

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

DUB MOWERY AND DAVE MILLER 2002 EMAIL EXCHANGE

I verify that the correspondence to follow is the actual posts that I made to the online discussion list in which I was a member. The group discussion list was overseen by brethren Gil Yoder & Ron Cosby. It was known as: LURlist, which meant: *Let Us Reason* discussion list. ***I have not corrected any grammatical errors or misspelled words.*** Brother Dave Miller's comments have not been altered in any way, but are presented exactly as he sent them to me.

At the time that brother Miller and I were corresponding in 2002 by email he gave me permission to post our correspondence on LURlist.

/s/Dub Mowery

[LURlist] False doctrine taught Message List

Mon Jul 8, 2002 5:02 pm

Reply | Forward Message #5043 of 18053 < Prev | Next >

Re: [LURlist] False doctrine taught

In relation to the subject concerning brother Dave Miller. I contacted both him and brother Eddie Whitten about the accusation brought to the list by Curtis Willis (referred to as "Chief" Willis) who has been a student at the Brown Trail preachers' school. Brother Whitten answered my e-mail Sunday night. He was aware of some problems at Brown Trail, but did not know all of the pertinent details. Eddie left today on speaking engagements and will not be able to respond further on this matter until he returns on or about July 12th.

From brother Dave Miller's response in two e-mails to me, he related the following: He was not fired by the elders of the Brown Trail church of Christ. In fact, the eldership has ask him to continue to on *The Truth In Love*, in which he has agreed to do for the time being. He said that he had been ready for a change and the offer by brother Bert Thompson was just too

good to turn down. Even though the eldership as a collective body requested that he stay, he decided it best to leave because of a difference between him and three of the elders (two of them have resigned).

I ask him about Everett Chambers, to whom Curtis Willis had reference. Brother Miller related that Everett had come out of the Boston movement, but had renounced that movement and graduated from the Brown Trail school of preaching several years ago. After he graduated, it came to light that before he came to Brown Trail he had conspired with his relative to gain citizenship by faking their marriage with the understanding that once citizenship was achieved, the "marriage" would be legally dissolved. The elders looked into the situation once it came to light, found that Everett had repented, and decided to keep him on the staff. He was later made dean of students and served with distinction until his departure from Brown Trail in September last year. While associated with the Brown Trail congregation Everett Chambers served as a worker on the T. V. program. He was not the director.

The above comments are derived from my corresponding with Dave Miller. A question might come up for us all, when should be use a brother or sister in Christ who has sinned, but later repented? In our area there was a question about using a woman at a youth came[p] who had had a crafts class for the young people. She had served in that capacity for several years. However, between last summer and this summer she had "ran off" from her husband with another man. Later she returned to her husband and went before the congregation in which she is a member. Those directing the camp session in which she served felt that since she had returned to her husband and went before the church, they would allow her to continue to have a craft class. Some brethren in the area did not think that she should serve under the circumstances. My wife and I had served

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

THE “INCONSISTENCY ARGUMENT”

Certain ones think the Bible teaches that inconsistent conduct on the part of some church members in dealing with their brethren is Scriptural grounds for other church members to fellowship erring unrepentant brethren. It reminds us of children who are out of sorts with each other. Tom says to Jim, “You’re a skunk.” Jim’s retort to Tom is, “You’re another one.” Mind you it would not do for only one of the boys to be a skunk. But as long as each boy knew the other was a skunk, they were content to remain in fellowship as they continued to play—*unified in the thought that each boy is a “skunk.”*

The previous view implies that all beliefs are indifferent and/or matters of opinion. But, it stands in opposition to the Truth set out in John 12:48 and Col. 3:25. There is a most tortuous system of Biblical interpretation (if it may be called that). This is the case because it destroys the self-evident meaning of 2 John 9-11, Eph. 5:11 and like Scriptures. Thus, we affirm that *inconsistent actions fail to change the meaning and force of Col. 3:17, Rom. 10:17, 2 Cor. 5:7, et al.*

This false view has forced those who believe it into the erroneous, unenviable and sad position of having to determine how much error (possibly the nature of it and who is guilty of it) God will accept before He considers a church member guilty of sin. Of course, this means that weak and fallible mortals must decide the amount of error, etc. that is too much for God to fellowship. This false view places unity before and above the Scriptural view that Bible authority for an action must exist, is superior to and precedes the unity of believers regarding that action (2 Tim. 2:15; Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 3:16; Gal. 6:16; John 12:48). Further, this “inconsistency argument” would never have been dreamed up except for the fact that some brethren are seeking to justify sin in other brethren’s lives as they remain in fellowship with them while perpetuating their own agendas.

Though many brethren refuse to see it, they have embraced the very premise long espoused by every liberal (those who loose men from what God in the Bible has bound on them). From the liberals in the church of the 19th Century, to Carl Ketcherside and his ilk in the middle of the 20th Century, down to Max Lucado and his contemporaries today—every stripe of liberal has sought to justify man in his sins. And, it is the error governing all of those brethren who continue to fellowship Stan Crowley, Dave Miller and their friends. Their attitude is—if having Bible authority for what we believe and practice thwarts our fellowship with certain erring brethren, we will reject the necessity of having Bible authority for our beliefs and practices in order to have some sort of “unity”—in reality union. Thus, they seek to justify themselves in fellowshiping erring brethren by pointing out and dwelling on the inconsistent acts of others (whether real, falsely perceived, or by them invented) as they continue to have and promote their all important “skunk unity”.

—David P. Brown, Editor

(Continued from page One)

as Bible class teachers for the past two years. We declined to serve in that capacity because of the cloud that hovered over the situation. We had mixed emotions about whether or not we should or should not serve under the circumstances. The way I looked at it, just as one who is considered as an elder or deacons must first prove them self, I felt that it was too soon to put this woman in a position of influence over young people.

Dub Mowery

[LURlist] Re: Dave Miller's Soundness? Message List
Thu Jul 11, 2002 9:29 am

Reply | Forward Message #5068 of 18053

Sadly, what brother Offord brought out about the Brown Trail church of Christ is true. This came to light to me last night in correspondence with brother Dub McClish. In fact, brother McClish points out in an e-mail to me that the Brown Trail congregation is now going through the process of reaffirming the five remaining elders over the controversy related to brother Dave Miller. They had seven elders and two resigned over the controversy. One who remains of the five also wanted to fire Dave as well as the two who resigned.

I still do not know the specifics about Dave firing all of the teachers of the Brown Trail Preacher's School except one, in which the elders fired that last one. Brother Maxie Boren, the preacher for the Brown Trail congregation, is now the temporary director of the school. Part time instructors include: Hardeman Nichols, Avon Malone, Robert Dodson, etc.

I personally have believed Dave to have been a sound preacher. However, this reaffirming of elders causes we to have strong reservation about that. I shall attempt to correspond with Dave about the reaffirming of elders. Also, I still do not know whether the Jamaican Everett Chambers remarried or not. His marriage to a cousin for the purpose of getting into this country certainly was a violation of the scriptures. After getting the U. S. citizenship the farce marriage was dissolved in a divorce. I understand that he repented of that, but did he remain single after that?

Dub Mowery

Re: [LURlist] Dave Miller's soundness Message List

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Fri Jul 12, 2002 7:12 am

Reply | Forward Message #5085 of 18053<

List,

Below is the answers given unto me by brother Miller concerning two of the questions that I ask of him. The third question had to do with whether or not he taught and/or upheld the practice of congregations "reaffirming" their elders every three or four years. Before posting his answer I ask brother Miller for further clarification of his position on the practice of "reaffirming elders."

Below are the specific questions that I ask of brother Dave Miller: You encouraged me to ask further questions if I wished. I appreciate your openness in this matter. Dave, I have at least three inquiries. (1) Did Everett Chambers report to the proper federal authorities about the marriage to his relative? In other words, did he later report truthfully the circumstances of his getting married "on paper" for the sole purpose of entering into the United States? (2) Did Everett remarry after dissolving the marriage between him and his relative? (3) Have you taught and/or supported the practice of "elder reaffirmation"? If so, by what Biblical authority can that practice be justified? And if you believe that it can be justified, then please elaborate from a scriptural standpoint.

I am withholding his answer to my third question until he replies to my request for clarification of his position on that matter.

Dub Mowery

Dub--

1. Regarding Everett Chambers, my understanding at the time was that the elders encouraged Everett to clarify things with the immigration authorities and that he sought counsel on the matter and resolved the situation. Apparently, his circumstances did not fit the usual case of fraud. For example, they check to see if money changed hands. None did. So as far as I am aware, he did what was necessary to show repentance.

2. No, Everett did not remarry and is even now still single. His relative has since died.

I hope these clarifications help.

Your brother,

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Dave

[LURlist] Fw: Re: SOME MORE QUESTIONS

Message List Fri Jul 12, 2002 12:24 pm

Reply | Forward Message #5107 of 18053

Brethren,

I am seeking to meet with brother Dave Miller concerning the accusations against him. If possible, I will have one other brother from the metropolis to be with me at that time. In my opinion, brother Miller has been effective in speaking out against the liberal movement within the brotherhood. He, as well as you and me, is not perfect. Concerning my third question to him is as follows: (3) Have you taught and/or supported the practice of "elder reaffirmation"? If so, by what Biblical authority can that practice be justified? And if you believe that it can be justified, then please elaborate from a scriptural standpoint." In relation to that question, I inquired: Please elaborate as to whether you think that elders should be reaffirmed every so often by a vote of the members of their congregation.<<

Dave Miller's answer:

>>No, I do not believe that elders should be reaffirmed every so often by a vote of the members. However, do elders (or preachers for that matter) have the authority from God to request that the members indicate their approval or disapproval of his service? Does he have the right to make his own decision as to whether he will remain or resign based upon how the members feel about him?<<

Dub Mowery:

>> I certainly do not believe "once an elder always an elder". In other words, if a brother ceases to be qualified then he should step down. Or, if a brother's health and/or age hinders him from being an effective elder then he also should step down.<<

Dave Miller replies:

>>My longtime experience has been that the very brother who ceases to be qualified refuses to step down. Does the congregation have no recourse? If they installed him, do they not have the right to remove him based on 1 Tim. 5?<<

Dub Mowery:

>> However, I fail to see how the practice of some congregation in allowing the membership to vote on the men serving as elders as to whether or not those men should continue as elders or to vote them out can be substantiated by the scriptures. Liberal brethren could use this means to get rid of godly elders. It is my conviction that if a brother serving as an elder teaches and upholds false doctrine, etc. then a congregation has the right to remove that brother from serving in that capacity. However, I am not aware of the congregation voting on whether or not their present elders continue to serve as elders.<<

Dave Miller replies:

>>I agree generally with what you are saying. However, where in the Scriptures do you find that if an elder teaches and upholds false doctrine, then a congregation has the right to remove that brother from serving? Would not the same passages authorize removing a man who is no longer qualified? Why would a man wish to continue to serve as a shepherd in a congregation where a sizeable percentage of the congregation does not want him to serve? As a preacher, I would not hesitate to leave. Even if those people are incorrect in their assessment and will answer to God for wrongfully wanting a man removed, how could a

man serve effectively in such a situation? If Acts 6:3 has any relevance to the selection of church officers, and the principle is that the members are to look out from among themselves, then if that same membership (or if that membership has so changed that it is no longer the membership that originally selected a man) would no longer look out from among themselves and select a particular man, why would he wish to continue to serve? It seems to me that before we can even discuss whether it is scriptural to remove an elder from the eldership, we must ascertain what the Scriptures teach with regard to selecting men in the first place. Logically, if a selection method is scriptural, the same method would be scriptural for the reverse, i.e., removal.<<

Dave Miller continues:

>>I do not claim to have all the truth on this matter. I would appreciate being taught on the subject. What surprises me is the lack of Bible support given for the assertions that are often made. Simply saying, "the liberals could get rid of godly elders" is no proof. If liberals take over a congregation, the godly elders will be effectively neutralized whether they remain in office or not. The problem is not with the matter of "reaffirmation" or removal; the problem is in the members going liberal! The problem lies in the fact that they are wrong in their attitude toward the conservative elder.<<

Dub Mowery:

>>Dave, would it be alright for me to post your comments in answering my questions on LURlist. You are a subject of discussion on that list. It would at least help clear up some questions on the mind of a host of brethren.<<

Dave Miller answers:

>>Yes, it's okay to post my comments. I would simply request that you do so with discretion, creating as little division as possible. I've been under such attack lately, that I have been wishing I could low key myself and be left alone for awhile to heal. The more people talk about me, the more the furor spreads and the more misrepresentation and rumor reigns. I honestly believe that Satan is currently attempting to assassinate my character and reputation with a view toward hampering my work in the kingdom and I believe he's using brethren to do his bidding. Some brethren, for whatever reason, wish to poke into every nook and cranny of my life in hopes of sniffing out some even minor viewpoint in order to exploit it and harm me. I wonder if they could stand up to similar scrutiny if applied to their life? Dub, I believe you to be genuine and sincere in your attempts to resolve differences between brethren. Thank you for not believing the worst about me and being willing to go to the source rather than accept hearsay. Few have done so. May God bless you in your work for Him.<<

Dub Mowery here:

>>Brethren, again I would request that, at this time, we cease discussing this matter until I have an opportunity to make arrangements for a visit with this brother in Christ. It has been and remains my effort to reach out to brother Miller. But at the same time, not to compromise truth for him or for anyone else. Your prayers and discretion concerning brother Miller and the problems at the Brown Trail congregation.<<

Re: [LURlist] Fw: Re: SOME MORE QUESTIONS
Message List Sat Jul 13, 2002 8:44 am

Reply | Forward **Message #5138** of 18053

I am going down to the Dallas/Ft. Worth area this next week for the purpose of visiting (interviewing) as many brethren of the Brown Trail church of Christ and the Brown Trail Preachers' School as possible. I have a "pretty tight schedule" already for this next week. It is not my purpose to take sides in their sordid situation. Brother Dave Miller is wrong concerning his upholding the "reevaluation of elders" concept. It is not my purpose in making the trip to simply support one side of their dispute over the other. My desire is to reach out to all of the brethren involved. Unless something is done quickly, I fear that souls will be lost. Now we can stand on the sidelines and say what ought to be or ought not to be done. I am acting on my own in pursuing this matter.

Others can be involved in reaching out as well. Brethren, we need to pray about this matter rather than to argue back and forth about it, especially when we do not know all the facts. I solicit your prayers for those brethren and for my effort to reach out to them. It is also my earnest prayer that some of you will put forth an effort to reach out to these brethren. However, we cannot afford to compromise on matters of a "thus saith the Lord", regardless of who is at fault. There may be some fault on both sides in this matter. The Brown Trail church of Christ has in the past been known for being a sound congregation. It is my prayer that it will be known for being sound in the future. Nevertheless, we must uphold truth regardless of who is at fault.

Dub Mowery
Broadway church of Christ
Box 3
Drumright, OK 74030
(918) 352-2208

[LURlist] The Brown Trail congregation & Dave Miller Message List Thu Jul 18, 2002 10:57 pm

[<Prev Topic](#) | [Next Topic](#)>

Reply | Forward **Message #5258** of 18053

Yesterday (Wednesday, July 17th) I met with **Maxie Boren** and **Dave Miller**. Also, I had a telephone conversation with one student of the Brown Trail Preachers' School plus one of the elders and one other individual in whom I do not wish to name. The more that I dug into the happenings related to the Brown Trail congregation, it became obvious to me that several mistakes have been made. I do not want to personally go into detail about any individual involved. However, I will mention Dave. He is in the process of moving to Alabama to work with brother **Bert Thompson**. Therefore, he is no longer a part of the Brown Trail congregation. It is my conviction that Dave made some mistakes in relation to the events that have transpired at Brown Trail. On the other hand, many false rumors relating to him have been repeated without checking them out.

Us gospel preachers can be just as guilty as anyone else is spreading unfounded rumors. It seems that many of the conflicts developed over personalities, differences of opinion and judgement. However, there is one thing in particular in which I am convinced that that congregation has erred in a matter of a "thus saith the Lord." That matter is in the reaffirmation of elders. I strongly stressed to both Maxie and Dave that the scripture taught that if an elder sinned to rebuke him before two or three witnesses. And those that sin are to be rebuked before all (I Tim. 5:19-20). The same congregation that selects men to

serve as their elders, according to the scriptural qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11), can reject any elder, who ceases to be qualified, from continuing to serve in that capacity.

I have choice not to go into detail about the various problems in which I have learned about. After all, there is usually two sides to any story. Also, it is my conviction that unnecessary harm can be involved in going into details and naming names. Therefore, other than those mentioned above, I have chosen to back off and pray that the brethren at Brown Trail can quickly settle their differences.

Dub Mowery

[LURlist] Check out Brown Trail Truth Message List Tue Jul 23, 2002 11:55 am

Reply | Forward **Message #5329** of 180

Re: [LURlist] Check out Brown Trail Truth

My whole purpose in pursuing the problems concerning Brown Trail and Dave Miller was to simply learn the truth regardless of who was at fault. In making a special trip last week to Bedford, Texas was to learn as much as possible first hand concerning their problems and about the rumors related thereof. My two and one half hour meeting with Maxie Boren and Dave Miller revealed a gross error on their part and the four men still serving as elders. That violation of the scriptures was the practice of reevaluating the elders by a popular vote of 75% of the congregation. Both Dave and Maxie defended the reevaluating of elders, although they shied away from that terminology. Maxie told me that he encouraged the elders to go through the process of having a 75% approval of the congregation to continue serving as elders. I tried to reason with the two of them by pointing out that that practice was not taught in the scripture. Instead, the scripture gives specific instruction about receiving an accusation against an elder (I Tim. 5:19-20). An elder who becomes disqualified should step down from serving in that capacity. However, many refuse to do so! Therefore, the congregation that selected them when they met the qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), has the right and responsibility to reject them as elders when they no longer meet those qualifications. I called one of their elders (Bobby Watts) and pleaded with him to stop the process of the reevaluation. He simply said words to this effect, "Everything will be settled by Sunday night!" (He was referring to last Sunday night, July 21st).

It seems that there is more involved than the reevaluation of elders. Nevertheless, I know that Maxie, Dave, and the four remaining elders are in error in upholding and using the reevaluation process. All of these men need to repent of this unscriptural method of retaining elders. Those men should resign as elders and allow the Brown Trail congregation to find peace and harmony within the membership and to appoint elders in a scriptural manner that will not be divisive in nature. In addition to visiting with the two preachers mentioned above and the one elder, three other individuals in whom I choose not to name, and one student of the Brown Trail Preachers' School communicated with me. Also, there is the web site **Brown Trail Truth** that provided additional information concerning the matter. Let us pray that that congregation will return to being a sound congregation as it was known years ago.

Dub Mowery
Online

[LURlist] Check out Brown Trail Truth Message List
Tue Jul 23, 2002 3:52 pm
Reply| Forward Message #5333 of 18053

Re: [LURlist] Check out Brown Trail Truth
Earl Gieseke wrote:

Dub, Thanks for the website. One interesting statement Dave Miller made which caught my attention was when he wrote: "In the mean time, I honestly believe that God is nudging me to move." [Letter of April 24, 2002] Since I never was privileged to attend a school to "learn to preach," I wonder how God nudges people.

Yes, brother Earl, I caught that expression myself. With so many claiming to be lead by the Holy Spirit (in a supernatural way), brethren who do not accept that false concept should

avoid such expressions. Any of us might use terminology that might be misunderstood. Therefore, we should avoid the use of such that might be misleading. Again, my sole purpose in looking into this matter was to learn the truth concerning the rumors and the problems at Brown Trail. I do not delight in what I found out.

—Dave Miller
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Is the Christian Obligated to Forgive the Sinner Who Will Not Repent?

Curtis A. Cates

The above question has often been asked this scribe. Every accountable being at times sins against others; some sin publicly even against the church. Clearly, those who repent and ask for forgiveness are to be fully forgiven. But, not everyone repents and asks for forgiveness. Does God require us to forgive the impenitent?

What saith the Scriptures? One's opinion and sentiment often differs from Holy Writ. Does one's own forgiveness depend upon his forgiving the impenitent? **"For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"** (Matt. 5:14,15). Does this include forgiving one who refuses to repent?

God cannot forgive one who does not repent. He refuses to hear one who refuses to forsake and confess his sin (Psalm. 66:18; Ezek. 33:11); if the sinner will confess and turn from his sin, God will hear (1 Kings 8:35, 36; Luke 15:17-24; Acts 2:38). When was Ananias [Simon"—Editor] forgiven (Acts 8:22-24)? the Ephesians (Rev. 2:5)?

Can the Christian do what God cannot do? In individual, personal matters between you and another (in which you strive to resolve the difference), if the brother will not repent, **"let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican"** (Matt. 18:15-17).

Without possible dispute are Christ's words, **"Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him"** (Luke 17:3, 4). When were the Corinthians commanded to forgive and comfort the man in adultery? The necessary implication is that the man had repented between the command to withdraw from him and the time when they were to forgive him (1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:5-

11).

But, some may object thus: Does this not demonstrate a lack of love for our brother, or is it not to carry a grudge? Our Father loves the impenitent supremely, certainly not carrying a grudge; yet, He refuses to forgive the rebellious one, who will not repent. Did not Jesus pray (as did Stephen) for His murderers to be forgiven? For them to have been forgiven while still impenitent would mean that man universally can be saved while refusing to repent. The penitent, obedient ones on Pentecost of Acts 2:37-41 received answer to Christ's prayer; only then were they forgiven.

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Does this mean that one can have a mean, unforgiving spirit? Absolutely not! The faithful child of God has the spirit of forgiveness, anxious for one who has offended him to repent (Matt. 18:15; Luke 17:3, 4). Contrast the self-righteous elder brother (Luke 15:25ff.). What is real forgiveness? **“And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more”** (Heb. 10:17); **“love covereth a multitude of sins”** (1 Peter 4:8). How sad to appear in judgment not having forgiven a penitent child of God who injures us! How can God show his mercy (Matt. 6:14, 15)?

And, how sad, on the other hand, for the erring child of God to sin publicly, hurting the name of the Lord and His body, and never to acknowledge the sin, refusing to repent and confess it (James 5:16)! How sad for an individual to sin against a brother and expect to go to heaven, his never having corrected the sin (Matt. 18:15-17; Luke 17:3,4).

—9194 Lakeside Drive
Olive Branch, MS 38654



WHEN GOD WON'T HEAR

Alton W. Fonville

To teach a vital lesson from the Bible, many times we use a “catchy phrase” in order to get the attention of our readers. The title is such a phrase, and it speaks of a real time, of which every Christian needs to be made aware.

We do not like to think of our Heavenly Father ever refusing to hear our prayers, but that is not realistic. People in all walks of life and in all kinds of situations have appealed to God in prayer when the going was “rough.” And, it is quite comforting to know that we have a Father who hears His “faithful children” when they pray. Herein is the “catch.”

Throughout the Bible we can see the teachings for “children” to pray to their Heavenly Father. He has promised to hear, because He is not far from anyone of them. Our Lord Jesus gave instructions for what and how to pray, as well as demonstrated it for us. One of His most fervent prayers is found in John 17, as he was praying for “unity” of his followers through hearing and obeying God’s Word. When we become united with Him, through the obedience of His Word, we are then His “children” (Gal. 3:27). And, if we remain “faithful” as His child, we have a “special relationship” with Him which we call “being in fellowship” with Him (1 John 1:7-2:5).

I once heard a faithful gospel preacher say one time: “If there is anyone here that is fit to pray, let us pray.” It did not “dawn” on me what he meant until some time later. Many people pray and are not “fit” to pray. They are not in “fellowship with God, and He “will” not hear them. It has nothing to do with God’s “ability” to hear. It has “all” to do with the heart of the people involved. Can God’s heart be so grieved that he “chooses” not to hear when people pray?

Going to His Word we are provided with His answer. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, was God’s messenger to Judah and Jerusalem. God sent him to them in order to try to get them to repent. The wickedness they were involved in was causing them to be literally destroyed and taken into Babylonian captivity. In Jeremiah 8 and 9 we find some eye-opening words from God. His words reveal to us His thinking on this subject.

Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?— Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.

The people were so wicked, they refused to **“tremble at**

God’s Word” and **“lay it to their hearts.”** Every man did that which was right in **“his own eyes.”** It is no wonder that God wanted to **“go from them.”** But, at another time, listen to His Words: **“Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee”** (Jer.7:16). Jeremiah was instructed not to pray for them, because it would do no good. A few chapters later, hear it again: **“Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble”** (Jer. 11:14).

Again,

Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence (Jer. 14: 11-12).

To any serious Bible student, it should be evident that not only prayers, but other acts of worship, will not be accepted when the heart is not right with God.

Now, to classic statements of when God chooses not to hear:

Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your god, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear (Isa. 59:1, 2).

We must, therefore, walk in the light of God’s Word, have fellowship with Him and **“Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”** (1 Thess. 5:16, 17).

—337 Madison 4605
St. Paul, AR 72760

EDITORIAL NOTE

Brother Alton Fonville faxed the previous article to the MSOP on 11/09/07. A few minutes later it was faxed back to him with the following note written on it. **“PLEASE STOP SENDING FAXES TO MSOP. THANKS!”** Is it possible that brother Cates’ excellent article struck a hypocritical nerve at the New MSOP? —EDITOR

SHUT UP RHODA, AND PRAY

MARTHA BENTLEY

What does prayer mean to you? Is it a vital and basic part of everyday life or just a practiced habit? Does God really hear and answer prayers? If so, what kind of prayers does He answer? We know they must be according to the will of God (I John. 5: 14-15).

God has not always granted petitions. Even in Old Testament times, there were prayers rejected because of disobedience to the commands of God. When Samuel was opposed and the people insisted on a king, God told them he would not hear their prayers (I Sam. 8:18). In Micah's time God refused to hear certain prayers (Mic. 3:4). Why would he not deal the same with us now since He always deals with man according to His Word (Psa. 119:89; Heb. 13:8)?

Our prayers today must be according to the will of God (John 9:31; Mt. 7:21). They cannot be from our own selfish desires or to be seen and heard of men (Mt. 6:5-7). We must have an humble and penitent heart (Lk. 18:10-14), and we must be living a godly life—believing God will hear and answer our prayers to Him (Jas. 1 :6,21-25). We must have a right relationship with our fellow Christians, being unselfish toward all (Jas. 3:14-16; 4:3). Also we must be ready to receive whatever answer whenever it may come.

Cornelius was not a Christian, but he was a devout Gentile who believed God and lived a good moral life, praying to God always. God heard his prayers as a reminder and provided a means for them to be answered. Peter was sent to his house to instruct him in the right way. When he arrived, Cornelius was ready—prepared to receive the answer to his prayers (Acts 10:33). Evidently he was in constant readiness to hear God's message. Do we look for God's answer on our own time table or are we ready to accept His answer whenever it may come?

When Herod, in his persecution of the church, had killed John's brother, James, he saw it pleased the Jews, so he had Peter put in prison till the Passover was completed (Acts 12: 1-4). While Peter was in prison, constant earnest prayer was made by the church for him (Acts 12:5). These

Christians were praying for one of their brethren and they had confidence that God would answer and grant their request. They were unselfish, humble Christians living according to the will of God.

Peter was delivered from prison by an angel from God. He then said:

Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate (Acts 12:12-14).

The young maiden was trying to tell them that God was answering their prayers even as they were praying. Although every aspect of their prayers was according to God's will, they were not ready to receive God's immediate answer. Think about it.

—8305 Burchfield Dr.
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

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Men of La Mancha and Etc.

Dennis “Skip” Francis

Over the past few years, I have participated in a number of internet discussion lists in order to gain insights and, hopefully, be of value in the teaching and admonishing of brethren who may be in error. In recent days, at least over the past few years, I have dealt with several men that have shown themselves to be of unsound beliefs and practices, and who often fail in both their logic and exegesis of the scriptures. Many of these men fail, in particular, in their use of implication. The fact that they often fail to see this problem shows up most prevalently in the fact that they get caught up in minutiae and erect “straw men” arguments for them to deal with when they cannot deal with the issues at hand.

On January 21, 2008, Bro. Lynn Parker addressed issues involving the sin of both Dave Miller and Joseph Meador as it related to the fellowship practices of the Rodriguez brothers (Israel and Joshua) on the ContendingFTF internet list. Several others got involved in this discussion in subsequent posts. Bro. Parker said that they had gone to visit with Joseph Meador to “get ammo to defend Dave Miller”. This was only one of several issues addressed in Lynn’s post. In fact, it was only a short paragraph in a lengthy post that addressed Curtis Cates and others who continue to defend both Dave Miller and Joseph Meador.

In subsequent days a number of other brethren made comments about the initial post, yet there were few that actually addressed the Rodriguez brothers. In fact, the majority who posted did so on peripheral matters and as a part of the general topic of the discussion, which was mostly about continued support of those in error.

For myself, until I read Bro. Parker’s post, I did not even know who the Rodriguez brothers were. I did note that they were from Beeville and that they had been involved in a lectureship (The Shenandoah Lectures) with some questionable fellowship, but that was all. I therefore determined not to be involved in the discussion, and only posted on one occasion involving a completely peripheral matter.

At the same time I was actively involved in a discussion with Justin Guess over material he had posted on his “myspace” page, in which he was making accusations against several members of the list that they were making false statements regarding him. The intent of my part of the discussion was to show that these were not false statements and that he was using this allegation to deflect attention away from his real problem. Since I had previously witnessed this same kind of behavior from several others on various lists, I posted the following:

On January 26, 2008, at 10:09 a.m., I sent the following post to the CFTF and Contending FTF internet lists under the subject line “Men of La Mancha”:

List,

Don Quixote de la Mancha is the assumed name of a delusional

man, named Alonso Quixano, who falsely believes himself to be a knight errant. Convincing an equally deluded and dull witted neighbor, Sancho Panza, to become his “squire”, they set off on a series of adventures, largely involving “tilting” at windmills, which Quixote believes are really giants.

Similarly, we have several such “men of La Mancha” today on the lists. They come down from their own “La Mancha” (Balanced Brethren, etc.), and tilt at windmills, falsely believing they have battled “giants”. The names are different (Justin, Andy, James, Robert, Roger, etc.) but the story remains the same.

Just as Quixote could have battled with REAL knights, these “knights errant” could come and deal with REAL situations and problems. Instead, they see perceived insults, pore over minutiae, and invent “windmills” to “tilt” at.

Why don’t our “men of La Mancha” answer the substantive questions that are put to them? Why do they, instead, look for every “slight” (real or imaginary), and accuse others of not “playing fair”. One wonders if Quixote commiserated similarly with Sancho when things did not go well in his own quests? Having slain not a single “giant”, they slink back to their own “La Mancha” (Balanced Brethren, et. al.) and either proudly announce their “success” or complain about their adversaries not playing according to the rules (Matt. 18:15-17).

Of course, the reader of Don Quixote sees the real problem. It

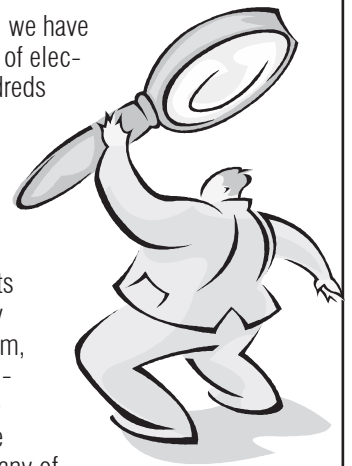
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—Dub and Lavonne McClish



is the “Don” himself and his perceptions, just as the majority of the readers of this and other lists can read for themselves and see that nothing real and substantive comes from these “men of La Mancha”.

Dennis (Skip) Francis
Suffolk church of Christ

Anyone being completely objective and fair-minded can tell who this email seeks to address. It is those who are listed that are the main target of the sarcasm in this post. In fact, the very ones listed have been the men with whom I have actually dealt on such matters.

At this year's Annual 2008 Spring Contending For the Faith Lectures, the Rodriguez brothers were invited to participate in the Open Forum by the director of the lectures and the elders of the Spring, Texas church, in order to address some of their complaints in this regard. At first they declined. The day of the first Open Forum, Monday, February 25, 2008, in a follow up to the original declination statement, they rescinded their original statement and accepted the invitation to participate.

Many of the men who attended the lectureship, knowing that the Rodriguez brothers were in attendance, had taken seats on the front row in order to address any issues that might come up in relation to them. When I entered the building, noticing this, I bypassed the group and went back midway in the auditorium to my original seat. I did this because I KNEW I had not addressed the Rodriguez brothers in any way.

Israel Rodriguez, representing his family, took the floor shortly after opening remarks by David Brown, and, as such, claimed to represent the elders of the Beeville Church of Christ. During his opening remarks, bro. Israel addressed the aforementioned email by Lynn Parker, and then listed a number of other names of men who had, according to bro. Rodriguez, made “false accusations and statements about the Rodriguez brothers” on these web sites. Imagine my surprise to learn that my name was one of those mentioned! I had made no accusation or statement related to the Rodriguez brothers AT ALL!

It became evident, over the course of the rest of the forum the first day that I would not have occasion to address this issue with them as Israel was intent on monopolizing the forum, even from his seat! This prompted numerous efforts on the part of David Brown and Kenneth Cohn to restore order to the forum, eventually dismissing the forum due to time constraints.

That evening, which ended quite late, I gave up some of my time for rest in order to verify what I believed to be true. I went online to the Yahoo Groups web site and examined every post I had made over a period of a month or so. I could find absolutely nothing related in any way to the Rodriguez brothers.

On day two, Tuesday, February 26, 2008, of the Open Forum, I did have occasion to address this issue with the Rodriguez family and asked them to provide proof that I had made any such accusation. It seems that they had brought with them an extensive notebook of material that it took them some time to peruse before they found anything with my name on

them some time to peruse before they found anything with my name on it. When they did provide a document, it only contained the email that I had entitled “Men of La Mancha”. I then addressed the email in its particulars and noted that the names of those I had in mind in the post were already listed “by name”. It was then that they pointed out that I had also included the word “etc.”. In other words, they inferred that I had included them in the post because of the word “etc.”.

First, it is passing strange that one would be accused of making “false accusations and statements about the Rodriguez brothers” without ever mentioning the Rodriguez brothers even once. *Second*, it is also strange that they would conclude that they were in mind by the inclusion of the word “etc.” in one email.

I would like to point out the fact that it is the Rodriguez brothers who determined that they were included in my post, even though that was not my intent. Why did they so conclude? Because, as was so aptly addressed in the March issue of *Contending For the Faith* (re: bro. Brian R. Kenyon's article on “New Anti-ism”), they tried on the “shoes” and THEY FIT! It is THEY that saw themselves as spiritual “Men of La Mancha” in my article of that name. This became apparent as the first and second days of the Open Forum came to their conclusion. The Rodriguez brothers simply could not deal with a REAL “knight” but were forced to “tilt at windmills” of perceived slights against them. They could not or would not deal with the important issues of fellowship with error that were being raised, so instead made charges and allegations against those who pointed out their error.

When asked about their fellowship with Miller and whether or not he was a false teacher, they equivocated. When asked if they had the CD produced by bro. Michael Hatcher, which contains nearly 150 pages of documentation about Miller's false teaching, they said it was “poorly produced” and that it contained “portions of letters”. When asked to provide proof of this allegation, they refused! In fact, they attempted to suggest that, given over a year and a half to peruse these volumes of evidence, they could not come to a conclusion because of the email that Parker had put on the ContendingFTF list in JANUARY OF 2008 (which had NOTHING to do with Miller)!

It was also noted that they were willing to ignore the problem of Joseph Meador's involvement in Gestalt Therapy for many years based on a short visit with him and *a letter, alleged by the Rodriguez brethren to be penned by Meador, but could as well have been penned by almost anyone!* Again, volumes of information was provided to them by bro. Kevin Townsend, but this was just “set aside” in favor of a statement that was not at all unlike the one put out in 2005 by Miller. The letter itself was filled with generalisms that did not address the real problems involved. Meador says,

I personally hold that the Bible only is the only book which guides mankind to salvation in Christ Jesus. I personally hold that the Bible is God's inspired, inerrant, and infallible word, and that we shall be judged by the teachings of Jesus (Jn. 12:48). My personal belief regarding God's word is a matter of public written and spoken record spanning 25 years of full-time ministry.

I say these are “generalisms” because even Rubel Shelly could have made such a statement, and most of the letter was of like nature! That the Rodriguez brothers are willing to set aside volumes of evidence in favor of such “weak as water” refutation demonstrates a mindset that has become all too frequent among those of our “balanced brethren”.

We have seen over the past 3 years quite a number of former “pillars” who have shown where their real loyalties lie when put to the test. It seems that continued support for broadcasting empires, publishing concerns, colleges, schools of preaching, former colleagues, para-church agencies, and religious “buddyhoods” have all taken precedence over contending “earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Folks who once could accurately examine evidence and make correct conclusions regarding false teaching no longer seem willing to make such assessments. It should be no surprise that young men who were trained by the “pillars” would have the same kind of mindset.

The second day of the Open Forum ended much like the first, only worse! The apparent attempt by the Rodriguez family to disrupt the entire proceeding only ultimately resulted in their invitation to participate being rescinded. Such behavior was entirely unbecoming of Christian decorum.

All other behavior aside, it seems evident that many today will only contend against those that are all too obvious in

their departures from the truth. It is easy to stand against the likes of Shelly, Lucado, and Walling. One can find volumes to speak about ACU, OCU, and DLU. When one stands against Sunset School of Preaching, they can find many fellow travelers. *The Christian Chronicle* is an easy target. It seems that only when one stands against the fellowship practices and doctrines of Miller and Meador, Apologetics Press, FHU, MSOP, ETSOPM, BTSOP, SWSBS, GBN, and the like that one becomes “vile” and “liars”.

Is it lost on anyone but me that men who had nearly 2 years to examine 150 pages of evidence could not come to a logical conclusion over it, yet could perceive a slight against themselves strong enough for them to level a public allegation of “false accusations and statements about the Rodriguez brothers” when the only thing they had to come to this conclusion was the word “etc.” in ONE email? Exactly how much evidence does it take?

This article IS about the Rodriguez brothers and their OWN “false accusations and statements” about me, and probably others like me on their list. I should not even have to put an “etc.” on this for them to figure it out. It is my hope that they will repent of their errors of fellowship with Miller and Meador, as well as the false accusations they have made about others.

—105 Robin Lance
Suffolk, VA 23434



EDITORIAL COMMENT

The following is the original email invitation I sent to the brethren Rodriguez through Joshua Rodriguez.

Date: Sat, 26 Jan 2008 15:34:56 -0800
From: <jbrow@charter.net>
To: Joshua Rodriguez <truth-justice@msn.com>
Subject: Invitation
Cc to the Spring elders and Lynn Parker

Hello Brother Joshua,

This email is a personal invitation for you, your brother Israel, the Adams Street elders and the Adams Street church to attend the 2008 Spring CFTF Lectures. The dates of the lectures are Feb. 24 - 27. The theme of this year’s lectures is “UNITY—FROM GOD OR MAN”. Israel and the Adam’s street elders are being included in this invitation to you because I do not have their email addresses.

I am especially encouraging you, Israel and the Adams St. elders to attend and participate in the open forum. It will be conducted, the Lord willing, on Mon., Tues. and Wed. Afternoons at 3:30.

Because of your and Israel’s beliefs regarding Matt. 18:15-18, your continued fellowship with Dave Miller, Stan Crowley, those who fellowship and support Miller and Crowley, the letter you received from Joseph Meador supposedly explaining his position that is now a moot point in deed (we would hope you would bring this letter with you to present it to the

forum), the letter you have from Miller that you think exonerates him from believing and teaching the R&R of elders (we would hope you would also bring this letter with you to present it to the forum—*There was no such letter ever admitted to by the Rodriguez brothers during the Spring Forum—Editor*), your continue fellowship of Miller, your continued fellowship of Stan Crowley, your continued fellowship of those who remain in fellowship with Miller and Crowley and the fact that these matters are public and have been so for some time, we want to give you, your brother and anyone else who believes as both of you do about the previously listed topics the opportunity to discuss these subjects in 2008 Open Forum of the Spring CFTF Lectures.

We assure you that the forum will be conducted within the confines of New Testament teaching. We certainly expect all to conduct themselves accordingly. Please make your plans to come be with us and be prepared to state your case, receive and ask questions on the aforementioned topics in said forum. Again, please know that you will be treated with Christian decorum. We trust that you will accept our invitation to attend and participate in these open forums.

For the One Faith,
David P. Brown

Via email attachment we received a reply from the brethren Rodriguez on January 30, 2008 at 10:45 am. At the bottom of the letter the following was printed.

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“Copyright infringement occurs when a copyrighted work is reproduced, distributed, performed, publicly displayed, or made into a derivative work without the permission of the copyright owner.” (United States Copyright Office).

The reason given to us by the brethren Rodriguez for copyrighting their response was to keep us from abusing and misusing it. So we will simply report in our own words and certain quotations from said email attachment, which quotations are completely within the bounds of copyright law, what Israel Rodriguez said in his copyrighted letter.

In his response he addressed me as “Dear.” But, before he was finished with his email you will see that he had as well addressed me as “Dear Diotrophes”—strange application of the word “dear”. He continued in the same approach in addressing me orally in his opening remarks during the open forums of the 2008 Spring CFTF Lectures. After thanking me for the invitation, he expressed regret that the brethren Rodriguez would not be able to attend the lectures, giving several reasons for not doing so. Their reasons were:

1. The “medley of issues” mentioned in my invitation did not concern them. Israel then informed me that I did not know anything about what they believed about Matt. 18:15-18, because they had never discussed it with me or my associates.

2. Whether to fellowship Dave Miller and Stan Crowley or how to deal with those who do fellowship Miller and Crowley are topics about “which no accurate biblical decision can be made until all the essential facts have been examined.”

3. The letter they received from Joseph Meador is in no way related to the Dave Miller issue.

4. Regarding a letter from Dave Miller that was allegedly in the brethren Rodriguez’s possession, Israel asked who had indicated that it even existed.

5. Israel indicated that whether the matters under discussion were of a public or private nature was a matter for debate. He then wrote that some public matters should be

treated privately.

Clearly the preceding points ceased to be sufficient reasons for them to decline our invitation, because they did attend said forums for two days. In fact, they orally declared that they came to attend the forums as long as it was necessary to accomplish their desired ends, even meeting into the night—*so much for their written reason for not coming*. But, because of their disorderly conduct, the Spring elders prohibited them from returning on the last day of the 2008 lectures.

In his next comments we learn why Israel, Joshua and Eddy Rodriguez disdained and opposed any effort to get them to comply with the rules guiding an orderly public open forum. He dictated to me that ***“you will not dictate to us where we will speak, when we will speak, what we will speak, and how long we will speak”*** (Bold italics mine—Editor). We may say that the brethren Rodriguez truly attempted to live up to the previous quote from Israel’s January 30, 2008 email to us. Never the less, and regardless of Israel’s bombastic, brash declaration, we did to some degree limit the brethren Rodriguez’s comments. Further they were stopped cold from speaking at the last open forum at all. Indeed they were prohibited from attending. So much for their “big shot” brazen attitude toward rules governing the Spring CFTF 2008 open forums.

Israel then wrote that their “issue” had nothing to do with me at all, but with Lynn Parker, whom the Rodriguez brethren considered to have made false charges about them. He then referred to a post Lynn Parker made to the CFTF Yahoo Group, owned by Keith Sisman of the United Kingdom (*Contending for the Faith* does not own this Yahoo discussion group—Editor). The post was made on January 21, 2008 and is entitled “Where Are All the Meador Supporters Now?” Israel said Parker’s post came from certain alleged gossip and was spread by Daniel Denham when it was posted on the CFTF Yahoo group on January 22, 2008, under the title of “The Rodriguez’s Whitewash of Joseph Meador.”

They claim to have followed the teaching of Matthew 5:23; 18:15 in dealing with Parker and Denham in their attempts to meet privately with said men. According to Israel, said men rejected their “biblical” efforts. I might emphasize that one needs to hear Parker and Denham’s views of the brethren Rodriguez’s efforts.

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Israel said that my name was mentioned during their confrontation with Parker and Denham. He then asked me, “Did you instruct them to do so? If not, why do you suppose they referred me to you?” Then without hearing from me, Israel immediately began to argue in the letter as if I had instructed Parker and Denham in what to say. Israel wrote, “Perhaps you seek to make a spectacle of us at the 2008 CFTF Lectureship? God knows. Whatever the case, may it not be that you have been imbued by the spirit of Diotrephes.” Israel then pointed out that others had started speaking lies about them and pointed out that these speakers had “the poison of asps” under their lips (Psa. 140:1-5). He ventured that the Rodriguez brethren would continue to be slandered and lied about.

Remarking about my closing remarks in my invitation to them to attend the open forums, Israel wrote asking me:

[I]s there any reason why we should accept your word that the open forum will be conducted within the confines of New Testament teaching, when the teaching of the New Testament has already been violated? Why do you assure us that we will be treated with Christian decorum when already the propriety and decency of Christian etiquette has been abused, and our dignity laid upon the altar of malice! Do not presume to infer the meaning of our words in this letter. If you have any questions concerning our words, abide by the Scriptures and have the courage to speak to us in private.

He closed his response to my invitation by quoting from Psalm 35. Israel then signed his email in the following manner.

“For God; For Christ; For the Spirit of truth; For the church,

Israel Rodriguez
Gospel Preacher”

If anyone desires to read the whole letter, one may contact Israel to request it.

On the afternoon of the day that the 2008 Spring Contending for the Faith Lectures began (Sunday, Feb. 24), I received an email telling me that the brethren Rodriguez had changed their minds about not attending said lectureship and they would participate in the open forum.

When we invited brethren Israel, Joshua (preachers) and their father, Eddy Rodriguez (elder/preacher) to participate in the 2008 Spring CFTF Open Forum, we *assumed* that they understood the necessary time constraints of each forum. We *assumed* that they would not attempt to monopolize each forum as if it they could speak as long as they desired and to the exclusion of other participants. Therefore, we *assumed* that the brethren Rodriguez were willing to be asked questions, answer questions, allow others to make their own comments, and ask their own questions—*all conducted within the time constraints of each forum, respecting the other participants, abiding by the rules governing such occasions and those whose lectureship it was.* We certainly *assumed* they would respect the Spring elders—especially since Eddy Rodriguez is serving as an elder. We also *assumed* they would respect the director of the lectureship who also served as the moderator of said forums, a brother whom the Spring elders appointed to these positions. Thus, we *as-*

sumed that the brethren Rodriguez would also respect the lectureship speakers. *All of our assumptions were wrong.* In this specific case we should have followed the late brother Ira Rice’s admonition—*NEVER ASSUME ANYTHING.*

During the open forums there was one thing that proved true over and over again about the brethren Rodriguez. Israel wrote in the Jan. 30 letter wherein he originally declined my invitation to attend the 2008 open forums the following—*“you will not dictate to us where we will speak, when we will speak, what we will speak, and how long we will speak”* (Bold italics mine—Editor).

In all my years of engaging in controversy—public and private—we were only partially successful in getting adult Christian men, Gospel preachers, and even an elder, to respect and abide by the rules governing a mature public discussion. We failed more than we succeeded. From almost the beginning of Monday’s open forum until the end of Tuesday’s forum, the brethren Rodriguez sought to undermine and dominate the proceedings. (Prior to the lectures I had warned the Spring elders this might happen, but I did not anticipate the degree to which it transpired.) Remember, Israel wrote me saying, *“you will not dictate to us where we will speak, when we will speak, what we will speak, and how long we will speak”* (Bold italics mine—Editor). Indeed, he said what he meant and meant what he said. But it is a sad and despicable commentary on what this family believes and practices regarding such conduct before God and man.

Even the “good cop/ bad cop” routine failed to stop the rude, domineering arrogance of the brethren Rodriguez. As the “bad cop,” when, in desperation and frustration, I cried out for Israel to **“Shut up!”**, he only continued his unruly diatribe, declaring that my exclamation was a violation of Christian courtesy. Strange one sided Christian courtesy he was exercising at the time that necessitated such action on my part. Then, the “good cop,” brother Kenneth Cohn (Spring elder), standing face to face with Israel, and looking him directly in his eyes, spoke to him with a calm, moderated voice, but in frank and candid words. Thereby brother Cohn attempted to get Israel to be silent. It appeared for a moment that such might work, but our hopes were short lived. For it did not take Israel long to remind us that he meant what he said when he wrote, *“you will not dictate to us where we will speak, when we will speak, what we will speak, and how long we will speak”* (Bold italics mine—Editor).

Since on more than one occasion the Rodriguez sons publicly declared they owed what they are to their parents, we may logically conclude from their own confession that they learned their unruly conduct from the same source.

This was clearly the case in the conduct of their father. He made little to no effort to keep his sons in line. Indeed, at times he conducted himself in the same way they did. While what they did on camera was more than enough to demonstrate their disrespect and domineering spirit, they engaged in the same kind of conduct off camera. Of course, some of this unruly activity cannot be seen on the videos of the forum. **BUT IT WAS SEEN BY A HOST OF BRETHREN IN THE AUDITORIUM OF THE SPRING CHURCH BUILDING.**

The brethren Rodriguez did not hesitate to charge anyone who sought to control them as unloving, unfair, biased and unchristian. Regarding his sons' conduct, before the whole audience, all were reminded that *the acorn does not fall far from the tree*. The elder Rodriguez was nothing more to his sons than someone who taught, trained, coached and exhorted them to continue in their arrogant, disrespectful and unruly conduct in said forums.

After the Tuesday forum had ended with the announcement that the Rodriguez brethren were not being invited to participate in the Wednesday forum, they continued their disruptive activities. We had asked that all such be terminated at the end of the Tuesday forum, but the Rodriguez brethren gave no heed to our request—even offering to take the discussion outside the building. **IT IS OBVIOUS, AFTER THE FACT, THAT THE RODRIGUEZ CLAN CAME TO TAKE OVER THE OPEN FORUM. THEY DID DISRUPT THE FORUMS TO WHERE LITTLE TO NO GOOD THAT SHOULD HAVE COME FROM THEM RESULTED.** However, at least one enlightening thing came out of the Monday and Tuesday forums—*over and over the brethren Rodriguez proved that they were willing to bully and harangue anyone or oppose anything they perceived to be a hindrance to their goal(s)*. We learned they are very good brethren—*as long as they get their own way, are not questioned, challenged, crossed, and/or opposed in any way or to any degree*. Again, they more than proved their affirmation that ***“you will not dictate to us where we will speak, when we will speak, what we will speak, and how long we will speak”*** (Bold italics mine—Editor).

Before closing I want to point out that we fully realize since Joseph Meador committed adultery, that the brethren Rodriguez are not in fellowship with him. But, before they knew Meador was guilty of fornication they were in fellowship with him. *Therefore, if Meador was not an unrepentant adulterer, the brethren Rodriguez would continue to be in fellowship with him and all of those who fellowship him.*

The only way I would meet these men in another religious discussion would be in a four night, public, oral debate format, governed by proper rules, with one of the Rodriguez brethren affirming precisely stated propositions that set out their views on the following subjects.

The brethren Rodriguez need to affirm the following proposition. *The Scriptures teach that the human will, as manifested in a divorce court decree, which decree is contrary to Matthew 19: 6 and 9, alters God's Will regarding MDR as expressed in the previous verses.* They either believe the previous proposition to be true or false. If false, obviously they do not consider it to be a fatal error and, thus, not a fellowship matter. Whatever position they hold, will they affirm in public oral debate what they believe on that subject?

They along with the Southwest Church, SWSBS, MSOP, AP, GBN, et al., continue to extend fellowship to Stan Crowley and the Schertz, Texas Church of Christ where Crowley serves as one of the preachers, though Crowley has never repented of his error on MDR. Crowley affirms and teaches that: *The Scriptures teach that when one spouse commits fornication while separated from its spouse, in order for the*

spouse who is innocent of fornication to appeal to Matthew 19:9 for authority to put away the spouse guilty of fornication, both spouses must have mutually agreed to separate prior to the time fornication was committed. The Rodriguez brethren should be able and ready to affirm that the position presently held by Stan Crowley regarding MDR (set out in the previous proposition) is a position that is taught by the New Testament or, if they think his position on MDR is erroneous, it, never the less, does not constitute fatal error. If they do not believe that said position does not constitute fatal error, they are forced to believe it is not an obligatory matter and, thus, should not cause a disruption in the fellowship of the church. *Are they willing to engage in a public oral debate on these matters—a debate so controlled that the brethren Rodriguez cannot “goose step” or ride “rough-shod” over the rules governing it?*

The Rodriguez brethren should be willing to defend the following propositions pertaining to Dave Miller's errors—the R&R of elders and his so-called “Marriage intent doctrine.” Let the brethren Rodriguez affirm: *The Scriptures teach that when Dave Miller taught and practiced the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders as was twice taught and practiced by the Brown Trail Church of Christ, Hurst, Texas, he (Miller) did only what is authorized in the New Testament of Jesus Christ.* If they do not believe the previous proposition to be true (Joshua stated to me that they did not believe it), then they (as well as many other brethren) need to affirm a proposition that teaches it is Scriptural to fellowship those who believe it to be true. *Specifically they need to prove that such an error is not fatal error and, therefore, should not cause a disruption in fellowship of the church.*

Regarding Dave Miller's so-called (we believe mislabeled) “Marriage Intent” doctrine, the Rodriguez brethren need to affirm the following proposition. *The Scriptures teach that when a man and a woman contract a marriage for the express purpose of entering the United States, upon having obtained their purposed goal, they then divorce, said two persons were never in a God joined, Matt. 19:6 marriage.* They either believe the previous proposition to be true or false. If they believe it is false, they cannot believe it to constitute fatal error. This is the case because they are continuing to fellowship at least one who do believes it to be true.

Are they ready to affirm in public oral debate what they believe on that subject or any of the other subjects herein noted? *If the Rodriguez brethren (Israel and Joshua are graduates of SWSBS) will not affirm the previous debate propositions, or other precise propositions stating as much, is there anyone who believes the previously noted doctrines and/or fellowships those who do believe them, who is willing to orally debate their convictions on these matters in a four night public oral discussion?*

—David P. Brown, Editor

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Receive Him Not...Neither Bid Him God Speed

Tim Smith

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he had both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11).

It is always troubling to find it necessary to address matters of controversy with those who ought to be of a common and precious faith, but it is no less our duty to address such matters, despite the distastefulness. I urge every congregation, every elder, every preacher, and every member to evaluate the actions of every child of God in the light of 2 John 9-11.

No matter how great some may seem to be, and no matter how great some may think themselves to be, none are above Biblical instruction. Everyone of us will be judged by our deeds (2 Cor. 5:21) over against His requirements (John 12:48). Should we happen to be directors of preaching schools or directors of apologetics societies or instructors at preaching schools or elders or even little clones of the above, our actions are not above investigation and our deeds are not above rebuke when they fail to comply with the requirements of Holy Writ.

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

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

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

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

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

—171 Radford Circle
Dothan, Al 36301
gradowith@yahoo.com

**“The are two ways of spreading light: to be The candle or the mirror that reflects it”—Vesalius in Zante
Edith [Newbold Jones] Wharton, 1862-1937**

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Directory of Churches...

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Holly Pond—Church of Christ, Hwy 278 W., P.O. Box 131, Holly Pond, AL 35083, Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., (256) 796-6802, (205) 429-2026.

-England-

Cambridgeshire—Ramsey Church of Christ, meeting at the Rainbow Centre, Ramsey, Huntingdon. Sun. 10, 11 a.m.; Wed. (Phone for venue and time); www.Ramsey-church-of-christ.org. Contact Keith Sisman, 001.44.1487.710552; fax:1487.813264 or Keith.Sisman.net. Research Website of 1,000 years of the British Church of Christ; www.Traces-of-the-kingdom.org and www.Myth-and-Mystery.org.

-Florida-

Ocoee—Ocoee Church of Christ, 2 East Magnolia Street, Ocoee, FL 34761. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7:00 p.m. David Hartbarger, Evangelist, (407) 656-2516, ocoechurchofchrist@yahoo.com, www.ocoeecoc.org.

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, Sun. 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Michael Hatcher, evangelist, (850) 455-7595.

-North Carolina-

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

-Oklahoma-

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

-Texas-

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

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

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

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

New Braunfels—225 Saenger Halle Rd. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7:30 p.m. Lynn Parker, evangelist. (830) 625-9367. www.nbchurchofchrist.com.

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

-Wyoming-

Cheyenne—High Plains Church of Christ, 421 E. 8th St., Cheyenne, WY 82007, tel. (307) 638-7466, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tel. (307) 514-3394, evangelist: Roelf L. Ruffner

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