

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

Gospel Speaker

Joseph D. Meador



Brother Meador is in his 14th year as director of Southwest School of Bible Studies. He has now been in ministry for 25 years having preached and lectured in 26 states. He has taught in schools of preaching for 21 years and has worked for congregations and schools in TN, KY, IN, NV, and TX. He is the regular speaker on The Word of Life Radio Bible Class aired on KLBJ AM, and has served as a staff writer for a number of religious periodicals. He currently serves as Vice-President of the board of directors of *The Gospel Journal*.

Joseph began studying Oriental and Indian philosophy in 1968, and pursued academic studies in traditional Mahayana (Vajrayana) teachings in the lineage of Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, and he was a student of Indian philosophy under Sri Amrit Desai. He received his education from The University of Texas (B. A.); the graduate school of The State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany; Harding Graduate School of Religion; Memphis School of Preaching (Dipl.); Bethany Theological Seminary (M. Th. in Theology); Jerusalem University College (Cert.); Aish HaTorah Yeshivah (Rabbinic Traditions); Hebrew Union College (Jewish Social History); Southwest University (M.S. and Ph. D. in Philosophy of Education); and he holds professional academic membership in the American Philosophical Association.

In addition, he completed residential and clinical certification in counseling at The Gestalt Institute of New Orleans and he now serves on the teaching and training faculties of the Gestalt Institute of New Orleans and the Gestalt Institute of Austin.

He and his wife Karen are the parents of eight children (seven daughters and one son): Rachel (who is married to Justin Bonnett, an minister); Esther (who is married to Jessie Agnew, a minister); Hannah; Sarah; Lydia; Leah; Naomi; Ruth; and Joseph. Joseph and Karen also have one grandson, Jackson Bonnet, and one granddaughter, Giinger Agnew.

[The article above is from the Jan. 28, 2007, Borger, TX Church of Christ bulletin, *PathWay*, Vol. 440, p. 2. Our only changes in it are the fonts and the omission of the dates of the meeting. May we correctly conclude that Meador approved of the information in the article? Also, is there any indication in the article that Meador does not accept the totality of Gestalt Therapy? On p. 4 you will find an article compiled by Kevin Townsend. In it he thoroughly examines, and exposes Gestalt Therapy and other matters concerning Meador. We urge you to read Townsend's article carefully.—Editor]

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH is published monthly. P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357 Telephone: (281) 350-5516.

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

Editorial...

A MEDLEY OF MATTERS

Joseph Meador met recently for about three hours with at least two young preachers. In that meeting he sought to justify his practice of Gestalt Therapy and possibly some of his other beliefs and activities as the advertisement on the front page of this *CFTF* reveals. He informed those in the meeting that he did not believe or practice those parts of Gestalt Therapy that are contrary to the Bible. He also gave them a printed statement to explain said matters, *but he told those who received his statement that they could not give said statement to anyone else.*

Is it not strange that Meador wrote a statement designed to put him in a good light and silence his critics, but it is not for everyone. Regarding the *intent* and *purpose* of said statement, does it remind anyone of another statement produced in September of 2005—Dave Miller's statement? It too was written to set straight the record about Miller. However, about the only thing said document turned out to be was an example of how to equivocate.

Comes Meador now limiting the circulation of his statement of explanation to those whom he thinks he has already personally persuaded to agree with him. What is there about Miller, Meador, and certain others of like attitude that motivate them to act contrary to Paul's statement regarding his teaching? Paul wrote, "**Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech**" (2 Cor. 3:12). *But we must not forget that to be understood is to be found out.* Paul did not mind being "found out" regarding what he preached (Acts 15:2; 20:18-27; Gal. 2:14a). Paul wrote, "**How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)**" (Gal. 3:3-4). If Meador is speaking and writing "**sound speech, that cannot be condemned**" (Titus 2:8), why does he desire his explanation and position statement to have a selective distribution? As the advertisement on the front page proves, Meador is not bashful when it comes to publicly declaring his accomplishments in the areas for which he has been criticized. But for some reason his explanation of clarification pertaining to his publicized accomplishments needs to be distributed only to those who have met with him and left agreeing with and supporting him.

When Meador described some of us to be a few who are in a small, but no less toxic, loyalty circle...a small negative faction, who if they gain control, will only rupture fellowship in the church even more than they already have...

was he employing Gestalt therapy on us, or what he learned from "Mahayana (Vajrayana) teachings in the lineage of Thubten Zopa Rinpoche," or did it come from his study of "Indian philosophy under Sri Am-

rit Desai,” or was it from his study of “Aish HaTorah Yeshivah (Rabbinic Traditions).” *One thing we know, it certainly did not come from the teaching of the New Testament of Jesus Christ.*

THE SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE

In the Vol. 30, Jan. 21, 2007 Northeast Church of Christ bulletin, pp. 2–3, Malcolm Hill, the preacher for said congregation and President of TBC, reviewed an article by Barry Grider from the Forest Hill Church of Christ’s bulletin, *Forest Hill News*. Grider is the preacher for the Forest Hill congregation, the home of MSOP, where he also serves as an instructor.

Hill believes in the Holy Spirit’s direct personal indwelling and influence on the inward man or spirit of the Christian, which influence is extra to the influence of the Word. This is the doctrine that Mac Deaver teaches. Hill and Deaver are in full fellowship.

Grider’s article pertained to what happens when a Christian prays. In said article he declares that when the Christian prays God does things to us and on our behalf which things are for our spiritual and physical well-being and are beyond the influence of the instructional powers of the Word of God.

Hill did not hesitate to take advantage of Grider’s points to advocate the direct personal work of the Holy Spirit in bringing about that for which Grider says Christians should pray. As Hill concluded,

To write as Barry Grider did, one must believe the Holy Spirit does something today when we pray, and it does not have to be a miracle. Why, then, all the problems about the Holy Spirit indwelling the child of God in His very Persons (sic).

Of course, the MSOP faculty have opposed Mac Deaver and, to say the least, Hill and TBC have been estranged from MSOP for a long time—even before TBC espoused the “Deaver doctrine” on the Holy Spirit.

Why bring Hill’s critical review of Grider’s article to the attention of our readers? Here is the reason: among others the 2007 TBC Lectures has as one of their speakers Tom Holland. Appearing also on their program is Mac Deaver. Among others, appearing on the 2007 MSOP Lectures is Tom Holland and of course Barry Grider and Curtis Cates. Cates has no involvement with Mac Deaver, but he and Grider are in full fellowship with Tom Holland. However Holland extended his fellowship to Hill and Deaver—two men who have been diametrically opposed to MSOP and vice versa. But there are more instances of compromise to come. Read on.

In general Faulkner University’s 2007 lectureship is a farce. It is a mixture of those whose names are known for sound teaching along with those who have compromised the Truth by fellowshipping whom they do, and/or those that teach false doctrine. Ronnie Hayes (MSOP graduate/supporter, and dear friend of incoming MSOP Director Bobby Liddell), Jim Dearman (one of the

main “ram rods” at GBN, who spoke for GBN during the 2006 MSOP Lectures—one of C. Cates’ “favorite brethren” he said with tongue in cheek), Phil Sanders, GBN speaker, regular writer for *The Spiritual Sword*, and speaker on the Spiritual Sword Lectures, which lectureship also has the MSOP faculty to speak each year (all but Garland Elkins, Getwell’s former preacher), and Kyle Butt of Apologetics Press, whose director is none other than Dave Miller. All are speaking on the same program with the rank false teacher Jack Evans, who believes, teaches and debates (advocating and defending it) the late James D. Bales’ error on MDR, Cecil May, Jr., Ralph Gilmore from F-HU and on and on it goes.

Then there are the lectures at Milestone (formerly Endsley) Church of Christ, Pensacola, FL. The Milestone and Bellview congregations have had no fellowship for years due to the late Max Miller and friends’ rebellion in 1988 in their efforts to take over Bellview. The rebels were withdrawn from and the school ceased operation. It was then that the Endsley (now Milestone) Church started the Northwest Florida School of Bible Studies and their lectureship.

In the aftermath of this mess Bobby Liddell moved to and remained with Bellview as their preacher for for a number of years, before moving up to MSOP. Bobby was in full accord with Bellview regarding Endsley, et al. Now one of Bobby’s sons, Tony Liddell, is speaking on the 2007 Milestone lectures with people that sought the undoing of Bellview all of the time Bobby was their preacher. No repentance has been forthcoming from those at Milestone who were a part of the sinful rebellion at Bellview almost 20 years ago. To put it mildly the whole Milestone lectureship is manifesting the spirit of compromise on several issues.

Further evidence of the change of certain brethren is seen with the move of Bobby’s other son Nathan to Denver, CO. Curtis and MSOP had no use for the Bear Valley School of Preaching. They looked upon said school with suspicion and disrespect. But Nathan began associating with Bear Valley. The small church where he was preaching united with the church from which it had departed, which departure had been due to liberalism in said church. It was none other than Barry Grider who made the trip to Denver to perform the “wedding ceremony” for the two churches. Further, another MSOP graduate, Neal Pollard, became the preacher for the Bear Valley congregation and Nathan’s father-in-law, Jerry Martin, part-time instructor with MSOP and close friend of Bobby, became part of the Master’s Program faculty at Bear Valley. *How Rubel Shelly must be laughing with glee as he and his rank apostates observe the aforementioned brethren practice the “unity in diversity” in obligatory matters they have so long advocated, and MSOP and friends have written and spoken against.*

—David P. Brown, Editor

Humanism and Christianity Do Not Mix

An Overview of Some of the Unscriptural Activities of Doctor (Brother) Joseph Meador, M.S., Ph. D.

Compiled by Kevin Townsend

There is a basic principle in Scripture that holds true in daily life: “**.., For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required..**”(Luke 12:48b)

God never expects more of anyone than they are capable of giving or doing: “**For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not**” (2 Cor. 8: 12)

Jesus never condoned sin. As he dealt with sin, he was tender and gentle with those of low estate and those with soft hearts. On the other hand, when Jesus dealt with the Pharisees (the educated elite) who claimed to know the law, he was anything but soft and tender:

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth (John 9:39-41).

By virtue of their education, their position of leadership in the nation and their function as teachers of the people, Christ held them more accountable. (Brother Meador also is an educated man.¹ He holds a position of leadership at the Southwest School of Bible Studies, where he and his staff teach impressionable young minds. In matters of the faith, ignorance will not be a valid defense with him any more than it was with the Pharisees of old.) Jesus rebuked them with some of the most scathing words ever used by our Savior against mankind:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.) Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Matthew 23:27-28)

Although these principles apply to all mankind, this document will focus on the actions of one very visible public figure within the Lord's church, Joseph Meador. When Meador has dealings within the churches of Christ, by all reports, he outwardly appears righteous unto men. On the other hand, there have been indications that Meador maintains a different standard when dealing with those of the world, as the attached documentation will show. It is the purpose of this document to look into that issue—this dual nature that allegedly existed or exists. To do this, we will do what the Bible says: “**Prove all things; hold fast that which is good**” (1 Thess. 5:21).

This Acrobat file contains PDF images which serve as evidence linking Meador to a variety of organizations, philosophies, teachings, behaviors and activities. Many of

the pages are in his own words or words created and posted on the World Wide Web at his direction for all of mankind to see. The document from this point forward consists of three sections: 1) an overview of the images in the PDF file; 2) a narrative explaining the images and showing how they relate to Meador and scriptural principles, and 3) a conclusion providing a summary of the entire document. [DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST—Editor]

OVERVIEW OF IMAGES CONTAINED IN THE ACROBAT FILE

1. *The December 13, 2006 Wayback Machine web page.* This is the result of the Wayback Machine search for the web site www.hier.org (search run on December 13, 2006 and again on December 23, 2006). It shows archived web pages for The Hutchins Institute for Education and Research (HIER). The Wayback Machine is a web site that takes snapshots of billions of web pages and archives them for future use. These archives can be used to see the content of web sites that are no longer “active” as well as a chronology of how a web site changes, i.e. when and how web sites were changed. (The archiving process is not always perfect, e.g. during the archiving process sometimes image files and other elements on web pages may not be fully captured.) The three highlighted entries on this page show significant web content included in this Acrobat file.

2. *The June 05, 2000 Hutchins Institute “Main” web page.* The attached Wikipedia article on Carl Jung brings into focus brother Meador’s emphasis on “Jungian Studies” and “Comparative Religion (including research in Eastern, Western and Native American religions as well as Mythology and Mythic Symbolism).”

a. The Wikipedia article on Carl Jung has four additional bookmarks that directly relate to items on the June 05, 2000 Hutchins Institute “Main” web page.

3. The June 05, 2000 Hutchins Institute “Purpose” web page shows the philosophy of Perennialism (that Meador has chosen for his institute) is an earthly one, rooted and grounded in the mind of a non-Christian, Robert Hutchins.

a. The Wikipedia article on Educational Perennialism (with two bookmarks) shows the clearly humanistic nature of Perennialism and how this type of philosophy is inconsistent with scriptural values.

4. The June 05, 2000 “Hutchins Institute Contact” web page.

5. The June 05, 2000 Hutchins Institute “Founder” web page shows that Joseph Meador was the founding director of the Hutchins Institute. It further highlights Meador's secular education, specifying that “... his graduate and doctoral research...”

focused on the philosophy of two men, “Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler.” It lists his membership in two religious or quasi-religious organizations, “the American Academy of Religion and the Religious Education Association.”

a. The December 14, 2006 ReligionSource.org page for the American Academy of Religion. Here the American Academy of Religion describes itself as a group that “neither endorses nor rejects any religious belief or practice.”

b. The Religious Education Association page (REA) shows that “The REA is a member of North American Interfaith Network (NAIN)”

i. The North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) page shows that NAIN is a conglomeration of a variety of

HIER Site Prior to May 18, 2004

Size: The old HIER web site consisted of multiple pages.

Focus: Brother Meador previously focused on providing “**Educational Consulting Services for the personal development of individual clients of all ages**” and “**academic research in Education and Transpersonal Studies.**”

Fee Basis?: The old HIER web site implied that Meador charged for his services after the “free... initial academic consultation.”

Activity: Brother Meador’s activities, as stated on the old HIER web site, were more heavily involved with educational studies and consulting (though not exclusively).

religious groups (“association of interfaith organizations”), all associated together with the understanding that each group will not oppose or hinder the objectives of the other (“Without infringing on the effort of existing organizations...”).

ii. The History of the Religious Education Association page shows the REA is composed of a wide variety of religious groups, all apparently working side-by-side. One of the men that had a great influence on the REA’s birth and ideals is “John Dewey” (who is mentioned on the page), one of the signers of the Humanist Manifesto I.

iii. The Wikipedia article on the Humanist Manifesto I describes humanism as a new religion designed to “replace previous, deity-based religions.” It shows John Dewey as one of the 34 signers.

iv. The Yale Library Guide to the Archives of the Religious Education Association page shows that from the very beginning it has been REA’s written stated goal and “purpose, ‘to promote religious and moral education.’” Religious and moral education should be delivered within the sphere of the home or the church, both God-ordained institutions (not some man-made entity like the REA).

v. The REA Board of Directors page shows the current make-up of the REA is still composed of a wide variety of religious groups, all apparently working side-by-side.

6. The June 05, 2000 Hutchins Institute “Global Links” web page.

7. The October 5, 2003 Hutchins Institute “Main” web page. The page emphasizes (by highlighting words focusing on the individual and the present) the practical result of a humanistic worldview, a worldview apparently held by Meador.

a. The October 5, 2003 Hutchins Institute “Purpose” web page describes the humanistic philosophies, theories, and perspectives used at the Hutchins Institute, to include Gestalt and Perennialism.

b. The October 5, 2003 Hutchins Institute “Contact” web page shows that Meador attempted to bring and/or did

HIER Site After May 18, 2004

Size: The new HIER web site seems to only consist of a single main page.

Focus: Meador changed his focus to “Individual, Couples, and Spiritual Counseling” as well as “Gestalt Theory, and Transgenerational Family Patterns.”

Fee Basis?: The new HIER web site clearly shows “Pro Bono - All counseling services are provided without charge.”

Activity: Brother Meador’s activities, as stated on the new HIER web site, had apparently shifted to broad spectrum counseling, including “Spiritual Counseling” using “Gestalt Theory” and other humanistic psychotherapies.

physically bring the business of the Hutchins Institute (e.g. humanistic psychotherapy, such as Gestalt therapy) into the Southwest School of Bible Studies. Brother Meador would schedule and physically conduct appointments with clients at the School of Bible Studies at 8900 Manchaca Road.

c. The October 5, 2003 Hutchins Institute “Global Links” web page shows various educational and academic research links, including “HIER Related Links.”

i. The October 5, 2003 Hutchins Institute “HIER Related Links” web page shows professional practitioners of Gestalt related therapies, all apparently recommended² or approved by Meador. The fact that Meador lists (endorses) a denominational minister (Paul Durbin, Ph.D.) is of particular concern.

1. A portion of the Human Trinity Hypnotherapy web page of denominational Chaplain Paul Durbin’s, Ph.D.

8. The May 18, 2004 Hutchins Institute “Main” web page.

a. The Wikipedia article on psychotherapy (with four additional bookmarks) shows that psychotherapy is a broad term that that can include medical and humanistic methodologies and schools of thought. The particular brand of psychotherapy practiced by Meador is, by definition, “person centered” psychotherapy.

It is clearly and properly labeled as humanistic in nature. Gestalt Therapy is given as an example of a “humanistic psychotherapy.”

b. The Wikipedia article on Gestalt Therapy reinforces the fact that Gestalt Therapy is a “humanistic psychotherapy” as well as showing this therapy is rooted in other ungodly philosophies (psychoanalysis, existentialism). The article also shows that some west coast adherents to this belief viewed Gestalt Therapy as a “as a way of life” rather than as a “therapeutic approach.” These “way-of-life” adherents even developed a “Gestalt prayer.”

c. Pages 1 and 6 of the Association for Advancement of Gestalt Therapy 2006 Spring Newsletter found at http://aagt.org/html/pdf/2006_Spring_Newsletter.pdf.

The article “Some Lingering Lavender-Hued Reflections of Amsterdam and AAGT ... And Gayly Anticipating Vancouver” leaves little doubt that this association, of which Meador was (is?) a member, tolerates homosexuality and the homosexual lifestyle.

9. The December 16, 2006 ZoomInfo Web Summary for Joseph Meador, Member of Bible Faculty, Southwest School of Bible Studies. ZoomInfo is a summarization search engine that gathers publicly available information and arranges it in an easy to read format.

Information gathered by ZoomInfo is consistent with other evidence gathered, thereby adding additional credibility to other information gathered.

a. A February 6, 2004 ZoomInfo cached web page showing Brother Meador was trained in Gestalt therapy at the Gestalt Institute of New Orleans.

b. A graduation list from the Gestalt Institute of New Orleans showing brother Meador was a graduate of their Gestalt therapy course.

10. A portion of the December 16, 2006 Austin, TX Body Mind Spirit Directory “Main” page (<http://www.bodymindspiritdirectory.org/7X-Austin.htm#Austin.TX>). To advertise in this directory the publishers require the submission to be “Holistic Health, Natural Healing.”

Spiritual, Environmental or Metaphysical in nature. The ad for The Gestalt Institute of Austin was submitted to run under the “Spiritual Counseling” section, apparently because the submitter believes that Gestalt is spiritual in nature. The ad appeared next to other religious ads from organizations like the Church of Scientology and a group called the Sacred Language of Light.

a. The December 30, 2006 Gestalt Institute of Austin “Main” web page. There is evidence that the Gestalt Institute of Austin is (owned?) operated by brother Meador. (The street address of the Anandamaya Yoga Institute and the Gestalt Institute of Austin are identical. Based on public information, the Anandamaya Yoga Institute is known to be operated by brother Meador.) Although it is not possible to tell if Meador placed the ad in Austin, TX Body Mind Spirit Directory, it is possible to see that, to this day, he still participates in the humanistic Gestalt activities advocated and practiced by the organization named in the ad.

NARRATIVE

To remain faithful, Christians must act in accordance with scriptural values and principles. When Christians act properly, they can expect to receive condemnation from a world that hates truth (1 Peter 4:4) and hates those that follow the truth (John 17:14, 16-17, 20). By living faithful lives in accordance with God's word, they also carry out the Lord's command: **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven**” (Matthew 5: 16).

The Bible also describes what happens when a Christian takes on worldly values, philosophies, and behaviors and does not live consistent with scriptural values:

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. (Matthew 5:13-15).

The Bible also says that a faithful Christian cannot “straddle the fence” and try to serve both God and the world: **“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”** (Matthew 6:24).

The evidence shows Meador started his own institute, The Hutchins Institute for Education and Research (HIER), as a private, consulting, educational and research foundation. (This institute appears to be the first of three institutes Meador has owned, operated or worked with in the greater Austin, TX area while still working with the Southwest School of Bible Studies.) One facet of this institute was Transpersonal Studies, a philosophy that tells the adherent to seek wisdom and the answers of life within themselves. This is humanism, pure and simple!

“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”
(Jeremiah 10:23).

The Transpersonal Studies methodology is an ungodly and sinful practice that is in direct contradiction to Scripture. For Meador to practice this (and advertise to the world that he does so) is shameful, not only for him but also for the Lord's body which he represents. Meador has also embraced a study of the work and philosophies of Carl Jung. Jung's philosophy (the basis of Meador's “Jungian Studies”) is humanistic to the core and, as such, stands opposed to the doctrine of Christ.

Another area the institute conducted research in was Comparative Religion. Comparative Religion analyzes differences between world religions and compares their “rituals.” Although it is not inherently sinful to do this research, it is puzzling how and why a man who heads a school of biblical studies and who is supposedly training faithful Gospel preachers would have the time and desire to set up a secular organization designed, in part, to study the false religions of the world. In any case, the Bible says a mature, godly man who wants to grow in faith and ultimately see God will focus his time on God's word rather than the false teachings of men:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the coun-

sel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night (Psalms 1: 1-2). When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches” (Psa. 63:6).

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (Phil. 4:8).

One of the purposes of the Hutchins Institute is “academic research in ... Transpersonal Studies.” This research is based on the underlying philosophy of “Perennialism.” The “Perennialism” educational philosophy used by the Hutchins Institute was developed by the late Robert M. Hutchins. Perennialism is a humanistic philosophy and, therefore, stands in opposition to the form of godliness taught in Scripture.

“Joseph D. Meador, M.S., Ph.D. (Education), is the founding director of The Hutchins Institute.” Meador’s graduate education was “focused on” the philosophies of two men, specifically “Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler.” **“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8).**

It is interesting to note how, in Meador's world, the rational mind, rather than the soul, takes preeminence. For example, he does NOT describe his duties on the “Bible Faculty at Southwest” as training gospel preachers, equipping men to seek the lost, or anything related to reaching and saving the souls of men. Instead, educational terminology is used, such as “teaches college level courses in Bible” and “related religious studies.” It seems more important for him to mention to the reader the particular LEVEL that he teaches (“COLLEGE level”) rather than the content of what he teaches (preparing gospel preachers to preach the truth of God's word). What he says and what he does not say betray much about him (Matt. 26:73).

The “Founder” page says he has “professional level membership in several academic societies.” What profession would that be? Would that be, Meador, a Christian, training men to preach the Gospel; or Doctor Meador, a man enamored with humanistic philosophies, titles, and degrees, who spends his time studying and embracing the worldly and humanistic teachings of men?

Although we must live in this world, we must not be like the world: **“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).**

Two of the “academic societies” that Meador joined are the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and the Religious Education Association (REA). The AAR has members from many of the major religious groups of the world. They say of themselves, “The AAR neither endorses nor rejects any religious belief or practice.” The REA is similar to the AAR in that it too has members from many of the major religious groups of the world. They say of themselves, the “REA is rich

with diversity; its membership includes those from the Baha’i, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Protestant and other traditions involved in all aspects of religious education,” “The REA is a member of North American Interfaith Network (NAIN).” Those in fellowship with NAIN (like the REA, which includes Meador) are part of an “association of interfaith organizations” and “diverse religious groups throughout North America” that operates “without infringing on the effort of existing organizations.”

All these groups are composed of religious people and each group has a common component—they expect their members not to disagree with or oppose the doctrines of other members or religious groups within their ranks. Did Jesus “agree to disagree” with hypocrisy, false teaching or sin in his day?

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? (Matt.23:29-33).

Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch (Matt. 15:12-14).

What Bible principles apply to Christians associating with members of false religions for the purpose of studying them or educating themselves? Can Christians remain Scripturally faithful to God while having cooperative fellowship with false religions and yet “neither endorse nor reject any religious belief or practice” that they have? What about the Bible’s commands on acceptable fellowship and proper associations (e.g. 2 John 1:9-11); are they rendered moot just because we join “professional level ..., academic societies?” Scripture gives us guidance that covers these questions:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you...(2 Cor. 6:14-17)

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth (Rev. 3: 15-16).

The October 5, 2003 Hutchins Institute web site is different than the version of June 5, 2000. The language of the

“Main” web page provides some additional insight for those who have doubts that Meador has embraced a humanistic philosophy that focuses man inward to solve his own problems (rather than towards his Maker).

The “Purpose” page restates some old material from the June 5, 2000 site (e.g. “Perennialism”) and introduces, for the first time, a new humanistic “orientation in use at the Hutchins Institute” — Gestalt Therapy. This page also describes the full range of techniques and philosophies used by the Hutchins Institute, as well as the persons who have help create these techniques and philosophies.

The most shocking of all things to appear on the October 5, 2003 site is on the “HIER Contact” page. There we find that Meador has advertised that appointments for clients of The Hutchins Institute for Education and Research are “Scheduled and Conducted” at his office at the “Southwest School of Bible Studies.” In simple terms, someone could, at that time, go to 8900 Manchaca Road in Austin, TX and walk in to Brother/Doctor Meador’s office on the grounds of the Southwest church of Christ. Depending on the individual’s desires, he could see Meador to enroll in the Southwest School of Bible Studies to study the scriptures or have an appointment with Doctor Meador to receive some sort of Gestalt Therapy or other humanistic psychotherapy. (Some questions left unanswered are, “Were the Southwest elders aware this was happening and, if they were, what did they do about it?”)

Following a series of links (the “HIER Global Links” page to the “HIER Related Links” page) we come to Brother Meador’s endorsement of the “professional practitioners” listed thereon: “The following sites represent professional practitioners of Gestalt related ‘Dreamwork’, ‘Parts Therapy’, and ‘Transforming Therapy’.” One of the professionals on the HIER Related Links page who is endorsed by Brother Meador is Paul Durbin, Ph.D., or should I say Chaplain (Pastor) Durbin, a United Methodist Minister. Again, the words of 2 Corinthians 6:14-17 come to mind. We may have to live in this world but we should never give anyone the slightest hint that we tolerate, much less endorse, sin (including those who sin by practicing a false religion). Any unsuspecting reader of this web page, by relying on Meador’s endorsement of Chaplain Durbin, could be induced to seek him out to receive humanistic and/or denominational counseling, both in violation of Scripture: “**Abstain from all appearance of evil**” (1 Thess. 5:22). “**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them**” (Eph. 5: 11).

The May 18, 2004 Hutchins Institute “Main” web page completes the major shift in Brother Meador’s thinking and practice at the Hutchins Institute (the beginning of the change was first seen on the October 5, 2003 site). The size of the web site has been reduced and seems to consist of only a single main page. By this point, Meador has fully changed his focus at the Hutchins Institute to “Individual, Couples, and Spiritual Counseling” as well as “Gestalt Theory, and Transgenerational Family Patterns.” Now, all services provided by the Hutchins Institute are pro-bono versus an apparent fee for service structure prior to this time. Previously,

educational studies and consulting were major activities at the Hutchins Institute; now Brother Meador seems to have taken on a much greater role as a psychotherapist. The site shows he has shifted to broad spectrum counseling, including “Spiritual Counseling” using “Gestalt Theory” and other humanistic psychotherapies. The obvious question is, “Where in scripture will brother Meador go to justify the use of humanistic ‘Gestalt therapy’ and other psychotherapies performed under the guise of ‘Spiritual Counseling’?”

This page also highlights some of the professional memberships that Meador held, and may still hold. The attached documentation expands on Gestalt therapy, a key issue for those who are members of the International Gestalt Therapy Association, and psychotherapy, a key issue for those who are members of the American Psychotherapy Association. Besides being a member of these two organizations, Meador is also member of the Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy (AAGT). There is an attached article from the AAGT’s 2006 Spring Newsletter (http://aagt.org/htm/pdf/2006_Spring_Newsletter.pdf—Pages 1, 6) which shows how this organization tolerates, and seems to even embrace, the sin of homosexuality. These are the organizations that BROTHER Joseph Meador belongs to. This is the man who runs a school of biblical studies at the Southwest Church of Christ, belongs to and actively advertises to the world that he belongs to it.

The December 16, 2006 ZoomInfo web page for Joseph Meador is a summary of information on him that is currently available on the world wide web. How is Joseph Meador BEST known in the public domain? Is he BEST known as brother Meador, a humble Christ-like man, training other men to preach the old Jerusalem Gospel; or Doctor Meador, a man who is not shy about showing others his advanced education, scholarly titles, close association with important Gestaltists, and impressive educational degrees? What does the evidence, which he has publicly posted for the world to see, show?

A portion of the December 16, 2006 Austin, TX Body Mind Spirit Directory “Main” page (<http://www.bodymindspiritdirectory.org/TX-Austin.htm#Austin,TX>), which shows advertising for services that are “Holistic Health, Natural Healing, Spiritual, Environmental or Metaphysical in nature,” is included (these are the advertising guidelines set by the page owner to place an ad). The ad on that page for The Gestalt Institute of Austin was submitted to run under the “Spiritual Counseling” section, apparently because the submitter believes that Gestalt is spiritual in nature. The ad appeared next to other religious ads from “spiritual” organizations like the Church of Scientology and a group called the Sacred Language of Light. Rational readers of this ad and the December 30, 2006 Gestalt Institute of Austin “Main” web page are forced to conclude that Brother Meador, as a member of the Gestalt Institute of Austin, holds to the belief and ideology that Gestalt is or has a spiritual or religious component. (There is some evidence that Meador holds a position of influence at the Gestalt Institute of Austin and may have been involved in the placement of the advertisement.) Since Meador is a man who teaches other men to preach the

gospel, maybe he should have engaged in spiritual counseling as described in scripture rather than advertising his name and humanistic Gestalt “Spiritual Counseling” side-by-side with false religions (and publicly disgracing the body of Christ). God’s counsel is His Word:

Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever (Psa. 73:21-26).

“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:” (Heb. 6:17).

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalms 119: 105).

According to the Wayback Machine, the last time The Hutchins Institute for Education and Research had a working web page was on or about April 1, 2005. After that, the Wayback Machine shows the site was archived but the site was blank. There are rumors that the elders at the Southwest church of Christ were displeased with Meador for creating and operating the Hutchins Institute for Education and Research. Supposedly, as the rumor goes, they “encouraged” him to take the web site down. (Considering the sinful nature of what was going on at the Hutchins Institute and the fact that the director of the Southwest School of Bible Studies was running the Hutchins Institute, I can imagine how that might embarrass and bother the Southwest elders quite a bit.) Try as I might, I have been unable to confirm or deny these rumors with any credible evidence so they remain just that, rumors. Removing the site is a good first step towards repentance (if that was Meador’s actual intent in removing the site) but it is NOT equivalent to actual biblical repentance. I have also looked in the public domain to find anything that shows brother Meador has repented for the sins he had committed in being involved with the worldly and humanistic philosophies described previously in this document. I also have been unable to find any credible evidence that shows he had done so or that he has even acknowledged that his actions were sinful.

The story of the worldly activities of brother Meador does not stop with the end of the Hutchins Institute. A search which returned “a listing of yoga teachers in Austin, Texas” shows a fairly new web site for yet another institute listed under Meador’s name. The Anandamaya Yoga Institute (<http://www.anandamaya.org/>) is his new institute. It happens to be located at the same address as The Gestalt Institute of Austin (which is one of the major reasons I believe Meador also owns/operates The Gestalt Institute of Austin). With The Hutchins Institute, Meador has followed the European Gestalt heritage that has connection with such men and women as Robert M. Hutchins, Mortimer Adler, Carl Jung, Kurt Koffka, Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Koehler, Anne Teachworth Elliot Shapiro, and Paul Watzlawick. Now, Brother Meador

has shifted to a more middle-eastern³ philosophy with the Anandamaya Yoga Institute, but he has still not abandoned his humanistic methodology. Although Meador has decided to include a religious disclaimer⁴ on the Anandamaya Institute site, this disclaimer does not excuse or mitigate the evidence of humanism that appears there. On the Anandamaya web page we find phrases like:

“Meditation – the peaceful path to the inner Self”

“**within** the true Self”

“**Interior** meditation”

“**inner** Self”

“**inner** – contemplation”

Each one of these phrases demonstrates how the philosophy behind Anandamaya meditation/yoga turns the person inward⁵ to seek answers for the questions of life rather than towards his God (Jer. 10:23); this is an ungodly and sinful philosophy. Meador previously has stated he uses the following philosophies/teachings as the basis for his work at The Hutchins Institute for Education and Research:

—The June 05, 2000 Hutchins Institute “Purpose” web page - “The educational **philosophy of the Hutchins Institute** is grounded in “Perennialism” as developed by the late **Robert M. Hutchins.**”

—The June 05, 2000 Hutchins Institute “Founder” web page – (Referring to Brother Meador) “He received his undergraduate education in the social sciences from The University of Texas (B.A.), and has conducted graduate work at the State University of New York, Bethany Theological Seminary (M.Th. in Systematic Theology), in Israel at Jerusalem University College (Cert.), and Southwest University (M.S., Ph.D. in Education) where his graduate and doctoral research in Education **focused on the philosophy of Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler.**”

Currently, Meador uses the following philosophies/teachings as the basis for his work at the Anandamaya Institute:

—The Anandamaya Yoga Institute web page – “Anandamaya meditation is a form of **inner–contemplation** which takes its **teachings** from an **ancient Indian philosophy** known as ‘**Samkhya**’.”

Although the type of philosophy has changed, one thing remains the same, brother Meador continues to appeal to men to look within themselves to fix their own problems and reduce stress, rather than following God’s word on the matter:

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and

mammon” 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? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Matt. 6:24-34).

CONCLUSION

What does the evidence show?

1. The evidence is overwhelming in showing that Meador has, for years, been involved in humanistic practices and/or other ungodly philosophies. Whether Meador was involved with these practices under the umbrella of Transpersonal Studies, Jungian Studies, Perennialism, Gestalt Therapy, Transgenerational Family Patterns, and currently, the more middle-eastern Yoga and Samkhya does not matter. Regardless of the source, the evidence shows that these philosophies direct the adherent to get their life “guidance within”⁶ or “to attain the deeper peace, healing and joy that is within the true Self.”⁷ Brother Meador is no novice in the faith. He knows or should have known by virtue of his years of experience and training in the Gospel that humanism and these humanistic practices are hellish and ungodly.

2. The evidence shows that Meador joined several academic societies, including the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and the Religious Education Association (REA). Membership in some secular organizations may or may not be sinful depending on the circumstance of the situation. These are organizations with religious or quasireligious purposes, as evidenced by the “Religious” or “Interfaith” title of the organizations. The evidence of this particular situation show that these organizations have ... members from many of the major religious groups of the world” and are “rich with diversity; its membership includes those from the Baha’i, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Protestant and other traditions involved in all aspects of religious education.” These groups were further allied with other groups, like the North American

Interfaith Network, which had a similar membership structure. Further, these groups operated with a “unity in diversity” and “agree to disagree” mindset where members were not to oppose the beliefs of other members. Joining these groups, accepting their values and the restrictions they place on their members (e.g., not opposing the false doctrines of other members) is inconsistent with what Christians are expected to do when confronted by false teachers and false religions. Based on the evidence, in this case, brother Meador was unequally yoked together with unbelievers and involved in sin (2 Corinthians 6:14-17).

3. The evidence shows that Meador was not content to keep his sinful conduct away from the Southwest School of Bible Studies, but rather, he brought that sin or attempted to bring that sin within the walls of the schoolhouse. Based on Meador’s advertisement on the World Wide Web, appointments for clients of The Hutchins Institute for Education and Research would be “Scheduled and Conducted” at his office at the “Southwest School of Bible Studies” at 8900 Manchaca Road in Austin, TX on the grounds of the Southwest church of Christ.

4. The evidence shows that Meador still is involved in some of these sinful practices (e.g., humanism). Brother Meador is no novice in the faith. He knows or should have know, by virtue of his years of experience and training in the Gospel, that a Christian cannot participate in “a form of inner-contemplation which takes its teachings from an ancient Indian philosophy known as ‘Samkhya’.” Faithful Christians, **“Hold fast the form of sound words...”** (2 Timothy 1:13a) not some “ancient Indian philosophy.” Although he has been creative in placing a disclaimer on the Anandamaya Yoga Institute web page, a disclaimer does not turn sinful conduct into righteous conduct.

It is my earnest desire that brother Meador, as well as anyone else caught up in this situation, will turn away from their sinful conduct and WHOLLY and COMPLETELY return to serving God in the manner He requires. Meador can be a force for much good in the Master’s service, but not in his current state. An holy God requires holy people who will humble themselves and put away their sin:

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:” (1 Peter 5:5).

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. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1 :5-9).

Come back before it is too late – humanism and Christianity do not mix.

END NOTES

1 The University of Texas (B.A. in social sciences), State University of New York, Bethany Theological Seminary (M.Th. in Systematic Theology), in Israel at Jerusalem University College (Cert.), and Southwest University (M.S., Ph.D. in Education)

2 Brother Meador would not have listed them if he did not think them worthy of his recommendation or approval.

3 The potential connection between Gestalt therapy and similar middle-eastern philosophies and practices (e.g. yoga) has not gone unnoticed by others. At the Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy 2006 International Conference, on Friday, August 11, 2006 the following lecture was given (http://aagt.org/html/pdf/2006_Spring_Newsletter.pdf – page 20): 8:30-10:20 Kailish Tuli “Yoga is Indian, Gestalt German— Will They Marry or Live Together?”

This presentation, both in theory and demonstration, is intended to address the basic issue of a mirror reflection between Yogic and Gestalt psychotherapy. It appears to be an unfortunate coincidence that Fritz and Laura Perls did not notice Yoga when Eastern thoughts like Zen entered the Gestalt bibliography. The presentation shows how Yoga might positively influence the practice of Gestalt (continued next page) therapy. Further, since psychotherapy has potential to influence beyond the clinic to one’s style of life, Yoga offers more than mere physical regimen; it is an influence on style of life and philosophy.

4 “The Anandamaya Yoga Institute is a non-profit, educational organization, that provides instruction in classical meditation, and is not affiliated with any religious organization, nor does it promote any organized religious teaching.”

5 Transpersonal Studies uses similar language and concepts to yoga’s “inner self.”

6 What Is Transpersonal Studies – Atlantic University Online web page.

7 Anandamaya Yoga Institute main web page.

—Kevin Townsend
6331 Shady Green
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THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN EVANGELISM

Gary Summers

Even among brethren who are in agreement with the basic principle that God has designated men to lead in public worship, there are differences as to what women may do outside the assembly. It is sad to have to disagree with brethren who are otherwise sound, but truth is truth, and it needs to be set forth and upheld. Doctrinal error must be refuted and denounced.

Some have chosen to argue that women may teach non-Christian men the gospel—not *incidentally*—but *intentionally*. What is the difference? In the course of a conversation, a non-Christian man asks a question of a Christian woman. Most brethren would agree that she could answer one or more questions. One example of such a situation involved a preacher, a secretary, and a salesman. The conversation was interrupted when a member stopped by unexpectedly with a personal problem. The preacher excused himself for what turned out to be 30 minutes or more. In his absence the salesman had seen some bulletin articles on the table and began to ask the secretary a few questions, which she answered. She had not set herself up as an authority or made an appointment to study with this man. The conversation was unplanned, unforeseen, and *incidental*. When the preacher returned, he continued the discussion, offering to study with the man. Situations like these arise on certain occasions, and no one (so far as this writer knows) offers any Scriptural objections.

However, it is a different matter when women *intentionally* teach Bible studies that have been set up with non-Christian men. Women may teach other women, along with children, with the approval of God, but why would they want to teach men? What kind of precedent does this set? Are there no qualified men in a congregation who can teach the gospel to someone? When she finishes teaching, will she also baptize him? Will she ground him in the faith as well and be his “mother” in the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15; Phile. 10)? Why not instead accompany her husband as he teaches?

The Defense Offered

Some have formulated a line of reasoning to attempt to justify the practice of women teaching men the gospel. An eldership put forth the following document which is set up similar to a syllogism.

1. New Testament teaching on women’s role in the church is based squarely on two things:
 - a. The order of creation (1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13).
 - b. The part woman played in the transgression in Eden (1 Tim. 3:14 [sic]; Gen. 3:16).
2. Because the roles of men and women

in the church are determined by creation and the fall, they have been the same in all dispensations: Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:13,14 [sic]).

3. Therefore, Old Testament teaching on women’s role illustrates New Testament teaching (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1-12).

In case you have not figured it out, this is not a sample of good logic—formal or otherwise. The first statement is true, as is its supporting evidence (except for the typo on 1 Tim. 3:14, which should be 1 Tim. 2:14). The New Testament teaching on the role of women is indeed based on the order of creation and the fall, in which woman was deceived and then led man into transgression.

The other two statements are, however, false. Whoever formulated the second point *assumes* that the roles of men and women have been the same in all dispensations, which is not necessarily true and certainly is not demonstrated. The two Scriptures cited do not prove this statement; they only show the teaching of God under the New Testament era. Below is a parallel (and also faulty) line of reasoning.

1. New Testament teaching on the permanence of marriage is based squarely two things:

a. God creating in the beginning a male and a female (Matt. 19:4).

b. The male shall leave his father and mother and be joined to the female, and the two shall be one flesh (Matt. 19:5). What God has joined together man should not put asunder (Matt. 19:5-6).

2. Because the permanence of marriage is determined by God’s action in Creation and in the Garden of Eden, His law on the permanence of marriage has been the same in all dispensations: Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian (Matt. 19:4-6).

3. Therefore, Old Testament teaching on the permanence of marriage illustrates New Testament teaching (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1-12).

The only problem here is that, while God’s ideal will was one woman for one man for life, He allowed divorce (Matt. 19:8; Deut. 25:1-4), and He allowed and regulated polygamy (Deut. 21:15-17). Yet, according to the logic on the role of women, God also must have had the same standard regarding marriage in the Old Testament (since Jesus appeals to Genesis), which creates a hopeless contradiction. The

“logic,” however, that put us in such an unenviable position is invalid.

God allowed certain things to occur in the Old Testament that did not match His ideal will. One cannot take New Testament doctrine and try to impose it upon Old Testament situations. Such an attempt is vain and would result in serious problems relating to authority.

The “conclusion” stated in the previous argument is already erroneous because the second “premise” is not true; it is also horrendous in its own right— Old Testament examples illustrate New Testament doctrine? To be sure, we are to learn from events that occurred then. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:1-12, shows how that the Israelites were disobedient—to their own laws. They lusted after evil things and became idolaters. They murmured and tempted God, also. We do not want to follow in their footsteps as to how they treated God.

Learning from these principles is one thing; saying that these things are illustrations of New Testament teaching is quite another. Why would God put illustrations of New Testament teaching in the Old Testament? Would it not make more sense to illustrate New Testament doctrine in the New Testament? The “logic” presented in this doctrinal statement is not only twisted; it is as false as it can be. What is such a strange argument leading up to?

The Application

The document goes on to say that the Bible teaches that women cannot serve as elders, deacons, or evangelists (public preachers of the Gospel), lead in the worship of the church, or preach the Gospel or teach the Bible in public assemblies of men and women—all of which is true. You will note the emphasis on the word *public*. Such would seem to imply that they can teach men in “private assemblies.” No one need wonder if such an implication is correct.

The authors of the statement under review make this point clear when they argue: “*We believe women can teach men in private settings (Acts 18:24-26; 2 Kings 22:12-20)*” (emph. gws).

Do these Scriptures establish the claim? The first passage introduces the eloquent Apollos, who knew only of the baptism of John. Verse 26 informs us:

So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

In what sense does this verse authorize women to teach men in private? It authorizes a woman to accompany her husband to teach someone in private; more cannot be made of this situation. The document under review advocates that brethren “speak where the Scriptures speak, and remain silent where the Scriptures are silent” (1 Pet. 4:11). Agreed! The Scriptures are silent about how much Aquila said or how much Priscilla said in their conversation with Apollos. Then what kind of leap is it that 1) assumes that Priscilla played a major role in this discussion (contrary to observing the silence of the Scriptures); and that 2) applies what a woman did in tandem with her husband to women (who are not ac-

companying their husbands) teaching men privately? This passage does not even remotely prove the argument.

As poor a choice as that example was, however, the second reference is even more disastrous. It concerns King Josiah’s reaction upon hearing the words of the Book of the Law, which had been found in the temple. He commissioned Hilkiah the high priest, Shaphan the scribe, and three others to do the following:

Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.

The men then went to see Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, who dwelt in Jerusalem. She responded to their inquiry in the following way.

Then she said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, “Tell the man who sent you to Me. “Thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants; all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read; because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath shall be aroused against this place and shall not be quenched’ (vv. 15-17).

But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Concerning the words which you have heard; because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you,” says the LORD. “Surely, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place.” “So they brought back word to the king’ (vv. 18-20).

This text is somehow supposed to prove that women today can teach men the Gospel in private, but such could only occur through the most convoluted reasoning imaginable.

First of all, the passage is in the Old Testament, which cannot constitute authority for what Christians practice (Col. 3:17). We must have authority from Christ—not Moses or one of the prophets. What was taught in the Law or what example we may find in a different dispensation has no relevance to the Christian system unless specifically cited by Jesus or the apostles. Paul made this point clear with respect to the Judaizing teachers. Circumcision was commanded under the Law, but to bind it under the Christian system was to fall from grace (Gal. 5:1-4).

Second, this situation involves an inspired person, a genuine prophetess, giving information to those who had no such gift. How can it therefore be parallel today to an uninspired woman teaching uninspired men?

Third, the inquiry had to do with the immediate future of the nation of Judah—something that Christians could not

ask of anyone—male or female—today, since spiritual gifts have ceased. We have all the revelation we need to last until the return of Christ.

These three facts are enough to disqualify this passage from being used in an attempt to justify women teaching men privately the Gospel. Since these are the only two texts cited, and they cannot accomplish the task, the assertion that women may teach men in private has no substantiation.

1 Timothy 2:8-15

One thing that brethren lose sight of is the way in which 1 Timothy 2:8-15 begins: “**Therefore, I desire that men pray everywhere....**” The text which explains the role of women never specifies the assembly of brethren. It would certainly include it, since **where** the saints meet certainly must be contained in **everywhere**. *Everywhere* also includes at camp, in the home, at a picnic, or any private setting. For women to intentionally plan to teach Bible studies with one, five, or ten men present is a violation of 1 Timothy 2. If not, why not?

You may wonder if the document under review is held by an isolated individual. Sadly, it is not. The position taken in that document has led to a loss of support for brethren in Kiev, from which comes our brother Igor. It is the congregation with which Kerry Sword, whom we support, works. Kerry and other brethren have tried to resolve this problem with various parties involved, but their letters and phone calls have gone unanswered—except for one, in which it was made clear that the elders who signed off on the document under review had no desire to meet.

I also made an attempt to see if there was any interest in discussing this subject and was informed: “I have already mentioned to you my position on the question.... I do not plan to have any further discussions on this topic.”

Therefore, since this is a false position, and it has been set forth in a public document, brethren probably ought to know that this teaching is apparently the official position of Truth for the World. The document is a statement from the elders of the Duluth Church of Christ, which oversees Truth for the World. At least two of those involved support this document.

It may be that other brethren will also be shocked by their mishandling of the Scriptures and their refusal to discuss the topic. Certainly, they need to be encouraged to change this teaching before it spreads.

One of the key dangers (besides the fact that the doctrine is false) is that if women teachers are accepted in private, it will make it easier for people to accept them in public roles. No, we do not believe that the goal of Truth for the World is to facilitate such a thing, because they plainly state they do not believe women preaching and teaching in public is right.

But their position will encourage movement in that direction. Some brethren sing spiritual songs, for example, in private to the accompaniment of instrumental music. Maybe they buy and listen to “gospel” CDs, also. Perhaps this looseness is also the reason that some congregations

have introduced (unopposed) instrumental music into their worship. The Scriptures do not limit “singing” (without accompaniment) to the assembly (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). What is wrongly accepted in private today is often accepted publicly tomorrow.

ADDENDUM

There is an additional document written by Skip Andrews, one of the elders who oversees Truth for the World, which is titled, “A Study of the Levels of Authority in Teaching the Bible (Revised).” In the “Introduction,” Andrews writes:

Although this study will address a number of principles and questions, the main reason for the effort that has gone into it is due to one question. The question is, “Is it scriptural for a woman to teach a man in a Bible study?” The major idea that is under consideration is with reference to a study that is intended to lead the man to Christ. He makes it clear that the answer to the question is, “Yes.”

This material is not an attempt to justify merely incidental conversations. He writes that “it can be an organized study as when one would use filmstrips, ‘Fishers of Men’ material, other aids, or the Bible alone.” He uses two approaches to try to prove his argument. One of these is by affirming: “There is a sameness of the pattern in both testaments,” which has been previously discussed.

The other mechanism to achieve his conclusion is what he terms “the position of equality.” Among other things, he affirms that “the Bible does not teach that every teaching/learning situation must have a designated leader,” and he refers the situation in Acts 18, in which Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos. “There is nothing in this text that says or implies that anyone was in a leadership role.” Those who regularly engage in personal work know that one of the two brethren **leads** the discussion, although the other person (male or female) may make helpful comments. The concept of **leaderless** discussions when teaching the gospel is ludicrous.

King Josiah’s sending five men to the “learn the will of the Lord” from Huldah the prophetess is cited to prove “that it does not even matter how many [men, gws] are involved, as long as she is not in a position of authority over them.” This situation is cited, in other words, as another example of leaderless equality—a tremendous stretch of the imagination.

In an “Inferences” section, Andrews carries the *incidental* situation to the breaking point.

(If one man has one question, can she answer? What if one man has ten questions? What if they are in the exact same order as the questions on a “Search for Truth” lesson? What if it is two men with one question each? What if... ?).

At the conclusion of the document, Andrews asks: “Does it make any difference how many sinners are present in the above situation (as far as the Bible teaching—not expedience) is concerned?” With an apparently straight face, he adds:

But it is easy to “imagine” a situation where there would be no other way. No Bible principle is violated whether it be one, two, or ten—for we know that there were at least five who came to Huldah; the woman at the well told “men” the truth about Jesus, etc. And do not forget that her example and others in Matthew through John, although before Pentecost, are a part of the New Testament. As such, they are for our learning under the new covenant. It is up to us to use the rules of interpretation properly to learn which parts of examples apply to us and which parts do not. These are clear illustrations of the truth that women can teach in situations where there is an equality of position—no one is in charge—and she is not even thinking about being in charge. All she is doing is that which she has a right to do! Let us not get in the *way* so they are stopped or detoured from their rightful service!

A woman can teach ten men the gospel—and she is not even thinking about being in charge! It would be laughable were it not so serious. Here is a prime example of where faulty premises and an illogical argument leads.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

[Some brethren do not desire to hear about the errors being taught and/or practised by the brethren. It seems that some have an attitude that says, “Yes, I know error is around, but I had rather go about my business as if it did not exist.” But the Bible condemns being willingly ignorant. Thus, we must be circumspect in our Christian living lest Satan get an advantage over us. This is especially true in this “information age.”

As is true regarding the spread of the Gospel, false doctrines are also spread by the agency of man. Thus, is needed the ever timely and relevant admonition to, “Beware of False Teachers!”

In the preceding article brother Summers has done a commendable job in informing us about and refuting certain error. We thank him for his efforts.

While reading Summers’ article I thought of the following proposition that pertains to the conduct of women towards men as they labor and worship together in the church. It reads: **“The Scriptures teach that whether intentionally or incidentally a woman is forbidden to exercise dominion over a man.”** The position treated by Summers reveals that some brethren have, for what ever reason, lost sight of doing all they do by the authority of Christ, leaving undone what is not authorized and what is forbidden. But if Heaven is to be our home, we must do all by the authority of Jesus Christ (Col. 3:17). To condone women teaching (exercising dominion) over men is sin. Any doctrine that allows for women to exercise dominion over a man is a false doctrine, all politically correct brethren notwithstanding.—**David P. Brown**]

DEALING WITH THOSE IN ERROR

There are many people who teach error (that which is false) without falling into the category of those described by Paul in 1 Tim. 4:1-3. For example, Simon the sorcerer of Acts 8 would not be in the same category as those described in 1 Tim. 4:1-3. Simon was in error for desiring that for which he was not authorized to have **“part nor lot”** (Acts 8:19-23). But he was not like those described by Paul in 1 Tim. 4:1-3. How do I know that? Because of Simon’s response to Peter’s rebuke, correction, and remedy (Acts 8:24). However, in both cases error in life and or doctrine committed by either kind of sinner is to be exposed, rebuked, and corrected. Obviously, though Simon was a novice Christian, the apostle Peter did not hesitate to bluntly rebuke him and correct him. What if Simon had not repented, could Philip, Peter and John have remained in fellowship with him indefinitely? Indeed not. While not a novice Christian, but an elder and an apostle of Christ, Peter was corrected in a straight forward manner by Paul (Gal. 2:14). What if Peter had not repented, would Paul and Barnabas have remained in fellowship indefinitely with Peter? Thus, error in all cases is to be exposed, the person(s) committing it rebuked, and the remedy provided. If the one in error, novice or mature Christian, repents of the error, then fellowship continues, but if repentance is not brought about, fellowship ends.

For example, if a person believed that *“Accountable to God persons who die without having the opportunity to hear the Gospel are persons who will go to Heaven”* is true, a correction of said person would need to be made. As to how such a person received the correction of his/her error would determine what would be done next. Concerning the treatment of heretics (the same kind of characters as Paul describes in 1 Tim. 4:1-3) Paul said, **“A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject”** (Titus 3:10). Even those who are weak in the faith, because they have not had the opportunity to grow, are not to be allowed to cause trouble in the church because of such ignorance and thereby their weakness of faith (Rom. 14:1).

We must not be persuaded that because, for example, some brethren believe that *“Accountable to God persons who die without having the opportunity to hear the Gospel are persons who will go to Heaven.”* is true, that we do not have an obligation to them to do what the Bible teaches in order to bring such people to repentance. Further, when brethren who are not novices in the Faith start advocating the previous proposition to be true (or any other false proposition to be true), teaching it all over the brotherhood, it seems clear that Titus 3:10 would be applicable to them—**“after the first and second admonition, reject” the heretic.** If not, why not?

Why would any knowledgeable member of the church argue a position, which position is nothing more or less than an effort to justify remaining indefinitely in fellowship with anyone, novice or otherwise, who believes, teaches and/or espouses error? That is exactly what such a doctrine teaches by implication. **But that which implies a false doctrine is itself false, because truth does not imply error.**

—Editor

Review Of A New Tract – “Guilt By Association”

Daniel Denham

A new tract written titled *Guilt By Association* has been released by its author, brother Lester Kamp, longtime editor of the quarterly—*Matters Of THE Faith*. It is more of a pamphlet than a tract as concerns sizing, but it is not bulky or unwieldy for easy use and distribution. It consists of some 19 thin single-column pages with additional spacing for notations.

The tract deals with the crucial subject of fellowship, which is a pressing issue of our time. It especially focuses upon decisions that preachers must make relative to activities in the Lord’s church and the bearing of Bible teaching on their participation in the same with those who are in error. He points out that those who are continually involved in participating with those who are teaching or practicing fatal error are guilty of sin in such association with them. He states the primary force of the tract in the following manner:

Though these people do not teach error, they are guilty because of their association with people who do. Though these people do not practice error themselves, they become guilty of sin by their association with those who practice error (p. 2).

He then proceeds to set forth the case from the Scriptures, which are the final authority in the matter as with everything.

What I am most impressed with about the tract is its depth and scope within a relatively small body of text. Kamp examines not only every pertinent New Testament text that deals with the scope, extent, limitation, and regulation of fellowship, but he also elicits a number of examples from both the Old and New Testaments that reinforce these principles. In fact, he actually begins with the latter in establishing the case, which he crowns with concise and cogent exegesis of the

New Testament texts dealing with specific warnings against such association with false teachers. He closes the body of his study with a section dealing with the withdrawal of fellowship and the key texts that describe the nature, procedure, and significance of respective cases. The tract is therefore also a handy tool in teaching on church discipline. In his conclusion he poignantly states:

After studying the Scriptures, it should be obvious that “guilt by association” is something that God recognizes as true and repeatedly warns us against it. Those who refuse to recognize this truth and who continue to associate and fellowship those who have departed from the Truth will surely reap the consequences. God will hold them accountable for their souls and the souls of those that they have influenced away from God’s Word (p.19).

Without hesitation I highly recommend the tract and commend Lester Kamp for a job well done. He has always shown an unflinching fidelity to the Truth of God’s Word and a fierce loyalty to the Lord’s church in opposing anything that would threaten its purity and safety. This tract is further evidence of that commitment. In a time of compromise by so many, this tract is not only timely but a panacea for this spiritual disease of compromise eating at the vital organs of the church. It is a call to arms and a plea for the doctrinal purity of God’s people. We wish for it a wide circulation among the churches. Copies of the tract may be ordered from Lester Kamp by writing him at 122 Nathaniel Gracie Drive in Statesville, NC 23625.

—607 72nd St.
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“What Manner of Spirit”

Lester Kamp

The October 2006 issue of *The Gospel Journal* (a journal which has a new basis and purpose) had the theme of “The Danger of Extremism.” Brandon Renfroe had an article in that issue with the above title. I do not know brother Renfroe personally and certainly have no ill will toward him (I do not desire his harm either bodily or spiritually), but several things in his article warrant a response.

Renfroe bases his article on the occasion upon which James and John, “**filled with righteous indignation and called for swift and decisive retribution**” on the Samaritans who refused Jesus and His companions. They said, “**Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from**

heaven, and consume them, even as Elijah did?” (Luke 9:54). Renfroe declares, “Obviously, these brothers were familiar with the incident concerning Elijah and the prophets of Baal, and considered it a historical reality (1 Kings 18:19-40).” There are a couple of parts of this statement that trouble me. *First*, I have searched the text cited and can only find fire coming down from heaven to consume the sacrifice that Elijah offered. The prophets of Baal were slain by the people under the directive of Elijah, but not by fire, and certainly not by fire from heaven (see 1 Kings 18:40). There is no fire in this text that consumes people as the “**sons of thunder**” request. The incident probably being referred to by James

and John is recorded in 2 Kings 1:10-12. *Secondly*, I wonder about Renfroe's reference to James and John considering this "a historical fact." Why would they consider it otherwise? Why introduce the idea of doubt regarding the historicity of the Old Testament or of this particular event into this article about "What Manner of Spirit"?

The response of Jesus to these two disciples was, "**Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them**" (Luke 9:55-56, emphasis mine, LK). Renfroe avers,

Should the Savior have heeded their misguided pleas, how would these unwitting Samaritans ever have been saved? The very idea advanced by James and John was counterintuitive to Christ's avowed mission to "**seek and save that which was lost**" (Luke 19:10).

The request of James and John was "counterintuitive" (i.e., against what common sense would indicate the mission of Christ to be). It is obvious from what Jesus said that at least at this moment James and John **did not know** what manner of spirit they were of or the real mission of the "Son of man." It was not counterintuitive to them; they needed reminding or they needed to be told (Luke 19:10 is some time after the text under consideration in the article).

Then Renfroe begins to make application of the situation he described from Luke 9. He writes of "**perilous times**" (2 Tim. 3:1), both in the world and in the church." According to Renfroe, many today are like the "Samaritans in Luke's narrative." He states that similar to the Samaritans many today are "**without natural affection**" (Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3)." One wonders how he can conclude that the Samaritans had such a trait from the text of Luke 9. The Samaritans were prejudiced against Jews and the text explained their reasoning in this particular matter, "**And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem**" (Luke 9:53). Indeed this was fact, for earlier in verse 51 we read, "**he** (i.e. Jesus) **stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.**" The Samaritans were not hospitable toward them not because they lacked natural affection, but because He was bypassing Mt. Gerizim and going to Jerusalem.

Renfroe continues, "When we are privy to such ungodly displays, we also may be tempted to unleash a string of anathemas, as did the ancient disciples of Christ...Many, like impetuous James and John, have a "shoot first, ask questions later" mentality...they are quick to "skewer and flay" any whose actions seem to them the least bit suspicious." I honestly do not know anyone in the brotherhood who has expressed a desire to bring bodily harm on someone as did James and John. (This is only a "straw man" that Renfroe creates so that he can easily defeat him.) I know some, however, who are vehemently opposed to false teachers and false doctrines and are unwilling to sit idly by while the bride of Christ is ravaged by wolves in sheep's clothing. These men are not hirelings who care more for their pay than for "**the faith once delivered to the saints.**" (Jude 3)—they are willing to contend for the faith!

The "Sword of the Spirit" according to Renfroe sounds more like a butter knife. To Renfroe and others like him the greatest harm to the brotherhood is being done by those who

strongly oppose error and expose it by clearly declaring the Truth—they suggest that such behavior portrays extremism. They would have us to overlook the errors (especially those of their friends or alumni), which will certainly cause people to be lost, and just get along with each for the sake of peace, friendship and good will. They are so loving they would not write up anyone except maybe those who stand unwaveringly upon God's Word and refuse to compromise (note: this is what Renfroe does in this very article under review even though his article suggests that writing anyone up displays the wrong "spirit.") Like Ahab in 1 Kings 18:17, they accuse faithful soldiers of Christ of troubling spiritual Israel today. The real troublemakers of the church today are those who teach "**contrary to the doctrine**" (Rom. 16:17) and those who refuse to see the evidence false teachers and false teachings (though the evidence is abundant and readily available) while promoting a "peace" that comes from compromise and intentional blindness. The result of this is "unity in diversity."

All of us desire peace, but some of us will not sacrifice Truth for the sake of peace nor for the sake of friendship. It should be carefully noted that "**the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy**" (Jam. 3:17). Peace, gentleness, and mercy are all predicated on the pure Truth of God's Word. Notice also that all of this is contingent on it being done "**without partiality, and without hypocrisy.**" The compromisers of today are applying the Word of God with partiality and hypocrisy. No one enjoys conflict or controversy, but some love the Truth enough not to remain silent when error must be reproved and rebuked (2 Tim. 4:2-3; Eph. 5:11)—faithfulness to God demands it.

Renfroe acknowledges that "there are times when severe censure is appropriate." He mentions Alexander, Hymenaeus, and Philetus. He tells us that these men "were not misguided novices; rather, they were hardened souls who made "shipwreck" of the faith, and so doing were instrumental in the "overthrow" of some." I wonder how Renfroe knew that these men were "hardened souls" and "not misguided novices"? The text does not reveal such information! Is it not possible for "misguided novices" to become false teachers and thereby overthrow the faith of some? He suggests that "surely **conscientious individuals** would prefer to see matters handled with discretion, with brethren being given the benefit of the doubt **whenever possible.** (emphasis mine, LK)" He referred earlier in his article to Titus 1:11. There Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, instructed elders to stop the mouths of those who are "**teaching things which they ought not.**" Renfroe tells us they were only "guilty of things which they 'ought not' to have done." Brother Renfroe, these were false teachers "**whose mouths must be stopped**" (Titus 1:11)! The text does not suggest that this matter needed to be "handled with discretion" or that these individuals were to be given the "benefit of the doubt"! Why? Because they were subverting whole houses (i.e. causing people to be lost). Perhaps Renfroe thinks that Paul (and the elders thus instructed) was not as "conscientious" as he should have been!? Renfroe gives the

examples of “severe censure” in which Jesus Himself was involved in John 8 and Matthew 23. Surely brother Renfroe does not believe that Jesus was not as “conscientious” as He ought to have been on these occasions of severe censure; should He have given them the “benefit of the doubt” and “handled” these matters “with discretion”? What manner of spirit did Jesus have on these occasions, brother Renfroe?

With Renfroe I wonder when such conditions would exist that would prompt him to not handle matters “with discretion” and give the “benefit of the doubt.” What manner of spirit would he then manifest by doing so? Renfroe is critical of “constant hurling of invectives.” I wonder what Renfroe would consider constant and what his thinking would be on invectives in general. What manner of spirit would be manifested by one who said, “**Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers**”; or speaking about people who are evil workers who said, “**Beware of dogs**”; or said regarding some who refused to listen to the Truth, “**Give not that which is holy unto the dogs**”? What manner of spirit, brother Renfroe? (See Matthew 23:33; Phillipians 3:2; Matthew 7:6 before you answer.)

I have little patience with my brethren who are so sweet, loving and peaceable that they will not take up the “**sword of the spirit**” and fight the “**good fight**” of faith for the sake of the salvation of souls. They do not realize that we are soldiers in a war with a real enemy. Too many of my brethren want to be so kind as not to offend especially the false teachers among us who are causing countless souls to be lost. They care not that they offend the Lord Himself in so doing. In the name of some newly defined “balance” they are willing for the sake of their buddies to compromise God’s Word. Because

they are dependent upon the continued flow of large sums of money, they would rather offend heaven than to disturb the rich. What manner of spirit, brethren? It is the spirit of compromise! Spiritual harm is the result of such, and it must be strongly opposed by every faithful servant of God. The Lord being my helper, I shall continue to wage the battle until my Lord declares the final victory!

—122 Nathaniel Gracie Drive
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“The Matter Of Divorce And Remarriage” (Sad Statistics and Erroneous Views on MDR Examined)

David B. Smith

The marriage of two eligible people is a beautiful thing, something in which God and man both take great delight. In fact, most people in the world smile at the beautiful picture in their mind of two people driving down the road with a sign on their car that says “just married.” It marks a special occasion in the lives of those two people. They have both pledged themselves to each other for life. The two have become one flesh. If all goes according to God’s plan, the two will continue to fulfill their individual duties toward each other and enjoy a happy life.

Unfortunately, too many marriages do not end happily ever after. Perhaps the husband becomes too preoccupied with work, or the two simply do not communicate effectively as they once did. For whatever reason, the two convince themselves that things just are not working out anymore. Because their thinking has been influenced by the world, they feel the answer to their problem is a divorce; it is especially tempting to them since divorce is now cheap and easy and socially acceptable. Their divorce is one among a myriad of divorces in this world, demonstrating to all that there is a serious problem worthy of man’s deepest attention. The statistics are rather shocking. It is a dark plague sweeping the masses of married and potentially married people (that is, the seed is planted in their mind before marriage). The following statistics, taken from the online version of *Divorce Magazine* should suffice to show the enormity of the dilemma:

- ◆ The median duration of first marriages that end in divorce: 7.8 years.
- ◆ Likelihood of new marriages ending in divorce: 43%.
- ◆ Percentage of weddings which are remarriages for at least one partner: 43%.
- ◆ Percentage of remarriages that end in divorce in 1997: 60%.
- ◆ Number of unmarried couples living together: 5.5 million.
- ◆ Number of people divorcing each year as of 1997: 2.5 million.
- ◆ Fatherless homes account for 63% of youth suicides, 90% of homeless/runaway children, 85% of children with behavior problems, 71% of high school dropouts, 85% of youths in prison, well over 50% of teen mothers.
- ◆ Percentage of couples not affiliated with any religious group who eventually get divorced as of 1995: 46%.
- ◆ Number of single parents: 10.72 million (total of both male and female).

- ◆ Number of children in new divorces each year as of 1997: 1 million.
- ◆ Number of single parents: 10.72 million (total of both male and female).
- ◆ Percentages of divorces due to irreconcilable differences in 1997: 80%

[From www.divorcemag.com; sources include: U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Health Statistics, Americans for Divorce Reform, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Institute for Equality in Marriage, American Association for Single People, Ameristat, Public Agenda]

The stats listed above preach a message on their own. They show that divorce is the primary way married couples handle their serious problems. They show that much of the problem is due to a lack of grounding in the knowledge of God’s word on the subject. They show that most divorces occur for an unscriptural reason. And they show that divorce is hard on everyone involved, especially the children. Obviously much more needs to be said in an effort to educate people on the problem of divorce and offer Biblical solutions. This is the aim of this small series of articles.

ERRONEOUS VIEWS ON DIVORCE

1. In the confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish-religious-leaders on this subject, he was challenged to answer the question of “divorce for any cause.” **“The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause”** (Matt. 19:3)? The exact motive for the question is unknown. They may have been trying to pit Jesus against Herod Antipas. They may have been trying to turn the people against Jesus, since Judea was infamous for its widespread belief in divorce for any cause. Some believe those Jews were testing the belief of Jesus, as to whether he aligned Himself to the nearby Qumran community. This all seems unlikely, as the basic portion of their question aims at trapping Jesus into one of the main rabbinical schools of thought (in that day).

In the Jewish school of Shammai, divorce was only allowable for moral transgressions. While they spoke of divorce for fornication, they were by no means consistent as allowances were made for other reasons. The school of Hillel was the more liberal of the two. He taught that Jewish men possessed the right to divorce their wives at pleasure. Regardless how trivial the cause might be, Hillel taught that the

nuptial bond could be broken at any time: for blemishes on the woman's face, going into a public setting without her veil, untidy attire, overcooking the dinner, or generally distasteful manners. When Jesus later said **"except for fornication"** (Matt. 19:9), He exposed both schools of thought as erroneous. He exposed the prevailing view of divorce for any cause. Even today, this is a popular view. Individual states in America grant divorce for drug use, committing a felony crime, drunkenness, idiocy, fraud, violent temper, refusal by a wife to move to a new residence, mental incapacity, et cetera. Any one with common sense can perceive this – divorce for every cause – is a corrupt doctrine of man.

Even more, history demonstrates the tragedy of nations who adopted this same view of divorce. The great Roman Empire stands as an excellent example. Immorality in general, including the destruction of the home, brought down an extremely powerful nation. Truly, righteousness exalts a nation (Prov. 14:34).

It does not matter that two people "fall out of love" [though this will not happen if they follow the perfect marriage manual, the Bible]. It does not matter if people have irreconcilable differences. It does not matter that a man may end up being a dead-beat husband. It does not matter if a wife will not listen to her husband. None of these justify a divorce. There is only one cause for divorce, and that is fornication (Matt. 19:9).

2. Some have gotten the idea that the Bible's teaching on divorce and remarriage applies only to Christians – that non-Christians are not amenable to the Lord's teachings on this subject. They say, for example, that "whosoever" in Matthew 19:9 speaks of members of the Lord's church only. Clearly this notion is riddled with inconsistencies and errors. For one, it is a doctrine of no-consequence. It says in essence that a person may marry, divorce and remarry as many times as desired and for any reason, but once that person becomes a Christian the teaching of the Lord applies (but only then and not before). Not only this, but, it requires that men disregard completely the universality of "whosoever"—the same "whosoever" as in John 3:16.

The New Testament is unambiguous in showing that the subject of divorce and remarriage is part of the "kingdom of God." Luke wrote:

"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16:16-18).

From a practical standpoint, what would evangelists of the first century teach non-Christians who asked about the Lord's requirements for marriage, divorce and remarriage? By responding with the Lord's own words, would they not

By responding with the Lord's own words, would they not be teaching the amenability of all men to these laws – and that as a part of the "kingdom of God?" If someone should raise objection to this line of reasoning, the Bible actually offers an example of this by implication. Listen carefully and objectively to the inspired words of Paul to the church in Corinth:

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Here are some immediate observations:

◆ By saying **"such were some of you,"** Paul affirms that some among the membership in the church at Corinth had engaged in the sins listed prior to their conversion. Such sins included fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, stealing, drunkenness, and others.

◆ Adultery is a sexual sin that includes at least one married party. The fact that one can commit adultery prior to becoming a Christian proves that one is amenable to God's marriage laws prior to becoming a Christian.

◆ The Lord said **"whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery"** (Matt. 19:9). Paul's inspired list of sins, committed by those in Corinth prior to their conversion, included "adultery" which can occur through an unauthorized divorce and remarriage. Again, Jesus' marriage laws apply to everyone.

◆ Hence, **"whosoever"** in Matthew 19:9 includes both the saint and the non-saint. The case of Onesimus shows that people can and do violate the Lord's teaching as aliens to the Christ.

"If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides" (Philemon 18-19).

Prior to his conversion he had violated the New Testament's teaching: **"let him that stole steal no more"** (Eph. 5:28). Onesimus, just as all men, was subject to the laws of the Christ prior to conversion. Observe also that his conversion did not rectify the wrongdoing. Whatever he had stolen [implied by Paul's talk of repaying something] was to be returned, for so is the nature of repentance—which requires restitution to the degree possible (cf. Luke 19:8). Had he stolen money, it was to be returned. Had he stolen clothing, it was to be returned. Whatever belongs to another man is to be returned, including another's spouse.

However, some have argued in response that the non-

Christian is only amenable to civil-law. But what civil-law prohibits fornication? Is the non-Christian (as in the case of 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) guilty of fornication because the Bible condemns the practice or because of some civil-law? Did Paul charge them on the basis of an existing law in Corinth that censured the act of fornication? Of course not. Surely people understand that morality is determined by God and not the state. Consistency would demand that if non-saints are only amenable to civil laws then they could not be guilty of an immoral act if that act was sanctioned by the state, in spite of what the Bible may say to the contrary. Concerning civil law, all men (both Christian and non-Christian) are amenable to civil authorities: **“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God”** (Rom. 13:1). These authorities are ordained of God, and God is therefore over them. In an ideal state, Jesus’ teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage would be followed in the civil realm. That is, marriage would only be between an eligible man and an eligible woman. Divorce would only be granted to an innocent party because of his/her spouse’s fornication. If civil authorities are from God, and He is over them, and His laws are to be respected ideally in the civil realm, and everyone is subject to civil authorities, then it stands that everyone (both Christian and non-Christian) is subject to God’s marriage laws.

Now this raises a thought about the distinction between “obligation” and “qualification.” Why is such a distinction necessary? Because some will argue that if the non-Christian is amenable to the laws of God then he must worship God and seek and save the lost. Here is the difference: *all men are obligated to worship and work for God, but one must be first qualified.* All men are obligated to be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16), but they are only

ified. All men are obligated to be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16), but they are only qualified to be baptized after they first believe (John 8:24), repent (Acts 2:38) and confess (Acts 8:37). Some have argued that non-Christians are only amenable to the Gospel but not to doctrine. By this, they will argue that the subject of divorce and remarriage is a doctrine and thus not applicable to the non-saint. However, “gospel” and “doctrine” are interchangeable terms. In Acts 13, the writer uses no small number of synonyms to describe the teaching of Paul and Barnabas: the word of God (v. 5), the faith (v. 8), the right ways of the Lord (v. 10), the doctrine of the Lord (v. 12), the word of this salvation (v. 26), glad tidings, meaning the Gospel (v. 32), the forgiveness of sins (v. 38), and the grace of God (v. 43). Are non-Christians amenable to the grace of God? Are they amenable to the glad tidings? If so, and they are, they are also amenable to the “doctrine of the Lord” because is it the same. Non-Christians are amenable to everything taught by the Lord, even His laws of marriage, divorce and remarriage.

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[David B. Smith is the evangelist for the Northside Church of Christ, Calhoun, GA. With said church’s faithful elders, Ron Hall and Terry York, the Northside church is standing strong for Gospel Truth and against all error.

Smith has written extensively on MDR. In future issues of *CFTF* we intend to print the rest of his articles on this important and timely topic—**Editor]**

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THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Bill Jackson

Surely one of the most effective and most Scriptural arguments the saints have made down through the years is that of the authority of the silence of the Scriptures. In hundreds of debates with proponents of every kind of error, audiences were shown that when God legislates in a certain area, making clear his requirements, then man has no authority to go beyond that, adding similar or like things to what God has specified. We have correctly used the gopher wood, the pitch, the dimensions of the ark in the case of Noah (Gen. 6), and we have used the fruit of the vine and the bread on the Lord's table (Mat. 26:26-28) on the same point.

Of late, men are stating that there can be no argument based on "the silence of the Scriptures." As one recently put it, "Man is free to do any and every thing that God has not specifically forbidden." And one other Man, in the kingdom, said that "any matter falling within the silence of the Scriptures should be treated as options, based on the rule of Romans 14." In correspondence with one in another state, and when the matter of dancing in worship was brought up, and our having no specific

condemnation in the New Testament of such, his answer was that if the congregation's elders gave approval, and if they then could see some benefit to be gained, it would be proper! Thus, the end to which one will be taken if he feels there can be no legitimate argument based on the SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES!

We know the argument we now are supporting is a legitimate one, for we find it used in the Word! In Hebrews 7, as the writer speaks of the priesthood of Christ under the New Testament, he states that there has been a change of the law, thus necessitating a change in the priesthood (v. 12). He speaks of our Lord coming from the tribe of Judah (v. 14), and in making then the point that the Lord could not be a priest if the law of Moses were still in effect, the writer states, "...of which tribe **Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.**"

Thus, the argument is made that Jesus could not be a priest under the Old Testament law, because the Scriptures said nothing about one of Judah being a priest! Let us, as we continue to stress Biblical authority, and the right handling of the Word (2 Tim. 2:15), also continually stress the **SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES.**

—Deceased

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9:00 AM....ALWAYS ABOUNDING—FAITH TOWARD
GOD (Heb. 6:1) (2 Cor. 2:13) DENNIS SARGENT

10:00 AM..... ALWAYS ABOUNDING—BELIEF OF
THE TRUTH (2 THESSALONIANS 2:13) JAY YEAGER

11:00 AM.....ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN—HOLY LIV-
ING (2 CORINTHIANS 7:1) DANNY DOUGLAS

NOON MEAL PROVIDED

1:00 PM.....QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
BAILEY, BROWN, YEAGER

2:00 PM...ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN—DEFENSE OF THE
GOSPEL (PHILIPPIANS 1:7, 16) DANNY DOUGLAS

3:00 PM...ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN—PUTTING BRETHERN
IN MIND (1 TIMOTHY 4:1-6) DENNIS SARGENT

SUNDAY:

9:30 AM.....ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN—TRUE, SPIRITUAL
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KNOWLEDGE (2 PETER 3:18) MICHAEL HATCHER

FELLOWSHIP MEAL— AT THE BUILDING

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MICHAEL HATCHER

2:00 PM...ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN—SEEKING THINGS
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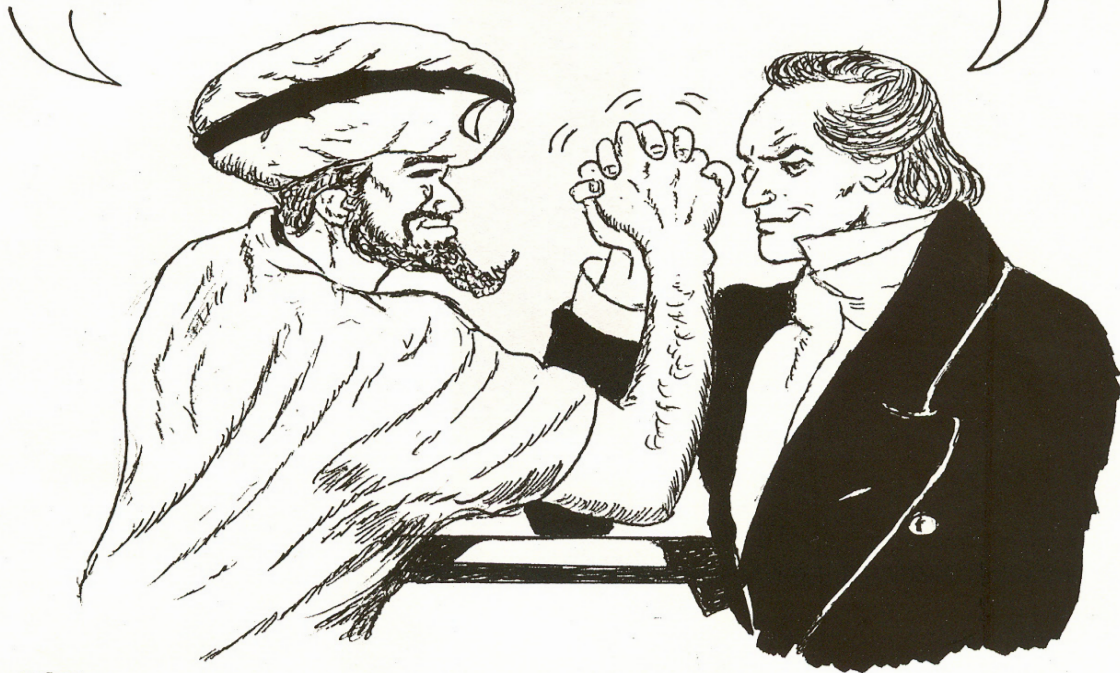
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I AM MOHAMMED, GOD'S GREATEST PROPHET. THE ANGEL GABRIEL TOLD ME TO GIVE GOD'S GREATEST BOOK, THE KORAN, TO MANKIND.

I AM JOSEPH SMITH, GOD'S GREATEST PROPHET. THE ANGEL MORONI TOLD ME TO GIVE GOD'S GREATEST BOOK, THE BOOK OF MORMON, TO MANKIND.



AND I AM PAUL. NOT THAT IT MATTERS TO YOU BOYS, BUT HAVE YOU EVER READ WHAT I WROTE IN GALATIANS 1:8 ABOUT ANGELS PREACHING ANOTHER GOSPEL?

STEVEN D. CLINE

WORDS FROM THE PAST

F. B. Srygley

Fighting for the Truth is almost a lost art. Men who are enjoying the benefits of the Gospel, unmixed with human error, are enjoying those benefits because our fathers fought for the Truth. Every inch of ground from that mysterious way of being saved, which was better felt than told, to the plain conditions of pardon, as taught in the New Testament, was fought out for us by our fathers. If someone before us had not fought for the Truth, most of us might yet be in the fog of denominational teaching. This is not the time to temporize or make friends with error.

—*Gospel Advocate*, 1928

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Tuscaloosa—East Pointe Church of Christ one block from Exit 76, off I-20, I-59, Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed., 7 p.m. Abiding in God's Word—The Old Paths. U of A student, visitor, or resident? Welcome! (205)556-3062.

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-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.ocoeccoc.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.

-Georgia-

Cartersville—Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris Pkwy NW 30120-4222. 770-382-6775, www.cartersvillechurchofchrist.org. Sun. 10, 11a.m., 6:30 p.m. Wed. 7:30 p.m. Bobby D. Gayton, evangelist- email: bdgayton@juno.com.

-North Carolina-

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

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

- Tennessee-

Lenoir City—Lenoir City Church of Christ, 1280 Simpson Road West, P.O. Box 292 Lenoir City, TN 37771 . Sun. 9:30, 10:30AM, 6:00PM, Wed. 7:00PM., Kent Bailey, Evangelist Tel: 865-986-3223 or 865-986-5698).

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

-Texas-

Denton area—Northpoint Church of Christ, 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; tgj@charter.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.

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