

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

“A SIDE... THAT I NEVER KNEW EXISTED”

Dub McClish

A recent article by John Rose (“An Open Letter to Garland Elkins, Dave Miller, and Miller’s Supporters,” *CFTF*, March 2009) chronicled his and his wife’s visit with brother Garland Elkins on July 22, 2008. Among other interesting things, brother Rose revealed that at one point brother Elkins claimed to have seen “a side of Dave [Watson] and Dub [McClish] I never knew existed.” I must assume that he had reference to our reactions to the grievous fellowship confusion and compromise precipitated by the scandal relating to Apologetics Press (AP) in May-June 2005 and the horrendous fallout therefrom. As a brief memory refresher, said fallout included the following:

- Expulsion of AP’s co-founder and executive director, Bert Thompson
- Premature signing of a “blank check” statement of support for AP by 60 brethren, when it appeared AP might fail
- Appointment of Dave Miller (an impenitent false teacher) to replace Bert Thompson
- My and Dave Watson’s forced resignations as editor and associate editor, respectively, of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*
- Numerous fellowship compromises and brotherhood realignments that have occurred in an all-out effort to defend and endorse Dave Miller in order to preserve AP’s existence

Brother Elkins’ statement about me is amazing in view of the following facts:

- He has heard me speak in scores of lectureships and has likely read hundreds of pages of material I have written over the past thirty-five years.
- When he directed Spiritual Sword and Power Lectures, respectively, he honored me with invitations to speak and write for those programs year after year, on which occasions he praised my uncompromising, open advocacy of Truth and my opposition to error and its advocates.
- We have engaged in numerous enjoyable conversations by phone and in person (including several times in his home and/or in mine) in the course of which I did not hide my convictions on any subject of which I am aware.
- The twenty-one years of the Annual Denton Lectures that I directed were from the beginning characterized by an unapologetic stand for the Truth and against error. Garland Elkins, from the inception of that program, incessantly praised my efforts in this regard (he was one of three men I included on every one of them).
- He opposed the elder reaffirmation/reconfirmation (elder r/r) program the Brown Trail church in Bedford, Texas, conducted in 1990, which was strongly promoted by Dave Miller and of which he has never repented ([www.scripturecache.com>Documents>Long manuscripts>“Elders, The Reevaluation and Reaffirmation of”](http://www.scripturecache.com/Documents/Long%20manuscripts/Elders,%20The%20Reevaluation%20and%20Reaffirmation%20of%20)).

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

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

Editorial...

“GOD SHALL SMITE THEE, THOU WHITED WALL”

Following the apostle Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem, the Roman captain brought him before the chief priests and the Jewish council to learn “the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews” (Acts 22:30). In Paul’s opening remarks to the council he declared: “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” Following his statement, Ananias, the high priest, ordered Paul smitten on the mouth. His order drew the response from Paul that serves as the title of this editorial (Acts 23:1, 2).

Many years earlier our Lord had answered a question put to Him by Annas, the high priest of that day. For His answer an officer had “struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so” (John 18:22). How closely Paul walked in the steps of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21).

Though many years had passed since Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, associated with the chief priests and the council, he was certainly no stranger to them. In his unbelief Saul was the untiring persecutor of the church of Christ and had the trust of the same men, some of whom possibly he now stood before (Acts 9:1,2; Gal. 1:13-14). But because of his conversion to Christ, these Jews now wished the apostle dead (Gal. 1:15, 23).

What did Paul mean about Ananias when he declared to him, “God shall smite thee, thou whited wall?” In that culture what did it mean to be labeled a “whited wall”? Our Lord’s scathing rebuke of the same type of characters gives us a divine commentary on the meaning of “whited wall.” In Matt. 23:27 Jesus declared,

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.

Clearly, then, Paul called Ananias a hypocrite.

There is the strong probability that before his conversion Saul of Tarsus knew of or was acquainted with Ananias. However, Theophilus was the high priest from AD 37 to 41—the time when Saul obtained his authority to arrest Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem (Acts 9:1). The reason we conclude such is this: according to Josephus’s *Antiquities of the Jews*, Theophilus, was the son of Annas and the brother of Eleazar, Jonathan, Matthias and Ananus, all of whom served as high priests. This was one of the most wealthy and influential families of that time period. Theophilus was also the brother-in-law of Joseph Caiaphas, the high priest before whom Jesus appeared. Furthermore his son Matthias served as the next to the last high priest before

the destruction of the Temple by the Romans. Thus, Saul of Tarsus walked in powerful circles before his conversion to Christ. However, all of these men were men of the world, acting accordingly, each one worthy of being labeled **“Thou whited wall.”**

It is ludicrous at best to attempt to picture the young Saul with his good conscience toward God approaching Theophilus to receive letters authorizing him to arrest Christians, while at the same time knowing him to be a hypocrite. Obviously at the time of Paul’s arrest and appearance before Ananias and the Jewish council he fully recognized what these characters actually were and had been all along, even when he was working with them to persecute the church.

Among other things this proves that one may have an association with someone but at that time fail to see that person’s true colors. But, because of changing circumstances and events, the true character of a person is revealed. Indeed, in our years of preaching the Gospel we have witnessed with great sadness, and sometimes to our own hurt, the same from certain brethren on more than one occasion.

Of Ananias *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* states:

Ananias the son of Nedebaeus reigned as high priest from A.D. 48 to 58 or 59 and was known for his avarice and liberal use of violence. Josephus says he confiscated for himself the tithes given the ordinary priests and gave lavish bribes to Romans and also Jews (cf. *Antiq. XX*, 205-7 [ix.2], 213 [ix.4]). He was a brutal and scheming man, hated by Jewish nationalists for his pro-Roman policies. When the war with Rome began in A.D. 66, the nationalists burned his house (cf. *Jos. War II*, 426 [xvii.6]) and he was forced to flee to the palace of Herod the Great in the northern part of Jerusalem (*ibid.*, 429 [xvii.6]). Ananias was finally trapped while hiding in an aqueduct on the palace grounds and was killed along with his brother Hezekiah (*ibid.*, 441-42 [xvii.9]).

Paul declared that God would smite Ananias. We believe this to be a prophecy of Ananias’ death. And, history records the collapse of that **“whited wall!”**

HYPOCRISY

Hypocrisy is translated from the Greek word *hupokrisis*. According to *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 241, it “primarily denotes a reply, an answer (akin to *hupokrinomai*, to answer); then, play-acting, as the actors spoke in dialogue; hence, pretence, hypocrisy.” Of the word hypocrite (*hupokrites*) Vine says,

corresponding to the above, primarily denotes one who answers; then a stage-actor; it was a custom for Greek and Roman actors to speak in large masks with mechanical devices for augmenting the force of the voice; hence the word became used metaphorically of a dissembler, a hypocrite. It is found only in the Synoptists (Matthew, Mark, Luke – DPB), and always used by the Lord (p. 242).

The Proverbs writer declared: **“An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered”** (Pro. 11:9). Warning us against placing our trust in a hypocrite the writer also penned: **“Con-**

fidence in a unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and foot out of joint” (25:19).

Our Lord said of certain Jews of His day:

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’s seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not ... But woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites (Mat. 23: 2, 3)!

In Proverbs 26:18-26 we read of such persons.

(vss. 18, 19) **As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport? ... Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. He that hateth disembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart. Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation** (vss. 23-26).

Wicked and evil words come from an evil source; **“for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh”** (Mat. 12:34). Hence, such a person has “heart trouble” of the worse kind. Paul commanded Titus **“to speak evil of no man...”** (3:2). The hypocrite cares nothing for Paul’s instruction because his heart is evil. Behind one’s back he says the direct opposite from what he says to his prey’s face. And, truly, to him he is his prey—*something to be devoured to satisfy his voracious appetite that is sustained by pride, envy, and jealousy.* All that such characters desire to do is come out “on top,” appearing in the eyes of their “public” as if they are in complete control of all things. They do not care that they hurt those they slander, for that they intended to do in the first place. Suspicion runs rampant in their twisted paranoid minds—they have been known to crucify and stone people. Hence, with seared consciences, the Pharisee, the scribe—hypocrites all—take their positions on the world’s stage.

In closing we note:

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen (1 John 4:20). I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead (Rev. 3:1). But 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 (James 3:17)

Paul’s truthful statement about and to Ananias, the high priest — **“God shall smite thee, thou whited wall”**— does not contradict the previously quoted Scriptures and, sadly, finds application in certain brethren today. We must, therefore, take Paul’s inspired advice to Timothy in dealing with all men—including brethren. The apostle wrote: **“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure”** (1 Tim. 5:22).

—David P. Brown, Editor

- When I openly opposed Mac Deaver's heresy upon its invasion of the eldership (of which I was a part) of the Pearl Street congregation in Denton, Texas, in 2003 (resulting in my having to resign and leave a work to which I had devoted twenty-three years of my life), he encouraged me in every possible way.
- He defended me when the remaining Pearl Street elders vengefully tried to destroy me because I had dared oppose and expose their errors.
- He had nothing but glowing words of praise for my efforts as editor of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL* (wherein we constantly both promoted the Truth and opposed error) through the sixty-seven issues of my editorship.

Yet, in the face of all of the above, he avers surprise that I have been outspoken in my *continued* exposure of Dave Miller and his impenitent errors, and those who are determined to defend him. *I could do no less and remain consistent, both with the Bible (Rom. 16:17–18; Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9–11) and with my own convictions and previous conduct.* Brother Elkins' claim that he has seen "a side" of me in the past four years that he "never knew existed" is a dog that will not hunt and a bird that will not fly—a disingenuous statement that sorely disappoints. Truth be told, rather than professing to see "a side" of me he "never knew existed" in the wake of the AP tragedy, he knows me well enough that he could have **accurately anticipated** my reaction. In fact, he **knew** and **applauded** this "side" of me until June/July 2005.

"A Side...I Never Knew Existed"

Is a Two-Way Street

In numerous conversations regarding the last four tragic years of heartbreaking alienations, many of us have confessed that we have observed (and continue to observe) "a side" of many brethren we "never knew existed." This previously undetected "side" of these brethren has involved such things as:

- Inconsistencies between pre- and post-June 2005 behavior
- Inconsistencies between oral teaching and practice
- Stilled voices against error and its advocates
- Greater loyalty to persons and institutions than to the Lord and His Truth
- Decisions based on monetary pressures rather than on Scriptural principle
- Refusal to respond to earnest inquiries from faithful brethren
- Vicious attacks against brethren who dare question the behavior of the attackers

- Refusal to defend questioned behavior

Several of us have stared in almost shocked amazement as we have observed the startling degree of compromise into which various brethren, many of whom were once our esteemed and close associates, have ventured. These matters have brought us inexpressible heartache and sadness. Among those who have revealed "a side...that I never knew existed" are the following:

Garland Elkins: This fearless and valiant opponent of error for so many years at one time opposed Dave Miller's elder r/r agenda, and said so in writing (as noted above). None who know brother Elkins can imagine that he has any sympathy for Miller's idiocy regarding marriage "intent." Elkins' opposition to Mac Deaver's errors on the Holy Spirit (from which errors Miller steadfastly refuses to separate himself) is too well known to need documentation. Elkins is well aware that Miller violated Scriptural fellowship dictates when he bade Godspeed to the apostate Calhoun, Georgia, congregation in 1999. In spite of Miller's continued justification of these errors and in spite of Elkins' knowledge of all of these events, he persists in defending Miller and in extending fellowship to him and to his host of other defenders. Those of us who have known, admired, and loved this brother for decades would never have imagined his behavior since the AP situation developed.

Who would ever have thought that Garland Elkins would demand a signature on a confidentially pledge before he would discuss Bible principles with them (as he did with John and Michelle Rose)? It is mystifying and troubling to hear a man well versed in the Scriptures argue that one cannot discern the meaning of a man's words from what he has written or recorded, as brother Elkins averred to the Roses in a lame effort to defend Miller. Moreover, his statement to them was no momentary lapse. I first learned of his resorting to this puny assertion in 2006. Such argumentation demonstrates an extremity of desperation to defend the indefensible.

Brother Elkins was not of this persuasion when he began frequently and publicly exposing Rubel Shelly's errors more than twenty years ago. For the most part, he did so on the basis of Shelly's *recorded and/or written* messages, rather than being present when Shelly uttered them. I doubt that brother Elkins has ever heard Max Lucado speak, but he has not hesitated to oppose his heresies, as he has those of many others, and rightly so. Suddenly, he has reversed course when it comes to Miller's errors, and "one had to be there" to discern the meaning of his elder r/r promotions; recordings and transcripts are insufficient.

Further, brother Elkins (and others) should be ashamed to assert that opposition to and exposure of Dave Miller, particularly from me, did not begin until my encouraged "resignation" as editor of *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL* (July 2005). (Michelle Rose promptly corrected him on that point, which he had to concede.) This assertion is a blatant motive

judgment, implying that my opposition to Dave Miller and his supporters is in some way a retaliation related to my departure from *TGJ*. Contrariwise, the record shows that he (and numerous others) never thought of *defending* Miller and his errors until June 2005, at which time brother Curtis Cates, then director of Memphis School of Preaching (where Elkins is an instructor), threw his (and MSOP'S) weight behind Miller *in order to support a failing AP*. I am still astounded that Garland Elkins has “a side” that would take such untenable positions as he has taken in an effort to deflect exposure of and opposition to Dave Miller and his errors. **“Shouldest thou help the wicked, and love them that hate Jehovah?”** (2 Chr. 19:2). His defending those he should be opposing and opposing those with whom he should be working to bring an erring brother to repentance is “a side” of him I “never knew existed.”

Curtis A. Cates: This beloved brother and I together fought many battles, traveled thousands of miles at home and abroad, engaged in countless conversations, and worked in numerous endeavors together over many years. When I delivered my 1997 Bellview lecture, publicly opposing and exposing the elder r/r error (and naming Dave Miller as its instigator), he was in the audience (he delivered his lecture the same day). He had nothing but praise for and endorsement of what I said. As with brother Elkins, he openly defended me against the merciless and ill-begotten attacks of the doctrinally and ethically corrupt Pearl Street elders in 2003.

He and I worked in wonderful harmony and in constant contact for more than six years to initiate and publish *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*. If he ever had a problem with my editorial efforts or emphases, he masterfully hid it. He had only praise for the special issue of *TGJ* (October 2002) on “Change Agents” (put together by my associate editor, Dave Watson), which issue included an article by Marvin Weir, exposing the elder r/r procedure and Dave Miller’s leading part in it. As late as April 2005, he had only profuse, almost embarrassing public praise for my editorial efforts at the annual *TGJ* dinner during MSOP Lectures. Such was characteristic of him continually toward me.

Yet, without any change in *my* approach, in the span of about *six weeks*, he completely reversed himself regarding my editorial efforts of almost *six years*. Suddenly, Alabama friendships, politics, and the threat of financial reprisals against MSOP changed all of that. By the time of the July 19, 2005, *TGJ* board meeting, brother Cates had decided that I was “meddling in congregational affairs” through the paper, that I was turning *TGJ* into another *Contending for the Faith* (a “mortal sin,” indeed!), that I was a malicious gossip, and that I had lost all credibility and would destroy the paper if I remained its editor. He even told some folk that the rest of the board pressured him to replace me. (Mind you, this is the same man who has for almost four years told folk that I was under no pressure to resign.)

I had no idea that in Curtis A. Cates, long-time Director of MSOP, “a side” existed that would wink at error and compromise the Truth of God’s Word on fellowship (or any other Biblical subject) for any reason. However, when he allowed his name to be affixed to the AP “Statement of Support” (June 2005), he took a fatal step in that direction. Upon learning, after his name was so used, that Dave Miller had been elevated to the top spot at AP, he could still have easily corrected his course, *but alas—wisdom, courage, and dedication to the Truth failed him*. Instead of quickly and openly disavowing the error he had made that forced him to fellowship and defend a false teacher, he “blinked” and sought to justify his mistake. (Almost comically, Cates still claims to oppose elder r/r, but with a qualifier: “as the liberals practice it.” I suppose when “non-liberals” [e.g., brother Miller] practice it that somehow sanctifies it.)

Predictably, once the line was blurred enough to include the impenitent brother Miller in his fellowship “circle,” it was indistinct enough to embrace others he formerly excluded and criticized (harshly at times). These new fuzzy fellowship lines are evident in the MSOP Lectureship rosters since 2005. Various men have spoken who formerly were *persona non grata* by the school (e.g., directors and faculty of Bear Valley Bible Institute and East TN School of Preaching). Also, brother Cates has appeared on lectureships wherein he publicly bade Godspeed to false teachers (e.g., Stan Crowley at the Schertz, TX Lectures). Brother Cates has “a side...that I never knew existed.”

The MSOP “Family”: Brother Cates’ associates on the MSOP faculty and at the Forest Hill church have displayed “a side” I “never knew existed.” Some of these men have been willing to go through mental contortions to rationalize their defense and fellowship of a brother in error. Where is the leadership of brother Cates’ successor as director of MSOP, brother **Bobby Liddell**? Rather than standing firm on fellowship as in the past, he joined his predecessor in compromise. Who would have thought **Keith Mosher** had “a side” that would excuse Miller’s elder r/r error by conceding it to be error, but just “not worth dividing the church over”? **Billy Bland** has never been bland when there was error or an advocate of error around, but he has been sorely afflicted with spiritual lockjaw regarding these matters. **Barry Grider** (Forest Hill preacher and MSOP faculty member) has proved himself to be one of Miller’s most ardent cheerleaders over the past four years. His compromising “side” on fellowship is not so surprising; he had let it slip, even before 2005. It blared forth fully in his February 10, 2009, bulletin articles in which he trumpeted his Texas-size fellowship “circle.”

The “buck” for these fellowship lapses at MSOP and Forest Hill stops on the conference table in the Forest Hill’s elders’ meeting room. These men oversee the congregation, and MSOP is part of the their work. Brethren by the hundreds, if not thousands have trusted and admired these men over many years. I did not intend to be prophetic

when, in my 1998 address to the MSOP graduating class, I charged the elders to diligently value and protect that trust for, once broken, it would be difficult to rebuild. They have now disappointingly joined their faculty and preacher in a compact of fellowship compromise. Many who had given them a pass on the Miller fellowship issue have now been shaken by their silence in the face of the outrageous statements of their preacher in the aforementioned bulletin articles. Every day they delay their disclaimer, confidence in their leadership and their convictions further wanes. These men have revealed “a side...that I never knew existed.”

Tommy Hicks and the Southside, Lubbock, TX, Elders: Tommy J. Hicks preaches for and directs the lectureship conducted by the Southside congregation in Lubbock, Texas. I have known him since he followed me as the preacher for a congregation in San Angelo, Texas, in 1971. I have valued his friendship and have appreciated his uncompromising stand for the Truth through many years. We have traveled overseas on more than one excursion, and I was pleased to use him frequently on the Annual Denton Lectures. We were more than casual acquaintances. I lost a friend in 2005 when he retreated from his loyalty to the Truth and revealed “a side... that I never knew existed.”

If any “outsider” should be well informed relative to the saga of the Brown Trail church over the past twenty years, he should. He taught in the school of preaching part-time in the 1980s while preaching for the Handley congregation in Fort Worth. He has been at odds with certain leaders at Brown Trail since at least March 1988, when he came away from a four-hour meeting with Maxie Boren. Soon thereafter, Hicks openly exposed the compromising behavior of Boren, at the time the “titular” director of Brown Trail Preacher Training School (although Eddie Whitten was actually managing the school on a daily basis). Hicks first blasted Boren in the Southwest Lectures at Austin, Texas, in April of that year. He stated in part:

Folks, if we had 10,000 Maxie Borens..., the church would go to Hell in a hand basket, because he is not going to publicly take a stand against doctrinal error. He'll not call names. He'll not specify individuals and congregations.

In response to the wounded Boren's outcry, Hicks replied on June 7, 1988, with eight pages of documentation as to Boren's unwillingness to confront error, in which he repeatedly (and rightly) chided Boren for *not taking a stand*. He mailed his long response far and wide. Hicks *took a stand* against Boren, which action resulted in his having to move from the Handley church in Fort Worth later that year.

Hicks well knows the involvement of Brown Trail in the elder r/r program, both in 1990 and in 2002. He also well knows Dave Miller's leadership in the first episode and his endorsement of the second one (as well as Miller's marriage “intent” error). Further, Hicks has stated his opposition to both of them—*after the AP scandal and upheaval at TGJ*. As a member of TGJ's board, he offered neither objection to nor

criticism of Marvin Weir's exposure of Brown Trail's 2002 version of the practice (*TGJ*, 10/02), in which he mentioned Dave Miller's part. On July 26, 2005, Hicks wrote to Kent Bailey:

Specifically, regarding the false doctrines in which Dave Miller involved himself (i.e., elders “re-evaluation” doctrine and the marriage/divorce “intent” doctrine *a la* Everett Chambers), **we stand with you and every other sound brother—in opposition to them** (emph. DM).

By the time of this statement, however, Hicks had allowed himself to become so politically entangled with some others (especially on TGJ's board) that it would have been “sauce for the goose” if Maxie Boren had circulated some letters chiding Hicks for *not taking a stand*. Since Boren will not do it, *I will do it for him*. I will even go so far as to apply Hicks' own words to his about-face behavior since June-July 2005: “Folks, if we had 10,000 Tommy Hickses..., the church would go to Hell in a hand basket.”

Instead of behaving in harmony with his strong assertion to Bailey, in the 2006 Lubbock Lectures, Hicks invited no fewer than eleven speakers who had signed the infamous AP “Statement of Support”—an in-your-face implicit endorsement of Dave Miller and his errors. He also has had on that and succeeding lectureships other men he would not have thought of inviting as speakers pre-2006. As seen in Curtis Cates, when Hicks broadened his fellowship enough to include Miller's supporters, he has found it difficult to know where to stop. The spirit of compromise that surfaced in July 2005 is “a side” of Tommy Hicks I “never knew existed”; it has only grown more visible with time.

Knowing the Southside elders over a span of several years in which I spoke and/or conducted the open forum on the Lubbock Lectures, I never anticipated they would support their preacher in his fellowship with error. They, however, stepped right into the same tar bucket. The 2006 lectureship roster was so filled with men who were out of character with every previous year of that lectureship's existence that twenty-six brethren, most of whom had spoken on the lectureship through the years (some of us every year), sent “A Sincere Expression of Concern” to the elders. They never even acknowledged receiving our plea, so unlike what we had seen in these men over the years—“a side” of them we “never knew existed.”

Barry and Melany Hatcher: I first got to know the Hatchers in 1986 when the Pearl Street church began sponsoring their campaign work in Jamaica. Their first stay (of many) in our home was when their boys were young and when Amanda, their precious adopted girl, was a mere toddler. Knowing their dedication to the Truth, when they decided to work in Indonesia, Lavonne and I were supportive of them in every way. Pat McGee (who later abandoned the faith) was still there at the time. He caused them sore problems and Barry cried long on my shoulder about them. I sympathized with him completely. On one occasion in

Singapore, I went with and supported him as he sought to convince brother Ira Y. Rice that McGee was not what he pretended to be.

In 1989 I made my first trip to Indonesia, during which I taught several hours a day in Southern Sumatra Bible College and preached at night (as illness allowed). I rejoiced when the elders at Spring, Texas, accepted oversight of the Hatchers' Indonesian work. While the Hatchers were stateside and living in Spring between Indonesian tours, Amanda, at the age of twelve, had a heart transplant that failed. Barry called me from Spring to come directly from MSOP Lectures to be one of the speakers at her funeral. In late 2003 I made a second preaching/teaching trip to Indonesia to assist in the Hatchers' work. That same year, Lavonne and Melany Hatcher worked closely together (though half-way around the world from each other) for months as they co-authored a book for young women, *Showing Thyself a Pattern*.

The brethren at Spring opened their hearts to the Hatchers during the two years or so they lived there and worked with the congregation before returning to Indonesia after Amanda's death. During that ordeal, the church stood by them and helped them in every possible way. The congregation did more than merely send money when they moved back to Indonesia. David Brown and Ken Cohn, preacher and elder at Spring, respectively, traveled to Indonesia to assist in the work (David more than once), and the church contributed and shipped clothing, medical supplies, books, and other items to further support the Hatchers and the Indonesian brethren.

Lavonne and I obviously enjoyed a close and cordial relationship with the Hatchers for many years, which we cherished. When the events of June and July 2005 occurred, we were stunned at how quickly that long and close relationship apparently vanished from their memories as fog struck by the sun. Upon learning (from some source other than us) some of the developments from the AP scandal that directly effected us, the Hatchers altogether spurned us after sending only one very brief e-mail message relative thereto. They never asked us for any documentation or explanation of the situation as it related to us. When they moved back to the states shortly thereafter because of visa problems, Barry finally called after several weeks, but then only at the repeated insistence of Ken Cohn, Spring elder. When he called, he engaged only in small talk, studiously avoiding any discussion of the "elephant in the room"—the grievous fellowship crisis—promising to call the next time he was in the area. I've not heard from him since (about November 2005), although he has been at nearby congregations more than once since then.

I feel bad for the brethren at Spring, who so faithfully supported and encouraged the Hatchers in their work for several years. When they returned to the U.S. in 2005, Barry drove to Spring, loaded some stored items in a trailer, and left town after barely speaking to any of those brethren.

Shameful is the only word that fits such incredible ingratitude. It appears that before they returned to the states, they had decided upon their allegiances in these events. Could their reluctance to face either us or the Spring brethren have been rooted in embarrassment and guilt, knowing that any serious discussion of these matters with us might force them to face their compromise?

It is not hard to see why they had to turn on us and on the faithful brethren at Spring. Getting along with their Alabama connections demanded it. They chose to settle in Montgomery, Alabama, where they quickly reunited with brother Frank Chesser and became members of the Panama Street church where he preaches (and where I suppose the Dave Miller family and other AP employees are still members).

Can anyone gainsay the suggestion that financial considerations played a major role in the Hatchers' choices? They knew that if they even hinted at any sympathy for me or any continued congeniality toward the Spring church they would be ostracized by the Montgomery folk—whose ties are still very strong with Memphis brethren, who, in turn, have strong influence on others whose support the Hatchers might need. Barry needed to maintain his own support, and he needed to maintain support for the Indonesian brethren. Those factors outweighed such old-timey principles as courage, loyalty to the Truth, observing Scriptural bounds of fellowship, and doing what is right regardless of the consequences. The last time I checked, those were also Scriptural principles. Such pragmatism is "a side" of the Hatchers I "never knew existed."

Space Fails To Describe Others in Such Detail

B. J. Clarke: Several years ago he rightly refused to speak on a lectureship with Buster Dobbs because of his doctrinal error. He has all but exhausted his considerable vocabulary in his praise of my work over many years. He has boldly and publicly promoted and defended the Truth in many books and pulpits. However, by September 2005, this same B.J. Clarke no longer had such convictions when it came to speaking on "Polishing the Pulpit" with another false teacher, Dave Miller, and speaking several times on *other* programs with him and with others who fellowship him. He has since stated (as did Garland Elkins) that I did not oppose Miller's errors until August 2005, when he had to know better. These things are "a side" of brother Clarke I "never knew existed."

Ken Ratcliff: I worked with him, a TGJ board member, closely and harmoniously for almost seven years publishing *TGJ*. Before several witnesses, he boldly declared in early 2005 that either he or Stan Crowley, preacher at Schertz, TX (where Ratcliff is an elder and associate preacher), would have to leave the congregation because of Crowley's MDR errors (Crowley has not repented, and both are still there). In 2003, he demanded *TGJ* run a disclaimer regarding an

article we published by Barry Grider, but by August 2005 he had no trouble accepting him as a co-editor of *TNGJ*. These behaviors are “a side” of brother Ratcliff I “never knew existed.”

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.: He wrote an excellent book on fellowship (*The Bible Doctrine of Christian Fellowship*) and thus knows what the Bible teaches on this subject. On another occasion he wrote:

Brethren who constantly associate with false teachers, never confuting them, have not yet learned to hate every false way (Psa. 119:104, 128; Rev. 2:6). Yet they want to maintain a reputation for soundness (*Studies in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*, Annual Denton Lectures, ed. Dub McClish, 1994).

He had no problem understanding the demands of Scriptural fellowship regarding such false teachers as James D. Bales, Marvin Phillips, Max King, Rubel Shelly, and Max Lucado. Immediately after it occurred, he wrote (as did Garland Elkins) in opposition to Brown Trail’s 1990 elder r/r program, led by Dave Miller:

I do not believe there is Biblical authorization for what they [the Brown Trail Elder Selection Screening Committee] proposed. I constantly stand amazed at our brethren seeking to tamper with God’s crystal clear pattern. The eldership is clear in Holy Writ. They are seeking to muddy the clear water of such. I view such with great alarm (www.scripturecache.com >Documents>LongManuscripts>“Elders, The Reevaluation and Reaffirmation of”).

However, brother Taylor (as others) has a “blind spot” relative to at least one false teacher, brother Miller, associating with and freely fellowshiping him on numerous platforms over the last few years, in spite of Taylor’s admission that Miller advocated and still defends a program that had no “Biblical authorization” and that Taylor viewed “with great alarm.” This behavior is “a side” of brother Taylor I “never knew existed.”

Jackie Stearsman, Brian Kenyon, and Gene Burgett—Florida School of Preaching principals: These brethren have historically conducted a school that has faithfully taught the Word to its students. They have conducted a good lectureship for many years that has benefited hundreds of brethren. These men have individually stood for the Truth and unblushingly opposed error and its proponents, both in writing and orally. The last assignment they gave me for their lectureship (2002) involved addressing and exposing the elder r/r error, so it is evident that at that time they recognized the procedure as sinful. Yet, they have seen no incongruity in using several speakers on their lectureship since 2005 who continue to bid Godspeed to and engage in fellowship with brother Miller, the chief advocate of the elder r/r program. Further, they have erected a stone wall around themselves regarding all questions about their fellowship policy and practice, including those from former FSOP teachers and alumni and at least one prospective student. Their only response to such earnest and appropriate

questions has been a series of oblique responses in the school paper, *The Harvester*. In one of these, querists were depicted as “new antis” and in another as those in whom the FSOP board no longer has “confidence” because their questions are judged by them to come from ill motives. I must say of all of these beloved brethren (and their fellow-board members) that these fellowship practices and these reactions to sincere questions constitute “a side” which I “never knew existed” in them.

Conclusion

The brethren I have discussed herein are representative of many more who have taken the same turn. I do not bemoan or begrudge their loyalty choices merely on the grounds of sundered relationships and friendships, as painful as these are. If any of the aforementioned brethren had maintained their long and close relationship with us only out of personal loyalty and/or friendship, they would have been wrong to do so—if we were wrong. The issue in all of this is the *motivation* for the relationship choices so many have made, which they have made clear. They have made their motivation clear. For some it has been a determination to salvage Apologetics Press at whatever cost, even though it meant justifying their endorsement and defense of a defiantly impenitent brother and mitigating and condoning his doctrinal errors *they had formerly opposed*. For others, it has not so much been a determination to uphold AP itself as it has been the need to maintain their “buddyhood” with those who are thus determined. In either case, there is no Scriptural justification for it.

The political regime now reigning in our nation’s capital “sold” its recent enormous “bail out” packages for various corporations on the basis that they were “too big to fail.” Could it be that some of these politicians learned their tactic from those brethren who decided in June 2005 that AP was “too big to fail”? (Where are those brethren who in 1973 rejected this attitude toward the Herald of Truth program and took part in a marathon meeting that exposed its errors? Some of those who led the charge in that effort have adopted this very attitude toward AP.)

I freely admit that brethren involved with AP have produced some very good work (although it has been

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by *Lester Kamp*

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tarnished by their own questionable fellowship practices over the years). This being said, how did the church survive through the centuries until AP was established? I submit that there is no human institution “too big to fail” if keeping it afloat means winking at error and defending its egotistical

head and his supporters. Verily, many of our brethren have revealed “a side” these past four years I “never knew existed.”

—908 Imperial Drive
Denton, TX 76209



AN OPEN LETTER TO MY BRETHREN (QUESTIONS OF GREAT CONSEQUENCE)

Virgil O. Greene

In September 2005, this writer and sister Sandra Greene sought counsel of brethren whom we greatly respected and admired, Curtis Cates and Garland Elkins, concerning a personal matter brought about by the contents of a lesson preached by brother Cates at the 2005 lectureship at Sunny Slope Church of Christ at Paducah, Kentucky.

After the meeting Sandra, brother and sister Cates and I, went to a local restaurant for lunch. It was during this time we spent with the Cates that we discussed the removal of Dub McClish from the editorship of *TGJ* and the false teaching of brother Dave Miller (which Miller has not repented of, not to my knowledge. V. G.) I am dealing with this part of the overall problems that have besieged the brotherhood since July, 2005. There is plenty of evidence out there concerning these things. I have written letters to all parties involved up front and directly associated with said problem involving Miller.

I became aware of Miller’s false teaching in the summer of 2000. I was made aware of his apostasy through brethren at Roanoke, Texas. I investigated the evidence and found that it revealed him to have taught falsely on elder r & r at the Brown Trail church of Christ, Bedford, Texas. All this has been proven, so I will get to the reason for this letter.

In September, 2005, I was at MSOP in regard to said lecture mentioned above (i.e., at Sunny Slope). At this time, I was in the dark as per the reasons of the removal of the editor and co-editor of *The Gospel Journal*. I was made aware that McClish was to be removed from that position because he had “gone off the deep end” (words of brother Bryan Braswell who had started his work at Roanoke in the summer of 2002). I was also made aware that this change was to take place on the week following the lectureship at Sunny Slope at a scheduled meeting of the Gospel Journal board at Schertz, Texas.

I knew only a few days before I attended the lecture at Sunny Slope that the editorship was to be changed. I had not researched nor sought any information on these matters until after my meeting with the two brothers at MSOP I did relate to Cates what I had found out in my investigation at Brown

Trail and that being, that Miller was guilty as charged.

After the lunch with brother and sister Cates, we (sister Sandra Greene and I) sat in the parking lot going over the information given us. We were emotionally upset by the accusations leveled at Dub McClish, for we knew the truth of Miller’s teaching on elder r & r. Up to this point, I had not sought any information on the reasons for the removal of Dub McClish and Dave Watson from the ranks of *TGJ*. I let my subscription lapse after the change. It was not of the quality I was used to in the original *TGJ* that I received since its beginning. I knew something terrible was amiss. I had been heartsick since I had been made aware of Miller’s apostasy, and now it was clear that there was more to this than was told me by brother Cates when I was in Memphis.

Our brothers at MSOP truly expect souls who are in sin, who are taught the Truth about their sins, to repent and be restored to the body of the Lord. At least, that is the impression I have always had of them. Even when they were counseling us on the personal matter mentioned above, they indicated and acted as though, when a person becomes aware of his sins, he needs to repent of said sins and turn away from such and not be involved with such sins any longer.

The sins of defamation publicly committed against McClish and Watson started off with the attack on McClish by brother Frank Chesser in Alabama, that caused Cates to accuse McClish of wrong doings. Brother Cates was visibly upset over this ordeal. *I had asked him if brother McClish had gone off the deep end and he agreed that it was so.* Cates told us that Miller had told him that he never did the things that he was accused of. I related how I had come to know about Miller’s false teachings regarding the 2002 practice of elder r & r, and which I had verified by brother Dan Flournoy, one of the other preachers at the Brown Trail congrega-

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tion at the time. He told me that Miller (although he was already involved in getting ready for his move to Alabama) was involved behind the scenes in the action Brown Trail was taking against their elders. *Cates mentioned several times that “they” made him take actions against McClish.* When I asked, “they who?”, he replied that *the board members told him that since he was the president of the board, it was his place to remove McClish.*

Now, I ask you folks in Memphis, TN, in Schertz, TX, and all others who claim to be preachers and teachers of God’s Holy Word, when are you going to do the very thing that you teach others to do? Repent! Admit that your attack on brother McClish was unwarranted, and work to straighten out this big sin against the Truth of the living God of Heaven! If you brethren have any biblical proof against McClish, you should make it known publicly—just as publicly as your attacks have been on McClish, Watson and those that support the Truth! Either admit your sins, or if you are so sure that you have not sinned, then publicly discuss these issues. The liberals, whom you all have stood against in the past, are happy to know that you folks are moving over to their way of thinking.

How can an honest Bible student support the apostate elements, operating as workers of righteousness, who you stood against in the past, but now, you openly fellowship and defend? Now you ignore their wrongs! Those of us who have looked to you brethren for sound teaching are hurting, knowing that, for some ungodly reasons, many of those whom we felt could be relied upon have deliberately left off standing for the Truth and the righteousness of our God and His Only Begotten Son.

When brother Miller stated that the liberal element was no longer a big problem (in my words V.G.), he must have meant that most of the opposition to him and his type were being manipulated over to the side of the liberals. I am thank-

ful that I understand enough of God’s Word to be obedient to it. I have many steadfast brethren to thank for this. It is a strange thing to me how I struggled, constantly in trouble with my liberal brethren because they did not live (stand behind) what they taught or preached. Thanks to many of you brethren, sister Sandra and I came to a better knowledge of the Word and grew in the Faith to a point that we could repent and be reconciled to God.

Now I am in kind of a dilemma. If I continue to study and grow in knowledge and in faith, is there a point that I will reach that I can go on where Christ has not led? God forbid! Some of the men who seemed so strong have been turned aside by Satan. He used some of the same tactics that he used on Eve.....surely you will not die (spiritually)....God does not want you to be ever so popular and in good standing only with the minority! You need to buddy up with those who have much money, power and influence in order to come to the more popular life, to be ALL that you can be!!

Do not listen to Satan! There are many who love your souls and pray for you daily.

I wrote only what I know about, what I personally was witness to. These things alone seem to be the great cause of all that has come to be. The problem exists because no one will stand up and face the facts at hand.

As your brother in Christ, I am seeking for the “peace that passeth all understanding” for this great brotherhood. It can only exist in the Christ and His Word. AMEN!

—Church of Christ at Alto Pass
P.O.Box 212
Alto Pass, IL 62905
altopass.coc@mchsi.com



Dub McClish’s Observations and Conclusions Regarding Brother Green’s Open Letter

[Having read brother Greene’s Open Letter brother McClish e-mailed his observations and conclusions about the same to me. We herein offer them to our readers — Editor]

I noted a couple of things in brother Greene’s Open Letter that had not surfaced before: (1) *Curtis Cate’s claim that the TGJ Board pressured him to replace Dave and Me.* Michael Hatcher (TGJ Board member at the time of McClish’s and Watson’s forced resignations) and I discussed this point not long ago, and both of us had a big laugh about that one. *Just one more lie from Curtis* (does this man with a doctorate not realize how easily such can be falsified or did he think Virgil and Sandi would never tell on him?). (2) *The other thing is that Bryan Braswell told Virgil at least a week before the July 2005 TGJ meetings at Schertz (note, even before the Sunny Slope Lectures) that Dave*

and I were going to be replaced. This information directly contradicts Barry Grider’s *denial* that (A) Curtis had decided before he left Memphis for Schertz that my head had to roll (Grider’s 7/29/05 e-mail to me) and (B) Grider’s and Braswell’s *denials* that Grider told Braswell, prior to the Schertz meetings, that I was going to be replaced (same e-mail). Now put Virgil’s testimony in his Open Letter along with what Cleatius Copeland (Roanoke, TX elder) told me on 7/17/05. I called to tell Cleatius about the Schertz meetings and that I suspected I would no longer be TGJ editor when I came back therefrom, then casually said, “For all I know, you may already know about the meetings in Schertz and their likely outcome.” He replied, “As a matter of fact, I do.” He then proceeded to tell me of Grider’s call to Braswell. *Thus, both Grider and Braswell lied—Grider’s saying that Curtis did not have his agenda well-set before he left Memphis for Schertz and Grider’s and Braswell’s tale about what Grider told Braswell regarding the end of Cates’ agenda.* ❧

STEPS WASHED WITH BUTTER

Martha Bentley

The man Job was a family man, a man of integrity, a man of conviction, who endeavored to convince God he did not deserve what he was receiving. In chapter 29 of the book of Job, he lamented the days of old and thought the former days better than the present. He got no acceptable answer, in his estimation, from God. The emphasis in chapter 29 is on "I." He, in effect, was saying, "Look what I have done for the Lord," and enumerated many good works. He complained, **"When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were yet about me, when I washed my steps with butter and the rock poured me out rivers of oil"** (Job 29:5-6). Truly times were good until God allowed him to be tried by the devil.

As did Job in the days of his prosperity, so do we today, as it were, wash our steps with butter. We have material wealth above all other nations (Psa. 104:24; 68:19). Our spiritual riches are beyond our comprehension. We are children of **the** king, sheep of **the** shepherd (Psa. 23; 138), and members of God's family.

Because of our great riches we have more and greater opportunities for service, both physical and spiritual. Do we appreciate these opportunities and take advantage of them? We also have more and greater responsibilities both to our homes and to our fellow man. Are we using these to the glory of God? Remember Job had riches in abundance and was a "perfect" man in God's sight, but all these riches were taken from him to teach him the value of greater riches. He needed to lose lesser faith to gain greater. Faith must be strengthened to accept God's conditions.

Are we negative or positive? Do we look for the bright side of each situation? Do we look for good in even the worst people? Are we content with that which God provides, not realizing how blessed we are? We have an ample supply of quality food, yet many have no food at all. We live in a free country when others are living in fear of their government. Have we really earned any of these blessings so that God should owe us anything? Truly our steps today are "washed with butter."

Many weak Christians leave God when life has its rough spots. While Job lamented his current situation he never failed to rely on God's providential care and great power, and in so doing he learned valuable lessons. He was not permitted to know the reasons for his trials but he trusted God through it all. He was truly humbled and saw God with his heart.

Then Job answered the Lord and said, I know that thou canst do everything and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me which I knew not. Hear I beseech thee, and I will speak. I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes (chap. 42:1-6).

Are we profiting by our trials, increasing in our faith toward God, or are we constantly looking back on what used to be? The apostle Paul said, **"...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before..."** (Philippians 3:13). Think about it!

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(Titus 1:7)*

ELDERS: Who Are These Men? AND PREACHERS (7)

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season ...” — 2 Tim. 4:2

W. N. “Bill” Jackson

This is written by a preacher, but one who has also served as an elder for some years. By continuing in the work of preaching, over quite a number of years, and being in that work this very day, I “lean” toward preachers, but trust that I am also objective when it comes to seeing the importance of the eldership, the authority of elders, and the need for an important relationship to exist between the elders and the preacher. It is of this last matter that we will now speak first. All will understand the same principles to apply if the congregation is of size to employ and utilize two or more preachers.

The Relationship

There would be no way to overemphasize the importance of a good, trusting, harmonious and spiritual relationship between the elders and the preacher. He is, after all, “separated unto them and unto their work” as is no other man on earth! He will be, by virtue of his pulpit and class work, a spokesman for them and for the congregational policies they establish, as he will speak for the Word of God and show the congregation how it will fit into the plan of God for their work and in behalf of their souls. But more: As a full-time worker in the Kingdom, taking into consideration his times in the pulpit and then his Sunday, Wednesday and other assigned classes, he spends more time before the congregation than any other man in the membership! His work, in making known the Word of God, is done under the charge given the elders to **“feed the flock of God”** (Acts 20:28). The elders are thus responsible for what he teaches and preaches.

If their relationship together is a good one, and it should be if all are intent on pleasing God, the preacher receives wonderful support, encouragement and uplift from the elders. If the relationship is not a good one, it will be of short life. In teaching young preachers, we stress that elders can be the most wonderful and supportive friends a preacher can have, but they make perfectly horrible enemies. In the first case, the atmosphere is grand, and promises a long work in that location; in the latter, the preacher is moving—he just has not realized it yet! Beyond the wonderful relationship that should exist between elders, we can think of none of any more importance than that between the preacher and the elders. Yes, these two—the preacher and the elders—can guard each other when it comes to dealing with divisive elements that may arise! There should be a close and confident relationship between elders and preacher, and when a man moves to

a work as preacher, the elders then should begin to labor to build that relationship.

Their Meetings Together

We have seen two extremes as to the elders and preacher meeting together, and neither of them best serves the Lord and the congregation: (1) The elders meet and the preacher NEVER meets with them, and (2) The elders meet and the preacher ALWAYS meets with them! The best operation, of course, lies between the two extremes. Whatever course or schedule is determined, all parties should know that their meeting together is a matter already consented to, and either party can feel free to ask for participation in a meeting.

As to the above extremes, it is hard to see how any group of elders can direct the teaching work of a congregation, with the preacher being given the heavier teaching load, and his work being done under the charge given the elders to “feed the flock” and they never see the need of his meeting with them! If nothing else, they will have some suggestions as to lessons needed by the congregation, or problems that need to be addressed, and such needs to be expressed to the preacher. Again, problems within a congregation are problems to both elders and preachers. Oftentimes, and their discussion together can be helpful. Then, if he is a man of maturity and experience, having served in several congregations, from that experience he may be able to give some advice or suggestions that relate to existing problems. The preacher himself will have questions to ask pertaining to the work of the congregation, and his meetings with the elders will give him the needed opportunity. Communication is so very important, and expedites the work of God in every place! Preachers and elders should meet together, and as previously pointed out, the foyer, hallway and/or parking lot is a terrible place to carry on the business of the Lord!

Now, as to the other extreme: The preacher ALWAYS meets with the elders. In fact, in some places where this is the custom, he, in effect, is made an elder for that meeting, and if he is the arrogant and self-willed type preacher, he can control the meeting and direct the elders (and thus, the congregation) to his own pleasure. Other than that, surely the elders have concerns, labors, counsel with others, studies and working over plans, etc. that happen not to be the preacher’s business! Surely elders have some things to work over together that

they must and should do without non-elders being present! So, our suggestion is that elders meet, and regularly, and that sometimes the preacher meet with them. All should feel free to request time together as the work and needs warrant!

This point should not have to be made, and yet, men and sin being what they are, we would best mention it for both elders and preachers: Respect the confidences that are in the discussions the elders and preachers have! Nothing will be more damaging to the work, and to the elders, and to the preacher(s) and to the congregation, than to have confidential matters publicly expressed and criticized before others' ears! Once more, respect and hold the confidences of the meetings, and when it is time for some matter to be made public, the elders should be the ones to do so, unless they have now given the preacher the consent to make mention of it in his pulpit work.

Considerations In Employing A Preacher

Every preacher should, when visiting a congregation and then in speaking with elders about the possibility of working with them, have a list such as the items we will mention. It is sometimes true that a man is reluctant to bring up all of these items, for fear that he comes across as "asking too much," and then when the work is taken and he expresses himself, he runs the risk of being charged with "wanting too much" now that he is settled in! Again, a young man, just beginning his work, may either be reluctant to ask, or may really not know all to ask about. We mention these things in order that elders will know of these things, and to keep down later problems, should see to these matters being settled, even if the preacher does not bring them up himself!

We think of these items:

(1) A frank picture given of the congregation, its work and its opportunities, along with any existing problems. Do not "spring" the latter on the preacher after he moves in.

(2) A frank and thorough picture given of their expectations of the preacher, his involvement in the work, any particular interests and activities he will be expected to be involved in, and especially of any schedule he will be expected to maintain.

(3) A frank and thorough discussion of where the elders, and the congregation, stand on the issues today troubling the church—such issues as we mentioned in chapter three. In these matters, "surprises" should not be sprung by either side after the preacher has begun his work.

(4) Clarity on his payment, and of such benefits as medical insurance, social security, car allowance and all else financial as relates to the preacher. Elders should spell these items out clearly, and make them a part of the minutes of the meeting. We are not suggesting a "written contract," and feel such is not needed. Spiritually minded men will abide by business meeting agreements and the record in the minutes; non-spiritual men would not hesitate to

break even a written agreement!

(5) Clarity on his time away from the local work, from his being allowed a day or more off during the week to time allowed for meetings and attending lectureships. Give the preacher some guidelines as to the number of meetings he may hold, and clarify the matter on whether the congregation will pay his expenses to one or more lectureships. May we here insert that the congregation always gains when they send their preachers to faithful lectureships, but there also must be consideration as to how much time he can be spared from his local obligations.

There is wisdom in the elders making all of these matters clear at the outset, that there can be a thorough understanding on the part of all parties. Once more, why create a problem by avoiding some of these matters, only to have them arise just a little while later, and perhaps making problems congregational-wide?

The Preacher As Your Missionary

We desired to add this further point, knowing that there is also a relationship existing between the elders at home and those men they employ as missionaries around the world. When such men are interviewed, with employment in mind, the same points should apply as when in discussion with the man who is to serve the cause locally. Future communication and contact will now be limited simply due to the distance involved and hence, all the more reason that the man or men be carefully selected.

Of utmost importance is the need for steady and informative communication. There should be a requirement of frequent reports on the work, and information as to future plans for the work. Ideally, there should be some occasional physical meeting between the elders and missionaries, wherein the fullness of discussion can be had. A non-performing missionary is disloyal to the elders and the congregation back home, and more than a few have embraced some false teaching and completely ruined their work, destroying what the home congregation spent years in building. Elders should expend much, much effort in supervision of their missionaries.

—Deceased

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RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES

Brad Green

On Tuesday, May 26, 2009, with a 6-1 decision, the California Supreme Court upheld a state constitutional ban on gay “marriages.” The ban was a result of a ballot initiative that passed in November 2008 with 52% of the vote. Citizens petitioned and won a place on the November ballot for Proposition 8 after the California Supreme Court’s 4-3 decision in May 2008 granted homosexuals an “equal right” to “marry.” Sadly, these individuals claiming a breach in “equal rights” are either ignorant of the facts or dishonest. In the United States, everyone has the same and equal right to marry. This right is derived from God’s definition of marriage – **“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh”** (Gen. 2:24). God’s law grants equal rights in regard to marriage – every qualified man has the right to marry a qualified woman and vice versa. What sodomites and their supporters are seeking is an “unequal right” to do that which God condemns as **“vile,” “against nature,” “unseemly,”** and **“error”** (Rom. 1:26-27). Marriage is a divine institution (Gen. 2:24). God defined marriage and made laws to govern marriage (cf. Mat. 5:32; 19:9). God is the only One who can join two together in marriage (Mat. 19:6) and He is the only One who can “disjoin” or abolish a marriage (Mat. 19:6, 9). I appreciate the 52% of Californians who voted in harmony with God’s law regarding marriage. It is rather refreshing to see a state known to be one of the nation’s most liberal do something so right. I also appreciate the California Supreme Court for upholding the “voice of the people,” rather than legislating law from the judiciary bench. But, “gay rights activists say they plan to return to voters as early as next year with a bid to repeal Proposition 8” (foxnews.com). Because these individuals do not respect God nor His Word, they will continue to fight for their lascivious and ungodly cause. Millions and millions of dollars will be spent in 2010 for and against the homosexual agenda and it seems pretty clear that this cycle will continue until California’s legislature steps in to make it harder to amend the state’s constitution. As long as people disregard the laws of God, and refuse to claim Him as King and only Law-Giver, every man will continue to do that which is **“right in his own eyes”** (Jud. 21:25).

God’s law is **“settled in heaven”** (Psa. 119:89) and cannot be changed. No matter how many propositions Californians vote on, God’s law will not change. No matter how many states follow the examples of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Maine and Vermont and choose to spit in God’s face by allowing “same-sex marriages,” God’s law cannot be changed. Individuals who vote in their respective state governments that God is wrong and sodomy is right, will have to stand before the Almighty Judge and give an

account if they do not repent.

Sadly, the religious world has seen its share of “Prop. 8s,” – ballot initiatives allowing men to vote on a matter already determined by God. Several denominations have met in “conference” or “general assembly” to vote in favor of welcoming homosexual members and for allowing homosexuals to serve as preachers and elders. They have eschewed God and His laws in favor of doing that which is right in their own eyes. In the mid 1800’s, the Christian Church denomination began after the famous “Prop. 8s” in which they chose to add mechanical instruments of music to worship and to “out-source” the work of the Church to a “Missionary Society.” They rejected the authority of the Bible and chose to do that which was right in their own eyes. There are various “Prop. 8s” being introduced in the Lord’s Church today as well. Some propositions bind and some loose where God did not. Many “Prop. 8s” are adopted and ratified by congregations without them even knowing it. All it takes is one sneaky individual to convince a good-hearted person or two that “we can all just agree to disagree.” How many false doctrines and unscriptural practices have slipped in under the radar because people were satisfied to “agree to disagree” regarding matters of doctrine? While those who were “hoodwinked” think that the controversy has been quelled, the sneaky individuals (wolves in “sheep’s clothing,” Mat. 7:15) begin the process of introducing that with which the “hoodwinked” disagreed. They enact their “Prop. 8” by doing that which is right in their own eyes.

The world around us will continue to do that which is right in their own eyes. The homosexual agenda (among others which are anti-God) will be debated every election cycle.

More states will obey men (homosexuals who comprise a minuscule percentage of the population) rather than God (Acts 5:29) and will adopt “unequal rights” for sodomites. We, as children of God (Gal. 3:26-27), must not swerve to the right hand nor to the left of God’s commands (Jos. 1:6-7). *We must seek to do that which is right in God’s eyes and not our own* – **“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil”** (1 Pet. 3:12).

—129 Lane Road
Lenoir City, TN 37772

Expelled

Teacher: “Johnny, can you define nonsense?”

Johnny: “Yes, teacher—an atheist.”

PLEASE HELP BRAD & APRIL GREEN

The article on page 14 is typical of the faithful stand brother Brad Green takes on fundamental and obligatory biblical matters. He is a brother who has the courage of his convictions and is worthy of faithful brethren's financial and other support in his efforts to preach and defend the Gospel. With his faithful wife, April, Brad is seeking to remain in a full time capacity with the relatively new Knox County Church of Christ—SEE BRAD'S LETTER BELOW.

This congregation began a few years ago in an effort to preserve the ancient order of primitive, pure New Testament Christianity. The church is doing well, but brother Green needs to remain as full-time evangelist with the congregation that it can be strengthened even more by his full-time work with it. Please give serious consideration to his request for financial assistance and remember the Knox County congregation in your prayers.

—David P. Brown, Editor

Brad Green
129 Lane Road
Lenoir City, TN 37772

(865) 771-0011
bradgreen@knoxcoc.com
www.knoxcoc.com

Dear Brethren,

I humbly submit to you this request for financial support as I labor with the Knox County Church of Christ in Knoxville, TN. Your support will allow me to continue preaching full-time and devote all my energies to the work of the church in this area. Sadly, if I am unable to increase my financial support soon, I will be forced to seek other full-time employment.

The Knox County congregation has been extremely blessed. Since the beginning of the year, three individuals have obeyed the Gospel and have put on Christ in baptism. Our newspaper advertisement, "Bible Answers For Bible Questions," has been very successful. We have received a great deal of correspondence through this effort and the Truth is being preached throughout Knox County. A family of two, seeking a new home congregation which teaches and practices only that which is authorized by the New Testament, found us through the newspaper ad and placed membership with us on March 15th. Other individuals have since visited our congregation after reading our newspaper advertisement.

Further, we have continued to build upon all of the recent good news by hosting a Gospel Meeting, April 5-8, with brother Michael Hatcher, preacher for the Bellview Church of Christ in Pensacola, FL. We had seven visitors during the week, including four non-Christians.

There is much more to do, and with your financial support, I will be able to continue to dedicate my full time and efforts towards this good work. I have weekly Bible studies with our new converts, regular Bible studies with two non-Christians, and am confident that more Bible studies with non-Christians are soon on the horizon. Please continue to pray for our efforts here as we work hard to grow, in Truth and in number, and glorify God in our community. **If you can supply any**

financial support for me as I labor here it will be greatly appreciated.

Your Fellow Servant in The Christ,

/s/Brad Green

REFERENCES

Dub McClish, Preacher
Northpoint Church of Christ
Denton, TX 76209
(940) 387-1429
tgjoriginal@verizon.net

Michael Hatcher, Preacher
Bellview Church of Christ
Pensacola, Florida 32526
(850) 455-7595
mhatcher@gmail.com

Barry Simmons
Knox County Church of Christ
Knoxville, TN
(865) 986-4984
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Directory of Churches...

-Alabama-

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

-Colorado-

Denver—Piedmont Church of Christ, 1602 S. Parker Rd. Ste. 109, Denver, CO 80231, Sunday: 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. www.piedmontcoc.net, Lester Kamp, evangelist. (720) 535-5807.

-England-

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

-Florida-

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

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

-North Carolina-

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

-South Carolina-

Belvedere (Greater Augusta, Georgia Area)—Church of Christ, 535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841, www.belvederechurchofchrist.org; e-mail belvecoc@gmail.com, (803) 442-6388, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Evangelist: Ken Chumbley (803) 279-8663.

-Oklahoma-

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

- Tennessee-

Murfreesboro—Church of Christ, 1154 Park Avenue, Murfreesboro, TN 37129, 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.murfreesboro-churchofchrist.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 6, Denton, TX 76208. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 1:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: 940.323.9797; tgjoriginal@verizon.net.

Evant—Evant Church of Christ, 310 West Brooks Drive, Evant, TX 76525. Office: (254) 471-5705; Jess Whitlock, evangelist (254) 471-5717.

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

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

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

New Braunfels—225 Saenger Halle Rd. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. Wed. 7:30 p.m. Lynn Parker, evangelist. (830) 625-9367. www.nbchurchofchrist.com.

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

-Wyoming-

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