

An Expression of Concern

We, the undersigned preachers of the gospel, set forth the following heartfelt expression of genuine concern. It is offered in sincere Christian love for our brethren everywhere to consider. It is our fervent desire that this expression may help to avert division and prevent further harm to the spiritual body of Christ. Our prayer is that this statement to which we affix our names will awaken many brethren to some ever-increasing dangers confronting us.

I. We are deeply disturbed over the liberalism that is so evident in the brotherhood today. By "liberalism" we mean especially the following items, though not excluding other specifics that could be mentioned:

- A. There is a drifting from the Bible-centered, definitive, distinctive doctrine that once characterized our preaching. Presently, uncertain sounds and weak messages emanate from many pulpits among us. Brethren are becoming accustomed to diluted and polluted preaching. We are rapidly approaching the point where many of our people, including preachers and elders, no longer know the difference between true Christianity and the corrupted forms of it so prevalent about us.
- B. There is a concerted effort on the part of some of our brethren to restructure the organization, worship and work of the church along sectarian lines, thus tending to denominationalize the New Testament body of Christ.
- C. A spirit of doctrinal compromise and fellowshiping of those in blatant religious error has permeated our ranks.
- D. The world has made alarming inroads into the church. Instead of the church influencing the world for righteousness, as it should, the world has adversely affected many brethren in matters of morality and conduct of life.
- E. The typical emphasis of the denominational world on recreation, entertainment, and solving the social ills of society has been incorporated into the thinking and programs of many congregations, supplanting the God-given work of meeting the desperate spiritual needs of those both within and without the body of Christ.

II. We are also greatly concerned over the controversy surrounding Abilene Christian University, and we feel that it needs to be properly resolved.

- A. About a year and a half ago, two ACU biology professors were charged with teaching as fact the theory of evolution, without any refutation whatsoever. Strong evidence was presented to substantiate the charges. In January of 1986, an ACU graduate with a Ph.D. in the field of biology published a book entitled, *Is Genesis Myth?*, in which much of the evidence was made available to the brotherhood. Since then, even more facts and damaging testimony have emerged.
- B. In February of 1986, ACU responded with an "Investigative Report" and "Institutional Statement," in which the charges were wholly denied. Though many have accepted these statements without question, it is our conviction that they have not responsibly addressed the accusations, much less answered them. And many specifics were left untouched.
- C. ACU's statement was simply the result of blanket acceptance of the findings of an in-house "Special Committee," which consisted of three members of the Board of Trustees appointed to investigate the matter. We believe that such an arrangement was the same, in principle, as if President Nixon had appointed three close associates to investigate the Watergate scandal. A lack of objectivity and thoroughness must surely account for the definite conflict between the tangible evidence available and the official denial issued by the school. In our judgment, this leaves a cloud of shaken confidence hanging over Abilene Christian University.
- D. Some apparently feel that our educational institutions should never be called in question. We believe that this attitude is seriously flawed. If New Testament writers could highlight the mistakes of certain first-century congregations, surely no school is immune to scrutiny. It is because we want to see ACU safeguarded for the benefit of the Lord's people that we raise these concerns.
- E. We therefore urgently request the ACU Administration and/or Board of Trustees to allow an impartial, independent investigation of the evolution controversy by a committee of men who are outside the framework of the ACU family, who are knowledgeable in Bible-science matters, and who have the confidence of sound brethren. Such an investigation should be as extensive as possible in order for a proper determination to be made and a just disposition of the matter to be implemented.
- F. Over the past several years, ACU has also become increasingly known for using numerous liberal-leaning speakers on its annual lectureship and other programs. Such has caused great concern to many about the direction the school is headed. Surely faithful and concerned brethren have the right to call for inquiry as to why such speakers are given a warm reception on ACU platforms to promote ideas which are harmful to the Cause we love.

This statement is simply an urgent plea from preachers of the gospel who love the Lord, His church, and His cause with all our hearts. We oppose both radicalism and liberalism, and we feel sure that the vast majority in the Lord's church today share these convictions. Therefore, we wish to emphasize the following:

We are convinced that it is time for more and more brethren to speak forth plainly! We must not sit idly by and watch the cause of truth erode. We urge brethren everywhere to join us in letting their voices be heard.

Express your convictions to the elders and preacher of your local congregation. Write letters to ACU Board members and Administrators, and let them know how you feel. (We can furnish a list of their names and addresses.) Brethren, please speak up! "Truth is not only violated by falsehood; it may be equally outraged by silence."

The names affixed to this statement by no means exhaust the roll of faithful and concerned preachers. We are merely representative of many who are anxious for the welfare of the Lord's church.

Maxie B. Boren • Frank Dunn • Noble Patterson • Eddie Whitten • Gary Workman • Tommy Hicks • Richard Melson • Dan Jenkins • T.B. Crews • Loyd Smith
Mark Bass • J. Leathel Roberts • Keith Oliver • Bobby Bates • Ed Rodgers • Jack Orbison • Jon Gary Williams • Goebel Music • Roy J. Hearn • W.L. Fricks • Jim Dobbs
F.F. Conley • Stan Stevenson • David P. Brown • Wayne Price • Jerry Noblin, Sr. • Carl Garner • Bobby Duncan • Perry B. Cotham • Michael Wyatt • Charles E. Wrenn
Ken Butterworth • Tim Ayers • T. Larry Marshall • Keith Mosher, Sr. • W. Michael Hatcher • John Baldwin • Luther Savage • Don Ruhl • Frank Starling • William Cline
Glenn Willcut • Tony Lawrence • Rex A. Turner, Sr. • A.C. Morris • Barry Hatcher • Foy Forehand • Clarence Lavender • Darrell Conley • Jim E. Waldron • Bobby Wood
H.A. "Buster" Dobbs • J. Donald Nash • Joe B. Rhoten • Demar Elam • H.R. "Bob" Hurd • Blackie Ellison • Phil Scott • Ralph Gentry • Dabney Phillips • Johnny Anders
John Temples • Graham Cain • Kippy Myers • Tom Blewitt • Timothy A. Pahman, Sr. • Leon D. Schrei • Steve Patterson • M.L. Sexton • Barry Kym Polk • Cecil Corkren
Sammy Cooper • T. Pierce Brown • Dalton Graves • Oran Rhodes • John Morgan • Andy Kizer • Jack C. Scott, Jr. • Owen Aikin • David E. Hanson • Bubba Phillips
Preston Cotham • Don Tarbet • Flavil Nichols • Tom Adams • Jodie Boren • Ray Peters • Gaylord Cook • Andrew Connally • Gary Summers • A.G. Hobbs • Reid Bennett
Robert Dodson, Jr. • Steven Lloyd • Dwight Fuqua • Rod Rutherford • Wayne Coats • David Dugan • Bill Lockwood • Joe Galloway • Terry Hightower • W.L. "Bill" Hearn
Burt Groves • Clyde Freeman • Tim Nichols • Bob Odle • Bronson Ostic • Toney L. Smith • Charles Atnip • Gilbert Gough • John Waddey • W.E. Skipper • Fred McClung
W.N. "Bill" Jackson • John D. Griffiths • Garland Elkins • Idus England • Earl L. Craig • Byron Denman • James D. Willeford • Don Hinds • Dub McClish • Al Brown
Jerry Moffitt • Manlif Barnes • Dick Biggs • Rex Oberg • Dave Collier • Jack Cox • Joe Cross • Don Michael • Brad Bromling • D. Gene West • Jack Norris • Bud Bayless
Pat McGee • W.D. Jeffcoat • Noah Hackworth • M.T. Crass • Dennis Moss • Glann Lee • Tom Bright • Arnold Sexton • Billy R. Davidson • Paul Epps • Archie Waldrum
Russell Artist • Lynn Matheny • Johnny Ramsey • Harrell Davidson • Kenneth Franklin • Larry Fluit • Troy Cummings • Joe K. Alley • H.L. Shirey • Donald W. Walker
E.L. Whiaker • Marvin Weir • John G. Shaver • Joe Malone • W. Terry Varner • Jim O'Connor • Steve Gibson • Murray Marshall • Charles E. Hill • Robert Stephenson
Glen Williams • Robert F. Berard • J.D. Boren • Darrell Perry • Dick Sztanyo • Billy L. Morris • Tim Lavender • William C. "Bill" Hatcher • Roy C. Deaver • Gary Colley
J. Cleo Scott • Garell Forehand • Perry Hall • Lester Fisher • Foy L. Smith • Alfred Palmer • Terry Hill • Winfred Clark • Cody A. Burgin • Glenn R. Sheumaker
J.T. Marlin • Paul Wilkinson • Joe Ruiz • Darrell Moore • Paul T. Kidwell, Jr. • Roy Hannah • Dan Flounoy • Bobby Cullum • Ken Chumbley • Phil Smith • Steve Orduno
Kenneth Bayles • Wayne Jackson • Eldon Rodgers • Frank Faircloth • Comer Hall • Kerry Cain • Edwin S. Jones • Joe Wilson Smith • Charles Reid • Mark K. Lewis



BROWN TRAIL SCHOOL OF PREACHING

MAILING

P.O. BOX 865

HURST, TEXAS 76053

A Work of the Brown Trail Church of Christ

(817) 282-3911

LOCATION

1801 BROWN TRAIL

BEDFORD, TEXAS 76021

May 12, 1988

Elders and Preacher
Church of Christ
1st and Ave. C
Burkburnett, TX 76354

Dear Brethren,

As a fellow-servant with you, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and in the mutual interest we have in His Cause, I greet you.

My purpose is simply to make you aware, if you are not already, of the work we are trying to do at the Brown Trail School of Preaching, under the oversight of the elders of the Brown Trail church of Christ, Bedford, Texas. Our objective is to train dedicated Christian men to become faithful gospel preachers. Since 1967, scores of men have graduated from Brown Trail and are presently proclaiming the good news in many, many places.

As Director, it is my singular aim to keep the school true to the Lord and His word in every way. We want to train men that love God and the truth more than anything else in this world. We also are intent to avoid extremism, and instill within the students the right attitudes, and humility of spirit.

We need our brethren throughout this area (1) to know about us, pray for us, and lend us their moral support; (2) to send us the names and addresses of men you feel would be quality, prospective students; and (3) to consider putting the Brown Trail School of Preaching in your budget . . . either helping us by an unrestricted regular contribution that we could use in so many ways to provide an even better learning experience for our students, or by agreeing to help support a student while he attends Brown Trail.

Brethren, we really need your help. The responsibility of encouraging and developing young men (and older ones too!) to preach the gospel is shared by us all. Hand in hand, in brotherly cooperation and fellowship, we can accomplish much. Please don't just throw this letter away . . . think about it, discuss it, pray about it, and hopefully, act upon it.

Yours in service to our dear Lord,

Maxie B. Boren

Maxie B. Boren, gospel preacher
and Director, Brown Trail School of Preaching
enclosure

ELDERS

DEACONS

Chas. E. Fletcher
Bill Hall
James Hillis
Marvin Holland

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Seth Hatfield
Paul McBroon

FIRST AND AVENUE C

MINISTER

Michael Hatcher
Telephone 569-2593

BURKBURNETT, TEXAS

May 27, 1988

Maxie Boren
Brown Trail School Of Preaching
Box 865
Hurst, Texas 76053

Dear Maxie,

I hope that everything is going well for you and your family. It is also my prayer that your work for the cause of Christ is prospering.

After discussing your letter with the elders of the Lord's church here we have decided that we cannot support the School of Preaching at Brown Trail, nor encourage men to attend at this time, although we do believe Preacher Training Schools are not only scriptural but also profitable and do support them. The reason we cannot support Brown Trail at this time is as follows.

1) The situation within the eldership of the church at Brown Trail. At this time there are eight elders. Four men we consider to be very faithful to the cause of Christ. The other four men, we believe, would turn Brown Trail into another Richland Hills or allow it to happen. There has been a concerted effort to have one, if not more, of the sound men forced to leave. We feel that if that occurs the liberal element would take control. With this as a very real possibility, we do not feel that it would be wise to support the school at this time.

2) One of the teachers in the school, Rusty Peterman, teaches false doctrine. At this years lectureship, he gave indications in his lecture that he believed the Calvinist doctrine of total depravity. Then he did teach that the Holy Spirit operates directly upon the individual. This was so blatant that bro. Whitten had to try to correct what he said. As long as Rusty Peterman is teaching at the school, we cannot support the school.

While these are our major concerns there are some other areas that we are worried about. 1) We cannot understand why the students were allowed to go to the

ACU lectures this year. 2) Nor do we understand why the students were viewing the Jeff Walling tapes during chapel this year. 3) We see danger in not having a director that is at the school all the time.

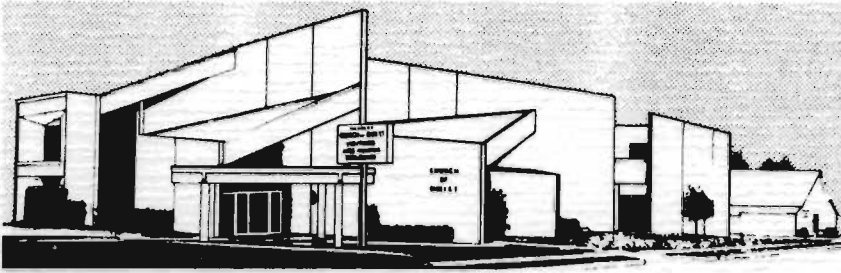
We hope these situations will be corrected, so that we will be able to support the school. It has done a great work in the past and we pray that it will do so in the future. We do pray that all things will be done to the glory of God.

In His Service,

Michael Hatcher

Michael Hatcher

cc: elders of Brown Trail Church Of Christ c\o Eddie Whitten



HANDLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

3029 HANDLEY DR. • P.O. BOX 8156 • PH. 451-7410
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76124-0156

ELDERS

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MINISTERS

TOMMY J HICKS
DOUG MARTIN

SECRETARY

PAT TRAINER

June 8, 1988

Dear Brother in Christ:

I am sending you the enclosed material because you signed An Expression of Concern. Since brother Maxie Boren was one of the instigators of, and the one who actually wrote the original draft for, that document and signed his name to its final version, you have a right to possess the information contained herein.

With this letter, you are being sent three items: A transcription (which I have entitled, "10,000 MAXIE BORENS") of part of a lecture I presented April 13, 1988, at the Southwest Lectures in Austin, Texas; a copy of the letter, dated April 16, that brother Boren sent to me in response to my remarks about him in that lecture; and, a copy of my letter of reply to him, dated June 7, 1988. Please read them very carefully.

Because I want you to be objective in your reading of this material, I will make no comment upon it in this cover letter. However, once you have read everything contained herein, if you have any questions or would like to have more information, I will be happy to make the appropriate replies. I will also welcome any constructive criticisms you might want to offer.

This comes with my prayer that your work for the Lord is continuing well. Please remember me in your prayers.

Yours in His Service,

Tommy J. Hicks

On Wednesday evening, April 13, 1988, in a lecture I presented at the Southwest Lectures in Austin, Texas, I made the following remarks concerning brother Maxie Boren. I am sending this transcription, from the tape recording of that lecture, in order that you might understand the basis for Maxie's letter and my response to it.

--Tommy J. Hicks

"10,000 MAXIE BORENS"

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

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

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

Folks, if we had 10,000 Maxie Borens, and so help me I love that man, but if we had 10,000 men like Maxie Boren, the church would go to hell in a hand basket, because he is not going to publicly take a stand against doctrinal error. He'll not call names. He'll not specify individuals and congregations. And, quite frankly, I'm just about to grow weary of hearing how much he loves everyone. I don't know if he is trying to convince us or himself. But, let me tell you this. No one loves anyone unless he warns him when that man is in danger. And, I actually believe that the preacher who warns, who cries out of the danger, and begs and pleads [with] people to turn aside from it, to stay away from it, lets them know of the damnation of the soul that it brings - that person is the one who's taking a stand - **YES** - that is the person who loves Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will continue in my word." That is the man who loves the soul out there that's sinning. Because he's crying out, beckoning, pleading, trying to get the sinner to repent. **TAKE A STAND!**

It doesn't do us any good to say, "I don't agree with it. What can I do?" You can preach what the book says. You can stand for what the book says. Let the people know where you stand.

Then lastly, when it comes to this matter of the good name, look at verse 14, in Proverbs, chapter 22, and see that we are to stand pure in moral matters. You can look at this down here where it says, "Rob not the poor." Excuse me. I'm reading the wrong verse. I shook myself up talking about Maxie. (The lesson continues without further references to Maxie Boren.)

Maxie B. Boren E V A N G E L I S T

P. O. BOX 10252 • LONGVIEW, TEXAS 75608 / TELEPHONE CONTACT: 214/759-0119 • 817/232-5529
April 16, 1988

Mr. Tommy Hicks
Handley Church of Christ
P.O. Box 8156
Fort Worth, Texas 76124-0156

Dear Tommy,

Can you imagine my feelings when I started hearing from a number of sources what you had to say about me on the Southwest Lectureship, Wed. night, April 13th? I was shocked beyond words! I thought you were my friend, but a friend doesn't do what you did, Tommy. To say the least!

Fran and I have listened to your tape...aghast at what you said about me! To think that a brother in Christ, and a supposed friend would launch such an unwarranted tirade is incredible!

For thirty-four years I have stood foursquare for the truth and against error as best I have known how! And for you to say that I won't take a stand against error is absolutely absurd and ridiculous! Time and time again I have stood against error of every sort, which can be well documented by literally thousands of people who've heard me through the years and have read my writings. To even suggest otherwise one would have to be grossly ill-informed or down right malicious. And I know you're not ill-informed!

Just because I have not publicly castigated Richland Hills and Jon Jones, you equate that with weakness. Well, Tommy, you are dead wrong! You have no right whatsoever to pass judgment on me as to how I handle a situation! And for you to stand before an entire assembly of people and malign me as you did is totally unChristian! You talk about following the word of the Lord...in what you did, brother, you utterly ignored a large portion of His teaching! And your soul stands in serious jeopardy because you have wronged me publicly and in a most slanderous way!

It is inconceivable that you would make such a preposterous statement as you did: "If we had ten thousand preachers like Maxie Boren, the church would go to hell in a hand-basket!" Such a statement is irresponsible and reprehensible! For one gospel preacher to make a statement like that about another gospel preacher who has faithfully preached the message of truth all over this land for thirty-four years, fighting all kinds of battles against error, is unbelievable!

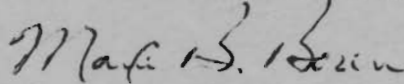
And to bring up a telephone conversation that took place some eight to ten years ago in which I sincerely tried to help you, misrepresenting me and "putting words into my mouth" that I deny ever having said, is again unthinkable. I believe as strongly as you do what the Bible teaches on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The only difference between me and you, Tommy, is I admit that some situations are very complex and perhaps I lack the "wisdom of Solomon" in knowing best how to deal with them, but you evidently think you have all the answers! Again, in your view, it seems that everyone has to conform to your every viewpoint or else you brand them some kind of a heretic! Such an attitude is repugnant!



'Thus saith the Lord' preaching!

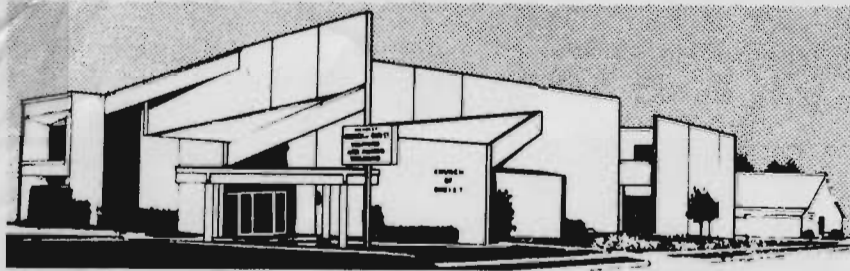
You have sinned against me in a most grievous way. The only way that this "thing" you have created between us can be made right is for you to publicly apologize and try to undo the harm you've done. If and when you are willing to do that, I'll be more than happy to forgive you. But until you do, Tommy, you have forfeited our friendship, and I sincerely believe your soul stands in jeopardy before God.

Your brother in Christ whom you have deeply hurt,



Maxie B. Boren

CC: Elders, Handley church of Christ
Elders, Southwest church of Christ
Elders, Brown Trail church of Christ
Elders, Grape St. church of Christ
Teachers--Don Simpson, Gary Fallis, and Rusty Peterman



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SECRETARY

PAT TRAINER

June 7, 1988

Mr. Maxie B. Boren
P.O. Box 10252
Longview, Texas 75608

Dear Maxie:

I have deliberately delayed responding to your letter, dated April 16, for three major reasons. One, I have been extremely busy and have been traveling a great deal. Two, I wanted to allow you some time to think. The third reason will be specified later in this letter.

In your letter, you made some very serious allegations against me, which I deny. It was a letter without substance. You did not back up what you said with proof. My remarks made in Austin concerning you were neither absurd nor ridiculous. There has never been any malice in my heart towards you, Maxie, even to this very moment. I deny that I maligned or wronged you in a slanderous way, or in any other way. It will be abundantly manifested in this letter that my statements, made in Austin about you, were neither preposterous, irresponsible, nor reprehensible. Maxie, I had more than ample justification for saying what I did. My hope and prayer is that, as you read the following pages, you will bear in mind that I do love you and that I am your friend.

Loving you as a brother in Christ, I desire only what is best for you and for the Cause of Christ. Maxie, love and friendship are things I cannot turn off and on; therefore, even at such a time as this, I remain your friend. Borrowing a question from Paul, I must ask, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16). Do you recall how sad you were when your friends at ACU let it be known to you that they would no longer count you as their friend? Did you feel any less a friend to them, or did you love them any less, because of differences you had with them? Please, do not do the very thing you found so "little" in them. Believe me, Maxie, I am not your enemy.

You know very well how much I despise "church politics." Such things as "posturing" and "chest beating" and "backslapping" are not my cup of tea. I am not "running for preacher," trying to gain a following, or attempting to advance myself at your expense. You know I know the reputation one gets, the consequences one suffers, and the other costs one pays for "naming names." Both of us, you and I, have expressed our appreciation for our mutual friend, Bert Thompson, because we knew what a tremendous toll the ACU/Evolution controversy took on him. However, if one loves his brother, if he loves the truth, and if he loves the church, one sometimes has to lay bare the facts. That is what I did in Austin and that is what I am doing, in more detail, in this letter.

Although you and I have known one another for more than fifteen years, Maxie, it has been only since your meeting with us at Handley, April 19-22, 1987, that I have come to know the real Maxie Boren. From that time, until, and including my last meeting with you (about a month before the Southwest Lectures), your words and deeds have forced me to the conclusion that you will not really take a stand against doctrinal error. Now, let me walk you through just some of those things which forced me to that conclusion.

THE HANDLEY MEETING, APRIL 19-22, 1987

While you were in your meeting with us at Handley, we took advantage of several opportunities to visit. Most of the time, other folks were present and were involved in the discussions. Witnesses are willing to come forward should anyone doubt the veracity of the following account of what was brought out in some of those discussions. Maxie, you were informed that Jon Jones had

been "caught" in a public place drinking beer with his meal. You were also informed that the Richland Hills congregation receives persons into its membership based upon their denominational baptisms and given roles of leadership within that congregation. Finally, you were further informed that Richland Hills has knowingly received into its membership and fully fellowshiped those who have been publicly withdrawn from because they would not repent of the sin of adultery. What were your responses to these three serious matters? You came back and said that you had talked to Jon about the "allegation" that he was "caught" drinking beer. You said that he told you, "It never happened." Then, you said, "I have to believe him." Next, you said you talked with your son-in-law, Mike Washburn, the "Singles Minister" at Richland Hills, about whether or not people were accepted into the Richland Hills congregation on their denominational baptisms. You said that Mike denied it and that you had no choice but to believe him. As for Richland Hills accepting into its full fellowship those who have been withdrawn from for the sin of adultery, you just shrugged it off without a reply. One brother commented, "It's easy to see where Maxie's loyalty lies. If given a choice between believing us or those at Richland Hills, he will side with them every time." Who do you believe, Maxie?

Besides the numbers of us outside the Brown Trail membership who know that Jon Jones was, in fact, "caught" drinking beer, there are two people (with whom you must deal) at Brown Trail who say it happened. One is one of your elders, brother Eddie Whitten. The other is one of your faculty members, brother Gary Fallis. Do you believe Jon Jones is telling the truth? If so, what does this say for your trust in Eddie and Gary? Of the two sides, who do you say is lying? Maxie, if you "have to believe" Jon Jones is telling the truth in this matter, then you "have to believe" Eddie, Gary, and the rest are telling a lie. Yes, there are others at Brown Trail who say that Jon Jones did drink the beer, as charged. Who do you believe? I have no doubt that you would preach against drinking, but Maxie, have you taken a stand in regard to Jon Jones and his drinking? No!

Relative to Richland Hills accepting people into membership based upon their denominational baptisms, you were shown that this could be substantiated in numerous ways. One way is by talking to some of the denominational folks who have left Richland Hills. I personally told you about brother Harry Lawing's meeting with Jon Jones, in Jon's office, about this very matter. I told you that brother Lawing was then an elder of the Mayfield Road congregation, that he had heard this about Richland Hills, and that he went directly to Jon to find out if this was true. Maxie, I was clear in stating to you that Jon told brother Lawing that denominational people were accepted on their denominational baptisms if they (the denominational people) thought they were okay. Jon explained to brother Lawing that a notation was made in the Richland Hills computer about such "members." Jon pointed out to brother Lawing that these folks are put in a class where first principles are taught, then after a few weeks they are allowed to go into whatever classes they select, take leadership roles in various church programs (in at least one case, allowing him to teach a Bible Class), even if they did not "feel the need" to be baptized. You were informed, Maxie, that only God and the Richland Hills computer would make a distinction. In all other ways, Richland Hills recognizes anyone as a member who desires to place membership, whether they are from a denominational church or are truly children of God. Again, these matters were made known to you in the presence of witnesses. Who do you believe? Maxie, no doubt, you preach that there is but one church which is Christ's and that one must be Scripturally baptized in order to become a member of it. But, have you taken a stand regarding Richland Hills' practice of accepting people into membership from denominational churches, based upon their denominational baptisms? No!

You did not even bother to deny that Richland Hills has accepted into its fellowship those who have been disfellowshipped, by other congregations, because they refused to repent of their sin of adultery. When you were told about this, Maxie, a particular case was brought to your attention. The names of those involved, the name of the congregation which had withdrawn fellowship, the fact that the elders at Richland Hills had refused to answer the letters sent to them from the elders of the withdrawing congregation - all of this was stressed to you. Should you preach a sermon on church discipline, or one on adultery, I am sure you would preach the truth. But, Maxie, you will not take a stand on either of these two points, as can be shown in the case of Richland Hills. Maxie, if you will take a stand at all, in these matters, are you being fair and consistent if you refuse to take a stand in these matters when Richland Hills is involved?

Another thing that disconcerted me was your booklet, From My Heart To Yours. I had never seen it before you brought it to Handley to sell during your meeting. What bothered me about your booklet can be found on page 53. At the top of that page, in bold print, you said, "If you would

like to know more about the Bible, and the church of Christ, the following are a few additional contacts." Among the 12 additional contacts you recommended were: White's Ferry Road church of Christ in West Monroe, Louisiana; Highland church of Christ in Abilene, Texas; and, Sunset church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas. Questions certainly can be raised concerning some of the other recommendations you gave; however, I have specified these three for an obvious reason. Maxie, you knew about the serious, terrible heresies (such as Crossroadsism, false doctrine on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, fellowshipping denominational churches, just to mention a few) of those congregations BEFORE you had the booklets printed that you brought to Handley (these were from the Third Printing, 1984). Knowing, EVEN BEFORE YOU PUBLISHED your booklet, what you did about the errors preached and practiced by those congregations, how could you recommend for those seeking the truth and/or new converts (or anyone else) to go to them for help? If you really stand for truth and stand against error, how can you encourage people to go to these hotbeds of error for teaching and guidance?

Looking back, I can now see that you are a contradiction, not a paradox. Nothing better illustrates this than the fact that you have the 5th and Grape Street congregation (a good, sound, faithful church), in Abilene, as your sponsoring congregation, but you tell people (in your booklet) to go to Highland (an ultra-liberal, heretical congregation) if they "would like to know more about the Bible, and the church of Christ." Maxie, in 1984, when you authorized the Third Printing of your booklet, did you really believe Highland was the place to send anyone who wanted "to know more about the Bible, and the church of Christ?" You knew, way before 1984, that the 5th and Grape Street congregation came into being when the sound brethren left Highland because they could no longer tolerate the unabated false doctrines being taught there. From your booklet, it appears that you took a stand with Highland, not 5th and Grape. Knowing what you knew about Highland and 5th and Grape, when you published your booklet, if you really stand for the truth and stand opposed to error, it appears to me that you should have directed folks away from Highland and toward 5th and Grape. Maxie, would you please explain to me how you can encourage people to go to White's Ferry Road, Highland, and Sunset, and still be standing for the truth at the same time?

Maxie, "if we had 10,000 Maxie Borens," preachers like you, refusing to accept the reports of sound, faithful brethren, choosing rather to believe known false teachers, shrugging off the fellowshipping of those who have been withdrawn from for refusing to repent of the sin of adultery, directing those who want to know more about the Bible and the church of Christ to go to apostate churches, for me to say "the church would go to hell in a hand basket" should not sound out of the question. It could not be otherwise.

UNITY MEETING AT WHITNEY - WEEK OF JUNE 1, 1988

Though troubled before, it was not until the Whitney Unity Meeting, that I began seeing you in a different light. Maxie, you were supposed to be one of the "conservative" preachers there, but, as they say, "unless you had a program," it would be almost impossible to tell which side you were on during those two days. Should the need arise, there were numerous witnesses to your behavior and remarks at Whitney who have indicated their willingness to vouch for the truthfulness of the following issues I am raising from the Whitney gathering.

I told you at Whitney how disappointed I was in your speech. I let you know that the cause of truth suffered at your hands because you did not say anything. You got up and said, "I just love everybody," in theme and variations, for about 20 minutes. Maxie, you did not really take a stand for truth, in opposition to error, at Whitney. That was the perfect place, the perfect time, and the perfect audience to do so, if you ever would. At least Jon Jones, Calvin Warpula, and Reuel Lemmons came prepared, plainly presented their views (with most of which I did not agree), and took a stand upon them - which is more than I can say for you. When I confronted you with this, your apologetic defense was, "I was only trying to set the 'tone' for the meeting." Maxie, why could you not have set the proper "tone" for the meeting by kindly exposing the errors that are the causes of division, by lovingly presenting the truth in refutation of those errors, and by taking an unshakable stand in a Christian way? Maxie, can one not "take a stand" and "just love everybody" at the same time?

Maxie, do you recall coming over to the table where Eddie Whitten, others, and I were sitting, eating lunch at the end of the Whitney meeting? Do you remember the look of shock and amazement Eddie had on his face when you attempted to get him to put Jon Jones and Stanley Lockhart on the Brown Trail Lectures as a gesture toward unity? Brother Steve Gibson and I heard every

word you said and we heard Eddie's reply. Eddie was so jolted by your request that his mouth literally flew open. He told you that if those men were placed on the lectureship program it would destroy the credibility of the entire lectureship. He was just as right as he could be. Maxie, I do not for one minute believe you would preach the same things as Jon Jones and Stanley Lockhart, but do you seriously think you are taking a stand for truth against error by extending such invitations to false teachers of the ilk of Jon Jones and Stanley Lockhart? Surely, anyone can see that would be like putting the wolves in the hen house.

Maxie, "if we had 10,000 Maxie Borens," preachers like you, inviting false teachers to come into sound congregations, giving them platforms from which to speak, to say "the church would go to hell in a hand basket," is putting it mildly. Do you know of a quicker, easier way for the church to be lost than to open its pulpits to false teachers and their false doctrines?

B.T.P.T.S. GOES TO ACU LECTURESHIP, FEBRUARY 1988

You became the Director of the Brown Trail Preacher Training School in January, 1988. Changes, not for the better but for the worse, could be seen almost immediately. One of the first radical changes was the 180 degree turnabout of the school's long established policy regarding the students attending the annual ACU Lectureship. Maxie, under your Directorship the policy was changed from non-attendance to mandatory attendance. Brown Trail students were told that if they did not attend the 1988 ACU Lectureship-it would go down on their records as an unexcused absence. Do not try to claim you were uninformed on these matters, Maxie. Brother Don Simpson explained to me that he had called you, that he had talked with you about the ACU trip, and that you concurred with him. Later, in our last meeting and conversation, you confirmed Don's account of what happened. Maxie, you made the final decision to send the preacher students to the ACU Lectureship.

The first opportunity I had to talk with you about this matter was about two or three weeks after the ACU Lectureship. By then, you had already learned that the Pearl Street, Denton, elders were objecting to the trip and to the unexcused absence policy, especially in regard to one of the students they were supporting in the B.T.P.T.S. You knew the Denton elders had sent a letter to the Brown Trail elders, letting their objections be known. As a result, you were on the defensive. What was your defense? Basically, your only defense was, "We didn't send them there to believe and accept everything they heard. We wanted them to listen with a critical ear and see for themselves what is going on." To some, that might sound reasonable, but you and the instructors at Brown Trail should know better.

In the first place, the students at Brown Trail are just that - STUDENTS! They are not seasoned veterans. They have not been "bloodied" in battle. Sending Brown Trail students to the ACU Lectureship is comparable to sending raw recruits, not even out of basic training, into a live mine field. THEY DO NOT STAND A CHANCE! Your dodge that Eddie Whitten had been attending the ACU Lectureships for years and therefore it is alright for the students to attend does not wash. Eddie is an "Old War Horse" who knows false doctrine when he hears it. He is able to understand if something even implies error. Eddie has always come back from the ACU Lectureships unswayed by the false teachings and false practices some have attempted to advance there. These things cannot be truthfully said of the students. I personally know that two of the Brown Trail students came back from the 1988 ACU Lectureship confused (though they did not know it). They had been greatly impressed by some of the things they had heard from certain speakers there, speakers who are recognized by sound brethren as being heretics and purveyors of false doctrines.

Many of us thought that if Maxie Boren ever did take a stand, it was regarding the ACU/EVOLUTION CONTROVERSY. Numerous people were extremely, pleasantly surprised that you were "taking a stand" against ACU's involvement in teaching evolution as a fact and ACU's defense of those who had so taught it. Back in 1986, you even wrote the original draft of An Expression of Concern. In it, concerning the ACU Lectureships you had the following to say:

Over the past few years, ACU has also become increasingly known for using numerous liberal-leaning speakers on its annual lectureship and other programs. Such has caused great concern to many about the direction the school is headed. Surely faithful and concerned brethren have a right to call for inquiry as to why such speakers are given a warm reception on ACU platforms to promote ideas which are harmful to the Cause we love.

Yet, now, after you required the students from Brown Trail Preacher Training School to attend the

ACU Lectureship as a part of their schooling, how can it correctly be said that you really took a stand against ACU? We thought you had. You preached it. You wrote it. But, when it came to "practicing what you were preaching," you actually had not taken a stand at all.

Maxie, "if we had 10,000 Maxie Borens," preachers like you, forcing impressionable students (who will become preachers influencing 100's and 1,000's) to attend such events as the ACU Lectureships, subjecting them to the influences of false teachers and false doctrines, it is not "preposterous" to say "the church would go to hell in a hand basket." I only wish my statement in Austin, concerning you and the point being made, were preposterous.

OUR LAST MEETING/DISCUSSION - EARLY MARCH, 1988

When I walked into your office shortly after 3:00 that afternoon, I viewed you in a different light, but I still could not see the complete picture. By about 7:00, when our meeting ended, you had provided the missing pieces of the puzzle. It was not until a couple of days later that all the pieces fell into place and I had a true, finely focused picture of Maxie Boren.

While this was a meeting just between the two of us and it might appear to be "my word against yours," I am confident that these matters can be established in various ways. For example, because only you and a few others (such as the Brown Trail elders) were privy to some of the things you told me, and because I could have learned them only from you, they can be substantiated.

Can you imagine my disappointment when you told me that Brown Trail's elders are "split right down the middle," that four of them are "moderates," that four of them are "too far to the right," and that your thinking was in agreement with the "moderates?" Maxie, you even told me the names and how you classified them. You said Barnum, Lauderdale, Peterman, and Tyson are the "moderates." And, you said Cain, Clark, Watts, and Whitten are the "right wingers." While you did not tell me who you thought the "leader" of the "moderate" group was, you did say that Eddie Whitten was the "leader" of the "right wingers." You flatly, emphatically stated that Brown Trail has a bad reputation throughout the brotherhood because of the influence the "ultra-conservative" leadership has had over the years. You said Brown Trail's annual lectureship was one of the chief reasons for that bad reputation being so widespread. Furthermore, you said that all such lectureships (and you named Denton's, Southwest's, Brown Trail's, and others) are counterproductive and divisive. Maxie, you went so far as to say that you are going to do all you can to change the image of the Brown Trail School of Preaching, the Brown Trail Lectureship, and the Brown Trail congregation. Maxie, I honestly do not believe the elders at Brown Trail would have selected you to become the Director of the Preacher Training School if they had known your true feelings about them and the Brown Trail congregation. In fact, a lot of us will have a different relationship with you, now that we know the real Maxie Boren.

Maxie, do you believe Dub McClish, Goebel Music, Eddie Whitten, and others would view you as one in agreement with them if they knew you considered them to be "radicals," "extremists," "ultra-conservatives," and "right wingers?" Besides saying those things about those brethren, you had more to say about them. You described Dub McClish as the "Pope" at Denton and said that his elders, Harry Ledbetter and Millard Smith, just did whatever he told them to do (this statement came about in our discussion of the letter they sent to the Brown Trail elders). You were highly critical of Goebel because of his preaching and writing concerning the heresies (my word, not yours) at Richland Hills. You "castigated" him because of what he preached in a gospel meeting in Florida and questioned his motives relative to Richland Hills by saying he has "a personal vendetta" against that congregation. You made these remarks in connection to Goebel's efforts to expose Richland Hills' participation in the T.S.S.A. and N.A.D.C.E. This is what I had reference to in Austin when I said, "I never dreamed that I would hear Maxie Boren defending Jon Jones and the Richland Hills Church of Christ in Fort Worth." (And, Maxie, to me, one of the most telling things in your letter was that you did not deny defending Jon Jones and the Richland Hills congregation! In fact, you admitted that you had not taken a stand in reference to Jon Jones and Richland Hills.) You made it plain to me that you just do not like Eddie Whitten. You described him as being "self-willed," "domineering," "deceitful," and if necessary "just downright mean." I told you I had heard that from others, but that I had not seen those things in him. To that you replied that you had recently "seen his teeth" in an elders' meeting.

Before that meeting, Maxie, I suppose I thought your statements and deeds indicating that you would not take a stand were just flukes, or inconsistencies which were the result of your being "so tender hearted" (as you kept telling us). However, in that last meeting, you revealed your true

feelings and expressed your philosophy, your thinking relative to the current state of the church. From that, in light of the afore mentioned matters in this letter, it became crystal clear to me WHY you have not and will not take a stand for truth against error. **Maxie, "if we had 10,000 Maxie Borens," preachers like you, "castigating" sound congregations such as Brown Trail and Pearl Street, condemning the sound lectureships hosted by them and other congregations, and ridiculing sound, good men such as Dub McClish, Goebel Music, and Eddie Whitten, yes indeed, "the church would go to hell in a hand basket."** Maxie, you claim you are in harmony with those men, those lectureships, and congregations when it comes to what you preach (and I would agree, with certain qualifications). But, do you not see that the real difference between them (congregations, lectureships, and preachers) and you is that they will take a stand. You will not! I shudder to think where the church would be today were it not for congregations like Brown Trail, lectureships like the one at Brown Trail, and men like Goebel Music, Eddie Whitten, and Dub McClish.

Since that meeting, I have analyzed your "track record." Yes, you have always "advocated" taking a stand, but you have not practiced what you have preached. In that, you remind me of the Pharisees Jesus described in Matthew 23:3, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not (emphasis mine, TJH)." Maxie, when it comes to taking a stand, what you do contradicts what you say. By looking at your past, one can "predict" what you will do. That brings me to my third reason for waiting to reply to your letter.

GOSPEL MEETING AT LAS VEGAS TRAIL, MAY 22-25, 1988

One night, during your gospel meeting at Handley, brethren Herman Knox and Noble Patterson (then elders of the Las Vegas Trail congregation) visited with you following the services. Because that congregation helped with your support, because those two men valued your opinion, and because they thought you might be able to help, they informed you of something very few outside the Las Vegas Trail congregation knew about at the time. Besides giving their own accounts of what had happened and what was then happening at the Las Vegas Trail congregation, they showed you a private investigator's report of (and a number of 8 X 10 photographs he had taken while working) surveillance on the preacher of that congregation. Maxie, you cannot truthfully deny that you knew what that preacher was doing. You cannot deny that you know he has never repented of what was so evident in the pictures and report provided by the private investigator. You cannot deny that you knew this matter caused a split in the Las Vegas Trail congregation. You cannot deny that you knew brethren Knox and Patterson, who were taking a stand for what was right, had to resign from the eldership and leave the Las Vegas Trail congregation because they would not stay there if it involved supporting and upholding an unrepentant fornicator. When these matters were first brought to your attention, noting that you had a gospel meeting scheduled yet to be preached at Las Vegas Trail, you said, "I'll just have to cancel my meeting there." That would be the thing a man who takes a stand would do, but Maxie, what did you do?

Brother Knox, after you told him you would have to cancel the meeting at Las Vegas Trail, helped secure another meeting for you at another congregation to take its place. By the time of the Southwest Lectureship, I was predicting (to a few in private) that Maxie Boren would hold his meeting at Las Vegas Trail. You did! Brother Knox was so convinced that you would take a stand for what was right, he helped keep you from suffering the loss of a week's preaching and the financial support it would bring. By not taking a stand, you preached in two meetings instead of one. One thing is sure. You will have a hard time convincing brethren Knox and Patterson that you will take a stand. They feel you have betrayed them. Brother Knox told me that he and brother Patterson feel as though you slapped them in the face. Some are learning the hard way that Maxie Boren will not take a stand. Some of us are learning from the sad experiences of others.

I have no doubt that you preach the same things brethren Patterson and Knox do on the sins of fornication, adultery, and dividing the church. But again, the difference between them and you is that they will take a stand. It is going to take men like brethren Patterson and Knox, following what the Bible teaches regarding morality, and how immoral brethren are to be dealt with, to keep the church morally pure. **But, Maxie, "if we had 10,000 Maxie Borens," preachers like you, upholding those who refuse to repent of immoral acts and those who divide churches in their refusal to do God's will, to say "the church would go to hell in a hand basket," is one of the greatest understatements of all time.**

YOUR LETTER, DATED APRIL 16, 1988

As I mentioned in paragraph two of this letter, your letter had no substance. What I have said to this point should more than answer your basic contention that my remarks in Austin were unjustified. If you want some more justification for my remarks in Austin, concerning you, just let me know. When you said, "I know you're not ill-informed," you were right. However, your implication that I am/was malicious is wrong. There is a third alternative you did not mention. One can be well-informed and say what I have said, and am saying, without any malice whatsoever. Again, after saying what I have said in all these pages, I want to assure you I am your friend. I do love you. The reason I have replied to your letter in this way is to prove you will not take a stand. There are a couple of things in your letter to which I want to direct your attention.

In paragraph four of your letter, you said, "You have no right whatsoever to pass judgment on me as to how I handle a situation!" Making the same application brother Marshall Keeble used to make of Matthew 7:15-20, Maxie, "I am just a fruit inspector." From the points already brought out, it is easy to see the fruit you bear. But, Maxie, the point I want to stress is that I have not only the right, but the obligation, to judge in such matters - AND SO DOES EVERYONE ELSE. Jesus commanded, "...judge righteous judgment." (John 7:24). In this case, that is exactly what I have done. We both know what the Scriptures teach relative to taking a stand against false doctrines, false practices, and those who advocate them. You know what Matthew 7:15-20 and John 7:24 teaches. Besides that, do you not remember what your reply was when the ACU brethren told you, and others of us, that we had no right to judge them in how they handled the ACU/EVOLUTION situation? Look at your copy of An Expression of Concern, especially major point "II," subpoints "A" through "E." Now, I want to know, do you stand on what you wrote me in your letter, or do you stand on what you signed your name to in An Expression of Concern? You cannot stand on both, unless you have one set of rules for Maxie Boren and another set of rules for others.

The only other thing I need to mention is in the sixth paragraph of your letter. It has to do with the phone conversation I mentioned in the Austin Lectureship. You claim my account put words into your mouth, words you deny ever having said. You protested too much, revealing more than you wanted to, Maxie. Carefully go over every word I said about that conversation. The only thing I quoted you saying was this: "I preach exactly what you preach on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage." and "What you've got to realize is, there is a difference between the 'ideal' and the 'real'." If you never said that, how do you explain that in your letter to me, you were able to point out the very significance of those terms? Again, Maxie, the sixth paragraph of your letter only confirms what I said in Austin. In it you admit that you will not take a stand. No, Maxie, I do not claim to know all the answers to all the problems of life. But, I do know that if a couple is living in adultery, regardless of the complexities involved, they must repent and get out of that situation if they are to please the Lord and save their souls. You see, Maxie, we both preach the "ideal" but when comes to the "real" we see the difference between us. I do my best to take a stand.

CONCLUSION

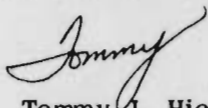
Why did I use you as the example in my speech? Because you are the very best illustration for the point I needed to make. You see Maxie, it is my sincere conviction that those who are false teachers are not the greatest danger to the church today. They would be "stopped dead in their tracks" if men, like you, would do more than pay "lip service" to taking a stand for truth in opposition to error. Our greatest danger is "good men" doing nothing, (not taking a stand). That is why I said, "**Folks, if we had 10,000 Maxie Boren, and so help me I love that man, but if we had 10,000 men like Maxie Boren, the church would go to hell in a hand basket, because he is not going to publicly take a stand against doctrinal error.**" You have said or done nothing to make me change my mind. On the contrary, you have only confirmed what I said about you.

Maxie, it is never easy to take a fellow gospel preacher to task. I think brother Thomas F. Eaves, Sr. expressed my view on preachers dealing with preachers best. He said, "Faithful gospel preachers will not oppose a good work nor will they destroy the influence of a faithful brother, but when men are in clear violation of God's word and are leading God's people astray - the faithful of God must speak out."

I beg you, please begin taking real stands for the truth and real stands against error. Warn brethren to beware of false teachers and apostate congregations and tell them who and where they are. And, Maxie, do what you know is right, in light of II John 9-10; Romans 16:17; II Thessalo-

nians 3:6,14-15; I Corinthians 5:1-13; and, too may others to mention here. If WE love the Lord we will obey Him (John 14:15; I John 5:3).

Yours in His Service,



Tommy J. Hicks

CC: Elders, Handley church of Christ
Elders, Southwest church of Christ
Elders, Brown Trail church of Christ
Elders, Grape Street church of Christ
Teachers: Don Simpson, Rusty Peterman, and Gary Fallis
All those whose names appear in this letter
All those who signed An Expression of Concern

Maxie B. Boren

EVANGELIST

P. O. BOX 10252 • LONGVIEW, TEXAS 75608 / TELEPHONE CONTACT: 214/759-0119 • 817/232-5529

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

It is regrettable, sad, and nothing less than tragic that a brother in the Lord, and a gospel preacher at that, would take it upon himself to TRY to discredit a fellow gospel preacher and seek to hurt his influence and effectiveness. And in attempting to do so, to drive all kinds of wedges in friendships, set brother against brother, and foment discord and division within the brotherhood.

The last three things of seven that the Bible says God hates, as recorded in Prov. 6:16-19, are:

- (1) Feet that be swift in running to mischief...
- (2) A false witness that speaketh lies...
- (3) And he that soweth discord among brethren...

Regardless of "whatever" his motivations were (and only he and God know for sure), the affect has been painful to me personally, and I believe very detrimental to the Cause of our Lord.

THE FACTS ARE

On Wednesday night, April 13th, while delivering a lecture on the Southwest Lectureship in Austin, Texas, brother Tommy Hicks called me by name and said things about me that were NOT true! What other intentions could he possibly have had than to plant seeds of doubt in the minds of those present concerning my fidelity to truth? The following is the gist of what he said:

- (1) That I am "soft" on liberalism and will not take a stand...
- (2) That I am "soft" on the marriage-divorce-remarriage issue and will not take a stand...
- (3) That if the church had "ten thousand men like Maxie Boren, (it) would go to hell in a hand-basket!"
- (4) And that he grew tired of hearing how much I love everybody...

The news of what he had said spread rapidly, and even by that weekend I had received a number of calls from true friends, very supportive of me and deploring what Tommy had done. Before I knew that the elders of the Brown Trail congregation (where I serve as director of the school of preaching, and where Tommy Hicks was one of the part-time instructors) even knew all this had happened, they had learned it from other sources, had a meeting on Sunday afternoon, April 17th, and unanimously gave me a vote of confidence and decided to terminate Tommy as a part-time teacher in the school. Meanwhile, having written Tommy a letter, I mailed it to him on Monday, April 18th. In the letter, I informed him that I felt strongly his "charges" were untrue, and I felt he had sinned against me and needed to make it right, publicly.

By the end of May, I had received a wonderful letter from the elders of the Grape St. congregation in Abilene (copy inclosed) which speaks for itself. This letter was especially meaningful to me, as I labor under their oversight in my work of evangelism. Also, two of the four elders from the Handley, Texas, congregation, where Tommy was then serving as local preacher, called me, assuring me that they backed me completely in the matter and deplored what Tommy had done. A third one of those elders expressed the same sentiments to his brother-in-law, who serves as an elder in Killeen, Texas. Also, by that time, a number of preachers had called me, or visited with me personally...thus, I was feeling much better about the matter. Then....

TOMMY'S LETTER OF JUNE 7th

What brother Hicks had done on April 13th was bad enough, but only 300 to 400 people heard that. His letter of June 7th, according to what he himself indicated, has been sent out to scores of gospel preachers throughout the brotherhood, which very likely will result in some misunderstandings, possible strife and "trouble" among brethren. Not only all that, but he was insensitive enough to send the letter to my aged parents (mother is 90, and Dad



"Thus saith the Lord" preaching!

...I be 90 on July 9th, the Lord willing), terribly upsetting them. What type of a person would do such as that? In all kindness and humility, I express to one and all who read this letter that I am concerned for the soul of Tommy, and I request you join with me in prayer on his behalf.

*NOTE: It is my sincere prayer, that by responding this ONE TIME, that the disruptive and destructive work of such a letter as brother Hicks has written will be minimized, and that no more harm come from this than has already been done.. With this response, I want it clearly understood THAT I WILL NOT BE DRAWN INTO A CONTINUATION OF SUCH A "HASSLE" AS THIS! If brother Hicks, or anyone else, wants to continue trying to defame me, and injure my effectiveness as a servant of Christ, then that is up to them...but they need to be reminded, that they will surely have to give an account for it someday! II Cor. 5:10. I just do not intend to spend time, energy, and effort in answering every brother who finds delight in stirring up trouble and embroiling brothers in a "big fight" with one another. I PLAN TO GO RIGHT ON WITH THE WORK OF PREACHING THE PURE GOSPEL OF CHRIST JUST AS PLAINLY AND FORCEFULLY AS I AM ABLE, AND YET IN KINDNESS AND LOVE. I WILL BE MORE THAN PLEASED TO LET THE LORD MAKE THE FINAL DETERMINATION AS TO WHO DID, AND WHO DID NOT, SERVE HIM FAITHFULLY! Rom. 14:4.

Since Tommy's primary objective seems to be substantiating his ridiculous charge that "if we had 10,000 men like Maxie Boren, the church would go to hell in a hand-basket," he sets forth what he considers to be "proof" of that, and concludes that I will not take a stand... it is then to all of these "charges" that I reply....

WHERE I STAND

(1) I AM 100% OPPOSED TO THE TRENDS AND TENDENCIES TO DENOMINATIONALIZE THE LORD'S CHURCH!

The sad facts are that a large number of brethren have pretty well abandoned "the old paths" and are leading the church into apostasy. These brethren are no longer preaching strongly and definitively that there is "one body, one faith, one baptism..." The distinctive nature of the New Testament church has been dangerously obscured behind the programs and promotions of a "social type" gospel. God's clear plan of saving the lost is watered down so much in many brotherhood pulpits, that many "converts" really have no idea of what "obeying the gospel" is all about. I AM OPPOSED TO AN INSIPID PULPIT! I BELIEVE THE TRUTH MUST BE PREACHED PLAINLY, AND FORCEFULLY, SO THAT PEOPLE MAY KNOW OF A CERTAINTY EXACTLY WHAT GOD WOULD HAVE THEM DO, AND BE TAUGHT WHAT PURE NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY IS ALL ABOUT...AS CONTRASTED WITH DENOMINATIONALISM! Now, brethren, isn't that plain? Well, that IS PRECISELY WHERE I HAVE STOOD THROUGH OVER 34 YEARS OF PREACHING! Tommy's "charge" that I am "soft" on this is ludicrous!

(2) MY STAND on the marriage, divorce, and remarriage issue is well known by brethren most everywhere: I believe that God purposed and designed that one man and one woman be married for life, and He intended that nothing separate that union but death itself. Rom. 7:2-3 and I Cor. 7:39a. Christ gave one exception in Matt. 19:9. I believe that preachers and elders must teach it plainly that marriage is sacred and that divorce is sinful! When cases of adultery are known, elders have the responsibility of dealing with them. Whatever action the elders deem wise and necessary in a given situation, it needs to be done with much love, compassion, and tender care. Teach the truth we must! Encourage people to do what is right we must! And when the situation calls for it, as a last resort measure, the withdrawing of fellowship may well have to be exercised. II Thess. 3:6. THAT IS MY STAND! Again, Tommy's charge is devoid of fact!

(3) I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE RECEIVED INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE! Wherever such a practice might be taking place in the brotherhood, I FOR ONE BELIEVE IT IS WRONG. I STAND AGAINST SUCH A PRACTICE! Tommy's "charge" is more of his "whistling in the wind."

(4) I DO NOT BELIEVE A CONGREGATION SHOULD ACCEPT INTO ITS FELLOWSHIP SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM BY A SISTER CONGREGATION. If one comes seeking to be identified with a congregation, and the fact that such an individual was withdrawn from by the congregation of which they were formerly a part, is known, every effort should be expended to find out the facts and WHATEVER IS WRONG NEEDS TO BE MADE RIGHT. If the individual involved demonstrates an unwillingness to make things right, THEN THAT INDIVIDUAL SHOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED AS A CHRISTIAN IN GOOD STANDING! THAT IS WHERE I STAND... IS THAT PLAIN enough for Tommy? I doubt that anything I say will satisfy him.

(5) I AM UNALTERABLY OPPOSED TO CHRISTIANS DRINKING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, be it hard liquor, wine, or beer. The "fruits" of the alcohol tree are nothing but pain, heartache,

abused children, broken homes, etc. A Christian should have no part in it! Some of the strongest sermons I've ever preached have been on this subject! I don't know of anyone anywhere who knows me at all that is unaware of my strong convictions and STAND on this matter. I AM OPPOSED TO "DRINKING" REGARDLESS OF WHOEVER MAY BE INVOLVED...BE HE OR SHE KINDRED OR FRIEND! But in the specific case to which Tommy refers in his letter, the "charge" was based on hearsay by the time it reached my ears. Tommy mentioned that brother Gary Fallis could bear testimony to the "drinking" of a well known preacher in the Ft. Worth area...so I asked Gary about it...he told me that another preacher friend had told him that two members of the congregation where he preached had told him they had seen the accused brother "drinking beer" at a restaurant. So by the time Tommy told me about this, it was FOURTH hand information. Besides, I went to the accused brother and asked him about it, and he denied having done so. Now, as a Christian, what should I believe...FOURTH hand hearsay, or the word of the preacher who said he didn't do it? This is typical of the "charges" brother Hicks brings against me, and which he considers to be "PROOF" that the church would go to hell in a hand-basket with 10,000 like me!

TO ADDITIONAL "CHARGES" WHICH TOMMY OFFERS AS "PROOF"

In re-reading Tommy's letter of June 7th, there just seems "to be no end" to his "charges" against me. By reading his "slant of things," one would gain the impression that Maxie Boren is surely the most villanous heretic in the country. That surely is strange, in view of the facts: (1) The elders at Handley told me that Tommy was "singing your praises" just a little over a year ago, recommending me highly to them for a gospel meeting; and (2) as late as Nov. or Dec. of 1987, to the three full-time teachers in the Brown Trail School Of Preaching, he "praised Maxie Boren to the sky" telling them what a wise choice the elders had made in selecting me as the director, etc.; and (3) around the first part of March of 1988, Tommy came by my office at Brown Trail, all "honey and pie" seeking to be a FULL TIME TEACHER IN THE SCHOOL OF PREACHING HERE. (I turned him down, primarily because our student enrollment was not large enough to warrant hiring an additional teacher.) Yet, according to his letter, he has known "the real Maxie Boren" since my meeting at Handley in April of 1987. WHY THEN WAS HE SO DESIROUS OF WORKING WITH SUCH A HERETIC AS ME? TOMMY, YOUR "PROOF" HAS PROVED TOO MUCH...FOR YOU, THAT IS!

(1) Tommy attacks the listing of "additional contacts" that I supplied for "whoever" out there in the world of darkness who might read my little booklet, "From My Heart To Yours." I did not write the booklet for brethren who are knowledgeable of all the brotherhood controversies... I wrote it for those in sin, many of which know nothing about the Bible. MY SINGULAR AIM was (and is) to lead them gently to an understanding of truth. Before I "went to press" with it back in 1980, I submitted the manuscript to some 20 to 25 of the finest and best known preachers among us, asking them to scrutinize it carefully, and inquiring specifically of them what they thought about the listing of the additional contacts on the last page. The consensus view was that by all means I should do it. My heart was right in wanting to supply them with as many contacts with our brethren as possible to help them understand the Way. And I find great joy in the personal knowledge of a number of people who are NOW Christians because of the little booklet. And one point of clarification...what I listed were the Schools of Preaching, the Bible Departments of the Christian Colleges, and brotherhood radio and television programs... NOT congregations, as Tommy states. Back in 1980, though there were "problems" existing, they weren't nearly so pronounced as they have come to be. I believed then that if a "seeker" of basic information were to write the contacts I gave, the seeker would receive a Bible correspondence course, or tracts, etc. that would help them understand the Bible better. That was my only motive. However, BEFORE Tommy's letter, I had already decided to delete that last page in the next printing of the booklet, because of my own concern on these matters whereof he speaks. TOMMY DOES NOT HAVE A MONOPOLY ON LOVE FOR THE TRUTH, OR ON A CONCERN FOR WHAT IS TAKING PLACE AMONG US TODAY!

(2) Another "charge" which Tommy advances is the speech I made at the "unity meeting" of our brethren at Whitney in June of 1987. First of all, for whatever it is worth, the meeting was the direct result of a suggestion that I made to a number of brethren that WE NEED TO TRY to get together with brethren to the "left" of us and see if we can't resolve some of the issues that are hurting the Cause so much. Brother Eddie Whitten and myself made a trip to Whitney to sit down with the elders there and help to formulate that first meeting (there has since been another which I was unable to attend because of a conflict in schedule). The elders at Whitney specifically asked me to be the first speaker and to SET THE TONE FOR THE MEETING...

"TONE" OF BROTHERLY LOVE, HUMILITY, KINDNESS, AND UNDERSTANDING. They said they felt that I was "just the man" to do this, and they wanted to be sure to get the meeting off to the right kind of start. So I did what I was asked to do. Tommy obviously didn't think much of my speech and that is his prerogative. But the vast majority of the 40+ preachers that were there were highly complimentary of what I had to say, and expressed appreciation to me. I suppose it just depends on one's outlook, and his attitude! Tommy further makes a "capital case" out of me suggesting to brother Whitten that it might possibly be a good idea to have someone like Stanley Lockhart on the Ft. Worth Lectureship sometime, since he is viewed by many brethren as more "middle of the road" and not "far out to the left." For what it is worth, I did not suggest Jon Jones as Tommy charges...and brother Eddie Whitten verified that just yesterday when I asked him about it. He said "I certainly do not remember your mentioning Jon." (Tommy just "dreams up" a lot of things, evidently.) I would not have suggested Jon for the Lectureship, even though I've known and loved him as a person and as a friend, for years...but I'll have more to say about that momentarily.

(3) The next "charge" of Tommy pertained to the one day trip to the ACU Lectureship of the Brown Trail School of Preaching in Feb. of this year. Brother Hicks certainly makes this a real "capital offense." That is ridiculous! Here is what happened....I was in the state of Florida during the latter half of Jan. and the first half of Feb. in gospel meetings. While I was there, brother Don Simpson, one of the full-time instructors in the Brown Trail school, and my assistant director, called me, and told me that he and the other two teachers had been discussing the possibility of taking the students to one day of the ACU Lectureship, and wanted to know what I thought about it....my answer was something like this: "Don, I don't see that going to one day of the ACU Lectureship would hurt anything. In fact, it may be a good teaching opportunity...if they hear something that is not true, then when you all get back you can discuss this with them, and show them the difference between truth and error. If what they hear is true, no problem. It will be good for them to meet other brethren, see the displays in the tent, etc." I never thought anything more about it. I didn't think it was that big of a deal then, nor do I now. WHILE I STAND FOURSQUARE OPPOSED TO WHAT TOOK PLACE ON THE EVOLUTION ISSUE, AND AGAINST THE LIBERAL SPEAKERS THAT HAVE BEEN INVITED TO MANY FUNCTIONS AT ACU, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT EVERYTHING THERE IS BAD. And just because I would go out there for the Lectureship, or many other good, sound, brethren that I know 'would go' there, DOES NOT MEAN THAT I HAVE DONE A 180 DEGREE TURNABOUT AS TOMMY CHARGES! As for the "mandatory" part of Tommy's charge is concerned...that word carries a connotation that is like "waving the proverbial red flag," which is most likely what Tommy wanted to do. Naturally, if the School is going to do something as a group, then we want everyone in the group to participate. What's wrong with that? We weren't "leading them to slaughter" as Tommy wants everyone to believe. We were taking them to ONE day of the ACU Lectureship. If we are not able to handle that, then we are in pretty sad shape! Tommy said it was like our taking them through a "live mine field," wherein "THEY DO NOT STAND A CHANCE." To that I say HOGWASH! If Tommy wants to think that ACU is 100% bad, that is his prerogative. But I don't. EVEN THOUGH I STRONGLY DIFFER WITH THEM ON THE TWO THINGS MENTIONED ABOVE, I am not ready to "throw out" the whole of ACU. As the old saying goes, "You don't throw the baby out with the bath water." (But for what it is worth; we will not take the school to the ACU Lectures again in the foreseeable future as WE DO INDEED WANT TO KEEP THE BROWN TRAIL SCHOOL TRUE TO THE BOOK, AND INTEND TO DO SO. We will make every reasonable effort to maintain the integrity of this school, and we will be more careful in the future to avoid anything that might be misunderstood. Brown Trail is an excellent school. sound in the faith, and Bible-centered to the core. It is deserving of the confidence of the brotherhood!)

(4) The next "charge" of brother Hicks pertained to my conducting a gospel meeting at the Las Vegas Trail congregation in Ft. Worth during the latter part of May of this year. As per usual, Tommy doesn't bother to get all the facts, he just takes what he wants to believe and builds "a case" on it. Let me give you the facts: first of all, my association with the Las Vegas Trail congregation dates back four or five years. The meeting in May was my 3rd there. Those brethren have shown a great interest in my work, and have financially assisted me in preaching the gospel to many places. I have had respect and love for the four men who served as elders before the "trouble" there, and the preacher and his family, and many of the members. The first I knew of "trouble brewing" was in Jan. of 1987, when brother Noble Patterson, one of the elders there then, and a long-time friend of mine, took my wife and me to dinner, and informed us that he and brother Herman Knox, another of the elders, had reason to believe the local preacher was having an affair. He told us then he was thinking of hiring a detective to put a surveillance on the preacher. (Which he later did.) I didn't think much more about

... until April of that year when I was in a meeting at Handley, with Tommy. On the closing night of that meeting, Noble and Herman attended, and asked to talk with me afterwards. We went "for coffee" and in the conversation, they told me their "side" of what all had taken place at Las Vegas Trail... (1) how that the surveillance proved the affair, (2) how that the other two elders nor any of the deacons would believe it, and (3) of an elders-deacons meeting that evidently was a real confrontation, (4) and how the two of them had resigned and left, and indicated that a large number of members left too. They proceeded to show me the "evidence" the detective supplied from the surveillance. Admittedly, it looked incriminating. I was really "shook up" over what they told me and showed me. They urged me to cancel the meeting with Las Vegas Trail, which at that time was yet somewhat over a year in the future. I will admit my first reaction was to cancel the meeting... first, because of my respect for Herman and Noble, and secondly because the evidence appeared most damaging. I told them that I would probably cancel the meeting but I wanted to think about it and pray about it, to be sure. About two or three weeks later, while in a gospel meeting at the West Berry congregation in Ft. Worth, another one of the four Las Vegas Trail elders came to see me... brother J.Q. Keesee, also a good friend and a humble, kind Christian man. He and one of the West Berry elders talked to me well over an hour and they "painted" an altogether different picture of the real problem at Las Vegas Trail... not the preacher and the alleged affair, (which brother Keesee said he did not believe at all, and that the vast majority of the members there did not believe, including the fourth elder; brother Haskell Dotson, and all of the deacons) but the domineering spirit of the two elders that had left. That at least caused me to know THAT THERE WERE INDEED TWO SIDES TO THE STORY of what had happened at Las Vegas Trail. I postponed making a decision. Meanwhile, on two or three occasions, Noble would urge me to cancel the meeting. Fran and I left for Iowa, South Dakota, and Montana, for meetings (June-July of 1987), and while in Helena, Montana, in a meeting, Noble called, and pressured me for a decision. Knowing that I was going to have to make a decision one way or the other (the ones that stayed WANTED me to hold the meeting; and Noble and Herman did not want me to... I felt like it was a hard decision to make as I WAS NOT SURE EXACTLY WHICH "SIDE" WAS RIGHT, and I wanted to be on the RIGHT side!), and Noble being persuasive, I said, "OK, Noble, I'll write Las Vegas Trail tomorrow and cancel the meeting." Which I did. The preacher's wife then wrote us a LONG letter, informing us of their side, stating her view of Noble, which was anything but complimentary, and pleading with us to reconsider. In response, I told her we would at least reconsider and I would really delve more into the matter upon our return. In mid-August, 1987, while in Ft. Worth, I called the preacher at Las Vegas Trail and asked him to tell me exactly his side of the story... he said he was but counselling the woman involved, and that at no time was any immorality involved... he admitted to being indiscreet and "stupid" to meet her as he did, but said he had confessed this to the church and had asked their forgiveness. I also talked to some others, who saw things entirely different to what Noble had told me. So, on the one hand, I had Noble and Herman telling me that the preacher there was guilty, and that some 90 members had left, etc. On the other hand, I learned that the vast majority that stayed there did not believe him guilty, and he denied being guilty, etc. (By the way, the present elders say that a total of 27 was all that left... that's a far cry from the "90" I was told had left!) To my own mind, I admitted that all Noble and Herman had to back them up was the "detective evidence," which though admittedly strong, was STILL AT BEST CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE! Even a court of law will not convict an accused individual on circumstantial evidence... should we then convict a gospel preacher on CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE? NO ONE SAW HIM COMMIT ADULTERY... they only surmise he did. He ASSURES ME HE DID NOT! Now who am I to believe? What was I to do? After consulting with about 5 or 6 gospel preacher friends who know this area, the people involved, etc., the advice was "go ahead and conduct the meeting" as it was scheduled. SO IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NOT A MATTER OF ME NOT HAVING THE CONVICTION OR COURAGE TO STAND, AS TOMMY ASSERTS, BUT IT WAS SIMPLY A MATTER OF MAKING A VERY HARD DECISION IN A SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES NOT OF MY MAKING, AND WHEREIN THERE WAS MUCH CONFLICTING TESTIMONY! What would Tommy have done had he the same sort of decision to make? He would most likely have not held the meeting so he could have patted himself on the back and told folks what a great defender of the faith he is... well, I chose the side of "mercy," giving the preacher involved the benefit of the doubt. If he is indeed guilty, then before God he will answer. But if he's not, then before God the brethren who have been so vehement in accusing him will answer. And Tommy will answer for his self-righteous attitude. And I will answer for having preached the gospel to human beings who assembled each night at the Las Vegas Trail building. I had to make a tough decision in a difficult situation. I made the best one I knew how to make. I'm thankful I'm not the one to make final judgment... but the Lord will do so. Acts 17:31.

(5) The "charge" from brother Hicks that incensed me most, perhaps, was the one concerning his visit with me at Brown Trail. He outright lied concerning things I said. I never said that I saw Eddie Whitten's "teeth" gritted in an elders' meeting; nor did I ever describe Dub McClish as being the "Pope" at Denton. Those are fabrications from the mind of Tommy Hicks, designed, as far as I am concerned, to be inflammatory and TO TRY TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN ME AND THESE TWO MEN. Therefore, I resent it very much! I have no respect for a man that would attempt to create hurt feelings, leave misimpressions, distort what a person is sincerely trying to say out of love for and concern for the Cause, divide friendships, and generally "stir up trouble" as Tommy obviously did on page 5 of his letter. The truth of the matter is that I treasure the friendship that I have had for so long with Dub McClish, Eddie Whitten, and Goeble Music. I THINK HIGHLY of all three of these brethren, admire them for their knowledge, conviction, and stand for the truth. I have never castigated any of them, as Tommy alleges. Yes, I do differ with them in some few areas of judgment, as they differ with me. But never have I said anything about any of them that could be considered of a "castigating" nature. So as far as I am concerned, that whole section that Tommy wrote about me, Brown Trail, and those brethren, is filled with distortions of what was said, and the spirit in which it was said.

(6) Lastly, one other matter that Tommy brought out in his letter, that needs to be dealt with, pertains to my "stand" about Richland Hills and in particular, Jon Jones. I am going to address myself to this openly and candidly: Over the past two to three years, a goodly number of my preacher friends, and a few others, keep asking me, "what do you think about Richland Hills?" and/or "Jon Jones?" In my own mind I inquire, "why do people seem so insistent on wanting to know what I think about Richland Hills and Jon?" Oftentimes there are a number of other gospel preachers around, and I don't see them being "pressed" for a response as I am...why the difference? Am I supposed to be some sort of an expert on Richland Hills? WELL, I'M NOT AND REALLY HAVE NO DESIRE TO BE! I FEEL LIKE I HAVE MORE THAN I CAN DO IN MY WORK OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL AND DIRECTING THE SCHOOL OF PREACHING AT BROWN TRAIL. I JUST WANT TO GET ON WITH MY WORK. But regardless of my desires...the questions keep coming. SO ONCE AND FOR ALL, LET ME STATE HOW I FEEL....

As far as the persons involved of immediate interest to me---Fran and I have a beautiful, precious daughter, who is married to Mike Washburn, who works with the singles at Richland Hills. We love them and our two granddaughters dearly! We also have our youngest son who goes there, and is soon to be married to a lovely young Christian woman who has just concluded her Junior year at Harding. We love them dearly! I make no apologies for those strong feelings of love. Also, it is well known Jon (the preacher at Richland Hills) and Joan Jones are long-time friends of Fran and me. We have known them since we were all students together at ACU, dating back to 1953. They are wonderful, vivacious people, who have always been good friends of ours, and in like manner we have tried to be good friends of theirs. Again, I offer no apologies in saying plainly that Fran and I feel a strong "friendship love" for Jon and Joan. Therefore, on several occasions, when I have heard brethren saying things about Richland Hills, Jon, or Mike, which I felt were not true, or exaggerated, or devoid of love and Christian care, I have indeed "spoken up for them." BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT I SANCTION OR CONDONE ANYTHING THAT IS IN FACT AMISS AT RICHLAND HILLS (OR ANYWHERE ELSE FOR THAT MATTER), OR ANYTHING THAT JON HAS SAID OR DONE THAT I BELIEVE IS WRONG IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD!

Please look to Page 2 for my convictions concerning some things that would be apropos as far as I can determine, pertaining to Richland Hills...and most likely any number of other congregations scattered throughout the brotherhood. And though I love Jon as a person, I do indeed feel strongly that he has been wrong in the following three matters:

(1) I feel Jon was wrong in what he said at the Southwest Christian Church in Ft. Worth about 2½ years ago. I listened to the tape and read his manuscript, and I THOUGHT THEN AND NOW THAT IT WAS VERY COMPROMISING. I'm thankful that I had opportunity to talk to Jon briefly about this, and let him know personally what I thought. I feel he made a big mistake in doing this. I BELIEVE THE TRUTH WAS COMPROMISED...WHICH IS WRONG!

(2) I think Jon has been mistaken in taking the "role" he has in some of the "unity meetings" with the Christian Church. I believe he has done so sincerely. But in my estimation, no real progress has been made, and unless and until the issues which divide us are really "debated out" it is a fruitless venture. I personally believe that these "unity meetings" with the Christian Church have fostered a spirit of compromise within the church that IS A BIG STEP IN THE WRONG DIRECTION, LEADING MANY BROTHERN CLOSER TOWARD DENOMINATIONALIZING THE CHURCH. Therefore, I think that a further pursuit of these meetings is totally ill-advised!

(3) WITH ALL MY HEART, I BELIEVE IT WAS A MISTAKE OF SERIOUS PROPORTIONS that Jon and others of Richland Hills spoke at the Texas Sunday School Association Convention. I would not impugn

their motives...for whatever reasons they might have had, and I think they sincerely thought that somehow it was a good idea to participate, BUT I BELIEVE IT WAS A BAD CONCLUSION FOR THEM TO REACH! I THINK THEY WERE WRONG FOR HAVING PARTICIPATED, AND "I WOULD GIVE ANYTHING" HAD THEY NOT DONE SO! I BELIEVE THAT SUCH ACTION SERVED TO LEND ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE PROPAGATORS OF ERROR AND THUS WAS A VIOLATION OF II Jn. 9-11. In addition to that, I KNOW THAT SUCH PARTICIPATION HAS CAUSED MANY PROBLEMS AS FAR AS MAINTAINING UNITY WITHIN THE CHURCH IS CONCERNED! IN ALL KINDNESS AND LOVE, IT IS MY STRONG CONVICTION THAT A CHRISTIAN SHOULD NEVER SAY OR DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD IN ANY WAY LEND SUPPORT TO DENOMINATIONAL ERROR! THAT IS WHERE I STAND! And as much as I love the ones involved in this matter, regardless of these strong ties of kinship and friendship, I REPEAT THAT IS WHERE I STAND!

But just like in what I said about ACU (see Page 4), I feel similarly about Richland Hills. To conclude that everything at Richland Hills is all bad and that all 3,000 members are hell-bound is too drastic a view to me. In all honesty, I just do not believe that! ARE THERE THINGS THAT CONCERN ME ABOUT RICHLAND HILLS? YES!!! About some of the things Jon has said and done? Yes! But what more can I do than what I've done? I can't dictate policy to the Richland Hills elders, and neither can I tell Jon how to run his affairs. The only thing I know to do, on these points wherein we differ, is to point them out plainly in love, and hope and pray that they (the Richland Hills elders...Jon, Mike, etc.) will receive what I say in the spirit in which it is offered and desist from saying or doing anything that would lead the church astray from the "old paths." Tommy accuses me of "not taking a stand." That is absurd! How anybody can read this letter carefully and say that is beyond me! BUT I AM NOT GOING TO ABUSE THE PULPIT IN MY GOSPEL MEETING WORK AND GO AROUND THE COUNTRY DENOUNCING RICHLAND HILLS AND/OR JON! To me that would be inappropriate, unwise, and anti-productive of good. AND NEITHER WILL I ALLOW TOMMY OR ANYONE ELSE TO FORCE ME TO THINK AS HE DOES, OR TO PUT ME IN SOME "CAMP."

We may feel strongly that something is amiss at another congregation other than the one to which we belong, AND WELL IT MAY BE! Now, the practical question is, "how to handle it?... what to do?" Herein is the point of difference, as I see it, between me, Tommy, and others. I say WE SHOULD POINT OUT ERROR IN LOVE, EXHORT, ADMONISH, WRITE, PREACH, AND TEACH, AND DO EVERYTHING WITHIN OUR POWER TO LEAD PEOPLE ARIGHT, AND CALL THE BROTHERHOOD TO THE LORD AND THE AUTHORITY OF HIS WORD, PLEADING THAT WE ALWAYS WALK IN THE OLD PATHS OF TRUTH, AND DO OUR BEST TO LIVE RIGHT OURSELVES AND TO BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH. I think we err in judgment if we forget about the principle of local congregational autonomy...Clem Thurman wrote in the June 17th issue of GOSPEL MINUTES, "Sometimes local church of Christ disagree on some matters. But churches of Christ are autonomous, which means they decide only their own course of action. No congregation can decide for another what the other church should do. Autonomy means the 'right of self rule,' and the principle is well-rooted in the Scriptures with regard to churches of Christ. Each church of Christ is autonomous, each has the right to decide for itself what it shall do." I think Clem made a good point for us to consider anew. Frankly I see a number of practices in the brotherhood today that concern me greatly, and I hear many things that concern me...AND I ALWAYS COMBAT THESE AS BEST I KNOW HOW. I DO NOT BELIEVE IN COMPROMISING THE TRUTH. But neither do I believe in wrong attitudes! I so often encounter brethren having a "hair-trigger" attitude that is ready and eager to blast, label, and condemn most every brother who doesn't dot every "I" or cross every "T" like some "party-spirit" person thinks he should. That kind of attitude is just as repugnant to me on the one hand, as liberalism is to me on the other!

I believe in this day and time of so many problems among us, when the inclination to divide and splinterize into a thousand warring camps is very present, that the situation calls for cool heads, and pure hearts, who exercise REASON AND SENSIBILITY in all we're facing. WE MUST NEVER LOSE SIGHT THAT IT WAS OUR DEAR LORD'S PRAYER THAT HIS PEOPLE BE ONE! Jn. 17:20-23. And the Bible teaches that we ENDEAVOR to do so! Eph. 4:3. I WOULD TEN TIMES RATHER TRY TO BE A BRIDGE BUILDER THAN A BRIDGE DESTROYER! "Blessed are the peacemakers..." Matt. 5:9. Anybody can be a peacebreaker...that requires no love, no spiritual maturity, character, nor knowledge. Reminds me of what one of my older brothers (James) said to my brother, Paul, and me, as he was leaving for the Marine Corps in WW II..."Remember, anybody can do what is wrong, but it takes a real man to do what is right." I have remembered that all my life, AND TO THE VERY BEST OF MY ABILITY I HAVE TRIED TO FOLLOW THAT PRINCIPLE! I don't make any claims to being perfect...I know I've made many mistakes along the way and undoubtedly will make more, but I can say HONESTLY THAT I PLAN TO ALWAYS BE TRYING MY BEST TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT. And when the mistakes are made, I PRAY THEY WILL BE MISTAKES OF JUDGMENT, AND NOT OF THE HEART!

And lastly, let me touch on the fact that Tommy says he grows tired of hearing how much I love everybody. I WOULD BE ASHAMED IF I DIDN'T HAVE A HEART FILLED WITH LOVE! I'm thankful that I do have a tender heart, and that I do love my brethren from my heart, fervently! Isn't that what the Bible teaches us to do? I Pet. 1:22. I humbly believe that my critic, Tommy, and perhaps a goodly number of other brethren with similar "mind-set" as he, would do well again to read Jn. 13:34-35, I Cor. 13:1-7, I Jn. 3:14, 16, and Rom. 13:8-10. And while doing so, why not include Matt. 7:12? In view of what JESUS SAID IN MATT. 7:12, would Tommy have wanted me to get up before 300 or 400 people and tell them, "If we had 10,000 men like Tommy Hicks, the church would go to hell in a hand-basket!"??? And then, would he want me to mail out a harshly critical, damage intending letter, obviously designed to stir up trouble, and drive wedges between friends, and divide, and cause many preachers all over the brotherhood to "wonder" about his fidelity to truth? Yes, brother Hicks tell us in his closing that "IF WE LOVE THE LORD WE WILL OBEY HIM." I couldn't agree more! It is just a sad, pitiful shame that he himself TOTALLY IGNORED what the Lord said in Matt. 7:12.

I don't wish Tommy anything but good. But I am sick at what he has done, and all the hurt he has caused me, and the time and trouble necessary to answer his tirade. This is my first and last such undertaking. Tommy can attack all he wants, but I am through with such "hassling." May God have pity on all of us, and extend His mercy to us in my sincere prayer.

Yours for the Cause of truth and right always,

Maxie B. Boren

Maxie B. Boren

CC: Letters reluctantly and sadly sent to the same ones Tommy sent his letter to...

Las Vegas Trail Church of Christ

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DEACONS:
Elvin Anderson
Rufus Davis
Jimmy Falcon
Victor Jones
Don Pickerel
David Roe
Monty Stark

~~COPY~~

June 6, 1988

Elders
Grape Street Church of Christ
5th and Grape Street
Abilene, Tx. 79601

Dear Brethren:

We, the Elders of the Las Vegas Trail congregation, thank you for allowing Maxie Boren to conduct our Spring 1988 Gospel Meeting. Maxie's sermons were scripturally sound, powerfully presented, and easy to understand. We believe that we will be harvesting the fruit of his endeavors long into the future.

We were, however, saddened to learn from Maxie that a former member of our congregation made an effort to stop Maxie's coming on the basis that it would endorse a "situation" that exists at Las Vegas Trail. We want to assure you that the "situation" here is a good one where Christians are striving to live pure lives in accordance with Bible principles. In fact, we believe the congregation is spiritually stronger today than it has been in years. Despite whatever information you may have received, we want you to know that there were strong and compelling reasons why the congregation took the stand that it did in opposition to the actions of this former member.

Again, we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

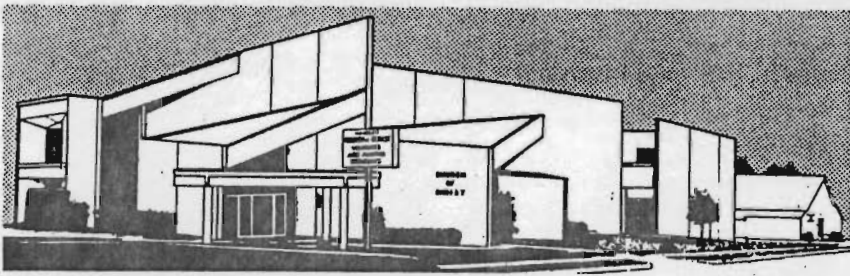
Haskell Dotson, Elder

J. Q. Keesee, Elder

Melvin Lewis, Elder

Dewey Tipton, Elder

Victor Welch, Elder



HANDLEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

3029 HANDLEY DR. • P.O. BOX 8156 • PH. 451-7410

FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76124-0156

ELDERS

DON AUSTIN
A. E. DEAL
BILL HOBBS
JAMES PATTERSON
DENSLEY REAGAN

MINISTERS

TOMMY J. HICKS
DOUG MARTIN

SECRETARY

PAT TRAINER

June 27, 1988

Maxie Boren
P. O. Box 10252
Longview, Texas 75608

Dear Maxie:

It was with sorrow in our hearts that we learned of the things that Tommy Hicks said about you on April 13 at the Southwest Lectureship in Austin, Texas, and his subsequent letter to you of June 7, 1988. We, the Handley Elders, wish for you to know that we disagree with Tommy's attempt to discredit you as one who stands for truth. We believe his charges can only bring grief to you, division and discord in the church, and eventually, personal ruin to Tommy himself.

Maxie, we are appreciative of your 34 years of preaching the Gospel and the stand you take for truth and especially for the attitude of love in which you present the Gospel. We deplore the attitude that Tommy has exhibited. We sincerely regret that Tommy's letter, which was sent to many people throughout the brotherhood, was written, without our permission, on Handley church of Christ stationery. This may indicate to some brethren that he had our approval in what he was saying. Nothing could be further from the truth.

We appreciate the meeting you held for us in 1987 and the much effort that you put forth in your meeting work. May the Lord continue to bless you.

In Christian love,

Bill Hobbs, Elder

Gene Deal, Elder

Don Austin, Elder

James Patterson, Elder



Brown Trail Church of Christ

LOCATION: 1801 BROWN TRAIL * BEDFORD, TEXAS 76021

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 865 * HURST, TEXAS 76053

817/282-6526 or 817/282-3911

June 22, 1988

To Whom It May Concern:

Relative to the letter you received from brother Tommy Hicks which contained his charges against brother Maxie Boren, we wish to make the following comments:

1. We are exceedingly sorry that this matter has come up to further disturb and hinder the work of the body of Christ.
2. We deplore and decry the method and manner in which these accusations were put forth. To launch such charges in the public fashion selected by brother Hicks was wrong for at least three reasons:
 - (1) He had not charged brother Boren with these matters in a private way, nor called upon him as a concerned brother to change his stance on the matters he considered to be wrong and sinful.
 - (2) They were not a part of his assignment and not a part of his manuscript in the lectureship where he was speaking.
 - (3) His harsh words of brother Boren, a respected gospel preacher who has never been known to preach or teach any error for a period of more than 30 years, were uncalled for and cruel.
3. Brother Boren is our director of the Brown Trail School of Preaching and we support him in this work. He has prepared a detailed answer and explanation to each item contained in the letter of brother Hicks.
4. We sincerely hope and pray that this matter can be quickly and quietly laid to rest. There are enough problems in the Lord's church already that truly need to be addressed without digging deeply to find others.

Howard Barnum
Howard Barnum, elder

Ed Clark
Ed Clark, elder

Dale Peterman
Dale Peterman, elder

Bobby Watts
Bobby Watts, elder

Graham Cain
Graham Cain, elder

Bob Lauderdale
Bob Lauderdale, elder

John Tyson
John Tyson, elder

Eddie Whitten
Eddie Whitten, elder

"Speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15)



Church of Christ

433 Grape Street
Abilene, Texas 79601

"Speaking Where the Bible Speaks"

ELDERS

A. J. BIVENS
HOYT BLODGETT
BILL DAUGHERTY
CHARLES GREENLEE
MURPHY RHOADS
JAMES WILLEFORD

EVANGELISTS

MIKE VESTAL
STAN HARVEY

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Class.....9:30

Morning

Worship.....10:30

Evening

Worship.....6:00

Tuesday

Ladies Bible Class

10:00

Wednesday

Mid-Week Bible

Classes

7:00

Church Office

915-673-0211

Preacher's Study

915-673-3861

May 25, 1988

Maxie B. Boren
c/o James E. Boren
P.O. Box 533
Clifton, TX 76634

Dear Maxie,

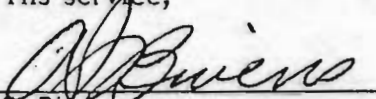
All of the elders here were equally shocked at the remarks made about you by Tommy Hicks in April. We hope that no lasting harm will be done to your fine work.

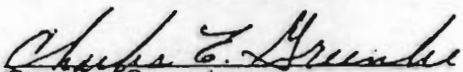
The elders at the North 5th and Grape Church of Christ stand by you 100% as you continue to proclaim God's Word around the country. We have the utmost confidence in your stand for the truth, your proclamation of the gospel and your desire to stand in the old paths. Your years of faithful, courageous service to the Lord speak for themselves.

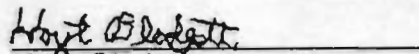
Stands for truth against error taught by Abilene Christian University, individuals and congregations over the years have shown who Maxie Boren is and where he stands. We appreciate and admire you for this courageous stand.

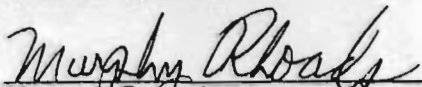
We hope and pray that your effectiveness, dedication and desire will continue to grow and enable this unfortunate situation to fade into the past. Keep up the good work!

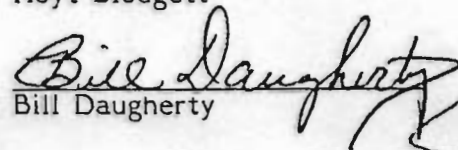
In His service,

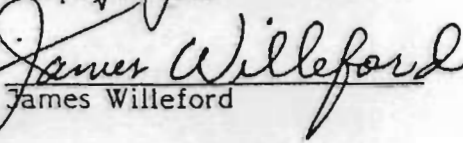

A.J. Bivens


Charles Greenlee


Hoyt Blodgett


Murphy Rhoads


Bill Daugherty


James Willeford

matter (Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:11, 12; etc.), and that pure worship to God does not matter (John 4:21-24).

CONCLUSION

There are many things that we need to learn today, and I list the following for our consideration:

1. There is a time that is too late (cf. Luke 13:25-27; Isaiah 55:6, 7; Psalm 95:7, 8; Ecclesiastes 11:3; Jeremiah 8:20; Matthew 25:11; 27:3; Hebrews 12:17; etc.).
2. There is a difference in being "courteous" towards Jesus, while not being "committed" to him.
3. "Many" will argue with God at the judgment (Matthew 7:21-23).
4. The God that lets the earth stand is our God of love, but someday he will destroy it and all who disobey him (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2 Peter 3:9 ff), and thus show himself to be an unsparing God.
5. God is longsuffering, but God does give up on some and, at certain times, has all he will take (cf. Isaiah 1:10ff; Amos 5:21-24; Romans 1:24, 26, 28; etc.).
6. There will be a judgment, a great tribunal, where every man is to give an account of himself (Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
7. The God of love will show his goodness to some, but his wrath, anger, terror will be shown to others (Matthew 25:46).
8. Vengeance belongs to God and he will recompense (Hebrews 10:30).
9. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31).
10. The only time that anyone has to prepare is now (2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7; 4:7; etc.).

We can truly say that he saves only the obedient (Hebrews 5:8, 9), and that we show our love to God by the keeping of his commandments, which are not grievous (1 John 2:3-5; 5:3; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 5:6; 6:15; etc.).

I trust that I have been true to the Biblical record, as it will judge us someday (John 12:48). Indeed, I firmly take my stand in saying, "The God of love is also an unsparing God."

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

By RUSTY PETERMAN



Rusty Peterman spent the early years of his life in the Midland, Texas area. Moved to the Fort Worth area in his teen years and became a member at the Brown Trail congregation. Educated at Lubbock Christian College, Dallas Christian College (B.A.), Abilene Christian University and Southwestern Seminary. Has completed two study tours and archaeological work in Israel. He is a 1981 graduate of the Brown Trail School of Preaching, and is presently a full-time instructor in the school. He and his wife, Sallye, have two children.

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

God calls us to a daily, Spirit-filled walk that results in spiritual blessings.

- I. GOD CALLS US TO A SPIRIT-FILLED WALK THAT LEADS TO SPIRITUAL VICTORY
- II. GOD CALLS US TO A SPIRIT-FILLED WALK THAT PRODUCES SPIRITUAL FRUIT

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

Life presents us with a number of major moments. There's birth, the first birthday, the first day in school, the first car, the first date. Very early in life is another first—the first step. Few things thrill parents quite so much as watching a child learn to walk.

Physically, we all must learn to walk. There are no shortcuts. There is struggle involved. Hard knocks and occasional falls await us. What is true physically, is also true spiritually. In a spiritual sense, we all must learn to walk.

In this lecture, I have been assigned a passage that focuses on the fruit of the Spirit. However, I have taken the liberty to expand this to the fuller context of Paul's teaching on the Spirit-filled walk in Christ, ← for only when we begin to walk by the Spirit will we put forth the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-25 is God's call to a daily, Spirit-filled walk that enhances the growth of the fruit of the Spirit.

GOD CALLS US TO A SPIRIT-FILLED WALK THAT LEADS TO SPIRITUAL VICTORY (5:16-21)

Paul makes a wonderful promise in verse 16, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." These are words of conquest, triumph and victory. It is an apostolic promise that *while* we are walking by the Spirit, we shall be spiritually invincible. Paul essentially says "There's no possible way in the world that you can experience spiritual defeat if you make your life a Spirit-filled walk."

A closer investigation of this passage reveals two matters that need to be fixed in our minds: They are: (1) real opposition and (2) real victory.

Let us consider the matter of *real opposition*. Paul identifies two opposing forces: "flesh" and "Spirit." Let us see what we can learn about them.

The word "flesh" translates the Greek word *sarx*, a word which Paul uses in his letters with a great variety of meaning. *Sarx* identifies the body or the material part of a living being, be it man or animal (1 Corinthians 15:39). It can represent the total person (Galatians 2:16). *Sarx* elsewhere means: earthly descent (Romans 4:1). But most often in the writings of Paul, *sarx* has a special moral dimension.

Paul chooses this term, *sarx* ("flesh"), to describe the ultimate enemy in the warfare of the soul. It is while we live in the "flesh" that we find ourselves opposed to God's redemptive plan for our lives. Paul could look back at his pre-Christian life and characterize it as a time "while we were in the flesh" (Romans 7:5). Just a few verses later he wrote: "Those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5).

Nothing good dwells in the flesh (Romans 7:18). Why? Because it represents everything aside from God in which a person places his ultimate value and trust. It is every tendency, every desire, every impulse, every inclination which leads to conduct opposed to the will of God.

"Where does 'flesh' come from?" We are not born with it. We do not inherit "flesh." Instead, we are born into an environment—a sinful, rebellious world of people—which trains us and pressures us to run our own lives, to satisfy our own desires, and to serve our own selves in ways that run contrary to the nature and will of God. That is the awful meaning of *sarx*. It denotes an acquired approach to life that is self-willed, self-destructive, and completely offensive to God.

To get back to our text, remember that verse 17 presents us with real opposition. On the one hand is *sarx*, on the other hand is Spirit. This is none other than the Spirit of God himself. He opposes the "flesh" within us.

When a person turns to God in belief, repentance, and baptism into Christ, God sends the gift of his Spirit (Acts 2:38). "And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" (Galatians 4:6). Without him, we are not Christians (Romans 8:9). He liberates us from the law of sin and of death (Romans 8:2); He brings peace to our lives (Romans 8:6); He empowers us to put to death the deeds of the body (Romans 8:13).

God gives his Spirit to Christians in order to complete his purpose for us. Not only does God desire to save us *in* Christ; he wills to make us like Christ. This is the task of the Holy Spirit in the life of a child of God.

Two forces constantly contend for complete control of the Christian. The Spirit resists the attempts of the flesh to dominate. And the flesh opposes the Spirit as he strives to exercise control.

Ultimately, the Christian decides to which of these influences he will yield himself in given situations. That is why Paul exhorts us with these words: "Walk by the Spirit, and you *will not carry out* the desire of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). If a Christian consistently surrenders to the direction of the Spirit, he will resist and conquer the flesh. In other words, if you and I cooperate with the Spirit in letting the image of Christ be formed within us, we will overcome the powerful pull of the flesh. It is a guarantee, a promise of *real victory*.

"But what does it mean to walk by the Spirit?" Paul himself offers the best answer to these words: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who lives, but *Christ lives in me* . . ." (Galatians 2:20). When you yield yourself, your talents, your possessions, your goals, your priorities, your relationships with other people to Jesus Christ, you discover what it means to walk by the Spirit.

In June of 1986, the *National Geographic* presented a study of the immune system of the human body. The article was entitled, "Our Immune System: The Wars Within." In a fascinating way, it presented information about wars that rage in our physical bodies every minute of every day. Usually we never even notice the battles within us. But every healthy person has about one trillion white blood cells that constitute a highly specialized army of defenders against viruses, bacteria, and fungi that seek to invade and to destroy our physical bodies. It is an internal, invisible conflict that rages within us.

In Galatians 5, Paul reminds us of another internal, invisible conflict. It is spiritual, not physical. But it is just as real as the battle fought by the immune system of our physical bodies. Paul points to the struggle of the Spirit against the flesh. And he essentially says, "If you seek to be on the winning side of this ultimate spiritual battle, then you must yield yourself completely to Jesus. Only then will you overcome the flesh and the works it produces."

Are you overcoming? Are you enjoying spiritual victory in the battle with sin? Are you walking by the Spirit? Have you given every part of your life to Jesus? Or does he only have control over those areas of your life that you found easy to surrender.

Where does the flesh still have its camp set up in your life? Does the flesh rule first thing Monday morning? Does it control your behavior at the office, at school, at home? Does the flesh find a place of operation in the value that you attach to money, to the kind of car you drive, to clothes you wear, to position that you seek? Does the flesh take over on Friday night or Saturday night so that the distinctive lifestyle that ought to be yours as a child of God completely disappears?

Every single one of us has those parts of our lives where the flesh and the Spirit still battle. Paul says, as plainly as he knows how, "Don't let the flesh get control. Surrender to the Spirit. Give a death sentence to every self-willed desire that you still have and let Jesus live his life in every area of your life. Let Jesus call the shots. Let the Lord really be Lord. And then watch for victory like you have never known it before!"

God calls us to a Spirit-filled walk that leads to spiritual victory.

GOD CALLS US TO A SPIRIT-FILLED WALK THAT PRODUCES SPIRITUAL FRUIT (5:22-25)

Paul's description of the fruit of the Spirit constitutes a word-portrait of the Lord Jesus. Instead of using oils and canvas, Paul selects beautiful, impressive qualities of life that combine into a mental image of Jesus himself.

Before we go any further, let us note a few things about the phrase "the fruit of the Spirit." First, the Spirit produces the fruit, not the Christian. It comes from the indwelling presence of God himself. To argue that a Christian could bring these qualities out in his life by his own effort would make as much sense as saying that an apple branch does not need the tree to bear fruit; or that a peach branch can bear fruit apart from the peach tree; or that a grape branch has no need for

the vine to put forth fruit. Jesus himself said, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Our human pride must not cause us to think for a moment that we can exercise our wills and begin producing the fruit that Paul writes about in Galatians 5.

Second, the word "fruit" is singular. We do not have before us a description of the "fruits" of the Spirit. The Spirit bears only a single fruit. Paul gives a description of it. If I were to describe my favorite fruit, I would say, "It is shades of red; it has a stem; it is sweet; it has a core and seeds." I have not described different fruits. I have described an apple—a single fruit. What Paul describes for us is a single fruit, not many different fruits.

One other thing ought to be mentioned. Paul uses a figure of speech which implies growth. Fruit does not just happen. You don't go down to the nursery, buy a peach tree, take it home, plant it, water it, go to bed that night, and get up the next day to find ripe peaches on your tree. No, growth must occur. Time is involved. Nutrients must be supplied. And so it is with the fruit of the Spirit. It takes time for the Spirit to produce the fruit. It also takes nutrients—prayer, meditation, Bible study, worship, fellowship—to bring forth the fruit. But when the Spirit is present, when the Spirit is given the freedom to do his work, when the right spiritual nutrients are provided, spiritual growth occurs that leads to spiritual fruit.

Now with these matters in mind, let us try to get a handle on the various words that Paul uses to describe the fruit of the Spirit.

Love. God himself is love (1 John 4:8). He is *agape*, which signifies a love that is totally selfless. It is a quality of love that sees the needs of others rather than the needs of one's self. *Agape* expresses itself with no strings attached. It expects nothing in return. It seeks no recognition or reward. It does not give in order to get, it just gives.

Do you see how foreign this is to the love we dish out? Even in the home, we chasten our children with words like, "How can you talk to me this way after all the things I've done for you?" Sometimes husbands and wives can catch themselves thinking, "I'd be more loving to him or to her, if he or she would be a little more considerate, help a little more, be a little more cooperative." We all tend to think that our expressions of love should pay us some dividends in return. And there is really nothing inherently wrong with these expectations. But *agape* does not require a guaranteed return on investment. It allows you to meet the needs of others without keeping a record or worrying about what they now owe to you.

Joy. Almost everyone laughs or chuckles or smiles on occasion, but precious few know anything about the experience of real joy. Joy does not come and go. It abides. It stems from an internal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Christian joy is an inner contentment and quiet satisfaction that the changing circumstances of life cannot diminish or destroy.

Do you have joy in your life? Are you able to rejoice now in the things that you are now facing? Some of you cannot, because you are not walking by the Spirit. Joy more than anything else is a result—a result of knowing that you are in the very center of the will of God for your life.

If you don't have joy in your life now, it is because you have held back some area of your life from the lordship of Jesus. You need to face it, identify it, deal with it. Because only when you surrender to him, only when you let the Spirit have his way will you know the utter joy with which Jesus wants to fill you.

Peace. The third dimension of the fruit of the Spirit is peace. The Bible reveals two kinds of peace that we can come to know as children of God: peace *with* God and the peace *of* God.

Peace *with* God occurs at conversion. Prior to the time that we come to God through Jesus, we are not on God's side. James tells us, "...friendship with the world is hostility toward God. Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). At some point we have all been God's enemies. We have gone against him. We have actively rebelled against his authority. To undo what we have done, God sent his Son. He sent Jesus to bring peace between himself and all of us who chose to be his enemies. The Bible tells us, "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). In Christ, the conflict has concluded; the strife has stopped; the war is over. Christians are at peace with God.

But beyond this peace *with* God, the Scriptures promise to those who walk by the Spirit the peace *of* God. This is nothing short of the inner tranquility, the inner stability, the inner confidence that you and I can have in the midst of a confusing and falling-apart world.

Our world threatens every one of us. The headlines of newspapers present a picture of a planet precariously close to coming apart. From the Middle East to Central America to the island nations of the Pacific, wars and conflicts rage that threaten us. Famine takes thousands of lives daily, while the world population continues to increase at an unprecedented rate. Epidemic diseases, like AIDS, continue to run out

of control. Crime, terrorism, recession, depression, political scandal, the breakup of the home—all of these are but representative of a world that has within it the seeds of its own self-destruction.

Many people find it difficult to cope with all of this. The pressure, the pace, the stress, and the strain are taking their toll. Everywhere there is evidence that people find it difficult to deal with what life serves them. In desperation they search for an escape in a few moments of sensual pleasure, in what a bottle of alcohol offers, or in another cocaine high. Some even take their own lives just to bring an end to their worries, their despairs, and their heartaches.

In contrast, the Spirit of God offers peace—not an escape from our threatening, confusing world—but an inner confidence and quietness that waits for God to work out his purposes in the midst of life's most challenging moments.

Patience. The original word is *makrothumia*. It is a compound word. *Makros* means "long," and *thumos* means "temper or anger." Putting these together, we come up with "long-tempered," the very opposite of the expression "short-tempered." When the Spirit of the Living Lord has his way within us, we lose the tendency to be short-fused with both people and circumstances.

Being impatient toward people or events is not a mark of spiritual maturity. It indicates the presence of the flesh. Having the sort of disposition that resembles dry gun powder waiting for a match is not something that pleases God. Isn't it interesting, though, how we often excuse ourselves at this point? We lose control and then follow it with, "Well, I have always had a bad temper." Or, "I sometimes say things that I don't mean." Granted. But God is not satisfied with the *recognition* that we are short-fused or quick tempered. He looks for our *submission* at that point.

If you fly off the handle easily or if people know you to have a short fuse, then you need to get alone with God and surrender your temper to him. Only then will the Holy Spirit begin to generate within you the Christ-like quality of patience.

Kindness. Kindness expresses the attitude of willingness to meet the needs of others. The quality finds its source in God. Consequently, by searching out what the Bible tells us about God's kindness we can learn something about its distinctive characteristics. For example, kindness knows no boundaries. It seeks to express itself *universally*. Jesus said: "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for *He himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men* (Luke 6:35).

God does not send his kindness with strings attached. He does not say, "I will stop being kind if you don't respond to what I have to say." He "causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:45). God's kindness is universal.

God's kindness is also *redemptive*. God has a purpose in showing kindness to all men. Paul asks, "Or do you think lightly of the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing *that the kindness of God leads you to repentance*" (Romans 2:4). God shows kindness to all because he seeks to save all.

God's kindness is universal and redemptive. What can we learn from this? First, when the Spirit really moves in our lives to produce kindness, the sinful tendency to be insensitive or uncaring toward others will be replaced with a willingness and determination to reach out to help others. We should not sit back and let government agencies take over the front lines in the war against drug abuse, poverty, hunger, broken homes and the like.

If there is any place that the people of our communities should know they can go to find help to get a teenager off drugs it ought to be the Lord's church. The place where the street people and the hungry are fed should be overseen by Christians, rather than non-Christian service groups. The place where divorced people find help in putting their lives back together should be the local body of believers. The place in the community most known by the community as a group of people who really care and who will help the littlest and the least should be the place that dares to be identified as the church of Christ.

To this we might add one other observation. To show kindness we begin where people are and help them. Some might denounce this. But don't let them stop you. Let the Spirit lead you into the practice of kindness, because it is the very image of Jesus himself. And when we begin to be known for our kindness, our consideration, our concern, then God will use this in a redemptive way to draw people to himself.

Goodness. The Greek word for goodness is so broad, so expansive in usage that its meaning is difficult to pinpoint. But basically, the Bible seems to show that the quality of goodness includes the twin ideas of generosity and big-heartedness.

Goodness goes beyond fairness. When we treat others fairly, we give to them what they deserve. A person who uses illegal drugs deserves to go to jail for it. It would be fair to sentence them to the maximum that the law allows for that particular crime. But goodness surpasses fairness. It concentrates on helping the person, on benefiting the person,

and on enabling the person to get back on the right track in life. Fairness may send a junkie to prison, but goodness may very well send him to a hospital or to someone somewhere who can help the person put his or her life back together again.

"But, people ought to get what they deserve." Is that right? Do you want God to give you what you deserve? As a sinner who will one day stand before the Judge of all Judges, do you want him to treat you in fairness or in goodness?

Goodness acts as one of those balancing qualities in the Christian life. The story is told about a man who was led to Christ in part by the goodness of T.B. Larimore. This individual had attended numerous worship services and meetings. He had heard the sermons of many preachers. After his conversion, someone asked, "Why did you respond to the gospel after hearing it proclaimed by brother Larimore when you had not before?" The man's answer is itself a sermon. He responded, "From other preachers I'd learned I was going to hell for my sins, but they seemed almost pleased that I was. From Larimore I learned that I was lost, but I could tell it broke his heart to have to tell me so."

Day by day you and I encounter hurting, embarrassed, struggling, depressed, confused people. They need a breath of fresh air to come into their lives. They need the expression of goodness from us that the Holy Spirit seeks to produce in us.

Faithfulness. The next quality associated with the fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness. If I have surrendered my life to the Spirit of the Living God, if I let Jesus live his life in me, my life will grow in faithfulness, in trustworthiness, and in dependability.

Faithfulness or dependability is one of the qualities that we associate with God. We can declare just as boldly that God is dependable, as we declare that God is love. And when the Holy Spirit moves in the Christian's life, he seeks to instill this divine dependability in us.

One of the characteristic features of this dying age is its fickleness. Unbelievers demonstrate a pronounced inability to stick with commitments. The pastures always seem greener elsewhere. Somebody else has always had things that offer a greater appeal, a spouse that looks more exciting, possessions which appear more satisfying, or an overall way of going about life that seems more personally fulfilling.

The problem is selfishness. People who let the flesh dominate do not have the ability to be consistent or dependable. They walk away from marriages, from problem children, from financial agreements, from friendships, and job assignments because serving self is more important

than carrying through with a commitment.

In contrast, the Christian life should exhibit reliability. We should allow the Holy Spirit to replace our fickleness with faithfulness. Some of you may find that this will involve staying with a congregation when it seems like no one appreciates your service. It may mean commitment to a spouse who seems to be intent on making your life miserable. Others may find that dependability demands that you refuse to give up on a rebellious child who has already broken your heart in a hundred different ways. Trustworthiness may mean doing your best on a homework assignment, or paying bills on time, or keeping appointments as scheduled, or fulfilling responsibilities associated with your local church.

When a child of God demonstrates dependability two important things should be noted. First, the Christian is under the influence of the Spirit, for this is the fruit of the Spirit. Second, the Christian's credibility to communicate the gospel of Christ is greatly enhanced.

Gentleness. Many of us men fail to value the quality of gentleness. In our society, men are tough. Real men grab for the gusto. They take life by the throat. They fight for their rights. "Real men don't eat quiche, and they don't like to come across as gentle!"

This misses the mark in understanding the sort of gentleness that God Almighty himself strives to bring forth in every believer's life. The Greek word translated "gentleness" is *prautes*. It is anything but a weak word. The Greeks refer to persons or things that showed a special soothing quality—like an ointment that relieved the pain of a burn. They also used this word to describe controlled conduct, like a Persian king who acted kindly to an officer who had failed in his given assignment, or like a horseman who trained a high-spirited horse in a sympathetic way.

Gentleness combines the ideas of toughness and tenderness. It is another balance-quality. If our treatment of others leans too much on the side of toughness, we tend toward coldness and intolerance. Likewise, if our treatment of others falls more on the side of tenderness, we tend toward compromise and timidity. In gentleness, the Holy Spirit makes us both tough and tender: always tough when we need to be, always tender when tenderness is best.

In the New Testament, we discover that gentleness is the attitude we need to face some difficult assignments:

1. When we seek to have a teachable spirit as we study God's word (James 1:21).

2. When we need to confront others with their sin (Galatians 6:1).
3. When we face personal opposition (2 Timothy 2:25).
4. When we defend the faith (1 Peter 3:15).
5. When we live our lives before men (1 Peter 3:4).

We need the divine balance of toughness and tenderness in times like these. Gentleness enables us to be teachable, considerate, courageous, and, most of all, Christ-like.

Self-control. The last of Paul's descriptive terms for the fruit of the Spirit is self-control. It is the power to restrain the urges and appetites that could ruin and destroy us.

Restraint is seldom heard today. We are much more likely to pick up a message from a bumper sticker or a billboard or a commercial that says, "Let it all hang out," or "Tell it like it is," or "Don't hold back," or "Go for it!" And it's easy to take that advice. It appeals to the flesh, to that inclination to do what we want to do instead of what God wants us to do.

Unfortunately, the removal of restraint results in ruination. It leads to disaster. I remember in the seventh grade that I was riding my bicycle home from school. I did not have my hands on the handle bars. I thought I could handle that bicycle without direct control. At least that is what I thought until I lost control, wrecked the bike, and dislocated a shoulder. You see, I thought the removal of restraint made the ride more exciting. And for a while it did, but it ended up causing a lot of pain.

Life is that way. You may think the removal of restraint makes life more exciting. Why restrain your sexuality, your desire for wealth, your push for power, your anger, your language, and your thoughts? Because if you don't, you are headed for a lot of pain!

There are things we encounter in life that taste so good, look so good, and feel so good that we are inclined to "go for it" without any restraint. But remember that God calls us to self-control. He beckons us to enjoy the good things of life within the boundaries he has set. Only within those divinely-ordained boundaries can we discover genuine and complete enjoyment of God's good blessings. When we recklessly go beyond these boundaries we will leave behind a trail of broken hearts, broken homes, and broken lives.

The fruit of the Spirit is self-control. That happens when you find in Jesus the power to exercise spiritual discipline and restraint.

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CHURCH OF CHRIST

FIRST AND AVENUE O

BURKBURNETT, TEXAS

February 2, 1989

Maxie Boren
 Brown Trail School Of Preaching
 Box 865
 Hurst, Texas 76053

Dear Maxie,

As is always the case, it was good to see you at the lectures. It was an excellent series on a vital theme. I am looking forward to next year's.

There are some things that I believe I need to mention concerning the meeting with Rusty. First, you asked me to meet with Rusty. I believe you took advantage of me by asking someone else to sit in on the meeting. I do not know if I would have accepted the invitation if I had known of that condition prior to the meeting. As it was I just about left the meeting when I saw Don come in with us, in some respects I still believe I should have walked out. To say the least, I would have requested to have someone with me. Maxie, that was an injustice to me.

Second, Don seemed to think that this was something that I had published around the brotherhood. Let me assure you the letter I sent to you was only seen by the elders here and a copy sent to the elders at Brown Trail. As far as I know, no one else has seen the letter, except the ones you showed it to.

Third, I was at a great disadvantage in this meeting. You asked me to meet during the open forum and immediately after the forum we met. This did not give me any time to prepare. I did not have access to Rusty's manuscript, nor the 1988 lectureship book, nor the tape of Rusty's lesson. I was trying to work from my memory of a year ago. Simply put, my mind is not good enough to remember everything over a year's time. As a result, I want to give some of the problems I have with Rusty's manuscript.

In the meeting he said he followed the manuscript fairly close. After reading the manuscript what he said in the meeting, and what he wrote in the manuscript are two different subjects. In the meeting he spoke of the Spirit's work as being in the realm of providence and in providing the proper atmosphere so the Christian can develop properly. If you will read his manuscript, this is not what he was talking about. "It takes time for the Spirit to produce the fruit. It also takes nutrients--prayer, meditation,

Bible study, worship, fellowship--to bring forth the fruit. But when the Spirit is present, when the Spirit is given the freedom to do his work, when the right spiritual nutrients are provided, spiritual growth occurs that leads to spiritual fruit" (p. 39). He makes a distinction in the book, and tells us that is what he meant. Both cannot be true.

I accused Rusty of indicating that he believed in the doctrine of total depravity. I did not mean hereditary depravity, but that man is incapable of doing any good. Rusty writes, "Nothing good dwells in the flesh" (p. 36). He goes on to explain, "We are not born with it...Instead, we are born into an environment" (p. 36). Later he says, "the Spirit produces the fruit, not the Christian" (p. 38). Then adds, "Our human pride must not cause us to think for a moment that we can exercise our wills and begin producing the fruit that Paul writes about in Galatians 5" (p. 39). This is clearly the doctrine of total depravity. A Calvinist would agree wholeheartedly with what Rusty taught.

The thinking that man is totally depraved causes Rusty to emphasize, "the Spirit produces the fruit, not the Christian" (p. 38). This is why I accuse Rusty of teaching the Holy Spirit operates directly on the individual. He says, "He (the Spirit - mh) empowers us to put to death the deeds of the body" (p. 37). Again, "His Holy Spirit accomplishes this, not in an overpowering way, but an empowering way. (p. 46). The word empower means, "to give power to; a. to give a person capacity, enable, to perform some physical or mental activity; b. to delegate authority to, authorize, give legal right." I believe we find out what Rusty means in the rest of the manuscript. He says, "Not only does God desire to save us in Christ; he will to make us like Christ. This is the task of the Holy Spirit in the life of a child of God" (p. 37). In discussing joy, he says, "It stems from an internal relationship with the Holy Spirit" (p. 40). Later he says, "only when you let the Spirit have his way will you know the utter joy with which Jesus wants to fill you" (p. 40). Discussing patience, "When the Spirit of the Living Lord has his way within us" (p. 41). Again, "the Holy Spirit begin to generate within you the Christ-like quality of patience" (p. 41). In discussing kindness, "when the Spirit really moves in our lives to produce kindness" (p. 42). Also, "Let the Spirit lead you into the practice of kindness" (p. 42). Discussing goodness, "They need the expression of goodness from us that the Holy Spirit seeks to produce in us" (p. 43). Discussing faithfulness, "And when the Holy Spirit moves in the Christian's life, he seeks to instill this divine dependability in us" (p. 43). Again, "We should allow the Holy Spirit to replace our fickleness with faithfulness" (p. 44). "When a child of God demonstrates dependability two important things should be noted. First, the Christian is under the influence of the Spirit" (p. 44). Discussing gentleness, "the Holy Spirit makes us both tough and tender" (p. 44). Maxie, not one time does Rusty even hint that the Spirit does this through the word of God. Since man cannot produce these things and the Spirit does produce them, then is not the Spirit working directly upon the individual? Those of the Pentecostal persuasion would agree

completely with what Rusty wrote. Maxie, can you honestly read these quotes and then tell me that Rusty is sound in the faith, and the type of man you want teaching the school of preaching? If so, I cannot support it. I believe my former accusation stands.

Maxie, we both know that when those of the liberal group speak or write they do so in such a way they can always say, "you misunderstood me" or "that is not what I meant". I also know that Rusty can say the same thing concerning his article. This concerns me as much as anything else. Why is it that a man that is teaching men to preach the gospel cannot so write and speak that everyone will understand exactly what he means? Which way will those under his teaching come out when he speaks and writes such? I fear for those men.

Maxie, I know there is difficulty in the area of fellowship and the discontinuance of fellowship. I also know the scriptures teach there comes a time when we must sever fellowship. I believe that when a man teaches false doctrine such that would cause others, if believed, to be lost or go astray then it is time to withdraw fellowship from him (see Rom. 16:17; Tit. 1:9-11; 3:10-11; 2 John 9-11; 2 Thess. 3:6,14). This is what places like Richland Hills, and those like them have done. When will those who are faithful mark and withdraw from them?

I believe what Rusty taught in his lesson if believed by others would lead us into Pentecostalism and Calvinism. It is not a "minuscule thing" that we can overlook. These are serious matters that you must address. This is even more true since he is a teacher of preachers. "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas. 3:1).

Maxie, I pray that you will receive this letter in the same spirit in which I have written it. I hold no animosity against you nor Rusty, although I do believe that he teaches some things that are false. If there is a way in which he can resolve the things he wrote with God's word, then I welcome the explanation. I pray that you will give more consideration to this letter than my other letter. Please consider these things and write me concerning them. I love good schools of preaching, and I want Brown Trail to be such a school.

In Christian Love,

Michael Hatcher

Michael Hatcher

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CHURCH OF CHRIST

FIRST AND AVENUE O

BURKBURNETT, TEXAS

DEACONS

Cleatus Copeland
 Seth Hatfield
 Paul McBroom
 Ricky Skaggs

March 16, 1989

Maxie Boren
 Brown Trail School Of Preaching
 Box 865
 Hurst, Texas 76053

Dear Maxie,

In many ways I am rather surprised, Maxie, that you have not responded to my letter of 2-2-89. I can only come up with a few ideas as to why this is the case. 1) You have not had the time to respond (but we make time for those things that we think are important). 2) It was not important enough to respond to (I certainly hope this is not the case, and I wonder if others would feel it is not important). 3) You hope this problem will just go away if you ignore it long enough (it will not). 4) You simply do not want to face the problem of a false teacher at Brown Trail.

Maxie, I do not believe that you are blind to false teaching. I think you can recognize it when it arises. It appears to me that what you want to do is nothing. You can see it, but allow it to continue. I believe this is the reason you have not marked and withdrawn from Richland Hills (I also know there is family involved). I believe that this is the reason you continue to have Rusty Peterman on the staff at Brown Trail. I do not believe that you can read his manuscript from the 1988 lectureship and say that he is sound in the faith.

Let me add another of Rusty's false teachings. Study the 1985 Forth Worth Lectureship book, p. 286-287 concerning footnote 7. In this footnote Rusty equates worship and service. "It would appear that Paul's use of *latreia* was designed to stress that the whole of a Christian's life should be "service" or "worship" to God." In the first of his three observations he says, "Likewise, *latreuo*, in both the O.T. and the N.T. describes "service" (or "worship") to God." In his second observation, he goes on to say, "Acceptable worship to God is anything given or done to show reverence, honor or respect -- including an attitude, a word, a thought or a deed -- which is not only authorized by God, but offered with proper motive (John 4:42; Colossians 3:17)." The book has John 4:42 although I am sure it should be John 4:24. Maxie, do you believe that everything one does is worship? This is what Rusty teaches. Is this what you want taught at Brown Trail? If not, then why keep Rusty as a teacher in the school?

Maxie, when will you, "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6:17a). Yet, you continue to fellowship those who are destroying the beautiful bride of Christ. You often speak of the love that you have for them, I want to know about the love you have for Christ. Do you love them or Christ and His church more? If the answer is the church then why do you continue to fellowship and apparently support those who would destroy it? God's word still says, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

If this were a member of the Lord's church here, I would work and instruct as best I could to get him out of his false teachings. That is not the case with Rusty. Rusty is in the business of training men to proclaim God's word. If Rusty infects the students with these false doctrines, what will the Lord's church become? I shutter to think.

One last thing. While in the past, I have kept everything on a private basis, even though I do not believe it was necessary, that will not necessarily be the case in the future. Many have asked me about the meeting we had during the lectures (even though private, others knew about it). To those people I openly talked about the events, and have allowed them to read my letter to you. I believe I have been very patient in this matter. When someone teaches false doctrine (as Rusty did) Matt. 18:15-20 does not apply. We have the right to publicly mark that false teacher. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). While I have not "written up" the school or Rusty, I did want you to know there are others who know about this and have read my last letter to you.

I pray that you will at least give me the courtesy of writing to me in answer to these things. Please, do so! Christian courtesy would demand such. I believe that we have been friends and still are friends (at least on my part). That should be reason enough to respond to something I believe is very important.

In Christian Love,

Michael Hatcher

Michael Hatcher

cc: Brown Trail Elders



BROWN TRAIL SCHOOL OF PREACHING

MAILING
P.O. BOX 210667
BEDFORD, TX 76095

A Work of the Brown Trail Church of Christ
(817) 282-3911

LOCATION
1801 BROWN TRAIL
BEDFORD, TEXAS 76021

March 24, 1989

Mr. Michael Hatcher
Church of Christ
1st & Ave. C
Burkburnett, Texas 76354

Dear Mike,

Your letter of Feb. 2nd was received sometime ago. I apologize for not responding sooner...had every intention of doing so and have just been so busy that I am way behind on most everything.

Also, Mike, I am sincerely sorry for whatever offense you felt concerning the meeting I arranged, on the spur of the moment, between you, myself, Don, and Rusty. Believe me, I thought I was doing the right thing and had no intention whatsoever of "ganging up" on you. I just thought that while you were there, and since you had made the charges concerning Rusty, that it would be good if you and he could talk about it. The only reason I asked Don to come in on the meeting was that he happened to be right there, and since he already knew about your letter, and was interested, I thought it might be good for him to sit in on it. Please recall that the meeting was informal and you were treated with the utmost courtesy. But anyway, I am sorry that you were offended, and I sincerely apologize, and ask you to forgive me.

The matter has been discussed between myself and Rusty, and between myself and Eddie Whitten. So we are aware of your feelings, and I have made myself clear to all concerned. We certainly purpose to keep the Brown Trail School Of Preaching true to the Book as best as is humanly possible.

If you should want to, please feel free to correspond with Rusty directly. I told him I was going to suggest that to you and he said he had no objections, and would be glad for you to do so.

My best wishes to you in your labors for the Lord.

In His service always,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maxie B. Boren".

Maxie B. Boren

cc: to Howard Barnum and Dale Peterson, elders at Brown Trail that act as "liaison" men between School Of Preaching and the entire eldership; Eddie Whitten, to whom you have written; and to Rusty Peterman.

ELDERS

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MINISTER

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CHURCH OF CHRIST

FIRST AND AVENUE O
BURKBURNETT, TEXAS

DEACONS

Cleatius Copeland
Seth Hatfield
Paul McBroom
Ricky Skaggs

April 11, 1989

Maxie Boren
Brown Trail School Of Preaching
P.O. Box 210667
Bedford, Texas 76095

Dear Maxie,

When I saw the letter from you I opened it with great anticipation, only to give way to disappointment. I at least thought that you would say something about the "charges" I had made against Rusty. Your silence is greatly surprising. You made the statement, "I have made myself clear to all concerned." Maxie, you have NOT made yourself clear to me, and I am the one who made the accusations against Rusty.

You say you have discussed this with both Eddie and Rusty. I was not privy to those discussions and know nothing concerning them. Are you in agreement with Rusty concerning these matters? Are you forbidding him to teach these doctrines, but continue to teach in the school? Are you releasing him from his teaching duties at the school? It is also my desire for Brown Trail to remain true to the book. My question is how can it remain true to the book when a teacher holds the false doctrines that I have enumerated?

I accept your apology for offending me. For the record I agree that I was, "treated with the utmost courtesy." I did not have any objections to meeting with Rusty. I wish you had written me before the lectures and asked me, so I would have had time to prepare. Much more could have been accomplished. The only thing I objected to was Don being asked to come into the meeting when you had asked me to meet with Rusty. That was all I objected and took offence to. If you would like I would not be opposed to having a public meeting with Rusty, to discuss not only these questions, but some others as well. I would propose that this meeting be Jan. 1990, during the lectures. There are several other brethren that I know of that would be interested in discussing several matters with Rusty. I will leave this up to your discretion.

Concerning writing to Rusty, I see no need to do so at the present time. He has read my letters to you and knows the "charges" that I have made against him. If he wishes to respond to these things then I will correspond with him. Otherwise, I see no reason to write to him.

I also want to clarify one small matter. I did not write anything to Eddie Whitten. I sent a copy of my first letter to the Brown Trail elders in care of Eddie Whitten. I have not addressed a letter to him nor written him about this situation. I have discussed the situation with him. I would like for you to give copies of this letter to the Brown Trail elders as well, in order to keep them informed.

Maxie, I still love you and wish the best for you. If you are in this area, feel free to stop by the house. If you would like to discuss this further, either by letter or in person, I would appreciate it. I would also appreciate knowing what action you have taken.

In Christian love,

Michael Hatcher

Michael Hatcher

Maxie B. Boren

EVANGELIST

P. O. BOX 10252 • LONGVIEW, TEXAS 75608 5 / TELEPHONE CONTACT: 214/759-0119 • 817/232-5529

Tuesday, May 2, 1989

Michael Hatcher
Church of Christ
First and Ave. C
Burkburnett, Texas

Dear Mike,

Your letter of April 11th was received. I've intended to reply sooner, but again, I've been awfully busy with so much to do. Presently, I'm in a meeting in West Virginia.

May this letter serve to inform you that brother Rusty Peterman has resigned as a full-time teacher at the Brown Trail School of Preaching, effective at the end of this present semester. He has accepted a work with the Airport Freeway congregation. Plans call for him to remain with the School on a part-time basis to teach Greek only. A good Greek teacher is hard to come by.

Knowing of your feelings on the matter, I trust that this news will be pleasing to you. You can be assured that we are going to do our very best to acquire the services of another teacher, who is sound in the faith beyond any doubt. We solicit your prayers to this end.

Michael, we'd like very much for you to feel good about the Brown Trail School of Preaching, and be a friend to the School. But, of course, that is up to you.

In closing, may I express my sincere best wishes to you in all your labors for the Master.

Yours in the faith,

Maxie B. Boren

Maxie B. Boren



"Thus saith the Lord" preaching!

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CHURCH OF CHRIST

FIRST AND AVENUE C

BURKBURNETT, TEXAS

May 10, 1989

Maxie Boren
P.O. Box 10252
Longview, Texas 75605

Dear Maxie,

I pray that the meetings you have been engaged in have been successful. I have received your letter of May 2.

I am pleased to hear that Rusty has resigned as a full-time teacher at Brown Trail. My prayer will be that Rusty will repent of the errors he has been teaching. I understand how difficult it is to get a good Greek teacher and I understand that Rusty is excellent in Greek. Personally, I already feel better about the school. I also know that many other preachers will feel better, and the respect of the school will improve.

Maxie, I believe I have been a "friend to the School". I believe I have been a very good friend. Just because I have exposed and tried to correct something I see as a problem does not mean I have not been a friend. In fact, I believe that is the best type of friend to have. If you mean by friend, supporting the school, I am much closer to being able to support the school now that Rusty has resigned. As I have said previously, I love good schools of preaching. Brown Trail has been such a one, and I pray will be in the future.

I will be praying for the school and the decision as to the new teacher. I pray that he will be an aid to the school, and will be sound in the faith, and well respected in the brotherhood. While I feel that any help from me is not exactly desired, any help that I can give is certainly available.

Best wishes in all that you do, Maxie. Give Fran my best wishes as well. My all that you do bring glory to our Lord.

In Christian love,

Michael Hatcher

Michael Hatcher

The SHIELD OF FAITH

"Above all, taking the shield of faith..." (Ephesians 6:16)

Vol. 4

APRIL 1990

Number 11

DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES OR PERSONALITY PROBLEMS?

Bill Clayton (editor)

THE DIVINE MANDATE

The inspired Paul wrote:

"I CHARGE thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

Introduction

Here in the twilight years of this beloved apostle is the charge to "preach the word." Although he was near the end of his earthly journey (cf. 2 Tim. 4:6-22), preaching the word, not tickling ears, took precedent over the preaching of all other things. Surely the doctrinal import of the Psalmist, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7), weighed heavily upon the heart of this aged apostle.

In his letter to Titus, Paul expressed profound concern for purity of doctrine. Some were unruly, vain talkers, subverters of the truth, and these mouths must be stopped (Tit. 1:9-11). "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Tit. 1:16-2:1). He later instructed Titus to reject the heretic (factious, ASV) after the first and second admonition (Tit. 3:10).

From the above contexts, it is evident that brethren would depart from sound doctrine. In what manner would they depart? They would seek to satisfy their own lusts, and they would seek after teachers who would make them feel good in what they were doing. They were high-minded, prideful, having the spirit of Diotrephes, and lusting after power and preeminence. Paul warned the elders of Ephesus: "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples (the disciples, ASV) after

them" (Acts 20:30).

In yet another context, Paul "marveled" that some were so soon removed from the grace of Christ, into which they had been called, and now were "troubled" by those "perverting the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6-7). Inspiration's strong condemnation of such perversion is clearly marked by the repetition of the word "accursed" in vs. 8-9. He then contrasts "a man pleaser" with "a servant of Christ" (vs. 10), and so will I.

The Cause Of The Clash

Opposing viewpoints would inevitably arise as those deviating into behavioral patterns of pride, self-will and "speaking perverse things" met with opposition from those upholding the truth. Conflicting personalities ALWAYS emerge when error or evil is PRO-posed by brother "A" and OP-posed by brother "B."

It must be acknowledged, however, that churches have been divided by nothing more than human pride and stubbornness. Such is tragic and sinful beyond excuse. It is also true that some have been ugly and hateful to others because of envy which generates contention and strife. Paul encountered such in a Roman prison. He said they so acted, "supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (Phil. 1:15-16). Such sinful motives and actions would surely engender personal tensions. It is, nevertheless, a fact that nearly all "personality clashes" occurring within the church have their beginning in genuine doctrinal discord.

It is identifying that which is of the faith (DOCTRINAL) as opposed to one's own self will (personal likes and dislikes, PERSONALITIES) that we now study. The following are concrete examples that I have known and/or observed.

Classic Cases Clarify

First, consider a situation where the biblical government of the local church is challenged. The detailed proposition submitted to the eldership stipulated an arrangement whereby the church would be directed/ruled by a system in which a committee would propose, promote and project rules and regulations for discussion and approval by the entire church.

CONTINUED PAGE 3

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

From Man, Not God

Raymond Allen Hagood

Several reasons have already been set forth, demonstrating why the social gospel is contrary to the Bible. First, it teaches "social salvation" — "Change the economic environment, and man will be transformed." It changes the mission of the church and offers its own definition of sin and evil. Also, it promises an earthly kingdom of God — not the church of Christ, God's true kingdom — but a man-made utopia structured according to socialistic principles.

In the fifth place the social gospel is wrong, because it changes the relationship between God and man. Max Webber in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* sets forth this change of relationship. Swanson in his writing summarized very well this change that Webber speaks of:

In Reformation Protestantism men were identified as God's creatures or dependents or servants or worshippers. The most dignified role allotted them was as God's images or as children in his household... New trends in [theology]...make another role the chief one, namely, the role of man as equally dependent with God in a common task.¹

Swanson makes it very clear that in this new theology God and the individual are equal and mutually dependent upon each other. Of course, this violates every passage of scripture in the Bible which speaks of man's relationship to God. God and man are not equal; to teach that they are is gross error. Romans 6:22 is only one of many passages that expresses man's relationship to God as that of servant: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

In the next place the social gospel preaches and teaches the overthrow of nations by any means; in particular, it advocates the overthrow of America. George Bernard Shaw, one of the originators of the Fabian movement, said, in effect, "When we come to power, you will do what we tell you or we will shoot you."² Walter Rauschenbusch said in his book, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*,

It is hardly likely that any social revolution by which hereafter capitalism may be overthrown will cause more injustice, more physical suffering, and more heartache than the industrial revolution by which capitalism rose to power.³

The New Testament never teaches or advocates in any way that Christians ought to create a revolution against any government. Paul never held an anti-slavery meeting; Peter never made a public protest against the organized grafting in the Roman system of tax-farming.

While the Bible does not approve slavery, it certainly does not endorse the uprising of a servant against his master. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord,

whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him" (Eph. 6:5-9). When this epistle was written, slavery was a legal institution. Millions of people were slaves, and some of these slaves were Christians. Yet, God's instruction was not revolution, but obedience.

Additionally, this false philosophy advocates the advancement of such atheistic political doctrine as communism. Socialism advocates the dialectical materialism that forms the theory of communism. Walter Rauschenbusch said this:

Thus the Three great institutions on which we mainly depend to train the young to a moral life and to make us all good, wise and happy, are essentially communistic, and their success and efficiency depend on the continued mastery of the spirit of solidarity and brotherhood within them. It is nothing short of funny to hear the very men who ceaselessly glorify the home, the school and the church, turn around and abuse communism.⁴

He further states: "It can fairly be maintained, too, that the State, another great moral agent, is communistic in its very nature."⁵

An even more revealing statement is found on page 396 of *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, from the last two quotations were taken.

Down to modern times, as we have seen, the universal judgment of Christian thought was in favor of communism as more in harmony with the genius of Christianity...Simultaneously with the rise of capitalism that conviction began to fade out...The question is now how quickly Christian thought will realize that individualism is coming to be an inadequate and antiquated form of social organization which must give place to a higher form of communistic organization.⁶

Then he says further,

It would seem, therefore, that one of the greatest services which Christianity could render to humanity in the throes of the present transition would be to aid those social forces which are making for the increase of communism.⁷

Finally, though this does not cover all that is wrong, the social gospel sets up equality as the determining factor in morality. Rauschenbusch states, "The sense of equality is the only basis for Christian morality."⁸

Now, understand it — it is not God and His word that establish morality, according to the social gospel advocates — it is the "sense of equality." What do they mean by equality? Theirs is the same meaning as that of the Fabian socialists — everyone has the same amount of money, property, clothes, food and such like.

Now we understand Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" and John Kennedy's "New Frontier." Both of these movements were strongly influenced by Fabian socialism and sought to create morality based upon equality. Listen to the way that they spoke of poverty. Poverty was a sin to them — a moral enigma.

Johnson declared a "War on Poverty." How was he to accomplish victory in this war? By taxing America greatly

After a series of committee and sub-committee meetings, followed by "OPEN: congregational meetings, the resulting decisions would be "presented to the elders for their review and approval." This would, of course, place the eldership in the unenviable position of approving the plans, or enduring the disappointment and vexation of both the committee (s) and the congregation in rejecting them. It actually was an attempt to place the local church in a position where all decisions of any import would be determined by a popular vote.

This matter definitely caused some "clashes" of major proportions within the eldership. Three important questions must be considered: (1) Were these "personality clashes?", (2) Were they "doctrinal clashes?" or (3) Was it a case of **Doctrinal** disagreements that led to personal conflicts?

If there is any clear teaching at all in the Bible, and there is, one of the clearest must be that the local church is to be overseen by a plurality of qualified men called elders or bishops. History has demonstrated over and over that many of the "personality" problems within the eldership of a congregation evolve from men who do NOT have the qualifications required by the New Testament.

SECOND, ponder a case of a false preacher/teacher putting forth, in a public discourse, the claim that the NT authorizes "solo singing" (1 Cor. 14:26) for use in a scriptural worship assembly. One elder clearly and publicly refuted this error immediately after it was taught. Others of the eldership manifested their displeasure with the false teaching being exposed, but did not make a definite attempt to actually uphold the error. This, however, did cause some tension and conflict. Question: Was this just **PERSONAL**, or was it **DOCTRINAL**?

THIRD, weigh the doctrinal differences that led to personal difficulties concerning the ungodly positions and practices emanating from one of "our" eminent "Christian" schools. One elder is totally adamant in upholding his old "Alma Mater," even in the face of ongoing evidence that this school is degenerating into liberalism. The infamous "Abilene (water) Gate" of a few years ago concerned the matter of evolution, and the charge of teaching raw evolution as a scientific fact was proven unequivocally. This has been constantly denied by this elder, even after these verbatim statements of Dr. Archie Manis were revealed:

"Evolution's history and methodology will continue to feed debates for generations, but the fact of evolution is beyond dispute. The concept is rational, scientific, and supported by an overwhelming mass of evidence from past and present."

And again, from his own handwriting,

"Our teaching at ACU has more presented evolution as an explanation for the world — it has been and is being presented as a body of scientific thought supported by a body of scientific evidence. As theory goes, there is no evidence against any of these viewpoints from science."

This is the same teacher who had written on the first page of God's revealed, sacred message that Genesis 1:1 is a "hymn" or "creation myth" (*Is Genesis Myth?* by Bert Thompson, pp. 1,26).

The elder under discussion just dismisses such facts with the terse statement that, "it didn't happen." This has been the ridiculous, simplistic handling of this serious problem from the president of the school all the way down to all who

put more credence in "myth" than in truth.

This man, who is still insistent upon being an elder, expounds in ringing tones his sound and firm stand for the faith. It seems to this writer that it would be difficult to correlate such bold claims with the fact that he dismissed a Bible teacher recently who, in a Sunday morning class, made reference to Archie Manis and his teaching evolution at ACU. Resentment, tension and opposition always result from such behavior. Is this because people have "personality" differences, or is it the case of genuine difference in sound doctrine?

FOURTH, examine the matter of the **ACAPPELLA VOCAL BAND**. One elder proposed that the young people be taken to see the performance of the **ACAPPELLA VOCAL BAND** at another congregation. After the discussion of the **UNscriptural** teaching and behavior that always accompanies their performance, the majority of the elders vetoed the proposal. Note, however, this headstrong elder went ahead and approved and encouraged the attendance, at that gathering, of several of the young people. This, naturally, generated "problems" within the eldership. Were these **PERSONAL OR DOCTRINAL**?

Self-Examination

Such questions have to be answered by each individual. This subject must be examined in the light of God's Word, especially in view of the division that results in the body of Christ. The sure and sobering conclusion is that all must stand before God in judgment (cf. Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10). Remember, we will not be judged "as a congregation," but as "an individual" and according "to what is written." No one must "dare" go "beyond what is written" (cf. 1 Cor. 4:6; John 12:48).

Conclusion

Just as Demas forsook Paul, and, as Alexander did him much evil, the roots of the matter were **DOCTRINAL**. Demas loved the ungodliness of the world, and Alexander withstood the apostles' teaching. In like manner, when scriptural proclamations condemn the looseness of the liberalist, his ever-ready escape clause is an appeal to personalities or methodology. Accordingly, when those espousing positions of doctrinal error are faced with it, rather than own up to such error, they hide behind their smokescreen of "**PERSONALITIES**."

I hasten to add, that in no way does this writer seek to take from the value of love, faith, brotherly kindness, and the fruit of the Spirit, as "against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:23). However, brethren must open their eyes and see that this is **NOT A GREY** area, but one either of **TRUTH OR ERROR**, that is, **DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES OR PERSONALITY PROBLEMS**.

Paul became weary of brethren turning against him and the inspired truth he taught, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16). Evidently, he knew the influence of their own wills deeply affected their personalities and how they acted toward the truth of God. Some today, like those of old, are trying to cover the **UNsoundness** under the guise of **personality conflicts**. May we forever love the truth enough to stand for it, to always let it, and it alone, be our standard, and never be "taken in" by this thing that is often termed as just a "personality clash."

enough to accomplish a redistribution of wealth which would make everyone equal. Long before America entertained the idea of an income tax, the Fabians advocated the idea and outlined the method of redistributing wealth by taxation. In fact, the income tax program in America was developed by the Fabian socialists.

Strong indictments against the social gospel have been presented. It teaches the "salvation" of man through changing the economic environment. It redefines sin and evil and the mission of the church. Its goal is a man-made utopia here on earth. It describes a different relationship between God and man. It advocates atheistic political doctrines such as communism and endorses the overthrow of nations by any means, especially America. It upholds equality as the basis of morality. This begins to paint the true picture of this false philosophy which masquerades as an "angel of light", offering hope and prosperity to the downtrodden, but delivering only slavery.

1. Guy E. Swanson, "Modern secularity; its meaning, source and interpretation." In *The Religious Situations: 1968*, edited by Donald R. Cutler. Boston: Beacon Press.
2. Rose L. Martin, *Fabian Freeway*, (Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands Publishers, 1966), p. vii.
3. Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, (New York, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1918).
4. Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, (New York, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1924), p. 391.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 396-397.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 398
8. *Ibid.*, p. 247.

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SOCIETY'S SHAM: The Church's Chokehold

David Lee Henderson

One has to merely watch the evening news to recognize the flaw in our society. We fail to blame blamable offenses, and criticize those who are trying to correct wrongs. We wonder aloud why the police do not do more about crime, then we read where a policeman is suspended and investigated for firing his gun in the line of duty, as though *he* were the criminal. We wonder aloud why the judicial system does not do more to put away criminals, then we hear the media and John Q. Public blaming Judges for *hardening* people by incarcerating young criminals, as though the Judges were to blame for crime. We live in a time in which a victim of a crime who defends himself, may very well be found guilty of transgressing the criminal's "civil rights", as though he were to blame for the crime in the first place. In this day and time, if an individual intends to right society's wrongs, he had best prepare to be accused of creating problems, as though he were the person doing wrong. We have very much

become like the drunk driver who blames the pedestrian for walking on the sidewalk, where the drunk driver likes to drive!

Unfortunately, Society's Sham is invading the Lord's church. We live in a day and time in which members of Christ's church falsely teach and preach that dancing and drinking are a satisfactory social outlet and the participating in such is a matter of personal judgment. There are preachers today who falsely teach that there are faithful Christians in some denominations. There are those today who advocate fellowshipping the Christian Church because of our common Restoration roots. There are those today who falsely teach that Jesus' doctrine that adultery is the only justifiable reason for divorce, does not apply to non-Christians. Indeed, "There shall be false teachers among you" (2 Pet. 2:1).

The worst part of our plight, is our people's reaction to those who expose false teaching. I know members of the church who teach against those who teach against error, who will only say negative words about negative sermons, who will only stand up to oppose those who stand up for that which is right, and who will only separate themselves from (i.e., "FIRE") those preachers who separate themselves from error and teachers of such. I once witnessed an informal debate between two fellow preachers. The subject at hand was whether debating was right or wrong. (If you think about this long enough, you may laugh as hard as I did!)

Brethren, society's sham of blaming society's troubles on our civil servants instead of on criminals is a *SHAME*, but worse yet, the church's chokehold of attempting to silence faithful preachers who are exposing erroneous teachings and practices, instead of separating from the sinners themselves, is a *SIN* (cf. Isa. 30:9-10; 2 Cor. 6:17; 2 John 9-11)!!!

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Sermon by David Miller (4/29/90)
(McCarthyism)

On February 9th, 1950, a United States Senator from Wisconsin, delivered a routine speech that ultimately attracted the attention of the nation and the entire world. Senator Joseph McCarthy, on that date launched his infamous tirade against U.S. Government—alleging communist infiltration of the United States State Department. McCarthy single handedly succeeded in arousing the American population to an unprecedented state of panic and alarm. For two years he sustained an enormous following of supporters. By exploiting the legitimate mode of apprehension which had permeated our nation. This vulnerability to fear which caused so many Americans to believe McCarthy's charges—was due to several factors, several circumstances, perhaps many of you that lived at that time remember. That as a matter of fact, there was genuine threat of Soviet atomic power in the post World War 2 years. There was the fall of Chiang Kai-shek and the communist take over of mainland China. There was the actual arrest and conviction of several American as Soviet spies and there was the onset of the Korean War in mid-1950. Senator McCarthy exploited these legitimate fears and in the process managed to focus attention upon himself and his own career. By accusing his opponents and critics of communist sympathies, he gradually voted them into silence. Whenever questions were raised relative to the substance of his charges, McCarthy would respond, not with the evidence but with even stronger accusations, accusations which overwhelmed his opponents and kept his name in the headlines. For instance in 1951 on the Senate Floor, McCarthy announced (and these are his words) "A conspiracy so immense and an infamy so black as to dwarf any previous venture in the history of man". When it came down to actually verifying his viewpoint, the allegations were without substance. He was a Master at marshalling a shrewd blend of innuendo, half truth, distortion and theory, which he would then promote with a brash, reckless, even unscrupulous manner that created an atmosphere of fear and forced conformity. An apparent opportunist, with an enormous ego. McCarthy was not dissuaded by either persuasion or confrontation. His coarseness bullying tactics and lack of meaningful evidence to support his charges came across convincingly.

It's been forty years at least or nearly since the McCarthy era. Looking back on it all at least two observations are apparent. #1 There was no real substance to his charges. Oh the problems he addressed were real enough. The communist threat was a fact in the United States, but the issues were so exaggerated, contorted and misrepresented by the McCarthy approach to resolving the problem, that for all practical purposes, he only succeeded in compounding and aggravating the situation. In the process, an entire nation went through an anguished, soul searching and bitter suspicion and animosity. In retrospect, an another observation is crystal clear. There is no justification for publicly accusing people of disloyalty without sufficient evidence. Do you know that McCarthy did not succeed in identifying any communist employed by the government. Even if he had identified 5, 10 or 50—his soiling of the reputation's of the innocent was inexcusable. Such reckless disregard for other people is calloused and despicable.

How does God view these two matters that we have observed from that period. What does God think about that. In Deuteronomy chapter 19, beginning in verse 15. God points out several things. He underscores the fact that a single witness is insufficient to convict a person of sin. Two or three are necessary to confirm the factuality of a matter—and that means that two or three independent witnesses—not one witness with two or three who take his word for it. Each of the witnesses must be independently first hand observers. It's also clear from this text that God wants thorough investigation, not hearsay, before any action is taken against a person. And if an accusing brother's charges are found to be false, the false witness is to receive the punishment that he hoped to pen on his brother. Folks, if we had to verify our claims, like they did, then or suffer the consequences, we'd have a lot less gossip and spreading of innuendo in the church than we have. If you had to prove a clear cut solid charge against a brother, or else be punished yourself, you'd likely keep your mouth shut, until you could prove your point conclusively. And that's precisely the way God wants it.

But you say, if you wait until you remove all doubt and make absolutely certain and verify everything, it may be too late to prevent damage. Well, I do not believe that, but whether I do or not, are we going to obey

God or are we going to consider ourselves wiser than God. Instead, in fact, the human tendencies is for us to spread our assessment of the situation and then when we're pressed to be more specific, to verify the assessment, we tend to magnify, amply, beef up the charges, so that they will sound more credible than they really are. And it's so easy for us to do that.

In Deuteronomy chapter 13, beginning in verse 12, God made provision for the eradication among the Israelites of what we would call liberalism, doctrinal looseness. But he enjoins a three-fold prerequisite to this purging process. Listen to it closely in the New American Standard, investigate, and search out and inquire thoroughly, and brethren most of us do not and will not do that. In fact, most of us find it easy to pride ourselves in ability to sniff out supposed error and to color our perceptions to see what we're predisposed to see and then to compound this sin of the heart, by going public with our half baked conjurings. What motivates us to appear to want to find error, who motivate us? In Deuteronomy 13, it makes it clear that if we fail to investigate and search out and inquire throughly, then we must have some ulterior motive, that is to say the least impure.

I am reminded of Joshua chapter 22. You remember the Israelites had heard that the two and a half tribes that had settled East of the Jordan. They heard that those two and half tribes had apostatized and the nation was so upset, that they prepared to go to war. You can't question their zeal for faithfulness to God. Fortunately, and according to the Bible, they were able to temper their enthusiasm for adherence to doctrinal specifics. They were to temper that zeal with a zest for love of truth, love of justice, love of fellow man. And fortunately, some of them had enough sense and wisdom not to jump the gun, but first send a delegation headed by Phenehas to check out and establish the facts of the matter. And I'll tell you that saved a lot of damage to the nation, a lot of heartache and grief—in fact it saved lives.

Sometimes, I think brethren, that when some of us are born into the Kingdom of God, we are born into the church in the attack mode, a propensity for running roughshod over others, under the pious guide of a loyalty to truth. It's painfully evident in the hosts of congregations that have been rent asunder and split wide open all over the brotherhood, and both sides basically admit, it's not for doctrinal reasons. Well, it's easy for us not to be interested in ascertaining the facts, determining the honest truth. It's much more easy for us to strike while the iron is hot. Its much easier for us to be a situation ethicist, that is a person who believes the end justifies the means, and if my goal, if my end is doctrinal purity, then anything I need to do to accomplish that is acceptable to God. We act as if as long as we are upholding Bible doctrines we can be as brutal, unscrupulous and careless as we choose. We apparently think that our obvious lack of love for neighbor is hidden or perhaps we feel that our self righteous love for straining gnats, as Jesus called it in Matthew 23:24 is acceptable, or excused.

How un-Christ like though because Jesus wants every fact confirmed, Matthew 18:16. So did Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:1. We're not even to receive an accusation according to 1 Tim. 5:19 against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses and surely the Lord expects us to follow that instruction on every matter as we relate to one another as Christians. Those passages are trying to head off the very thing that we are describing, because God knows us as human beings and our tendencies to think the worse, jump to conclusions and act rashly. These passages are not intended to shield the guilty, but it is clear that it is extremely important to God that we not prematurely accuse or condemn another human being. That is important to God. And all of the enthusiasm and zeal that we have for the truth will not excuse that.

God want us to possess a genuine love for fellow man. Listen to Romans, chapter 12 beginning in verse 9 in the New American Standard Version. "Let love be without hypocrisy, abhor what is evil, cling to what is good, be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Give preference to one another in honor, not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Rejoicing in hope. Persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality, bless those who persecute you, bless and curse not. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in sight of all men. If possible so far as it depends

on you be at peace with all men, never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink, for in so doing you will reap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome but evil, but overcome evil with good." If we had that kind of devotion for each other, we would still oppose error, we would still covet doctrinal purity, we would still ardently defend the faith, but we would do all of these with a kind and gentle spirit, giving each other every benefit of the doubt. Approaching each other out of attitude of humility and lowliness, feeling no animosity in our hearts for each other. We would patiently hope, think and believe the best of one another . 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

That type of mental posture, would put an end to the shoot first, ask questions later temperament that seems to have obsessed some in the church today. It would replace the panic and hysteria generated by our perilous times, but it would replace that hysteria and panic with a sensible, rational, mature appraisal of each individual on his own merits, in or out of the church. We would couple that appraisal with genuine attempts to assist him in coming to a correct understanding of God's will. We would be less concerned about pouncing and labeling and writing off until we have first genuinely tried to assist, instruct, encourage.

When Jesus was on this earth, it's clear that he approached different people in different ways. His severest criticism, his strongest denunciations, were leveled against those who were guilty of those things we are discussing. If anyone in the church today deserve to receive such stringent condemnation, based upon that Biblical teaching it would those who manifested that attitude. But brethren, it's clear that we've got some members of the church as we described them, that are rather insensitive, that are so enthused about doctrinal correctness, that they are quick to criticize, quick to assume the worst, quick to size it up from their own perspective without getting all the facts, quick to destroy. But then we also have those who largely out of reaction to that approach and that attitude who tend to be guilty of essentially the same thing. We must not place our souls in jeopardy by allowing our own hearts to be infected by feelings of resentment animosity and contempt for those who approach their religious practice in that fashion. Satan is constantly on the alert to lure us to into a heart condition that will subvert us. We must rise above and transcend the personalities, the pettiness, the inflamed emotions which only serve to side track us from the single sided commitment to God's desire for our lives on this earth. Neither our emotional attachment nor our emotional detachment must be allowed to derail us from the course of clear thinking that God expects from us in light of his written revelation.

Joseph McCarthy's erratic and truculent behavior ultimately discredited him on nation wide television. And in Dec. 1954, the Senate formerly censored him for his contemptuous conduct. He lost interest in public affairs after that, neglected his Senate duties, began drinking heavily. His health suffered accordingly, he died on May 2, 1957 at the age of 48.

Are there liberals in the church today? Absolutely! And you do not have to rely on hear say or someone who thought they over heard. There are books, there are tapes, there are articles promoted by liberals, promoting doctrinal looseness within our ranks. Let's not allow the over reaction of that circumstance in the church—let's not allow the over reaction of that of some to cause us to under react. However, let's learn from God's book and from history. Let's remember what James said in 1:19, "Let's be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Let's make certain that our consciousness are clear, that we're not motivated by pride, popularity, or pettiness. As Bill read a moment ago concerning the wisdom that it from above, it's peaceable. Let's not allow ourselves to be swept into the whirlpool of hysteria. Yes, there are genuine threats to the church among us, but fanning people into hysteria will only neutralize our ability to wage war with Satan intelligently and effectively. Let's not be guilty of prematurely accusing our bothers and lacking verifiable substance. The cause of Christ is not helped by such erratic, irrational displays of zeal. Even if time proves us correct, we are not justified in promoting that which is insufficiently substantiated and we'll give an account for that. In fact such tactics aid Satan's assault upon the church. They cloud the water, they obscure the true issues, they make Satan's ploys more difficult to identify and address. In order to prepare ourselves for the conflicts that face the church in our generation, we need a healthy dose of Peter's inspired instruction, 1 Peter

1:22 "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another from a pure heart, fervently." Those are not just words. If we would truly live those words, we would please God.

If you need to enlist in the Lord's army, we will take time and sit down and talk with you about what you need to do, if you will come and tell us. If you are in the Lord's army, but you have allowed the currents and trends of imperfect humanity, Satan's darts and wiles to derail you from a loyal but loving approach to the practice of Biblical religion, tonight is the time for you to make that clear to God to your brethren and to yourself. If you need to come, we hope that you will. Shall we stand.

March 24, 1990

The Elders
Brown Trail Church of Christ
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Dear Elders,

It is with deep regret that I am compelled to tender my resignation as a deacon of the Brown Trail congregation. Additionally, I wish it to be known that my family and I no longer feel able to serve the cause of Christ under the current eldership and will be faithfully attending services elsewhere from this day forward. I was hoping to express my feelings to you personally, however, the cancellation of your last elders' meeting and the scheduling of the elders/deacons meeting for tomorrow have necessitated this letter. The decisions expressed above have not been made in haste nor in response to any individual action or incident. I hope you will bear with me as I explain.

When my family and I moved to the Fort Worth area in the fall of 1982, we were well aware of the dangers involved in locating a "true" church. We have never left a congregation for reasons other than our family moving, and hoped to keep it that way. When I took over the Sunday morning high school class from Bro. Charles Hensarling in, I believe, January 1983, I sat in the class for approximately six weeks while Bro. Hensarling taught a series on church discipline. To find a congregation that taught and practiced Biblical discipline was indeed encouraging. As positive as our feelings were some eight years ago, the future of the Brown Trail church looks just as negative to us today.

As I begin this discussion, let me state emphatically that all conversations referenced herein, with both present and past Brown Trail members, were initiated BY ME. I have not been contacted or "recruited" by any past or present member to persuade me one way or the other. As a matter of fact, I almost feel hurt that in all of the supposed recruiting and dissention being sown by those Christians who left Brown Trail, not a single one has initiated contact with my family. That seems far more Christ-like than the name-calling and innuendo being heaped upon these brethren in "prayers", class discussions, etc. In actuality, there have been two or three calls from past Brown Trail members. Each of these was from a female member of the family involved and each call was in concern after they heard that our daughters had contracted chickenpox. Again, all contacts with all members were at MY initiation.

Although I am confident that the problems at Brown Trail began far before last fall, I will begin with the men's meeting of last November 21. The meeting was in response to the resignations of Bro. Eddie Whitten and Bro. Ed Clark. The event which apparently brought Bro. Whitten's frustrations to a head and forced his resignation

involved a personal letter to Bro. Judito Aton concerning fiscal responsibility for supplied support. You, the current eldership, feel that this letter needed approval from the elders since Eddie was an elder and on the payroll, despite the letter being on personal letterhead with only his signature. In this letter, Eddie referred to "using my influence" and how he was "very jealous and protective of the school." (These quotes are from tapes of that meeting.) Regardless of whether the letter was indeed personal, as the tone clearly is, or a matter for the eldership, it was certainly blown out of proportion. The elders, or at least Bro. Lauderdale, were given the letter, according to the tapes, by Sis. Doris Powell. Her husband was on distribution as they supplied support to Judito. (As a side note, the distribution of the letter supports Bro. Whitten's classification as a personal letter.) I have had a conversation with Sis. Powell concerning her actions. I have a scriptural problem with her taking the letter to the elders prior to a personal discussion with Bro. Whitten as taught in Matt. 18:15. Her first defense was that she was given the letter on Monday and Eddie left for California almost immediately. Later, however, she expressed disappointment that Eddie had not brought the letter to the elders' meeting on Tuesday. Since I found out later that Eddie left town on Wednesday, she had at least one full day to do that which was right. Did the eldership request her to follow Biblical protocol and settle this matter between two Christians? I think not. Bro. Whitten was concerned since he had personally endorsed Judito, and others, and had helped raise support from some of those on distribution. Was the entire eldership involved in all of these previous communications and correspondence? I think not. Why then, the sudden concern? If the elders at Rescue, Ca. had written the same letter and put you on distribution, would you expect consultation since it might reflect on the school? I think not. Bro. Don Simpson mentioned a letter he wrote to Bro. Staggers (unsure of spelling) requesting that he redirect some support from a student who had left school to a new student. This same Bro. Staggers was on distribution for Bro. Whitten's letter. Did Bro. Simpson clear this letter with the eldership? It is implied from the tape that he did not. If not, why not? He is also on the payroll. He also, more than Bro. Whitten, represented the school of preaching at the time. All I am pointing to is a perceived lack of consistency and fairness pointed with prejudice toward an elder of the Lord's church. As far out of proportion as this letter has been blown, I thank God that the apostle Paul was not under the oversight of the current eldership. If he had been, I fear that approximately half of the New Testament would never have been written as they, too, are letters of stern rebuke. As I said before, the matter of the letter, by itself, was certainly too petty to provoke the resignation of two elders. I should inject at this point that I know one remaining elder among you who has previously resigned "irrevocably" only to be encouraged back in Christian love for the good of the Lord's work. How many among you have tried to do the same with Bro. Whitten or Bro. Clark? If you had such concern over the impact of a letter due to Bro. Whitten's reputation, why did you have no regard for the impact of his resignation? Only each of you can answer this in your own hearts.

Another matter, again concerning Bro. Whitten, which seems to surface in any conversation of Brown Trail's problems, involves the supposed incompetence of Bro. Whitten. First, this arose when he was director of the Preacher Training School. A major part of this argument was the amount of time Eddie was out of town. What was

overlooked was his reason for being gone. The majority of his absence occurred as a speaker where he also took time to promote the school. These instances have included numerous trips overseas which is the primary reason for the attendance of the students from the Phillipines, thereby truly taking the impact of the school "into all the world." A personal example involves his attendance at the ACU lecture in February, 1985 where he had a display set up for the school. It was this coincidence that allowed him, along with Bro. and Sis. Roper, to be present the day we received Brittany at Christian Homes. If Bro. Whitten was so incompetent, then why does he still have such a great impact on and association with the school, as evidenced by your concern over the letter, some two years AFTER he was released as director. If there was so much concern over time absent from the school, then why was he replaced with someone who spends more than 75% of his time AWAY from the school. Nobody seems to question Bro. Boren's competence or motives, nor do I. What I find inconsistent is the logic, or lack of it, in such an appointment. While both an elder and director of the school, Bro. Whitten tried to have a certain member of the faculty fired for questionable teachings. I have heard of some of these philosophies from both past and present students. As a member of Brown Trail, he even introduced some of these "modern thoughts" into his adult class but failed to point out where the error was or refute the doctrine. This is a favorite tactic of subtle liberalism. Bro. Whitten was not successful due to a lack of backing by the eldership. It is interesting to note that what Bro. Whitten could not accomplish for doctrinal means has been brought about through outside pressure in that this faculty member was terminated, reportedly, at the threat of another congregation withholding support from the school because of his teachings. A triumph for God's truth despite the eldership. Another contention of Bro. Whitten's competence was as educational director. I, personally, saw no problem with his work in this capacity. Reports to the elders that "all" the teachers were ready to quit because of Eddie were obviously erroneous since neither my wife nor I were consulted. As long as we are discussing competence, let's discuss the lectureship. If Bro. Whitten is so incompetent, why has the 1991 lectureship been shortened in both length per day and days? Why will only local talent be used rather than the best of the brotherhood? Why are the proceedings being shortened to where no book is feasible? Could it be that no one is left with the desire, time, initiative, talent, and competence to pull it off? With the PTS faculty, the eldership, and two full-time ministers, is nobody left who can accomplish this task? Is it possible that the strong, sound, straight speaking servants of God who have filled the podium of the past would no longer be willing to participate? Or that the remaining eldership no longer wants the harsh truth of the gospel? This lectureship has stood for years as one of the strongest doctrinal gatherings of Christians available. The publicly announced plans for 1991 will extinguish another bright shining light of true Christianity and turn it into an area-wide meeting.

In 1988, a committee formulated a plan to redirect the decision-making process of the congregation. When I first received a copy, it struck me as a very intriguing means to bypass the authority of the elders. A congregationally appointed committee would make decisions for the direction of the church and report back to the congregation. After final congregational approval, they would present plans to the elders. If the "decisions" of the proposed committee were not rubber-stamped by the

elders, the hard feelings of the committee and the congregation could never be patched. If the eldership was simply a rubber-stamp, what good would it be scripturally? This proposal was tabled by the elders and I felt comfortable. Little did I know that there was strong support for this plan in the eldership. Strong enough support that today I feel this plan would be approved by you, although foundationally unscriptural. Bro. Clark wrote a critique which expressed the doctrinal error and drew comments from elders and deacons which were, and are, sins in themselves. The comments documented in the minutes of the elders' meeting directed at Bro. Clark have not to my knowledge been retracted or repented of and are totally unworthy of anyone calling themselves a Christian, let alone an elder. As an outgrowth of this, charges against one of you are documented in the minutes which clearly show you scripturally unfit to hold the office of an elder. Action on those charges died for lack of adequate support. How can a man sleep at night knowing that he is Biblically unqualified to lead God's people? How can those that serve with him sleep knowing they did nothing? What does that say for the credibility of the entire eldership that remains? The strength of the eldership to negate that plan caused dissension to the point that some families left. While many at Brown Trail today talk of people leaving to follow a certain person, why was not the same said then of those who left over this doctrinal stand and reassembled at Airport Freeway? Could it be because many who stayed then agreed with those who left but not with the ones who have left recently? During the November meeting, Bro. Lauderdale stated, "I don't think this congregation is going to go liberal all that fast." ALL THAT FAST! God forbid that it should go liberal at all! Most congregations don't go liberal fast, but evolve in subtle ways. The implementation of the plan mentioned above would be a great start for liberalism.

During the November meeting, Bro. Graham Cain called for a show of those who "don't have full confidence" in the remaining eldership. Many of those who stood, left Brown Trail shortly after that meeting. Many have put them into a group and labeled them as "trouble makers", "dissenters", sowers of "discord", etc. I, too, stood on that occasion. As I said before, I have initiated my own education leading up to this letter. I noticed in listening to the tapes that Bro. Whitten and Sis. Clark were said to have been heard telling their side of the story on the telephone. This was apparently to support charges of them sowing discord toward the remaining eldership. Careful listening shows the wording was careful not to say that they had placed the calls. Could it be because they were acting like Christians and NOT initiating contact while still under the eldership at Brown Trail? Were they not to answer the phone and take incoming calls at their place of employment? How were their conversations known? Could it have been from the elder seen eavesdropping at the office door? Wake up, brethren! The majority of the problem of the church at Brown Trail still sits in its pews on Sunday and can't wait to gossip and back-bite about the Christians who have left.

One of the last topics of the November meeting involved appointing of additional elders. Statements were made such as, "x number of weeks after the lectureship" (Watts), "as soon as we can" (Lauderdale), and "try to get it started before the end of the year." (Lauderdale) Brethren, it is the end of March! I have taken more time than most to reach the decisions in this letter. One of the reasons was to give the remaining

eldership the benefit of the doubt to try and turn things around. The last thing I want is to see Brown Trail reject God's will but almost as sad would be to see it cease to exist. Since almost 20 families have left, you should have few people left who would oppose your views and still you refuse to honor your commitments. Regarding the office of an elder, Bro. Peterman mentioned something called "reconfirming" the existing elders through a majority or some percentage of votes of the congregation. I assume that this is similar to the bishops' way of electing a new pope, because there is no basis for it in God's Bible. The eldership is not a popularity contest. You are either qualified or you are not, you know the truth. It was interesting to see where the Airport Freeway congregation, now home to many past Brown Trail members, "reconfirmed" their elders a few weeks ago as they installed others. Is the Brown Trail church going to import doctrinal error from those who previously left when God's will and not theirs prevailed?

Regarding my cessation of the teaching of the high school class, when Bro. Dave Miller asked me to assist in fund raising for the television work, I accepted knowing that I would be unable to continue teaching on Sunday morning. I thought nothing of this until Bro. Tyson expressed to my replacement that "we've got to get Gould out of there" in the presence of my wife. Conversation with Bro. Miller produced the comment that he had been told that I would be leaving that class soon but was not requested to involve me in the TV work. Subsequent conversation with Bro. Tyson reflected no problem on his part with my teaching doctrinally. I accepted that and expressed dismay that someone in a position as important as the eldership would be so careless in their choice of words and implied meaning. When I mentioned Bro Miller's comment, Bro. Tyson seemed surprised and mentioned a report that I was possibly teaching over their heads. Let it be noted that I was made aware of a comment such as this about a year and a half ago involving a student who did not really belong in the grade 10-12 class and went back to the lower class supposedly for that reason. Bro. Tyson did not, however, know the source of the comment to Bro. Miller about me leaving my class soon. If Bro. Tyson, the educational director, was unaware of an impending change, then who is running the education department? Is this the kind of incompetence alleged of Bro. Whitten when he held that position?

I feel that too much faith is being placed in secular educational degrees and people, rather than God's word. Keep in mind that a religiously affiliated institution will find a way for their doctrine to infiltrate their teaching, however subtle. Also keep in mind that the middle initial in TCU supposedly stands for Christian but their teaching betrays them. Are other "Christian" colleges far behind? In my last class for the high school students, I talked of putting too much emphasis on educational rather than Bible study. I spoke of blindly accepting someone else's faith without properly investigating God's word. I spoke of our Christian colleges and the great liberal threats of our time. The problems of divorce and remarriage false teachings have deep roots at Harding. The promotion of theistic evolution and a mythical Genesis have been well documented to exist at ACU. A tragic and somewhat personal example is as follows. While in Singapore some years ago, I attended the Moulmein Rd. congregation, served faithfully by Bro. Gordon Hogan and his wife. Not long after I left, Bro. Hogan's son completed studies at Harding Graduate School in Memphis. To the delight of his parents, he went

overseas to help in the work, especially at Four Seas Bible College. Bro. Hogan was soon faced with the unenviable decision of supporting his son's modern thoughts based in higher education or continuing to preach God's will "in season and out of season." Unfortunately, Bro. Hogan accepted the doctrinal error of his more educated son and many brethren, including Bro. Eddie Whitten, have spent several years trying to undo Satan's work in southeast Asia. It is possible that some of you are or may soon face similar choices. May God grant you the wisdom to accept His word at any expense.

So there will be no doubt as to my position on areas of issue at Brown Trail RIGHT NOW, here is a synopsis.

- 1) The Genesis account of creation is a factual, accurate accounting of God's handiwork. The classification of even one verse of this account as a myth or fairy tale demotes the entire Bible to a good piece of historical literature and no more. The views being taught at ACU are heresy and must be actively fought by true Christians everywhere. I could not conscientiously recommend ACU to anyone due to the error being taught.
- 2) Elders are to be appointed by the church and not elected as part of a popularity contest. They should strive to lead the flock and not let popular sentiment replace God's will. If one can be proven unfit to serve, he should be sincere enough to resign the position rather than heap condemnation on himself and lead God's children astray.
- 3) All that we do or say should be to God's glory and acceptable to him. However, every moment of our life is not an act of worship to God. Just one aspect of the absurdity of this philosophy involves music. If every moment of our life is worship, then it would be wrong for a Christian to learn a musical instrument for he would be learning and playing in worship. The singing of any non-religious song would be wrong as all singing would be worship. The listening to any music from Bach to the Beatles to George Strait would be a sin due to the instrument in worship. This is a single, simple example of many such arguments.
- 4) Prayer is to be made to God, the Father, through Christ. Yes, Christ is our king, but he is also our brother and joint-heir. The prodigal son did not return to his brother for consolation and acceptance, but to his father.
- 5) Christians are to actively support and uphold God's word when attacked or taught in error. This holds true regarding an individual, a congregation, or a university. False teaching must be aggressively fought and how can a war be waged without identifying the enemy? Christianity was never intended to pacify the masses with internal good feelings in and of man's own will. Again, I refer to the writings of Paul as an example of calling error by its true name, even to the point of personal names. The elders of a congregation

have a responsibility to protect the flock and part of that necessitates identifying the wolves.

In closing, you have received one letter from a dearly beloved sister which was very concise and to the point. She simply stated that if you wished to know why she was leaving, you should pull from your files the letter she wrote to the elders at Richland Hills some ten years ago because the reasons were the same. Brethren, if that thought doesn't send cold chills down your spine, then nothing will ever shock you to reality this side of judgement. I have nothing against any of you, brother to brother, and I love each and every one of you. Unfortunately, I no longer respect your judgement in leading God's people. I will make this letter available to anyone who REQUESTS to know why I am leaving. If any statement that I have made in this letter is found to be in error, please respond to me no later than the 15th of April that I may correct the error. I will not distribute it on my own initiative. I can only pray that others will do as I have done and search out the documented truth. I support the TV program and pray for the continuance of its doctrinal purity. I will continue to pray for you and the church at Brown Trail that it may once again earnestly contend for the faith. "..., but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15)

In sorrow and Christian love,

Philip C. Gould and Family

[Footnote: No response was ever received from the Brown Trail elders.]

Sermon by David Miller (4/8/90)

Appointment of New Elders

A statement was made by our elders several months ago concerning their determination to give this congregation an opportunity to make adjustments in the leadership of this church in the future. Their discussion of this matter have persisted over the last few months. Plans were made several weeks ago more concretely and they asked me to present them with some information that would assist them in carrying out this objective. They then appointed a committee composed of the preacher of this congregation, that is Johnnie Ramsey, Don Simpson, Gary Fallis and myself. Maxie Boren has an opportunity to have input on this committee, but is out of touch and out of town so much that his participation will probably be rather minimal. And so in formulating this committee, as well as a number of guidelines that were discussed by the committee, we submitted to the eldership for their approval. 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.

It is my task this morning to introduce you to this program as well as to address a particular Biblical matter that in my opinion needs to be addressed. Let's begin by asking ourselves this question: Since we are people of the book, and we believe that whatever we do in religion and life must be authorized and guided by the Word of God—what does the Bible say about the selection of elders. We are aware of the fact that in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and Acts chapter 20 and 1 Peter chapter 5 and other passages describe to us a function within the church, the body of Christ, known as elders, or shepherds or bishops or pastors, that this is to be a plurality, a group of men, never do we find in the New Testament one bishop, one shepherd, one elder, ruling over a congregation, but there is always two or more, a plurality, and that is very clearly taught in the scriptures. But how are these men to be appointed? We find the list of qualifications that they must meet in order to operate in this function in this capacity. But by what means, by what process, by what procedure are they to be selected and placed into that function? The Bible is largely silent on this matter. However, the Bible has a great deal more to say about that matter than most perhaps members of the church realize. And while the details, the specific's of such a procedure are not spelled out, some fundamental principles and guidelines are. And it is to those that I would like to direct your attention.

Let's begin in first, rather in Titus chapter 1, the first chapter of Titus where we find perhaps the most explicit instruction to the selection of elders. Contextually Titus is a young evangelist, who among other things has been working among churches of Christ which were situated on the island of Crete. And as part of his responsibilities in preaching and teaching amid those churches was Paul's statement in Titus chapter 1:5, did I say verse six, verse 5. Paul says to Titus, "my own son after the common faith, grace mercy and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior, for this cause I left thee in Crete. That thou should set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee." Now, if that is all that we had in the New Testament concerning the appointing and selection of elders, we might get the idea that an inspired apostle was authorizing an evangelist, a preacher to go into local congregations to look over the situation and make personal judgments about who should serve as elders and therefore we would have Titus going in and saying O.K., Bro. Jones, Bro. McGilcutty and Bro. Smith, you're going to the elders of this congregation. There are members of the churches of Christ who have so interrupted this passage and thus have given rise to the doctrine of evangelistic authority. Most prominent among our black brethren, and they actually teach and practice the idea that the preacher is not under the elders. That he in fact, if anything presides over the elders, and is to make judgments concerning their selection. I do not find this to be the teaching of this passage or any other passage. Turn with me now to Acts chapter 6, and we'll look at evidence that indeed proves that point. The context of Acts chapter 6 is the selection of some of the leaders within a local church. Granted this is not a context in which elders are being selected, but again if we are people of the book, if we are going to be guided by New Testament principles, we must go to those passages that give us any sort of insight on a selection process, by which functions and capacities within the church might be fulfilled. And this is really the only passage in all of the Bible that gives us that information. Contextually, the church of Christ is located in the city of Jerusalem. Populating that congregation are Jews and Jews only.

There have been no Gentiles convert added to the church at this point in time. But within this group of Jewish Christians, is a culturally diverse situation. That is you have Jews, who are Aramaic, who are Hebrew Jews and their background is Hebrew—they speak Hebrew or Aramaic—a Semitic dialect. But there are some other Jews in this congregation who did not grow up under that sort of a Hebrew background, but rather grew up in the Roman empire and in particular areas that were heavily Hellenized. They are what's known in history as Hellenistic Jews—they have been cultured, inculturated in a Greek setting. They don't even speak Hebrew, in many cases. They speak Greek. But both groups have a strongly Old Testament background. Now here are these two culturally different groups of people, even though we would see them the same, their Jews, and they are not getting along with each other. And they begin fussing toward on another because some of the specific responsibilities that need to be taken care of in the church were being neglected—specifically the widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food and other needs, for these older women, member of the church. The apostles, this is a young church that hasn't had a chance to appoint elders yet, and so the apostles who established the church in Acts chapter 2 in this location are concerned about these disturbances that are arising. They need to give themselves continually and consistently and persistently to the preaching of the word, to prayer, to advancing the church in terms of causing the church to grow in spreading the Gospel around the Empire and so it seems to me that what we have here is the very beginnings of what would ultimately be set completely in order with the writings of such letters as Timothy and Titus, although keep in mind that the contents of Timothy and Titus though they appear in written form, laid down in the first century that information was available and operative to Christians wherever inspired men spoke. But it seems to me that what we have here is essentially the designation of what we refer to as deacons. In fact the term, a for of the term deacon occurs three times in these verses. But rather than argue whether that is who is being appointed, let's simply note that here is an inspired selection process given by the inspired apostles. And what is that process? Verse 3, "Brethren (that is you members of the church at Jerusalem), you are to look out from among yourselves seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom." Now isn't that clear? It is the people who do the looking out from among themselves. But they are to not simply look among themselves and say "Well, I like brother So and So, he's a really good fellow, I think he's a nice man." No, you are to look out from among yourselves men who fit certain qualifications. In this case, we are given three qualifications for this group of men and as said 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and other passages give us a host of other qualifications but there are the two fundamental Biblical New Testament guidelines for making selection of capacities within the church of Christ. The people are to look out from among themselves and they are to make those selections based upon inspired instructions. Now if that be the case brethren, the implications are enormous. If indeed this is intended to be the prototype—if this is intended to be the New Testament authority which we have for making selection of officials within the church when it would be wrong for the preacher to make those selections and it also follows that it would be inappropriate for officials to make those selections. Where the eldership becomes sort of a self perpetuating board and they add to their number men who they think ought to be added. This passage clearly teaches that it is the congregation, the members, who are to be involved in this process. Someone says then that you are saying then that elders and leaders are to be selected are to be selected by majority vote. Well, that is not exactly what I am saying, but I am saying that this passage very clearly teaches that the membership at large is to make that decision. I don't think means though that the church is a democracy, no, because God has already stated the guidelines, the qualifications upon which men can be selected. The fact that he expects members of the church to study the Word of God to know these qualifications, and then to also know the men whom they are selecting, and you have to do both, you've got to know what the Bible teaches as a qualified elder, and you've got to know men well enough to know whether they fit that. It seems to me that does not make it majority vote so to speak. It is not a popularity contest, someone has said- and I agree with that completely, it is not. We should not select men based upon whom we really like and whom we think are popular with other people. We had better do it based on what the New Testament teaches is a qualified man. Now, by the way, do you see the term that is translated "appoint" in the King James Version in Acts 6:3. Here the apostles is saying, "You look out from

among yourselves men who meet these qualifications.” Once you have done that, we will appoint them. Now notice that. The apostles don’t do the selection, the membership does. But the apostles then formally appoint—or install them..Do you know that the word translated “appoint” in verse 3 is the same word that is translated in Acts in Titus chapter 1 verse 5 “ordain.” Now think about that. By the way the American Standard came long and translated Titus 1:5 “appoint.” Doing a couple of things—they recognized that it is the same word that occurs here in Acts 6:3. Number 2, they were trying to soften the King James translators selection of the term ordain which sure enough made it sounded like the evangelist made the decision. But we see the same word used in Acts 6:3 where the apostles did not make the decision, they just formally installed them into office. But the members selected them and I suggest to you that is how Titus 1:5 ought to be interpreted not vice versa. Paul was telling Titus to go among the Grecian churches and formally install or appoint men whom the membership has looked out from among them. That is the only way to make those two passages harmonize. I would also point out to you that in Acts chapter 14, verse 23, a different term for appoint is used. It is a very different Greek term, where we are told that a couple of the apostles went around and ordained elders in every city. But again there is no need for us to assume that they went in and made those selections, although, I for one would not question an inspired apostles ability to select qualified men. But you see that same term used in Acts chapter 14 verse 23 is used over in 2 Corinthians 8 verse 19, to describe what the membership did. In selecting one individual to carry a contribution. 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. Titus merely inaugurated the selection process in each Cretin city, in each congregation as the member looked out from among themselves on the bases of these qualifications that Paul had given to Titus and then appointments were formally confirmed by Titus. If we follow that process, we can be assured as Paul told the Ephesians elders in Acts 20, the Holy Spirit has made those overseer. But only if we follow the instructions of the Holy Spirit as given in Scripture.

Well, 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 or not it is right or wrong but I am concerned about what the Bible teaches. Notice #1, that if the members select elder’s to begin with based on Acts 6:3, and since the complexion of a congregation in terms of its membership can change over a period of time, over a period of years, an eldership may conceivably no longer consist of the same individuals that the membership would look out from among themselves and appoint. So you see the implication is, it is false to say once an always an elder, always an elder That is as false as to say once saved always saved, that doesn’t follow. Not only may a man no longer meet the qualifications, but 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. How unwise for me as a preacher to say that I am qualified to be a preacher now you’ve got to keep me. When 20 or 30% of the congregation thinks I am a dumpy preacher. I promise you I’d leave. I wouldn’t lock my feet into the dirt and say “Well, I’m qualified so they’d better accept me. What an attitude! That attitude alone disqualifies a man. What follows then 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 there is one other passage that I think we need to have our attention called to and that’s in 1 Timothy chapter 5. In addition then to Acts chapter 6 verse 3 concerning the selection of elders, we have this statement in 1 Timothy chapter 5 and I don’t think I’ve ever seen it followed in any church with which I’ve ever been affiliated. Here we have a context beginning in verse 17 where elders are already in position in the local church, they are local bishops. He talks about how they are to be even paid, especially those who are not

only shepherding the congregation spiritually but also conducting themselves as evangelists, as preachers. He says those individual are worthy of double honor, which is a euphemism in the New Testament, for receiving enumeration. But he also says, and by the way verse 18 is an interesting passage, hardly a point that we ought to stop and make, but there are two illusions, verse 18 to previous scriptures. The illusion of the ox treading out the corn is from Deuteronomy 25, which was a principle even under the Old Law about how you ought to treat you animals. But notice the scripture—notice this—verse 18, for the scripture sayeth and he quote two scriptures—one from Deuteronomy 25 and the next one “the laborer is worthy of his reward.” I’ve not been able to find that in the Old Testament. But it is Luke 10:17 a statement that Jesus made. Here we find a New Testament epistle referring back to another New Testament epistle as scripture, well that’s an interesting side point, that has implications for our understanding of scripture. Notice verses 19 and 20, “against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses, them (meaning contextually here the elders) that sin rebuke before all that others also may fear.” The principle here is that even though a man is in a position of being an elder in the church, he can disqualify himself, or make mistakes that he shouldn’t make. It therefore follows, that a man can be removed from the office of an elder. In fact, there we have the process of doing so, there has to be also two or three witnesses, a principle well grounded in the Old Testament, in God’s approach to human relationships, but theoretically if charges could be sustained against an elder being disqualified, he could be removed. That’s all we’re talking about. 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 wh put the elder in the first place, can remove them. And certainly all that ought to be based upon scriptural, teaching that is the man ought to be found to be faulty scripturally—and spiritually, but 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 voluntary remove himself. Now how do you determine that unless you ask the members, how they perceive that man, as an elder of the church. 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. And out attitude ought to be that we want to serve the Lord, and serve the flock, and continue to have the approval and respect of the flock, of one another. And if I, or anyone else in a leadership sort of capacity, no longer sustains the respect from a sizeable portion of the flock, for whatever reason, the proper attitude would be to remove oneself from that position. A position that depends upon credibility, depends upon it! And by the way, Johnny recently told me a Christian doesn’t have to be elder to go to heaven. You know, this is a very sticky situation, and in previous congregations where I’ve been, this thing has been done. It’s not easy. It can be very unpleasant, very difficult because we are dealing in area of ego, emotions, feelings. And therefore it’s going to require every single one of us being gentle, and kind and loving; firm, yes, truthful, yes, scripturally, absolutely But all of us must be very careful that we are able to see things clearly through the eye glasses of scripture, and not through personal feelings concerns emotions. There’s not a person in this auditorium, that I know personally, that I do not think the world of and appreciate as a member of the Church, but that doesn’t mean that I think everyone in here should be an elder. If I do not think you should be an elder of church, does that mean I don’t love you and think the world of you as a Christian and as a human being. Of course not! I don’t think I should be an elder. I don’t think I’m scripturally qualified to be. An if I find out that you agree with that assessment, should I somehow think that you don’t like me like you should? Of course not! This is such serious business that we allow, we must not allow our personal egos and emotions to enter in. We must not! We dare not! There’s too much at stake here in light of eternity.

Very quickly, here is the process outlined and this procedure has been written out in steps and you are certainly welcome to take a look at this. We can post it in the secretary’s office for anyone that has any questions. Beginning next Sunday morning, Johnnie will be presenting two sermons, one next Sunday morning and one the following Sunday morning—so that’s April 15 and 22 on the qualifications and

responsibilities of elders and I know that he will do a good job. That a short time to cover a lot of ground that he's a Master at capsuling and summarizing what the Bible says. I urge you to be present for those lessons and to listen carefully. Then on April 22nd, the 2nd Sunday of these Sermons, forms will be distributed to the membership. 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. The second form will be a form that is designed to identify the scriptural responsibilities, or specific qualifications of elders. You will be asked to fill out one form for each man whose name you wish to submit as a potential elder for the church here. You have one week to turn in all of those forms and we're encouraging every member to do that, not like one form per couple, but each individual member, of responsible age, who wishes to do so. No one is required to do this. It may well be that your affiliation with the church and with these men is such that you feel that you do not really know about them and what's going on. You do not need to feel compelled to comment. Once those forms are turned in, which will be by April 29, the committee of preachers, whom the elders have asked to monitor this process, will sit down and go through these. And I want to stress to you that in light of Acts 6:3 and everything else that we've said, these preachers are not going to be making these decision for you. But they are some fundamental guidelines that will be followed. Present elders would need to receive sizeable percentage of support from this congregation. As I suggested to you that as a preacher, if we polled the congregation and found out that 25% of the church think I stink as a preacher and wishes that I would leave—I would probably leave. Because for me to work effectively with you, you have got to want me to be here. And so that only follows. And then of course the other forms there would need to be again a sizeable percentage of people who turn in say one man's name, the submission of one's man name would surely show up several times among this membership. If that individual is indeed perceived to be eldership material. So that process in and of itself will weed some individuals out. And then of course, it would be the responsibility of the committee to interview and to speak with and talk with those individuals who are being considered to be elders in the future. And so our committee interviews will sit down with these men, there's nothing secretive about this, or nothing ominous, we'll sit down with the Bible and with that man and discuss his spiritual condition in light of those qualifications. Ultimately out of that process then will come names who will be presented to the congregation on May 13th, is the way that's set up at this time. And on that date then when those names are presented to the congregation, a two week period will be allowed for the submission of scriptural objection to the committee which will be held in strictest confidence by that committee. We see no reason to render strife among members, problems that one member may have with another member, we want to try to handle this tastefully and in Christian way and yet to face squarely the issues that are raised by any potential objections that may come in. 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. That may, or may not include, additional ones. That's up to you. Let me stress however, brethren, that between now and then, you have some serious responsibilities, and quite frankly some heavy burdens. May you not take this lightly. This isn't like running down and voting for Clayton Williams. This is serious! You know he or someone else may mess up Texas but God forbid that we mess up the church. This has eternal consequences. And I have always been convinced ever since I studying the subject of elders, that it would be terrible for a person to just sit down and in five minutes say, "Well, I think brother So and So is a good fellow and write his name down and turn it in. I think that is terrible! What we ought to do is take 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and sit down and study for, I would be so bold as to say hours, applying that teaching to the individual that I am thinking about, and making certain that I can honestly say, Yes, but we tend to pull out one or two things and say that he really does that well, so that's it! And he may fit 90% of these tremendously and yet be glaring deficient in another or two. We've got to stand before God and face these spiritual decisions with all of their

consequences. And I'll tell you another thing we'd better do, rather than thinking this all depends on us and that's what we do, we think this all depends on us. We'd better do an awful lot of praying between now and then. I mean we'd better pray, pray, pray that God's will will be done in this undertaking Not our will, not our desires, not our perceptions, but I think it ought to be that—we'd better pray, deeply and fervently that God's will will be done. We need to be sober, serious, objective,—and that's hard to do, isn't it. Because we're dealing with people that we love. But we've got to be objective, and honestly allow scripture to mold our perceptions of each individual that we might consider, not our past experiences necessarily, unless those specifically are germane to what the Bible says. Can we honestly and genuinely say scripture, is what formulates our perceptions with an individual. That's what we've got to do and that means we need to listen closely to the two sermons that Johnny preaches, we need to do study on our own if we have not done that in recent months or years on what the Bible says and we've got to be honest in facing up to the teaching of those passages.

If you are in our audience this morning especially if you're a visitor we in some sense want to apologize for not having a more evangelist message that is designed to bring you into confrontation of your own spiritual condition. On the other hand brethren our children and we ourselves need this kind of fundamental plain talk about how the church is functioning among us. We are not to shy away from that. We ought to rejoice that as a body of God's people we are privileged to take the Word of God and to honestly face ourselves as we said in the beginning, we will do that just as soon as the Lord returns. He wants us to do it now, and to make prayerful, careful decisions. But if you are in our audience this morning and you need to respond to the Gospel invitation to become a Christian, we would love to take a few moments and discuss that with you. If you'll come forward and make your desire known, we'll take that time to do that. If you are a member of the Lord's church and you need at this time in this assembly to come forward and publicly acknowledge sin in your life. Here is a group of people, whom I have found in the two or so years that I've been here to be people who relish the opportunity to express love and concern an appreciation for one another, as together we try to alter the blunders that we've made and grow closer to God in His will. And so what a place to rededicate one's life to the Lord, to make confession of wrong. There is no other place on the face of the earth that would be a better environment for doing that. Not the counselors couch, but before other Christians, the body that is striving to work together. Do you need to come. If you do, please do that as we stand and sing.

Open Hands

A Ministry of Churches of Christ

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Open Hands Center

JANUARY 1991

CHURCHES OF CHRIST COOPERATE TO HELP THOSE IN NEED

Months of planning and preparation came to an end when the Open Hands Center opened its doors to the public on Thursday, October 25, 1990. This joint effort on the part of churches of Christ in the Mid-Cities area offers a Christian response to the increasing number of requests from people for food and clothing assistance.

I find people somewhat surprised that so much need exists in our community. The general perception is that not very many people in our area live in poverty. However, social service agencies, including First Call For Help and the Department of Human Services, report an increase of more than 60 percent in the number of Mid-Cities residents seeking assistance. Recent layoffs in Tarrant county will only tend to increase the number of people living on the jagged edge economically.

The churches of Christ cannot assist all of those who have need, but

we can touch the lives of so many more through a joint effort like this.

The original sponsoring congregations for the Open Hands work were the Airport Freeway, Brown Trill, and Pipeline Road churches of Christ. Two other congregations joined the work this month. They are the College Hill and Colleyville churches of Christ.

Christians from each of the sponsoring churches have already donated hundreds of volunteer hours.

The Mid-Cities community has also responded positively to what we are seeking to accomplish. Several area businesses have made food donations.

All in all, things are off to a good start. A number of opportunities for you to become involved in this rewarding work exists. If you have not visited the center, please do so. It's a great place to serve with and to meet other Christians.

Help Us With Your Donations

This year we anticipate providing over \$116,000 worth of food assistance. Our clothing assistance should approach \$120,000 in disbursements. Donations from people like you will be needed to meet this challenge. Here are some suggestions about how you can help.

First, with food. If you are a member of one of the sponsoring congregations, actively involve your family in your church's quarterly food drive for Open Hands.

If as an individual you wish to help, you may do so by donating canned goods. You might call the center to see what is needed at a given time. Or, you could make a monetary donation to our food fund. This would be greatly appreciated. About 40 percent of our food supply is purchased in this manner through a local wholesale distributor at cost.

We accept donations of clothing. We especially need children's clothing. Approximately 80 percent of

Continued on pg. 2

I wish to support the Open Hands Center in the following manner:

___ I wish to make a contribution of \$_____.

___ I want to be a part of this ministry. I will send \$_____ per month, beginning in _____.

___ I would like to become a volunteer. Please have the Volunteer Coordinator contact me concerning various volunteer opportunities.

MY NAME: _____ PH. _____

ADDRESS: _____

MAIL TO:
Open Hands Center
512 E. Pipeline Rd.,
Hurst, TX 76053

Help With Donations Continued

requests for clothing come from parents who are hoping to find some clothing for their children. On the other hand, about 80 percent of all donated clothing that comes to the center is adult size. As you can see, any donations of children's clothing would be a great help.

A rule of thumb that we use in keeping clothing is this: "Would I be willing to wear this?" All out-of-style clothing, stained, torn, or otherwise is sent on to other sources. We are committed to offering our very best to those who come to us for clothing assistance.

Think of it this way. If Jesus came to you in need of clothing, what would you offer to Him? The Bible seems to make it clear that God is not pleased with our discards. It does not glorify Him for me to pass on to others what I would not feel comfortable wearing for myself any longer. As you think about what you would donate, think about what you would offer to the Lord. In a very real way, that is what you are doing. "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Presents and Food Baskets For Over Seventy Families

Seventy-four families were helped with Christmas presents for their children this past holiday season. The presents were donated from area businesses, Bible class groups, ladies groups, Girl Scout and Boy Scout troupes, and a number of generous individuals.

Another forty families were supplied with Christmas food baskets through the generosity of the Hurst Police Officers' Association.

One of the joys of this work is seeing people take it upon themselves to offer needed assistance to others. Because the center opened in late October, we really did not foresee being able to provide much in the way of holiday assistance. Yet, in a wonderfully spontaneous way, presents became available.

SERVICE REPORT October - December, 1990

Category	No. Services
Total families served.....	301
Total individuals served.....	996
Volunteer Hours.....	1,672

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS

1st Quality Food Store	L. D. Bell Student Council
B.E.I.	McDonald's Photography
Boy Scout Pack 387	Mervyns
City of Bedford	Metro Business and
Employees	Professional Women
Community Enrichment Center	N.E.E.D.
D. and B. Pawn Shop	Staples Direct Office Supply
Golightly's Gallery	Sunbelt Savings
Hurst Pawn Shop	Town and Country Drugs
Hurst Police Officers Association	UTA Bible Chair
L. D. Bell French Club	Worth Grocery Store

OPEN HANDS CENTER

Hours of Operation
Monday - Friday

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Office.....(817) 285-0269

OPEN HANDS

Airport Freeway Church of Christ
P.O. Box 369 Euless TX 76039
(817) 285-0269

Non-Profit Organization
Permit No. 8
U.S. Postage Paid
Euless, TX 76039

Charles and Laverne Sheets
5501 Scott Dr.
No. Richland Hills, TX 76180

Coalgate Church of Christ

P.O. Box 307
Coalgate, OK 74538

Evangelist
Gil Yoder

October 25, 1991

Michael Hatcher
Church of Christ
First and Avenue C
Burkburnett, TX 76354

Dear Mike,

Greetings! It has been a while since seeing you, and I hope you and your family are able to survive in this present world. I have wanted to come see you at Burk' ever since you told me about your 386, but just haven't had the chance yet. Perhaps we will get to visit at the ADL next month.

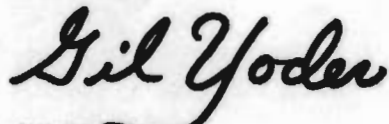
I am writing now about your correspondence with brother Maxie Boren. Brother Popejoy gave me a copy of the material that you sent to him, and I have gone over it today. Some of the material I received from brother Hicks about a month ago. I just wanted to commend you for the courage you evidenced in pressing Maxie regarding Rusty Peterman. I don't think that I have ever heard brother Peterman or read anything he has written, but I have heard of him. It looks like your effort (at least in part) had a good affect upon the school at least for the present.

There are still a number of things about Brown Trail that give me problems, and I think perhaps the removal of Rusty as a regular teacher is more window dressing than any real substance. I suspect you feel the same thing, or else you wouldn't be distributing the information you have.

Hopefully we can visit over lunch or supper next month during the lectures and discuss some of these things.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely yours,



Gil Yoder

Lectureship celebrates 35th year

Lubbock Christian University hosted its 35th Annual Bible Lectureship this year. The theme of the program was "Principles for the 21st Century from 1 and 2 Timothy."

This year the lectureship was under the leadership of a new director, Dr. Leon Crouch. Dr. Crouch has been a member of the Bible faculty at LCU since 1972. He is one of the University's most talented teachers and has been selected twice by students as the F. W. Mattox Teacher of the Year.

The job of Lectureship Director carries many responsibilities. Crouch will be planning the lectureship programs and contacting the speakers who will be featured on the program. "Our purpose for the lectureship is to select topics based on issues that are facing the church today," Crouch explained. "For example, this year we used passages from 1 & 2 Timothy to examine two primary issues, 'The Women's Role in the Church,' and 'The Elder's Role.'"

Attendance for the lectureship increased over last year and the response from people attending the lectureship was very positive. "There is a definite need for lectureship-type programs today and we are going to offer the very best programs possible," Crouch said. "This means we will dedicate ourselves to proper planning and increase our publicity and promotion efforts."

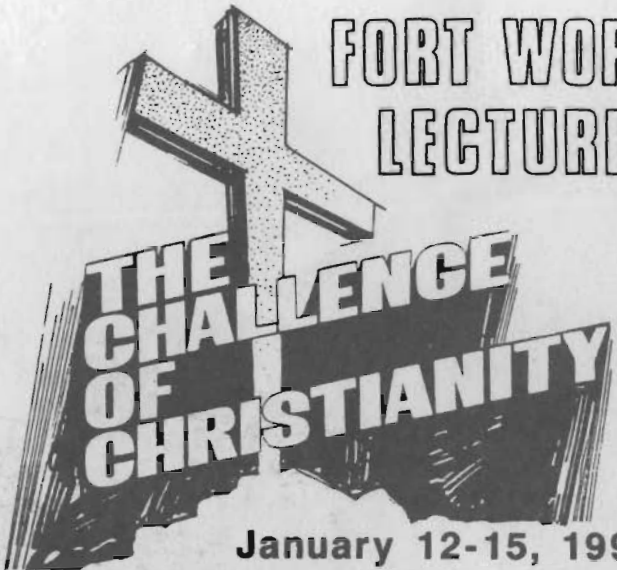
This year 17 guest teachers were featured as a part of the lectureship program. These teachers were: Elmore Johnson, Lubbock, Texas; Karl Jones, Burleson, Texas; Tim Hadley, LCU; Benny Baker, Dimmitt, Texas; Tom Greer, Abilene, Texas; Daniel Hardin, LCU; David Miller, Brown Trail School of Preaching; Gary Blakeney, Nederland, Texas; Jim Brewer, Plainview, Texas; David Tarbet, Clovis, New Mexico; Robin Wright, Quanah, Texas; Charles Stephenson, LCU; Ed Stokum, Brownfield, Texas; Brent Adams, Canyon, Texas; Bob Shepherd, Canyon, Texas; Joe Blakeney, Whitney, Texas; and Furman Kearley, Monahans, Texas.

Initial plans for the 1992 Lectureship have been made. The theme for the program will be "The Doctrine of Salvation." The dates for lectureship will be October 25-27, 1992.



Leon Crouch is the new Lectureship Director.

15th Annual
**FORT WORTH
 LECTURES**



January 12-15, 1992



John Banister



Maxie Boren



Leroy Brownlow



Walter Buchanan



Sarah Fallis



Larry Fitzgerald



Joe Darrell Gibbs



Shelton Gibbs

Lectureship Schedule

Sunday, January 12

7:30- 8:00 p.m. Singing Director: ANDY KIZER
 8:00- 8:45 p.m. Keynote: "THE CHALLENGE OF CHRISTIANITY" WENDELL WINKLER

Monday, January 13

9:15-10:00 a.m. Lecture: "Growing in Christ" JACK GRAY
 10:15-11:00 a.m. Bible Study Classes
 Class #1: "Do We Need A 'New Hermeneutic'?" TERRY HIGHTOWER
 Class #2: "Christian Ethics: Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage" GARY FALLIS
 Class #3: "Ladies' Class--'A Time To Be'" SUNNY WORKMAN
 11:15-12:00 p.m. Lecture: "O Worship the King" JOE DARRELL GIBBS
 12:00- 1:00 p.m. Lunch
 1:15- 2:00 p.m. Lecture: "Anticipating Heaven" MAXIE BOREN
 2:15- 4:00 p.m. Open Forum Moderator: GARY WORKMAN
 4:00- 6:30 p.m. Dinner - Brown Trail School of Preaching Alumni Banquet
 6:30- 7:00 p.m. Singing Director: FERMAN CARPENTER
 7:00- 7:45 p.m. Keynote: "OBEDIENCE: THE FORGOTTEN COMMANDMENT" JIM LAWS
 7:50- 8:30 p.m. Bible Study Classes
 Class #1: "Is Ecumenism Permeating the Church?" HARDEMAN NICHOLS
 Class #2: "The Challenge of Islam: Why Not Be A Moslem?" GUY CASKEY
 Class #3: "The Role of Women in the Church" ROY LANIER

Tuesday, January 14

9:15-10:00 a.m. Lecture: "Understanding God's Word" PERRY HALL
 10:15-11:00 a.m. Bible Study Classes
 Class #1: "Challenges Facing the Church in the 90s" DON DEFFENBAUGH
 Class #2: "Christian Ethics: Abortion / Allowing the Terminally Ill To Die" ROBERT DODSON
 Class #3: Ladies' Class: "How Is the Human Potential Movement Affecting Your Family" LOTTIE BETH HOBBS
 11:15-12:00 p.m. Lecture: "Not For Sale" SHELTON GIBBS
 12:00- 2:00 p.m. The Truth in Love Luncheon
 2:15- 3:00 p.m. Lecture: "The Just Shall Live By Faith" JOHN BANISTER
 3:15- 4:30 p.m. Open Forum Moderator: GARY WORKMAN
 4:30- 6:30 p.m. Dinner
 6:30- 7:00 p.m. Singing Director: LARRY HARP
 7:00- 7:45 p.m. Keynote: "WHO BELIEVES IN HELL ANYMORE?" JOHNNY RAMSEY
 7:50- 8:30 p.m. Bible Study Classes
 Class #1: "Musical Variety in Worship" TONEY SMITH
 Class #2: "The Challenge of Premillennialism" ED WHARTON
 Class #3: "The Christian Family in the 90s" BILL HAMRICK

Wednesday, January 15

9:15-10:00 a.m. Lecture: "Helping Young People To Cope" EDDIE PARRISH
 10:15-11:00 a.m. Bible Study Classes
 Class #1: "Saved By Grace" BURT GROVES
 Class #2: "Christian Ethics: Homosexuality" DAVE MILLER
 Class #3: Ladies' Class: "The Challenge of a Crucified Savior" SARAH FALLIS

11:15-12:00 p.m. Lecture: "When Jesus Comes Again" WALTER BUCHANAN
 12:00- 2:00 p.m. "Honor To Whom Honor Is Due" Luncheon Honoree: GARY WORKMAN
 2:15- 3:00 p.m. Lecture: "Commending the Savior To Others" HARRY HART
 3:15- 4:30 p.m. Open Forum Moderator: GARY WORKMAN
 4:30- 6:30 p.m. Dinner
 6:30- 7:00 p.m. Singing Director: DAVE MILLER
 7:00- 7:45 p.m. Bible Study Classes
 Class #1: "The Biblical Background of the Troubled Middle East" GUY CASKEY
 Class #2: "The Challenge of Mormonism: The Doctrine of Continuous Revelation"
 Class #3: "Should the Church Raise Money Like a Business" LARRY HARP
 7:50- 8:30 p.m. Keynote: "THE CHURCH OF CHRIST" LEROY BROWNLOW

CLASS LOCATIONS

Classes taught in the following rooms:
 (maps available at all entrances)

- Class #1 — Auditorium
- Class #2 — Multi-Purpose Room
- Class #3 — N112

BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST

1801 Brown Trail, Bedford (Ft. Worth), Texas (817)282-6526

(HOME OF THE BROWN TRAIL PREACHER TRAINING SCHOOL)
 Located 3 Blocks North Of The Airport Freeway (121A)



Sunny Workman



Gary Workman



Guy N. Woods



Wendell



John Banister



Maxie Boren



Leroy Brownlow



Walter Buchanan



Guy Caskey



Don Deffenbaugh



Robert Dodson



Gary Fallis



Sarah Fallis



Larry Fitzgerald



Joe Darrell Gibbs



Shelton Gibbs



Jack Gray



Burt Groves



Perry Hall



Bill Hamrick

Lectureship Schedule

14

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 Allowing the Terminally Ill To Die" ROBERT DODSON
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15

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 Class #2 — Multi-Purpose Room
 Class #3 — N112



Terry Hightower



Lottie Beth Hobbs



Jim Laws



Roy Lanier



Dave Miller



Hardeman Nichols



Eddie Parrish



Johnny Ramsey



H.D. Simmons

CRIST

-6526



Sunny Workman



Gary Workman



Guy N. Woods



Wendell Winkler



Ed Wharton



Toney Smith



Don Simpson

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER BALANCE

Jesus taught that the true worshippers of God must worship Him in "spirit and truth." Please read John 4:23-24. Not "spirit" alone, or "truth" alone, but "spirit and truth." To leave out either of these in worship of God would be to worship in vain!

Most all agree that worship in spirit means that one engages in expressions of praise and adoration to the Almighty One with reverence and awe, and with a humble and sincere attitude. Read Luke 18:9-14 for insight concerning a proper spirit. To worship in truth means that one does so in compliance with the revealed will of God as recorded in the last will and testament of Jesus Christ. Read Matthew 15:6-9 for insight concerning the importance of obeying the divine precepts and not supplanting His directives with the doctrines of men. Regardless of how sincere and "spiritual" a person might be, if he/she engages in worship of God while ignoring or rejecting God's truth pertaining to worship, such worship is vain. On the other hand, regardless of how careful one might be to do just those things commanded of God, if his/her attitude is bitter, cynical, and devoid of humble and sincere devotion, such worship is vain!

This principle of PROPER BALANCE in the worship of God is applicable to many areas of the Christian's life. We need to remember that to allow one's self to become sidetracked from "center" generally causes some kind of a "crash" in the ditch on either side. "Extremism" is hurtful to the Cause of Christ.

As an example, let us consider some present happenings in the brotherhood: A significant number of brethren seem rather intent on disrupting the unity of the church by veering to the left and taking a course away from the "old paths." While many are at various "intervals" along this route, some have gone extremely far away, even ridiculing the very concept of a Divine pattern! It is my firm conviction that such is wrong! But on the other hand, in reaction to all this, some have allowed the pendulum to swing so far the other way that bitterness and cynicism dominate. This produces a "circle-drawing" mindset that ends up setting at naught any brother that disagrees with them at all. This posture, in my judgment, is just as wrong as the other. Both extremes only polarize brethren, and fragment the church.

We need to see the importance of proper balance! Let the "mainstream" of brethren cleave to truth with conviction and courage, and yet in love, understanding, and kindness. Let us continually plead for unity based on truth, and lovingly try to wield our influence to attain it. Let us be bridge builders and not bridge destroyers! Let us be peacemakers and not peacebreakers! See Matthew 5:9.

--Maxie B. Boren

THE CHRISTIAN BELONGS TO GOD

During his perilous sea journey as recorded in Acts 27, the apostle Paul made reference to God, saying, "whose I am, and whom I serve." Verse 23. Earlier in his life, in giving instruction to Christians concerning proper moral conduct, he wrote, "ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body." I Corinthians 6:19-20. And again, in his epistle to Titus, he stated that Jesus Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works." 2:14. And another apostle declared that the church is "a people for God's own possession..." I Peter 2:9. Brethren, we need to realize this, in view of eternity, and act accordingly!

--Maxie B. Boren

7-3-92

Michael:

Hope the enclosed will be helpful. This whole Charade was ridiculous. Minor flaws in an elder are to be handled as instructed in 1 Tim 5:1. In V. 19 (some chap.) a case of a more serious charge is under discussion. This procedure involving a plurality of "Witnesses" demands the understanding that a very serious offense is being considered. The next verse (20) progresses to show what must be done when the "accusation" has been fully sustained before witnesses and repentance has not occurred. The implication indicates "public exposure" before all" (the congregation). If all this procedure fails, withdrawal would seem to be the final step.

The amazing thing in all this is that: (1) The "Elder Selection Committee" was composed of four men, D. Miller, J. Ramsey, G. Fallis & D. Simpson who are reputed to be sound, capable preachers. (2) M. Boren was not on the committee only because of being away so much. Apparently, however, he did approve of the system (3) BUT The best passage of scripture that these five men combined could come up with to use to justify all this - Was 1 Tim. 5:19 !!!

After the procedure was finished and the votes

tabulated (they hate the word "VOTE" - Johnnie called it "the mandate" of the church) three of the five were rejected since they did not receive the required 75% approval. Although I know that there was more than one person who listed scriptural objections against these men, they were not contacted by the screening committee and apparently no follow-up was conducted. Instead, some of the people worked up a dinner in ^{honor} ~~order~~ of the three deposed men in ~~the honor~~ and presents given. After "the mandate" had been announced by Johnnie, you will hear brother Sauderbel's carefully prepared RESIGNATION on the tape. Johnnie said it was the best announcement of this nature he had ever heard. It, somehow, reminded me of the announcement made by the fellow whose saddle horse suddenly died. After very careful consideration of the situation the man announced that, "I ain't gonna ride that horse no more!"

Oh well - maybe the next time the system of "reconfirmation" is enacted it will work a little better

PS Let me know what you think of my thoughts on Rom. 8:26-27.

Graham

BIBLICAL RATIONALE FOR EVALUATION OF ELDERS

(1) The members select elders to begin with (Acts 6:3). Since the complexion of congregational membership changes over the years, an eldership may conceivably no longer consist of the same individuals whom the present membership would select.

(2) Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow. Even if a man is technically qualified to be an elder, if the membership where he attends does not perceive him as a leader whom they respect and trust, he cannot shepherd effectively.

(3) The Bible makes provision for the evaluation of an elder's spiritual standing (1 Tim. 5:19). Should a current elder be found to be disqualified, he no longer meets the qualifications to be an elder. An evaluation process is simply one expedient means of ascertaining the elder's conformity to God's will. "Once an elder, always an elder" is as false as "once saved, always saved."

(4) Elders have the authority to ascertain the amount of confidence that members have in their leadership capabilities. Any shepherd who genuinely wishes to serve the flock will naturally desire the continued approval and respect of that flock. Should an elder no longer sustain that respect from a sizeable portion of the flock for whatever reason, the only proper attitude would be to remove oneself from a position that depends upon credibility. A Christian does not have to be an elder to go to heaven.

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE ELDER SELECTION SCREENING COMMITTEE

We are now ready to proceed with the elder selection and evaluation process. Packets have been prepared by the committee for distribution to the Brown Trail membership. Each member who wishes to participate in the process is to receive a packet. Complete instructions are enclosed. If you desire additional forms, please see one of the committee members.

While you may not choose to submit names of men for new elders, we urge members to participate in the evaluation of our present elders. Fill out one evaluation form for each of the current elders. Fill out one selection form for each new name you wish to submit.

Only one change has been made in the procedures which were presented two weeks ago to the congregation. The committee is asking that you sign all forms. No forms will be considered which do not include a signature. However, we want to assure you that **ONLY THE SCREENING COMMITTEE WILL KNOW WHO TURNED IN FORMS**. The screening committee has pledged itself to hold all signatures in strictest confidence. The only purpose for requiring signatures is to insure that all participants are members of this congregation and to "provide things honest in the sight of all men."

Please seal your envelope and return it to the committee no later than next Sunday (one week from today).

The committee would like to again remind the congregation that the committee is not and will not make decisions concerning leadership for this congregation. The committee is acting strictly as a liaison between the membership and the leadership. In the final analysis, the congregation will select its leaders in harmony with Bible teaching.

Please do not allow personal likes/dislikes to affect your decisions. This is not a popularity contest. This is a decent, orderly method of looking out from among ourselves as well as determining whether our present elders are qualified. To quote Johnny: "According to divine mandate, elders are selected by Bible qualifications, and not elected by popular vote."

PROCEDURE FOR IMPLEMENTING
ELDER EVALUATION/SELECTION PROCESS

BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The elders formed a committee to regulate and monitor the process. Committee members: Gary Fallis, Dave Miller, Johnny Ramsey, Don Simpson.
2. Formally apprise the congregation of the commencement of the evaluation/selection process (Dave Miller--April 8). Present sermons on elder qualifications and responsibilities (Johnny Ramsey--April 15 & 22).
3. Distribute evaluation/selection forms to the membership (April 22). Give membership one week to carefully/prayerfully evaluate present eldership as well as potential new elders and submit forms to the committee no later than April 29.
4. Tabulation of forms by the committee. Present elders must receive 75% support of those submitting forms. Individual interview appointments will be scheduled. Interviews will facilitate introspection and review biblical qualifications.
5. Names presented to the congregation (May 13). A two week period will be given for the submission of signed scriptural objections to the committee (Deadline: May 20).
6. If any objections are forthcoming, interview appointments with objectors will be scheduled in order to ascertain the validity of objections. The objector will not be required to meet with the one to whom he objects. The objector's anonymity will be maintained. Scriptural objections will then be discussed with those receiving objections.
7. Appointment/ordination service (May 27).

ELDER EVALUATION FORM

An elder must have the respect, trust, confidence, and support of the congregation. Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow. The present Brown Trail eldership is composed of Howard Barnum, Bob Lauderdale, Dale Peterman, John Tyson, and Bobby Watts. Will you please respond to the following evaluation information frankly and honestly. Please circle the answer that represents your view. Please fill out five forms on the present eldership--one form per man. Your assessment will be held in strictest confidence by the screening committee.

My evaluation of _____

I have reservations about this man being an elder at Brown Trail.

YES

NO

Please express your reason(s) for your decision:

signature

Wednesday Afternoon
May 2, 1990

GOEBEL MUSIC

5114 MONTCLAIR
COLLEYVILLE, TX 76034
(817) 283-3634

Dear Faithful Brother:

First, I KNOW THAT YOU ARE EXTREMELY BUSY, THEREFORE, I BELIEVE YOU WILL UNDERSTAND MY SCHEDULE AND WHY THIS IS PHOTOCOPIED. I AM SENDING THIS TO JUST A FEW THAT I DEEM MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE, CHRISTIAN MEN, AND WHO LOVE THE TRUTH, ONLY THE TRUTH, LIKE I DO (YEA, WHO FIGHT EVERY OUNCE OF LIBERALISM, REGARDLESS OF...). I leave for a gospel meeting shortly - there is much to do before I leave.

Second, I want you to know that I am not trying to "stir" trouble, but I am seeking your advice and asking for your expertise with the Book of God. I love the church at Brown Trail, like you also love it, but I am concerned and I do try to "stay abreast" of things.

Third, I want you to know that I was present when the announcement was made of the resignation of Eddie Whitten and Ed Clark. I was also present when it was announced again, but this time with Nelda's (Sister Ed Clark) resignation added to it. I KNOW EXACTLY what was said and met with one of the elders, with three witnesses, after worship (I also have a copy of the elders' letter sent out later, and the wording was directly in conflict about her...).

Fourth, I have not asked to be involved in any of their happenings, but I have tried to be "aware" ... and have kept a file for some time now of various things. When I returned from the Far East, I received the tape and listened to the meeting that took place between the five remaining elders and the "men of the church" (the date of that was Nov. 21st and the tape is 5½ hours long).

Fifth, Recently, I heard brother Dave Miller's sermon (heard it on tape) and was perplexed about the matter of "reevaluating current elders, or reconfirming..." I listened to it once, and it is a marvelous lesson, all except the "particular biblical matter" that he set forth to prove. That is, at least the way I feel about it, and you might differ - but that is the reason I am writing.

***The first enclosure has some of the excerpts relative to this particular biblical matter, the evaluating, reevaluating and/or reconfirming elders, which he proved (?) to be so biblical. I personally went back over the tape and this is the area with which I have concern and with which I seek your help in my understanding. If I made any mistakes in my transcribing, it was certainly not on purpose. I think I have typed off all he said pertaining to it.

***I love and appreciate Dave Miller. He is a fine young man with a great education, good mind, etc., but on this I do have difficulty...

Sixth, Brethren, I have much material that I cannot divulge at this particular time (hour), material that "directly" relates to some of the problems at Brown Trail. I suppose you would have to KNOW ALL OF THEM TO BE FULLY AWARE of my concern. I ask that you trust me in this statement, as I do not say what I cannot document. The fact is, that even now, I am listening to a 4½ hour tape of...and it, too, is powerful.

Seventh, I could very clearly relate to you as to why one man is no longer teaching in the School of Preaching. Finally, the announcement was made of his resignation, but nothing was said as to "why." I want you to understand that this, too, concerns itself with the problems there.

Eighth, THE SECOND ENCLOSURE is the six pages (all tucked into a packet & into an envelope) distributed to the membership on Sunday, April 22, which forms were turned back in on April 29th.

***The value of this is just to let you see:

Page 1, BIBLICAL RATIONALE FOR EVALUATION OF ELDERS.

Pages 2-4, ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE ELDER SELECTION SCREENING COMMITTEE, PROCEDURE FOR IMPLEMENTING ELDER EVALUATION/SELECTION PROCESS AND ELDER EVALUATION FORM. (These pages are not numbered, but in the order as they were in the packet).

Ninth, If you were hearing the tape, you would hear the names of Johnny Ramsey, Don Simpson, Gary Fallis, Dave Miller and Maxie Boren, even might have input, but he is "gone so much..." as the committee chosen by the elders to discuss and devise this plan that the elders approved. Therefore, all five of these men MUST believe this to be scriptural. These are the employees, preachers, of and at Brown Trail who work under these five elders.

***I want to reiterate, for emphasis, about my folder of material, as it does relate to the things I am sending you. Yea, even the "percentage" of votes (?) for elders. It is stated both from the negative and from the positive and I stand amazed when I observe such...

Tenth, I am not going to list my objections to said materials, BUT BRETHREN, I MOST SINCERELY, TRULY, AND FOR THE TRUTH'S SAKE, DESIRE TO HAVE YOUR INPUT. Help me if you can! Yea, to see if I am wrong or right (and "why") in my feelings about "reconfirmation of elders").

***I have in mind to write an article on: RECONFIRMATION: IS IT IMPLICATION OR MISAPPLICATION OF SCRIPTURE? This is a GROWING item and needs "to be dealt with" before many churches "follow in these paths and do likewise."

***I AM WRITING TO YOU "IN CONFIDENCE," SO PLEASE KEEP IT THAT WAY AT THIS TIME. If you can help me to see I am wrong, there will be no article. If we agree, then I'd like to be able to quote something you might have to say about this "biblical matter" (?).

Eleventh, The words are "carefully chosen" in this material, so you must be aware of that. However, notice if you will, that on May 27, 1990, "we will be able to formally appoint, ordain 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. That may or may not include additional ones. That's up to you." Since these five remaining elders have not resigned, HOW CAN THEY BE "APPOINTED OR ORDAINED"?? How can you appoint or ordain one who is already "in office"?

Faithful Brother
Page (3)
May 2, 1990

Twelfth, I do not like trouble of any kind, especially when it relates to SOUND DOCTRINE. If I did not believe in you, and that you, too, want to keep SOUND DOCTRINE SOUND, I would not send this to you, as all of us have more "already" than we can handle.

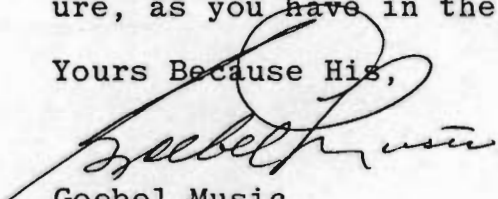
***If I do write an article on this, help me with any history of this "reconfirmation" thing, its unscripturalness, the fallacy of trying to prove it from "the complexion...and 1 Tim. 5), & or any problems such would cause in local churches.

Brethren, I am sure that what I have thought about, studied, etc., will be forthcoming from what you write, that is, if you think this matter is one that is wrong. However, I do want to hear from you. I do not think that an article should "come forth" until they finalize their several item step in their procedure (I am not against Brown Trail, as you well know, only against any error - and that is true for any place).

You will observe that a change or two has been made from the transcription of the tape, that is, after that first lesson was presented. This is another reason for sending you the six pages of their packet.

And now, I very humbly, kindly and most graciously thank you for your help and especially do I thank you for your love of THE TRUTH OF GOD. God be with and bless you in your every endeavor and may you always in the future, as you have in the past, be a blessing to HIS MAJESTY'S CAUSE.

Yours Because His,


Goebel Music

PS I know this is long, but not nearly as long as it could have been. I felt you had to have this much to adequately help in this matter.

EXCERPTS OF DAVE MILLER'S SERMON AT BROWN TRAIL

SUNDAY A.M. - APRIL 8, 1990

"..."

"And so, in formulating this committee, as well as a number of guidelines that were discussed by the committee resubmitted to the elders for their approval, 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."

"It is my task this morning to introduce you to this program, as well as to address a particular biblical matter that in my opinion needs to be addressed. Let's begin by asking ourselves this question. Since we are people of the Book and we believe that whatever we do in religion and life must be authorized and guided by the word of God. What does the Bible say about the selection of elders? ..."

"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, that's what the liberals are doing. Well, they may be, but I'm unconcerned about that in terms of whether or not it's right or wrong. I'm concerned about what the Bible teaches."

Notice Number 1, that if the members select elders to begin with, based upon Acts 6:3, and since the complexion of a congregation in terms of its membership can change over a period of time - over a period of years - an eldership may conceivably no longer consist of the same individuals that the membership would look out from among themselves and appoint. So you see, the implication is, it is false to say 'once an elder, always an elder.' That's as false as 'once saved, always saved.' That doesn't follow. Not only may a man no longer meet the qualifications, but 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 would submit themselves. Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow. So a man can be technically qualified to be an elder and yet, if the membership where he attends does not perceive him as a leader whom they respect and trust, he cannot shepherd effectively. How unwise for me, as a preacher to say, 'I'm qualified to be a preacher, now you've got to keep me' - when 20 or 30 percent of the congregation thinks I'm a dumpy preacher. I promise you, I'd leave! I wouldn't lock my feet into the dirt and say, 'Well I'm qualified, so they'd better accept me.' What an attitude. That attitude alone disqualifies a man. And it follows then, 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 there's one other passage that I think we need to have our attention called to and that's in 1 Timothy chapter 5. In addition then to Acts chapter six verse three concerning the selection of elders, we have this statement in 1 Timothy chapter 5 and I don't think I've ever seen it followed, in any church with which I have been affiliated. Here we have a context, beginning with verse seventeen...notices verses 19 and 20 (he read just here) ... the principle here is that even though a man is in the position of being an elder in the church, he can disqualify himself for making mistakes that he shouldn't make. And therefore follows that a man could be removed from the office of an elder. In fact, there we have the process for doing so...but theoretically, if charges could be sustained against an elder being disqualified he could be removed. That's all we're talking about. We may use the term 'evaluation of elders,' we may use the term 'reconfirmation,' and if those terms concern you, then call it something else. But the prin-

Excerpts-Miller-Sermon-Brown Trail
Sunday A.M., April 8, 1990

ciple is, that if the membership finds fault with an elder, the membership who put the elder in in the first place, can remove them. And certainly all of that ought to be based upon scriptural teaching... But 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. How do you determine that unless you ask the members how they perceive that man as an elder of the church?

No one should be threatened by the prospect of being evaluated. Not a one of us - the preacher...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...

And if I or anyone else in the leadership sort of capacity no longer sustains the respect of a sizeable proportion of the flock... the proper attitude would be to remove oneself from that position. A position that depends up credibility - depends upon it. And by the way, Johnny recently told me that a Christian doesn't have to be an elder to go to heaven...

Very quickly here is the process...April 15 and 22nd...then on April 22nd...forms will be distributed to the membership...one of these forms...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...the second form...one week to turn in all of those forms...forms turned in...April 29th...the committee of preachers...elders have asked to monitor this process (earlier in the very beginning of the lesson he named them: Johnny Ramsey, Gary Fallis, Don Simpson, Dave Miller - Maxie Boren, but...):...

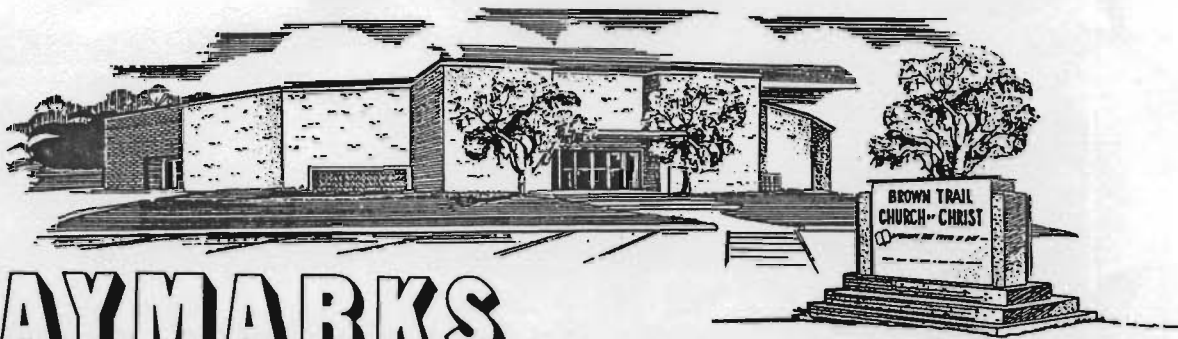
But there are some fundamental guidelines that will be followed ... The present elders would need to receive a sizeable percentage of support from this congregation...as a preacher...25% of the church thinks I stink as a preacher...I'd probably leave...

And then, of course, the other form... need to be again a sizeable percentage of people who turn in, say one man's name...and so that only follows...the responsibility of the committee to interview and to speak with, to talk with...

Ultimately out of that process then...names to the congregation on May 13th...

...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. That may or may not include additional ones. That's up to you...

Transcribed by
Goebel Music
May 1, 1990



WAYMARKS

"Set thee up WAYMARKS, make thee guide-posts; set thy heart toward the highway..." Jeremiah 31:21

Volume 13, No. 13

PUBLISHED BY THE BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST, BEDFORD TEXAS

May 1990



Johnny Ramsey
EVANGELIST

The men had a wonderful breakfast together last Saturday. TEX HAMILTON and BOB CARROTHERS are great cooks and the rest of us were excellent eaters! MAC WEAVER and son-in-law, TOM are superb dishwashers and the rest of us made a big mess so they could prove their work skills. All in all it was a morning 45 of us will cherish. That same evening the elders and their wives put on a fine meal for deacons and preachers and wives. Very thoughtful of them - except for that hot red pepper some of us sprinkled on the chicken and spaghetti dish. BILL PAINTER and I are still wiping the tears away. JOHN TYSON asked all of us to tell about our courtship days. You need to get BOBBY and JUNE WATTS and GARY and SARAH FALLIS to share their brilliant stories. Lots of laughter and good times. We even learned that a certain preacher ("mustachio") eloped! Several of the men made a mistake in saying too many sweet things about their wives and now IRIS expects "mushy" words, too. It was a good time for all.

In a more sensitive way, we are in the midst of serious and prayerful consideration, as a congregation of future elders for Brown Trail. We have had 3 lessons on this specific matter lately as we evaluate present elders and select new ones in the light of Bible teaching. Let us pray and study diligently.

DAVE is doing great work with The Truth In Love. Speaking often in many area churches, he has been able to successfully raise funds and stir up interest in this great opportunity of spreading the Gospel.

It has been a real joy to teach in the School of Preaching. The young men challenge us to do our best. Let us pray for this work.

Please read the articles in the bulletin carefully.

The New Testament not only reveals the religion of Christ in vivid detail, but also gives a solemn warning to anyone who would add to or take away from the pattern of Christianity. Read 2 Jno. 9 and Rev. 22:18-19. Jesus makes it clear that, "The seed of the kingdom is the word of God" (Lk. 8:11). Thus, the power of truth resides not in apostolic succession, nor in the creeds and catechisms of men, but in the gospel of Christ. That gospel is contained within the New Testament. We dare not preach any other (Gal. 1:6-9).

Even the casual reader of the Bible would admit that pure Christianity existed in the first century. The New Testament gives us a clear picture of the church which Jesus built (Matt. 16:18). The worship, doctrine and life of the early Christians can be ascertained from a study of the word of God. Regardless of what has transpired between the first century and the twentieth, one can be a Christian today just like Paul, Peter, Stephen and Philip. Not "this kind" or "that kind" of Christian, but just a Christian: simply a member of the same church the first century Christians were members of. How? If we do what they did, teach what they taught, we will certainly be what they were. What denomination would that make us members of? Why, none, of course -- and that is the point! None of the denominations were in existence for several centuries. Jesus prayed for unity, not diversity in religion (Jno. 17:20-21). Paul condemned division among believers (1 Cor. 1:10-13). We know, therefore, that the early Christians were members of the church of Christ and not of any sectarian movement. JR


The New Testament has 27 books in it, the first four: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, tell us the life of Christ. Then the book of Acts tells us how to become a Christian. Twenty-one epistles, Romans through Jude, tell us

how to live the Christian life. Very logically the book of Revelation, tells us how to have the hope of a Christian, how to die in Christ. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life," (Rev. 2:10). They, the saints, overcame him, the Devil, through the blood of Christ and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:11). So Jesus said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne even as I also overcame" (Rev. 3:21). "He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and they are called and faithful and chosen," is the brilliant theme of Revelation 17:14. The comprehensive theme of God's entire message from first to last is taught in the book of Revelation. Paradise lost in Eden (Gen. 3) is regained in the last scene of the last chapter of the final book of the Bible (Rev. 22:14). JR

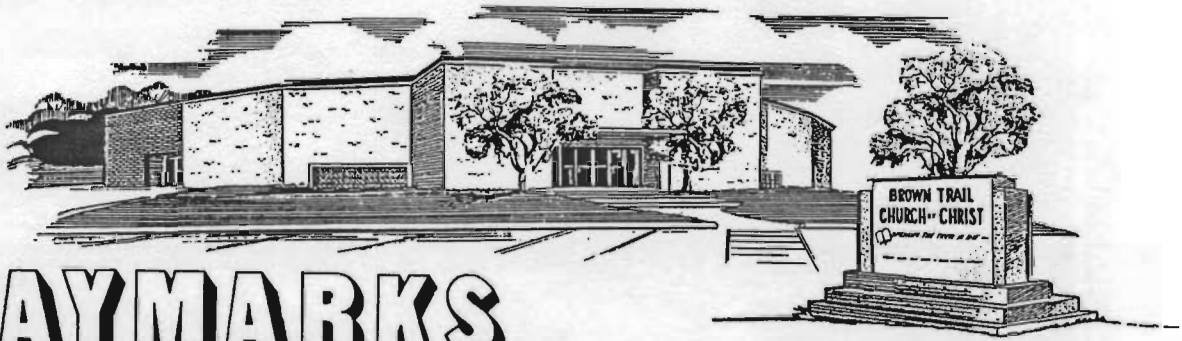
Family Bible School

is coming soon



Classes For All Ages!

JULY 15 - 18



WAYMARKS

"Set thee up WAYMARKS, make thee guide-posts; set thy heart toward the highway..." Jeremiah 31:21

Volume 13, No. 14

PUBLISHED BY THE BROWN TRAIL CHURCH OF CHRIST, BEDFORD TEXAS

June 1990



Johnny Ramsey
EVANGELIST

Brethren: We have so much to do for the Redeemer and so much to be grateful for. May we encourage one another - each by the other's faith (Romans 1:11-12) as we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

Like Joseph of old we dare not engage in anything that would defile our relationship with heaven (Genesis 39:9). Daniel and his friends could not compromise on earth because of a heavenly cause considered far more important (Daniel 1:8; 3:17; 6:10). For a heavenly cause our blessed Redeemer endured the loneliness of Gethsemane, the mockery of a trial, the pain of Roman scourging and the anguish of Golgotha. What have we been willing to suffer for heaven's advancement? In our libertine existence of spoiled children, nonchalant society, permissive parents and "soft-religion" we are not developing the kind of mature character that will forego anything for a heavenly cause. Whether it be modesty of dress, courageous giving or abstaining from evil practices or impure associates we seem bent on "doing what comes naturally" instead of renovating our lives into spiritual palaces. True Christianity is always a challenge.

BRETHREN, CAN WE BE COUNTED ON TO SUFFER WITH CHRIST FOR A HEAVENLY CAUSE?

JR

The bulwark or righteousness in any nation is a home as God intended it to be. Psalms 127 boldly states:

"Expect the Lord build the house they labor in vain who build it."

So many couples today marry mainly for lustful reasons and then pursue a materialistic, hedonistic life-style. Is it any wonder that such homes, built upon the sinking sands of time, crumble into the dust and debris of carnality? In Proverbs 12:7 and 14:11 we learn that the house of the righteous stands firm while the abode of the wicked deteriorates! In building homes that honor the Creator we must break the ties that bind us to materialistic goals. Nothing hurts young couples more than craving finer houses, fancier cars and clothes, prestige in the community and so forth. False standards that pander to the flesh have shipwrecked many marriages. Setting our affections on things above (Colossians 3) will buttress the solid foundation of the home that glorifies God. A failure to emphasize eternal values has been the basic error of thousands down through the years. Selfishness is at the heart of the unrest in American homes.

JR

**REMEMBER FAMILY BIBLE SCHOOL:
JULY 15-18 CLASSES FOR ALL AGES.**


Our elders, brethren BARNUM, BELLOWES and WAITS, are working diligently to see that Brown Trail goes forward in all of its work. We, as a congregation, should pray daily and sincerely for them. We bid Godspeed to brethren PETERMAN, LAUDERDALE, and TYSON for their tremendous work as overseers in days past and their present contribution to our efforts in this area and around the world. In a recent get-together, those three and their wives were honored for their labors and presented with beautiful plaques and exceptional Bibles as a tribute to their years of service in God's cause. Let us go forward in the work of the Lord with one mind and one mouth as we read in Romans 15:6!

School of Preaching

It will only be a few days until the graduating class moves on to greater things in the service of Christ. How we will miss these 4 tremendous brethren. It has been a delight to work with them and to know them as fellow Christians. To Felipe, Eddie, Randy and Carl, we pray for you only the very best in the service of the Master. We expect wonderful things from you in the days ahead as you preach the Word!

TV Work

We appreciate the great and thorough work of DAVE MILLER - and the many hours spent in the spread of the gospel on television. He has been able to raise lots of funds as he travels among brethren to inform them of this vital work. We also appreciate the many hours GARY FALLIS spends in reaching congregations who assist us in the School of Preaching, MAXIE BOREN, who is constantly in meeting work - evangelism - all over the nation - tells our story to thousands each year, also.



GRADUATION SERVICE

Speaker: Andrew Connally
Date: Sunday - June 10, 1990
Time: 6:00 p.m.

Randy Gray
Carl McCann
Felipe Palomar
Eddie Parrish

CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR GRADUATES

ARTICLE IN QUESTION

Forsaken Christian Free to Remarry?

■ "Dear Bro. Thurman: When one partner in a marriage becomes a Christian, and the other leaves; is the remaining partner free to remarry? (In the Lord, of course, and provided they have divorced). This question arose in our Bible study, with some not sure, some opposed. We hope you can shed some light on this for us. -Mrs. A.M.W., MO"

Thanks for your closing commendations! Modesty and lack of space prevented us from including them, but we often appreciate such encouragement more than queries. We do try to do our best.

You have a parallel situation discussed by Paul: "And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. . . . But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace" (1 Cor. 7:13, 15). In verses 10-12, Paul cautions the wife not to depart from her husband; but tells her that IF she departs, she is to remain unmarried! In that case loyalty to Christ was no issue; but in the verses we are studying, we have a different setting. A Christian woman has a husband who leaves her because of her faith! She is not to renounce her faith and blindly follow him! Rather, she must let him depart! And this leaves her unmarried, and free to marry again: the one deserted "is not under bondage in such cases." But there still are restrictions of which she must be cognizant: "She is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." (1 Cor. 7:39). I grant you this last verse deals with a widow indeed, but we are dealing with one who "is not under bondage in such cases" (7:15).

I am surely not an advocate for divorce; but God made a provision for it to preserve the sanctity of the home, and His provision is best! Never should His allowance be prostituted to selfish and warped desires, gratified in sensual lusts! But neither should it be denied as though God did not know best! Before any Christian, husband or wife, seeks to wreck a home they have established "until death do us part," let them seriously and fervently study the 7th chapter of 1st Corinthians. Strive to do God's will in all things "in honour preferring one another." -DILLARD THURMAN

Did Mary Have Other Children?

■ "Dear brother Clem: I was told that Mary remained celibate after the birth of Jesus. But what about Matt. 13:54-56? Did Mary and Joseph have other children, or does the Bible speak only of his 'spiritual brothers and sisters'?" -B.L., OH"

There are several passages that speak of the brothers and sisters of Jesus, one of which is Matt. 13:54-56, "And coming into his own country he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?" The relationships in this entire passage are very obviously of the physical family, for that is precisely what the people were discussing. Joseph and Mary were both men and women.

the parents of Jesus (Joseph, of course, was the legal father of Jesus, even though he was not the biological father, Matt. 1:20,23). The brothers of Jesus are named and reference is made also to His sisters. One of these brothers is later referred to repeatedly in the Scripture written by the apostle Paul, as he wrote of "James, the Lord's brother" (1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19; etc.). This has to be a physical relationship, for if it were spiritual it would not identify which James is meant.

When Mary was found to be pregnant, Joseph intended to put her away, but an angel of the Lord told him that the child was begotten by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20). The angel then used the prophecy of Isa. 7:14, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (Matt. 1:23). The Scripture then adds, "Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she brought forth a son: and he called his name Jesus" (v. 24). The phrase, "knew her not," refers to sexual relations, but notice the statement: "Knew her not till she had brought forth a son." That statement certainly implies that, after Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary had normal marital sexual relations. The fact that they had four other sons and several daughters surely confirms that.

The "veneration of Mary" is based upon many false assumptions and perpetuated by false ideas. First, the idea that she is "the mother of God" is absolutely false. Jesus Christ was both God and man; she was mother of the human, not the divine. Jesus addressed this false assumption in Lk. 11:27-28, when a woman cried out to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck." Jesus replied, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Jesus places the emphasis on doing God's will, not on the physical relationship of mother and son.

Mary was "full of grace" (Lk. 1:28) and specially favored by God as the chosen one who should give birth to the Son of God. I question whether one could find a better woman on earth, for God didn't find such. Mary is certainly deserving of our greatest respect. But she was still just a woman, and as part of mankind not to be worshipped. On one occasion, when told that His mother and His brothers were outside and looking for Him, Jesus said, "Who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round on them that sat round about him, he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mk. 3:31-35). Jesus was not denying the family relationship, but instead was emphasizing the surpassing importance of the spiritual relationships based on obedience to God.

The Scriptures clearly show that Joseph and Mary had normal sexual relations as husband and wife and that they had a number of children after Jesus was born. The Scriptures also show that, as great a woman as Mary was, she was still human and not to be worshipped. -CLEM THURMAN

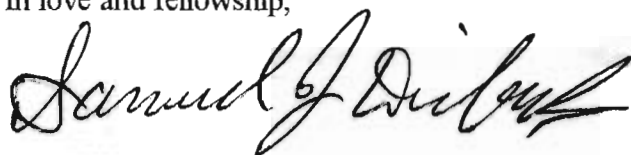
Dear Brother Hatcher,

This is the article you requested me to send you. Sorry I was so late in getting it to you. I know that you are concerned about false doctrine and I hope this will help you in your fight against it. I am also sorry the reproduction is not of high quality, but I believe you can still read it. If you do have trouble reading it because of the copy quality feel free to call me at (512) 445-0262.

It might interest you to know that this article prompted me to write to Johnny Ramsey. I know he did not write the response, but I just wanted him to correct or clarify the answer. I wrote him once and asked him to just respond to me, not in the "Minutes." This letter was written on July 3, 1992. I received no answer to the letter. So on July 29 I wrote yet another letter. In this letter I begged him to give me an answer and I also informed him of my address change. I still have not received any indication that he is going to answer. You don't suppose that the company he runs with has influenced him enough to cause him not to give an answer to the hope that is in him.

My wife and I really enjoyed the meal your family prepared for us. We thank you for your hospitality. Give my regards to your wife. If you would like a copy of the two letters to Ramsey just drop me a line, the elders have my new address.

In love and fellowship,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samuel J. Dilbeck". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Sam Dilbeck

Johnny Ramsey
% Gospel Minutes
P.O. Box 50007
Ft. Worth, TX 76105-0007
July 6, 1992

Dear Brother Ramsey,

I write this letter to you out of concern for the truth. There is a subject that has been bothering me for sometime now and I would like for you to help me clear it up. The matter about which I am writing is one that causes great disruption in the brotherhood today. I feel that you will answer my question of the same love for the truth that I have. My question is: **If a Christian woman has a husband who leaves her because of her faith is she free to marry again?**

I would appreciate a prompt reply on this matter. There is no need to publish it in the Gospel Minutes, just send your response back to me if you wish. However if you choose to publish it, you may do so with me permission.

I know you are a sound teacher of the word. I have heard a lot about you from Rudy Cain and some of the Deaver Clan. The reason why this question has been bothering me for some time is because Dillard Thurman answered the same question with an incorrect answer. I would like for you to clarify/correct his answer with the truth. The issue I am referring to is Vol. 40, No. 40, October 4, 1991. His answer to the same question was, **"A Christian woman has a husband who leaves her because of her faith! She is not to renounce her faith and blindly follow him! Rather, she must let him depart! And this leaves her unmarried, and free to marry again..."**

I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

In loving faith,

Samuel J. Dilbeck

Sam Dilbeck
409 E. Wm. Cannon Dr., Apt 161
Austin, TX 78745
July 29, 1992

Johnny Ramsey
% Gospel Minutes
P.O. Box 50007
Ft. Worth, TX 76105-0007

Dear Brother Ramsey,

On July 6, 1992 I wrote the following letter to you. It has been approximately three weeks since I sent the letter. I assume you either did not receive the first letter or that you have been very busy and did not have the time to respond to me. Either way I understand and wish that you would take time to respond to me.

I will be moving on August 6, 1992, and my new address is listed above. I will be a student at Southwest School of Bible Studies starting September 1, 1992. I am sure you are aware of this fine school so I will not take the time to tell you how excited I am about being accepted as a student.

I hope that one day we will be able to meet face to face. I pray for you and your endeavors. I hope that you will always seek the counsel of God through his word.

In Faith and Fellowship,

Samuel J. Dilbeck
Enclosure

Dear Brother Ramsey,

I write this letter to you out of concern for the truth. There is a subject that has been bothering me for sometime now and I would like for you to help me clear it up. The matter about which I am writing is one that causes great disruption in the brotherhood today. I feel that you will answer my question of the same love for the truth that I have. My question is: **If a Christian woman has a husband who leaves her because of her faith is she free to marry again?**

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I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

In loving faith,

Samuel J. Dilbeck

GOSPEL MINUTES

The Gospel by Proclamation In Minutes of Meditation

VOL. 41, NO. 37

SEPT. 11, 1992

Restoring the New Testament Church

In the early 1800's, there arose in this country a "restoration movement" that had as its purpose the restoring of the church that is revealed in the Scriptures. With the proliferation of denominations, and the resulting animosity generated by opposing religious views, the leaders of the "restoration" determined that the only real solution was to go back to the original and start from there. Some ridiculed the possibility



of restoring the New Testament church, others declared there was no need for it. Both attitudes are still with us. But I firmly believe that the need for restoration is as great as ever.

While in Virginia several years ago to preach in a gospel meeting, my wife and I visited "Colonial Williamsburg." A philanthropist, using a survey and drawing made by a Frenchman in the 1700's which showed every building, fence, well (like that above), road and tree of the town in colonial days, had "restored" the city. We visited the governor's mansion, shops and the colonial capitol. We saw the cobbler's equipment, spinning wheels, wooden churns, the blacksmith shop and every other kind of store. The colonial capitol, where Patrick Henry made history with his famous "liberty or death" speech, was most impressive. The authenticity of the entire restoration made a lasting impression on both of us. Such restoration was possible only because the survey and drawing provided the blueprint and guide which was needed. In restoring the New Testament church, the blueprint and guide is the Bible. Restoring the New Testament church means going back to the original and finding what God reveals that church to be.

A few weeks ago, a preacher said to me, "If we are going to restore the New Testament church, which will it be: Jerusalem, or Corinth? For they were sure different!" The answer is, "Neither one!" We should strive to restore the church which the Lord intended, not one (either Jerusalem or Corinth) which is marred by man's weaknesses and mistakes. I believe when we go back to the Scriptures, we can see revealed the church which God designed.

Restoring the Church of Prophecy

The church was not some afterthought with God, but was planned "according to his eternal purpose" (Eph. 3:11). This is shown in the Old Testament prophecies that reveal it: "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the

OUR EDITORIAL POLICY

Our purpose is to serve churches of Christ and the members thereof by preaching the gospel of Christ each week. **GOSPEL MINUTES** is our pulpit. This paper will not become embroiled in brotherhood controversies. We determine to publish a paper, week after week, that you can put into the hands of all members and non-members with assurance that Christ, His word and His church will be presented in a positive way.

Our lessons are designed to edify members of the body of Christ and also instruct non-members. We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God and is the only source of authority for all we do in religion. We believe that the church which Jesus built is His body, His kingdom, His bride. We oppose all denominationalism, both in and out of that church, and call for all to help us restore New Testament Christianity by going back to the Bible for our pattern in all things.

Writers are Clem Thurman (who also serves as editor), Johnny Ramsey and David Thurman (Clem's son). Articles by Dillard Thurman, founder of the paper who died in 1991, will also be used from time to time. You can have the utmost confidence in these men.

1 BURKB

CHUR

CHURCH OF CHRIST
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GOSPEL MINUTES

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Clem Thurman, Editor

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Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2-3). Daniel foretold that the Lord's kingdom would be established during the days of the Roman kings, "And it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44). Zechariah, like Isaiah, pointed to Jerusalem as the beginning place of "the house of God" (Zech. 1:16). And the apostle Paul identified "the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Throughout the Old Testament writings, prophets wrote of "the Messiah" (or Christ) who was to come. God said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations" (Psa. 89:3-4). Again, "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved" (Jer. 35:5-6).

The church the prophets revealed is "the house of God" and "the kingdom of God." The king was to be of the "seed of David" who would also be the Savior. This "house of God" would begin in Jerusalem "in the last days" and would be built by the teaching of God's word.

The Nature of the New Testament Church

Jesus gathered the apostles together and told them, "I will build my church, and I will give you the keys of the kingdom" (Matt. 16:18-19). What the prophets called "the kingdom" the Lord calls "the church." He further defined the nature of it when

he told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight" (John 18:36). Jesus never came to set up an earthly kingdom. His is not a political system nor military kingdom. It is spiritual, as was His mission to earth.

There are a variety of terms used to describe the nature of the church: kingdom, body, bride, family, temple. The church of the New Testament is all of that. Notice Jesus promised to build "my church" and gave the "keys of the kingdom." Those in the church are citizens of the kingdom (Col. 1:13,18; Heb. 12:23,28). Paul wrote of Jesus, "He is the head of the body, the church... The church which is his body... There is one body" (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). That church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-32), it is "the household of God" (Eph. 2:19), it is the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16).

The church is not a place nor a building. It is a people, composed of "living stones, built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:5). The apostle addresses the church this way: "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9-10). Those in the church are "called out" - which is exactly what the word "church" means.

The Authority for the Lord's Church

The New Testament church is not governed by men, nor by a board composed of men. Jesus said, "All authority hath been given unto me, both in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). He is the authority. Only Christ is "head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18), and He does not share that with anyone else. We read that God, "In these last days hath spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:2). Jesus expanded on that idea with these words, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). The only authority for the church, to govern those who would be members of the New Testament church, is the word of Jesus Christ. For all matters pertaining to the church, we must go to the Scriptures. No other authority for the church exists.

Jesus, knowing He would soon return to heaven and leave the apostles on earth, told them: "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth... But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14:15,26). He further told them, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). Thus, when the apostles

received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), they *"spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance."* They were not dependent on their own wisdom, knowledge nor experience for what they were to teach. Christ revealed it to them by the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, *"We received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth"* (1 Cor. 2:12-13).

What is the design, purpose and mission of the church? Only the Scriptures can provide the answer. The apostle Paul wrote, *"When ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God"* (1 Thes. 2:13). Please notice that reading again. What they preached was not their word, it was the word of God. Not one of them preached his own ideas, nor did any one of them seek to build up his own church. They preached the word of Christ and thus built up the church of Christ. Many churches have been begun by men, and the teachings of men govern them. But only the word of Christ can be authority for the church of Christ.

Salvation and the New Testament Church

Jesus clearly gave His mission on earth when He said, *"The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). This became also the mission of the apostles, and through them the mission of all members of the church. When Jesus sent the apostles out, He told them: *"Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . . Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem"* (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). When the apostles began to preach His gospel, those were the very terms they preached.

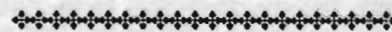
On the day of Pentecost following the death of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, as Jesus had promised, came upon the apostles to guide them into all the truth. They preached Christ. And people asked, *"What shall we do?"* The Lord's answer: *"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins"* (Acts 2:36-38). This was the pattern of their preaching, as recorded throughout the book of Acts. *"When they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women"* (Acts 8:12). In the same way, the Ethiopian, when he believed Jesus to be the Christ, was baptized

immediately (Acts 8:36-38). The Philippian jailor, hearing the gospel, believed and was baptized (Acts 16:30-33). Saul of Tarsus, blinded on the road to Damascus, asked the Lord what to do; the Lord told him he would be told that in the city. The Lord then sent Ananias to him to say, *"Why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins"* (Acts 22:16). That was always the pattern. To restore the New Testament church, it must be the pattern now.

The Lord told Nicodemus, *"Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"* (John 3:5). That is exactly what Mark 16:16 teaches, *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."* The result when this was preached on Pentecost? *"Repent ye, and be baptized . . . They then that received his word were baptized, and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls . . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved"* (Acts 2:38,41,47). When they were *"born again"* by believing and being baptized, the Lord saved them and added them to His church. What church? His church, the New Testament church!

How can we restore the New Testament church today? Simple. Just go to the word of God for authority for all that we do, and the result will be the New Testament church. That was true 1900 years ago. It is true today. When people did what God said, the Lord saved them and added them to His church. If people do the same thing today, the same Lord will add them to the same church. That is precisely the way the New Testament church can, and should, be restored.

—CLEM THURMAN



Questions and Bible Answers



What of Latter-Day Revelations?

■ **"Dear brethren: What do people mean when they speak of latter-day revelations? How can we know that the Bible is complete and final?"**

—S.B., CO"

By the expression, "latter day revelations," we simply mean the religious groups which sprang up in the middle of the nineteenth century as a result of claims made by some who said, "I have some more of God's truth, all has not yet been revealed." For instance, in 2 Nephi 29:6-9 of the Book of Mormon we read: "Thou fool that shall say, 'A Bible, we have got a Bible and we need no more Bible' . . . ye need not suppose that I shall not cause more to be written." This is a representative statement to show us that either the Bible is incomplete or that all those claiming present day revelation from Jehovah God are in error. We confidently affirm that the Bible is complete and that God now speaks to us only through His Son as

revealed in the New Testament: "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1-2).

If the will of heaven is all contained in the Bible, then such statements as the following by Ellen G. White could not possibly be true: "It was not long after the passing of time in 1844 that my first vision was given me . . . I had seen a better world . . . I related this vision to the believers in Portland, who had full confidence that it was from God. The Spirit of the Lord attended the testimony and the solemnity of eternity rested upon us. An unspeakable awe filled me, that I, so young and feeble, should be chosen as the instrument by which God would give light to His People" (Page 40-43 of "Life and Teachings of Ellen G. White").

Friends, God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33) and yet all four of the so-called latter-day revelation movements contradict each other. Even if there was some vacuum to be filled in God's word, none of these leaders qualify. If so, which one? Joseph Smith claimed to be the instrument of Jehovah in revealing the everlasting gospel and the one to lead the people of God. So did Ellen White, as per the above quotation! We should not concern ourselves over which one to follow because the Bible clearly shows that the basis on which each religion was started is false. There was no need for further revelation in 1830 or 1844 because all of God's word had been "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . . that the man of God may be complete" (2 Tim. 3:16). Jesus, 1800 years before Smith, White, Russell or Eddy came upon the scene, promised the Holy Spirit to His apostles and said: "He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you . . . Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth" (John 14:26; 16:13). We definitely believe that the Holy Spirit accomplished His divine purpose. Do you? —JOHNNY RAMSEY

How Does God Call People Today?

■ "Dear Brother: Jesus said in John 6:44 that no one could receive the gospel unless God draws him. But I don't understand. How does God draw one to Christ? —S.M., PA"

That isn't quite what Jesus said. He said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45). There are certain steps which Jesus gives in this text, and it is important that we know them if we would understand how God calls people. Jesus said that one must be drawn of God in order to come to Him (v. 44). He then shows the means by which one is enabled to come to Him: "Heard from the Father, and hath learned" (v. 45). From these two verses, then, it is clear that God "draws" people by the instructions which He gives, which they hear and learn.

Many still look for some "mysterious call" — and find instead "lying wonders . . . strong delusions" (2 Thes. 2:9-11) that deceive them. The apostle Paul shows how people are called to be Christians, "God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you through our gospel" (2 Thes. 2:13-14). That makes it simple, doesn't it? God calls us "through the gospel" which the inspired apostles preached as Jesus directed them. That also explains the saying of Jesus, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). Jesus told the apostles, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15-16). Many are called (by hearing the gospel), but few are chosen (that is, few actually accept the gospel, Mark 16:16). The way God calls people today is the same as it was 1900 years ago: He calls them by the gospel Jesus Christ. —CLEM THURMAN

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For over forty years GOSPEL MINUTES has been used with confidence by churches of Christ in all fifty states of this country. At present more than 2,000 churches use the paper, about half with mailing lists and the others using bundles. More than 1,400 of these churches use the "front page box" to list information about the local congregation (see sample of "box" at left, size of box can be seen on front page of this paper). Our annual circulation is well over 6 million, with 115,000 papers mailed each week. We appreciate that kind of confidence in our ministry. We keep the paper to only four pages, with less than 4% average advertising, so that all space may be best used to preach Christ. Most elders report that the members avidly read all of the paper each week, and we believe that is important. If it isn't read, it does no good.

(Witness to the Saviour of the)

CHURCH OF CHRIST

128 Kemper Way
ANYTOWN, ST 00000

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Morning Bible Study 9:30 a.m.

Morning Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

Evening Worship Service 6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Mid-Week Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

John Doe, Minister . Ph. 555-1212

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1. It is a weekly, reminding saints of weekly assemblies.
2. It is "Bible centered" with scriptural, basic teaching.
3. It is designed to assist the local church program.
4. It stays free of controversies, fusses and "issues."
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SUNNYVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST

HIGHWAY H, SOUTH OF FARMINGTON
P.O. BOX 896
FARMINGTON, MO. 63640 - 0896
TEL. NO. (314) 756-5925

Johnny Ramsey
3304 Hanover
Arlington, TX. 76014

January 20, 1993

Dear Johnny,

I trust that you and Iris are both doing well. It has been a long time since I have had the pleasure of being with you. My family and I have been back from England since last July after seven years of mission work. It was hard to leave, but for a number of reasons we found it necessary to return to the States. I came over in April of last year and was able to locate the work here. This is a small congregation but is sound in the faith. We average in the mid fifties for Sunday morning services. The town is about 12,000 population and is about 70 miles south of St. Louis. We are right in the heart of "Ketcherside country". There is a small Ketcherside group in town, where Carl Ketcherside's sister and her husband attend. The Sunnyview church was established because of the Ketcherside influence on the original congregation. Just up the road, at Flat River is Carl's old stomping ground and there is much of his influence in the area. We are enjoying the work here and we believe there is much potential for growth as Farmington is an expanding community.

Johnny, I was concerned recently when I found out that you were to appear on the A.C.U. lectures in February. My concern is not that you will not teach the truth, for I believe that I know you well enough to know that you will do an excellent job of upholding the truth. My concern is that the school uses you as "window dressing" in an effort to show the brotherhood that they are still willing to have conservative brethren appear on the program. When one looks at the program, it is clear that the featured speakers are of the "liberal" persuasion and thus the school is still promoting the "liberal" agenda and any conservatives that appear are, purposefully, in the minority.

While I was in England, I was asked to speak at a lecture program of the British Bible School, which is liberal. I had had discussions with the director and with the elders who were overseers of the school (Frank Worgan, Joe Nisbet and Albert Winstanley) with regards to their use of false teachers in the program of the school. I believed then, and still do so today, that their idea in asking me to speak was to put out the message to the brotherhood in Great Britain that there was not really any significant problem. I agreed to speak on the assigned topic, however, I said that I would have to make a short statement, and told them what it would be, indicating that my appearance on the program was not an endorsement of all that the school was doing or of all of the speakers on the program (if such were necessary in respect of the speakers). Their response was to cancel the invitation. Johnny, are you being given the opportunity to make a similar statement in the light of the situation at A.C.U. and also with the false teachers that are also to appear on the program?

In the years that I have been gone, I have not seen any changes at A.C.U. that would make me withdraw the statement of concern that you and I, along with a number of others signed back in 1986. In fact, I think matters have gotten worse. Would you agree? Thus, my concern is that A.C.U. is using your appearance to "soften" the impact of that statement of concern and other statements that have been made by brethren concerned with the departure of the school from the principles upon which it was founded. Do you not think that they might use your appearance in that way? If they do, would that enhance the cause of truth or would it enhance the cause of error?

Johnny, at what point would consider that a school had gone "too far" and you would be unable to appear on the program. Would you feel free to speak at Pepperdine? What about Texas Christian University? I know that T.C.U. is now affiliated with the Disciples, but when it was first established, that school held to the principles of the restoration of New Testament Christianity. Where should one draw the line in fellowshiping with those who are no longer holding true to the principles of New Testament Christianity?

As I stated years ago, many are now at the position that the Christian Churches (Associated Churches in Australia) were when I left them in the mid-sixties, except for the matter of the instrument (and with some that is no longer an issue and many have no problem with its use). A.C.U. is in that situation. I find it hard to justify fellowship with such, in the light of the Scriptures. What is your opinion?

Johnny, I hope that I have not come over as being harsh, but I am writing out of a genuine concern as to how faithful brethren can in any way be seen to be supportive of error or to give the appearance of compromise so that others may assume that the differences which exist with A.C.U. and with others are not important and in no way affect our fellowship. Could appearance on such programs not send a wrong signal to brethren which might lull them into thinking that all is fine with the school?

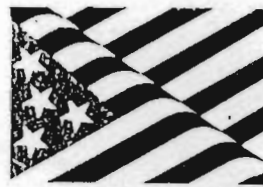
A number of years ago, Linda, who you may remember is a graduate of A.C.U. (when it was still A.C.C.), and I had to change our wills as we did not want to give the impression that we supported the error that was being espoused by the school. Incidentally, we had to do the same relative to the British Bible School when we became aware of the false teachers that were used by that school.

I trust that you will take this letter in the spirit in which it is written. A spirit of concern for you, that you might not be "used," for the Lord's church and for A.C.U. My prayer is that the trustees and the administration at A.C.U. will return the school to the principles upon which it was established and that they will cease their promotion of false teachers and false teaching and once more be an asset to the cause of Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Ken Chumbley

Ramsey 3324 Harover
Arlington, Tx 76014



USA 19

Ken Chumley
P.O. Box 896
Farmington, Mo.

63640-0896



Dear Ken + Linda -
Thanks for nice, kind and thought-provoking
letter. I understand your concern and every
word you wrote. However there is another side
who needs to hear Truth more than liberals? What
if ~~no~~ no one ever gets to express + be heard in their
midst? whatever their motive is for having me in
their problem - My task is to do as Paul + Barnabas
did in Synagogues. I spoke twice in Mormon
building in Lubbock. Have always tried to obey Eph.
4:15 whenever and wherever. Jude 3 + Phil 1:17 fit
here. I signed that statement against ACh Evolution
controversy, also. ACh is a school not a church. I
will have opportunity to teach Truth and rebuke error
where it is most needed. In reason, out of season. You
could never convince it is wrong to take advantage
of such opportunity. Brotherly love

SUNNYVIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Johnny Ramsey
3304 Hanover
Arlington, TX. 76014

February 5, 1993

Dear Johnny,

Thanks for your postcard in response to my letter to you of January 20, 1993.

Yes, I agree that the liberals need to hear the truth and, if they were to hear the truth (and better still obey it!) it would be great. However, you are not to be one of the featured speakers where you would have an opportunity to address many liberals, but you are teaching a class at the same time when six others are going on. Johnny, do you really believe that you are going to get many liberals who will choose to come to your lecture. It appears to me that most, if not all, who would choose to come and here you would be the more conservative brethren. I don't for one minute expect that a majority of the board and the administration will attend, and these are the ones who need to hear, aren't they? You ask, "What if no one ever gets to exhort & be heard in their midst?" However, as indicated above, you will most probably not be in the midst of many of them, indeed, only a minority, and certainly not the most vocal. Why have they not invited you to be a featured speaker where you could truly "exhort & be heard in their midst"?

In your response to my concern that you are being used as "window dressing" in an effort to show the brotherhood that they are still willing to have conservative brethren appear on the program", you state, "Their motive is for having me is their problem - My task is to do as Paul & Barnabas did in the synagogues. I spoke twice in Mormon building in Lubbock." I strongly disagree, I believe that their motive IS your problem. On this point, I am enclosing a copy of an article by Bob Berard which goes to the very heart of this matter. I say Amen to what he has said. This is the point that I was getting at in my letter to you. As regards your comparing this to Paul and Barnabas in the synagogue, it could well fit IF you were a featured speaker to the whole lectureship. However, the similarity would only be their if they had put Paul and Barnabas in a classroom where only a few members of the synagogue could attend and the leaders of the synagogue were seeking to appease Jewish Christians or Jews who were open to the gospel. As regards your speaking in the Mormon building in Lubbock, the same would hold true. They gave you an opportunity to present the truth to all who would attend and gave you full use of the facility. In neither instance, Paul and Barnabas in the synagogue or the Mormon people, were they or you dealing with brethren who are false teachers who are seeking to "restructure" the church of the Lord in a manner contrary to the teaching of the New Testament. I have no doubt that you have sought to obey God in respect of Ephesians 4:15; Jude 3 and Phil. 1:17, however, I sincerely believe that you need to reexamine your participation in the light of the matters that I raised, and that Bob Berard has raised in his article. I am sorry that you chose not to answer many of the specific questions that I raised in my first letter as the purpose of these was to get you to rethink your position.

You state, "I signed that statement against ACU Evolution controversy, also ACU is a school not a church." Johnny, surely you do not mean to imply that the "expression of concern" dealt **only** with the "Evolution controversy"? I did not think so at the time, and on rereading it today, I am still convinced that it deals with other matters. It was the controversy that brought it to a head, but was not the only matter of

concern. I am enclosing a copy so that you can have it on hand to examine yourself. Yes, "ACU is a school and not a church," however, it is a school that was established on the principles of New Testament Christianity and that the members of the board, as trustees, are to uphold its charter based on these principles. Surely, you do not mean to imply that since the school is not a church that it has the right to violate its charter and to uphold false doctrines and false teachers, contrary to the principles of New Testament Christianity. The school expects members of the church to support it, yet at the same time, is advocating teachings that are contrary to the Word and upholding and fellowshiping false teachers contrary to that Word. Can you honestly say that the founders of the school would uphold what is happening today? If they would not, why should we support them in their error in any way, even when teaching the truth when they clearly have abandoned the truth and would only use faithful preachers as "window dressing"?

Johnny, you close your card by stating, "You could never convince me it is wrong to take advantage of such opportunity." Johnny, I am sorry that you have made such a statement that would indicate a closed mind in the vain of "I have made up my mind, don't confuse me with facts." I am surprised, also, in the light of two articles from you that I have seen in print in the past year in The Restorer and Power, copies enclosed. Johnny, how are we ever going to convince those in charge of the schools to change if we continue to support their programs and appear on them with those who advocate the very things that we cry out against? They may read the strong words, but they will see the actions and will remember that actions speak louder than words.

Johnny, I would implore you, in love, to think again, keeping in mind the things that I have written and also the souls of those who advocate and uphold the purveyors of false teaching.

Yours in Christ,

Ken Chumbley



AL MACIAS, JR.
Instructor
and
Spanish Work

DON'T GET CARELESS

It is an interesting thing how sometimes we get careless in our lives. We are not paying too much attention where we are walking and we stumble or perhaps cause others to stumble. We get careless in our conversation and before we know it we have said the wrong thing to the wrong person at the wrong time. As a consequence, we never hear the end of it. But as humans, we are all going to get careless sooner or later with one thing or another.

The writer to the Hebrews writes about getting careless with a more serious matter—getting careless with the Word of God. We read in Hebrews 2:1, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard; lest at any time we should let them slip." The writer here is telling us how serious it would be for us to get careless with the Word of God. And he says why it is such a serious matter.

He makes the argument that since the brethren, whom he was addressing at the time, had received the Word of God through the Son, they should have considered it a very serious matter. The Son of God was in fact the creator of all, the upholder of all, and in essence the express image of the Father, and was exalted above all the angels; therefore, it would follow that one should be very careful with what they had heard from him. And so should it be the case with all of us in what we have heard from the Word of God. The Son had spoken numerous things, but among them were such things as: believing that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that it was through His coming to this world that salvation was made possible for all mankind. Jesus came to this world with a message, the gospel, and a mission, his death on the cross for the sins of the world. Salvation was made available to

(continued on page two)



DAVID BROWN
School Director
and
Instructor

FAREWELL

On Thursday, January 7, 1993, I tendered my resignation as director of S.W.S.B.S. to the Southwest elders. Some things are hard to do. One of the most difficult is to say good-bye to certain brethren with whom you have worked and worshipped for so long.

As I wrote in my last article for 1992, I have enjoyed a good relationship with virtually everyone at Southwest. I, along with my family, are deeply appreciative of the good friendships made and fellowship enjoyed in my time with the S.W.S.B.S. The Browns would be unthoughtful and rude if we did not express deep appreciation for every kindness extended toward us while with the Southwest church.

To be involved in training preachers has been a wonderful and challenging time in my life. I have been benefited by it and I trust past and present students can say the same. May God bless each one to be faithful.

Although my plans are not yet finalized, my present intentions are to return to "local work." Since at this writing I have just begun my search for a faithful church with which to work, I cannot be more specific.

Our thoughts are with you and our prayers are that the church and school will with great determination...

Enter...in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Matt. 7:13,14).

And now, brethren, I commend you to God; and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you and inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 10:32).



BOB BERARD
Instructor
and
TV Producer

REASONS FOR NOT SPEAKING ON AN APOSTATE LECTURESHIP - #1

Commendable is the gospel preacher's commitment to preach the gospel of Christ whenever and wherever he is permitted to do so (2 Tim. 4:1-2). Such a resolve may even seem to be beyond any reasonable criticism if one does not thoroughly examine the liabilities which might be associated with such conduct in certain settings, e.g. speaking on an apostate lectureship. Certainly it is the case that there is nothing inherently sinful in preaching the gospel; indeed, the very opposite is the case since that very preaching is commanded by the Lord (Matt. 28:18-20). May such preaching increase and abound. But, it is also the case that one can by preaching even the pure gospel in a given setting, e.g. an apostate lectureship, do much harm to the cause of Christ. How so?

1. The influence of a faithful preacher is unnecessarily marred.

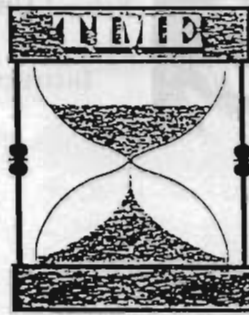
Would it not be cause for alarm among those in a westward bound wagon train if word got around that one of their ablest Indian-fighting cowboys was to be one of the featured speakers on the annual wagon-train-massacring Indian powwow? Would not the lone cowboy stand out (in the eyes of wagon train folk) in a confidence-shaking way among the other scheduled speakers who are blood-thirsty, wagon-train-attacking Indians, especially if the official program gave no indication that the cowboy had a role of any significant difference from those of the Indians?

One might excuse the speaking cowboy's participation because of his good motivation by citing his determination to only say true things, things discouraging to wagon-train attackers and supportive of western-bound wagon trains, but his name on the program also sends a message, probably the only

(continued on page two)

tus 2:4-5, et. al.). The differing role of men and women in the work and worship of the church was made plain (1 Tim. 3:1-15; Titus 1:5-16; 1 Tim. 2:1-15). What constitutes acceptable worship for the New Testament church was clearly revealed (singing, Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; prayer, Acts 2:42; 1 Thess. 5:17; preaching, Acts 20:7; Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. 11:20-34; giving, 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7; in spirit and truth, John 4:24). Fellowship with doctrinal and moral error was vigorously condemned (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:10; 2 John 9-11; 2 Thess. 3:6; Gal. 5:19-22; Eph. 4:17 - 5:18; et. al.). The unity of the Spirit was carefully laid out (Eph. 4:1-7). Those who love not the truth will be sent strong delusion that they might believe a lie (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

We are Christians because we have come to know, believe, love and obey truth. We must walk in it, support it, rightly handle and contend for it. There is no other way but Christ's way. There is no other name but His name. There is no other doctrine and no other gospel but His gospel. We must never follow those "who change the truth of God into a lie." Surely we can see the extreme value of truth on any and every Divinely revealed subject. As lovers of God, the lovers of truth, we must come to realize that the only justifiable reason before God for believing any religious doctrine is because it is of God and therefore true. If it is not of God it is, therefore, not true. We thank God and praise Him for committing his truth to written form that we might know it, believe it, love and obey it. Thus we are promised by the God of truth, the God who cannot lie, that we will have the eternal bliss of heaven and escape the consequences of those "who changed the truth of God



PERRY N. HALL
EVANGELIST

THE TIME IS SHORT

Another year has come and gone. Life's clock ticks on towards the end. Paul urged the Corinthians to remember the things that were really important. He said, "*Brethren, the time is short*" (1 Cor. 7:29). Paul was pleading that they not allow the fringes of life to crowd out the center. The center of a Christian's life is communion with God and obedience to Him. No other preoccupation, not marriage, lands, homes nor business, should displace it. The plea is summed up in the words of verse 31 of this chapter, "*and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.*"

Not only are we aging, but we live in a very dangerous world. Terrorist blow airplanes from the skies and warriors shoot them down. Thousands of atomic bombs wait to be used. Men manufacture life-destroying gas. Multiplied satellites sail around the earth, beeping constantly. But listen carefully. What they really are saying to humanity is, "*Brethren, the time is short!*" Other foundation can no man lay for survival than is laid in Christ Jesus.

into a lie."

Perry N. Hall

THE RESIGNATION OF BROTHER
DAVID BROWN

Elsewhere in the bulletin you will read a note of resignation from brother David Brown. As pulpit preacher, I feel compelled to say something about this matter. We are still in a state of shock from the announcement Sunday morning. From the

first time we heard brother David preach we have had deep respect for his commitment to the Lord and his ability. Our appreciation and love for this beloved brother has grown in the last 15 months. He is a person of keen and disciplined intellect and has done a wonderful job as director of the school. Though we do not understand his decision, we trust his judgment that he has done what he deems best for himself, his family and the cause of Jesus Christ. We bid him godspeed in every endeavor for the Lord and we will sorely miss him. P.N.H.

(MACIAS - continued)

all who would meet the conditions as set up by the Lord Jesus Christ and later on by the apostles who continued to preach the gospel of salvation. In the Lord's teachings, one was told that salvation was conditional on one being obedient to all of the Lord's commandments. If they got careless in all they had heard, then the consequences would be very grave. They would be eternally lost. How careful are we in all the sermons we hear every Sunday, or all Bible classes we attend? Let us not get care-

less as so many have in the past as well as in the present.

(BERARD - continued)

message the wagon train will hear. Should we not avoid an uncertain message from our actions as well as an uncertain sound from our teaching?

One might fault the ignorant wagon train folk for jumping to conclusions about this well-intentioned cowboy's involvement in the Indian powwow. Nevertheless, the weak-minded wagon train folk who are prone to think that

generally one is known by the company he keeps, may predictably come to suspect such a well-intentioned cowboy. Thus, the mutual trust which was so helpful to a united effort to continue toward the westward goal is certainly and unnecessarily jeopardized.

It is true that each of us bears the responsibility of judging righteously, but each of us also is responsible for doing that which is honorable in the sight of all men and to take care that even our rightful deeds not be misunderstood and thereby cause harm to our Lord's cause (Rom. 12:17; 1 Cor. 8:9). □



AL MACIAS, JR.
Instructor
and
Spanish Work



**SOUTHWEST
STUDENTS
SPEAK**



BOB BERARD
Instructor
and
TV Producer

BE NOT ANXIOUS

We are living in a world in which many are afflicted with the malady of anxiety. We live in a very stressful world where so many things cause us to worry. What are we to do to combat this terrible malady? My answer would be to go to the Bible, God's holy word, to find the answer. The Lord Jesus Christ himself spoke about this malady in Matthew 6:25. There we read the following: "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

Let us first discuss what the Lord was not saying in the passage just mentioned. The Lord was not saying that we should not be concerned for the basic needs we have in our daily lives. We read what the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy in I Timothy 5:8, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

What the Lord was actually saying in Matthew 6:25 was that one should not be anxious (worry) about food, clothing, shelter, etc. like those of the world do. God created us and therefore He will provide for us the basic necessities of life. Of course we need to do our part and then have faith in God that He will take care of the rest. But the Lord's discussion did not end there. He also spoke about being anxious and worrying about things that are actually beyond our control. In Matthew 6:27 we read, "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" The word "stature" could have meant either one's physical height or the length of our lives on this earth. Whichever of these two is meant, no one can change

(continued on page two)

IT WILL KEEP YOU OUT OF HEAVEN!

In Psalm 15 we learn what qualities and characteristics a man must possess if he is to be pleasing and acceptable in God's sight. The qualities and characteristics mentioned will allow the man to become one of God's people here on earth, and eventually dwell in heaven for eternity. Among those things mentioned we find these words, "He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend" (Ps. 15:3). The word "backbite" is a very ugly word, and carries the idea of a cowardly, low-born, brutal person, who is completely insensible to the feelings of others. The man who is on his way to heaven does not engage in such activity and, on the contrary, he refuses to even "take up" false and malicious stories. Solomon, with his God-given wisdom, had the same thoughts in mind when he wrote; "where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no tale-bearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife" (Prov. 26:20-21). Brethren, are you engaged in such evil speaking? **IF YOU ARE, IT WILL KEEP YOU OUT OF HEAVEN!**

The Lord said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9). Christians should avoid all works and actions that have the slightest possibility of provoking any ill will between others. The Lord also said, "Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone" (Matt. 18:15). Rather than cause quarrels and strife, the Christian should be doing his very best to heal and end them. Paul the apostle wrote to the Corinthians and described to them the fruits of Christian love. He told them

(continued on page two)

REASONS FOR NOT SPEAKING ON AN APOSTATE LECTURESHIP - #2

The preceding article noted that one should not speak on an apostate lecture-ship because: (1) **the influence of a faithful preacher is unnecessarily marred.** Consider here a second reason for not speaking on an apostate lecture-ship, that is, (2) **the blurring of the distinction between the commendable and the condemnable.** The Bible abounds in teaching men their need to distinguish between righteousness and sin; and, it decrees that the former be wholeheartedly embraced and that the latter be hated and shunned (Gen. 3:1ff; 4:1ff; Jer. 6:16; Pro. 2:1ff; Psa. 119:104; Rom. 12:9). The obligation to love God, man, and the truth demands that men develop and increase their ability to discern and choose God's way and help others do the same (Matt. 22:37-39; 2 Thes. 2:10; Ja. 1:21). What bearing does this have on speaking on an apostate lecture-ship? Read on.

Jesus warned that the false teacher would not appear as the ravenous wolf he is, but rather as the antithesis, a sheep (Matt. 7:15). Paul echoed this thought in saying, "... Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; ..." (2 Cor. 11:14-15). Obviously the most successfully passed counterfeit currency is that which appears most like the authentic. Given the drive, ingenuity, and subtlety of Satan and his henchmen, it is certain that counterfeit gospel preachers/teachers will be difficult to detect even by the wary and that less discerning brethren will need uncompromising and informed men to help identify and warn them of such enemies of the cross (Heb. 5:12-14; 1 John 4:1; Acts 20:31).

How much aid will the immature, the weak, and the gullible receive if a no-

(continued on page two)

glory, we are changed into the same image from one level of glory to the next (2 Cor. 3:18). Those who hunger and thirst shall be filled with righteousness (Matt. 5:6). What a wonderful opportunity and privilege is ours to have daily intake of God's power in our lives through the study of God's word in the home and in our Bible School program. Please, dear brother and sister, neglect neither of these. We will be looking for you Sunday and Wednesday in all of our studies.

Perry

BEST WISHES TO THE BROWNS

As was noted in the bulletin last week, brother David Brown resigned as director of the Southwest School of Biblical Studies. We commend David for the good work he did in directing and teaching in the school. Southwest has been blessed because of a number of good men who are now preaching the gospel as a result of the school; we are thankful that David was a part of this effort. As David and Jody relocate, we wish them well in their efforts to teach the gospel and expand the borders of the Father's kingdom.

The Elders

(MACIAS - continued)

either one by worrying. These things and many others are just simply beyond our control. It is a fact that 80 percent of the things people in general worry about never happen and are things that are beyond their control. What we need to do is what the Lord commanded in Matthew 6:33, "...seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all of these things will be added unto you." Do you have problems with anxiety?

(CHADWICK - continued)

that Christian love, "thinks no evil" (1 Cor. 13:5), "believes all things, hopes all things" (1 Cor. 13:7). The love God wants us to have for each other does not think badly of people, nor does it look for faults and pass them on. It certainly doesn't rekindle quarrels and strife between others by repeating false and malicious stories; but instead, it endeavors

God said it long before

C. 700 BC: "THE EARTH WILL WEAR OUT LIKE A GARMENT."
(ISAIAH 51:6, NASB)

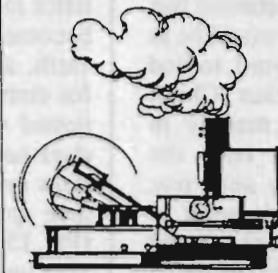


A.O. SCHUBERT and BOB WEST
ILLUSTRATIONS BY R. TOM GILSON

ANCIENT PHILOSOPHERS THOUGHT THAT ORDER AND IMPROVEMENT CAME OUT OF DISORDER SUPPLIED BY UNLIMITED ENERGY.



1850 AD: A MODEL STEAM ENGINE WAS USED TO DISCOVER THE LAW OF ENTROPY, DISPROVING ALL PAST CONCEPTS.




SCIENTIFIC FACT: OUR WORLD AND EVERYTHING IN IT IS BECOMING DISORDERED, RUNNING DOWN, AND WEARING OUT "LIKE A GARMENT."



JUST LIKE GOD SAID OVER 2600 YEARS BEFORE!

We Hope To

See  You Next Sunday

to see and speak only the very best about all people.

Consider also this quote from a man called Lavater, "Never tell evil of a man, if you do not know it for a certainty, and if you know it for a certainty, then ask yourself, 'Why should I tell it?'" Brethren, let me suggest one good reason for why you shouldn't tell it. **IT WILL KEEP YOU OUT OF HEAVEN!** Brethren, "a little gossip goes a long way." Remember the warnings given by James. He wrote, "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire a world of iniquity" (Jas. 3:5-6). Christians be warned. It can and will **KEEP YOU OUT OF HEAVEN!**

Brian Chadwick

(BERARD - continued)

tably capable preacher of truth is found listed among the devil's most carefully disguised and most effective recruiters

on an apostate lectureship flyer? How will those honestly striving to resist the denominational drift of the church be hindered when the preacher who is sometimes most helpful to the gospel effort, at other times insists on his "right" to preach the gospel anywhere he is asked to do so? How can mature brethren steer the babe in Christ away from the influence of an apostate "Christian" college and its apostate "Christian" following when one who is thought to be a pillar in the church appears on the same school's lectureship program? How can warnings about the choice of colleges to the church's high school-age students be effective when countered by reports of that fine and faithful brother So-and-so preaching on the apostate school's lectureship?

Surely the distinction between the commendable and the condemnable is blurred when a good man speaks on an apostate lectureship, the church is hurt thereby, and Satan grins because it is so.

Bidding Godspeed To Error

by Johnny Ramsey

In the little one chapter book of Second John, we learn that we must not bid God's blessings upon those who fail to teach the doctrine of Christ. When we do, we become partakers of their evil deeds and find ourselves devoid of the Lord. The doctrines of demons (2 Timothy 4:1,20) need no encouragement from the followers of the Saviour. Jesus, meek and gentle, pointedly rebuked the servants of Satan for all hellish mandates (Matthew 23; Mark 12:24). When precious souls are in the balance, we dare not compromise truth under the guise of "being polite." False teachers must always find sharp conflict with the soldiers of Christ who wield not the sword of the Spirit in vain (Ephesians 6:17). When the emissaries of Hell feel comfortable in our presence, we have "bowed the knee to Baal" (1 Kings 18:21).

There seems to be a growing movement to criticize criticism! That old ecumenical cry of "let's agree to disagree" passes over Ephesians 5:11; 2 Timothy 4:2 and Thessalonians 5:21. These passages clearly demand that we not only "prove all things," but that we rebuke untruth and have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." There seems to be many now who pick up the old cry-baby tactic: "Just look for the good in everyone and then you won't have time to be critical." And, if one is critical, he is weak, paranoid and to be pitied.

What a convenient way to build a system of error! Ahab never liked Elijah and Micah because they were always condemning his evil plans. Jewish leaders never did become ardent friends of Christ for the same reason. I also seem to recall that Peter and John and other apostles spent many days in prison because they had not read "The Power of Positive Thinking." Poor Stephen got himself stoned to death. Unfortunately, he lived long before some of our brilliant (?) thinkers came out with this "don't be critical" advice.

More than anything else, I would recommend to every Christian a careful study of *Acts, 1 and 2 Timothy* and *Titus* and much less of Peale, Graham, Carnegie and Wilkerson. The psychology of the Bible, if used, is often just the opposite of what the world calls compromise.

One of the clearest and best ways to bid Godspeed to error is to rebuke those who are rebuking error. May fervent evangelists and dedicated elders of Christ never be persuaded to sheath the sword of Truth.

Johnny Ramsey labors for the Lord out of Arlington, Texas.

PREACHING: HAS THE CHANGE BEEN FOR BETTER OR WORSE?

by Dennis Gulledge

Recently, I sent interviews to a number of gospel preachers who have been preaching the gospel for 30-50 years or longer. Some of these have been printed in *"First Century Christian"* in the past several months.

The purpose of the interview is to get these brethren to reminisce and instruct from their many years of experience in gospel preaching. One of the questions I asked is "How do you think the emphasis in preaching has changed since you began? Has the change been for better or worse?" Mack Lyon, who has preached for 52 years, answered this way:

"With secularization of the church, there seems to have been a change toward professionalism in preaching in the last half century. I mean there's less emphasis on preaching, teaching, exhorting, evangelism from the word of God, with more emphasis on ministerial education, management skill, executive ability in the development of 'programs' etc. that will draw the biggest numbers. There seems to be less interest in salvation for the lost and more focus on 'church growth,' less faith in the Divine power to achieve God's purpose in the church, and greater focus on human 'proven success formulas' to achieve 'church growth.' And much preaching seems to have lost its urgency. The professional preacher must have something to say once or twice a week, while in the past, the preacher had something he just had to say whenever and wherever he had or could make an opportunity. Today he draws on his education, puts together a sweet-spirited speech of some twelve to fifteen minutes that will leave everyone feeling good about themselves, dismisses them, then goes by the business office on his way to the lake or golf course and picks up his check, the amount of which determines the measure of his success."

"And at least from my vantage point, it seems that fifty years ago he just had to say something! People looked to him and expected him to point them to Christ. He had no education and no library, so he went to his Bible to find his message. Well, some of the change has been for good, and some is obviously very negative. Certainly if a medical doctor must be educated and trained to perform intricate surgery on the physical body, the preacher should be educated and prepared to skillfully speak to the spiritual needs of people. There's nothing wrong with that unless it is used as a substitute for the urgent burning need to speak up for Christ. I don't want to leave the impression that I believe all preachers are 'professional' preachers as described above. But the emphasis seems to be in that direction. I'm encouraged by the number of young preachers among us who seem to be turning the situation around."

Dennis Gulledge serves the Lord in Mablevale, Arkansas.

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Gary Workman
Editor

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Guest Editorial

Winds of Change

Johnny Ramsey

How simple life in Christ used to be! Brethren everywhere, in days past and gone, were pure in life, sound in doctrine, biblical in worship and zealous for souls. Very few were worldly, marriage was honored, and preachers filled their sermons with scripture. Young people were in the same assembly as their elders, hearing the old



Jerusalem gospel just as their parents did. The church was not in the entertainment business but in the work of saving souls. Youth ministers did not exist because such an emphasis was unheard of in the body of Christ where all ages blend together as a spiritual family, being edified by the same Bible message. There were a few colleges that began as an adjunct to the home, to help parents educate their offspring with a Bible-based thrust that opposed the evolution, modernism and carnality found in the state schools. Young men who wanted to be preachers were trained by evangelistic teachers who believed the Scriptures with all their hearts and would not compromise divine mandates at all. A premium was not placed on higher degrees or pseudo-scholarship, but on sending solid citizens back to local congregations, deepened in the sacred text and high morality. Lectureships featured keen gospel preachers filled with God's word and no uncertain sounds. Trying to impress the world with "our image" was foreign to the thinking of strong men of learning in our midst. "Let us go forward—back to the Bible!" was the cry.

In the past twenty years things have changed, due to a generation fed on pabulum diets in the spiritual realm. Educational compromise and secular pressures developed a society wedded to philosophical standards that opted for shallow, humanistic disregard for authority in homes, schools, government and religion. Everyone was his own god and every mistake was surely someone else's fault. Nothing was black or white or right or wrong anymore. Gray was the dominant shade, and straddling the fence was the place to be. Morality was lost in the nebulous acceptance of homosexuality and other forms of pornography as hedonism overwhelmed the world. Godliness, purity, holiness and propriety were mocked by Hollywood, television and the press. Homage and allegiance to Christ and the Bible was rebuked by nation after nation as demons in hell applauded a world debauched in sin and shame and sensuality.

Sadly, all of this rubbed off on a large segment of brethren. In order to "go along to get along," we had to *change* our view of the Bible. Some even went along with evolution. From several areas came a constant cry to approach preaching altogether differently. Quoting scripture was taboo and loyalty to the church Christ died for was a no-no! Denominational preachers were invited into our pulpits and classes via tapes and films. Women began to occupy roles unknown to the New Testament. We even found some areas where the spotlight was on those who worked overtime to sound like mechanical instruments of music in the

assembly. College lectureships featured speakers who were renowned for questioning the canon of Scripture, fellowshiping false teachers and making it easy for adulterers to find a haven in their congregations. In fact, in the latest ACU Lectures one of the best-known professors there affirmed that women can preach and do almost anything men can do. I suppose 1 Timothy 2:9-12 and 1 Corinthians 11:1-3 are no longer in the Bible! It is beyond sad that such heresy was cheered by some of the students. Many of us will no longer be silent about such apostasy. This is absolutely enough!

I graduated from Abilene Christian College in 1952, having been president of my class for two years. Some very dear friends of mine for the past forty years were made there. Some still teach there.

This is not a *personal vendetta* or an *angry outburst*. It is a *sincere rebuttal* to the direction of a school that has compromised too long. After all, the colleges are *human institutions* and not *divine*. Why can so many criticize the church of the Lord, but no one dares to be critical of something totally *human*?

Any student of church history knows what happened to Bethany and Kentucky Bible colleges. Will we sit idly by and never raise our voices when the influence of pseudo-intellectualism pervades the scene? Must we wait until *abject error* overwhelms us? Will not the Board of Trustees and the administration correct these matters? We shall see if anyone in charge even cares about *the winds of change*!

3304 Hanover, Arlington, TX 76014

Will the "Gay Rights" Movement Gain a Stranglehold on America?

Maxie Boren

Most generally people seem oblivious to a potential problem until it's too late. Samson, the thirteenth judge of Israel is a prime example of this. He should have been more alert to the danger of losing his strength, but evidently he wasn't. After Delilah had coaxed him into telling the secret of his might, she used that information to take it away from him. Thus, when she cried, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson," there was nothing he could do (Judg. 16:4-21).

With no desire to be a proverbial "prophet of doom," I must, nevertheless, speak up and warn of a potential problem of great magnitude which I see on the immediate horizon that could affect our country for decades to come and have ominous implications for the church too. I speak of the concerted effort by the so-called "gay community," in collusion with many people with clout in the political arena and the entertainment industry, to get laws passed that would make it virtually impossible to prohibit homosexuals from man/man, or woman/woman marriages, homosexuals' adoption of children,



homosexuals teaching in the public schools, and being in the military, etc. *Right now* there are stringent efforts being made to *force* the military into accepting "gays." And a lawsuit has recently been filed against the Boy Scouts of America to *force* them to accept homosexuals and atheists! Who can possibly know what kind of legal entanglements this portends for the future as to the stand the church takes against the sin of homosexuality? Most politicians are bending like reeds in the wind to court the favor of the "gays" and to promise them all kinds of "rights" to win their votes. There is a very real danger that, while riding the wave crests of the present permissive society and immoral climate extant in our nation, weak-kneed and ultra-liberal politicians might well enact laws whereby "homosexual rights" could gain a strangle-hold on our nation that would take a long time to break, if ever. Mark my word, the radical feminists, pro abortionists, homosexual rights crowd are a *very real danger* to decency, moral uprightness and the value system given by Almighty God!

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Johnny Ramsey
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February 10, 1993

Dear Johnny,

I am enclosing a copy of the third part of Bob Berard's article, which, as I mentioned, in my previous letter, goes to the very heart of the matter concerning speaking on a lectureship that is put on by apostate brethren.

Again, I would ask that you reconsider, even at this late stage, speaking on the A.C.U. lectureship. If any of the lectureships put on by brethren merits the title of an "Apostate Lectureship," the A.C.U. lectureship certainly does. I cannot, under any circumstances, see how your appearance on the program will benefit the cause of truth but rather will encourage those apostate brethren in their departure from the truth.

Yours in Christ,

Ken Chumbley



AL MACIAS, JR.
Instructor
and
Spanish Work

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

It is very interesting how so often we find different writers of the New Testament using the word "light" when making reference to God, the Lord, or those who claim to follow Jesus. In I John 1:5ff, the apostle John wrote the following regarding God, Christians and the light: *"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

What was the apostle John saying here about what he had heard from Jesus? He was saying, first of all, that the message that he and others were now declaring to those who would be willing to listen, was the message they had heard from Jesus. They made no changes whatsoever; they did not add to it, or subtract from it, or try to alter or modify it in any way so as not to offend anyone.

This message that John and others were declaring to the people was that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. What this meant was that God is holy, good and pure completely separated from sin. Light represents what is right, what is true, what is pure. Darkness, on the other hand, represents what is evil, sinful, and impure. Now, darkness also represents being ignorant of God's word. John was trying to combat some false teachings of the time, that it was possible for one to be in fellowship with God in spite of walking in darkness; John says that was not so. To have fellowship with God there are certain conditions to be met; one

(continued on page two)



AN EX
SOUTHWEST
STUDENT
SPEAKS

A WORD TO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

And God said unto Ezekiel, *"Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel"* (Ezek. 3:4,5). And God said unto Jeremiah, *"Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak"* (Jer. 1:7). And God said moreover to Jeremiah, *"Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD..."* (Jer. 2:2).

And God said through Isaiah, *"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me"* (Isa. 1:2). And God said through Jeremiah, *"O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD"* (Jer. 22:9). And God said to Ezekiel, *"Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD"* (Ezek. 13:2).

And God said concerning his word to the Israelites through Isaiah, *"This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear"* (Isa. 28:12). So, God said through Jeremiah that he would send destruction upon the Israelites *"Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD"* (Jer. 29:19). And God, through Ezekiel, tells us why he would do such a thing. *"Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house"*

(continued on page two)



BOB BERARD
Instructor
and
TV Producer

REASONS FOR NOT SPEAKING ON AN APOSTATE LECTURESHIP - #3

Preceding articles noted that one should not speak on an apostate lectureship because: 1. the influence of a faithful preacher is unnecessarily marred and 2. the distinction between the commendable and the condemnable is blurred. Consider here a third reason for not speaking on an apostate lectureship, that is, 3. the enemies of the cross are encouraged in their calamitous course.

Christians are, of course, to love all men including their enemies (Matt. 5:44). Likewise, none should be remiss in encouraging the fainthearted, supporting the weak, and being longsuffering toward all men (1 Thess. 5:14). None of these essential matters, however, warrant actions which knowingly give aid and comfort to men in their pursuit of a course away from truth, nor do they justify boosting the morale of men in their determination to take a one-way journey down the broad way which leads to destruction (Gal. 6:1f; 2 John 9ff; Matt. 7:13f).

One who agrees to have his good name placed on the program of an apostate lectureship with no distinction as to his having a role any different from a dozen or so speakers who are noted for their failure to abide in the doctrine of Christ has certainly provided fuel for the bonfire of current digression. Those leaders in the apostasy who, like king Saul, have already "forced" themselves to do a host of things which are not authorized are eager to have someone tell, intimate, suggest, or remotely hint that their departures are acceptable to God (1 Sam. 13:12f). Satan's servants need "love" too; that is, they want to believe others agree with them in the doing of their evil deeds (I Pet. 4:4; John 3:20). Such men will jump at the chance to wrongly conclude that the inclusion of a

(continued on page two)

God's greater remedy. May His message of hope and deliverance ever be in our hearts and upon our lips.

Perry N. Hall

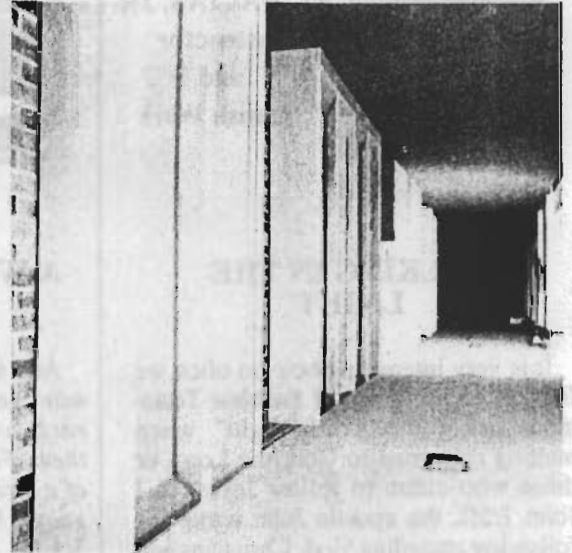
BILL JACKSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY MOVES AHEAD

Several members of the congregation have been involved in recent months in making the Bill Jackson Memorial Library a reality. Brother Bill owned several thousand volumes and all of these are being made available for congregational use. The church library has been moved to a new room and the Jackson library is being set up in the old church library location. Bill had so many books, it has been necessary for brother Al Farris to construct eight new sections of shelves in addition to what



BILL JACKSON

was already in the church library. We will keep you posted on the progress of this project.



Pictured above are five of eight new book shelf sections for the new Bill Jackson Memorial Library. They await staining and setting in place.

we need you!  **in Bible School!**

(MACIAS - continued)

needs to walk in the light, always striving to separate himself from a sinful life as well as from being ignorant of God's word. It has never been enough just to say we have fellowship with God; it has always been the case that one needs to meet the conditions as set out here in I John as well as other passages which tell us that in order to have fellowship with God, our lives need to be good, right and pure. Are we walking in the light?

(CAULEY - continued)

(Ezek. 12:2). And God explains more about this rebellious people, "That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD" (Isa. 30:9). God said, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts" (Isa. 65:2). God further says, "But this people

hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone" (Jer. 5:23). And God says to Ezekiel, "Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day" (Ezek. 2:3).

Brethren, we are spiritual Israel (Rom. 9:6-13; Gal. 6:16). Is it a wonder that the Holy Spirit through Paul would charge Timothy and all other gospel preachers until the end to "Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine, but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:2-4). Brethren, that time has come. "Preach the word."

Kevin Cauley

(BERARD - continued)

man noted and respected for his solid Bible preaching on their program is evidence of their continuing progress along the strait and narrow way. It is likely too, that many who have set a parallel course for hell, but who will not come to the apostate lectureship and never hear a word of what the preacher of truth says on that lectureship will take note of his name and be consoled in their allegiance to apostate leaders.

Nothing in the above remarks suggests doing less than one's best to restore the multitude of erring brethren who are connected with an apostate lectureship; rather, the intention and teaching is identical to that of the apostle Paul when he noted the need to deliver such ones "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5). In contrast to what Paul said, those speaking on an apostate lectureship encourage the enemies of the cross in their calamitous course.

Johnny Ramsey

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8 Feb 93

Dear brother -

Even though I detected a little unkind sharpness I'll answer you and try to explain some things. First of all I notice you did not thank me for strong article against ACU in Restorer. If, after writing that, they still invite me I count it providential for the opportunity. - Paul taught in the School of Tyrannas (Acts 17) - I am confident he taught Truth - Evidently you do not have confidence in me even though I wrote that strong article in Restorer - On previous occasions at ACC or ACU I have rebuked several matters out there that should be - It is good that someone can't do - But God knows my heart, motive, purpose + message - That is why you could never convince me that ^{what} I will do is wrong - Could a non-Bible Class brother convince you it was wrong to teach a Bible Class? Has nothing to do with: "Don't bother me with the facts" -

If you were on such a program my attitude would be: "Ken loves the Lord and the Bible and the brethren and sincerely believes he can do some good

for the cause of Christ" I have more confidence in your integrity, wisdom and judgment than you do in me -

The Lord knows I am going to teach truth, expose error and try to reach some folk (5, 50, 500 ? ?) makes no difference how many -

In the Day of Judgment I am confident the Lord, knowing my motives for going, will not condemn me for trying - You and brother Bernard and Terry Hightower may but fortunately I am the servant of the Savior -

Wish you would pray for me instead of what you are doing but that is your choice -

Very few brethren have been willing to sign their names to as many straightforward articles as I have written against the schools, liberalism, etc. But if I only speak where everyone agrees with me how can I reach out to those who need it most ?

You should wait until you know what I shall say & do Feb 25 before you know for sure it is wrong for me to go!

Brotherly
Johnny Ramsey

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Johnny Ramsey
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March 2, 1993

Dear Johnny,

Your letter of February 8, 1993 arrived while I was out of town and, although by this time, your appearance on the A.C.U. lectures will have taken place, I believe that your letter needs a response.

You open your letter by stating, "Even though I detected a little unkind sharpness I'll answer you and try to explain some things." Johnny, I had not intended the letter to have any "unkind sharpness" and, after looking at what I wrote again, I do not believe that I did. However, I do want you to know that if there was, it was not intended.

You state that I did not thank you for your strong article in the Restorer, I may not have specifically said that, but if you will note, I did say that in print you did "cry out against the errors that were being supported by A.C.U. However, you have not addressed the point that I made relative to that article and the one in Power, namely that "actions speak louder than words." You say that "If after writing that, they still invite me I count it providential for the opportunity - Paul taught in the School of Tyrannas (Acts 19) - I am confident he taught Truth." Johnny, can you not stop and think why they would invite you, as suggested in my previous letters? Why not invite you to speak to the whole lectureship group and not to some class when there are numerous others going on and thus you can have only a very limited impact? When Paul spoke at the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19), I find no indication that he was speaking to a small segment of the people in one of the classrooms while other classes were going on but that they gave him opportunity to speak to all. There could only be a real parallel if the folk at A.C.U. had given you the opportunity to speak to **all** that were assembled over an extended period of time and not in a situation where the vast majority of scheduled speakers were opposed to the truth, even though they claim to be faithful Christians.

You also state, "Evidently you do not have confidence in me even though I wrote that strong article in Restorer." Johnny, I would refer you back to my first letter. I made it clear that I was confident that you would teach the truth. I stated, "My concern is not that you will not teach the truth, for I believe that I know you well enough to know that you will do an excellent job of upholding the truth." Johnny, if that was not a statement of confidence that you would teach the truth, then I don't know how much more clearly I could have expressed myself.

You continue, "But God knows my heart, motive, purpose & message - That's why you could never convince me that what I will do is wrong - could a non-Bible Class brother convince you it was wrong to teach a Bible Class? Has nothing to do with :'Don't bother me with the facts.'" Johnny, I have not questioned your heart, your motive, your purpose or your message, but rather have questioned the heart motive and purpose of those at A.C.U. who have invited you and how your agreeing to appear can send false signals to both them and to others that would

indicate that the problems at A.C.U. are not serious. As regards my being convinced by the non-Bible Class brother it was wrong to teach a class, if he had the truth, I could be convinced. However, I would listen to what he has to say. I would want to respond to his questions and not have a closed mind. Johnny, if you would have taken the time to rationally look at the points that I raised and responded to the questions that I had asked instead of simply offering an emotional response, I believe that you would think differently. I can understand your being emotional in your response in defending your decision, but I believe that emotion needs to be tempered with reason. Incidentally, you may remember that I came out of the Christian Church, thus I have been willing to be changed when I have been convinced of the truth. If I had worked on a purely emotional level, I would have remained with the Christian Church. To hear many of my brethren today, they believe that it would have been fine for me to stay there. I don't. To have a closed mind is a dangerous thing and I hope that I will never have such but that I will be always willing to listen and to weigh the evidence in the light of the teaching of God's Word that I may always be true to the Lord and His Word recognizing that I may be sincere in heart, motive, purpose and message and still be wrong.

Again, you state, "If you were on such a program my attitude would be: 'Ken loves the Lord and the Bible and the brethren and sincerely believes he can do some good for the cause of Christ.'" If I were to agree to appear on such a program, as a teacher for a small class, as you have done, I would hope that brethren, like you and others, would seek to reason with me as to the advisability of such an appearance and that I would not respond from an emotional standpoint rather than from reason. We both know that someone can sincerely believe something and be sincerely wrong. Johnny, I don't doubt your sincerity. I don't doubt your integrity, but I do question the wisdom of your decision to appear and your judgment in reaching that decision. That is why, out of concern that I have written to you.

Johnny, I am ready to grant that I may be wrong in my judgment with respect to this. However, I have been surprised that you have chosen to respond from an emotional level rather than from reasoning. If you could show me that my reasoning is wrong, I would appreciate it. I have asked numerous questions in my previous letters but your approach in response has been to ignore these. When you have raised points, I have sought to respond to them, why have you chosen to ignore most of the points that I raised in questioning your decision?

Again, I would point out that all of the strong words and strong articles will **not** speak as loudly as actions. I am reminded of J.W. McGarvey in his strong opposition to the use of instrumental music in worship yet, even he in later life, realized that his actions had spoken louder than his words and as a result the majority of those whom he taught, and that on a regular basis over a number of years, not just a few days, accepted the error of the instrument.

In closing, I know that you have already participated for this year, but I would plead with you again to reconsider your stand on this matter and to consider it from a reasoned approach, along with God's Word and not from an emotional level as you have done thus far.

Yours in Christ,

Ken Chumbley

P.S. In case you have not seen them, I am enclosing the last two parts of Bob Berard's article.



AL MACIAS, JR.
Instructor
and
Spanish Work

WALKING IN THE TRUTH

In I John 1:5ff, we read how God is light and in Him is no darkness. That being the case, we are told by the apostle John that unless we are walking in the light we cannot have fellowship with God. To say that one has fellowship with God, while walking in darkness, is to lie and not be practicing the truth.

In III John, we find that the apostle John again writes about "walking," except this time he does not write about walking in the light but rather about walking in the truth. We read in III John 3,4 the following: *"For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth."* Knowing the truth is one thing but being totally obedient to it is altogether a different matter.

In the passage before us, John writes about a brother who not only knew the truth but was walking in it. John like James, in the book of James, knew how to appreciate brethren who understand that knowing the truth and having the truth is not at all sufficient to enter heaven. One needs to be a doer of the truth; one needs to walk in the truth.

John had been told by some of the brethren about how faithful Gaius was to the Lord and to the truth. John had been told of Gaius, not once but several times, that Gaius was such a faithful man to all those who went about preaching the gospel. In the first century, it was a very difficult thing to find lodging for those who went about preaching the word of God to the lost as well as to the saved. This is where Gaius came in; he opened his home to many of these traveling missionaries. Besides this, many of these men had no

(continued on page two)



SOUTHWEST
STUDENTS
SPEAK

THE TRUTH HURTS

The 14-by-48-foot billboard read, "Welcome to Austin, abortion capital of Texas." It was located near St. David's Hospital along the upper deck of Interstate 35. However, it was quickly removed just hours after it had been posted. It seems there were numerous angry telephone calls from those who did not think that the billboard was appropriate.

However, when one examines the facts it is clear that the sign is more than appropriate. The city of Austin spends \$100,000 each year to fund abortions for those on Medicaid or in the city's medical assistance program. When one looks around the state, one will find that no other major city finances the killing of unborn children. So, at least in this category, Austin easily wins the title of "abortion capital of Texas."

Why were people so upset by this billboard? Because it reveals the truth, and as is often the case, the truth hurts. One of the quickest ways to make someone angry is to simply tell them the truth. What we must do is make sure that we do not allow their negative reaction to keep us from teaching those things that they need to hear most. We are obligated to teach those around us what they must do to be saved, even if they do not realize that we are thinking of their ultimate good. Paul understood this when he stated in Galatians, *"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"* (Gal. 4:16).

Some may call this unloving, but that is simply because they do not have a biblical concept of love. One of the most loving things that you can do is warn someone if they are in sin and then explain to them how they can rid themselves of this problem. Proverbs 27:5 states, *"Open rebuke is better than secret love."* This is saying that a love that

(continued on page two)



BOB BERARD
Instructor
and
TV Producer

REASONS FOR NOT SPEAKING ON AN APOSTATE LECTURESHIP - #4

Preceding articles noted that one should not speak on an apostate lecture-ship because: 1. the influence of a faithful preacher is unnecessarily marred, 2. the distinction between the commendable, and the condemnable is blurred, and 3. the enemies of the cross are encouraged in their calamitous course. Consider here a fourth reason for not speaking on an apostate lectureship, that is, because:

4. the command of God to mark and avoid divisive men is thwarted. Paul declares Heaven's will saying, *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which ye learned; and turn away (avoid, KJV) from them"* (Rom. 16:17, my emp., B.B.). It is undoubtedly the case that the apostates considered in this series of articles are those who are "causing divisions and occasions of stumbling"; and, it is undoubtedly the case that the faithful are obligated to mark them and turn away from them. The point in question is whether one's appearance on an apostate lectureship helps or hinders the "marking and avoiding" which God requires.

It is here affirmed that the notable preacher of truth who speaks on an apostate lectureship (with massive advertising efforts indicating that he is just one of several speakers and without any note that he is opposed to the other speakers who are apostates) does more to hinder than to help the accomplishment of God's will in marking and avoiding the apostates. Though such a speaker stand up on the apostate lectureship and denounce the sins of its sponsors, promoters, and attendees, there is at best a "marking" and not an "avoiding" accomplished, and the marking which is accomplished is given

(continued on page two)

from sin and its eternal consequences. If we swerve from this divine mission, we will be swallowed by liberalism, modernism, humanism, and finally hell itself. All the while we struggle against every perversion of divine truth, we must, however, remember that our main mission is to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified to a lost world. If we fail to do that, we have failed the Lord of the commission and will lose our own souls.

Because the law of Moses has been fulfilled and taken out of the way, we are free to preach Christ and Him crucified (Col. 2:14). We are free to preach Christ and Him crucified because Christ has set us free from sin and death (Heb. 2:1-18). We are free to boldly preach Christ and Him crucified because God's eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ, has been accomplished (Eph. 3:11-12). God, having blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, let us preach Christ and Him crucified (Eph. 1:3). God, "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved," let us preach Christ and Him crucified (Eph. 1:5-6). "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," we are free to preach Christ and Him crucified (Rom. 3:24).

"Christ and Him crucified," as Lenski, so well points out, is the perfect

summary of the entire gospel. The idea that our age somehow demands that the church change, and the gospel be modified, does not come from an unchanging God (Heb. 13:8-9). Laboring under the great commission of Christ, we are free

to preach only Christ and Him crucified, the faith, once delivered for all time to the saints (Matt. 28:18-20; Jude 3). May God help us to do it.

Perry N. Hall

19 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. PSALMS 19

God said it long before

C. 1475 BC: "AND GOD CALLED THE EXPANSE* HEAVEN." (GEN. 1:8, NASB)

*EXPANSE (from Hebrew "raqiya") ALSO TRANSLATED "FIRMAMENT." DEFINITION - LITERALLY SPREADING OUT, AS IN THE SPREADING ACTION OF DOUGH UNDER THE ROLLING PIN.




by A.O. SANBORN and Bob West
ILLUSTRATIONS BY E. TOM GALLIFORD

EARLY ASTRONOMERS TAUGHT THAT WE LIVE IN A SMALL FIXED-SIZE UNIVERSE.



1950 AD: AT MOUNT PALOMAR OBSERVATORY, HUBBLE'S 20 YEAR OLD THEORY WAS CONFIRMED. ALL GALAXIES IN SPACE ARE RECEDED FROM US WITH THE MOST DISTANT ONES APPROACHING SPEED OF LIGHT.



SCIENTIFIC FACT: THE UNIVERSE IS EXPANDING.



JUST LIKE GOD SAID NEARLY 3,500 YEARS BEFORE!

(MACIAS - continued)

financial help from anyone to be able to preach as they were. The financial help had to come from somewhere if they were going to preach the gospel. Gaius, by opening his home and being hospitable to them, was in fact walking in the truth. Are we walking in the truth? How much are we doing for all of those who have decided to give their lives completely to the preaching of the gospel? Let us not only know the truth, but let us walk in it.

(HAFFNER - continued)

would keep secret those things that need to be corrected is useless. If you saw a child reaching for a skillet of hot grease, it would not be loving to remain silent.

The prudent course would be to slap the child's hand to instill in them the danger of their actions. Those who are involved in sin are in even greater danger of getting hurt. How can we remain silent?

Proverbs 27:6 states, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." A friend will speak up when he sees one in danger, whereas an enemy will carry on as if nothing is wrong. We must speak the truth even if it is not pleasant. Sometimes the truth hurts.

Russell Haffner

(BERARD - continued)

for the most part to those likely to miss, ignore, or reject the message. On the other hand, an affected group of far greater number (those who do not attend

the lectures and who do not in any other way learn of the content of the sermon presented by the one truth-preacher on the program) are given an appearance of harmonious fellowship between the one noted for his Bible preaching and the apostates among whom he is listed on the apostate lectureship program.

Of even greater fault and more harmful consequence is the preacher of truth who appears on an apostate lectureship, merely teaches on his assigned topic, and makes no attempt to expose the wickedness fostered by the apostate lectureship. Surely such a man acts in defiance of God's command to mark and avoid divisive men and stokes the intense fires of apostasy which even now threaten to engulf the church.





AL MACIAS, JR.
Instructor
and
Spanish Work

THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYS

We read in I Timothy 4:1,2, the following, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." Paul, writing by inspiration concerning certain things that would come to pass, spoke about the Holy Spirit as a personality.

In this passage, we learn several things that should be of great importance to all of us. First of all, we learn that the Holy Spirit is not what many believe the Holy Spirit is. In discussing the gospel with certain young men this week, they asked me if I knew that the Holy Spirit was only a force, not just any kind of force, but a force of God. In our discussion of what the Holy Spirit is or is not, I wondered what the average member of a congregation would have said to these young men. Could they have explained who the Holy Spirit really is? What do you understand the Holy Spirit to be? What do the Scriptures say about this important question?

The Holy Scriptures say that the Holy Spirit is a member of the Godhead. We have the heavenly Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Just as the Father and the Son are considered personalities so is the Holy Spirit. How do we know that the Holy Spirit is also a personality and not just some force or influence, as so many have come to believe? This we know because the Holy Spirit has certain characteristics just as any personality has. In the passage we cited at the beginning of this article, Paul wrote how the Holy Spirit had spoken about certain things that would come to pass (I Tim. 4:1). Can a mere force or influence speak? In John
(continued on page two)



SOUTHWEST
STUDENTS
SPEAK

GOD OWNS EVERYTHING, AND WE ARE HIS STEWARDS

"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it,' when you have it with you," (Prov. 3:27-28).

Albert Barnes, in his commentary on verse 27, points out first of all that the expression, "from those to whom it is due," literally means, "the owners thereof," in the original Hebrew language. He goes on to say, "that this expresses the great scriptural thought that the so-called possession of wealth is but a stewardship." He states further, "that the true owners of what we call our own are those to whom, with it, we may do good." Paul expressed the same thought when he wrote, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith," (Gal. 6:10). Brethren, do we really and truly understand, that God owns everything, and we are His stewards?

In David's final prayer of thanksgiving, he stated these words: "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours," (I Chron. 29:11). In the Psalms God declared, "For the world is MINE, and all its fullness," (Ps. 50:12), and by the prophet, He said, "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, says the Lord of hosts," (Hag. 2:8). Well, that just about covers everything, and if we ever turn away from those who are in need, when it is in our power to give, we have failed in our stewardship before God, and denied those in need what is rightfully theirs.

Remember, God owns everything, and we are His stewards. Are you being faithful in your stewardship? Can God trust you to pass on what belongs
(continued on page two)



BOB BERARD
Instructor
and
TV Producer

REASONS FOR NOT SPEAKING ON AN APOSTATE LECTURESHIP - #5

Consider a fifth reason for not speaking on an apostate lectureship as the final segment of this series. This reason is: **5. because faithful brethren are hurt.**

The church of our Lord is the army of the Lord. Christians are to be His loyal soldiers, those wearing the whole armor of God, those militant for His cause, those warring "a good warfare," and "fighting the good fight of faith" (Eph. 6:10ff; 1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12). The fight is one motivated by love, but this love, like the spiritual fighting itself, does not rule out the use of right reasoning with God's revealed will in determining the consequences of what one does (I Cor. 13; I Thes. 5:21; Heb. 5:12-14). Motivated by love and set for relentless battle with the devil, we must wisely choose activities and their settings which will further the Lord's cause, rather than take a short-sighted approach that fails to notice the harm which can be done by a good thing (gospel preaching) done in a wrong manner (preaching on an apostate lectureship) (Heb. 5:12-14; Ja. 3:13-18). David's sincerity and zeal for God (and that of all Israel with him) did not justify his moving the ark of the covenant without taking note of and complying with the "due order" for such movement (I Chron. 13:1-13; 15:2,13-15). Moving the ark to Jerusalem was right; moving it on an ox cart was wrong. Likewise, the good intentions and the fine sermons of men who have decided to preach wherever invited will not justify them in speaking on an apostate lectureship when the outcome of such has the detrimental effect discussed in this series of articles.

Faithful, militant soldiers of Christ are rightly trying to warn brethren (many of whom have their heads in the
(continued on page two)

“Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath raised up the Lord, and will raise us up by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ...the temple of the Holy Ghost...therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor. 6:13-20). The fruit of the Spirit brings to us love, joy and peace (Gal. 5:22). Let us not be guilty of mind, spirit or body corruption, but be filled with the Spirit, letting His word guide our every step (Eph. 5:17-18). We have the highest possible motivation to say “NO!” to all of these spiritual and physical pollutants, the glorifying of our God!

Perry N. Hall

VOLUNTARY SLAVERY TO SIN IS SOME PEOPLE'S IDEA OF PERSONAL LIBERTY!

(MACIAS - continued)

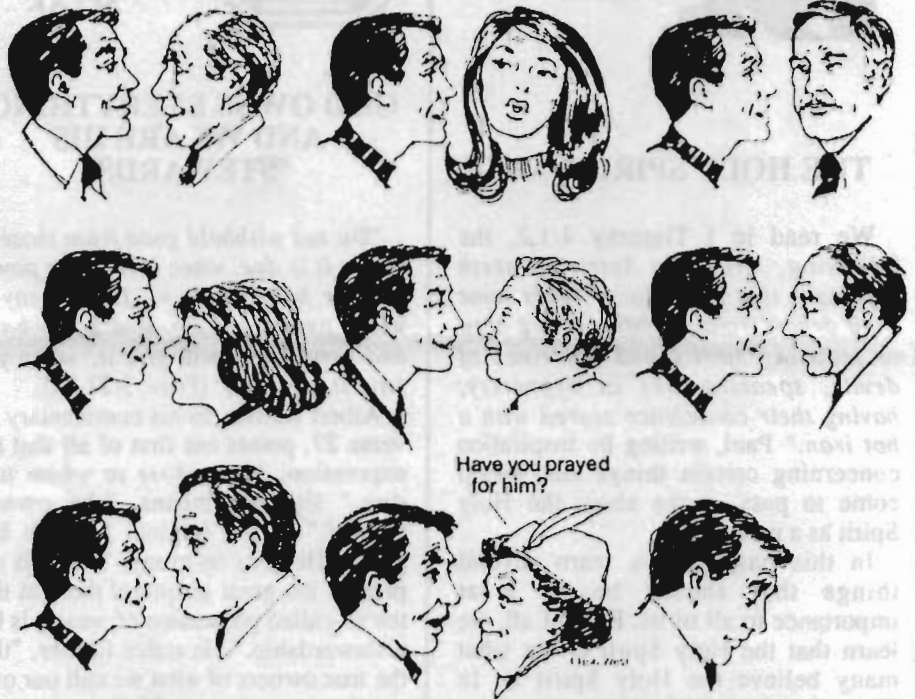
14:26, the Lord Jesus Christ told his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come and teach them all things. Not only that, but that the Holy Spirit would help His disciples to remember all that the Lord had said to them while he was among them. How could an impersonal force of any kind do this? And finally we read in John 16:13. “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak and he will shew you things to come.” How could any kind of an impersonal force or influence be able to do what the Lord himself said that the Holy Spirit would do? The Lord referred to the Holy Spirit as guiding, as hearing, as speaking, and as showing his disciples all the truth. Yes, the Holy Spirit is a personality.

(CHADWICK - continued)]

to Him when others are in need? What about your contribution to the Lord's work? How much of the Lord's money do you give back to Him? David put it like this, “Who am I, and who are my

II Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

JAMES 4



people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You. And of your own we have given you,” (1 Chron. 29:14).

Malachi challenged us all on this same subject, when he wrote: “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and prove Me now in this, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:10-11).

What a challenge this scripture presents to those who fully understand that God owns everything. Consider also the teaching of Jesus: “There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward’” (Luke 16:1,2).

Remember, God owns everything, and we are His stewards.

Brian Chadwick

(BERARD - continued)

sand and need anything but an indica-

tion that the apostates may really be all right after all) of the current digression (Acts 20:31). Those warnings include identifying and avoiding the very apostates with whom some of notably good reputations for preaching the truth are **wrongly supporting** (though unknowingly) by allowing their good names to be used in advertising apostate lectureships (Rom. 16:17). Those who are enduring hardness as good soldiers of Christ are hurt when one of their preaching brothers tends to undo part or all of the **rightful warning** they have accomplished by his “joining” one of the apostate bunches for a lectureship appearance.

In conclusion, it is wrong to speak on an apostate lectureship (as defined in this series of articles) because: 1. the influence of a faithful preacher is unnecessarily marred, 2. the distinction between the commendable, and the condemnable is blurred, 3. the enemies of the cross are encouraged in their calamitous course, 4. the command of God to mark and avoid divisive men is thwarted, and 5. faithful preachers are hurt.

WEDNESDAY - JANUARY 12

9:00 TO 9:50 A. M.

"The Joy and Hope of Being a Christian" Mike Elrod

10:00 TO 10:50 A. M.

Men's Class: (Auditorium)

"Biblical Preachers—A Staff?" Robert Dodson

Ladies' Class: (Multi-Purpose Room)

"Recognizing Divine Restrictions" Pat Suba

11:00 to 11:50 A. M.

"Having A Heart In The Lord's Work" Dean Whaley

11:50 A. M. to 1:45 P. M.

"HONOR TO WHOM HONOR LUNCHEON"

HONOREE: Roy Deaver

2:00 to 2:50 P. M.

"Faithful Unto Death" Thomas Warren

3:00 to 4:15 P. M.

-OPEN FORUM-

"Standing For Truth—Yet Peacemakers" . . . Furman Kearley

4:15 to 6:20 P.M. --- DINNER BREAK

6:30 to 6:50 P. M.

Congregational Singing Joe Chase

7:00 to 7:50 P. M.

"Lessons From New Testament Churches" Johnny Ramsey

8:00 to 9:00 P. M.

"The Church Is Destined To Glory" Tom Holland

NURSERY

Child care services will be provided during the morning womens' classes and the evening session. Parents are requested to pick up their children **before** the lunch break.

HEARING IMPAIRED

Signing for the hearing impaired will be provided for most lectures as needed.

ELECTRICAL HOOK-UPS

A limited number of electrical hookups are available to those with RVs.

AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

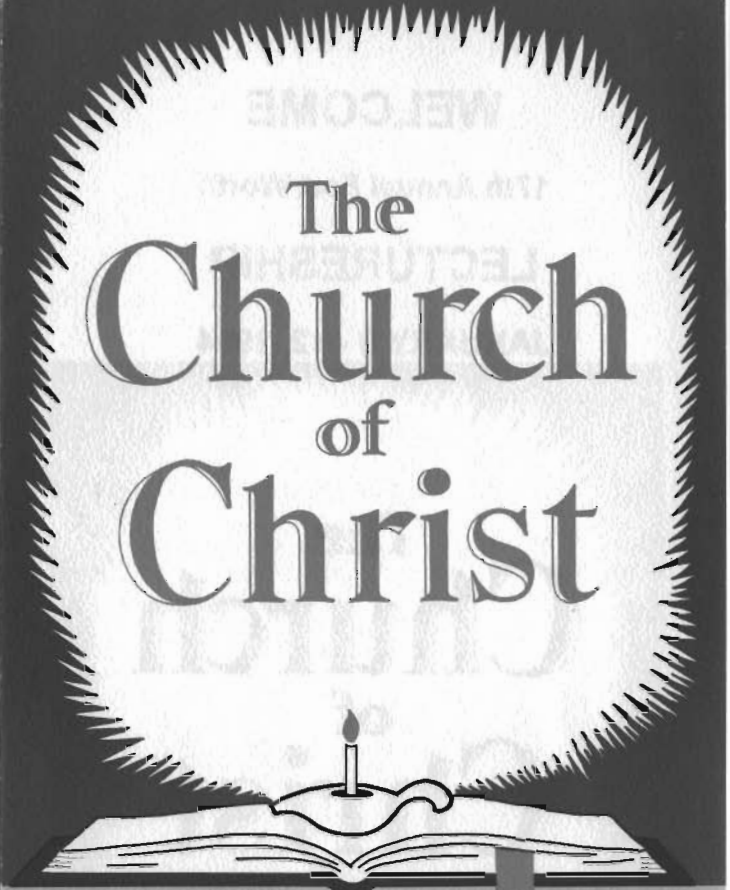
In addition to the Lectureship book, audio and video tapes will be available at a nominal cost.

COFFEE AND REFRESHMENTS

Coffee and refreshments will be available in room N112.

PREVIOUS LECTURESHIP THEMES

- 1978 — "Premillennialism, True Or False"
- 1979 — "The Holy Scriptures"
- 1980 — "What Do You Know About The Holy Spirit"
- 1981 — "Difficult Texts Of The New Testament Explained"
- 1982 — "Difficult Texts Of The Old Testament Explained"
- 1983 — "The Person And Life Of Christ"
- 1984 — "The Evangelistic Church"
- 1985 — "Morals In An Immoral Age"
- 1986 — "Exegetical Studies Of Great Bible Themes"
- 1987 — "Questions Men Ask About God"
- 1988 — "Liberalism, Law And Love"
- 1989 — "The Restoration Principle"
- 1990 — "Fidelity To God And His Word"
- 1991 — "Thus Saith The Lord"
- 1992 — "The Challenge Of Christianity"
- 1993 — "The Spirit Of The Prophets"



The Church of Christ

**17th Annual
Ft. Worth Lectures
Jan. 9-12, 1994**

Brown Trail Church of Christ

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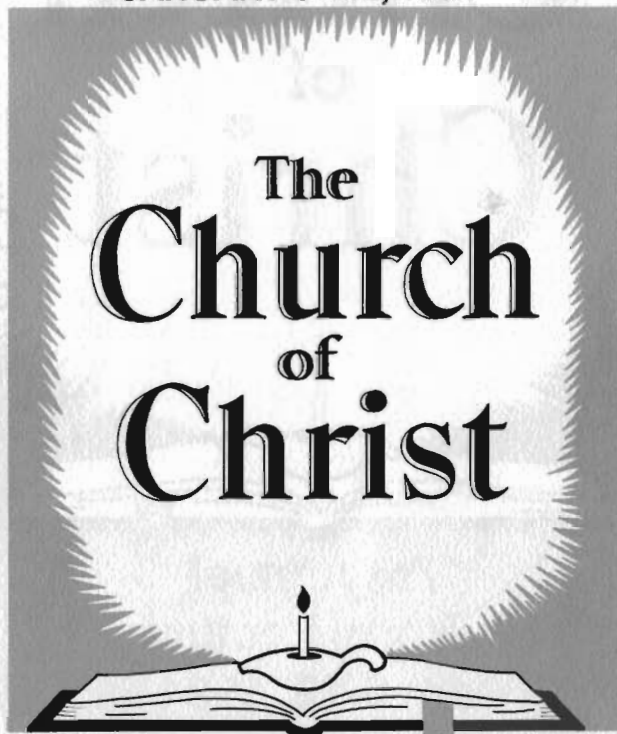
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WELCOME

17th Annual Fort Worth

LECTURESHIP

JANUARY 9 - 12, 1994



WE PRAY FOR
THE GLORIOUS LIGHT OF TRUTH
TO SHINE BRIGHTLY

SUNDAY - JANUARY 9

7:30 to 7:50 P. M.

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
Dean Mannen - Song Director

8:00 P. M.

"The Church Is Divine In Origin"
Avon Malone

MONDAY - JANUARY 10

9:00 TO 9:50 A. M.

"The Church/Kingdom In Prophecy" . . . Garell Forehand

10:00 TO 10:50 A. M.

Men's Class: (Auditorium)

"The Worship Of The Church" Foy Forehand

Ladies' Class: (Multi-Purpose Room)

"God Made Them Male And Female" . . Barbara O'Banion

11:00 to 11:50 A. M.

"The Establishment Of The Church" Billy Patton

11:50 A.M. to 1:20 P. M.

LUNCH BREAK

1:30 to 2:20 P.M.

"The Recognition Of Divine Authority" Lindell Mitchell

2:20 to 2:45 P. M. -- BREAK

2:45 to 4:00 P. M.

-OPEN FORUM-

"The Strange Sounds We're Hearing" Buster Dobbs

4:00 to 6:20 P. M. -- DINNER BREAK

Brown Trail School of Preaching Alumni Banquet

6:30 to 6:50 P. M.

Congregational Singing. Foy Forehand

7:00 to 7:50 P. M.

"Lessons From New Testament Churches". Burt Groves

8:00 to 9:00 P. M.

"The Church Is Distinctive In Identity" . . . George Bailey

TUESDAY - JANUARY 11

9:00 TO 9:50 A. M.

"The Called-Out of Christ" Jimmy Jividen

10:00 TO 10:50 A. M.

Men's Class: (Auditorium)

"Biblical Shepherds and Deacons" Dan Flournoy

Ladies' Class: (Multi-Purpose Room)

"Accentuating The Positives" Sunny Workman

11:00 to 11:50 A. M.

"Is The Church Of Christ A
Denomination?" Owen Cosgrove

11:50 A. M. to 1:45 P. M.

LUNCH BREAK

"THE TRUTH IN LOVE" BANQUET

2:00 to 2:50 P. M.

"Are There Saved People Outside
The Church?" Dave Miller

3:00 to 4:15 P.M.

-OPEN FORUM-

"Problems We're Facing Today" Hardeman Nichols

4:15 to 6:20 P. M. -- DINNER BREAK

6:30 to 6:50 P. M.

Congregational Singing. Ken Helderbrand

7:00 to 7:50 P. M.

"Lessons From New Testament Churches". Richard Jones

8:00 to 9:00 P. M.

"The Church Is Definitive In Doctrine" Leroy Brownlow

December 23, 1993

Dear Brethren,

I would like to take a little of your time to address the upcoming Fort Worth Lectures, and one of the scheduled speakers. I am very concerned about the appearance of brother Jimmy Jividen and the implied endorsement by Brown Trail.

I have no personal animosity toward brother Jividen, the Baker Heights elders or its membership. I have written to brother Jividen and the elders at Baker Heights and have received no response to allay my concerns. I know that neither you, brother Jividen, the elders at Baker Heights nor its membership answer to me. I do feel that my concern deserves a sincere answer.

I hope that you will take time to review the attached correspondence with brother Jividen. I wrote him (with a copy to the elders), fully expecting that I would receive a Christian response, alas I received the attached instead. I have not heard from the elders at all!

In addition to the problems addressed in the letter, brother Jividen holds a false position regarding "special music" in the church. Please consider the following quotes from *Worship In Song*, by Jimmy Jividen, Star Bible Publications, P.O. Box 181220, Ft. Worth, TX 76118.

"It is significant that congregational singing was not always the norm for the Corinthian assembly. The text suggests "solo" singing. Notice, "each one hath a psalm" refers to the individual. This is not to suggest that congregational singing is wrong. It is reflected in other passages. It does show that "solo" singing is also scriptural and can be edifying." (pg. 52)

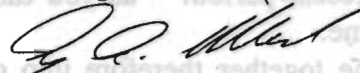
"It is on this point that good judgement must be used in order to maintain the edifying purpose of singing. The New Testament authorizes solo singing and by inference quartets and choruses. Such would sometimes be very edifying. A new song composed to teach a lesson or complement a theme being emphasized in the life of the congregation could well be sung in solo or by a group. A chorus of singers often fill a special need in singing at funerals and weddings.

Opposition to choral groups and solos in the assemblies of the church has often been based upon practical reasons rather than doctrinal prohibitions." (pg. 158)

Brethren, I hope that this will give you cause for thought, and reconsideration of the use of brother Jividen. It is my sincere desire that brother Jividen repent, and turn his spiritual life back on a parallel path with the truth of the gospel. Should he do so, he would then be in a position to help the brethren at Baker Heights get back on track with the truth.

If you need any further information, feel free to call or write, my home phone is (915) 695-5219. Use this letter in any way that will further the cause of Christ.

In the greatest cause,



Clay A. Middlebrook

(over)

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" Eph 6:10-17.

December 2, 1993

Jimmy Jividen
Baker Heights Church of Christ
5382 Texas Ave.
Abilene, TX 79606

Dear brother Jividen,

Greetings in Christ, I am sorry that I have not written or called sooner, I blame it on getting settled down after the move from Turkey. As you know we are not worshipping at Baker Heights, but rather at the Eastside congregation meeting at 805 N. Judge Ely Boulevard. We are very happy there as the brethren are desirous of "contending earnestly for the faith" and opposing error wherever it may raise it's head. That is as it should be.

I am very concerned with some of the things that are going on at Baker Heights and perhaps you or the elders would be kind enough to provide Bible answers to my concerns. The first thing that I would like to address is the practice of the divided assembly at Baker Heights. Let me assure you that I hold no animosity for brother Jividen, the elders or the members of the Baker Heights congregation. It is truly my desire to oppose error, and exalt the truth without regard to friendship or position of the one(s) in error!

Surely you and the brethren know that there is no authority to be found within God's word for a divided assembly, namely the "Children's Church" (junior worship, children's Bible hour or whatever it is called). Should such exist I admit my gross ignorance in that regard. I will not take up your time with a lengthy lesson but simply point out a few verses and make some comment.

Consider the following verses in light of what God AUTHORIZES in regards to the assembly.

Heb. 10:23-25, clearly we are authorized to assemble TOGETHER, and commanded not to forsake such assembling together. *Websters New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, Deluxe Second Edition, says of Assemble: "1. to collect (a number of persons or things) into one place or body; to bring or call together; to convene; to congregate; as, to *assemble* an army corps." Well that seems to be pretty simple to me, but trying to prove a first century term with a 20th century dictionary could lead to misunderstandings. *Ungers Bible Dictionary* says of assembly: "the term used in the A.V. for several Hebrew words, elsewhere translated "congregation" (q. v.). It is also the representative of the following: (1) 'āsārāh, a coming together, especially for a festal occasion (Lev. 23:36; Num. 29:35; Deut. 16:8)." Vines says, "(3) *Episunagōgē*, akin to No. 1, *Note*, an assembling together, is used in 2 Thess. 2:1, of the rapture of the saints into the air to meet the Lord, "our gathering together;" in Heb. 10:25, of the gatherings of believers on earth during the present period." as you can see the Greek and the English meaning of "assemble" are the same.

"When ye come together therefore into one place..." (1Cor. 11:20). Again we are authorized to come together, IN ONE PLACE. "Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" (James 2:4). Here the brethren are condemned for dividing based upon wealth or lack thereof. It is no better to divide over age than money. In Ephesians

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God" Eph 6:10-17.

the 6th chapter, the apostle Paul addresses the children. Why did he not write a separate letter for the children's church? Because there was not one! The saints were all together in one place.

Consider some Old Testament examples that are worthy of our consideration (cf. Rom. 15:4). Deuteronomy 31:10-12 is an example of the command for all of Israel to come TOGETHER. Not one gathering of the adults and one gathering of the children. This should be enough to remove any such excuse as "the children can't learn in the regular assembly," they were able to do so then. Joel 2:15-17, once again the separate assembly was not authorized. Ezra 10:1, It is repetitive, because it is the way it has always been and it is the ONLY way authorized! Joshua 8:34-35 also tells us that the men, women AND children were gathered TOGETHER!

Some try to excuse the "children's church" by saying that it is an expedient. Something can not be an expedient when it changes that which is commanded! A songbook is an expedient to singing, as it is not a different form of making music (cf. Eph. 5:19). A piano is not an expedient in the singing as it is another form of music. The "children's church" is not an expedient to the worship, as it is another form of worship. An expedient to the worship may be the owning of a building that all may come together to worship. Some may try to claim that the children's assembly is in the same building under the same roof, so they are still "together." Have you ever spent the night in a hotel? Did you spend the night "together" with all the other guests of that hotel? Because you are under the same roof does not mean you are together! In James 2:4, they were divided in the same room!

The second concern are the messages that I have observed on your Marquee the last couple of days.

The east side reads as follows:

IT'S NOT HOW MUCH YOU KNOW, IT'S HOW MUCH YOU CARE!

It is not my desire to be ugly, and I think I am not being that way, but brother, I doubt I have seen a more denominational sign in my life! The first thought that I had was, this cannot be! How could the Lord's church be a part of promoting the hatred of knowledge. Do you really believe that it does not matter what one believes or knows? What if one does not know that baptism for the remission of sins is an absolute requirement for salvation, but cares very much about God (or so he thinks)? Is that one saved though he is never baptized? The denominations teach the exact same thing in an attempt to avoid the truth of the gospel, "It doesn't matter what you believe, just so you are sincere." What a bunch of hogwash! What about those who don't or refuse to know that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God? As long as they care (are sincere) are they OK? Is this what Jimmy Jividen and the elders at Baker Heights believe and teach? That truth is not important? Is there anything we can and must know? If there is ANYTHING we must know, how do you explain the sign? (Brethren, my daughter Kelly and my son Cam, both recognized that the sign teaches that you don't have to know ANYTHING to be pleasing to God! Neither one of them has a Ph.D., they haven't even finished elementary school yet!)

The west side reads as follows:

I WON'T TELL GOD WE SINNED, IF YOU WON'T!

What in the world does that mean? Does it mean that you do not have to confess your sins? Does it mean that one need not repent and ask God for forgiveness? Is there no need to acknowledge sin in our lives? Could we reword the sign to say "I won't notice your sins, if you don't notice mine!" Sounds a little like the three monkeys, "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." Are Jimmy Jividen and the Baker Heights elders trying to teach that we can all get along and pretend that there are no sins in our lives? Is there never a cause for public acknowledgement and repentance of sin? The implication seems to be that we can accept those

(over)


in error without their acknowledging and repenting of those errors. There are still those who think we should accept and fellowship those in the Christian Church without requiring them to repent of their various public sins such as false worship, dividing the church over innovations etc.. Your sign sure seems to point down that road of apostasy.

I hope that the signs don't mean what they say! There is enough liberalism in the church today without Baker Heights becoming a full-fledged denomination. Brethren, it is much easier to prevent error than come out of error. It would be truly wonderful to see the brethren at Baker Heights stand and "contend earnestly for the faith" with the brethren at Eastside. When uncertain sounds come forth from a congregation, one wonders where it will lead?

The cause of Christ needs stalwart defenders, those who are not afraid to stand with the Lord Jesus Christ through His, His bride, and His brethren's trials. The Lord needs those who are not intimidated by worldly degrees and titles. The Lord needs those who would rather stand with truth, than with the apostate ACU. It seems that when ACU speaks, the brethren of Abilene jump. How sad to see some defend an institution that would rather hobnob with the denominations than teach the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. How sad when some will not publicly speak out against Carroll Osburn and his errors concerning the role of women in the church as taught at the 1992 ACU Lectures. Most here in Abilene are following this error like blind sheep, though some try to soften it up by saying that women may take a roll in the worship, but may only wait on the Lord's table. How about those here in Abilene who refuse to "mark and avoid" Mike Cope and the apostate Highland congregation (Rom. 16:17; 1Cor. 5:11; 2Tim. 3:5; 2John 10)? Can you imagine, the President of ACU is an elder where one of the editors of *Wineskins* is the preacher? **Unbelievable** is all that need be said!

Please consider these things carefully, if you recognize the error of these things then heed the words of God, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22). Brethren, there is no way to tell you how deeply my heart breaks for the cause of Christ here in Abilene, won't you stand forth for the truth with myself and the brethren at Eastside?

In the cause of truth,



Clay A. Middlebrook

cc: Elders

I WON'T TELL GOD WE SINNED, IF YOU WON'T!

What in the world does that mean? Does it mean that you do not have to confess your sins? Does it mean that one need not repent and ask God for forgiveness? Is there no need to acknowledge sin in our lives? Could we reward the sign to say "I won't notice your sin, if you don't notice mine!" Sounds a little like the three monkeys, "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil." Are Jimmy Lividen and the Baker Heights elders trying to teach that we can all get along and pretend that there are no sins in our lives? Is there never a cause for public acknowledgement and repentance of sin? The implication seems to be that we can accept those

(over)

BAKER HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

5382 Texas Avenue Abilene, Texas 79605 Phone: 692-6974

December 15, 1993

Clay A. Middlebrook
3110 Heritage Lane
Abilene, TX 79606

Dear Clay,

Thank you for your letter and concern about our work here at Baker Heights. Our goal is to be faithful to the teaching of our Lord in every way. We appreciate your comments.

We encourage you to assemble with us when you have opportunity. We would enjoy your fellowship.

In brotherly love,



Jimmy Jividen

JJ/sd

After running a few ads in ACU's Optimist and Abilene Reporter News, members of the advertising committee of our new congregation have become more aggressive. Both papers recently published our latest ad without change, reproduced below.

EASTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST 805 N. Judge Ely Blvd. 676-1615

What role does the New Testament authorize women to hold in the church of Christ today?

About a year ago, a local professor, who moved to Abilene from a west coast University, said that women in the first-century church, with apostolic approval, led public prayers in mixed assemblies and preached from pulpits on Sunday mornings. In 1989, a congregation in Houston, Texas, announced that the women of that congregation would henceforth be used for leadership roles in the public assemblies, i.e. directing singing, prayer, serving communion, etc. In 1990, a preacher from Brookline, Massachusetts, and an elder from Houston, Texas, in a debate forum at Freed Hardeman University, asserted that they had no objection to women serving as elders in the church of the Lord. (These things show how far the liberals have digressed.)

When God pronounced that men would have the responsibility of leading the worship assembly, and that women were to be in subjection to the man, no superiority or inferiority was implied, yet each must submit to God's will in these matters. The Bible not only lists faithful male heroes, but reveals a significant number of women who were deeply and lovingly involved in God's work. But, in regard to the home, marriage, family and worship, God's system has always been patriarchal, that is, the headship and leadership role has been given to men. Paul said, "I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness" (1 Timothy 2:12). The negative conjunction "nor" here is explanatory in force, revealing that the apostle is forbidding any teaching or similar activity in which a woman exercises authority over a man (cf. Lenski, Commentary p. 563; Arndt & Gingrich, Greek Lexicon, p. 595). We believe it is a serious error to advocate the idea that women may lead the worship of groups consisting of male and female Christians! (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:3, 14:34-35; Ephesians 5:22-25; 1 Timothy 2:11-15.)

In 1992, the above mentioned (Christian?) west coast University, a close friend of its sister school in Abilene, decided to allow its women to lead in prayer in all of its public assemblies. That University also installed signer Pat Boone as Chairman of its Advisory Board. Boone and his wife left the church of Christ in the 70's to join the Pentecostal Holiness church. Why would that University solicit or heed the advice of a movie star who is not even a member of the Lord's church?

We regret that these errors are being taught or supported by some Universities, elderships and individuals. We do pray that those who hold to these false positions will repent and return to the path of righteousness (cf. Proverbs 2:20; Jeremiah 6:16-19, 18:15; Micah 4:2).

If you would like to learn more about God's will in the work and worship of women in the church, come worship with us this Sunday and hear God's word proclaimed in truth and love.

Classes-9:30 AM * Worship - 10:30 AM & 6 PM
Wednesday Night Services - 7:00 PM

**19TH ANNUAL FORT WORTH LECTURESHIP
FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH
JANUARY 7-10, 1996**

SUNDAY - JANUARY 7

7:30 to 7:50 P. M.
CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
Dean Mannen Song Director
8:00 P. M.

"There Is One God" Furman Kearley

MONDAY - JANUARY 8

9:00 TO 9:50 A. M.

"There is One Lord" Monte Ginnings

10:00 TO 10:50 A. M.

Men's Class: (Auditorium)

"The Christian Man Living For Jesus" Mike Vestal

Ladies' Class: (Multi-Purpose Room)

"The Christian Woman Living For Jesus" Joann Hatch

11:00 to 11:50 A. M.

"There Is One Spirit" Bill Lockwood

11:50 A.M. to 1:20 P. M.

LUNCH BREAK

1:30 to 2:20 P.M.

"There Is One Faith" Bill Thrasher

2:20 to 2:40 P. M. -- BREAK

2:35 to 3:50 P. M.

-PANEL DISCUSSION-

"Doing All In The Name Of The Lord" *Leslie McGalliard

Jodie Boren, Perry Cotham, Ken Hope, Jr., Tommy Moore

4:00 to 6:15 P. M. --- DINNER BREAK

Brown Trail School of Preaching Alumni Dinner

6:30 to 6:50 P. M.

Congregational Singing - Noble Patterson

7:00 to 7:50 P. M.

"There Is One Power To Save" Paul Sain

8:00 to 8:50 P. M.

"We Must Stand For Sound Doctrine" Joe Gilmore

TUESDAY - JANUARY 9

9:00 TO 9:50 A. M.

"There Is One Baptism" Eddie Beard

10:00 TO 10:50 A. M.

Men's Class: (Auditorium)

"The Christian Man Working For Christ" Gary Adams

Ladies' Class: (Multi-Purpose Room)

"The Christian Woman Working For Christ" Sarah Fallis

11:00 to 11:50 A. M.

"Worship In Spirit And Truth" Cecil May, Jr.

11:50 A. M. to 1:15 P. M.

LUNCH BREAK

"THE TRUTH IN LOVE" LUNCHEON

1:30 to 2:15 P. M.

"There Is One Hope" Rick Laing

2:30 to 3:20 P. M.

"What Is Entailed In Repentance?" Ivie Powell

3:30 to 4:45 P.M.

-OPEN FORUM--Roy Lanier, Jr.

4:45 to 6:20 P. M. --- DINNER BREAK

6:30 to 6:50 P. M.

Congregational Singing Foy Forehand

7:00 to 7:50 P. M.

"There Is One Book From God" Edward Myers ?

8:00 to 8:50 P. M.

"There Is One Body" Frank Chesser

WEDNESDAY - JANUARY 10

9:00 TO 9:50 A. M.

"The Law And The Gospel" Don Hatch

10:00 TO 10:50 A. M.

Men's Class: (Auditorium)

"The Christian Man And The Home" Ferman Carpenter

Ladies' Class: (Multi-Purpose Room)

"The Christian Woman And The Home" Judy Miller

11:00 to 11:50 A. M.

"God's Offer--Man's Response" Leon Dennis

11:55 A. M. to 1:45 P. M.

"HONOR TO WHOM HONOR LUNCHEON"

HONOREES

Furman Kearley--Hardeman Nichols--Johnny Ramsey

2:00 to 2:50 P. M.

"The Tendency Of Men To Rebel" Eugene Greer

3:05 to 4:20 P. M.

-PANEL DISCUSSION-

"The Importance Of Sound Doctrine" *Owen Cosgrove
Lindell Mitchell, A. C. Morris, Byron Nichols, Bobby Bates

4:20 to 6:20 P.M. --- DINNER BREAK

6:30 to 6:50 P. M.

Congregational Singing Joe Chase

7:00 to 7:50 P. M.

"The Judgment To Come"(Dan Jenkins)

8:00 to 8:50 P. M.

"Dare We Change The Fundamentals?" E. Claude Gardner

Hammer & Tongs

Volume V

September – October 1996

Number 5

Kearley on the Spirit

by Stephen Wiggins

Furman Kearley, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, joins the ranks of those claiming a direct leading of the Holy Spirit independent from the word of God. In his book, *God's Indwelling Spirit*, brother K. states,

It is a further conclusion that gospel preachers and teachers have been driven to the extreme view that the Spirit leads only through the word ... brethren have taken the easy-to-explain position that the Holy Spirit leads only through the word ... if the Spirit leads in no way except through the word, we would do better to cease praying and to spend that time reading the word.... It is perfectly consistent with God's word and free moral agency for the Holy Spirit to help us arrange our thoughts and to bring to our remembrance information that will be of help to us in making the right decision in the right situation (pp. 43, 46, emphasis supplied).

Kearley pipes that the only reason brethren have been "driven" to the "extreme" and "easy-to-explain" view that the Spirit leads only through the instrumentality of the gospel is "because of arguments in debates with religious groups which stress the direct operation of the Spirit" (p. 43). According to this, then, faithful brethren of days gone by who routed out Calvinistic and Pentecostal error on the polemic platform took the position they did in debate, NOT because they sincerely believe that the Bible taught the Spirit provides guidance solely by means of God's written revelation, but rather because they were forced into that position by the proponents of error. It was

not a position faithful brethren took because they derived it from sincere study of the Bible but, as Kearley touts, it was a self-serving "easy-to-explain" position one could whip out at a moment's notice in oral debate when under the gun from sectarian pastors. See, to hear Kearley tell the tale, our brethren of the past could

"It is a further conclusion that gospel preachers and teachers have been driven to the extreme view that the Spirit leads only through the word."

-Furman Kearley

"The Bible is the only medium by which we derive guidance, insight, and strength to live the Christian life (2 Tim. 3:16, 17)."

-Dave Miller

not defeat the devils' dogma with God's truth but had to resort to a position they were compelled to embrace in order to come away with anything like victory in confrontation with denominational error. Brethren, I must declare to the top of my voice that I have never read a more arrogant and misrepresentative statement than this one from our dear brother Kearley. Not to mention the stain that it

leaves upon the memory of faithful gospel preachers of yesteryear in calling into question their very convictions and motives as to why they preached what they did. May brother Kearley muster the courage to "repent therefore of this thy wickedness."

Led by the Spirit

That a person is led by the Spirit to become and remain a faithful child of God, no Bible believer will deny. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). And again, "But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18). It is equally clear, however, that the Spirit's guidance is provided through means of the gospel which was given by inspiration for this very purpose, and in no other way. The Spirit "speaks" and thus we are bidden to give heed to his message. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (1 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 2:7). There is not a man alive who can prove that the Spirit offers any other avenue of guidance for the Christian religion other than that leadership the Spirit provides within the message of written revelation. H. Leo Boles in his book, *The Holy Spirit*, writes,

So the Holy Spirit leads people by speaking to them. He speaks to people in the New Testament. When people follow the New Testament, they are following the Holy Spirit. When they do what the Holy Spirit teaches, they are being led by the Holy Spirit.... Hence, all Christians are led the same way....

All should yield to the simple teachings of the New Testament, for in doing so they are led by the Holy Spirit (pp. 238, 241, emp. Added).

Kearley has the Spirit's direct leading "stimulating our minds" in helping us to "arrange our thoughts" and "bring to our remembrance information" that personally assists the Christian in daily living. I hasten to add, however, that there is not a semblance of scriptural support for this sectarian bosh. It is nothing more than regurgitated "illumination" of the Calvinistic kind with a generous dose of Holly Roller Pentecostalism thrown in for good measure. All of which has been evaluated and repudiated by faithful brethren in days gone by for the worn-out and oft-refuted devilish rot that it is. Such heresy flowing from Kearley's fertile imagination does nothing but lay the groundwork for the next generation to

Hammer & Tongs

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Hammer & Tongs is a work of the Burkburnett Church of Christ, and is published bimonthly for the express purpose of combating the Calvinistic doctrine of the Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit in conviction, conversion, and sanctification, as well as other denominational dogmata. Subscriptions and tax-deductible contributions (earmarked Hammer & Tongs) may be sent to the following address.

MAILING ADDRESS

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reject the written revelation of God's word as the standard of truth for the Christian religion. Brother Bobby Duncan in his monthly publication, *Vigil*, recently had something to say on this very point.

The Holy Spirit conveys God's message to man by speaking to man. The Holy Spirit has never tried to *lead* man by causing him to have certain feelings, certain urges, or certain experiences. He has always conveyed God's message to man by speaking to him.... Still there are some among us who have traded off the sure, explicit words of the Holy Spirit for some nebulous urge or feeling which they (mis)interpret to be the *leading* of the Spirit. As is true concerning *every false religious doctrine, this idea slaps at the perfection and the reliability of the Bible* (April 1996, p. 26, emp. added).

Another respected by all and despised by none, brother Rex Turner, reiterates the same within a chapter entitled, "The Holy Spirit and His Work."

Now, when a person thinks that the Holy Spirit has in some mysterious way operated on him—whether by a voice, a *leading*, a dream, an urge, an inclination, or an intuition—at that point the *word of God ceases to be an absolute standard of authority for him* (*Fundamentals of the Faith*, p. 136, emp. supplied).

Of course, per the Kearley accusation, the very reason why such reputable brethren as H. Leo Boles, Bobby Duncan, and Rex Turner teach that the Spirit leads man today only through the word of God is because these brethren were "driven" to this "extreme" and "easy-to-explain" position from their confrontations with sectarian error. Bah!

Vehicle for Apostasy

It is such subjective claims that Kearley makes for a direct guidance of the Spirit that serves as a common bond for all the liberalistic efforts of renewal currently being foisted upon the churches of Christ by self-styled "change-agents." Rubel Shelley, Mike Cope, Lynn Anderson, Joe Beam, and others of the same stripe all make exactly the same assertion Kearley does—a *direct leading of the Holy Spirit*. A perusal of the back issues of Shelly/Cope's *Wineskins*, Anderson's book *Navigating the Winds of Change*, and more recently, Jubilee speeches by Joe Beam which are reviewed

elsewhere in this issue of *H&T*, will demonstrate that the onslaught of liberalism among us is all grounded in the one foundational error of a direct leading of the Spirit. And there is not a whit of difference in the Spirit's direct leading of the Kearley kind and the direct leading for which these liberal-minded change agents are squealing. Brother Dave Miller, director of Brown Trail School of Preaching, pinpoints this common ground in his par excellent tract, *Fallacies and Fruits of Liberalism*. Under the caption, "Views on the Holy Spirit," he writes,

Teaching about the Holy Spirit is fast becoming the vehicle for apostasy and liberalism. The things that are being said, written, and taught around the brotherhood about the Holy Spirit are nothing but demonstrations of subjectivism and the desire of so many to be freed from an authoritative book in exchange for license to believe and practice what one wants while still feeling that he is religious and holy and acceptable. Subjectivism is liberalism....

The Holy Spirit does not operate upon the believer directly or miraculously. The brotherhood has stood united on the fact that all of the denominational claims that the Spirit guides them [direct leading, SW], speaks to them, "energizes" them, heals them, and makes them feel "warm," are **false**. We have persistently, consistently, and insistently preached, taught, and affirmed in debate that the written word of God is our **sole** authority. The Bible is the **only** medium by which we derive guidance, insight, and strength to live the Christian life (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

Now, however, with the gradual permeation of subjectivism and liberalism into our ranks, many voices are boldly asserting the presence and direct operation of the Spirit in their minds and lives.... One young preacher claims that when he is standing in the pulpit and performing rather poorly, the Spirit "energizes" him and enables him to muster sufficient enthusiasm to bolster his delivery. Another preacher claims the Spirit "triggers his mind" when his memory fails in the pulpit (pp. 17-18, emp. in original).

The preceding quote from Miller precisely states the truth of the matter. The brotherhood is currently saturated with liberal minded change agents who promote their liberalistic agenda to catapult the church into apostasy. And the

Hammer & Tongs

common denominator which they all use as their springboard is the subjective claims of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of man. Several observations are now in order pertaining to the Miller quote.

First, Miller's assessment is right on target when he states that a direct operation and leading of the Spirit is nothing more than a "vehicle for apostasy and liberalism." It is, in fact, the very basis for the current movement toward apostasy into which liberals are swiftly taking the Lord's church. So let brother Kearley sit up and take note. Second, I could not have said it better myself when Miller states that the "denominational" claim that the Spirit leads one directly is "false." That's right, folks. It is sectarian. It is false. It is error. It is wicked. It is sinful. Are you listening, brother Kearley? Third, Miller correctly points out that the brotherhood of the churches of Christ has always stood united when in combat against sectarianism by persistently, consistently, and insistently maintaining that the "Bible is the only medium by which we derive guidance, insight, and strength" for Christian living. But to hear Kearley's version the only reason why the brotherhood taught an "only through the word" position in the first place was because our preachers were "driven" to this "extreme" and "easy-to-explain" view when debating the proponents of Calvinism and Pentecostalism. Fourth, Miller accurately identifies this direct operation of the Spirit with pure subjectivism. He even gives the illustration of how one pulpiter claims that the Spirit "triggers his mind" when his memory fails in the pulpit. It is no less subjectivism, then, when Kearley argues that the preacher is enabled by a direct leading of the Spirit to "stimulate our minds so we remember the right scriptures at the right time" (p. 44). Now, in view of what brother Miller so forcefully and capably teaches here, imagine my surprise when he stood up in a public forum to offer support to brother Kearley and his erroneous notion on the Spirit's direct guidance.

Brown Trail

A year or so ago my fellow worker, Bill Lockwood, appeared on a lectureship sponsored by the Brown Trail church of Christ in Bedford, Texas. Brother L was invited to speak on the subject pertaining to the work of the Spirit, which he

did, quoting brother Kearley unfavorably in the process. Brother Maxie Boren, knowing that several were disagreeable toward the lecture, asked if Bill and I could return the following day to participate in the open forum that was to be conducted by Johnny Ramsey. This, we were more than happy to do. For, who was to say whether or not we had come into the kingdom for such a time as this? Ignorant of the fact that Brown Trail had honored brother Kearley during the lectureship and even dedicated the lectureship book to him, yet knowing he was in attendance at the lectures, I took his book and read from it publicly during the open forum. What happened then, I suppose, was a quirk of human nature, yet inexcusable among seasoned brethren who should know better.

"When people follow the New Testament, they are following the Holy Spirit. When they do what the Holy Spirit teaches, they are being led by the Holy Spirit.... Hence, all Christians are led the same way.... All should yield to the simple teachings of the New Testament, for in doing so they are led by the Holy Spirit."

-H. Leo Boles

After brother Ramsey made some statements pertaining to the personal indwelling of the Spirit, which he defended, I stood up and pointed out that while there are certainly disagreements as to the manner of the Spirit's indwelling, the real danger that threatens our brotherhood today is the error, not of a *direct indwelling*, but that of a *direct operation*. With these statements I sought to clarify the real issue demanding attention. I then proceeded to read from Kearley's book where he argues for the Spirit's direct guidance. Prior to my statements I expressed my love and appreciation for brother Kearley and for the many contributions he has made down through the years. At the same time I sought to impress upon all present that Kearley's clamor for direct guidance was error of

the worst kind and such a position must be relinquished in the name of doctrinal purity and genuine concern for the Lord's church.

During the discussion that followed brother Kearley made a brief defense for himself. Brethren Miller and Gary Workman, who has served on the school's faculty, came to brother Kearley's rescue. This was quite amazing to me, especially in view of what brother Miller had already written on the Spirit's direct leading serving as a springboard for liberalistic onslaughts currently among the churches of Christ. I could not help but wonder on this occasion if brother Miller had ever read what he himself had written on the subject. Brother Workman was even more of a disappointment as he told me afterwards he most certainly did believe in a direct influence of the Spirit and even suggested a public oral debate between Lockwood and Roy Deaver on the subject. He further defended Kearley saying that it was merely a "non-informational" leading that Kearley teaches. Yes, and my reply is that this is precisely what the trio of Shelly, Anderson, and Beam will also tell you. The Wineskinners and Jubileers all assure us with one voice that they are not receiving further revelation or information in addition to the Bible. Nevertheless, it is still a guidance provided by the Spirit independent of and in addition to the word of God, just like Kearley's. In fact, the very suggestion from brother Workman that the Spirit provides guidance without using the means of information shows that even this brother confusedly supposes that the Spirit is providing direct guidance while circumventing man's mental faculties. This, my friend, is the epitome of subjectivism; and from subjectivism flows liberalism and pragmatism. And, brethren, need I tell you that the stream runs deep and wide? Brother Ramsey lent no support to Kearley on this occasion other than his conspicuous silence which was as loud as Texas thunder.

Concerned brethren seeking information would do well to read William Woodson's book, *Change Agents in the Churches of Christ*, wherein the author heavily documents the fact that modern-day liberals among us are relying upon an alleged direct leading of the Spirit to bolster their strategy for renewal in the

Continued on page 6.

in the form of a 72 page booklet authored by brother Wayne Coats entitled, "A Study of Holyrollerism as Presented by Lindsey Garmon and Steve Flatt at the Nashville Jubilee." Therein brother C offers devastating refutation of outright Pentecostalism as spewed forth by some prominent Jubileers. Both Garmon and Flatt make the silly clamor for spiritual gifts in the church today along with a direct leading of the Spirit beyond the revelation of the gospel. I urge the reader

Continued from page 4 ...

Our brethren are careful in stating their opposition to Calvin's "direct operation" theory of the Spirit within the heart of alien sinners in the Spirit's work of conversion. Yet, many brethren are careless in stating their views attributing enabling powers to the Spirit, who,

to obtain this booklet if for no other reason than to see the documented evidence that some of our own brethren have become drunken from sipping the Pentecostal toddies of Holyrollerism. Order from 705 Hillview, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122, and while you are at it subscribe to brother C's monthly, *The Plumblin*, wherein he exposes this same kind of foolishness on a continual basis.

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as they claim, personally and directly "acts" within them in the Spirit's work of sanctification. It was the inspired wise man Solomon who observed that, "The legs of the lame are not equal" (Prov. 26:7).

4620 King Arthur Ct.
El Paso, TX 79903

You Are Another

by Johnny Robertson

On page 4 of *Biblical Notes*, Vol. 24, #6, we read, "Our critics ... in their rejection of the actual indwelling of the Holy Spirit position, turn to a 'word only' position. Somehow, in their minds, the 'word' and the 'Holy Spirit' become identical, and all references to the indwelling of the Spirit are simply references to the fact of and influence of the written word."

The writer of the above article claims that equating the Spirit and indwelling with the influence of the word is to turn to a "word only" position. We will respond "you are another." We ask what the author says when someone is said to be "born of the Spirit"? If one asks "how" this comes about, how would the author respond? Will he lapse into a "word only" position by explaining to the querist that the Spirit causes the birth by means of the word? Will he quote Paul saying, "I have begotten you through the gospel" or from James 1:18 and say, "You were begotten by God with the word of truth?" Perhaps he will even quote from Peter's timely conclusion (1 Pet. 1:20) and say, "See here, even Peter claims that the new birth is by the word."

We ask the brother, will he summarize his answers by saying, "Yes, the

Spirit effects the new birth but He does so by means of His sword (Eph. 6:17) which is quick and sharp (Heb. 4:12)?" If he refuses to follow a similar path in which it is shown that the birth attributed to the Spirit is effected by the word, we shall cry "foul." If he does follow this line, we shall say he has taken a position which is exactly parallel to the position he decries as "word only." The exception being, when the Holy Spirit is said to affect some action in regard to salvation, the brother is satisfied to relent that it is through the medium, *modus operandi*, of the word. On the other hand when it comes to the Spirit's actions upon the Christian he cries, "No, it is directly, personally, literally the Holy Spirit, without a medium, and if you say there is a medium you are a 'word only.'" We say, "You are another." I am happy to be consistent in affirming that the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work in saving a sinner through the word, as well as saving a Christian (including the indwelling) through His word. If the latter makes me "word only" then the former makes you "another."

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Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960

Continued from page 3 ...

church, which amounts to nothing more than outright apostasy (pp. 100, 258-279). Further, Dave Miller's most recent volume, *Piloting the Straight*, contains an entire chapter wherein he demonstrates that "Calvinism and Pentecostalism—are exerting a considerable influence upon churches of Christ today." As proof our brother offers half a dozen quotations wherein the liberals specifically attribute this renewal movement to nothing other than a direct leading of the Spirit (pp. 371-390). Hear me well: the common denominator upon which is based all the current efforts of liberalism's change agency is a *direct leading of the Holy Spirit*. When we expose as erroneous the change agents' appeal to direct guidance of the Spirit we likewise squelch their subjectivism; and when we put a stop to their subjectivism, we sever the tap root upon which liberalism feeds and prospers. Herein lies the very reason why *Hammer & Tongs* exists.

While I have no doubt that brethren Miller, Workman, and Ramsey, in their more sober moments, maintain that the Spirit guides us today solely by means of God's written revelation, it is unfortunate that they become timid souls when looking into the face of one Furman Kearley—and that when God's truth needed them the most. Their courageous influence for truth and right on this occasion might have gone far in assisting Kearley to abandon his error. "For God gave us not a spirit of timidity." As it now stands Kearley clings to his fallacy of the Spirit's direct leading and inadvertently fuels the liberalistic flames that attempt to consume us. And who among us has contributed to his comfort? I will tell you, dear reader, politics and truth often make up for a deadly combination. Thus, in the interest of our own spiritual welfare, may we all ever keep before us inspiration's question, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God?"

208 E. First Street
Burkburnett, TX 76354



Hammer & Tongs

Bellview Church Of Christ

4850 Saufley Road
Pensacola, FL 32526
(904)455-7595

BISHOPS: Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, Fred Stancliff
MINISTER: Michael Hatcher
DEACONS: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Jerry Caine, Bill Crowe,
Louis Herrington, James Loy, Harold Maxey, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr. SECRETARY: Denise Mowery

A Friendly Church With A Vital Message

November 27, 1996

Stephen Wiggins
208 E. First St.
Burkburnett, TX 76354

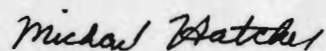
Dear Steve,

I just finished reading your article in *Hammer & Tongs* dealing with Furman Kearley and Brown Trail. I thought it was a good article and one that needed to be written. I have believed that Brown Trail needed to be exposed for years. However, I really do not understand why Dave Miller's and others from Brown Trail coming to "Kearley's rescue" was "quite amazing to" you. This has been the modus operandi of Brown Trail for years. I told you the same thing a couple of years ago. I had also told our brother and friend Bill Lockwood. Bill should have received material from Tommy Hicks (he sent it to all that signed "An Expression of Concern") after he made the statement that if "we had 10,000 men like Maxie Boren the church would go to hell in a hand basket, because he is not going to publicly take a stand against doctrinal error." (That statement was made at the Southwest Lectures in Austin, TX, on Wednesday, April 13, 1988). In the material Tommy sent out he showed how Maxie would not take a stand. It is also amazing to me that you were "ignorant of the fact that Brown Trail had honored brother Kearley during the lectureship" as this was in their advertizing of the lectures, their bulletin, and the brochures they sent out. It troubled me that Bill Lockwood would even speak on Brown Trail lectures especially when they were honoring Kearley, and had men such as Leslie McGalliard (our liberal friend from Wichita Falls), Cecil May Jr., Edward Myers and Dan Jenkins (who holds the guilty party may remarry with God's approval) on the lectureship program. Brown Trail has for years spoken correctly on subjects, but "when the rubber meets the road" they do not follow what they say, they do not take a stand. They have for years tried to play both sides of just about every question. They have had known liberals on the lectureship along with sound brethren for years. This, by itself, proves that this has been the modus operandi of Brown Trail. Additionally, why do you think Eddie Whitten, Ed Clark, Graham Cain (all former elders at Brown Trail) left Brown Trail, along with many others, and started another congregation? Have you not thought that it was strange that while Maxie Boren, Dave Miller, and Johnny Ramsey used to be on the Denton Lectures, they no longer appear; in fact, they do not even make an appearance. I likewise am sorry that Brown Trail did not take the opportunity to take a stand and believe "it is unfortunate that they become timid souls" anytime something along this line comes up. I could go on with more, but that is enough, except for this observation. There are more things that disturb and destroy the Lord's church than just the Holy Spirit issue (as important as it is).

Steve, I believe an honest man will correct a misrepresentation that he makes of someone without any delay, immediately. In the July-August 1995 (Vol. IV; No. 4) issue of *Hammer & Tongs* you wrote an article titled "Clarifying the Issue." You set forth six (6) basic erroneous positions concerning the Holy Spirit within our brotherhood. In the second position you state, "the personal presence of the Spirit operates 'in conjunction with the word' in order to 'enable' the believer to do/accomplish certain things in Christian living....Such is the position of our respected friends and brethren Roy Deaver, Mac Deaver, and Terry Hightower." I agree that this is the position of the Deavers, however this is not the position of Terry Hightower. In fact, I wrote to you on August 31, 1995 concerning fellowship of those holding the six different positions. I then attended the Denton Lectures in November 1995. During those lectures, I had the opportunity to talk directly to Terry Hightower. Because I had heard that he did not believe that position, I specifically asked Terry concerning it. He denied holding such a position, and continues to deny such. While I do not agree with Terry concerning his views on the Holy Spirit's indwelling, it was a misrepresentation of Terry to place him in that category. Additionally, Terry has agreed to help anyone (specifically Jerry Moffitt) in a debate against the Deavers concerning this matter. I have not written to you on this matter previously because I had been told that you knew the mistake and that a correction was going in *Hammer & Tongs*. I can certainly understand a misrepresentation of anyone, but can especially understand it concerning Terry on this subject. At the time you wrote the article, I likewise thought Terry held that view. However, what I cannot understand is why there has not been a correction. I have been told (if I am wrong, please let me know and I will certainly apologize) that you were informed of the misrepresentation many months ago. Thus, for the past several issues, when I receive *Hammer & Tongs* the first thing I look for is the correction. So far, unless I have missed it, it has not appeared. Why would you allow a misrepresentation of this nature of a brother in Christ to continue to stand? I believe souls can and will be lost for not correcting misrepresentations such as this. Please make an immediate correction of this! Do not wait!

Steve, I have not meant to sound harsh in this letter, although I know it might have. Please accept it in the spirit in which it has been written. I have no animosity toward you or Bill Lockwood concerning these matters. I might not understand everything concerning these matters, but that is not necessary. I pray that everyone in Burk is doing well.

Fraternally,



Michael Hatcher

FORT WORTH LECTURESHIP

- JAN. 12-15, 1997

Coming soon...a great spiritual feast! **The 20th Annual Fort Worth Lectureship**, scheduled for **January 12-15, 1997**, the Lord willing.

This year's theme is, **"THE GREAT SALVATION."** We believe it is going to be one of the very best we've ever had, and we do hope and pray that brethren in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex, and from near and far will attend!

Brother **Avon Malone** will be the featured speaker to open the Lectureship on Sunday night, Jan. 12th, at 8 p.m. Avon is one of the great preachers of our time. For Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights the speakers will be **Frank Chesser, Shelton Gibbs III, Tom Holland, Dave Miller, Paul Sain, and Johnny Ramsey**. Other very capable preachers will speak during the three days of the Lectureship...**Jerry Ball, Robert Waller, Stan Harvey, Owen Cosgrove, Perry B. Cotham, B.J. Clark, Robert Taylor, Jr., David Sain, G.P. Holt, Phil Davis, Gary Workman, Roy Deaver, and Don Simpson**. Speakers for the Ladies' Classes will be **Lottie Beth Hobbs, Irene Taylor, and Sunny Workman**. We will also have two Panel Discussions, with participants **Darrell Conley, Eddie Parrish, Don Walker, Gary Fallis, Robert Dodson, Perry Hall, Gary Summers, Dan Flournoy, Asa Keele, and Richard Massey**. **Hardeman Nichols and Roy Lanier, Jr.** will conduct an "Open Forum" on Tuesday.?

-Maxie B. Boren

1979 - Mid-America Evangelism Workshop - Indianapolis

Marvin Phillips, Abe Miller, Joe Beam, John Clayton, David Powers, G.P. Holt

1981 - Midwest Evangelism Seminar - Chicago

Jerry Jones, Humphrey Foutz, Tom Jones, Chuck Lucas, Kip McKean, Abe Miller, Marvin Phillips, Richard Rogers, Nick Young, G.P. Holt

1981 - Mid-American Evangelism Workshop - Indianapolis

Nick Young, Wayne Kilpatrick, Jeff Walling, Jerry Jones, Jimmy Allen, G.P. Holt

1982 - Mid-American Evangelism Workshop - Indianapolis

Jerry Jones, Rubel Shelly, Charles Hodge, Marvin Phillips, G.P. Holt

1983 - Midwest Evangelism Seminar - Chicago

Jerry Jones, Tom Jones, Roger Lamb, Reuel Lemmons, Chuck Lucas, Kip McKean, Nick Young, G.P. Holt

1983 Mid-America Evangelism Workshop - Indianapolis

Oliver Rogers, Nick Young, Jeff Walling, Richard Hostetler, Jerry Jones, and G.P. Holt.

1984 Mid-America Evangelism Workshop - Indianapolis

Richard Rogers, Nick Young, Oliver Rogers, Rubel Shelly, Gary Beauchamp, Harold Hazelip, G.P. Holt

1987 Mid-American Evangelism Workshop - Indianapolis

Reuel Lemmons, Tex Williams, Don McLaughlin, Mike Cope, Harold Hazelip, G.P. Holt

1991 Mid-America Evangelism Workshop - Indianapolis

Jerry Jones, Keith Lancaster, Max Lucado, Randy Mayeux, Don McLaughlin, Doug Parsons, Landon Saunders, Rubel Shelly, Jeff Walling, Jim Woodroof, G.P. Holt

1991 Jubilee - Nashville

Max Lucado, Randy Mayeux, Gayle Napier, Joe Beam, Mike Cope, Terry Rush, Steve Flatt, G.P. Holt

1993 Jubilee - Nashville

Willard Tate, Prentice Meador, LaGard Smith, Joe Beam, Buddy Bell, G.P. Holt

1994 Heartland (formerly Mid-America Evangelism Workshop)

Rubel Shelly, Marvin Phillips, Jeff Walling, G.P. Holt. Also a G.P. Holt dinner

1996 - Article in Defender Magazine re: Meetings in the city of Cookeville about G.P. Holt and Steve Flatt holding meetings at one of the congregations in Cookeville. April 1996 Defender p. 7.

1996 - June Issue of Contending For The Faith re: brethren Holt and Flatt holding meetings in Cookeville. Page 2 editorial and pp. 12, 13 which shows ad run a Cookeville area newspaper sponsored by a number of churches and individuals in the Cookeville area.

DAVE MILLERS'
"PILOTING THE STRAIT"

The above mentioned book is worthy to be read and digested by faithful Christians everywhere. It is very readable and often directed to needed points which the brotherhood as a whole needs to think about. I cannot say enough about the impact which this book can have if elders and faithful brethren will take the time to find out what is really going on in the brotherhood.

One area covered by Dave is the move to find ways to fellowship with denominations. Those who are labeled as change agents are trying to reshape our attitudes toward those in denominational bodies. They would wish for us to move from not condemning to a more "loving attitude." What they fail to see is, whether we condemn or not is left up to God, not us. The issue of love as God reveals it is to do what He commands (John 14:15). Some would like us to forget that.

I was able some time back to hear a tape of a sermon delivered by Tom Holland on the "Liberal Agenda." He made four powerful points about what the liberals are doing. One of his major points was like that of Dave's concerning fellowshipping the denominations. I raise this point to let us know that we are hearing some good lessons and receiving good materials which can help us to turn back the tide toward liberalism among the Lord's people.

What would really help in this battle is for men like Tom and Dave to take heed to what they preach to others and practice the same thing themselves. Tom and Dave both appear on lectureships with the very men they condemn. How can I argue that change agents are bad for the brotherhood, then appear with them on lectureships? The cause of Christ would be better served if all of these men who are now on the bandwagon against change agents would take a real stand.

Am I to believe that Paul would have opposed the false teachers in Jerusalem in Acts 15, and then go to the region of Galatia and appear with these same men for the "cause of Christ?" Paul and Peter had to get some personal differences cleared up real quick (Galatians 2:11). Doctrinal differences would demand even more of our attention. Paul commanded us all to mark those who create division by preaching a gospel different than the one the apostles preached. (Romans 16:17).

Are the change agents among us preaching a different gospel? To ask this question is to answer it. Why then would I lend my support by my appearance to these men who are preaching a different gospel? What real purpose would have been served by Nehemiah coming off the walls and meeting with the enemies on the plains of Ono? Therein lies the real problem. We are losing sight of who the enemy is. Paul^s said the enemy of the cross of Christ was those who no longer walked by the same rule.

I commend Dave's book, but not his actions. Know the difference!

---CHARLES BLAIR

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 M,D,R 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

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Ken:

No, I had not seen this, but, of course, it is very recent (last Friday). I have read it over and I have some observations: I'm glad to see that brother Miller has finally addressed the accusations many have made against him for a long time. Knowing that my comments will not please him or his defenders, nevertheless, I find it to be a very weak and self-serving statement. Some may even suggest that I will not be satisfied unless "he crawls on broken glass" in penitence. While I require no such thing, I do wish he had forthrightly repented of (instead of denying) his errors.

1. 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 wilfully ignorant. He obviously does not think well of many of us.

2. Since Brown Trail "had the right" to do the 1990 R/R because the elders themselves instigated it (per his claim), would Brown Trail "have the right" to allow women to lead prayers or preach in mixed adult assemblies if the elders themselves instigated it? To argue that a practice is right merely because fallible elders "instigate it" is very dangerous ground.

3. I don't know about other "critics," but I have not defined Dave's R/R doctrine for him in what I have written about him (Bellview Lectures book on Leadership, 1997). I simply quoted him and let him define what he believes and advocates concerning the practice. I believe he has erected a straw man here, of which he can easily dispose, of course.

4. I have never suggested (nor have I seen it suggested by others) that Dave Miller believes in the practice of "term limits" or stated terms for elders, at which time they regularly must submit to the R/R procedure. Another straw man.

5. If he does not believe in any procedure that removes qualified men from the eldership, why did he favor a procedure that could do just that? In the "Rationale" (issued by the Brown Trail R/R committee, of which brother Miller was a part), written to help "sell" the congregation on the R/R program it implemented in 1990, we read the following: "Shepherds cannot lead where sheep will not follow. Even if a man is technically qualified to be an elder, if the membership where he attends does not perceive him as a leader whom they respect and trust, he cannot shepherd effectively." The admission that an elder who is qualified may be removed simply because a sufficient number of members choose not to follow him is glaring.

6. Brother Miller cites Acts 6:3 as if it favors his R/R case. All this passage does is furnish the principle that the whole congregation is to be involved in the selection of elders and/or deacons. One searches it in vain to find some intricate reevaluation process of men who were already selected, appointed, and serving. Acts 6:3 does not help his cause.

7. To use 1 Tim. 5:17-20 as authority for the R/R practice is to engage in eisegesis rather than exegesis. To say that a man should be removed because "25% of the congregation doesn't want to follow him" or "doesn't like him" is not in this passage or any other. 1 Tim. 5:17-20 doesn't help his case. Obviously, brother Miller would have used additional passages to justify the 1990 R/R process if he could have found them.

8. To accuse those who dare question brother Miller's advocacy of R/R as thereby pursuing a "pet hobby" is purely pejorative terminology, intended to bias uninformed readers against those who sincerely question his doctrine. The hurling of such terminology has for years been a favorite ploy of liberals, and it is certainly unworthy of the author of the fine book, *Piloting the Straits*.

9. It is not we who deny the existence of Scriptural authority for the R/R process who tamper with the authority of elders. Rather, those (whether or not they are elders at the time) who form committees (such as brother Miller was a part of) are those who tamper with the authority of elders by becoming de facto elderships while the R/R procedure runs its course. The existing elderships and their respective congregations in such cases must subject themselves to such committees for the plan to operate.

10. If brother Miller was not involved in the 2002 R/R procedure at Brown Trail, why did he help Maxie Boren (Brown Trail preacher at the time) defend the practice to brother Dub Mowery (nativeheritage@peoplepc.com), who journeyed all the way from Drumright, OK (near Tulsa, where he preached at the time) to Brown Trail (about 300 miles) to express his objections to and concerns over their 2002 version of R/R?

11. Brother Miller seeks to place the Brown Trail practice of R/R in the realm of "expediency." The appeal to "expediency," however, overlooks an elementary principle of Biblical hermeneutics: Scriptural authorization must precede expediency. No matter can be expedient unless it is first authorized, and the authorization for this practice has not been produced.

12. Why is brother Miller "astounded" that an event that occurred 15 years ago could cause such a "stir"? Is he not aware that the mere passage of time does not convert sin to righteousness or error to Truth? Repentance, rather than the passing of time, is necessary for correction and forgiveness. He has likely preached this principle to others through the years.

13. Has brother Miller really not "preached or promoted" this practice since 1990? Brethren Gary Summers and David Watson have observed his influence encouraging this practice in congregations near them in recent years, contrary to his disclaimer.

14. If brother Everett Chambers and his cousin "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)," how did their actions help him get into and stay in the U.S.? Did they not have to go through some sort of wedding ceremony and did they not have to affix their signatures to an application for a wedding license and then do the same on a marriage certificate? Were not these actions on the part of both of them actions which indicate "that they actually intended to be married," even though their intent in doing so was a conspiracy to deceive the authorities? Was not the full intent of both of them to become legally married so as to enable him to enter and remain in the U.S.?

15. Is brother Miller implying in the statement above that a man and a woman are not married at the time they are pronounced husband and wife, but that they must "live together" before they become married? If, after being pronounced "husband and wife" in the eyes of both civil and Divine law, on the way from the wedding site to the place of their initial act of intimacy, the husband dies of a heart

attack, were they never married?

16. That the woman had been married before and was not eligible to remarry does not alter the fact of their conspiratorial intent. Is brother Miller attempting to argue that had she been eligible to marry, the deception would have been justified?

17. Whether or not brother Chambers "remains unmarried to this day" is not the issue. The issue is, does brother Miller believe/teach that brother Chambers has a Scriptural right to remarry?

18. So far as I know, neither brother Chambers nor his cousin whom he married was kidnapped or drugged and therefore pronounced "husband and wife" against their wills or while in a drugged stupor. They were quite conscious of what they were doing, fully intending deceptively (yet nonetheless legally) to marry each other. Nor were they actors in a movie, but they deceptively "acted out" a live drama, with full intent to marry so as to deceive the U.S. Government.

19. I have never suggested or heard anyone suggest that brother Miller has so "abandoned Bible teaching on M,D,R" that he is "out counseling hundreds of people to remarry." If anyone is doing so, he should stop. Also, if anyone is doing so, let brother Miller produce the evidence of such or stop his accusation.

20. It is good to see brother Miller's forthright declaration of his position on who is eligible to marry, divorce, and remarry. However, he then diminishes the impact of that position statement with the following: "Yet, this extremely rare, unusual, unique situation is being held up as a 'false doctrine that threatens to undermine the very foundations of marriage!'" It matters not how "extremely rare, unusual, unique" the situation with brother Chambers may have been and may still be. If anyone (including brother Miller) justifies and excuses this practice in one person, then he must logically and consistently do so for all persons. If brother Chambers did what brother Miller says he did (legally married his cousin), and if he did it for the reason brother Miller says he did it (to defraud the U.S. Government, lying in order to circumvent U.S. immigration law), and if, as brother Miller believes, brother Chambers and his cousin were not really married because of their lack of "intent," then "the very foundations of marriage" are indeed thereby threatened.

21. Brother Miller refers to those who have dared challenge his strange MDR position relative to brother Chambers as "talebearers of the brotherhood." Would liberals, whose errors he exposed so well in *Piloting the Straits*, be accurate in characterizing him as a "talebearer of the brotherhood"? I doubt that he would think so. Neither do I believe that he is accurate or fair in thus characterizing those who are not content to let his errors pass.

Brother Miller's statement will doubtless be more than sufficient for those who have defended him through the years. They will now begin saying that he has "cleared up" and "corrected" all of those accusations. However, for my part, there are still many nagging questions left unanswered.

I'd like to see the reactions of others, now that I have expressed mine.

Dub