaching of Christ and have not God. He instructs her that the end result of aiding the false teachers and deceivers was to be a partaker in their evil, a partaker in their sin. In between these two major sections is a pivotal passage, 2 John 8, that deserves our close attention.

In verse 8 we see a summons to self-guardianship. John cautions his readers that they have a duty and responsibility to **“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”** From this passage, it is clear that effort and participation are essential to man’s salvation. We must be careful and deliberate in weighing all teaching that comes into our midst, taking care to compare it with what was delivered from the beginning, careful to **“try the spirits whether they are of God”** (1 John 4:1).

He cautions us to take a soul-searching, introspective view of ourselves to see if we are strong enough to withstand

the deceivers mentioned in verse 7 that we will encounter. So, what means can we use to guard ourselves from false teachers and deceivers? *First*, we can guard against error in our faith and knowledge of God’s word. **“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”** (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Second, we can seek to know more about the Truth of God. **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”** (2 Timothy 2:15)

Third, we need to observe, keep and maintain our spiritual vitality. During the winter season, people who have a low state of physical health are more likely to fall victims to sickness. Likewise, when a person has a low state of spiritual health, they are easy prey to error. One of the most effective and efficient safeguards against the corruption of our faith is a healthy, vigorous spiritual life.

Last of all, the most effective way of looking to ourselves is to look earnestly toward Christ. Doing so will secure our safety, our progress in maturing in the faith, and our full reward. Many start out their Christian life and service with a fervent zeal, and work earnestly for a time, and then grow lukewarm and decline into useless servants in the kingdom. Great is the eternal loss of their reward, but let it not be so with us. We need to be covetous of our **“full reward”** that we lose it not. By looking inward to ourselves and examining our faith, we will be aware of, and concerned about, our own standing before God. This should cause us to quickly reject any and all threats to our spiritual well-being that any deceiver and false teacher poses.

There are several other points that 2 John 8 emphasizes. *First*, apostasy is possible. Else why would we need to look to ourselves? If apostasy is *not* possible, how could you lose your reward? In the elect lady and her children’s case, if they were deceived by being misled into a false application of love by the deceivers and false teachers, they would bring to naught all that had previously been done. On the other hand, if they were watchful and faithful to the truth as they had received it, they would receive a full reward.

A *second* point is that constant self-examination is vital. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 13:5, **“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”** It is essential to our eternal welfare that a most demanding self-examination should constantly be made of our standing before God; that the exact truth should be known. If we are deceived, it is best for ourselves that we should not be left under the delusion that we are secure in the Lord, but that, understanding our own case, we might be led to secure our salvation through obedience to the doctrine of Christ.

The *third* point is that vigilance is a condition of spiritual success. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 16:13, **“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”** We must be vigilant against the temptations of Satan if we want to be successful in obtaining our full reward.

Finally, there is a reward we can either gain or lose. It is a heavenly reward that will be realized in the day of judgment.

The danger of losing this reward by the failure to abide in the doctrine of Christ, or by giving aid and comfort to those who endanger our fellowship with God, is enough to warrant John's warning: **"Look to yourselves."**

That which the elect lady and her children stood in danger of losing was the most priceless possession they had: the salvation of their souls. Likewise, we need to know that we too are in danger of losing our own salvation when we will *not* abide in the doctrine of Christ and seek to aid, comfort and fellowship deceivers and false teachers. We need to understand that when one *knowingly, willfully* and *adamantly* fellowships a false teacher, he is a partaker of his evil deed, a partaker of his sin. When a person will *not* renounce his fellowship of known false teachers, he, by implication of his actions, teaches that one may fellowship false teachers; and that is contrary to the scriptures, and more specifically to the teachings of 2 John 9-11. He has then become a heretic and Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote in Titus 3:10, **"A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject."** And if a man encourages others to continue in fellowship with a known false teacher, he has become a stumbling block and will answer for that sin.

Of course, the people being influenced have free will and must answer for allowing themselves to be deceived. Yet some men, whether it is merited or not, have much influence within the church by their teaching or preaching position—and people look to them for advice, and listen to their teachings, and observe their actions—and people are deceived. How does this happen? To quote one such man in his own words from the 1994 Denton Lectures book, page 494, and substituting only the word Millerism in place of Ketchersidism, he said:

However, some preachers who were very strong in the Truth and well respected have now gone over to Millerism, and some members of the church cannot bring themselves to see that such men change. Therefore, these men are being able to deceive the hearts of those weak in the faith and/or unlearned in the Scriptures.

I could not have explained any better in my own words *how* this deception happens. The author of the previous quote is brother Curtis Cates. He understands exactly how the deceiving of the weak takes place—and yet he upholds Dave Miller, a known false teacher, in fellowship.

In these troublesome times we need to examine closely whose hands we uphold in fellowship. We need to look to ourselves: in self-examination, at our standing with God, and with whom we are in fellowship; then, we need to correct any wrongs in our spiritual life and seek diligently to receive our eternal reward.

CONCLUSION

As we close our study of Second John, it is hoped that you are left with a strong sense of the need to walk in the Truth in love and to be very careful about those teachers to whom we give our support. We need to heed the call of our Savior recorded by the apostle John wherein he said, **"Ye are my**

friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14) rather than compromise with deceivers and false teachers.

It is important that we teach people to assemble for worship, to give of their means generously, and to live righteously; but we should not be content to stop there. It is vital for us to teach the word of God and instill its precepts into the hearts of men. We must uphold the truth against false doctrine and **"earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"** (Jude 3). It is essential that we create within people a respect and love for the teachings of the Bible in general, and the doctrine of Christ in particular, a respect and love that exceeds *all* other loyalties they may hold—including loyalties to men, schools and other works of the church. And everyday we need to look to ourselves and ask, "How is our walk today? Are we walking according to the doctrine of Christ concerning truth in love?"

END NOTES

1. All quotations are from the King James Version.
2. *The Pulpit Commentary* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), Volume 22, The Epistles Of John, p. *i*.
3. Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John and Jude* (Gospel Advocate Co., 1968), Volume VII, pp. 332-333.
4. *Ibid*, p. 333.
5. Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible, Revised and Expanded* (Moody Press, 1968, 1986), p. 300.
6. Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Volume VI, (Carlton and Porter, 1829), p. 934.
7. *Hypotyposes, The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume II (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), p. 576.
8. Woods, p. 338.
9. Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), p. 376.
10. Woods, p. 334.
11. Tenney, pp. 376-377.
12. A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Volume VI, (Broadman, 1933), p. 254.

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Striving for character is strength. Aiming solely at reputation is weakness. Character endures difficulty. Reputation seekers are confused when difficulty arises. Character seeks to do what is right. Reputation seekers seek to do what is acceptable to the most mortals. Integrity, honesty, clarity, and honor are valued by men and women of character. Vagueness, indistinct communication, and craftiness are hallmarks of reputation seekers. The man with character can stand alone when duty calls upon him to do so.

The reputation seeker will not stand alone under any circumstances. The man with character tries to speak the truth clearly and honestly and openly invites others to examine it. The reputation seeker aims at acceptance and therefore makes vague statements that can be interpreted in ways acceptable to the hearer. The man of character speaks the truth as clearly and kindly as he is able at all times and under all circumstances. The reputation seeker speaks the truth with boldness only when he is assured that those who are significant to him will applaud.

The man of character is often out in front, regardless of who is following. The reputation seeker cannot lead the way because he cannot move in any direction until he is assured that the army is already headed that way.

The reputation seeker is confused by the man of character. He tends to assume that all men are motivated as he is, and he attempts to manipulate others by dangling before them the golden carrot of approval and by goading them on with the spear of disapproval. His arguments are often shallow, and when he cannot convince others with reasonable discussion, he attempts to intimidate with threats of harming the reputation of the man of character. He is shocked, perturbed, and disgusted when his petty attempts at coercion are ignored by the one who is examining his own heart and his own Bible rather than opinion polls.

The godly man of character has a genuine light that shines for all the world to see. When right-thinking men see it, they glorify God (Matt. 5:16). The reputation seeker has no real light, but he works very hard at giving the impression that he does. His artificial light changes color as it radiates in different directions. It is adjusted so that men who see it will glorify him.

Sometimes men of character deservedly own a fine reputation among men. This is desirable above great physical

wealth (Prov. 22:1). But a fine reputation is not to be desired above character. False teachers have always enjoyed fine reputations among some segment of the people (Luke 6:26). They, along with other hypocrites of their stripe, have traded character for reputation and have received the only reward they will ever see (Matt. 6:1–21).

Only a man of character can “rejoice and be exceedingly glad” when he is wrongly persecuted and when men say all kinds of evil against him falsely because of his practice of Christianity (Matt. 5:10–12). The reputation seeker will fall apart at such times. Only the man of character can truly teach and practice the Truth without partiality (1 Tim. 5:21; Jam. 3:17). He is not moved by the potential influence of his hearers upon the opinions of others. He does not challenge the sins of those without influence while ignoring those of opinion leaders. All are treated equally by him. The reputation seeker “pets the big dogs” and kicks the helpless ones if doing so will please the “big dogs.”

Reputation seekers tend to, sometimes subtly, point at their degrees and awards hanging on the walls and suggest that you ought to respect their opinions because they have been respected by influential men in high places. Men of character point at the Bible and suggest that God's word is alone worthy of your trust and that all opinions ought to be weighed upon God's scales.

Men of character are able to say, “I was mistaken” when

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they are able to discover errors in themselves. They clearly defend what they have said or done when they are accused of errors that they themselves cannot detect. Reputation seekers, on the other hand, are quick to say that they have been “taken out of context,” even when their words clearly mean what they appear to mean when placed in their context. Their “clarifications” are often very imprecise and unclear. Since many approved of them for what they did say, they cannot retreat from it. Since some disapprove of what they said, they cannot directly own it. Their fence-straddling seldom wins for them the approval of both sides, and it often backfires and causes them to earn the displeasure of both. Honesty and consistency go out the window when reputation is the goal. They are obvious and apparent when character is the objective.

Work to become a man or woman of character. Begin on the inside. The outside will follow. Those who love truth and right, though they be few, will love you. God will love and reward you. When you look in the mirror, you will be able to approve of what you see. The transient applause of men cannot match the authentic approval of Heaven or that of your own conscience.

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A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE WITH TOMMY J. HICKS

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Tommy J. Hicks stated the following in his April 13, 1988, lecture on the SW Lectures:

Folks, don't misunderstand me. There is nothing that breaks our heart more than to see our brethren, whom we love, either put up with apostasy or participate in apostasy. But, I'll stand just as strongly against my grandfather, my father, or my daughters if they go into error. And, if anyone challenges my love for them, let me tell you, they just don't know.

There are a number of us who are deeply, seriously concerned about brother Maxie Boren. I never expect to hear Maxie Boren teach false doctrine. But, I never dreamed that I would hear Maxie Boren defending Jon Jones and the Richland Hills Church of Christ in Forth Worth. I sat in Maxie's office. I've talked with him on other occasions. He'll tell you, "I don't agree with them." But Maxie, what are you going to do about it? If you will, stop and think about this whole idea of just sitting back and twiddling our thumbs, saying, "I don't like it, but I can't do anything about it."

A few years ago, when I was preaching in Visalia, California, an incident occurred (and I had forgotten about it until recently) in which we had a problem. Marriage, divorce, and remarriage reared its head there, as far as being a doctrinal issue. Approximately 50% of the congregation decided they wanted to go ahead and live in adultery. I'm telling you that many people in the congregation were living in adultery, or had children living in adultery. A lot of the people out there loved, respected Maxie Boren. They called him for counsel—"how do we get these people to come back?" I called him. And, I certainly am not misrepresenting this conversation. Maxie said, "I preach exactly what you preach on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage." But, he said, "What you've got to realize is, there is a difference between the 'ideal' and the 'real'." And, I asked Maxie, "You mean we cannot practice what we preach?"

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Folks, if we had 10,000 Maxie Borens (and so help me, I love that man), but if we had 10,000 men like Maxie Boren, the church would go to hell in a hand basket, because he is not going to publicly take a stand against doctrinal error. He'll not call call names. He'll not specify individuals and congregations., And, quite frankly, I'm just about to grow weary of hearing how much he loves everyone. I don't know if he is trying to convince us or himself. But, let me tell you this. No one loves anyone unless he warns him when that man is in danger.

His lecture caused quite a stir, in fact, so much of a stir with the elders where he preached at the time (the Handley congregation, long-time supporters of Brown Trail where Maxie was the preacher), that it cost Tommy his job. Some observations:

1. Tommy's words about brother Boren have proved to be true many times over.
2. Tommy's words about "taking a stand" were Scripturally accurate.
3. Tommy boasted about his own willingness to strongly, publicly stand for Truth, even against family members.
4. Tommy disappeared from the "take-a-stand-at-whatever-cost" brotherhood "radar screen" two years ago.

Like Maxie Boren, he is (at least was) willing to say in private that he opposes Dave Miller's errors. He wrote to Kent Bailey on July 26, 2005:

Specifically, regarding the false doctrines in which Dave Miller involved himself (i.e., elders "re-evaluation" doctrine and the marriage/divorce "intent" doctrine a la Everett Chambers), we stand with you and every other sound brother in opposition to them.

However, who can cite a single instance in which Tommy has expressed **PUBLIC** opposition to Miller and his errors, **SINCE** July 2005? As the old song says, "No not one." Contrariwise, he has implicitly **PUBLICLY** endorsed Miller's errors by continuing to bid Godspeed to a host of Miller's defenders (signers of the AP "Statement of Support"). So, perhaps we should say of (and to) the post-2005 Tommy Hicks:

There are a number of us who are deeply, seriously concerned about brother Tommy Hicks. I never expect to hear

Tommy Hicks teach false doctrine. But, I never dreamed that I would hear Tommy Hicks implicitly defending Dave Miller and those institutions that are bidding him Godspeed in Fort Worth, Montgomery, Memphis, Dalton, Dyersburg, Pulaski, West Palm Beach, Austin, San Antonio, and Schertz. Tommy'll tell you, "I don't agree with Miller." But Tommy, what are you going to do about it? If you will, stop and think about this whole idea of just sitting back and twiddling our thumbs, saying, "I don't like it, but I can't do anything about it.

Folks, if we had 10,000 Tommy Hickses (and so help me, I love that man), but if we had 10,000 men like Tommy Hicks, the church would go to hell in a hand basket, because he is not going to publicly take a stand against the doctrinal errors of Dave Miller, which his "buddyhood" are determined to support (especially his fellow TGJ, Inc., Board members).

It is too bad that in so many cases the backbone of brethren has been disconnected from their jaw bone.

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*As a young preacher I was greatly impressed when, about 35 years ago during the old F-HC lectures, I heard the late Franklin Camp point out with much emphasis what he considered to be the greatest single danger to faithful brethren—**growing weary in fighting the Lord's battles.** His comments I never forgot. From that day forward, I better understood Paul's words, "**And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not**" (Gal. 6:9; also see Luke 18:1; 2 Cor. 4:1, 16; Heb. 12:3; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10). With age his sage advice is even more appreciated.*

With some there is also the desire for success as the world defines success. They seek a place of prominence in the church. Balaam's old sin, the hunger for money, grows and the subtle digression from honesty into dishonesty matures. Then the time comes when what we thought never would happen does .

*Though they are sad thoughts, the preceding article by brother McClish documents the changes in bro. Hicks conduct. But he is not the only one to change. Such change is indicative of what has happened to several brethren in recent years—**their faith in God and Godly things was put to the test and, sadly, they failed. What a lesson for all!** —Editor*

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-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-

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

-Texas-

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

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

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

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

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