

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

SHALL WE SUPPORT APOLOGETICS PRESS “...THAT GOOD MAY COME”?

Jerry C. Brewer

Paul said he was slanderously reported to have said, “**Let us do evil that good may come**” (Romans 3:8). The great apostle to the Gentiles never subscribed to that philosophy and later, in the Roman epistle, exploded the error that the more one sins, the more God’s grace abounds. In fact, Paul asked this rhetorical question: “**How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?**” (Romans 6:2). One who pledges allegiance to Jesus Christ through obedience to the gospel must sever all ties to sin. Jesus said His followers cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24), and John wrote that to bid Godspeed to error is to partake of the same (II John 9-11). Few things are clearer in the New Testament than this: One cannot serve Jesus Christ while holding to error or endorsing the errors of others.

Recent sad events have focused much attention upon the publishing work of Apologetics Press (AP). For about a quarter of a century this publishing firm has produced good, sound material to strengthen faith, while exposing Darwinism and other pseudo-science. No one doubts the good this work has accomplished in the area of scholarly apologetics—a work especially needed in the midst of a skeptical generation. But while such a work may accomplish good, there are questions relating to its structure, oversight, and direction. Until those questions are resolved, AP cannot be supported by faithful Christians, even though it may do good. We cannot “**do evil that good may come.**”

ITS STRUCTURE AND OVERSIGHT

AP was organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Alabama, in Montgomery County, February 19, 1991, for the purpose of disbursing “religious materials,” with **Bert Thompson** as in-

corporator and registered agent. Its principal address in Alabama was, and remains, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, Alabama 36117. Thompson was the corporation’s registered agent until June 21, 2005 when he was replaced by **Dave Miller** (<http://arc-sos.state.al.us>). Prior to its incorporation in Alabama, AP was incorporated in Tennessee by Thompson, June 29, 1981, with its principal address as Rt. 1, Box 23A, Cookeville, Tennessee 38501, according to information from the website of the Tennessee Secretary of State.

As a nonprofit corporation, AP conducts its business of publishing and selling apologetics materials to individuals and congregations and operates under a board of directors. This is a standard structure for many such entities in this country and is a legal way to conduct business. In fact, some brotherhood papers are structured this way. As businesses, they violate no law of man, nor do they violate God’s New Testament law. (Note: “Nonprofit” status does not forbid a corporation from selling its products at a profit. It does prohibit its officers/owners from receiving any distribution of net earnings of the corporation. This prohibition does not include paying reasonable compensation for services rendered, even to officers/owners.)

But AP has another structural layer in addition to its Board of Directors. It is also under the eldership of the Palm Beach Lakes Church of Christ in West Palm Beach, Florida. Here the question of Scriptural organization arises. Since it is the case that AP has a board of directors **and** is under the oversight of the church’s elders, whose decisions take precedence? From the following, it seems obvious that the elders have no **direct** supervision of or control over the daily operations of AP. They admit as much when they point out that

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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SUBSCRIPTIONS RATES

Single Subscriptions: One Year, \$14.00; Two Years, \$24.00. Club Rate: Three One-Year Subscriptions, \$36; Five One-Year Subscriptions, \$58.00. Whole Congregation Rate: Any congregation entering each family of its entire membership with single copies being mailed directly to each home receives a \$3.00 discount off the Single Subscription Rate, i.e., such whole congregation subscriptions are payable in advance at the rate of \$11.00 per year per family address. Foreign Rate: One Year, \$30.

ADVERTISING POLICY & RATES

Contending for the Faith was begun and continues to exist to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7,17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we are interested in advertising only those things that are in harmony with what the Bible authorizes (Colossians 3:17). We will not knowingly advertise anything to the contrary. Hence, we reserve the right to refuse any offer to advertise in this paper.

All setups and layouts of advertisements will be done by Contending for the Faith. A one-time setup and layout fee for each advertisement will be charged if such setup or layout is needful. Setup and layout fees are in addition to the cost of the space purchased for advertisement. No major changes will be made without customer approval.

All advertisements must be in our hands no later than two (2) months preceding the publishing of the issue of the journal in which you desire your advertisement to appear. To avoid being charged for the following month, ads must be canceled by the first of the month. We appreciate your understanding of and cooperation with our advertising policy.

MAIL ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADVERTISEMENTS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357. COST OF SPACE FOR ADS: Back page, \$300.00; full page, \$300.00; half page, \$175.00; quarter page, \$90.00; less than quarter page, \$18.00 per column-inch. CLASSIFIED ADS: \$2.00 per line per month. CHURCH DIRECTORY ADS: \$30.00 per line per year. SETUP AND LAYOUT FEES: Full page, \$50.00; half page, \$35.00; anything under a half page, \$20.00.

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...

BIDDING FAREWELL TO 2005

As we come to the last issue of *Contending for the Faith* for 2005, we realize that certain ones wish that with the conclusion of 2005, *CFTF* would permanently cease publication. Of course, some have held that sentiment regarding *CFTF* for many years. However, we are very much aware that many people—specifically our subscribers—are grateful for what we do. And to them we express once again our deep appreciation for their support in subscribing to the paper, getting others to subscribe to it, and especially for their prayers to our Heavenly Father on our behalf.

With all the previous matters stated, we must emphasize that we who publish *CFTF* do not, as some do, change our views for the sake of family, friends, money, and/or keeping our jobs. We do not “hold our politically correct finger high in the air” to see which way the brotherhood winds are blowing before we uphold the Truth of God’s Word on any issue or subject. We are “open and above board” in our actions and do not operate deceitfully by attempting to hide our actions behind a fake confidentiality. We have no desire to be and neither do we work at being willfully ignorant, hoping thereby to escape making a decision that will trouble our comfort zones. Our obligation is to God: first, foremost, and always (Matthew 6:33). But evidently some, whom we thought to be abiding by Matthew 6:33 and Colossians 3:17 in thought, word, and action, have, by their conduct, proved otherwise. Having learned that they are not what they claimed to be, we have not hesitated to expose their weak defense of certain false doctrines, those who propagate and defend them, and their Biblically unauthorized fellowship of the same. Moreover, we have not hesitated to note their hypocrisy and repudiate it. Further, it is our continual fervent prayer for and plea to them that they repent of their sins and return to the Lord.

We assure everyone that, regardless of the sacrifices of friends, family, money, anyone or anything, we remain committed to declaring the whole counsel of God, exposing and opposing all error from all sources, along with those who propagate it. As long as the Lord allows, without fear, favor, or respect of persons, we will continue to pursue this God-approved course, no matter what any mere human being thinks about it or us.

WELCOME TO NEW SUBSCRIBERS

We want to take this opportunity to welcome our new subscribers. Over the last three months we have had quite a number decide to subscribe to *CFTF*. We welcome them and in doing so make this special request of them, as we do those who have been long-time subscribers to the paper, to please help us get the paper to more of our brethren.

SPECIAL MAILING FUND

Many of you know that for many years we have had a special mailing fund. However, we have not referenced it in some time. That fund exists to make *CFTF* available to people who normally are not exposed to all sides of a matter. As one sister wrote recently: "Thank you for putting all the facts before all of your readers. Keep up the good work in debunking the liberal inroads within the brotherhood and combating the liberals on every turn." You can contribute to this special fund by sending your donations to the Spring Church of Christ with a notation on the envelope that you desire your contribution to go the *CFTF*'s special mailing fund.

OUR CRITICS

We also get critical letters and phone calls—we always have. However, we do not remember our critics approaching us from the standpoint of our having acted without Bible authority for what we teach and practice. We do not remember any of our critics showing us that we have violated one or more direct statements of the Bible, or that which is implied by the Bible, or that we have failed to follow an example set out in the Scriptures. They usually employ against us the very tactics they condemn in us and never seem to see their inconsistency (at best) and hypocrisy (at worst). Some of these critical letters are after the manner of the one that follows. This critic wrote:

I am very disappointed to be writing to you under these circumstances. I feel that for years [your paper] has effectively represented [us]. However, [some of your work] was absolutely despicable and, even worse, irresponsible to the [people about whom you wrote]. The damage you have caused to [our] image and the harm you have sustained to your own reputation as a professional journalistic entity with this caricature of truth presented in the illustration, as well as the article, will take enormous healing.

[The people about whom you wrote] have the utmost integrity and, aside from their [normal] duty have and additional responsibility, which they fully accept.... The drawing you thought fit to run with that article was insulting to those hardworking [people].

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Please notice the previous writer's efforts to repudiate and counteract the material opposed. There is no:

1. Evidence offered to substantiate the writer's claims
2. Argument made to prove the writer's point
3. Effort made by the writer to state plainly the errors in the article
4. Attempt made to single out any fallacious argument(s) in the article

Thus, the critic is only voicing personal dislikes (opinions) regarding the matter about which he is so upset. Therefore, the criticism amounts to nothing. But that is basically what critics do nowadays. And, for the most part this is the kind of criticism *CFTF* receives. It says much about the people who write such stuff. In case you are wondering about the letter given earlier, the complete letter is as follows:

Badge of Dishonor

I am very disappointed to be writing to you under these circumstances. I feel that for years *TEXAS MONTHLY* has effectively represented Texas, its cities, and its people. However, the artwork for the article "Borderline Insanity" [August 2005] was absolutely despicable and, even worse, irresponsible to the citizens of one of Texas's oldest, historically significant, and culturally rich communities. The damage you have caused to our community's image and the harm you have sustained to your own reputation as a professional journalistic entity with this caricature of truth presented in the illustration, as well as the article, will take enormous healing.

Our public-safety professionals—from the city's police department to our county law enforcement officials—have the utmost integrity and, aside from their duty to serve and protect the citizens of Laredo and Webb County, have an additional responsibility, which they fully accept, to protect our border in the name of homeland security. The drawing you thought fit to run with that article was insulting to those hardworking men and women defending Laredo, Webb County, the state of Texas, and the United States of America.

—Mayor Elizabeth G. Flores
Laredo (*TEXAS MONTHLY*,
November, 2005, p. 26)

Please remember that we did not state earlier that the actual letter was written by a member of the church in criticism of *CFTF*. What we wrote was: "Some of these critical letters (of *CFTF*-Editor) are after the manner of the one that follows." And, for the most part, what do our critics have in common with Mayor Flores? They do as the honorable Mayor of Laredo did, make accusations and charges, let us know

their likes and dislikes and in general "vent their spleens." Others lecture us that we should not do the same as they do and, to one extent or the other, they attack us personally. But when they finally get through, they have not offered any adequate evidence, credible witnesses, or argumentation to prove their accusations. And every time one of these critics takes the same approach to *CFTF* as Mayor Flores did to *TEXAS MONTHLY*, we take their lack of evidence into account, note how illogical they are, and stand in amazement that they do not understand, for whatever reason, the significance and importance of Colossians 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:21 and like Scriptures.

Brother **Kenneth D. Cohn**, my partner in *CFTF* and one of the elders of the Spring Church of Christ, had occasion to remind a certain critic of those who are less than honest in their criticisms of others. Brother Cohn wrote:

There is an old saying that is apropos: When one is opposed in what he believes or practices, attack the facts. If one cannot refute the facts, attack the logic. If one cannot refute the logic, attack the person. It seems that you, and not you alone, have resorted to attacking the person because you cannot refute the facts or the logic.

We have found what brother Cohn wrote to be typical of the conduct of various brethren, but we have been greatly surprised at some who have lowered themselves to the point of being best described "as lower than a snake's belly in a wheel rut." No one forced them against their wills to lower themselves to such a sad level of conduct. But, when things, persons, and associations became more important to them than God's Will, they resorted to such dishonest and shameful conduct in dealing with their brethren and, then, they have pretend not to see it in their own lives.

"GONE CRAZY"

Lately, your editor has been judged "crazy" by some of those "**balanced**" brethren who abhor making such judgments and applying such labels. They are "**balanced**" when they judge us to be mentally "out of balance"—but I am sure that they **lovingly** pronounced "yours truly" insane and, of course, that makes their judgment of us correct, **balanced**, and in harmony with the principles of Christian conduct.

Well, why beat around the bush about my mental state? I will just come on out and admit it, I am as crazy as a loon. Now that we have that settled, where is the fine, loving, kind, soothing, **balanced**, and sane preacher who will answer this lunatic's questions, refute his arguments, and disprove his evidence set out

on the pages of *CFTF* over the last few months? To any sane, rational, learned, **balanced**, and loving preacher, answering a lunatic should provide no problem at all.

Having written all the preceding, we must confess that we had much rather be judged a lunatic by those who judge and label others (with their **balanced**, loving and kind appellations, evidently without knowing they are engaged in the very thing they condemn), than to be guilty of the inconsistency and hypocrisy that characterized them. If such persons are sane but engage in that which they condemn, they can be nothing more or less than inconsistent (at best) and hypocrites (at worst). Thus, we consider it a blessing to be judged “looney” by such persons. *Seeing that this lunatic is doing to them what we are, imagine what*

Shall We Support...

(Continued from page 1)

Thompson was removed by the Board and the Board installed Miller as Interim Director (see below). Exactly what do the Palm Beach Lakes elders “oversee” and/or supervise about AP, and how do they do it? If they do have a “say-so” in the hiring and firing, why did they accept oversight of AP when it had Dave Miller, a marked false teacher, on its staff? Why did they approve the appointment of Dave Miller as AP’s Director? Is this action the way to protect the flock from wolves (Acts 20:28-32)? Is it possible that these elders are mere figureheads, secured to satisfy concerned conservative brethren who might inquire if AP is “under” an eldership?

For the past eighteen months, the eldership of the Palm Beach Lakes Church of Christ has overseen the work of Dr. Bert Thompson and Apologetics Press. With great sorrow, on May 24, 2005, this eldership supported the Board of Directors when they terminated Dr. Bert’s association with A.P.

The Board also recognized and has encouraged A.P. to focus on its core mission, defending the Christian faith with a relentless pursuit of excellence, which has become a hallmark at A.P. The PBL elders plan to work with the Board in an advisory capacity, provide strength and counsel to Bert and to continue overseeing this amazing, effective organization. ...The healing process has already begun. The Board named Dr. Dave Miller as interim Executive Director and we have every confidence in his spiritual foundation, talent and leadership ability. (“Open Letter to Contributors and Friends of Apologetics Press—May 31, 2005,” www.pblcoc.org)

Moreover, can an entity under the “oversight” of elders Scripturally ask for and collect donations from the general public on its website? Note the following

a sane preacher would do to them.

IN CONCLUSION

We wish for our honest, faithful, courageous, and consistent brethren a wonderful holiday season along with a happy new year. May God bless everyone who consistently, steadfastly and routinely does His good Will and is willing to call a spade a shovel (I Corinthians 15:5; Jude 3; Colossians 3:17; II Timothy 2:2).

But before we go, in order to satisfy those just, loving, righteous, sane, and **balanced** brethren who have violated their own standard of conduct in judging us less than sane, without their consciences being pricked at all, with **Daffy Duck** we say: “That’s all folks.”

—David P. Brown, Editor

appeals on the AP Website:

We genuinely appreciate your interest in the work of Apologetics Press. There are several ways in which you can help us. First and foremost, you can help us by remembering us in your personal prayers from time to time. As James noted: “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (5:16b).

Second, you can help us by using our materials. The primary purpose for the existence of Apologetics Press is to provide materials and services that can be used to help convert the non-Christian and strengthen the faith of the Christian. Everything we do is aimed at the proclamation and defense of the Gospel of Christ.

Third, you can help us by recommending our work to others. By telling your friends and associates about our monthly journals, books, tracts, tapes, and other products and services, you are helping spread the Good News.

Fourth, you can help us financially. Apologetics Press is an IRS-recognized nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation, which means that the funds you contribute are eligible to be deducted on your tax return(s). There are numerous ways to give (for additional details, be sure to ask your tax consultant).

Monthly contributions. By giving to our work on a regular, monthly basis, you help provide financial stability that allows us to better plan our annual budget. We not only publish numerous new products each year, but we also send out many of our materials completely free of charge to people who simply cannot afford to pay for them (e.g., those incarcerated in jails and prisons, those in Third World countries, etc.). Monthly gifts make it possible for us to continue this valuable service.

Irregular contributions. While most of our financial support comes from people who prefer to give on a regular, monthly basis, there are those who, for their own reasons, prefer to give on a somewhat irregular basis (e.g., bimonthly, quarterly, semi-annually, sporadically, etc.). These types of gifts certainly are appreciated as well, as they permit us to carry out special projects (for which funds are not always available in our annual budget).

Annual contributions. There are some who donate to our work in a lump-sum fashion at the end of the year. If you use this method of contributing, then you can claim your deduction on your taxes just a few months later.

Stocks and Bonds. If someone told you that you could reap double the tax benefits through charitable contributions, would you believe it? It's true! You can do this by donating some of your investments, as opposed to cash. As an example, suppose you purchased stock for \$3,000 several years ago, and it has increased in value so that it now is worth \$10,000. If you were in a 28% federal tax bracket, sold your stock, and qualified for the 20% capital gains rate, you would owe \$1,400 in taxes. If you donated that same stock to Apologetics Press, you would get the tax deduction for the full \$10,000 market value. That would save \$2,800 in taxes. If you then added the \$1,400 you avoided in capital gains tax, your total tax savings would be \$4,200.

By remembering us in your will. We understand that this is a sensitive subject for some, but it still is one that we would like friends of our work to consider. By including Apologetics Press in your will, it one day may be said of you, as it was of Abel, that you, "being dead, yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4). Years ago, a sweet Christian widow included Apologetics Press in her will, not knowing at the time that she was dying of an incurable disease. As a result of her foresight, at the end of each quarter we receive a gift from her estate. Those funds have been used for more than a decade to publish many of the books that we have produced to proclaim and defend the Old Jerusalem Gospel. Thanks to her good stewardship, her good works have continued long after her death.

By telling a friend or loved one about us. If you know of anyone who would benefit from our materials or services, or who might be willing to help us financially, please send us their name(s) and addresses. When we receive that information, we will send them a letter introducing them to our work, along with a copy of our most recent catalog and samples of our two journals (*Reason & Revelation* and *Discovery*). [Click here </apinfo/freesamples> to submit their name.] Thank you for taking the time to learn how you can help us. If you would like to make a contribution to this work, you may fill out the on-line contribution form </apinfo/contributeform>, mail us your contribution, or call us toll-free (to use a credit card). (<http://apologeticspress.org/apinfo/donate>). <(http://

apologeticspress.org/apinfo/donate).>

For as long as I can recall, brethren have been adamant about refusing to ask for funds from the general public to do the work God expects His church to do. We have often criticized denominations for this very thing that is now being done by AP, though it claims to be under the oversight of an eldership. As a 501(c) (3) nonprofit entity, AP has every right to solicit donations from the general public, but as a work of the church such solicitations are contrary to the Scriptures (3 John 5-8). AP cannot Scripturally have it both ways. Either it is a work of the church which distributes all materials without charge, or it is a private, nonprofit publishing house which charges the public for its publications and accepts contributions from the general public.

SALARY AND INCOME QUESTIONS

What about income and salaries of the AP speakers/writers? Does the Palm Beach Lakes Church pay the salaries of these men? Does AP pay their salaries? Do the Palm Beach Lakes elders exercise any control over or supervision of AP salaries? When AP employees conduct seminars, do they keep what they are paid for doing so? If so, are they paid salaries also? Bert Thompson, previous Executive Director of AP, reportedly conducted forty weekend seminars per year for several years, charging \$2,500.00 per seminar above expenses. Did he keep this for personal income, turn it over to AP, or turn it over to Palm Beach Lakes? Did he keep the remuneration for his seminars and draw an additional salary from either AP or Palm Beach Lakes? What income/salary policies do AP and Palm Beach Lakes follow now that Thompson is gone? Have these changed since his departure? Since AP solicits and receives contributions nationally (from Christians and non-Christians alike, as previously indicated), these are pertinent questions that deserve forthright answers.

ITS DIRECTION

Bert Thompson, past Executive Director of AP, made the following announcement in an official publication:

As of August 1, we are adding our first department, the Department of New Testament Studies. And it is with much pleasure that I announce to you the man who will chair that department, Dr. Dave Miller. It is quite likely that Dave needs no introduction to many of you since he is widely known throughout the churches of Christ for both his scholarship and his unwavering-yet-balanced stand for Truth. Dave holds earned M.A., M.Th., M.A.R., and Ph.D. degrees from various accredited universities, and has served for the past decade as the director of the Brown Trail School of Preaching in Bedford, Texas (near Fort Worth). In addition, he also is a much-sought-after speaker, he serves as host of "The Truth in Love" television program produced by the Brown Trail Church of Christ, and he is the author of the critically acclaimed book,

Piloting the Strait, which forcefully addresses the “change agent” movement that has been troubling the church worldwide for the past several years (“Announcing: Our New Chairman of the Department of N. T. Studies”, <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/134>).

Dave Miller left Brown Trail following his exposure as a false teacher, but, like many others who have fallen prey to political correctness in the church, Bert Thompson ignored the facts and made Miller an AP staff member. Miller led the effort at Brown Trail in the unscriptural practice of “reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders” and teaches a false concept of marriage, divorce and remarriage. Since all of this was well documented in articles in *CFTF*, and is presently available at [www.http://brown-trail-truth.com](http://www.brown-trail-truth.com), <<http://www.http://brown-trail-truth.com>> there is no need to rehearse the matter again. We simply point them out to remind readers that these things were publicly reported and are public knowledge.

However, some among us continue to defend AP in spite of the injunction against bidding God speed to error. It is beyond our understanding how otherwise sound brethren could/can lend their names to “A Statement of Support” for this corporation and for its new Interim Executive Director (also AP’s registered corporate agent and a member of its Board) **who is a false teacher**. Some have lamely argued that they support the “concept” and “work” of Apologetics Press, but do not endorse Dave Miller or his errors. Would

these same brethren endorse the “concept” and “work” of a sound school of preaching if **Rubel Shelly** was were appointed its director? I trow not! The legs of the lame are truly unequal. Some of those same people who endorse AP, but say they do not endorse Miller, are also willing to speak on the same programs with him (e.g., Spiritual Sword Lectures, Truth in Love Lectures, East Tennessee School of Preaching Lectures, “Polishing The Pulpit,” et al.). When they thus speak, will they expose Miller and his false doctrines, or will they simply “let it slide” because of political considerations?

Jesus said, **“He that is not with me is against me”** (Matthew 12:30). In the war between Truth and error, there is no “middle ground.” One who endorses any entity thereby lends his support and endorsement to those who operate, direct, and serve in that entity. Those who continue to regard Apologetics Press as a “sacred cow” and lend their endorsement to it are bidding God speed to its Scripturally questionable organization/operation and to the false teaching of its executive director, despite the “good” that it does in its publishing business. They cannot “straddle the fence” and have it both ways. They must either repudiate AP and its executive director, or they are partakers of error. To endorse AP is to endorse Miller. To reject Miller one must reject AP to remain consistent. We cannot **“do evil that good may come.”**

—P.O. Box 267
Elk City, Oklahoma 73648

OPEN FORUM

CFTF Spring Lectureship

TUESDAY, February 28, 2006

ALL DAY OPEN FORUM. SUBJECTS: Apologetics Press, Dave Miller, MDR as taught by Stan Crowley, The Gospel Journal Board’s involvement in the departure of Dub McClish as Editor and David B. Watson as Associate Editor from *TGJ* along with related topics.

The Spring elders, **Kenneth D. Cohn** and **Buddy Roth** will moderate the forum. The format for the forum will be as follows: Beginning at 9:00 a.m. there will be a 20 minute speech followed by a 20 minute question and answer period with a 10 minute break between sessions. We will break for Lunch from 11:50 a.m. until 1:30 pm. The forum will resume at 1:30 p.m. and conclude at 4:20 p.m. with the same format as the morning sessions. Following the dinner break there will be a panel discussion with time for questions and answers during the 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. sessions. The speakers in the forum will be composed of those who accept the Spring elders’ written invitation, which invitation was mailed to them by certified mail with return receipt.

MORE INFORMATION:

Spring Church of Christ • P.O. Box 39 • 1327 Spring Cypress Rd.
• Spring, TX 77383 281.353.2707 • scoc@swbell.net

[Since **Dave Miller** propagated the false doctrine of re-evaluation/reaffirmation of elders in the Brown Trail Church of Christ pulpit about 15 years ago, many of us have done our best to expose and refute the doctrine. Because a number of years passed without the Brown Trail church's practicing this false doctrine, some of us gave them the benefit of the doubt that they had given up the doctrine. Then about three years ago, Brown Trail did it again. This would have been an opportune time for Miller to declare his opposition to the doctrine he once advocated, but he did not do so. **Bert Thompson** hired Miller and ignored those brethren who tried to get him to see Miller's re-evaluation/reaffirmation error as well as Miller's error on MDR. Some have charged us with only separating ourselves from Miller after Miller was appointed Interim Executive Director of AP, but those charges are as wrong as could be as the following letter shows. Please note the date of the letter. To date there has been no response to our letter. And, Dave Miller not only appeared on the 2004 *Spiritual Sword Lectures*, but also on the 2005 lectures.—Editor]

SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

1327 Spring Cypress Road
All Mail to: PO Box 39 Spring, TX 77373-0039
Phone (281) 353-2707 Fax (281) 288-3876

March 4, 2004

Mr. Gary McDade
Lectureship Director
Spiritual Sword Lectureship
1511 Getwell Road
Memphis, TN 38111-7299

Dear Gary:

I am in receipt of your February 26, 2004 letter wherein you graciously extended to me the invitation to speak on the 2004 *Spiritual Sword Lectures*. I also appreciated the phone call and conversation we had several days preceding the arrival of your February 26th letter.

While in our phone conversation, I verbally accepted your invitation to speak. However, having learned that brother Dave Miller is also to speak on your lectures, I must, therefore, now decline your kind invitation. This is a very sad and difficult thing for me to do because I have always thought highly of you, your faithful work for the Lord. I have always wished the best for the Getwell congregation, her elders, *The Spiritual Sword* and the *Spiritual Sword Lectureship*. And, I continue to do so.

However, brother Dave Miller teaches the false doctrine of elder reevaluation and reaffirmation as practiced by the Brown Trail Church of Christ on at least two occasions. We have openly and publicly opposed this false doctrine in *Contending for the Faith*. I am enclosing the issues of *CFTF* wherein this doctrine was exposed, opposed and refuted. I know of no repentance on brother Miller's part for believing, teaching and participating in this unauthorized activity as it was taught and practiced by the Brown Trail Church of Christ. It would, therefore, be highly inconsistent for me to oppose the doctrine as strenuously as I have done, and appear with him on a lectureship as if I had no problem with his doctrine and conduct at all. I hope you understand my position.

Furthermore, brother Miller also believes and teaches that if a person marries for the *purpose* of getting into the United States, then divorces after obtaining entrance into the U. S., the parties involved in what is commonly called a "green card marriage" are free to remarry. The specific case in point is that of Everett Chambers, an employee of the Brown Trail School of Preaching while brother Miller was the school's director. Brother Chambers did the very thing previously described. (Of course, I am not discussing any illegalities that may have been committed by brother Chambers when he engaged in a "green card marriage.")

The position taken by brother Miller regarding brother Chambers' conduct in this matter is this: since the *purpose* for the marriage was to get into the United States, said persons were never joined together by the Lord (They never had a Matthew 19:6 marriage). Hence, brother Miller concludes that Chambers and his wife, having divorced to satisfy legal requirements, are free to contract a Matthew 19:6 marriage. At least it has been said that brother Chambers is free to remarry.

Brother Miller and those who agree with him err on this point because there was *intent* on the part of each one involved in said marriage to contract a marriage with each other, but the *purpose for said marriage* was to gain entrance into the U. S. Nevertheless, no one held a gun to either person's head and forced them against their will to go through the legal and ceremonial aspects of marriage. They *willed (intended)* to contract a marriage with

one another regardless of the *purpose* of the marriage. Indeed, they were duty bound to God and one another to continue in the marriage, although the original purpose of the marriage was to get into the United States.

Brother Miller, and those who believe as he does, has confused the *purpose* of the marriage with the *intent* to marry. Two people may *intend* to marry one another because their families arranged for their marriage. They do not love one another, but it is the custom for such so to do. But the *purpose* or *reason* for their marriage to each other is because their parents arranged for the marriage. Nevertheless, the two *intended* marriage to each other and are bound by its mandates.

In the days when God tolerated polygamy, Jacob married Leah thinking he was marrying Rachel. Though it was after the fact, Jacob learned of and agreed to his father-in-law Laban's terms for marriage to Rachel. According to their custom, the terms of the marriage contract stipulated that Leah must marry before Rachel. Jacob *intended* marriage for Leah. But for what *purpose* did Jacob *intend* to remain in his marriage to Leah?

A man and a woman commit fornication. The woman becomes pregnant out of wedlock. When marriage was held in much higher esteem than it is in these days, a common way to honorably correct such a problem was for the man and the woman to marry. If there had been no pregnancy the man and the woman may have never considered marriage to one another. But, for the sake of the mother and child, marriage was proposed and realized. *Question:* Though the man and the woman *intended* marriage, for what *purpose* was the marriage? Will brother Miller say because the *purpose* of such a marriage was less than the ideal *purpose* set out in the scriptures, that there was no *intention* on the part of the man and woman to be married-thus, there was no Matthew 19:6, "God-joined" marriage? Indeed, will anyone say that God did not join together the two persons in said marriage to be husband and wife?

Does the Bible teach that persons who are eligible for marriage and intend to be married *must* fully understand God's teaching on every aspect of marriage, divorce and remarriage before God will join them together to be husband and wife? If the answer is "yes," then how is it possible for atheists, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, etc. to be married? Surely we do not believe that only Christians who are correctly informed about marriage, divorce and remarriage are authorized by God to contract a "God-joined," Matthew 19:6 marriage. Indeed, marriage is not a church ordinance.

Please consider the following "true"/"false" statement. T F All other things being scripturally equal, if a man and a woman *intend* to marry each other for any other *purpose* than their love for one another, God will not join them together as husband and wife (a Matthew 19:6 marriage). I certainly will not answer "true" to the foregoing statement, the reason being that one's *purpose* for entering into a marriage does not necessarily alter or nullify one's *intent* to enter into a Matthew 19:6 marriage contract.

Brother Gary, before closing I want to assure you that I count you as a friend. Moreover, I am not attempting to tell you or the Getwell elders how to run your own affairs. I am only informing you as to why I cannot accept your invitation to be on your lectures. As I have explained earlier in this letter it is a matter of personal conviction and consistency on my part. And, therefore, I must stay true to my conscience.

Having directed a number of lectureships under the oversight of the Spring elders, I know that they and I would want to be informed about why someone would not accept an invitation to be on our lectures. I have, therefore, written you accordingly. Please be assured that I have the highest regard for you and your work as well as your strong stand for the truth and against error for which you are well known.

If it turns out to be the case that brother Miller has repented of his positions as represented in this letter, then I will certainly be happy to hear of his repentance. Furthermore, if it is the case that I have misrepresented his beliefs (I assure you if I have misrepresented his beliefs it is unintentional), then I would appreciate being corrected. In times past I have appeared with brother Miller in certain teaching situations on different occasions. It is my will that such could once again be a reality.

Please know that I harbor no ill will toward you or anyone at the Getwell congregation. I wish you and the *Spiritual Sword Lectureship* good and great success. May God richly bless you, yours and the work at Getwell as you "walk in the light as he is in the light" (1 John 1:7).

Brotherly,
[signed]
David P. Brown
Evangelist

A STATEMENT FROM BROTHER DAVE MILLER

[On September 23, 2005, brother Dave Miller issued the following statement in response to the accusations of numerous brethren that he has taught and practiced the unauthorized elder reevaluation/reaffirmation procedure and that he has advocated an erroneous position regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. We produce his statement in full below:]

FOR HONORABLE BRETHREN WHO SINCERELY WANT TO KNOW

The vast majority of those in our great brotherhood who encounter rumors and hearsay choose to believe the best about their brother, suspending judgment until verification is forthcoming. They sincerely want to believe and hope the best about their brothers and sisters in Christ (I Corinthians 13:7). *For the sake of these dear brethren*, and in the spirit of Proverbs 18:17 (“the first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him”), I wish to offer a brief word of explanation and clarification concerning the allegations and accusations that are circulating.

“ELDER REAFFIRMATION”

- I do not believe in the “reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders” as my critics have defined the concept.
- I do not believe that elders should be temporarily appointed and their “terms” only continued on the basis of an arbitrary vote of the membership.
- I do not believe that a congregation has the right to use any procedure that expels qualified men from the eldership.

What I **do** believe is that elders have the authority to solicit from the congregation the congregation’s desires regarding who should serve them as elders.

The specific instance at Brown Trail **in 1990** entailed a process that was instigated and executed by the elders themselves. The elders appointed Johnny Ramsey, two instructors from the school of preaching, and me to do the “leg work,” but it was **the elders themselves that initiated the process and implemented it** from beginning to end. The issue boils down to a single point, illustrated by two questions: (1) Does an elder (or preacher, deacon, Bible class teacher) have permission from God to request the members to give him their feedback regarding whether they think he is qualified to continue to serve and/or perform his job properly? (2) And does that elder then have the scriptural right to decide whether he will remove himself on the basis of the response that he gets from the members? The few passages that have anything to do with the selection and ongoing qualification of officers in the church (e.g., Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 5:17-20), imply that the congregation has the right to participate in the appointment (i.e., “evaluation”) of their leaders. The process or method by which an individual is deemed to be biblically qualified is not spelled out in Scripture. It is therefore a matter of expediency that falls within the God-granted **authority of the elders**. Those who have turned this issue into their pet hobby are the very ones who are tampering with the authority of elders.

While I am not aware of any unscriptural actions having occurred, I was not in any way involved in a completely separate procedure implemented at Brown Trail **in 2002** by a different eldership that was then in place. I had already resigned and was in the process of moving to Alabama. It is astounding that an event that occurred **15 years ago**—an event that I have neither repeated nor promoted since—should cause such a stir!

M,D,R

AS IT RELATES TO “INTENT”

It is unnecessary for me to explain my views regarding what the Bible teaches on the overall subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. I have taught on this subject for many years and my views are a matter of public record, having been permanently documented in lectureship manuscripts, school of preaching classes, a tract I wrote on the subject, a section in *Piloting the Straits*, numerous sermons I have preached over the years, articles in brotherhood journals, and television programs recorded for “The Truth in Love.” My views are the same views held by the faithful segment of our brotherhood: one man for one woman for life with fornication being the one and only exception by which the innocent party can put away his/her mate and remarry.

However, several years ago an incident occurred in the school of preaching where I served as director. One of the staff members was found to have gained entry into the U.S. several years earlier (before he became a Christian) at the behest of his cousin who had concocted a plan by which they would “marry” on paper in order to defraud the U.S. government to achieve his entrance into the U.S. As soon as the conspiratorial goal was achieved, they planned to put through the paperwork to end the “marriage.” When the elders and I became aware of this situation—which had occurred years earlier—we confronted the brother, who acknowledged/confessed the incident and expressed a penitent attitude. The elders then assessed the situation and decided that he would be allowed to continue in his capacity with the school and church. The elders counseled him to rectify these past mistakes to the extent that he was able to do so. They also cautioned him regarding his marital status, but no official pronouncement was made concerning his future eligibility for marriage in view of the fact that he was single and not entertaining any prospect of marriage. The entire affair was laid to rest to the satisfaction of the eldership. Five factors that the talebearers of the brotherhood consistently fail to include in their widespread reporting of this circumstance is (1) the woman who offered to accomplish his entry into the U.S. was **his cousin** (illegal in and of itself); (2) the two never did anything to indicate that they actually **intended** to be married or viewed themselves as such (i.e., they did not live together or enter into any relationship or arrangement that could even be remotely construed as marriage); (3) the woman had been married before and was **not eligible to remarry**; (4) the woman is **dead and has been deceased for many years** (cf. Romans 7:1-3); and (5) he remains **unmarried** to this day.

Totally separate and apart from this incident which occurred in the 1990s, I was asked by the elders to participate in a Wednesday evening Summer Series program in 2001 in which the preachers of the congregation formed a panel and fielded questions from members of the auditorium class. One question posed the hypothetical situation in which two people conspire to defraud the government in order for one of them to gain entry into the U.S. In a completely off-the-cuff response to the question. I pointed out that there must be mutual intention for a marriage to take place. I gave as an example (poor as it may have been) a situation in which a person is kidnapped and drugged only to wake up days later to find that he is married—with no recollection of having gotten married. He did not consent/intend to be married. [Another example would be Hollywood actors making a movie in which their characters get married. They speak the vows and say everything that would ordinarily be said at a real wedding. Yet no one thinks they actually get married—since their intention is lacking.] These incidents, in which I responded “off the top of my head” in an attempt to offer input on the submitted question have been latched onto and blown all out of proportion to make it appear as if I’ve abandoned Bible teaching on MDR and am out counseling hundreds of people to remarry. They claim I advocate that a marriage is not a marriage if either party had “mental reservations” when they married! I categorically deny ever having said, implied, or believed such a thing. My spur-of-the-moment remarks do not contradict my continued belief that two eligible people who are married can divorce only on the grounds of fornication, with the result that the fornicator is not eligible to contract another marriage. Yet, this extremely rare, unusual, unique situation is being held up as a “false doctrine that threatens to undermine the very foundations of marriage”!

May God bless us all in our efforts to be faithful to Him, and to do His work without the distractions of unnecessary division.

Dave Miller
Montgomery, AL
9/23/05

PS: In addition to the above misrepresentations, I have been astounded that in the last 3-4 years, additional FALSE rumors have circulated about me, including the following:

1. That I believe in instrumental music in worship
2. That I stole money from Brown Trail (a charge dispelled by an IRS audit)
3. That I had an affair with a woman
4. That I believe in the doctrine of annihilation of the soul
5. That I am dead

[Please study closely the following review and expose’ of Miller’s “Statement.” by brother Dave Watson.—Editor]

A RESPONSE TO DAVE MILLER'S "REPLY"

David B. Watson

On September 23, 2005 brother Dave Miller wrote a "Reply" that he titled: "For Honorable Brethren Who Sincerely Want to Know." Brother **Dub McClish** has correctly observed:

His condescending attitude is evident in the title of his statement. He suggests that anyone who dares question his doctrine or practice is "dishonorable" and "insincere," and that those who do not buy all of his explanatory statements are "dishonorable," "insincere," and willfully ignorant.

Miller begins by placing those who oppose and expose his errors into a minority "in our great brotherhood." He implicitly (and falsely) charges that they "choose to believe the" worst "about their brother," that they render a "judgment" before "verification is forth coming" and that they do not "want to believe and hope the best about their brothers and sisters in Christ." This same tactic was used by brother **Frank Chesser** when he falsely charged that brother Dub McClish possessed a "judgmental, censorious, self-righteous, unforgiving spirit that characterizes a small and diminishing group of brethren in the church." It was used again by brother **Joseph Meador** when he falsely charged that brother McClish is one of "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." It was further used by brother **Curtis Cates** who falsely campaigned that: "brother McClish's reputation had been ruined and that if he remained as editor [of *TGJ*] the paper would die." It was finally used by brother **Barry Grider** who charged brother McClish with "viciousness" and "falseness" and claimed that he "did not deserve nor need to be in the position he was in." Miller, Chesser, Meador, Cates and Grider are all attempting to "poison the well" concerning those who point out their errors so that the uninformed will think that such allegations are unverified and that the accusations are only "rumors and hearsay."

"ELDER REAFFIRMATION"

Miller denies that he believes in the reaffirmation and reevaluation of elders. His testimony is:

"I do not believe in the 'reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders' as my critics have defined the concept." But, let us call another witness. Brother **Eddie Whitten** was a member of the Brown Trail congregation, serving, for many years, as director of the school of preaching and also as an elder until he "left there under very distasteful and distressing circumstances in 1989. He writes:

We, the elders at Brown Trail, unfortunately allowed two men to be appointed as elders, who gave the "right

answers" to questions asked in interviews with them, [but] who revealed their liberal leanings as soon as they were appointed to the eldership. The next 3 ½ to 4 years became an ongoing contest to retain the Biblical integrity of the Brown Trail church. The eldership was divided to the point that we were stalemated and could not effectively function for the good of the church. After that much time had elapsed under those trying conditions, one of the "good" elders had to resign for health reasons. That left the "liberals" in control. With the apparent intent of remedying the situation, Dave precipitated a confrontation between the two factions. The obvious result was that the liberals forced me to resign (actually minutes before being fired) and **Ed Clark** followed suit in the next couple of days. The men of the congregation demanded a meeting to explain what was going on. It was in that meeting that my respect for Dave Miller vanished.

In the months preceding my resignation, Dave had expressed his concern to me about the views of the most vocal of the liberal elders. He mentioned to a young couple in the congregation just two weeks prior to the above event how dangerous this man was. There were about a hundred, or more, in the meeting the men requested of the elders. In the course of the meeting someone asked me to give my side of the story. I related that there was liberalism in the eldership and in the faculty of the school of preaching. They asked me what I meant by the term "liberalism." I answered that things were being advocated such as (1) authorizing women deacons, (2) all of life is worship, (3) no authority for elders except by example, and (4) praying to Jesus.

After I had returned to my seat, Dave spoke up and stated, "I don't see anything liberal about these men!" I could hardly believe my ears! He destroyed my case and my respect for him. The result was that now there were only the liberal elders left.

Within the next six months, there was, at his suggestion, a "reevaluation of the eldership." In a tape that I heard myself, Dave stated that I Timothy 5:19 was authority for reevaluating an eldership. I know where the tape is, and I think it could be made available if desired. [The tape may be ordered from the Northside Church of Christ, 700 Jolly Road, N.W., Calhoun, GA 30701—Editor] In my judgment, I Timothy 5:19 is addressing the case of an elder who is guilty of sin and who will not repent. It has nothing to do with reevaluating or reconfirming an eldership. Ballots were passed out to the congregation for their vote. The existing elders were not to see the results, only the five preachers that were at Brown Trail and the School of Preaching. The result was that three of the four remaining elders were ousted by the congregation. Two other

men were appointed at that time. Dave had accomplished his mission! He had remedied the stalemate by grossly unscriptural means.

We now call upon Dave Miller to give testimony against himself. He has already done so in a sermon preached at Brown Trail on Sunday morning April 8, 1990 [See the August 2005 issue of *CFTF* for the full printed text of Miller's sermon.—Editor]. In that sermon he explained to the congregation the process of reevaluating and reconfirming present elders. Notice these nine statements from that sermon:

1. "A system has been set in place by which current elders might be evaluated and additional elders might be added to the body of elders."

2. "We[II], that certainly seems to cover the question of how elders ought to be selected, but what about this idea of reevaluating current elders or reconfirming—and there are some brethren that are really up in arms it seems to me and say that is what the liberals are doing. Well, they may be, but I am unconcerned about that in terms of whether it is right or wrong—but I am concerned about what the Bible teaches."

3. "We may use the term *evaluation of elders*, we may use the term *reconfirmation*, if those terms concern you, then call it something else, but the principle is that if the membership finds fault with an elder, the membership who put the elder(s) in [at] the first, can remove them.

4. "I would still maintain that a man could theoretically be qualified and yet have lost his standing with enough of the members that he ought to voluntarily remove himself. Now how do you determine that unless you ask the members how they perceive that man as an elder of the church?"

5. "No one should be threatened by the prospect of being evaluated, not a one of us, the preacher shouldn't be, the School of Preaching instructors, the elders, the deacons, and all of us as members, ought to have in our mindset, in our attitude, an evaluation mentality, because my friends, the Lord is going to evaluate us one day—and it may be sooner than we think."

6. "And if I, or anyone else in a leadership sort of capacity, no longer sustains the respect from a sizable portion of the flock, for whatever reason, the proper attitude would be to remove oneself from that position."

7. "There will be two types of forms. One of these forms will give you an opportunity to simply state whether or not you think any of the five men who are now serving in the eldership should or should not continue to serve. You won't be asked to sign that form, in fact our five current elders have made that point, that this is strictly your opportunity without any pressure from anywhere or anyone to state your feelings about the current eldership in light of what the Bible teaches."

8. "Present elders would need to receive sizable support from this congregation."

9. "Then, theoretically, once those can be sorted out, on May 27th, the last Sunday of the month of May, we will be able to formally appoint, ordain those men who will serve as elders of this congregation. Now that may or may not include the five present ones. That's up to you."

The previous statements, from Miller, clearly show that **he** has defined the concept of elder reaffirmation/reevaluation himself. These statements show that when Miller says, "I do not believe in the 'reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders' as my critics have defined the concept," he is lying. They also show that when he says, "I do not believe that elders should be temporarily appointed and their 'terms' only continued on the basis of an arbitrary vote of the membership," he is stating a falsehood. They further show that when he says, "I do not believe that a congregation has the right to use any procedure that expels qualified men from the eldership," he is stating another lie. Finally, these statements show that when he says, "the specific instance at Brown Trail in 1990 entailed a process that was instigated and executed by the elders themselves," and that "it was the elders themselves that initiated the process and implemented it from beginning to end," he is not being accurate.

ELDER REAFFIRMATION AT BROWN TRAIL

Miller recognizes the distinction between additional elders being added and current elders being reevaluated, reaffirmed, or reconfirmed when he says in statement one: "A system has been set in place by which current elders might be evaluated and additional elders might be added to the body of elders." After covering "the question of how elders ought to be selected," he then moves, in statement two, to "this idea of reevaluating current elders or reconfirming" them. In statement three he sets forth the criteria by which current elders are to be reevaluated, reaffirmed, or reconfirmed. He says: "the principle is that if the membership finds fault with an elder, the membership who put the elder(s) in [at] the first, can remove them." In statement four he defines what he means by the word *fault* saying: "I would still maintain that a man could theoretically be qualified and yet have lost his standing with enough of the members that he ought to voluntarily remove himself." He maintains that a man who has been made an elder by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) and is currently serving as an elder, qualified according to the Scriptures (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-4), but has "lost his standing with enough of the members" should "voluntarily remove himself" from office. He further maintains that if he will not "voluntarily remove himself" from office "the membership who put the elder in [at] the first, can remove [him]. And "how do

you determine” if a currently serving, Scripturally qualified elder has “lost his standing with enough of the members” so that he should “voluntarily remove himself” from office or be removed by the members? Miller answers: “You ask the members how they perceive that man as an elder of the church.”

The apostle Peter said: “**But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies...**” (II Peter 2:1). Dave Miller is a false teacher who is trying to privily bring in a damnable heresy. Brother **Guy N. Woods** wrote: “Privily (*pareisago*) means to slip in by the side of, and indicates that these teachers had artfully and slyly introduced their false doctrines by the side of truth in such a fashion as to deceive those who had accepted them.” Miller is artfully and slyly trying to introduce a new qualification for currently serving, Scripturally qualified elders. This new and unscriptural qualification has to do with how an elder is “perceived.” Notice these quotes from Miller (emph. supplied):

So what I am suggesting to you brethren, based upon these passages, is members of the church, of the local congregation, are to look ye out—that they are to consult among themselves and reach an agreement concerning who is qualified to be an elder, and whom they **perceive** to be a leader, and then those men are to be formally appointed or installed into that function.

Conceivably a man could meet the qualifications, brethren, and yet not be **perceived** by that flock as a shepherd, not be a man to whom they will submit themselves. Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow.

So a man could be technically qualified to be an elder, and yet if the membership where he attends does not **perceive** him a leader in whom they respect and trust, he cannot shepherd effectively.

What follows then [is] that one of the qualifications of a shepherd is that the membership **perceives** him to be such, and is willing to submit and to follow, to respect and to trust.

Now how do you determine that unless you ask the members how they **perceive** that man as an elder of the church?

Miller falsely claims that in addition to the Scriptural qualifications, which a man must meet in order to become an elder and must maintain in order to remain an elder, there is something else to consider. He falsely claims that the man must be one that the members “perceive to be a leader.” He says that the man must be “perceived by that flock as a shepherd.” He again adds that the membership must “perceive him a leader.” He specifically states: “that one of the qualifications of a shepherd is that the membership perceive him to be such.” Then he falsely concludes that “you ask the

members how they perceive that man as an elder of the church.” The one he designates as “that man” is a currently serving, Scripturally qualified shepherd of the church.

But let us try brother Miller’s new, unscriptural qualification on the “chief Shepherd” (I Peter 5:4). Even though Jesus Christ is qualified, in the eyes of God, to be our “chief Shepherd,” would Miller claim that He must also be “perceived” by His sheep to be a leader and that He must be “perceived” by His flock as a shepherd? Miller stated: “Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow.” Does the fact that some sheep will not submit to and follow the lead of the “chief Shepherd” indicate that He “cannot shepherd effectively”? The fact that some sheep will not respect and trust the “Shepherd and Bishop” of their souls (I Peter 2:25) does not disqualify Him nor does it disqualify a currently serving, Scripturally qualified shepherd or bishop. If members do not perceive a Scripturally qualified elder as a leader, they are at fault, not the elder. If members will not submit to a Scripturally qualified elder, then they are sinning: “**Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you**” (Hebrews 13:17). If members will not follow a Scripturally qualified elder then the members are in violation of Scripture. “**Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of [their] conversation**” (Hebrews 13:7). If the members do not properly perceive a Scripturally qualified elder as worthy of respect and trust then they lose their standing before God for Paul commanded: “**And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. [And] be at peace among yourselves**” (I Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Miller’s false doctrine has disrupted the peace of congregations across our great brotherhood beginning at Brown Trail but not ending there. His statement five said: “No one should be threatened by the prospect of being evaluated, not a one of us.” He then went on to name “the preacher...School of Preaching instructors, the elders, the deacons and all of us members.” He overlooks the fact that elders have the rule over preachers, instructors, deacons and all members (Hebrews 13:17) and that this reaffirmation/reevaluation process takes that rule away from currently serving, Scripturally qualified elders. He correctly points out that “the Lord is going to evaluate us one day.” Does brother Miller believe that Scripturally qualified elders will be judged unfit for heaven because in addition to the quali-

fifications found in the Word of God (which will judge all of us [John 12:48]), they were not properly “perceived” (as defined by Miller) by the members?

In statement six Miller makes this astounding claim: “And if I, or anyone else in a leadership sort of capacity, no longer sustains the respect from a sizable portion of the flock, for whatever reason, the proper attitude would be to remove oneself from that position.” He claims that not only must currently serving, Scripturally qualified elders “sustain the respect from...the flock,” but such “respect” must be “from a sizable portion of the flock.” He later defines the sizable portion to be 75% of those who voted. He further claims that if such “respect” is not sustained “for whatever reason” the “proper attitude would be to remove oneself from that position” as an elder. *For whatever reason* would allow “unruly and vain talkers and deceivers...whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake” to replace an elder who is “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9 - 11). Of course, if the elder did not voluntarily remove himself from office, the members, according to Miller, could do so. His heresy is indeed damnable.

In statement seven Miller again indicated a distinction between selecting new elders and reaffirming, reevaluating, or reconfirming currently serving, Scripturally qualified elders. He said, “There will be two types of forms. One of these forms will give you an opportunity to simply state whether or not you think any of the five men who are now serving in the eldership should or should not continue to serve.” Notice that this determination is to be made on the basis of what the members “think” in spite of the fact that these elders may be Scripturally qualified. Then, in opposition to the fact that the Bible says: “**Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses**” (I Timothy 5:19), Miller states: “You won’t be asked to sign that form [this point was later changed], in fact, our five current elders have made that point, that this is strictly your opportunity without any pressure from anywhere or anyone to state your feelings about the current eldership in light of what the Bible teaches.” Notice again that this determination is to be made on the basis of the “feelings” of the members. And how would anyone know if those feelings were “in light of what the Bible teaches”?

In statement eight Miller again refers to his arbitrary “sizable support” yardstick: “Present elders would need to receive sizable support from this congregation.” Remember again that this “sizable support” figure was set at 75% of **those who voted**, not 75% of the membership. Although this could make a big difference in the outcome, neither scenario validates the concept.

In statement nine Miller announces that “once those [forms] can be sorted out” [i.e., votes counted]

“we will be able to formally appoint, ordain those men who will serve as elders of this congregation. Now that may or may not include the five present ones.” How were the presently serving elders to be appointed or ordained if they were not viewed as having resigned their positions? This procedure therefore necessarily includes elder resignation in addition to elder reevaluation/reaffirmation. Even if they had resigned (which is nowhere indicated in the explanation of the process), and they were to be reappointed or reordained, such would still constitute elder reevaluation/reaffirmation or reconfirmation, which is what brother Miller stated he did not preach or practice. His own sermon shows he is lying.

CONCLUSION

Brother Miller concluded his recent statement of explanation regarding elder reevaluation/reaffirmation with the following questions:

The issue boils down to a single point, illustrated by two questions: (1) Does an elder (or preacher, deacon, Bible class teacher) have permission from God to request the members to give him their feedback regarding whether [sic] they think he is qualified to continue to serve and/or perform his job properly? (2) And does that elder then have the scriptural right to decide whether [sic] he will remove himself on the basis of the response that he gets from the members?

I agree that a currently serving elder has “permission from God” to request feedback regarding whether the members think he is Scripturally qualified to continue to serve and or perform his job properly. Also, the members have “permission from God” to give him feedback regarding whether or not they think he is Scripturally qualified to continue to serve and/or perform his job properly. If they conclude that he is Scripturally qualified to continue to serve and/or perform his job properly, then he can do so. If they conclude that he is not Scripturally qualified to continue to serve and/or perform his job properly, then they must follow I Timothy 5:19. Accusations are to be received before two or three witnesses, as opposed to being secret or anonymous. The accused elder also has “permission from God” to respond to the accusations and defend himself. If the accusations are not **Scriptural**, then the elder can continue to serve and/or perform his job properly. If the accusations are **Scriptural**, then the elder, if he refuses to repent, should remove himself from the office of elder. If he will not repent and remove himself from the office of elder, then the congregation should remove him.

Miller’s own statements show that he believes in the reaffirmation/reevaluation of elders, per the accusations against him. He is the one who has defined the concept, but the process or method that brother Miller has spelled out for the resignation and/or reevaluation, reaffirmation and/or reconfirmation of cur-

rently serving, Scripturally qualified elders is **not** found in the Scriptures. It is therefore **not** merely “a matter of expediency that falls within the God-granted authority of the elders.” He believes that elders should be temporarily appointed and their terms only continued on the basis of an arbitrary vote of the membership “since the complexion of a congregation in terms of its membership can change over a period of time” and because “an eldership may conceivably no longer consist of the same individuals that the membership would look out from among themselves and appoint.”

Miller believes that a congregation has the right to use a procedure that expels qualified men from the eldership when only 26% of the members **who vote** find fault with them “for whatever reason.” Whitten’s

statements and Miller’s own sermon show that the specific instance at Brown Trail in 1990 entailed a process that Miller instigated and executed and that it was **not** “the elders themselves that initiated the process and implemented it from beginning to end.” Fifteen years later we see from his reply that it is Miller who has turned this issue into his “pet hobby.” He is the one who is tampering with the authority of elders, and more importantly and dangerously, with the authority of the Word of God.

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RECEIVE HIM NOT, NEITHER BID HIM GOD SPEED

Tim Smith

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he had both the Father and the Son. 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).

It is always troubling to find it necessary to address matters of controversy with those who ought to be of a common and precious faith, but it is no less our duty to address such matters, despite the distastefulness. I urge every congregation, every elder, every preacher, and every member to evaluate the actions of every child of God in the light of II John 9-11.

No matter how great some may seem to be, and no matter how great some may think themselves to be, none are above Biblical instruction. Everyone of us will be judged by our deeds (II Corinthians 5:21) over against His requirements (John 12:48). Should we happen to be directors of preaching schools or directors of apologetics societies or instructors at preaching schools or elders or even little clones of the above, our actions are not above investigation and our deeds are not above rebuke when they fail to comply with the requirements of HolyWrit.

Know that, even before you begin to apply the above text to the lives of others, some will deny that they teach error even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Some will say something like this: “I never taught that! And when I did teach it, it was not wrong. I no longer teach that! I teach now exactly what I taught then!” Now, even a small child can see the nonsense of such a statement, but some

very educated and highly connected preachers claim they cannot see it!

It does not matter who it is, no matter how much you think of them or they of you, and no matter how much they think of themselves, when brethren fail to respect the authority of God’s Word, they are wrong. It is sinful so to behave. Such must be called down and rebuked before all that others may fear. My prayers to God are that those currently setting themselves above the very clear and plain teaching of the Scriptures will repent and bring forth the fruit thereof before any more damage is done to the body of Christ.

Please join with me in praying that those who have torn asunder the body of Christ will cease and desist soon—in fact, today, right now, this very instant. Perhaps more on this will appear in this space in the future—maybe a note that the schismatics have seen the forest **and** the trees. Either way, dark clouds are hovering over some institutions—one long supported by faithful brethren and one that used to be—clouds of destruction and impoverishment, and rightly so, if the current policies remain in place.

May God grant us the love needed to do what is right—no matter whose feelings must be hurt, no matter what the earthly consequences.

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2006 SPRING CFTF LECTURES

“ANTI-ISM—FROM GOD OR MAN”

FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 2, 2006

WITH AN OPEN FORUM ALL DAY TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

David P. Brown, Director Elders: Kenneth D. Cohn Buddy Roth

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

- 9:30 A.M. “A Failure to Understand How to Ascertain Bible Authority can Produce Anti-ism -The Difference in Obligations and Options” David P. Brown
Jason Rollo
- 10:30 A.M. “Examples of ‘Anti-ism’ in the New Testament”
NOON MEAL PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION
- 5:00 P.M. “Anti-Bible Classes Doctrine” Wayne Blake
Lynn Parker
- 6:00 P.M. “Why ‘Anti-ism’ is Sinful”

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27

- 9:00 A.M. “A Review of the ‘Whitten-Lanier Debate’-A Discussion of Classes and Woman Teachers” Bruce Stulting
Geoff Litke
B. J. Rollo
- 10:00 A.M. “Anti-Bible College Doctrine”
- 10:00 A.M.** “The Importance of Women Knowing their Bible # 1”
- 11:00 A.M. “Is There Biblical Authority to Eat in the Church Building and if there is Such Authority, Does that Same Authority Authorize Gymnasiums and the Like?” Roelf Ruffner
Tim Kidwell
Paul Vaughn
John West
- 1:30 P.M. “A Review of the ‘Wallace-Ketcherside Debate’-Located Preacher”
- 2:30 P.M. “The Anti-Orphan Home Doctrine Refuted”
- 3:30 P.M. “A Review of the ‘Britnell-Woods Debate’-Orphan Homes”
- 6:30 P.M. **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**
- 7:00 P.M. “Congregational Cooperation and the Sponsoring church Doctrine” Darrell Conley
Randy Mabe
- 8:00 P.M. “A Review of the “Bingham-Highers-Bigham Debate”

TUESDAY, February 28

ALL DAY OPEN FORUM. SUBJECTS: Apologetics Press, Dave Miller, MDR as taught by Stan Crowley, The Gospel Journal Board’s involvement in the departure of Dub McClish as Editor and David B. Watson as Associate Editor from TGJ along with related topics.

The Spring elders, **Kenneth D. Cohn** and **Buddy Roth** will moderate the forum. The format for the forum will be as follows: Beginning at 9:00 a.m. there will be a 20 minute speech followed by a 20 minute question and answer period with a 10 minute break between sessions. We will break for Lunch from 11:50 a.m. until 1:30 pm. The forum will resume at 1:30 p.m. and conclude at 4:20 p.m. with the same format as the morning sessions. Following the dinner break there will be a panel discussion with time for questions and answers during the 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. sessions. The speakers in the forum will be composed of those who accept the Spring elders’ written invitation, which invitation was mailed to them by certified mail with return receipt.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1

- 9:00 A.M. “Anti-Located Preacher Doctrine” Michael Hatcher
Gary Summers
- 10:00 A.M. “A Review of the ‘Porter-Waters Debate’-Number of Cups in the Lord’s Supper” B. J. Rollo
Lee Davis
- 10:00 A.M.** “The Importance of Women Knowing their Bible # 2” Ken Chumbley
Terry Hightower
John M. Brown
- 11:00 A.M. “Anti-Woman Teacher Doctrine”
- 1:30 P.M. “Saints Only Doctrine”
- 2:30 P.M. “Some Implications of ‘Anti-ism’”
- 3:30 P.M. “A Review of ‘Lectures On Cooperation by Thomas B. Warren”
- 6:30 P.M. **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**
- 7:00 P.M. “Are We ‘Institutional’ Brethren?” Daniel Denham
Dub McClish
- 8:00 P.M. “A History of ‘Anti-ism’ since the 19th Century to the Present”

THURSDAY, MARCH 2

- 9:00 A.M. “Is Opposing Support for Colleges from the Church Treasury is Not ‘Anti-ism’” Stacey W. Grant
Lester Kamp
- 10:00 A.M. “Are We Practicing ‘Anti-ism’ Because we will not Fellowship the Denominations?” David Smith
- 11:00 A.M. “The ‘One-Cup’ Doctrine Refuted” Danny Douglas
Darrell Broking
Jerry Murrell
- 1:30 P.M. “A Review of the ‘Cogdill-Woods Debate’-Orphan Homes and Cooperation”
- 2:30 P.M. “Anti-ism is Not God’s Answer to Liberalism”
- 3:30 P.M. “The ‘Hats and Hair’ Doctrine Refuted”
- 4:30 P.M. **CONGREGATIONAL SINGING**
- 7:00 P.M. “Are we Holding a Form of ‘Anti-ism’ Because we Oppose False Doctrine and False Teachers in ACU, OCU, Harding U, FHU, Lipscomb U, and the like?” Dave Watson
- 8:00 P.M. “Are we Occupying an ‘Anti’ Position When we Oppose ‘The Church of Christ Disaster Relief Agency’?” Kent Bailey

**LADIES ONLY

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Northside church of Christ

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Brother **Dave Miller** has been marked as teaching error on MDR and re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders. His false teachings on these issues have been fully exposed in several publications including *The* (Old-editor) *Gospel Journal*, *CFTF*, *The Defender* and a website called Brown Trail Truth at <http://www.brown-trail-truth.com/>. The evidence of his errors and participation in them is overwhelming. Since brother Miller has been marked as a false teacher he should repent before faithful brethren use him in their meetings and lectureships or appear with him on such programs. The Bible clearly teaches us how to deal with a false teacher (Romans 16:17-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). After reading the evidence provided by the brotherhood papers noted above and the website, one should be able to draw his own conclusions as to the error he holds.

Northside's concern with Dave Miller involves his violation of God's law on fellowship. Our dealings with brother Miller began in October 1999 when he conducted a meeting at the Calhoun Church of Christ in Calhoun, GA. The faithful had departed from this congregation six months earlier (April 1999) because of doctrinal error, which was documented in our "Open Letter" and "Reasons Why We Left" journal.

Prior to brother Miller's coming to Calhoun, some of our Northside members who had left the Calhoun congregation contacted brother Miller and provided him with a copy of our "Open Letter" which we had sent to the Calhoun elders on April 18, 1999. In this "Open Letter" we documented the doctrinal reasons why we left. We also sent brother Miller a copy of the audio tapes Jerry Dyer (a marked false teacher) had presented at the Calhoun Church of Christ in February 1999, in which he taught at least seven doctrinal errors. When the Calhoun eldership were asked if they agreed with what **Jerry Dyer** taught, they stated before thirty men in a meeting on March 22, 1999, that they believed and supported what Jerry Dyer taught. We knew then it was time to withdraw ourselves from that apostate eldership.

The Northside brethren had been gone six months when brother Miller came as scheduled to the Calhoun Church of Christ and conducted a Friday-Sunday night meeting. On the last night he praised the Calhoun elders for their soundness and good leadership. He also praised the Calhoun preacher as a good man and encouraged the congregation to "hang in there" with these good men. He went on to say that he knew they had just been through a tough time, but in time things would get better. The sad part to all brother Miller's praises and endorsements of these brethren was the fact that he had all of the evidence that this was a marked apostate church for some five months before coming to Calhoun and he bid them God's speed anyway.

As a result of brother Miller's comments two of the Northside members called Dave Miller and asked him why he endorsed this apostate congregation in light of the documents he had been provided showing their doctrinal errors. His response was, "I don't have time to read or listen to all the stuff I receive". His attitude toward them was short and as if he didn't care about our concerns. Needless to say, he closed the minds of the Calhoun members that had been concerned about the soundness of the Calhoun Church of Christ. After that night, all doors that had remained open to teach and explain the doctrinal errors that existed in this apostate congregation were closed.

Three weeks after Dave Miller left Calhoun, the apostate church paid the expenses to move **Avon Malone** to Brown Trail School of Preaching from Oklahoma Christian University. It would appear that money was part of the motive for Miller's holding this liberal apostate leadership up in high esteem.

Dave Miller was reminded of the Calhoun problem again in 2003. **David B. Smith**, minister of the Northside church of Christ, along with other preachers, refused to speak on a lectureship with brother Miller because of the controversy surrounding him. Brother Smith wrote brother **Oscar Craft**, director of the Palmetto Bible Lectureship, Greer S.C., which was scheduled for October 12-16, 2003, and told him about the situation here in Calhoun and provided him with information about brother Miller's false teaching. Upon receiving this information, brother Craft wrote a letter of cancellation to brother Miller and asked him to repent of his error and correct the situation he had created in Calhoun. As of August 30, 2005 we have not heard from brother Miller concerning this situation.

The participation with and endorsement of a known apostate church by brother Dave Miller is a violation of God's law on fellowship (II John 9-11). This is yet another error brother Miller needs to repent of before he can be received by the faithful.

Our prayer is that brother Miller will repent of all the error he has taught and of his participation with liberal congregations.

We pray that he will repent and stop the division he is causing in the Lord's church. We hope he will live up to the man he presented himself to be in his book, *Piloting the Strait*. We pray that faithful brethren everywhere will uphold the marking that faithful brethren have placed on brother Dave Miller until he makes a public acknowledgment of repentance.

Elders, Northside church of Christ
Calhoun, Georgia
Bobby Hall
Ron Hall
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"IS IT ANY OF OUR BUSINESS WHAT GOES ON ELSEWHERE?"

David B. Jones

[Brother David Jones is the longtime preacher for the Nesbit, Mississippi, Congregation. He also teaches for MSOP, where Cathy, his good wife is an employee. We have counted brother Jones and his family as dear friends. However, when the Lenoir City Church of Christ elders' questions were rejected by the MSOP faculty, brother Jones not only refused to answer the questions, but sent the envelope containing them back to the Lenoir City elders unopened. Evidently, he no longer believes the following excellent Scriptural article he wrote some years ago. That is the case or he believes MSOP, Forest Hill, et al. are above questioning.—Editor]

There is an erroneous idea being planted and perpetrated by Satan and his army that it is nobody else's business what is done in other congregations of the churches of Christ. Of course, Satan's chief goal is to replace the distinctive teaching of the New Testament with the deceitful trickery of his own accord. On the pernicious road to accomplish this goal, he fills the hearts and heads of the weak and ignorant with the false idea that it is nobody else's business what goes on anywhere else. What that does is open the floodgates of whatever he can deceitfully manipulate his victims to do and no one is supposed to warn them nor help them watch.

He is rapidly accomplishing his mission as we see so many congregations go astray and make shipwreck of the faith. When they are approached about the error they allow or the unscriptural practices in which they engage, the answer is given, "You cannot tell us what to do!" They say, "You are trespassing on our autonomy," or "We do not need you to tell us who we can invite and what we can do." It is sad, but he is gaining speed with his success. May God help us to study, so we will not be ignorant of Satan's devices. Let us ask and answer the question, "Is it any of our business what goes on elsewhere?"

IT IS OUR BUSINESS BECAUSE WITH ARE A BROTHERHOOD

Let us be quick to say that each congregation of the churches of Christ is autonomous, that is, each is self-governing with elders, deacons, and members. Each congregation decides how it will expedite the word of

God by carrying the gospel to the world. The time of services, color of the carpet, what type of building, and such like, are to be governed by the local leaders. However, there are some things which are not up for negotiation, and these matters affect the entire brotherhood.

In Acts 15 we read of a meeting in Jerusalem involving the elders and apostles to decide what to do about the Judaizing influence to bind circumcision on the Gentile converts. It is interesting that this was a problem which affected the entire brotherhood, and yet, God did not instruct them to just tell everyone to keep their noses out of the others' business. Letters were sent to all the congregations informing them of God's word on that matter. This was not a simple matter of opinion or judgment, but one of doctrine. The plan of salvation is not an optional matter—it is a matter of faith. The worship of God is a matter of doctrine and authority. Anyone who advocates changes which adulterate heaven's word is to be dealt with. Why deal with those who pervert the gospel? Because we are a brotherhood and the error taught does damage to this brotherhood is the reason we must deal with them. The body into which we are called is far too precious to allow Satan and his snakes to come and divide it asunder with error and lies.

IT IS OUR BUSINESS BECAUSE WHAT GOES ON ELSEWHERE EVENTUALLY AFFECTS ALL

Satan knows that if sin and error go unchecked, they will eventually spread and infect everyone. This is exactly why the Lord commanded. "Now I beseech

you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Romans 16:17-18). God did not want the hearts of the simple and trusting to be deceived by the lies of Satan and his snakes. This is also why Paul warned: “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good morals” (I Corinthians 15:33). **“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”** (Ephesians 5:11). God knows if we do not deal with and destroy sin and error, eventually it will make its way everywhere. More than a generation ago this digressive movement began to exert its influence upon our brotherhood. Godly elders and preachers warned of the impending doom unless it was checked. Many indifferent, ignorant and idle brethren said, “If it is not right here in our congregation, we do not want to hear about it.” So, many good and sound men were silenced by these indifferent brethren. As a result, a generation has now been reared, by and large, **“who know not God nor the works He has done”** (Judges 2:10). It is not just “over there somewhere,” it is here and in our homes, heads, and hearts.

IT IS OUR BUSINESS BECAUSE OF THE PICTURE IT PAINTS FOR THE UNBELIEVING WORLD

Jesus prayed for unity, unity which must be based on truth. When Satan is able to divide by his lies and destroy by his laborers, the world has a distorted picture of the body of Christ. We must obey truth because it is God’s power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). When

members of the church begin to espouse error, thus causing division, the picture the world gets is one of confusion and chaos. We must understand that those who bring in the innovations and inventions of men are the ones who cause the division. Those who seek the old paths and walk therein are not the ones causing the trouble! Those who teach things contrary to the doctrine need to understand what picture they portray to the world.

It is our business because we must keep the doctrine pure and oppose any who will corrupt the pure gospel. We must be aware of and alert to the dangers to the body from without and within. We must keep the message and the morality pure. We must pray for those in error, and we must maintain the proper attitude. However, we cannot shut our eyes or sink our heads in the sand to the falsehoods taught and practiced.

What goes on in other places is “our business” relative to matters of faith and practice. We are a brotherhood which affects everyone, and we must be aware of the picture we paint to the world. May God continue to be longsuffering and allow us time and opportunity to recover those who have been taken by Satan. But may we never compromise one jot or one tittle of God’s precious and priceless word. May we ever be aware of the cost paid to provide us His word.

[Do brother Jones, along with brother Curtis Cates, the rest of the MSOP faculty, the Forest Hill elders, believe the foregoing article applies to what any of them do, to whom they do it, and the reason they do it?—Editor]

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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 TRUTH AND HATE ERROR.”

To subscribe to **ContendingFTF** send an email to:
ContendingFTF-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

THE TRUTH ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS

B. J. Clarke

Many passages speak of the existence of false teachers, but none is any more specific than the inspired record of II Peter chapter two. This chapter provides positive proof that there have always been those who would pervert the gospel of the grace of God. Five major ideas emerge from a study of this great chapter.

I. THE REALITY OF FALSE TEACHERS

Note carefully the first word of II Peter 2:1, the word **“but.”** The word draws a contrast with what Peter has just said in the closing portion of chapter 1. Therein, Peter spoke of **“holy men of God”** who **“spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”** In contrast to those who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, Peter notes two things.

1. There were false prophets also among the people. The phrase “the people” most likely refers specifically to the Jews (Romans 15:11; Jude 5). Even a casual study of the history of Israel proves that there were false prophets among them (Deuteronomy 13:5, 18:20-22, I Kings 22; Jeremiah 23:11-36; 28:1-17; Ezekiel 22:28).

2. There shall be false teachers among you. This is not a surprising prediction in view of what Jesus and the apostles taught (Matthew 7:15; 24:4-5, 24; Acts 20:28-31; II Timothy 4:1-4; I John 4:1). Nevertheless, Peter’s readers needed to be on guard for the false doctrine that was already swirling around them, as well as any false teachers who might be on the horizon.

II. THE REASONS THAT FALSE TEACHERS EXIST

There are a number of reasons that explain the existence of false teachers. Two of these reasons are prominently discussed in II Peter 2.

1. Revenue (II Peter 2:3, 14-15). “Revenue” is “the gross income returned by an investment” (Webster’s Dictionary). In this case, the investment was the time and energy invested by the false teachers to promote false doctrine so that they might receive revenue from their happy hearers! It was **“through covetousness”** that these false teachers endeavored to **“make merchandise”** of their hearers (II Peter 2:3). They taught what they taught because they had hearts full of covetousness (II Peter 2:14).

Their attitude was like that of the Old Testament prophet Balaam, **“who loved the wages of unrighteousness”** (II Peter 2:15). When God would not give Balaam permission to curse the children of Israel in his official prophetic declarations, Balaam, apparently, decided to give some “off the record” advice to Balak, king of Moab. Evidently, Balaam said something like this to the Moabites: “Look, I cannot officially curse the children of Israel, but if you could seduce

them into worshipping idols, then the harm you seek for them will naturally follow.” According to Scripture, Balaam taught Balak **“to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication”** (Revelation 2:14, cf. Numbers 25). Why did he teach this? Peter tells us that he did it for the money!

Many false teachers are only in it for the money (I Timothy 6:5). There were many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers among those of the circumcision, who were **“teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake”** (Titus 1:10-11).

2. Rebellion (II Peter 2:10-12). The people described in these verses manifested a number of characteristics.

(1) They were recalcitrant in their attitudes. The word “recalcitrant” refers to those who are “stubbornly disobedient, obstinately defiant of authority or restraint” (Webster’s Dictionary). They despised government. They were so brazenly presumptuous, and self-willed that they spoke openly and defiantly against “dignities,” i.e., those in positions of authority. Even angels, which are greater in power and might, **“bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord”** (II Peter 2:11).

(2) They were ravenous in their actions. Because they had no regard for God’s authority over them, they eagerly pursued the lusts of the flesh. They were reasonless. They were like natural brute beasts, and they spoke evil of things that they did not understand (v. 12). They were not willing to deny self and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23).

III. THE RECIPE FOR BECOMING A FALSE TEACHER

A careful study of II Peter 2 provides a compelling description of the modus operandi of a false teacher. While we pray that no one would ever want to become a false teacher, II Peter 2 shows some of the ingredients necessary to being/becoming one.

1. They repress their real intentions (II Peter 2:1-3, 13-14). They bring in their damnable heresies **“privily,”** i.e., “to smuggle in, ...to bring in secretly...creeping along under some sort of cover” (*Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, p. 774). Jude referred to certain false teachers as those who **“crept in unawares”** (Jude 4). They do their work “with feigned words.” Their arguments are made up and artificial, like **“cunningly devised fables”** (II Peter 1:16).

Their relationships with others are but a ruse to get their foot in the door to teach their false doctrines (II Peter 2:13). They use occasions of fellowship as an

opportunity to gain the trust of the very people whom they will deceive. No wonder Peter describes them as those who engaged in **“beguiling unstable souls”** (II Peter 2:14).

2. They recruit their followers by promising what they cannot deliver.

Peter describes them as “wells without water.” Though these false teachers portrayed themselves as offering the refreshing water of life to their hearers, they were, actually, wells without water. Picture a tired and weary traveler in the wilderness, longing for water. Imagine this weary traveler spotting a well, (or spring) and rushing to it in full anticipation of slaking his thirst. Envision his countenance when he arrives, only to find that the well is empty, the spring is dry!

Peter describes them as **“clouds that are carried with a tempest.”** The analogy is the same as above; only the figure is different. Imagine a dry and parched land longing for rain. On the horizon there is the clear sight of black storm clouds. However, just when it looks like the much-needed rain is about to fall, high winds blow the storm away before it can emit its life-giving moisture.

They recruit their followers by enticing them to believe that pursuing their natural desires will fulfill them and make them happy. They speak great swelling words of vanity. Their words are bold and, perhaps, even eloquent. Yet, they are “vanity,” i.e., empty and worthless! Their encouragement to others to pursue the lusts of the flesh, did not bring about the promised liberty. Instead, it only put them in more bondage.

IV. THE RESULTS OF FALSE TEACHING

False teaching produces many tragic results. These results are clearly identified in 2 Peter 2.

1. It results in a repudiation of the Savior Who died for us (2:1).

2. It results in many following after lasciviousness (2:2; Jude 4).

3. It results in the way of truth being evil spoken of (2:2). This is true because those who see the wickedness produced by the “cheap grace” philosophy are going to speak evil of those promoting such a philosophy. If we maintain that we are preaching the truth, and “the truth” we are preaching leads to lustful and lewd behavior, you can be sure that the way of truth will be evil spoken of.

4. It results in the damnation of its hearers and practitioners (2:1). Hearing a lie, believing a lie, and acting upon that lie, will lead to disaster (Genesis 3; I Kings 13). If we believe a lie we shall be damned (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). It is only through obedience to the truth that man’s soul can be purified (I Peter 1:22-23).

5. It results in the corruption and damnation of those who teach it (2:3).

These false teachers would bring upon themselves swift destruction (2:1). This was not an idle threat on

God’s part. God did not spare the angels that sinned. God did not spare the ungodly from the flood. God did not refrain from turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes (2:4-6).

God knows how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished (2:9). Just as brute beasts are made to be taken and destroyed, so these false teachers, who spiritually were like brute beasts, would be taken and destroyed (2:12). They were servants of corruption (2:19) and they **“shall utterly perish in their own corruption”** (2:12). They shall receive the reward of unrighteousness (2:13). They are **“cursed children”** (2:14) **“to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever”** (2:17). Their latter end will be worse with them than the beginning (2:20).

V. THE REMEDY FOR FALSE TEACHING

As deadly as false teaching can be, there is an antidote for it. Let us note four things from 2 Peter 2 which serve as a remedy.

1. Remember the Revelation of God. If we remember those things taught by holy men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, then we will always be on the safe ground of truth (II Peter 1:21). One of Peter’s favorite words in his epistles is the key ingredient in finding a remedy for false doctrine; it is the word “knowledge.” It is through knowledge that we initially escape the pollutions of the world (II Peter 2:20). After we become Christians, as babes in Christ, we are to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby (I Peter 2:1-2). Peter wanted his readers to remember the words which were spoken by the prophets, apostles, and by Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:1-2).

Because there are false teachers who, as unlearned and unstable men, will wrest the Scriptures, we must beware lest we be led away with the error of the wicked and fall from our own steadfastness (II Peter 3:17). The key to this is to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18).

If we, like the noble Bereans, will regularly reconsider what God has revealed in His Holy Scriptures, then we will not be like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14). Rather, we will be **“perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”** (II Timothy 3:16-17).

2. Remember Your Redemption. It will be much harder to follow after false teaching if we are in constant memory of our redemption. The false teachers of II Peter 2 did not properly appreciate the blood of Christ (2:1; cf 1:9). If we will truly reflect upon the blessings given to us by the blood of Christ, we will not be as easily seduced by the “blessings” offered unto us by some false doctrine (II Peter 1:3-4). If we truly remember the sacrifice of Christ, it will be easier to sacrifice our fleshly lusts upon the altar of service to him. Hence, when some preacher comes along preaching a

doctrine that does not require as much of us as does the doctrine of Christ, we will reject the false doctrine and sacrifice our desires so that we might please God.

3. Remember The Righteous Example Of Others (II Peter 2:7-8).

Remembering that others have stood strong against false teaching, even at the expense of personal comfort and popularity is a major encouragement to us who are trying to fight false doctrine today. Men like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, John the Baptizer, Paul, and, of course, Jesus, all give us great courage to stand against that which is wrong.

4. Remember The Reward Awaiting The Righteous (II Peter 1:11; 3:13). It will definitely be worth it to stand up for the truth. While going along with error

may give us a degree of popularity here on earth, it is not worth it to miss out on the reward awaiting the righteous. Therefore, let us, like the psalmist, declare to God, **“Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way... Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way”** (Psalms 119:104, 128).

[Does brother Clarke’s article apply to the truth about Dave Miller’s false doctrines on re-evaluation/reaffirmation of elders and MDR?—Editor]

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THE SUDDEN AND CURIOUS EMPHASIS ON “BALANCE”

Dub McClish

Has anyone else besides me noticed a recent upsurge in the cry for “**balance**” in preaching and writing? Further, am I the only one who has noticed that this emphasis is **not** coming from the predictable liberal tongues and pens, but from some brethren who are generally considered sound in the faith? Have others noticed the corresponding parallel to what seems to be this almost orchestrated emphasis, namely the sudden outcry **against** such things as “arrogance,” “radicalism,” “sarcasm,” “invective,” “viciousness,” “harshness,” and “belligerence”? But let me do more than merely indicate such emphases in general terms. In a recent issue of a magazine published by brethren of sound repute, the following statements appeared in various articles (emph. DM, except as noted):

Balance is a word abused by liberals and is anathema to radicals.... Some spend their time constantly critiquing what others are doing and at times even refusing to endorse good and noble endeavors of sound brethren.... The church must maintain proper **balance** if it is to grow and if it is to have a positive influence in our world....

Both men [the men are named] are well grounded in the faith, are experienced in the Lord’s work, are dedicated to truth, have good **balance**.... There will be unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace among brethren when we seek the very best for each other and get permanently away from a biting, devouring disposition to destroy.... Too many of us do not treat a brother as we would like to be treated were roles reversed. Caustic words have a sure way of returning to haunt us.... Is there any among us who cannot make improvement in the way we treat our brethren in Christ? Remember, He died for the very ones we may be seeking to crush....

Too many brothers wear Sound Doctrine as a badge of Christianity. In reality, the badge of Christ is Love.... A few years ago, I believed that as long as I taught the truth, then my love for others could not be questioned. I gleefully attacked liberals and change agents with sarcasm and satire. If they would have read my articles and heard my preaching they would have been stabbed by my rapier wit.... Many sound preachers and Christians have failed here. Love demands that we care for liberals, legalists, change agents, denominationalists, and... one another. Sitting behind a keyboard pecking out condemnations appears rude, arrogant, resentful, and unkind—all the qualities contrary to love—but it is easy.... We have all heard men defend truth who were more intent on making someone look stupid than inspiring conversion or repentance. Derision and ridicule express rudeness, not love.... We all face people, events and decisions in the church that are not matters of fellowship, but we do not like them. Some choose to “make an issue of them,” but love chooses to let them go without a fight.... When change agents knock on the church’s door its members must exhibit abiding love with meekness and instruction; this will thwart their will, not clever condensation [*sic*] or gleeful humiliation (2 Tim. 2:24–26).

Christians are not to be arrogant or obnoxious in their conduct.... Brethren are not to be disagreeable so that their conduct in defense of the gospel becomes offensive....

We can be pigeonholed as that mean, exclusive bunch who think they are the only ones going to heaven while all else are going to hell.... There are instances where churches of Christ indeed have assumed an identity of belligerence....

The periodical and writers referenced above by no

means constitute the only source of such statements, as the following additional quotations, all from “non-liberals,” demonstrate:

I am apodictically opposed to acting on rumor, innuendo, and hearsay. And I will not be a party to such. I do not want anything I might say or write to provide fuel for some critic’s fire, or fodder for their cannon, as they carry on a battle that inserts them into someone else’s affairs.... I will neither participate in nor condone a situation where something that I, personally, have written or said...., ultimately ends up being used by some self-proclaimed “defender of the Faith” to write a rumor-based article for a “watchdog-type” brotherhood journal in order to provide the author or editor with his personal fifteen minutes of fame.

[A sound Gospel paper was described as] ... a far **right leaning** paper. By “right-leaning” I mean they tend to legislate for others and print accusations before they have their facts straight [emph. in orig.].

I am presently penning one final piece addressing this judgmental, censorious, self-righteous, unforgiving spirit that characterizes a small and diminishing group of brethren in the church.

[“Certain” brethren have been recently described as]... 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.

How different that [i.e., the conduct of another] was from brother _____, who, after I sent a brief email..., sent me a 4 page diatribe filled with viciousness and falsehood against me. This only reaffirms my belief that such a man did not deserve nor need to be in the position he was in.

[After mentioning the dangers of liberalism, an article stated]: There are too many... who are equally damaging and vicious in their attack on the body of Christ. In one sense, they are more dangerous due to their contention that they are rooting out all false doctrine and exposing all error. When they are doing so with proper ethics, attitude and **balance**, they are to be applauded. Yet, there is a mentality that seems wholly obsessed with fulltime heretic detection, slandering brethren, and scrupulously elevating minutia as on par with Christ’s doctrine. They unnecessarily divide brethren.... They polarize and draw away disciples after themselves. They are fight-pickers, seemingly eager to engage in lengthy, unending diatribe and debate to the exclusion of other Christian obligations, of righteous, Christlike conduct, and of a charitable spirit that “is not rude... keeps no record of wrongs... does not delight in evil...” (1 Corinthians 13:5–6).

[Concerning these “fight-pickers,” the same article then opined]: First, they are increasingly turning on one another. Further, they are succeeding in infecting themselves by their biting and devouring. Then, they are

facilitating their own demise—that of influence, reputation, trustworthiness, and respectability. However, they have also viciously wounded good men and women... in the process.

I agree (as I suppose all faithful brethren would) **in principle** with much of what the foregoing quotations emphasize. Who among us is not concerned with pursuing a course of “**balance**” and with avoiding a course of “radicalism”? However, as with the fine print in legal contracts, “the devil is in the details,” or, perhaps more appropriate to these quotations (and their authors), “the devil is in the applications.” At the risk of being labeled a vicious, censorious, far right leaning, judgmental religious redneck who is part of some horrible and repugnant toxic loyalty circle bent on rupturing fellowship in the church, I offer a few observations on these quotations—and their timing.

THE IMBALANCE OF THE “BALANCED”

Those who call loudly for “**balance**” obviously believe themselves to be near perfectly, if not perfectly, **balanced**. Those against whom the **balanced** brethren inveigh are always “certain” others besides themselves. In fact, they seemingly believe that being **balanced** requires that one frequently preach to others about their lack of this noble trait. To these **balanced** brethren, preaching about the need for **balance** somehow actually ratifies and demonstrates their own **balance**. I wonder: Is it possible to so emphasize the need for **balance** that one becomes **unbalanced** in his emphasis on **balance**?

AN ATTEMPT TO SILENCE

Those of us who have served as preachers and/ or elders for a few decades have heard this drum beat for **balance** before. Liberals have long used it in their efforts to “tone down” or silence the warnings of faithful brethren. To them, such warnings, especially if they are specific enough to call names and explicit enough to provide documentation, constitute **imbalance**. We expect change agents and other ne’er-do-wells among us to characterize as “radicals” and “watchdogs” those who expose and resist their errors. Now (as demonstrated in the numerous quotations above) the same pattern has emerged in some who at one time were in the thick of the battle for Truth with the rest of us. Remember, these quotations came not from liberals. Rather, they came from supposedly sound brethren, and they were aimed at faithful brethren who have dared expose errors in doctrine and practice of some of these **balanced** brethren and/or their associates “**who are reputed to be somewhat**” (Galatians 2:6).

THE SWEETNESS OF THOSE WHO CRY FOR “BALANCE”

Consider some of the verbiage of these brethren

of **balance** (plucked from the quotations above), which they employed to describe those whom they perceive to be **unbalanced**:

- Carry on a battle that inserts them into someone else's affairs
- Write...rumor-based article[s] for...“watchdog-type” brotherhood journal[s]
- Provide the author or editor with his personal fifteen minutes of fame
- Wear Sound Doctrine as a badge of Christianity
- Legislate for others and print accusations before they have their facts straight
- Will...rupture fellowship in the church even more than they already have
- Polarize and draw away disciples after themselves

They are:

- Self-proclaimed “defender[s] of the Faith”
- Radicals
- Caustic
- Seeking to crush [others]
- Rude, arrogant, resentful, and unkind
- Intent on making someone look stupid
- Obnoxious
- Disagreeable
- Far **right leaning**
- Judgmental
- Censorious, self-righteous, unforgiving
- [A] small and diminishing group
- A small...toxic loyalty circle
- A small negative faction
- Eager to engage in lengthy, unending diatrib and debate to the exclusion of other Christian obligations
- Fight-pickers
- Slandering brethren
- Increasingly turning on one another
- Infecting themselves by their biting and devouring
- Damaging and vicious
- More dangerous [than liberals]
- Wholly obsessed with fulltime heretic detection,
- Slanderers

They engage in:

- A biting, devouring disposition to destroy
- Derision and ridicule
- Gleeful humiliation
- Belligerence
- Viciousness and falsehood
- Scrupulously elevating minutia as on par with Christ's doctrine
- Unnecessarily dividing brethren

Having read the foregoing list, one is made to wonder whether or not they have any inkling of the meaning of the traits of civility, kindness, agreeable-

ness, and charity—in other words, the meaning of **balance**.

THE HYPOCRISY OF THOSE WHO CRY FOR “BALANCE”

These self-appointed spiritual physicians prescribe **balance** as the do-all, end-all remedy for the ailments of “certain” brethren (besides themselves, of course). I strongly suggest that they need to swallow a large dose of their own medicine. Their definition of **balance** includes the following (as long as they are doing it, of course):

- Strongly worded condemnation of brethren for engaging in strongly worded condemnation of brethren
- Very negative outcries against those who are accused of being very negative
- The use of biting and devouring verbiage to assert that some brethren are biting and devouring others
- Judging “certain” brethren for being judgmental of “certain” brethren
- Being obnoxious and disagreeable in alleging that others are obnoxious and disagreeable
- Employing caustic and radical terms to rail against those perceived to be caustic and radical
- Using toxic terminology to describe a small, toxic loyalty circle
- Seeking to “crush” brethren who are accused of “crushing” brethren
- Picking fights with their brethren for being fight-pickers
- Being rude, arrogant, resentful, and unkind in describing some as rude, arrogant, resentful, and unkind

Ironically, some of the most (1) brutal accusations of meanness and (2) strident calls for kindness and sweetness as quoted above appeared in the most angry and hate-filled letter I have ever read from a brother. In every word of condemnation of their inferior brethren (as they doubtless view those they describe), the condemners condemn themselves, but they are too self-righteous to see or admit it. Is it permissible to be caustic in crying out against those who are caustic, as long as the recipients of these causticisms are liberals or “certain” other sound brethren? This seems to be the current course of these **balanced** brethren. I suppose they still reserve for themselves the right to behave in ways that they condemn in “certain” others of us (after the manner of the U.S. Congress toward U.S. citizens). They seem to retain for themselves alone the right to legislate who may speak caustic words, when caustic words may be spoken, and to whom caustic words may be directed.

These men who are now berating “certain” faith-

ful brethren for being self-righteous, obnoxious, arrogant, censorious, unkind fight-pickers would do well to pause, at least momentarily, for reflection and self-examination. In their harsh condemnation of others, implying that they are above such vile attitudes and behaviors, do they not thereby demonstrate in themselves the very self-righteousness they profess to so deplore? Moreover, which of these men have not repeatedly over the past several years done the very things they are now railing against in “certain” brethren? Have they not all written and/or spoken caustic and censorious words, describing and denouncing others (especially liberals and those advocating direct operation of the Holy Spirit). Many witnesses have heard and read their words, including their calling the names of those under attack? Were they **unbalanced** when they were thus behaving only a few months ago, or was such behavior **balanced** then, but **unbalanced** now? Maybe it is still **balanced** if they so behave, but **unbalanced** if “certain” others act the same way. Further, when “certain” others of us have done the same, have these **balance** advocates not applauded and encouraged us for doing so?

But now, suddenly, by their own declaration, they are too genteel for such uncivilized behavior. They apparently do not realize that they, by assuming this posture, have by implication imposed a gag order upon themselves. No longer can they bluntly or plainly expose error and its purveyors without violating their own *ipse dixit*. Moreover, since they have decided to endorse, support, and defend a brother who has been marked as a false teacher, will they now endorse and support other false teachers? In fact, they are already doing so. It was therefore not surprising to see several of these **balanced** brethren publicly praising and bidding God-speed to another marked false teacher at a recent south Texas lectureship. They were merely being “consistent” and demonstrating their exceptional **balance**.

Could it be that one reason for this sudden, concerted emphasis on **balance** lies in the fact that the arrows of Truth fired by “certain” brethren have been finding their mark with telling accuracy? Is the call for **balance** an attempt (conscious or otherwise) to silence or soften the blows of “certain” brethren who have repeatedly exposed the utter inconsistency of those who profess their opposition to the errors of the Executive Director of an organization while supporting the organization itself? Are the **balanced** brethren trying to convince others that opposing a false teacher while supporting the institution he directs is a demonstration of **balance**? When **balanced** brethren speak on lectureships praise, commend, and glad-hand marked teachers of error, are they tell us what, to them, constitutes **balance**?

In contemptuously describing some as “...a few who are in a small, but no less toxic loyalty circle...a

small negative faction...,” brethren of **balance** obviously depict themselves as part of some large non-toxic loyalty circle that is wholly positive. Both they and the objects of their verbal blasts know better. If the attitude and demeanor of these men represents **balance**, I fervently desire that I may never run afoul of those who are truly **unbalanced**.

These **balanced** brethren seem to have forgotten (or have failed to apply) our Lord’s injunctions: “**Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.... Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye**” (Matthew 7:1–5) and “**Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment**” (John 7:24). Likewise, they have forgotten Paul’s warning: “**Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practice the same things**” (Romans 2:1).

IS HISTORY BEGINNING TO REPEAT ITSELF?

This latest crusade for **balance** scares me. It brings back haunting memories of similar cries I heard as a young preacher—cries that proved to be the seeds that have matured into full-blown, widespread, arrogant liberalism and digression in all of their irreverent ugliness. In the early 1960s, a few brethren begin to call for more “**balance**” in our preaching. At first the cry was faint, but it grew louder and more frequent with time. The charge was that brethren in general and preachers in particular had been too negative, dogmatic, mean, and narrow-minded. Along with these charges came another: Too much emphasis for too long on “the plan” (i.e., the plan of salvation, the pattern for the church, et al.) and not enough emphasis on “the Man” (i.e., the person of Christ). Thus arose the controversy that brethren energetically discussed for an extended period in the Gospel papers concerning “the Man or the plan.” The excuse and theme of those who sought to tone down the Gospel was, “We need to be **balanced**.”

The seeds planted by those crying for **balance** over forty years ago took root in many of my generation. These men, some of whom were classmates of mine in two different colleges, have been among the leaders in the awful apostasy that presently characterizes so much of the church. Some of those who swallowed the “**balance**” bilge went on to obtain advanced degrees, returning to various schools operated by our brethren. These **balanced** professors have succeeded in destroying or damaging the faith of thousands of precious young people, providing tremendous impetus to the malignant digression that has now affected two generations. Some have authored books that depict the

church as a narrow sect of which they are terribly ashamed. Still others have wielded great influence from the pulpits of large, urban churches. I dare say that all of these consider themselves prime examples of **balance**. Likely, they teach “loud and long” on the need for **balance**. Correspondingly, such men (and women) consider as decidedly **unbalanced** (if not downright nut cases) those who still dare preach that there is one body, that the distinctive pattern for it is clearly discernible in the New Testament, and that the church has been restored and is reproducible in every succeeding age. Perhaps the ultimate blasphemy to such **balanced** folk is to identify faithful congregations of the church of Christ in our time as the church of the New Testament. We may generally trace the progression of liberalism from its seeds in the 1960s to the full-grown plant of the present in the following stages:

1. A few began to cry for “**balance**,” along with the outcry against their perception of “**negativism**” and “**dogmatism**.” (Never mind that the church experienced its greatest numerical growth in modern times [the 1950s and early 1960s] in our nation by this so-called “**negative**” and “**dogmatic**” approach in preaching and debating the Gospel and conducting home Bible studies.)

2. The cry for “**balance**” gradually became a cry for “**moderation**.”

3. The cry for “**moderation**” evolved into a cry for “**tolerance**.”

4. The spirit of “**tolerance**” gave birth to unabashed **liberalism**, which neutered the Gospel message, resulting in blurring the meaning of fellowship, compromising the plan of salvation, corrupting the worship, and generally denominationalizing the church.

Forty-five years ago, many of those who began chanting for **balance** were **generally considered to be sound and faithful men**. I fearfully observe that some who are of that reputation today are the very source of the revived **balance** mantra. Is history beginning another of its cycles?

I have long opined that the out-of-the-closet, in-your-face, easily-identifiable, proud-of-it liberal is not the greatest enemy of or threat to the Truth. Outright liberals are dangerous enough all right, but we know who and what they are. The greater danger is from the fence-straddlers—those who can talk strongly when they are around strong brethren, but who wilt like daisies in a sauna when they are in a group of compromisers. These are treacherous religious fifth columnists, spiritual subversives, who, like old Joab, will thrust a dagger in your ribs while kissing you on the cheek. They will not take a stand if it will cause them inconvenience, discomfort, disfavor from friends, or sacrifice. Their earthly attachments are stronger than their loyalty to the Christ and His Truth. After the manner of Judas, they are willing to betray principle, righteousness, in-

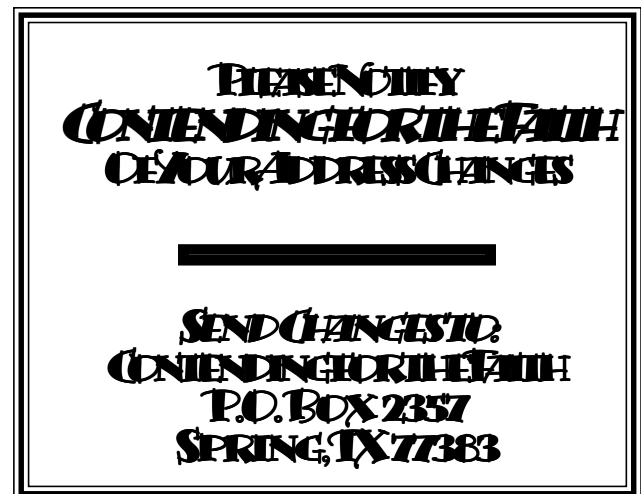
tegrity, and honor (to say nothing of faithful and loyal friends) for their thirty pieces of silver. Such folk test the wind to see who is going to “win” before deciding who or what is right or wrong, instead of examining the evidence, choosing the right, and standing for it, even if they must stand alone. Such **balanced** brethren are far more dangerous than admitted liberals. One brother has tagged them as “moderate liberals,” and I think he may have a point.

CONCLUSION

The Lord’s people have long struggled to find terms to distinguish between true and false brethren. *Faithful* and *unfaithful*, *sound* and *unsound*, *conservative* and *liberal* have all been employed. Now we have a new set of terms, thanks to our brethren who have recently rolled out and jumped on the **balance** bandwagon: *balanced* and *unbalanced*.

Balance, like beauty, is at least somewhat in the eye of the beholder; it is somewhat subjective. Those who are calling for **balance** so loudly just now obviously believe they know perfectly well what it is, and just as obviously, they believe they are **balance** personified. In the 1960s, the ones who cried for **balance**, “**balanced**” a large percentage of the church right into apostasy. May we be on guard lest it happen again. The best definition I know of **balance** in spiritual matters is from Paul, who said he “**shrank not from declaring the whole counsel of God**” (Acts 20:27). If we will follow his noble example, we shall achieve **balance** as God defines it.

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Spiritual Insights From Godly Women...

DEAR TGJ BOARD MEMBERS

Lavonne McClish

[Sister Lavonne McClish sent copies of the following letter to each member of the TGJ Board (Curtis Cates, Joseph Meador, Ken Ratcliff, Tommy Hicks) on August 27, 2005. As of this date (Nov. 23), she has received no acknowledgement or response from any of them.—Editor]

Dear TGJ Board Members:

Before I say anything else, I want to assure you that I am not challenging your **right** to remove Dub and David [Watson—Editor] from their respective positions as editor and associate editor. I only ask that you examine your motives carefully. Please examine also the manner in which this thing was done, and see if you can defend your motives (I am not presuming to judge your thoughts and motives, but I can evaluate your actions) and your manner according to the standard of God's Word. One more thing: Please do not automatically discount what I have to say on the basis of my sex alone. I am not a "hysterical, emotional woman." I do my own reasoning, studying, and thinking.

I was, frankly, distressed that you would allow anyone to pressure you into betraying us without either a just or a Scriptural cause. The entire board (on 7/20) admitted that Dub had not sinned. Think about it: Suppose Dub **had** been guilty of sin of some kind, or of teaching something false, or lying and slandering, or being contentious. Would any board member—even one—ever have tried to talk to him and admonish him over the past five years about his "sins," or even his "poor judgment"? (Come to think of it, one board member [in 2001] **did** lodge several criticisms concerning practical matters he felt were not being properly carried out. These criticisms came across as arrogant and hypocritical, to us, considering the fact that the critic himself was not able to do the things he insisted the editor could do if he just put forth the effort [such as getting every issue to the subscribers' mailboxes "on time"]. As far as we know, the rest of you did not share that point of view.) **Frank Chesser** is the one who committed the sin(s), which ignited this whole mess, not Dub. Only Michael [Hatcher—Editor] has dared to state openly that it was Frank Chesser rather than Dub who sinned in the AP controversy, a fact obvious to anyone with any degree of objectivity. Bert [Thompson—Editor] has been made the victim, Frank the champion, and Dub the villain (shades of "woe unto them that call good evil and evil good" [Isa. 5:20]).

Can any board member show me the Scriptural authorization or justification for secretly storing up all these complaints and grievances that are now coming out (e.g., "issue-oriented," congregational "meddling," "too much like CFTF," "harsh writing," et al.), waiting for just the right moment to pounce and spring them upon the unsuspecting victims? That is exactly the tactic a former Pearl Street elder used, as some of you will doubtless remember, when he came up with his "selling-books-on-church-property-is-sin" "conviction." In all the months when he was getting his case together, he never said one word—not even a hint; he never tried to reason with Dub from Scripture, attempting to show him where he was "wrong"; he allowed the books to be sold on Pearl Street property; and he even bought a book himself. He did all this while he was acting in a way contrary to his "convictions," so as not to let anything slip until he had it all ready. Can those who do such things—to a brother who trusts them—honestly say they are following the "Golden Rule"? Would you want to be treated in that way? Would you be offended if you were treated in such a way? Would you feel betrayed if you were thus treated? The entire thrust of the Bible condemns such behavior. Even slaves of Christian masters were entitled to better treatment (Colossians 4:1).

I keep thinking of some basic principles that are applicable here. So far as I know, no one has yet mentioned them, although I know all of you know them well (probably much better than I), even if you don't seem inclined to apply them. For instance: If you would give in so easily and quickly to pressure and/or threats from "friends" and brothers, without questioning, without asking for proof, without even having a just cause (merely an **alleged** cause, at that, and not an accusation of sin), what will you do when you are faced with actual persecution—even physical persecution—if you offend someone? I feel that such an idea is rapidly passing from the theoretical into the realm of probability. In our country. In our time. When you are threatened with prison if you continue to teach and preach, or to condemn homosexuality or abortion, what will you do? What will you do when a woman takes you to court, demanding that she be allowed to preach? Suppose she sues you for the church property, the church bank account, your own houses, and your own bank accounts? Given your recent behavior, why should anyone expect you to have the strength and courage to defend the Cause in the face of such persecution? When Ahab met Elijah and said, "**Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?**" (I

Kings 18:17), Elijah's response was not to apologize and promise to quit troubling Israel, or to bring a kinder, gentler, less negative message from Jehovah. He didn't promise that he would concentrate on the **positive** aspects of God's Word, stop being so "issue-oriented," and quit meddling in other people's affairs. No, Elijah laid the blame squarely on Ahab's shoulders. The one who didn't want to hear the Truth, who wanted to "shoot the messenger," is the one who was troubling Israel. When the apostles told Jesus that He had offended the Pharisees, what was His reaction? He proceeded to offend them even further (Matthew 15:12-14). Make the applications. When Peter and John were beaten because they were preaching Christ publicly, did they promise not to do it again? The "Powers That Be" commanded them not to speak any more in His name. Instead of saying, "Well, I guess we had better mend our ways. We don't want to make them angry and get beaten again. That might ruin our reputations and give the church a black eye!" No, they said, "**We ought to obey God rather than men**" (Acts 5:29). When I was a child, I remember that weak Christians would sometimes pointedly suggest to my father that he "preach the Gospel and let other folks alone." In other words, don't preach the parts of the Gospel that might offend anyone—either in the church or out. That spirit survives today.

Paul wrote to the Galatians, "**For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ**" (Galatians 1:10). Has there ever been a time—during any Dispensation, Old Testament or New—when those who belong to God are encouraged to take the easy way out when they are under pressure? Are we ever promised that God will not allow us to suffer humiliation, financial loss, or being ostracized by those we love, for His name? "**Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution**" (II Timothy 3:12). Jesus said, "**And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell**" (Matthew 10:28).

When several of you first conceived the idea of a new periodical, you all, with one voice, insisted, and continued to insist, that Dub must be the editor. He was your first and only choice. He badly wanted to do it, but I was hesitant. I knew he would be perfect for the job, so that was not the motivation for my hesitation.

However, since he was already editing the Denton Lectures books (and I was proof-reading and checking Scriptures on those), directing the lectureship (and I was doing almost all the secretarial work on that), and doing a great deal of traveling (most of the Valid Publications work was left to me, and I fell further and further behind), I knew there was no place in our lives to

cut out the huge chunk of time that editing **THE GOSPEL JOURNAL** would require. We already had almost no time together, and I knew the time would come out of what we had normally devoted to eating, sleeping, and other such frivolities. I reluctantly gave in. I soon realized that it would be even worse than I had envisioned. He spent almost a year learning all that he could about producing the paper, raising funds, and trying to get everything in readiness for that first issue, January 2000. I helped as much as I could with proof reading, Scripture checking, and so forth. My health began (actually I think it had already begun) to deteriorate. Dub poured his life, his heart, and his soul into **THE GOSPEL JOURNAL**, and I tried to support him in every way I was able. He almost never took a day off, or sat down and watched television at night, or took any time to relax at all. He sacrificed these things, and the time he might have spent with his family (and **Paige** [granddaughter—Editor] and I gave up his time with us), for the paper. Even when he was on the road he had to work on *TGJ* constantly to keep it on schedule. He became constantly fatigued.

I know that Ken (Ratcliff-Editor) has worked tirelessly as business manager, but not a one of you (including Ken) has any idea how much work each of the sixty-seven issues (thirty-six pages each) of the paper required. Tommy (Hicks-Editor) **may** soon begin to appreciate these things a bit more. I am telling you all this so you will know, not only what Dub gave to *The Gospel Journal*, but also what I gave—and gave up—as well. And this "mother of all boards" (created [for the most part] for the purpose of keeping the *Journal's* content pure and Scriptural, protecting it from editors who might go astray, and protecting its integrity) has destroyed—purely for political/financial advantage, of all things—what we and others had worked so hard to begin, build, and keep going. I ask that each one of you read and think seriously about what I have written. I know I have been blunt, but I hope I have not been rude. I have not intended to be. Please pray about it as well.

Sincerely and truly,
Lavonne McClish

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“When the Bough Breaks”

Cynthia Clark

I remember thinking this could not be happening as I heard my number being called out. In disbelief, I stood up and took my place as a jury member in a case involving kidnapping and sexual assault against a minor child. During the course of this one week trial, I listened to some disheartening and disturbing information that I do not think I will ever be able to forget.

The first three days of the trial were filled with testimonies and evidential material. I will not go into the horrid details; however, I will share with you a couple of vivid images that are forever imprinted in my memory. The first one was of the girl telling us about the sexual assault. She told us in detail about the nursery rhyme he sang to her while she was crying and asking him to stop. I do not think I will ever be able to hear that particular nursery rhyme in an innocent light again and without its causing me to feel incredibly sad. The second centered on an argument the attorneys entered into with regard to showing us a particular exhibit prepared by the girl’s attorney. The defendant’s attorney argued vehemently against allowing as evidence a picture of the girl taken before the incident occurred. In the end, the judge ruled that the evidence was admissible. After seeing the picture, you immediately knew why it had caused such a commotion. Have you ever seen a child’s picture where her smile is so brilliant and there is so much energy radiating from the picture it seems to just leap off the paper? This picture fully captured the innocence and joy of childhood. It was a picture that normally would cause one to smile regardless of whether one knew the child or not, which made for an even more startling contrast to the shattered young girl we saw on the stand with the sad, knowing eyes and broken spirit. At the end of this phase of the trial, the jury was able to come to a guilty conclusion on both counts after a short period of deliberation.

Next, we entered into the sentencing phase of the trial. It is at this time that the jury is presented with the defendant’s prior offenses. We found out he had a long juvenile record and his first offense at molesting young children was reported when he was 14 years old. Since juvenile records are sealed, however, we could not get a definitive idea as to how many assaults he committed during this time frame. Then we heard even more disturbing information. While out on probation for this trial, he was arrested and released again for raping a two-year-old and a four-year-old. In a short period of time, we learned we were dealing with a repeat offender and a pedophile at that.

After the defendant’s prior history is disclosed, the character witnesses are brought to the stand basi-

cally to plead for leniency on his behalf for sentencing. Time after time, I heard witnesses state what a hard and dedicated worker he was, how he volunteered in the community and at church and how good he was around children. Every time I heard someone make a statement about his being around children it just filled me with dread, and I could not help wondering how many more victims there are that we did not even know about. I thought to myself, “How can so many people be so naïve?” Last, we heard from two psychiatrists who work exclusively with pedophiles. They provided us with additional information such as the following characteristics/traits:

- Pedophiles commit numerous sexual assaults (typically in the 100s) before they are caught because their victims are small children.
- Pedophiles deliberately live in areas that put them in closer proximity with children and seek out positions or jobs that allow them to establish trust with many of their victims.
- Therapy to change this sexual dysfunctional behavior tends to fail because:

1) Pedophiles do not voluntarily seek help. There is a correlation between the timing of when a pedophile enters into a treatment program and when the court orders him into a program which, regardless whether or not it is mandated, generally works in his favor to lessen potential jail time served.

2) Pedophiles do not accept responsibility or full accountability for the harm and pain inflicted upon their victims. Because of his long-term habitual practices, a pedophile’s conscience becomes “turned off,” which makes it easier for him to lie to himself and others.

3) Pedophiles do not accept the fact that they are addicts. The first step in any addiction recovery program is accepting the reality of the situation, which is one of the hardest things for them to do.

4) Pedophiles cannot isolate themselves from their addiction even if they get to the point of admitting it. Children are a part of our society, so their temptation is always around them (e.g., at the stores, in the neighborhood, in the cars driving past, etc.), which proves to be their downfall.

- Long-term success rates in rehabilitation for pedophiles cannot be confirmed to date.

After digesting all this information, we entered into the deliberation phase of the sentencing. To my great surprise, I quickly learned the jury was divided. There were those of us who felt strongly about having consequences linked to a person’s deviant behaviors and actions. We also wanted to immediately restrict

this person's freedom so he could no longer harm any other children. The other side felt strongly that a prison sentence was too harsh. He was a sick, young man that needed help, and he would not be able to get the type of help he needed in prison. They were also fearful of his safety within a prison environment so they argued for mandatory therapy within a monitored work release program instead. As you can imagine, it was a heated debate on both sides. In the end, it will be awhile

before this person gets out of prison, if ever, especially since he is also facing another trial with the sisters who are two and four years old, respectively. Realistically, it scares me that he will get out some day and continue right where he left off. For now, however, it is a relief knowing he will not be singing his nursery rhymes to any other children.

—34 *Scarlet Woods Court*
The Woodlands, TX 77383

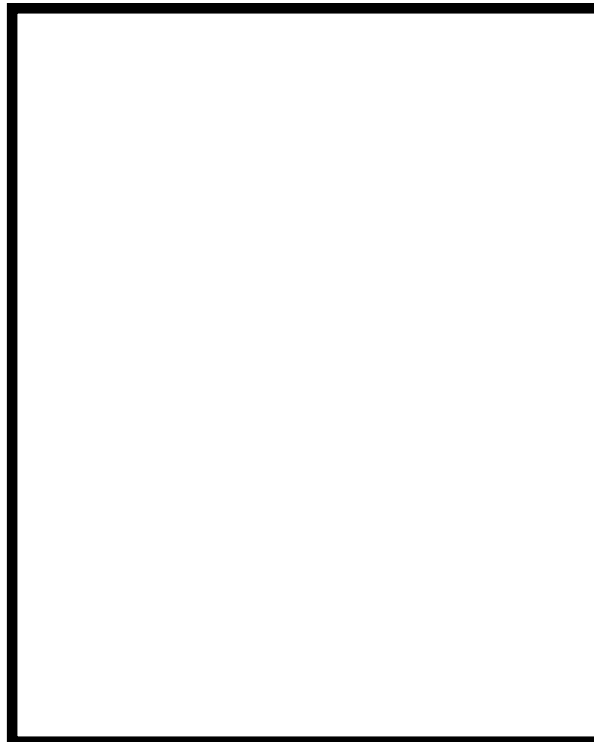
Restoration Reflections....

CLARK ELKINS WAS A VALIANT SOLDIER

Paul Vaughn

There are multitudes of gospel preachers who are not well known in the brotherhood. These faithful messengers of the gospel of Christ work diligently and courageously, never seeking fame or recognition, only working to enlarge the kingdom and help Christians grow spiritually. One of those valiant soldiers of the cross was brother Clark Elkins. I first met Clark in Prestonsburg, Kentucky, where he was preaching in a gospel meeting. His command of the Scriptures and zeal for preaching influenced my life so much that I wanted to become a gospel preacher. Brother Elkins who first encouraged me to preach, giving me my first opportunity to proclaim the word of God in the fall of 1985 at the Mason County Church of Christ in Maysville, Kentucky. I spoke all of twelve minutes, then Clark got up, spoke some encouraging words, and delivered an excellent sermon. I always believed that I left the extra time in good hands.

Clark Elkins was born on January 31, 1920 in Woodbury, Tennessee. His parents were **Richard (Dick)** and **Emma Todd Elkins**. Both of Clark's parents and grand-parents were members of the church of Christ. Richard was a song leader for fifty years. Clark had six brothers and two sisters (Haskel, Sterling, Fred, Loritta, Garland, Bob, and Maxine), but only five survived to adulthood. Clark and **Garland** are the only boys who became full-time gospel preachers. Clark was first "baptized" when he was a teenager, but later came to realize that he did this because other teenag-



ers were doing it. He then obeyed the gospel in Wayne, Michigan, being baptized by **W.C. Quillen**. Brother Elkins was married at the age of eighteen to **Pauline Williams**, the daughter of **Vince** and **Eugenia Williams**. Pauline's parents were also members of the church of Christ. Four children were born to Clark and Pauline: **Darrell**, **Patricia**, **Vicki** and **Don**.

Brother Clark desired to preach. While working as a crane operator in Dearborn, Michigan, he would take his lunch hour on the crane to memorize Scriptures. In 1960, he began to preach full-time for the Pikeville, Kentucky Church of Christ. When he and Pauline arrived in Pikeville, the church had about eighteen members. While preaching in Pikeville and the surrounding area, about four hundred people became Christians. Clark related an interesting story about the beginning of his preaching in Pikeville. During the first week of the meeting, he and his brother, Garland, had a number of radio broadcasts. They both preached about the New Testament Church and that denominationalism was sinful. Clark said that Garland soon went back to Tennessee and the denominational preachers came after him. He said that was good because it drove him to study even

harder to refute their errors.

Two very interesting events took place while Clark was in Eastern Kentucky. He was preaching in a meeting during which a woman desired to be baptized. When she got home, her husband strongly objected to her plans and he came to the meeting the next night with his shotgun. He sat on the front porch with his weapon, saying that if Clark baptized her, he would shoot Clark. However Clark baptized her and the husband did not shoot him. Then there was a “preacher” in the area named **Roy Hall** who was known for his outbursts of anger. Mr. Hall did not agree with the preaching of Clark and told everyone in the community that he was coming to the meeting in which Clark was preaching and planned to physically assault him. The brethren were concerned about Clark’s safety and wondered if he should preach. Clark would not allow anyone to stop the proclaiming of God’s word. He said, “I am going to preach, and if he gets up to start trouble we will just sing him down.” Hall came but he stayed in the pew and heard a good sermon.

Brother Elkins preached for fifty-five years. The last ten years of his life he preached for the Curlee Church of Christ in Readyville, Tennessee. Just before his death he was talking with his brother Garland and said, “I am ready.” This is nothing new because Clark lived each day of his life preparing to die. He passed away on April 7, 2004.

One other event in Clark Elkins’ life I desire to share with you greatly impressed me. It took place in the fall of 1996. I was preaching for the Highway 77 Church of Christ in West Memphis, Arkansas. The brethren invited Clark for a gospel meeting. During the meeting, Garland invited his brother to speak in chapel at the Memphis School of Preaching. Clark was relating his experiences and said that he had only attended one year of college. I could not help thinking that if those preacher students could ever have as much Bible knowledge as brother Clark Elkins, the church would be much stronger for it. We thank God for the work and life of Clark Elkins.

—1415 Lincoln Road
Lewisport, KY 42351

The Last Word...

One May Be Essentially Wrong Without Being Totally Wrong

Kent Bailey

As we consider the reality of the existence of error, many fail to distinguish the fact that, while one may not be **totally** wrong in the conclusions drawn regarding crucial issues, nonetheless, one may be **essentially** wrong regarding some specific conclusions. The end result amounts to the same consequence: *being outside the fellowship of God and faithful brethren.*

When we speak of being *essentially wrong*, we speak with reference to that which is inherently or fundamentally wrong. The term *essential* implies belonging to the very nature of a thing and therefore being incapable of removal without destroying the thing itself or its character. The term *fundamental* applies to that which is a foundation without which an entire system or a component part of it would collapse.

When we speak of being “totally wrong” we speak regarding that which is completely wrong. Such goes beyond the state of any one essential to the particular state or condition of all component parts. This implies the aggregate of a whole, or the state or condition of wholeness—everything that constitutes the whole is wrong.

As we view various false doctrines and/or practices that have either been taught in the past, or else

are being presently advocated, we note that all fatally false doctrines and/or practices fit into the categories of being either wrong *essentially* or wrong *totally*.

In Acts 19:1-6 the historian Luke, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote:

And it came to pass that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much heard whether there be any Holy Ghost? And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And, when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

As we note this account we find certain individuals in Ephesus: Who had received the baptism that John the Baptist had taught and practiced. Prior to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and His being declared the only begotten Son of God; the baptism administered by John had divine authority. However,

due to the specific nature of the ordinance, such was temporal and was never a universal requirement placed upon the totality of accountable individuals.

A careful study of the gospel accounts gives evidence that John's baptism was immersion in water for believing, penitent Jews. It was to prepare them to receive the coming Christ. John's baptism was "for" or "unto" the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). *Remission of sins*, as mentioned in these passages, constituted remission on a promissory basis. Remission of sins would be realized in actuality in the Kingdom of Christ. This is so because they were "prepared material" to be set into the Lord's Kingdom upon its establishment (Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3).

John's baptism placed a Jew into a prepared state, and, he/she could enter into fellowship with the promised Christ. It did not bring one into a state of actual and realized redemption due to the fact that, during the time John's baptism was in force, God's scheme of redemption was not completed. Therefore, while the baptism administered by John was authorized during its time, it had been abrogated upon the completion of God's scheme or Redemption. It was then superseded by the baptism authorized in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16: 15-16). Receiving John's baptism after it was abrogated and superseded by another accomplished nothing for the person submitting to it.

While the Ephesians in Acts 19:1-6 were not *totally* wrong receiving the abrogated baptism of John (which consisted of immersion in water unto the remission of sins) they were *essentially* wrong in that John's baptism was a temporary preparatory baptism that had been rendered obsolete by the baptism set forth in the great commission. This baptism brings penitent believers into the established kingdom of Christ and is for or unto the absolute possession of the remission of past alien sins.

In making an even more specific application of the principle under discussion to the issues we face within the church today, no doubt conservative, right-thinking brethren have no problem at all in understanding this basic principle as it relates to the false doctrine concerning *Covenant Amenability* as taught by the late brother **J. D. Bales**.

Was Bales *totally* wrong in all that he taught? No, he was not! As a matter of fact, Bales taught much truth and accomplished much good in his preaching, teaching, writing, and debating. Some of the most valued books in my library were authored by J.D. Bales. Yet, in spite of all the good that Bales accomplished, he advocated that which was and is *essentially* wrong in affirming the fatally false doctrine that *alien sinners are not totally amenable to the law of Christ*.

As we bring this discussion closer to home, it is very obvious that certain brethren today are more than

willing to overlook two fatally false doctrines as advocated by brother **Dave Miller** in his affirmations regarding the *re-evaluation/reaffirmation of elders* and what I call the "mental reservation" doctrine regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Miller has stated that we have either misrepresented his views, or else have misunderstood him. He recently published a statement of denial regarding his teaching on these two positions. However, when one carefully examines his previous statements (both in print and on audio recording) his present denial and explanations are of no value.

Is Miller *totally* wrong on MDR? Obviously, he is not. All one is required to do in order to understand that about which we are writing is to study carefully what he has advocated. However, while Miller is not *totally* wrong he is *essentially* wrong in arguing that God does not join in marriage those who do not intend to remain in the marriage union. To further compound his error, Miller confuses "intent" with "purpose." While those being married may entertain a wrong *purpose* in being joined in marriage, they nonetheless *intended* to enter into the marriage union.

Is Miller *totally* wrong concerning Elders in the local church? No, he is not, and to my knowledge no one has so accused. However, he is *essentially* wrong in advocating that, because of a change of dynamics in a local church with an influx of new members or a change of attitude in the present membership for whatever reason (even though the present elders are qualified and faithfully following the New Testament pattern in their work), the members, because of this change of dynamics, may with Scriptural warrant, call for a re-evaluation and reaffirmation of the present elders to determine if they shall continue to serve as elders of that congregation.

Brethren need to give serious consideration to these issues. I am truly amazed that brother **Curtis Cates**, Director of MSOP, and his supporters, after opposing such false doctrine, has now decided to sweep such issues under the carpet of insignificance. The fact that some of the MSOP alumni are now employed at *Apologetics Press*, and that Dave Miller consults at various times with Cates on various issues, does not change *essentially* false doctrine into truth.

It was as recent as the 2004 *Spiritual Sword Lectures* in Memphis, Tennessee that **Bobby Liddell**, Associate Director of MSOP, publicly opposed Dave Miller's elder re-evaluation/reaffirmation. We now wonder what has changed regarding Liddell's stand between October of 2004 and the present? Miller has given no indication that he has repented of teaching fatally false doctrine in either category. Have those brethren at MSOP decided that fatal error will now be determined upon the basis of whether or not one is politically linked to the School?

We cannot help wondering how those brethren

would react if they discovered that they had a student involved in an unauthorized “marriage.” Would they endorse such a sinful relationship provided that the parties would cease sexual relations? How about it, brother Cates; will you refuse to answer this question just as you refused to deal with our recent survey?

For years faithful brethren have emphasized the importance of the component parts or essential elements argument. This argument logically recognizes that, when all of the crucial and/or essential elements of a given situation are proven to be scriptural, then the total situation is also proven to be scriptural. Conversely, when an essential element in a total situation is proven to be false, the total situation thus is false.

In January 1946, a gospel meeting of eight days’ length was conducted in the Houston Music Hall located in Houston, Texas. **Foy E. Wallace, Jr.**, was the evangelist for the meeting. During the meeting Wallace contrasted the essential elements of the Lord’s church with those of Roman Catholicism and Protestant Denominationalism. During the course of his preaching Wallace emphasized with great clarity that one can identify the New Testament church by origin, doctrine, designation, worship, and work. *Negate one of these essential elements and any religious collective would be essentially wrong!*

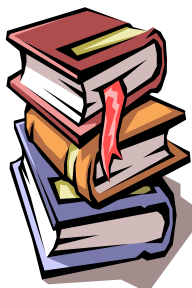
While some are teaching concepts that are not **totally** wrong, some, such as Dave Miller as earlier set out in this article, are teaching concepts wherein one (or more) of the **essential** or **component parts** pertaining to Godly conduct is wrong.

If the church practices the truth concerning the five acts of worship in the worship assembly of the saints on the first day of the week, but uses Pepsi Cola in place of the Scripturally authorized fruit of the vine in the observance of the Lord’s Supper, the whole of the worship is thereby polluted and unacceptable to God.

Thus, faithful children of God have always desired the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth on all things pertaining to our salvation. We must not be content with “a little error” mixed up with a lot of truth. But that is exactly what Cates, Frank Chesser, Barry Grider, Paul Sain, brethren connected with the Gospel Broadcast Network, and others are advocating in regard to Dave Miller. Miller is wrong on *at least two essential points* as we have proved over and over again. He needs to repent of those two essential errors and any others that may be found in his life. This is what faithful preachers have always preached. Surely brethren are not willing to teach the mendacious and palpably false doctrine that one must be totally or completely wrong in all one believes and practices before brethren are authorized to practice corrective church discipline on him/her, even to the point of withdrawing fellowship from one if she/he persists in error regarding **only one essential element**. However, by the actions of certain brethren, they are implying as much, whether they realize it or not. And, for those of us who are concerned about New Testament authority for all we believe and practice (Colossians 3:17), it will take more to settle this matter than brother **Barry Grider** standing before the Forest Hill congregation’s Ladies’ Bible class ridiculing the elders of the Lenoir City Church of Christ for asking questions of the MSOP faculty and the Forest Hill elders with the full expectation that they will answer them. In the meantime, right-thinking and honest people continue to wonder why Forest Hill and MSOP, along with their supporters, are vigorously campaigning for brethren to ignore these **essential** errors of Dave Miller.

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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! Andy Cates, evangelist. (205)556-3062.

-England-

Cambridge—South Cambridge Church of Christ, Brian Chadwick, 198 Queen Edith's Way, Cambridge. Publishers of "Oracles of God". Tel: (01223) 501861, e-mail: brian.chadwick@ntlworld.com

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-

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, GA; 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.

-Michigan-

Garden City—Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Dan Goddard, evangelist. (734) 422-8660. www.garden-city-coc.org

-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. We are currently meeting at the home of Shawn & LaDawn Hale. 227 Aubrey, Denton, TX 76227. Contacts are Shawn Hale (940)365-5997.

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—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.

The Grangerland Church of Christ

Invites You To Our Second Annual Saturday Lectures *January 28, 2006*

Lectureship Theme:

“FOR OUR LEARNING (Romans 15:4)”

Schedule of times and speakers:

9:00 a.m.	“Noah Found Grace”	Dub Mowery, Pritchett, TX
10:00 a.m.	“Nadab, Abihu & Strange Fire”	David P. Brown, Spring, TX
11:00 a.m.	“Moses: Challenged Leadership”	Dub McClish, Denton, TX
12:00 p.m.	All are Invited to the Barbeque Lunch to be Served at the Building.	
1:30 p.m.	“Samuel, Saul & Bleating Sheep”	Dub Mowery, Pritchett, TX
2:30 p.m.	“David, Uzzah, & the Due Order”	David P. Brown, Spring, TX
3:30 p.m.	“Elijah on Mt. Carmel: God Against All”	Dub McClish, Denton, TX

The lectures will be audio recorded. Check with us about obtaining audio tapes.

Building Location:
15611 FM 3083, Grangerland, TX 77302.
Phone #: (936) 231-3989.

DIRECTIONS TO CHURCH BUILDING

Traveling Interstate 45 from Conroe, Tx take Loop 336 East.
Turn East off of Loop 336 on to F.M. 3083. Proceed East about 5 miles to the Grangerland church building.
The church building is on the South side of highway F.M 3083.
If you have any questions feel free to phone Leon D. Schrei at (713) 208-3115.

Contending for the Faith
P.O. Box 2357
Spring, Texas 77383

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