

# Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

## A TIME TO BUILD TENTS

William S. Cline

We are neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet therefore we do not consider ourselves a voice crying in the wilderness. Yet, one needs nothing more than to casually observe the situation to deduce that the church of our Lord is heading toward a testing, the likes of which she has not seen since the restoration movement of one hundred-fifty years ago.

We are concerned that the liberal philosophies of the educational, political, social, and denominational worlds are becoming the governing undercurrent in the kingdom. Preachers who contend earnestly for the “Old Paths,” wavering neither to the right nor the left, are not nearly so popular as they once were among a people that claims to “Speak where the Bible speaks.” Scripture quoting, sin condemning preachers are fast becoming out of step and out of style in a church that wants to “win friends and influence people” so long as we do not upset them. Feeling and friendship instead of doctrine and fellowship have become the enigma of the day and political, love everybody, condemn nothing, joke telling, good God, good Devil, good heaven, good hell, entertaining preachers have become the desired order of things on the parts of many. Where in the name of heaven are we headed?

Almost unnoticed among some brethren is the fact that a great number of sound gospel preachers are quitting the pulpit to go into some type of secular work. For certain, some have quit because preaching was harder than they supposed. Others surely have quit because they found out

they simply were not cut out for preaching. While others may have been so poorly supported or cared for, they had to go into some other type of work to adequately support their families. But there are large numbers of preachers who have quit because brethren would not stand for sound, doctrinal preaching and having been associated with one or more such congregations they became discouraged and went into secular work.

Brethren can be mean when they want to. Just now preachers who exposed the sins of members in their respective congregations come to mind. They are no longer preaching. One preached against adultery. One in the congregation set out to “get him.” His reputation was severely damaged by the gossips and he quit preaching. The gossip, the unkind remarks to wives and children, the mockery, the refusal to participate in programs of work, the cutting off of the dollar in the contribution, the constant wrangle in classes, etc., are some of the things that are putting preachers into secular work. One able preacher of the Gospel who quit preaching told this writer that he was sick and tired of his family’s welfare depending upon the whims of the brethren. Only the Lord Himself knows how many others have harbored the same feelings.

Statistics that have come to us indicate that we have approximately 800 fewer preachers today than we had five years ago! Perhaps each of us can name several preachers we have known over the years that have quit preaching and taking note of those that have quit recently, one can only become concerned because of the present situation. We know of one city that has at least 19 men in it that were faithful gospel preachers, yet today they are not preaching. There are more than two congregations for every preacher,

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# Contending FOR THE Faith™

David P. Brown, Editor and Publisher  
dpbcftf@gmail.com

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*CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH* exists to defend the gospel (Philippians 1:7,17) and refute error (Jude 3). Therefore, we will not knowingly print anything to the contrary.

*CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH*  
25403 Lancewood Dr., Spring, Texas 77373  
Telephone: (281) 350-5516

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

“Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice” (Shakespeare). Is it not harder to listen than to speak sometimes? I wonder how many chances to learn great and profound truths I have missed because my mouth was more active than my ears. It is better to hear and forget a foolish word than to never hear a word of wisdom because we were too busy talking. Be quick to hear, slow to speak and slower still to wrath. God bless.

*Tim Smith (Deceased)*

## Editorial....

### “TIME IS FILLED WITH SWIFT TRANSITION”

2022 belongs to the past and one month of 2023 has come and gone. Thus, we are well into the new year. Toward the end of October 2022 saw the necessity of getting a new computer, problems in getting on the internet, and the need for new software for the layout of our publications. Thrown into the technology changes and problems was a spike in your editor’s blood pressure and the search for medication to lower it without making him ill. This did not happen overnight and throughout November and most of December your editor was able to do little physically. Toward the end of December last, the doctors finally found medication that worked to bring his B/P to a healthy level without making him ill and he has continued to hold his own throughout the month of January.

Much appreciation is extended to sister Sonya West, secretary for the Spring congregation, for her tireless efforts in getting out the last issue of the 2022 Nov./Dec. issue of *CFTF*. Without sister West’s efforts that issue would remain unpublished. She is a tireless worker and for many years has been one of our proofreaders for *CFTF* as well as a helper in so many other ways regarding this paper and other work for the Lord’s church.

Beginning with this issue of *CFTF*, we will take the liberty to expand or reduce the number of pages per issue. Also, we may or may not print more than one issue per month as we deal with various topics. In other words, there will be at least one issue of *CFTF* per month, but at times more than one. Also, the number of pages may vary from issue to issue. Those receiving paper copies of *CFTF* will continue to receive via US Mail once a month, however many paper copies are printed during any one month.

You will notice on page 3 of this issue of *CFTF* an advertisement for the 2023 Spring, Texas Church of Christ *Contending for the Faith Lectureship*. We urge all to make your plans to attend. If you cannot attend in person, please note that the lectureship will be streamed LIVE via the church website and also archived for those who cannot view the lectures live.

Please remember our work in *CFTF* and this upcoming lectureship in your prayers.

—David P. Brown, Editor

# Spring Church Of Christ

*Contending For The Faith Lectureship*



## “Studies About The Lord’s Church”

**February 25th & 26th, 2023**

### SATURDAY

9:00 am ~ *Is It Possible To Know Who Is A Member Of The Lord’s Church?* ~ Danny Douglas

10:00 am ~ *The All Sufficiency Of The Church* ~ Johnny Oxendine

11:00 am ~ *The Indestructibility Of The Church* ~ Bruce Stulting

**LUNCH PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION**

1:30 pm ~ *The Church’s Concern For The Lost* ~ Danny Douglas

2:30 pm ~ *The Lord’s Church Is Not A Denomination* ~ Johnny Oxendine

3:30 pm ~ *The Eternal Home Of The Church* ~ Jose Gamez

### SUNDAY

9:00 am (Bible Class) ~ *The Church’s Concern For Her Members* ~ Danny Douglas

10:00 am (Morning Worship) ~ *The Worship Of The Church* ~ Eric Paluka

**LUNCH PROVIDED BY THE SPRING CONGREGATION**

1:00 pm (Afternoon Worship) ~ *The Church Contends For The Faith* ~ Johnny Oxendine

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**LECTURESHIP DIRECTOR: David P. Brown**

**ELDERS: David P. Brown, Kenneth D. Cohn, John West**

**1327 Spring Cypress Road Spring, TX 77373 ~ (281) 353-2707**

**[springcoc@gmail.com](mailto:springcoc@gmail.com)**

*Contending For The Faith*  
25403 Lancewood Dr.  
Spring, Texas 77373

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yet our number of preachers is decreasing. Where are we headed?

As liberalism continues to infiltrate the congregations of the church of our Lord, more and more faithful preachers are going to become tired of beating their heads against the brick wall of this old philosophy which has gotten such a strong hold on the minds of modern man and they are going to leave preaching to engage in some other form of work. Perhaps **“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto my people their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sins”** (Isa. 58:1) is going to have to “build tents” if he is to be supported in his preaching the whole counsel of God.

When Paul went to Corinth to preach he supported himself by building tents (Acts 18:3). There is a certain independence that comes with tent building. A preacher that is self-supported will not feel the need to keep one eye on the contribution and attendance while he preaches the gospel. Many do this very thing because they know when the contribution and attendance drops they are in trouble. Since brethren use these as gauges, the preacher is tempted to preach that which will keep those two thermometers high and rising. On the other hand, the self-supported preacher can keep both eyes on the Bible and preach the whole counsel without fear of being cut off. There is

certainly nothing wrong with preachers being supported and supported well by congregations as long as they do not allow that support to hinder their work as an evangelist.

There are congregations that use the salary to buy the kind of preaching they want and some preachers are more concerned about their salary than they are their soul. If the time comes when preachers have to build tents in order to preach the Word of God as revealed in His verbally inspired book, then may God be our stay and our strength to do what we have to do to preach the unsearchable riches of the Christ. God forbid that we ever let the whims and the philosophies of what may well be the outspoken minority keep us from preaching the Word without fear or favor.

Preacher, **“preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching”** (2 Tim. 4:2) and if and when that time comes for you, for the sake of Christ, the kingdom and all that is pure and holy begin building your tents. It looks like that time is coming, but when you start building tents don’t stop preaching the Word. That is what the devil wants and God forbid that we ever conduct our lives in such a way as to give victory to the Prince of Hell.

—Deceased