

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

“I TEACH LOGIC”

Gary W. Summers

“I teach logic,” Keith Mosher told about 200 people at the Sunny Slope lectures in Paducah, Kentucky, on July 15, 2006. Such became abundantly clear when logical fallacies were used expertly to address an honest question. This article will address the comments given by three men in response to the following question:

In view of all that has been written over the last year in widely distributed brotherhood publications, would brothers Cates or Mosher please clarify whether the leadership of Memphis School of Preaching supports Dave Miller as director of Apologetics Press?

This is a question that could be answered, “Yes, we support him,” or, “No, we don’t,” but most of us would probably elaborate on our answers. What is interesting is the *way* that the elaboration occurred. The answers were defensive and full of fallacies. The purpose of this article is not to denigrate the men involved (brethren Curtis Cates, Keith Mosher, and B. J. Clarke). Most of us have heard these men preach the Word time and again and have marveled at their knowledge, their conviction, and their presentation of the Truth. It is sad, however, to see the tactics used by them when we ought to be trying to find ways of promoting reconciliation.

Keeping the question in mind, Curtis Cates began with the following remarks.

All right. First of all, let me say that we have never taught, as it is practiced among the liberals, and so forth, elder reevaluation/reconfirmation. We are opposed to it. Last November brother Liddell spoke specifically against it in Missouri. I amended it. I was there. I spoke against it in Alabama back in October—elder reevaluation/reconfirmation. We have never taught that. We have taught against it. We teach against it. We *shall* teach against it as long as I have anything to do with the MSOP and the present faculty.

It is interesting that, in answering a question about supporting Dave Miller, the first thing out of his mouth was to speak about the elder reevaluation/reconfirmation practice done at Brown Trail in Fort Worth—twice (1990, 2002). He next said: “Now relative to brother Dave Miller, brother Dave Miller denies that they practiced what they’re being accused of as having practiced, as far as what the liberals do, and so forth.” Say, that is comforting. Brown Trail did not practice it like liberals do. What does this

mean—that they got rid of elders the way conservatives do?

Is there one system that liberals use when they want to expunge men from the eldership and another system for conservatives? Hmm. Does that mean it is wrong for liberal elders to jettison conservative elders, but right for conservatives to defrock liberal ones? Elders from Brown Trail ended up resigning in both instances. Are we now being told that these changes were *not* the desired result? Perhaps Miller and Cates could explain more fully how we conservatives practice elder reevaluation/reconfirmation (with God’s authority) better and differently than the liberals.

THE RED HERRING FALLACY

The red herring fallacy involves changing the subject to try to divert attention away from the question. For example, a presidential candidate is asked if he had ever used drugs. He might answer, “No one has been more opposed to the use of drugs than I have, and I have a four-point program ready to put into practice that will reduce drug use.” *These are facts of value to the voter; they are true, but none of what was said answers the question.* Brothers Cates and Mosher both gave red herring responses. Cates’ words were mentioned above as he affirmed that he and others do not teach it—even though that was not the question. He went on to say further:

And let me just assure you brethren. I stand where I’ve always stood. I’ve written a lot of books against liberalism. When I spoke here in 1980, I was opposed to liberalism. Some of you

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

“A DOUBLE MINDED MAN...”—JAMES 1:8

John Gill’s Exposition of the Bible has the following comment regarding the meaning of James 1:8

A double minded man?

A man of two souls, or of a double heart, that speaks and asks with an heart, and an heart, as in (Psalms 12:2) who halts between two opinions, and is at an uncertainty what to do or say, and is undetermined what to ask for; or who is not sincere and upright in his requests, who asks for one thing, and means another, and asks amiss, and with an ill design; does not call upon God in truth, and in the sincerity of his soul; draws nigh to him with his mouth, and honours him with his lips, but his heart is far from him. Such an one is

unstable in all his ways;

he is confused in his mind; restless in his thoughts, unsettled in his designs and intentions; inconstant in his petitions; uncertain in his notions and opinion of things; and very variable in his actions, and especially in matters of religion; he is always changing, and never at a point, but at a continual uncertainty, both in a way of thinking and doing: he never continues long either in an opinion, or in a practice, but is ever shifting and moving.

David B. Smith is exceptional in his ability as a preacher. We had fully intended to run a complete series of brother Smith’s articles on the timely and important subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage until events caused David to unfurl his true colors. We will not knowingly use anyone to write for *CFTF* who is as unstable as Smith has turned out to be—although several such “double minded” and “unstable” characters have come to light in the last two years because of the errors of Dave Miller, et al.

Smith’s spiritual color is determined by the color of his surroundings. To the Northside church and her elders he appeared as one of them—*while he was with and among them*. Smith was willing for the Northside elders and church to take care of him and his wife and draw his salary from them while all the time remaining in fellowship with those who unscripturally withdrew fellowship from his elders. To put it bluntly, but truthfully, he “consorted with the enemy.” The Northside elders took (and are taking) all sorts of fire for the courage of their convictions, while Smith refused to stand beside and behind them in the heat of battle. He refused to let his “yea be yea” and his “nay, nay.” At the same time he was letting the Millerites—in particular GBN—know that he saw no problems with Miller, et al.

Read the material in this issue of *CFTF* regarding brother David B. Smith and you will read the account of a true “fence straddler” who was finally forced off of the fence on to the side where his heart always has been.

In closing we express our deep appreciation to Barry Gilreath Sr. and Jr. for raising the questions and pressing the points during the 2007 Spring *CFTF* Lectures’ Open Forum that helped smoke out a fifth columnist from our ranks.

—David P. Brown, Editor

(Continued from page 1)

heard me. I have written 7 or 8 books against liberalism. I have written numberless articles on liberalism.

Somebody from Kentucky wrote me a while back and said, “Brother Cates, where do you stand on the marriage question?” Brethren, I stand where I’ve always stood on the marriage question. I sent him a chapter in the book in 1980 at this very lectureship. And I said, “This is where I stand.” I sent him also a copy of a brochure by brother Elkins on the marriage question. Brethren, that’s where I stand.

This is all truthful information, but none of it relates to the question. Brother Mosher answered in the same vein.

I went to school with Dave Miller. I sat in the classes at the graduate school as he and I fought those liberal professors together. He’s the only one who stood with me. He’s the man who wrote *Piloting the Strait*; have you read it?

All of these statements are true, but what is the relevance to the question that was asked? Incidentally, what relevance is there in asking if brethren have read *Piloting the Strait*? Many faithful brethren have read the book and recommended it (see www.spiritualperspectives.org; under *topic*, select *book reviews*, and look at the fourth entry). These facts do not prove that Miller is right on the issue of elder reaffirmation / reconfirmation.

THE AD HOMINEM FALLACY

Familiar to many is also the *ad hominem* fallacy. *Rather than deal with an issue, an attack is made “against the man,”* who represents the opposition. Consider the opening words of brother Keith Mosher as he comments on the question.

This statement is typed (showing it to the audience), which means the brother or sister had it made up before they got here. I call those set-up questions. And I’m speaking for myself—not the Memphis School of Preaching. I teach logic, and this is the kind of question that says, “Have you stopped beating your wife?” It doesn’t matter what we say; somebody’s going to write about us. I’ve been preaching for 42 years, brethren, and I stand right where I stood 42 years ago. And my friends will believe that, and my enemies won’t, but these people are as vile a group, and I do mean vile as I have ever read after in my life. I have never seen the kind of attitude they have. They want to destroy about nine good works in the brotherhood just to prove a point.

First of all, brother Mosher made an incorrect assumption about the question. It was not a set-up question; it proved to be an honest inquiry. A teacher of logic should not jump to the conclusion that, if a question is typed, it implies a sinister motive. It may be that the individual has poor handwriting or that he took the time to carefully phrase the question in an unbiased way. If the reader will look at the question again (at the beginning of this article), he will observe that the question was impartial.

Following this opening (undeserved) condemnation is another sampling of the red herring, followed by the *ad hominem* attack. It may be that I am included in “these people” who are “vile” and destructive (of nine good works) since he has stood with those who call upon Dave Miller to repent. Since when is urging someone (who has taught and practiced error) to repent vile and destructive? Is it the spirit of Christ to overlook sin? Our Lord rebuked His own disciples when

they were wrong; love demands it. The question is, “Why are so many giving Dave Miller (and others) a pass on this issue?” If they would have said, “Dave, we need to clear this matter up in a public way, so that no one can continue to criticize you and the good work of Apologetics Press,” the brotherhood would have been in much better shape than it currently is.

Mosher also said: “And I want to tell all of you in public: This isn’t about Dave Miller. (An “amen” is audible in the background.) This is not about Dave Miller.” Really? If someone really wanted to prove that statement, the best course of action would be to resolve the Miller controversy and then see if the criticism continues. Mosher closed with one final *ad hominem* attack: “If you’re going to believe some of these publications, you’re going to have a problem, because those brethren are lying to you.” So, those opposed to Dave Miller being used to speak while he remains impenitent are vile, destructive, and now liars to boot. What is next—an affirmation that we kick our dogs and snarl at children? Brother Mosher should supply the evidence he has concerning this charge.

B. J. Clarke also made an *ad hominem* attack. After discussing passages from Deuteronomy 13 and 17, which charge Israel with investigating the facts before putting someone to death, he concluded with these words:

We have a lot of people throwing stones who’ve never taken a moment to investigate the certainty of what they’ve heard. And that’s the problem. It’s a sad, sad problem indeed that people will just hear one person say something and then they’ll run with that, and then someone else will say it, and then someone else will say it. And before you know it, it gets distorted. Brethren, I’m thankful to God that He’s going to be our judge and not some individuals who want to believe lies that have been told without even one shred of foundation of fact.

How does brother Clarke know how many people are throwing stones without any evidence? Does he have *evidence* of that allegation? If such were the case, it would be deplorable, but his criticism does not allow for the possibility that many are pleading for Dave Miller to repent *because of* the facts. The argument he makes is basically this: “Those who are criticizing Dave Miller and the institutions that support him (MSOP, GBN, et al.) do not know what they are talking about. They stand guilty of believing lies.” What an effective way to silence the opposition! Generally, people resort to *ad hominem* attacks when they lack legitimate arguments.

Brother Cates closed his remarks with an *ad hominem* statement:

I remember one fellow told me on one occasion, “I wouldn’t believe what Dave Miller says if it were to come out of his own mouth.” Now I want to ask you, “What possibility does a person have when he’s dealing with that kind of attitude?”

Surely brother Cates knows that this sentiment does not characterize all those who have taken issue with Dave Miller. The example is calculated to make people think that all critics fall into this category, and such is simply not the case.

“JUST CALL DAVE”

Brother Cates encouraged people to call and talk to Dave—a sentiment he also repeated the second time he addressed the audience on this issue. Brother Mosher likewise exhorted those present to call Dave and talk to him. Have not some done just that? One reported that Dave said a qualified elder should resign if he did not have the right percentage of support from the members and that an unqualified man could be an elder if he met with the congregation’s approval. Several have reported that Dave told them he had nothing to repent of. *The problem, however, with such telephone conversations is that what was said cannot be verified.*

A few years ago, an elder told people to call him if they wanted to know what he believed. He then told some of those people one thing and others just the opposite. Many were confused. But nothing was in writing where it could be examined. For that reason the advice to “call Dave” lacks merit. What would be far more productive would be a meeting where several sound brethren are present, and the meeting is taped. That would eliminate all the confusion and possible misrepresentations.

I mailed Dave a letter toward that end on March 7, 2006. A portion of that letter follows:

Wesley Simons said that he thought that you felt that it would not matter what you said—you think some people are out to get you. I cannot say that there might not be a few who might feel that way, but I do not believe the vast majority of us just really “have it in” for you. Speaking for myself, I want to see every faithful gospel preacher succeed; I want Apologetics Press to succeed. But what can I do under the circumstances?

So many things have occurred within a year’s time: brethren who have been friends and worked together for decades are at odds with one another; the brethren in Dalton have withdrawn from those in Calhoun, and this will cause brethren to “take sides” even more than they already have. Unfortunately, you and your teachings lie at the heart of a great deal of this division. This is not to say that you purposely created any of these problems, but you certainly are in a position to help resolve them.

What I am proposing is this: Would it be possible for some of us to work on effecting a solution? Could a few of us meet in a non-hostile atmosphere, where we could be free to be honest? A meeting full of accusations would achieve nothing. If we could treat one another kindly, as brethren, do you think it might accomplish something? Could we examine the Scriptures in a non-defensive manner and perhaps achieve agreement?

Of course, there is no way to know the answers to all of these questions. Dave, does this appeal to you? I do not believe you are a liberal at heart. But, despite warnings, you met with and apparently endorsed the liberal church in Calhoun, and you have not been as clear in defense of yourself as you could be. The very fact that you authored *Piloting the Strait* says that you want to stand with the truth, but your teaching on two doctrinal issues have brethren unsettled, as well as your fellowship practices.

The decision is up to you. Wesley, I, and others would like nothing better than to see this current polarization dissipate. Please let me know by mail or phone call what your thoughts are on this matter.

As of May 1, 2007, no reply has been received. Wesley Simons contacted Dave Miller about the time this letter was written, encouraging him to meet in just such a fashion. He said that he was too busy. Yet, the brethren at the Sunny Slope forum kept encouraging people to call Dave. Now, which would take less time—a meeting of several brethren for a few hours, or constantly answering phone calls from individuals seeking information?

THE SCRIPTURAL SOLUTION

Another brother, Charles Leonard, spoke at this forum, also. *Although he was thinking of a different situation, he wisely said:*

And I have known of brethren that you could not do anything to correct anything with. And I maintain this, that when you have difficulty among brethren and brethren have something—say two brothers here—and one has a problem against the other and said, “Now we need to meet and work this out.” Well, now, if there is no meeting, there won’t be any working out. And I have known of brethren across the years that would say, “I’m not about to meet.” How can you solve problems when brethren are unwilling to sit down and to meet? Now it’s somewhat like trying to deal with husband/wife relationship. They’re about to break up their marriage. And so the husband encourages the wife, and they come talk to the preacher. Preacher listens to her. And when she gets through, he seems to think, “You know that fellow ought to be shot.” But then the husband comes in and talks to the preacher. And when he got through, he said, “Boy, I don’t know how he lived with her.” Now the only way to solve problems is to get brethren together. And when brethren won’t get together, and they won’t meet, you can’t solve any problems. We’ve got some brethren in the brotherhood that won’t meet, and they’re not about to solve any problems.

Amen! This brother has stated a Scriptural principle. If someone has something against a brother, he is to go and tell him about it (Matt. 18:15-17). If someone knows that a brother has something against him, he is to go and talk to him about it (Matt. 5:23-24). Why has this problem concerning Dave Miller been allowed to persist this long? Where is the desire to meet and resolve issues that are dividing us? It will not do for some to stand up and condemn those who have actually made efforts to achieve reconciliation. If some are not working to resolve this problem, brethren should be asking, “Why?”

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["This current polarization" will not dissipate as long as brethren ignore evidence as they attempt to sweep the sins of Dave Miller, et al. under the proverbial rug. Seemingly men such as Keith Mosher and his fellow MSOP faculty members, along with other brethren of their mind set (Wesley Simons, are you listening?) are more interested in working on advanced degrees in politics than they are settling things according to the Bible. Why these brethren have chosen the “wide gate and broad way” in this matter is beyond me, but they have started on a trip that will take them down a road that has never ended in anything else but spiritual ruin.—Editor]

The David B. Smith Controversy

The Following Material Was Compiled by the Northside Church of Christ, Calhoun,
Georgia Elders, Ron Hall and Terry York

THREE POINTS COVERED BY THE NORTHSIDE ELDERS STATEMENT

(1) Events which lead up to David B. Smith's Resignation March 7, 2007

(2) David B. Smith Issues Statement March 22, 2007 – Northside response March 25

(3) David B. Smith attempts to clear-up inconsistencies and Response from others

David B Smith's Resignation and The Northside Elders' Statement

You are likely aware of the confusion created by Barry Gilreath, Sr. during the 2007 Spring *Contending for the Faith* Lectureship Open Forums on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 27 & 28. If you are not familiar with what took place you can go to www.churchesofchrist.com and view the Open Forums for yourself. The purpose of this statement is to clear up any false and misleading rumors, hearsay, and gossip which are being spread by certain individuals associated with the *Gospel Broadcasting Network (GBN)* and others as they relate to the Open Forums noted above. We will address only the events that occurred between February 27 & 28 (the dates of the Open Forums) and March 7 (the date David B. Smith resigned his work with the Northside church of Christ). This information should set the record straight and stop the misleading statements which have been put forth for some time now.

We met with David B. Smith Saturday night (3/03) to discuss the assertions put forth by Gilreath, Sr. about him and any part he might have played in this matter. We had what we thought was a very productive meeting. David is a fine young man who it appears has now fallen victim to wicked men whom he once thought were his friends. They have now betrayed his trust for their own selfish interests and are using that trust (confidential e-mails, phone calls, etc.) in an attempt to destroy the Northside church of Christ and ultimately David B. Smith himself. Brother Smith admitted to us, in our March 3 meeting that he had resumed his "confidential" correspondence with Barry Gilreath, Jr. (and others) sometime after we had asked him to discontinue these exchanges in April 2006. We had instructed David to advise these men to contact us and let us address whatever concerns they might have. He agreed to do as we had instructed. David admitted that he had done wrong in this matter and apologized to us for what he had done. Barry Gilreath, Sr.'s, e-mail accusations submitted to the Spring Lectures Open Forum also made David realize that the Highland elders were now using some of the statements he had made in confidence to hurt him and his elders,

which realization he acknowledged to us. David agreed to make a public statement to the Northside congregation the next day (Sunday, 3/04), apologizing to them (and to us) for the shame and reproach his actions have brought upon the Northside church. Accordingly, David made the following statement which was transcribed verbatim:

My dearest brethren,

The last few days have been some of the most spiritually taxing in all of my life. It seems as though the frustration that has been building between certain men over a number of months was let go in such a way as to call in question my character, Terry's, and others. Without going into detail, these events have left many in great despair, not to mention confused. I've had to consider and reflect, or had time to consider and reflect, on these events and realized that despite my outright anger that my, or despite my disappointment, and even in spite of every good intention on my end, that I have contributed in part to the worry of a good number of people.

I consider myself a true optimist in that I really do look for the good in everything. I believe the Bible teaches us to be this way, a hope-against-hope for the good in everything and every situation. I believe we are supposed to extend the benefit of doubt until it cannot possibly be extended any more. And I have tried, in spite of bad circumstances, to be something of a peacemaker, but I am also a man in deep desperation.

My spirit has been crushed for the longest time over the division of the men I love very dearly. My immense love for brethren, coupled with my desire to be trusting and patient, have caused me to say things that can be and have been easily misconstrued. There have been times in great frustration when, instead of being slow to speak, I have said things in confidence to others that never should have been said. There are times when I have not been firm enough in my speech because I thought it would actually help a situation, but ultimately harmed the situation further. There are times when things should have been said that I did not say. While it does not excuse my actions, I am a man. I face temptations like everyone else. And there are times when I look back and reflect and see where I have been a part of the problem.

I want you to understand this very clearly: I would never intentionally do anything to harm this congregation—never. I believe you know that. I have always, always, acted in accordance to [sic] what I know is right. I've always done what I thought to be right, and sometimes I make mistakes in doing that. I've tried to be as consistent as I possibly can be, and at times I've been inconsistent in my speech and in my actions. I consider myself to be a very sensitive man, and I'm not too proud to ask forgiveness when I believe I have done wrong. In a short time I hope to clarify some things on my end. I hope to be more distinct about my position on some things for the benefit of others.

I hope this will help everyone. I ask for your patience as I work those things out. Until then, you can know that I love this congregation. I love and appreciate everyone in this congregation. I love the elders. I love the members. I love you, and you know that I do. I ask you to pray for everyone,

including me, that we will all act right and that we will do right and be honest enough to correct mistakes when they are pointed out. There is no reason why we cannot all be one if our goal is to be just as true as possible to our convictions.

I'd like to ask Terry, if he would, to come lead prayer.

[NOTE: Brother Barry Gilreath, Sr., accused brother Terry York of misrepresenting David B. Smith during the Spring Lectures Open Forum. Also, brother Barry Gilreath, Jr., in an e-mail message (3/02, reproduced below), accused Terry of "misrepresentation" and of making "misleading" and "erroneous" statements in the Spring Forum concerning David's convictions. However, as seen in David's statement above, he called on Terry, one of his elders, to lead a prayer to God on his behalf. David obviously would not have done so had he believed Terry misrepresented him. This alone is ample evidence to unbiased brethren that David knew that Terry spoke the truth about him at the Open Forum. The Gilreaths' assertions about Terry are patently false and therefore sinful. You will also notice in David's statement that he understood he was to make a public statement, giving up his silence and stating distinctly where he stands on these issues when he said: "In a short time I hope to clarify some things on my end. I hope to be more distinct about my position on some things for the benefit of others." At this point, we were hopeful he would do as he had promised. But apparently his respect of persons overruled his convictions and courage.]

In our Saturday March 3, 2007 meeting, David agreed to prepare a signed statement setting forth in clear, unambiguous terms where he stands, which statement would be made available to the brotherhood. He promised to prepare this statement ASAP. Because of this promise and the significance of this statement, we therefore expected him to prepare it Monday, but Monday came and went without his doing so. We asked him about it Monday night, and he said he would have it Tuesday. Tuesday came and went, but he still had not produced the promised statement. We met with him Tuesday night (3/06) and reassured him that, since he had repented for his part in this current conflict, we would fight with him to clear his name in this matter. We impressed upon him how important it was for him to make a precisely-worded statement and have it ready the next day. We stressed to him that he needed to clear not only his own name, but the name of Terry York, whose character had also been called into question by Barry Gilreath, Sr.'s statements in the Spring Open Forum.

[NOTE: At this point we want to emphasize that the statements made by brother Gilreath, Sr. did not in any way slander the good name of Terry York, nor any of the members of the Northside church among those who know us for the stand we have taken over the years. We have had hundreds of brethren who have sent their love and support for us since the Spring Open Forums. But we do realize there are those who will use what was said by brother Gilreath, Sr. to further deceive good brethren in order to promote their own selfish agendas. They will not present both sides of this story, but will hope that those who do not know us will take their word (which is offered without one shred of evidence), and believe the worst about us. Their goal is clear, which goal is to cast doubt on

our credibility, but we believe brother Gilreath, Sr., did us, and all the faithful, a tremendous favor by introducing his statements to the Spring Open Forums as he did. He gave us another opportunity to set the record straight and get the truth of these matters before a large number of brethren. To further set the record straight we decided to issue this statement for those who are genuinely seeking the truth.]

Now back to David B. Smith's statement. David told us he would have a statement prepared Wednesday. The next day, when it appeared to us that he was continuing to stall, we decided to make some suggestions about what he should include in his statement. We e-mailed our suggestions to David at 9:21 A.M. for his consideration. David acknowledged receipt of our suggestions, as noted below:

From: confffaith@aol.com [mailto:confffaith@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 07, 2007 11:13 AM
To: TYYORK@aol.com
Subject: Re: Correction

Terry,

I appreciate these suggestions. I will consider them today as I work on my statement.

David

David had agreed to e-mail a copy of his statement to us before he sent it to any others. This way, since it so vitally concerned the Northside church, we could approve (or disapprove) it before it went out to the brotherhood. Wednesday afternoon came, but there still was no statement. Later Wednesday afternoon we decided to prepare our own statement, in case David failed again on his promise to have a statement prepared. Our statement simply affirmed where he stood on current brotherhood fellowship issues and on the recent confusion created by Barry Gilreath, Sr., according to David's statements to us on March 3. (see our statement below). We met with David after services Wednesday night (3/07), expecting him to hand us his long-awaited statement for our consideration. However, instead of his statement, he presented his letter of resignation as the preacher at Northside.

Realizing that David's resignation indicated he had decided not to produce the statement he had agreed to do, before we accepted his resignation, we handed him our statement and asked him to read it (we had already e-mailed him a rough draft as noted above). He immediately put the statement in his notebook and said he would read it later. We then asked him if he would read the statement immediately, in our presence, and let us know if he agreed or disagreed with any part of it. He read the statement, said he agreed with it completely, and that it represented his true position on the matters it embraced. We then asked him to sign the statement so we could clear brother Terry York's name in reference to the false charge Barry Gilreath, Sr., introduced at the Spring Open Forum, but he refused. He said he could not sign the statement. Terry York then begged David to sign the statement which would refute Barry Gilreath, Sr.'s reckless charge and thus clear his (Terry's) name. David again refused, saying he would not sign it. Brother York asked David if he would

ever consider signing the statement, he said he **might** if he had some time to think about it. Brother York asked him how much time he thought he needed—two weeks? David said, “Ten days.” At this point, we decided to give David ten days before we made this matter public. The ten days David requested to reconsider signing the statement have now come and gone, and there is no signed statement from him. He has left us with no choice but to make this public announcement concerning these grievous matters.

It is still a mystery to us why David refuses to sign his name to a statement with which he orally professes full agreement. His refusal demonstrates the nature and behavior of compromisers. When someone wants to hide something, Satan is always ready to take advantage of the situation. We expressed to David our strong concern for and disappointment in him for his refusal to sign the statement, a statement with which he explicitly stated his agreement in full. We told him he was compromising for not signing the statement. David disagreed. He then told us he would reaffirm his agreement with our statement to anyone who called him and talked with him personally. We told David in response that this was not the way we were going to handle this problem. We pointed out that his way of addressing this was like that of Dave Miller and his defenders. Nothing short of a signed, clear, precise statement would do. While David will not admit it, he has compromised and in doing so he has rendered his “beloved” brethren at Northside and the cause of Truth (and all those who refuse to compromise) a severe blow. However, we will not let this matter diminish our resolve to stand **for** the Truth and **with** faithful brethren everywhere. At this point in our meeting on March 7, we had no choice but to accept David’s resignation. Ironically, instead of bringing to us his promised public statement (which would have cleared up the confusion Barry Gilreath, Sr., sought to create at the Spring Open Forum), David brought us his letter of resignation, which has created even more confusion. **To our great disappointment and dismay, we have since learned that the Highland elders, Wesley Simons, and others knew of David’s resignation before he made it known to us.** We had asked David a few weeks earlier that if he ever decided to leave Northside to let us be the first to know. He told us he would. David’s telling others of his resignation before he told us was particularly disappointing, for it represented another broken promise on his part.

Brother Terry York has been treated very wrong in all of this. The only thing of which he is “guilty” is being honest and faithful to uphold the Truth. The Highland elders and GBN have tried to cast a long, dark shadow over his good name and the name of the eldership and the members of the Northside church of Christ in order to promote their own selfish agenda. Spreading half-truths, hearsay, slanders, and now lies is not the way for anyone to act, much less Christians. Please closely read their withdrawal letter and their e-mails. Then observe very closely their unchristian conduct in this whole matter, and realize what they are doing to the precious body of Christ. Please carefully examine the evidence we have

made available on these matters www.northsidecalhoun.net, and see for yourself who is to be blamed for this current division. Please wake up, brethren.

Barry Gilreath, Jr., sent the following e-mail to brother York soon after he returned from the 2007 lectureship at Spring, Texas:

From: James Barry Gilreath Jr. [mailto:jamesbg2@alltel.net]

Sent: Friday, March 02, 2007 11:42 AM

To: TYYORK@aol.com

Subject: Spring Lectures

Brother York,

I was so shocked to hear the **misrepresentation** of your first statement at Spring concerning David. I was even more astounded that you got up the next day and reaffirmed your **misleading** and **erroneous statement** again. You did a great disservice to David in publicly aligning him with this radical element that he does not support and does not want to be a part of. David had even cancelled his appearance to distance himself from the very lectureship you attended. You know that he does not believe that Dave Miller is a false teacher. So do many other brethren [who] know his position. Furthermore, we have evidence that proves you **misrepresented** David, and I don’t say that if I couldn’t back it up. Additionally, David has said to you and others that if everything that Dave Miller told him on the phone was true, then he would not consider him to be a false teacher. And you also know that he affirmed during the lunch hour at the CFTF lectures at Lenoir City (Oct 2005) that he (David) said that he accepted the statement that Miller made. David made that statement in front of Freddie Clayton, his parents, Bobbie Hall, and others. It is no secret what David believes to those who truly know him. Many brethren are now aware of your **misrepresentation** of David at Spring, and as one brother said concerning this matter, “Someone is lying”. Brother, you may have repented for your attitude during the Gospel meeting with James Rogers, but you need to repent for some other matters as well, including now the **misrepresentation** of David at Spring.

Additionally, despite your **misleading statement**, David has no problems being on a lectureship program with me. Again, I have the means to prove that and do not make that claim lightly either. The problem is actually the Northside eldership. He doesn’t want to do anything that would cause problems for you at Northside. He does not have a fellowship problem with me. Yet you portrayed David as though he would not fellowship me. That is false. You gave a **misleading response** which is nothing more than **deceit**. That was so damaging to David and others.

I believe that you have sadly sealed David’s fate as far as Northside. Time will tell. Yet, your participation at the Spring fiasco was so unnecessary. To my knowledge, most every congregation or preacher that has been caught up in this radical movement that was spear-headed by Dub McClish and David Brown after 2005 has suffered greatly as a result. I knew that when Ron Hall affirmed in your men’s business meeting before all of this got started, that this stuff wasn’t going to affect Northside, he would be sadly mistaken. One can not continually expose a congregation to negativity and bickering, and it not affect the church. People get sick of it. Now I notice that you have a second and new Northside Website dedicated to this bickering and negativity. I wonder how many of your members are aware of this effort that seemingly appears to be the work of Ron Hall alone, based upon the posts author. Did you know

about the website? Do your members know about it?

Brother, I am still praying and hopeful that one day you will see **the error of your way** and make things right.

Barry Jr.

When you read the four-point statement at the end of this document, which David has orally affirmed (in the presence of several witnesses now) represents his convictions, compare that with the nine assertions and allegations in Barry Gilreath, Jr.'s letter. Indeed, "Someone is lying." We refuse to respond to e-mails like this which are filled with caustic language, false allegations, and slanders with the intent to divide and conquer those who refuse to go along with their agendas. Is this the kind of brethren with whom you want to be associated? We hope not. We concur with the words of brother David B. Smith, as set forth in his public confession before the members of the Northside congregation on March 4, when he said, "pray for everyone, including me, that we will all act right and that we will do right and be honest enough to correct mistakes when they are pointed out. There is no reason why we cannot all be one if our goal is to be just as true as possible to our convictions." Brethren why can't we be one? We can if we will all get back to the Bible and use it for our authority for what we do in word or in deed (Col 3:17).

Terry York has been accused falsely (he is not a liar) and his brethren at Northside are standing firmly behind him and with him in this controversy. In this entire matter brother York has conducted himself as a Christian gentleman in every way. Below is an e-mail brother York sent David B. Smith shortly after his departure from the Northside church of Christ, which shows the kind of Christian man brother York is:

From: Terry York

Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2007 1:03 AM

To: David B Smith ConFTFaith@aol.com

Subject: Thanks for Books

My Dearest Brother David

Thank you so very much for the books you left for me at the building. The books mean so much, especially knowing how much you cherish your books. I will always treasure them greatly. The note you left was also very much appreciated and it will be kept and cherished always. From what you said in the note, it is apparent that you still have a love for your co-worker, which love is mutual, even though you made your decision to leave. The time we spent together doing the Radio programs and visiting will also be remembered. Maybe the best memory you and I have of visiting is the time when we studied with Art and Belva and you baptized them.

David, about three years ago you said something that made a lasting impression when you were teaching from Matthew chapter eleven. You said that a true friend will always complement one to others and criticize one to their face. With that said please consider a few things.

David, I have always told you that I would trust you with my life. I also had confidence in your truthfulness. I have no doubt that you told me the truth on Tuesday and Wednesday when I called you from Texas. I had no thought that you would ever leave a question hanging over my truthfulness in what I said in those open forums. I am going to look for your signature on that statement every day, until you tell me differently, even though there is a little something that tells me that since you

left that meeting Wednesday night 3-7-07 there is little chance you will, especially if it depends on other men's advice. You have betrayed my trust by not clearing the suspicion that will now hang over the both of us. But David, if for what ever reason you don't, I will take the bullet, especially since I have no choice.

David, I am also disappointed that before you met with us Wednesday night, there were phone calls already being made that you were going to resign. I asked you in the hall of the building a good while back should you make the choice to leave (as Wesley advised) to let Ron and I [sic] know first. You also told us no one had advised you in your decision. It is also reported that Highland is now going to destroy or isolate Northside. If that is true, your friends helped you get out before they (Highland) dropped the bomb. It appears that there is more rejoicing in Highland (eldership) over one congregation that would perish than over ninety and nine that supports GBN. A lot of things are coming to light by the hour that is very disturbing. Be careful David, there is no honor among deceitful men. Of all the efforts made by Highland to harm the work here, your contribution seems to be the greatest obstacle to overcome.

David, it hurts tremendously to think that Christianity has come to this. I think of how Emilie loved you and Wesley, how she was so excited to be able to ride with him from the building. How she loved for him and other preachers to come over. Wesley's part in all of this undermining and behind the scene work is merciless, and Wesley says we are radical. Emilie doesn't connect the dots yet, but she is pretty smart and the time will come when she will realize that she too was betrayed by the ones she trusted and idolized as heroes. Too, David, if you could have only looked into the eyes of the Northside members Sunday. Almost ALL of the congregation has viewed the open forums. They are so hurt because you would think twice about signing the statement.

David, several things give me peace. I always called or wrote Wesley if I had a problem with him, and didn't try to undermine the congregation where he serves. I criticized him to his face if I had a problem with him. I am hurt because you would allow Highland to use the open forum to try and make me a liar before the world. You may be going to allow them to do that (they may still use your "private correspondence" against us). What gives me peace though, is that as painful as that may be, it is far, far more bearable than it would be if I had to live with the fact that I had done that to someone who trusted me.

... People are being convinced that you are now in support of GBN. You can help put a stop to this madness. Are you going to "sit idly by as your brethren go to battle?" Will you help silence the lambs?

I have thought much about this as you would expect. I still believe you have a love for me as I do you. David, when I think of all of what is happening and those who are scheming against Northside in the name of Jesus (and Christian love), I think, "sweet revenge," but no, there is something much sweeter and much more peaceful and that is a forgiving spirit.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit"

Your Brother,
Terry York

We love David B. Smith. During his work with us, we loved and supported him and considered him as one of our own family. From the beginning of his work here we considered him to be one of the finest Gospel preachers in our brotherhood. During his 6-1/2 years at Northside, his teaching

and preaching helped all of us to grow spiritually. We have said publicly many times that David fit the description of an evangelist as described by Paul when he instructed Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2-5. We would have done anything for David, except compromise with him or for him. David's continued silence while Northside and her elders have been relentlessly attacked over the past several months has been troubling to us and to many others who are not members at Northside. His refusal to sign a statement which would let everyone know, once and for all, that he stands with us in our defense of the Truth is without excuse. His refusal to clear Terry York's good name is especially troubling and hurtful. David has displayed all the marks of a compromiser, notwithstanding his denial of such. False teachers are notorious for denying they are false teachers, but their denial does not convert their error into Truth. Denying that one is a compromiser when one is in the very act of compromising does not alter the fact of the compromise. We have been extremely patient with David for almost a year, waiting for him to indicate by some means that he supported his elders and the Northside church in its struggles against error. His long-continued silence and now his refusal to either produce his own statement or to sign a statement with which he professes agreement are simply unacceptable. From our March 3 meeting, David understood we could no longer tolerate his wavering stance, and that his future with Northside was in his hands. When his courage failed him concerning the statement he promised, he knew his only alternative was to resign. David has deserted his brethren at Northside in the heat of the battle and has left us to the wolves. He professed to love Northside and her elders in his March 4 oral statement, but he seems to have forgotten that the true measure of love is not in mere words, but in deeds (1 John 3:18). Not only has he deserted us, but he has deserted all faithful brethren who stand against wicked men "who serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies" (Rom. 16:18).

At this point, we believe what David B. Smith told us about him not having any fellowship with the Highland elders, GBN, or Dave Miller until this controversy is resolved (see point 4 in the statement below). But, at the same time, we can not recommend David until he signs the precisely worded statement which we proposed to him on March 7, 2007. David's behavior thus far tells us where he really stands at this time. We pray he can find the courage to do what duty (and we hope his conscience) demands. His signature on the statement would certainly have been a good start in the right direction. We hope and pray that if concerned brethren contact him he will reaffirm the four points in the statement as he did to us and as he has done to other brethren since March 7. Just this week we received an e-mail from brother Lester Kamp, who personally asked David about our statement in the presence of one of his elders, Dennis Strickland, and their wives. Below is an excerpt from brother Kamp's e-mail (copied with his permission) which proves that David has reaffirmed, as he promised, his agreement to our statement:

From: Lester E. Kamp [mailto:lkamp@juno.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 15, 2007 10:06 AM
To: ronhalloffice@bellsouth.net; tyork@aol.com
Subject: David B. Smith

Brethren,

Last night before services my wife and I went out to eat with David and Ashley. Dennis Strickland and his wife Linda hosted the meal at a local restaurant... I asked David about the statement the elders at Northside had asked him to sign. I asked if it was accurate. He said yes. I asked if there was any part that he disagreed with or objected to. He said no. I asked if he would sign it. He said that IF he signed anything it would be something that he wrote himself for his own words would best express his thoughts... I asked if he did not feel betrayed by Gilreath Jr. in all of this. He said that he did feel betrayed and he was angry about it...

Lester

David's statement relative to Barry Gilreath, Jr.'s "betrayal" is very significant and will doubtless not please brother Gilreath. He obviously cannot continue to affirm his agreement with the four propositions of the statement we asked him to sign and remain in favor with the Highland elders and GBN supporters. We know that David's continued refusal to stand for the Truth will destroy the confidence faithful brethren have had in him as they learn of it. We fear that his attempt at appeasing certain of his friends (refusing to sign the statement, while professing agreement with it orally) will not please many of those men. We hope someone is able to convince David to sign the statement affirming his position. A private confession is not acceptable when dealing with a public matter such as this. Until David signs this statement, and allows it to be made public, a cloud of sin will hang over his head. We make this statement without any animosity toward David. We are not seeking to harm him, whom we have loved as a son, and still love. He needs to understand he has already done great harm to himself by refusing to go on record for Truth and righteousness. We love his soul too much to overlook his compromise with those who are in error, and we pray that he will repent.

The Northside elders will continue to stand against those, who for their own selfish agendas, are determined to destroy the body of Christ. We have the full and complete support of every member at Northside who are now praying for David's repentance. We are praying that all good brethren will join with us and stand against this wickedness. **"God sought for a man to stand in the gap so the people might not be destroyed but there was none"** (Ezek. 22:30). **"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity"** (1 Cor. 16:13-14).

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:" (1 Tim 6:12-14).

Ron Hall
Terry York
Elder, Northside church of Christ

March 19, 2007

Posted below are the original e-mails Barry Gilreath, Sr. sent to the Spring Open Forums. To hear the answers to these emails go to www.churchesofchrist.com and click on video archives:

----- Original Message -----

From: [info \(Barry Gilreath, Sr.\)](mailto:info@barrygilreath.com)

To: SCOC@swbell.net

Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2007 11:33 AM

Subject: Brethren at the Spring Lectureship

I would like for the brethren at the Spring lectureship to deal with the following points:

1. David B. Smith, preacher for the Northside church of Christ in Calhoun, GA, has agreed to speak on the Greer, SC lectures which includes Barry Gilreath, Jr., elder and preacher for the Highland church of Christ in Dalton, GA. Others to speak are Cliff Goodwin, who teaches on GBN, as well as other supporters of GBN.

2. Most fair minded brethren who have considered brother Dave Miller, including David B. Smith, preacher for the Northside church of Christ in Calhoun, GA, have concluded that Dave Miller is not a false teacher.

3. Radical brethren who have made personal attacks in publications, lectureships, and public internet websites are in sin and have brought shame and reproach on the name of Christ.

4. The elders of the Highland church of Christ in Dalton, GA as well as the staff of GBN are praying for your repentance (sic) and restoration.

Barry Gilreath, Sr., elder and director of GBN

From: Barry Gilreath

To: SCOC@swbell.net

Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2007 2:36 PM

Subject: Statement for Wednesday Open Forum

Brethren:

I request that someone other than those named in this document read it word for word to those present at the open forum today (Wednesday) before any comments are made.

It has been the observation of some brethren that there seems to be a lot of hypocrisy taking place in the positioning of some. In order to clarify these matters, would you please address the following points?

1) Would you please provide the time (the year is sufficient) in which Dave Miller became a false teacher who was no longer in fellowship with God and faithful brethren. Was it 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, or only after the fall out of the Gospel Journal in mid 2005?

2) Did any brother, who has gathered at the Spring Lectures this year, sin in their appearance with Dave Miller on any program after the year you specify he became a false teacher who was no longer in fellowship with God and faithful brethren?

3) Brother McClish misrepresented BJ Clarke in the open forum in stating that BJ said that McClish and some others were not concerned about Miller before 2005. What BJ Clarke actually wrote which brother McClish referenced is that McClish and others did not make Dave Miller a matter of fellowship until after the fall out of the Gospel Journal. That is a much different statement than brother McClish publicly affirmed in the open forum. Does he want to recant that false assertion that he made multiple times? Will brother McClish deal with the valid point BJ made regarding 2005 becoming the year in which some gathered at Spring made matters surrounding

Miller an issue of fellowship, but not before. Why then and not in the 15 years prior?

4) We are seeking clarification as to when it was that brother McClish and others withdrew their fellowship from Dave Miller, Maxie Boren and others at Brown Trail. In 2003 Kent Bailey appeared on the Truth in Love lectureship with brother Miller. Obviously brother Bailey had not drawn a line of fellowship before that time. It is also true that Michael Hatcher and David Brown appeared on a lectureship with Maxie Boren and Dave Miller in 1996. Was the incident at Brown Trail not a matter of fellowship to these brethren at that time? Daniel Douglas appeared on the Truth in Love Lectures with Dave Miller in 1997 and 2004. Was Miller a false teacher at that time?

5) If Miller is a man who is not in fellowship with God, would brother McClish and Brown explain why they had been purchasing, promoting and circulating Miller's book, "Piloting the Strait", well after the events surrounding Brown Trail. Consider these facts that can be verified by Paul Sain of Sain Publications.

Biblical Resource (owned by David Brown)

Purchased:

5 copies in 1997

6 copies in 1998

4 copies in 1999

WAS MILLER AN APOSTATE DURING THOSE YEARS?

Valid Publications (owned by Dub McClish)

6 copies in 1999

10 copies in 2000

6 copies in 2001

8 copies in 2002

IF MILLER WAS APOSTATE DURING THOSE YEARS, WHY DID BROTHER McClish PURCHASE SO MANY COPIES OF MILLER'S BOOKS AND SELL THEM THROUGH HIS BOOKSTORE AT MEETINGS AND OR LECTURESHPIS?

Gospel Journal (copies ordered by Dub McClish, former editor)

4 copies in 2004

8 copies in 2005

Again, the facts reveal that brother McClish was continuing to buy and circulate brother Miller's book, even as editor of the Gospel Journal and as late as 2005. Of course this all ceased after the fall out with the Gospel Journal Board.

Since there is nothing to expose in the fine book, "Piloting the Strait", and since we can safely assume that these brethren were not buying multiple copies to read for themselves, do these revelations not reaffirm what some brethren have been saying all along, and that THESE BRETHREN are the ones who have changed. They are now drawing lines of fellowship that they did not draw prior to the fall out of the Gospel Journal? Prior to that time, they appeared on lectureships with Miller, they had no problem appearing with brethren who also appeared with Miller. They were purchasing and promoting his materials through their bookstores. David Brown even had tracts from Apologetics Press in his tract rack at Spring up until about 8 months ago. Is it the intent of brother McClish or Brown to continue to purchase Miller's book for promotion and circulation, and if not, why not? Was it permissible for brother McClish to promote Miller's book into 2005, and not permissible to promote Miller's book in 2007? And what about the tracts? Why take AP'S tracts off the shelf if there is nothing wrong with marketing Miller's book as brother McClish did up until 2005?

Brother Brown chastised me yesterday and wanted to debate somebody. Perhaps, it would be a good idea to start

the debate between some of the ones who are at Spring since it is clear that all of you do not agree with yourselves about some of the matters being addressed. There was even one brother who took the position this week that it would be sin for the church to accept money from a will if the man was not a Christian. Unbelievably, you are now discussing whether we can have fellowship with a dead person! Do you all agree with that position? Has any congregation there ever taken money under such circumstances? If so, will you continue to fellowship brother Hailey [sic] for claiming that such would be sin? Will he continue to fellowship you over the "dead man's will issue"?

I stand behind the facts that I asserted regarding David Smith. This matter is much like the one that came to light last year during the lectureship. When my son, Barry Gilreath, Jr., emailed you during the open forum and challenged brother Bailey's assertions regarding the views of the Northside elders concerning marriage and civil law. Brother Bailey acted as though my son did not know what he was talking about, even though both he and my son were present at the White Oak congregation in which this matter was publicly discussed by the Northside elders. The White Oak forum is on tape. Then after the Spring forum in which brother Bailey denied the position that the Northside elders affirmed in Chattanooga, Terry York finally admitted to Freddie Clayton that he indeed held a false view, but changed AFTER the Spring Lectures. Notes were taken in this meeting by David Smith, the Northside preacher, and he was permitted by his elders to circulate the notes for a few days. Then they decided they no longer wanted others to read his notes and he was no longer permitted to send them out.

Concerning David Smith, I stand behind what I have said.....Let the facts be known and we will see if I misrepresented David and owe him an apology, or if Terry York owes David an apology for his characterization of David, and if David Brown owes me an apology for publicly chastising me for simply stating the facts that I have proof of. Since David Brown had the courage to publicly rebuke me, we will see if he has the courage to publicly apologize when the facts come to light in this matter as they did concerning the matter involving Northside last year.

Barry Gilreath, Sr.

The statement to follow is that to which David B. Smith orally stated his full agreement in our meeting of March 7, 2007. **Note:** the Northside elders prepared this statement since David failed to prepare one as he promised he would.

SMITH'S STATEMENT TO THE BROTHERHOOD

March 7, 2007

Concerned Brethren,

I am making the following statement in hopes of clearing-up [sic] any confusion created by certain statements made by brother Barry Gilreath, Sr. (Exec. Director of GBN) on February 27 and 28 at the 2007 Annual Spring Lectureship Open Forum in Spring, TX. During the Tuesday and Wednesday Open Forums, brother Gilreath, Sr., made certain statements (via e-mail) which brought into question my character and that of one of my elders, Terry York. I realize that I have in some way contributed to this situation because of my silence over the last several months. I would not intentionally hurt anyone. I hope I can be more distinct in my position in the future. I apologize for any confusion or hurt which my silence has

caused. The following statement confirms my position in this matter and should clear-up any confusion created during the Spring Open Forums.

I, David B. Smith, affirm the following:

1. Terry York, Elder for the Northside Church of Christ in Calhoun, Georgia, did not misrepresent me in the answers he gave in the 2007 Spring Open Forum on Tuesday February 27th.
2. I believe Dave Miller taught false doctrine in his elder R/R sermon delivered at Brown Trail in 1990, and there is no evidence that he has made public repentance of his sin.
3. I believe the withdrawal, enacted by the Highland elders against the Northside elders, is unscriptural and therefore sinful.
4. Because the Highland elders refuse to repent of their unscriptural withdrawal from my elders, Ron Hall and Terry York, and continue to fellowship Dave Miller, a marked false teacher, I am not in fellowship with Barry Gilreath Jr. nor any of the other Highland elders which include Barry Gilreath, Sr., Skip McNutt, Bob Moneau, and Jimmy Woods.

David B. Smith

[NOTE: David B. Smith not only orally agreed with everything on this statement. He also told us that anyone who has any questions for him regarding his agreement with this statement may call him and he will reaffirm what he told us, the Northside elders, on 3/07/07. His cell phone number is 423-667-1987. His e-mail address is ConFTFaith@aol.com.]

THE AFTERMATH OF SMITH'S STATEMENT

SMITH ISSUES A SECOND STATEMENT

From: David B. Smith

Sent: Thursday, March 22, 2007 1:45 PM

To: Terry York; Barry Gilreath, Jr.; Wesley Simons; James Rogers; Freddie Clayton; Chad Dollahite; B.J. Clarke;

Cc: Roger Campbell; Cliff Goodwin; Clifford Newell, Jr.; cocsmith@bellsouth.net; Caleb Campbell ; Dennis Morris

Subject: David B. Smith statement

Brethren,

Since my resignation from the Northside church of Christ, my character has been under attack by some. Because of the recent controversy surrounding me, I am releasing this statement to

THE 2006 BOUND VOLUMES OF CFTF ARE READY FOR YOU. WRITE, PHONE OR EMAIL US TODAY FOR YOUR COPY. WHY NOT ORDER AN EXTRA COPY FOR A FRIEND?

help clarify my convictions (on the matters for which I am being asked to give an answer). I send it with no ill will toward any one and pray that it will be used in a manner harmonious with proper Christian conduct. These are the only email addresses I could think [sic] off the top of my head. You may know of others who wish to have a copy.

Your servant,
David B. Smith

A RESPONSE TO SMITH'S MARCH 22, 2007 STATEMENT

[NOTE: When David B. Smith issued his public statement on March 22, 2007, ironically, that date represented the eighth anniversary (March 22, 1999) of the meeting we had with the elders of the Calhoun Church of Christ. This meeting determined the future of the Calhoun Church. Ninety-five percent of the men in that meeting are now part of the Northside church of Christ. During that meeting it became obvious the Calhoun elders had compromised with the liberals and that they were going to defend a false teacher by the name of Jerry Dyer. While we believe it is coincidental that David B. Smith chose this date to make his (first and only) public statement regarding the controversy surrounding Highland elders/GBN, and Dave Miller, the results are very similar. David's statement made it clear he was compromising with the liberals and that he is now defending a marked false teacher by the name of Dave Miller. March 22nd (1999 & 2007) will truly go down in history as a sad date in the history of the Lord's church in Calhoun, GA.]

RON HALL'S RESPONSE TO SMITH'S STATEMENT

March 22, 2007

Brethren,

SMITH WROTE: Regarding the Spring Open Forum which occurred on February 27, 2007, the few parts of our phone conversation that Terry did relay were correct. I can only speak for my comments to him, not the comments he added in addition to mine. My concern, which I expressed to him and a few others, was that our entire phone discussion was not relayed. Many more things were said between us that were not entered into the Open Forum as a part of my answer to those questions. Without the bulk of our conversation, I believe those brief answers lacked context. In this way I feel as though it misrepresented my answers to him on the phone. I am not accusing Terry of lying, only that much more was said in our phone conversation that did not make its way into the actual answers.

[HALL'S RESPONSE: While David admits that Terry did not misrepresent him at the Spring Open Forums when he wrote, **"the few parts of our phone conversation that Terry did relay were correct."** He then adds doubt and confusion to his statement when he said, **"I believe those brief answers lacked context. In this way I feel as though it misrepresented my answers to him on the phone."** *David contradicts his own statements in these two short sentences.* He cannot have it both ways— either Terry MISREPRESENTED him (lied) or he did not. David never supplied any

of the context he said was missing which would prove that Terry had misrepresented him. This is nothing more than a compromising statement trying to appease both sides of this controversy. Please note David's further inconsistency in this matter when he affirmed the following statement on March 7, *"Terry York, Elder for the Northside Church of Christ in Calhoun, Georgia, did not misrepresent me in the answers he gave in the 2007 Spring Open Forum on Tuesday February 27."* And now he is saying something else in his first and only public statement??? Until David definitely/explicitly clears Terry's name in this matter a cloud of sin will hang over his head. The statement we issued on 3/19/07 has not been answered by this statement from David and shall remain our final word on this matter.]

SMITH WROTE: As for what Dave Miller taught at Brown Trail in 1990 [I am referring to the sermon on the reaffirmation of elders], I do believe it was false. I know very few brethren who agree with what he said in that sermon. I have talked to brother Miller on the phone; and after talking to him, I believe I understand his reasoning for saying things the way he did in view of the totality of the procedure as he understood it. Based on what he told me, and in order to give him the most benefit of doubt, I did not think I ought to brand him as a false teacher as I was being pressured to do.

[HALL'S REPOSE: We issued *The Final Word* on December 30, 2006 which adequately answers David false conclusions as to brother Miller's current Spiritual condition. You can go to www.northsidecalhoun.net and read our statement.

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Furthermore, David's statement, "**I did not think I ought to brand him as a false teacher as I was being pressured to do**" is incorrect. Who has been pressuring David to assert such a thing? *I do not know to whom he is referring, but we never forced David to admit anything that he did not believe on his own accord.* To make a statement like this is to imply we force people to believe as we do, but David knows us better than that. Matter of fact we allowed David plenty of time to sort through this matter. On March 3 and March 7, 2007 he willingly and without restraint admitted to us that he agreed with us and our statement regarding Dave Miller being a marked false teacher who has not made any public repentance. On March 7 David said he would reaffirm this with anyone who called him. Apparently he has once again changed his mind!

Now consider the fact that David told Terry York and me on March 7 that he agreed (completely) with our statement "**I believe Dave Miller taught false doctrine in his elder R/R sermon delivered at Brown Trail in 1990, and there is no evidence that he has made public repentance of his sin**" and would reaffirm such to those who asked him. He told Lester Kamp and Dennis Strickland on March 14 that he agreed with every part of that statement. Did David lie to us on March 7 and to brother Kamp and Strickland on March 14? Please read our statement dated March 19 regarding this issue. Until David corrects this matter a cloud of sin will hang over his head.]

SMITH WROTE: As for the withdrawal of fellowship from the Northside elders by the Highland eldership, I have never understood or honored that. I have tried to be honest enough to consider the rationale for that withdrawal when it was explained to me, but I cannot see how it was consistent with Bible principles. However, to my understanding, while I was a member at Northside, the elders had not officially marked the Highland congregation (which included the Highland eldership). Thus, while participation was restricted because of the existing controversy, I have not marked and withdrawn from the Highland congregation (which includes the Highland eldership).

[**HALL'S RESPONSE:** I cannot imagine David making this statement in light of his elders being unscripturally marked and withdrawn from by the Highland elders, which he readily admits above. He never made this admission to us. Matter of fact he said to us on March 7 that what they did was "stupid" and he would tell anyone who asked him that as well. He continued to be in subjection/fellowship with his elders during this time. As to being in fellowship with the Highland congregation and her elders, they (the Highland elders) decided the fellowship issue when they unscripturally withdrew from the Northside elders on October 30, 2005. Please read our statement—**Chad Dollahite and the Highland Unity Letters**—dated May 30, 2006 and the article **Fellowship and GBN** by Gary Summers, located at www.northsidecalhoun.net, which scripturally and sufficiently puts this issue to rest. Until David corrects this matter a cloud of sin will hang over his head.]

SMITH WROTE: Brethren, I am trying to do what is right so I can go to heaven. I do not teach any false doctrine. I try hard every day to live above sin, though I am sometimes weak and do the wrong thing; and I correct myself when I know I need to make corrections. I am trying hard to be as consistent

with every Bible principle as I can be. I have no desire to be to the left hand or to the right.

For every statement I have made that is contradictory, seemingly contradictory, confusing, or unclear, I repent of that. There have been many times when I have been caught off guard by brethren, or have been asked to respond about a situation, and have regretted afterward that I was not more direct and clear in my answer. I am sorry for that and will be better in the future, starting with this statement.

[**HALL'S RESPONSE:** I do not see how David can make these statements of repentance until he corrects the glaring discrepancies as noted above. Until he clears this matter up a cloud of sin will remain over his head. For the Biblical solution to this conflict, which David has found/placed himself in the middle, please read the article **Solutions** by Michael Hatcher at www.northsidecalhoun.net.]

With great love for all,

David B. Smith

[This statement may only be released or reprinted in its entirety.]

This concludes Ron Hall's response.

LESTER KAMP'S RESPONSE TO DAVID'S STATEMENT:

(We had many others we will not list here.)

From: Lester E. Kamp

Sent: Friday, March 23, 2007 2:54 PM

To: Ron Hall; Terry York

FREE CD AVAILABLE

Contending for the Faith is making available a CD-ROM free of charge. Why is this CD important? ANSWER: It contains an abundance of evidentiary information pertaining to Dave Miller's doctrine and practice concerning the re-evaluation/reaffirmation of elders, MDR, and other relevant and important materials and documents directly or indirectly relating to the Brown Trail Church of Christ, Apologetics Press, Gospel Broadcasting Network, MSOP, and more.

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Subject: Commendation

Brethren:

David B. Smith's statement falls far short of clearing up things. He continues to compromise and contradict himself and the facts. His recorded words indicated to Darrell Broking and all who have heard it that he acknowledged that Terry had not lied nor misrepresented him. His spoken statements in front of Dennis Strickland and our wives indicated the same. Now in his "own words" statement, he has tried to straddle the fence to his own harm and the harm of Truth! It is not really surprising at this point, but it is amazing!

In Christ,
Lester Kamp

David Smith now attempts to clear up his inconsistent statements he made prior to his public statement with yet more inconsistent statements:

From: Lester E. Kamp

Sent: Tuesday, March 27, 2007 11:59 AM

To: Ron Hall; Terry York

Subject: David B. Smith's letter to the elders here

Brethren:

One of the elders arrived at the building a few minutes ago, opened the mail and brought me a copy of the letter from David B. Smith. I thought I would type it out and send you a copy. I am not sure, but I think David needs to clarify his apology. I don't understand: "my intentions were good but my actions were wrong." Is he saying he lied, tried to deceive, or what? For a person even with his experience to claim that he was "taken off guard" I am amazed—especially when he told his elders at Northside that he would affirm what they had written in that statement to anyone **though he would not sign it**. Was his embarrassment caused by his "actions" or by the fact that these questions were even raised? For a person who can use words effectively in a sermon, he is not very good with words recently. I have found when a person tries to deceive others he finds himself contradicting himself quite often. Why can't his yea, be yea and his nay, nay! I don't believe he now would affirm anything in that statement from Northside. I am not sure he would affirm anything that is right and stand behind it. David is very disappointing!!!

Dear Tommy, Bill, Dennis and Lester,

I wanted to send a personal apology to Dennis and Lester for my statements to them when last we talked. You made inquiry into my recent resignation from Northside and my convictions on a few other matters, but I was somewhat taken off guard when these issues were brought up in a conversation in a restaurant in front of our wives. It was somewhat embarrassing and I tried to say things to help calm the storm and instill some sense of peace between brethren. **But many of those things were contradictory.** My intentions were good but my actions were wrong and I apologize to you (emphasis NS Elders). I have also made this clear to other brethren in a recent statement I released (which I have enclosed in this letter). Since my words affected the preacher and an elder, I felt as though my apology needed to be clarified to the entire eldership.

Ashley and I enjoyed our time with the congregation there during the meeting, and wish you all the best in your work for the Lord.

Your servants in the Christ,
s/ David and Ashley Smith

After receiving the above information we wrote the following NOTE TO DAVID. Ron Hall explains:

From: Ron Hall

Sent: Wednesday, March 28, 2007 1:03 PM

Subject: DAVID B. SMITH

After receiving the e-mail (above) from brother Lester Kamp, Terry and I prepared the little note below and had it hand delivered to David last night (Tuesday night 3/27/07). David and Terry were scheduled to teach their final class at the Greens Lake Road School in Chattanooga TN and since Terry was to follow his class we thought our note would encourage David to meet with us, and just maybe, he would talk to Terry about our concerns. At the end of David's class Terry told me that David left out a side door (as he has done since he left Northside – avoiding Terry) without making any acknowledgment to him (or to the rest of the class for that matter) about our concerns. It is obvious that David's heart has become, beyond doubt, hardened with the compromise in his heart. At this point we shall treat David the same way we treat the Highland elders, Freddie Clayton and Chad Dollahite and those of such like. We shall reject them and move on with our work. We appreciate you good brethren for your support and encouragement and we will stand with you as we go forward contending for the faith.

Ron

03/27/07 Special message to David B. Smith, Our beloved brother, from the Northside elders:

David,

We are hurt that you have abandoned your faithful brethren and sold us out to your compromising "friends." We have not made "merchandise" of you as your so-called friends have. We are still your friends and simply want to help you correct this wrong and to go to heaven one day. **We would like to meet with you** (at your convenience) to discuss your continued side-stepping of the controversy **you** have created. You continue to bring **shame and reproach** upon the Northside church, and faithful brethren, because of your continued compromising statements. You say you are a man of principle but David you have violated every principle you have taught while at Northside. If you can't see what **you** are doing, not only to yourself, but to the body of Christ, then **you** have become blinded to truth and your conscience has become harden with your compromise. We thought **you** had truly repented on March 3 but your actions (3/22/07 statement and the letter below) prove that **you** failed to produce fruits of said repentance. Can't you see what you are doing? We still love you and are concerned about your soul. You need to get hold of yourself and truly repent and put this sad situation to rest. Brother, please let us help you!

Your Faithful Friends (Gal 4:16),

Ron Hall

Terry York

Elders Northside church of Christ

David we received a copy of the letter (below) you sent to the Broad Street elders:

Dear Tommy, Bill, Dennis and Lester,

Contending for the Faith—May/2007

I wanted to send a personal apology to Dennis and Lester for my statements to them when last we talked. You made inquiry into my recent resignation from Northside and my convictions on a few other matters, but I was somewhat taken off guard when these issues were brought up in a conversation in a restaurant in front of our wives. It was somewhat embarrassing and I tried to say things to help calm the storm and instill some sense of peace between brethren. But many of those things were contradictory. My intentions were good but my actions were wrong and I apologize to you. I have also made this clear to other brethren in a recent statement I released (which I have enclosed in this letter). Since my words affected the preacher and an elder, I felt as though my apology needed to be clarified to the entire eldership.

Ashley and I enjoyed our time with the congregation there during the meeting, and wish you all the best in your work for the Lord.

Your servants in the Christ,
s/ David and Ashley Smith

End of Note which was hand delivered to David Tuesday March 27th.

On March 28, 2007 the Mountain City, Tennessee Elders received the following information from David B. Smith in an attempt on his part to clear up his inconsistent statements. A copy of the email was sent to the Northside Church of Christ, Calhoun, Georgia elders:

Sent: Wednesday, March 28, 2007 5:43 PM
To: Ron Hall; Terry York
Subject: David B. Smith Letter

Here is what David sent the elders here:

Dear brethren,

I am assuming that all of you by now are aware of Darrell's phone call to me. While I consider such a call unethical (recording me without my knowledge or consent), I do want to repent for the things I said because my words did not fully represent my true convictions. I have made my convictions clear, as well as my repentance, in a statement I recently released.

Sincerely,

David B. Smith

Darrell Broking, preacher-elder

[NOTE: In order to put this letter into context we must look at the background surrounding the recorded phone call David referred to as unethical in his letter. On March 14th Chad Dollahite posted on the internet that Terry York had misrepresented David B. Smith at the Spring Open Forums and that was the reason he (David) had to leave Northside. Brother Broking called brother Chad Dollahite on March 16th and asked him if what he had posted on the internet was true and he said it was. He specifically asked if David B. Smith had actually told him (Chad) that Terry York had misrepresented him. Chad affirmed absolutely! He said that David had told him such and that he had a private/confidential e-mail where he (David) had made such a statement. *Brother Broking recorded his phone conversation with Chad Dollahite.* Brother Broking had already called David B. Smith the day before

(March 15th) and asked if Terry York had misrepresented him during the Spring Open Forums. David told brother Broking that Terry DID NOT misrepresent him. *This phone conversation had been recorded as well.* Now we clearly had two conflicting statements. One from David B. Smith, and, another from Chad Dollahite. On March 16th brother Broking shared his recordings with both David and Chad and asked them to clear this matter up since brother Terry York had been called a liar by Chad Dollahite (Employee of GBN) and the Gilreaths (overseers of GBN). Since these false charges against brother York had been made in public he asked them to clear this matter up publicly. After giving David B. Smith and Chad Dollahite ample time (three days) to correct their conflicting statements, neither chose to do so. So on March 19 brother Broking made the recordings public. After David and Chad's phone conversations were made public David finally issued HIS statement on March 22, 2007. David's statement clearly conflicted with his earlier statements which he had made to: (1) the Northside elders on March 7, 2007 (2) Lester Kamp and one of his elders and their wives on March 14, 2007 (3) one of the Northside members in a phone call on March 15, 2007 and (4) Darrell Broking on March 15, 2007 in a phone call which had been recorded. David's conflicting statements represent nothing more than a compromise. Now David continues to make conflicting and compromising statements with the letter below to the Mountain City elders. He is trying to explain away his answer to brother Broking. He is now (just as he did in his letter to Lester Kamp and the Broad Street elders) trying to repent for saying to brother Broking (and the world since it was recorded and made public) that Terry York DID NOT misrepresent him at the Spring Open Forums. *According to David B. Smith Terry York DID NOT misrepresent him BUT now he is saying that HE DID!!!!*. Only a compromiser would conduct himself in a way such as this. Faithful brethren do not talk and act like this!]

On 3/28/07 brother Lester Kamp sent David B. Smith the following letter in response to David's letters to him (Lester) and the Broad Street elders:

From: Lester E. Kamp
Sent: Wednesday, March 28, 2007 1:46 PM
To: David B. Smith
Cc: Ron Hall; Terry York; Dennis Strickland
Subject: Your letter

March 28, 2007

Dear David,

Since receiving a copy of your recent letter (not dated), I am more confused than before regarding a number of things which relate to you and what you have said. You apologize "for my statements...when last we talked." For which of those statements are you apologizing? Are you apologizing for what you said about your "recent resignation from Northside" and/or your "convictions on a few other matters." If you are apologizing for your "convictions on a few other matters," then what specifically are those "other matters." What did you say about those matters for which you are now apologizing? You say that you were "somewhat taken off guard when these issues

were brought up in conversation in a restaurant in front of our wives.” That remark greatly distresses me for several reasons: 1) Aren’t we always to be ready to answer such questions (I Peter 3:15)? Why would you be taken off guard by discussing spiritual matters? Since you made it clear to the Northside elders that you would be willing to acknowledge your agreement with the points contained in the statement they asked you to sign, but you refused to sign it. I was simply finding out if that was the case. 2) If you told me the truth about these matters (i.e., “recent resignation from Northside” and “convictions on a few other matter”) “in conversation in a restaurant in front of our wives,” then what are you apologizing for? If you did not tell me the truth about these matters “in conversation in a restaurant in front of our wives,” then why did you lie? If you lied, was it because it was “in conversation in a restaurant in front of our wives”? Would you have told the truth had the circumstance been different (i.e. not in a restaurant)? Would you have told the truth had our wives not been present? Would you have told the truth had an elder in the church where you were preaching in a Gospel Meeting not been there?

Further, you said “It was somewhat embarrassing.” I don’t understand this at all! What was “somewhat embarrassing” regarding that conversation? Are you embarrassed to discuss your convictions? Your perception of spiritual matters? Your resignation? Your stand on matters of Truth? Your answers to the reliability of the elders under whose oversight that you have worked for the past 6+ years? What was it exactly that was “somewhat embarrassing”? Were you embarrassed to discuss matters about which all who were at the table were all aware and concerned about those very matters?

You said, “I tried to say things to help calm the storm and instill some sense of peace between brethren.” I am concerned about “peace between brethren,” but real, God authorized peace is based on truth (James 3:17). I would not “stretch the truth” (lie) to accomplish “some sense of peace.” Surely you are not suggesting that you did not speak the truth in order “to help calm the storm and instill some sense of peace”? You would not do that, would you? I did not think you would compromise for the sake of “some sense of peace between brethren,” but perhaps I was wrong.

You said, “But many of those things were contradictory.” Until now I saw no contradiction in what you said that night in conversation in the restaurant in front of our wives. What did your remarks that night contradict? Have you received “heat” because of your statements that night because your remarks that night contradict what you are telling others now? I am amazed and appalled by your recent statements! For someone with your obvious ability to express yourself in an understandable way, you are spending a lot of time lately trying explain the “context” of your remarks and apologizing for contradictory statements. Your “recent statement” enclosed with your letter is as vague and ambiguous as Dave Miller’s “repentance” statement of 2005. After reading it several times along with the letter you sent, I remained confused regarding where you stand. This is the document that you wrote after many days of thought. You claim to have made “clear” in that statement, but let me tell you that you have not!

You wrote of being embarrassed. If you thought that writing to the entire eldership here would embarrass me, you are dead wrong. If that was your intent, you failed. I speak the same thing before whomever and whenever without shame. I certainly did nothing wrong in asking you a few questions that night in the restaurant in front of our wives. I conducted myself as a Christian in every way. You said, “Since my words affected the preacher and an elder, I felt as though my apology needed

to be clarified to the entire eldership.” I doubt that two of the elders have any idea what you wrote about in your letter. Not only that, but what you did in sending the letter to all of the elders was unscriptural, sinful. Why go to others before trying to resolve the wrongs with those who have been wronged (Matthew 18:15-17)? What did you hope to accomplish by such? Were you trying to “calm the storm and instill some sense of peace between brethren”? I don’t think so!!

David, you need to wake up and get things right and stand firm on God’s Word. Don’t yield to pressure from others. Do what is right! Your letter was signed by you and Ashley though I think the letter was written by only David. I don’t understand that either.

Yours in Christ and for the Faith,
Lester Kamp

After the Northside members read David’s statement of 3/22/07 everyone (about 60% of the membership) who spoke to us about it said they thought we should discontinue David’s salary effective immediately. After prayer and careful consideration of the matter we sent David the following e-mail on 4/05/07.

From: Northside Elders

To: David B. Smith
Subject: Financial Support

Dear Brother David

We are saddened and disappointed that you have chosen not to honor your word as you agreed in the meeting with us on 3-7-07. You told us that our (since you refused to provide one yourself) statement expressed the truth and that you did not disagree with

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any part of it. You assured us that you would unreservedly affirm the points in the statement to clear up the confusion and suspicion on your and Terry's name caused by Barry Gilreath, Sr. Not only do you now refuse to affirm the truth of our statement you have now changed your answers based on your personal statements you made public on March 22. We believe you have been deliberately deceitful in your handling of this matter and therefore further solidified the already existing division caused by the unscriptural actions of the Highland elders (GBN). For these reasons we can no longer support you until you correct this situation.

Also, we wanted to let you know of our decision to no longer continue your salary. While we honored our financial support to you from March 7 – April 30 we cannot, in good conscience, continue to support you in your present deception. Therefore, we have decided to discontinue any further financial support. We feel that we are giving you sufficient notice so you will have time to secure employment to provide for your household.

David you know in your heart the Northside congregation is a forgiving people. We all love you and Ashley and are heartbroken over what you are doing to the Lord's church at Northside. We stand with hearts wide open awaiting your genuine repentance as you stated you were doing on 3-4-07.

Northside Elders

Ron Hall
Terry York

Brother Ben Justice, a fellow student with David B. Smith while at the East Tennessee School of Preaching, wrote the following letter:

04/07/2007

To David: My Dear Friend and Brother in Christ,

I know that you have been very busy, especially in light of all that has happened to you over the past several weeks. I am sure that you have been bombarded with phone calls, letters, and e-mails. I guess that you probably could care less about reading my letter to you. I hope that is not the case, though. I say that because of our friendship. Even though we have lost contact over the past few years, I have, nonetheless, considered you a dear friend in whom I have admired and respected. I have respected your great ability in proclaiming the Word of God – both orally and in writing. I regularly listen to your sermons and read your writings. I have encouraged others to do the same. We go back several years, beginning at East Tennessee School of Preaching. As you know, we spent much time together, studying and “hanging out.” We fought battles while there. When you tried out for the position at Northside, Brother Ron Hall called my house while I was preaching in Cherokee, AL. He talked with Pam, and she gave the highest recommendation. Of course, had he talked to me, I would have done the same. When someone has said something about Northside, I always stated that my good friend David Smith preaches there. In light of our friendship, I hope, therefore, that you will carefully consider the things I write to you. They are truly written out of sincere love and admiration for you – not only as a dear friend but as a brother in Christ.

The things that have transpired over the past several weeks that have directly involved you have weighed heavy upon my mind. A day hasn't passed in which I haven't thought about it. I am sure it will weigh heavy on [my] mind for many more

days to come. I write truly not understanding the position you have taken. I have read your statement and everything that has been said in response from Terry York and Ron Hall. When everything was considered, I was truly shocked and dismayed. When Pam read of these things, she, too, could not believe what she was reading.

Brother David, your statement to the brotherhood (dated March 22, 2007) left me bewildered. I, like others, have many questions. I know that you are probably sick and tired of answering the same questions. But, this is the consequence of your actions. You should expect to have to deal with them.

In your statement, you said in regard to the answers Terry York gave at the Spring Open Forum, **“Without the bulk of the conversation, I believe those brief answers lacked context. In this way I feel as though it misrepresented my answers to him on the phone. I am not accusing Terry of lying, only that much more was said in our phone conversation that did not make its way into the actual answers.”**

Brother David, this is a contradictory statement. When someone “misrepresents” someone else, then they have essentially lied. When Abraham misrepresented Pharaoh and Abimelech concerning Sarah, he lied (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-18). When someone misrepresents another it is deception, which, again, is lying. When someone misrepresents another, they are given a false impression; they are causing others to believe something that is not true. According to Terry York and Ron Hall, they said you agreed orally with the statement that said, **“Terry York, Elder for the Northside Church of Christ in Calhoun, Georgia, did not misrepresent me in the answers he gave in the 2007 Spring Open Forum on Tuesday February 27th.”** This squarely contradicts what you said in your statement to the brotherhood. Either Terry misrepresented you or he didn't. By the way, when I learned that you would not sign that statement, I simply could not believe it. I would have signed it in a heartbeat — not only to clear my name, but the name of my elder, friend, and brother, Terry York, and to let the brotherhood (friends and enemies) know exactly where I stand. I would really like to know your reasoning for not doing so.

With regard to Dave Miller, you ought to know that the Elder Reevaluation/Reaffirmation doctrine is not all there is hanging around his neck. His false doctrine concerning MDR stands out. His fellowshiping and bidding God-speed to the Calhoun church stands out. Even if the Elder R/R practice was

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repented of and completely gone from the scene, he still has a lot of other sinful things that need to be repented of. To claim he is not a false teacher *is false*. The evidence is so overwhelming in this regard that I don't see how anyone could miss it. But, you made another contradictory statement in your statement to the brotherhood. You said, **"As far [as] what Dave Miller taught at Brown Trail in 1990 [I am referring to the sermon on the reaffirmation of elders], I do believe it was false."** Alright, if it were false (as you admit), then has he repented of it? (By the way, that wasn't the only time he taught the Elder R/R practice, which has been clearly documented.). If he has repented of it, then where is the evidence? No one will continue to label him a false teacher if he has repented. I know some brethren will direct you to the statement he put out. If you (or anyone else) believe that was a statement of Biblical repentance, then you (or anyone else) don't understand the Bible's teaching on Biblical repentance. If what Miller taught was false doctrine, and if he has not repented of it, then what does that make him? Well, it makes him a false teacher – both when he first taught it and also now. You contradict yourself by saying, **"... I did not think I ought to brand him as a false teacher ..."** The only way that you can't brand one a "false teacher" is if there has never been false doctrine taught to begin with, or if so, there has been repentance. Again, where is the repentance from Miller? If he taught false doctrine (as you admit and of which there has been no repentance), then he was a false teacher when he taught it and continues to be false teacher now. Jesus said very plainly, **"... If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him"** (Luke 17:3). As long as a brother refuses to repent, he should be treated as the sinner or false teacher that he is. Time doesn't take care of sin and false doctrine. You stated that you wanted to give Miller **"the most benefit of the doubt."** This doesn't take care of Miller's false doctrines either. It doesn't matter whether you understand why he did what he did or not. I understand why Baptists reason the way they do with regard to teaching that baptism is not essential to salvation. But, their reasoning is wrong. Whatever reasoning Miller (or anyone else) wants to give doesn't change his false doctrine into true doctrine. Sure, we should give our brethren "the most benefit of the doubt." However, when it comes to false doctrine, giving "the most benefit of the doubt" will not change false doctrine into true doctrine. Brother David, I have to be honest with you. What you stated does not characterize the intelligent man that I used to know. I believe you are desperately trying to ride both sides of the fence. You may have heard the saying about the one who straddles the fence: "All he gets is a sore backside." This statement did not reveal any true conviction on your part.

You stated with regard to the Highland church, **"... I have not marked and withdrawn from the Highland congregation (which includes the Highland eldership)."** Brother David, I simply ask, "Why not?" The problem is not due to a lack of evidence that reveals their blatant errors and compromises. By the way, their problem is not just Dave Miller; they have many other speakers who are compromisers and should be refused to be used.

You said, **"Brethren, I am trying to do what is right so I can go to heaven. I do not teach any false doctrine."** Brother David, if you say that Dave Miller is not a false teacher, then you are teaching false doctrine, because the Bible says he is! If you say that the Highland congregation is not in error, then you are upholding false doctrine. As far as doing what is right, I simply don't see it.

What happened to the David Smith I once knew? Brother,

I know I have said some strong and forceful things to you in this letter. But, I want you know that my heart aches and grieves over these things. Brother, I beg of you to do what is truly right and to expose these compromisers for who they are (Rom. 16:17; Eph. 5:11). Stand up and be counted during these perilous times. I have written these things out of sincere love and concern for your soul. I had wanted to invite you to hold a gospel meeting here in Sullivan and to renew our friendship, but it doesn't look like that is going to happen. What you had at Northside was, as Brother McClish said in his letter to you, "a preacher's 'paradise'." Now, you have thrown it all away just to be popular with men. What else am I to conclude?! There are many brethren who were friends of mine who have now gone the way of compromise. I am sure that you can say the same thing. The preacher who married me and Pam has gone down this same path. It hurts deeply. But, I love the Lord and His word more (cf. Luke 14:26; Gal. 1:10). Again, I truly hope and trust that you will seriously regard the things I have written to you, and not only I, but many others also. David, your soul weighs in the balance. Don't come up short on the Day of Judgment. I hope to hear back from you soon. But, most of all, I hope to hear of your repentance.

From your dear friend and brother in Christ and one who loves you in Christ,

Ben Justice

P.S. ... A copy of this has been sent to Terry York, Ron Hall, Dub McClish, David Brown, Kent Bailey, Dennis Sargent, David Justice, and some members of the Sullivan church. They can distribute it to whomever they desire.

**THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES SHOULD
HELP SHED LIGHT ON THE UNSCRIPTURAL
ACTIONS OF THE HIGHLAND ELDERS:**

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FELLOWSHIP AND GBN

Some very disturbing events have occurred within the body of Christ during the past year, concerning which all who are Christians, interested in the unity of the church, have been mortified. Brethren who have worked together for years (and in some instances, decades), building up the body of Christ and fighting against liberalism, are no longer speaking to each other. It has been sad to watch close relationships deteriorate and dissolve before our very eyes. Even as recently as a year ago, if anyone would have predicted this kind of estrangement, he would have immediately been branded a false prophet. Nevertheless, breaches in friendships have occurred.

However, in the midst of all the hurt feelings and unkind comments—no one initially announced any withdrawals of fellowship, which was a blessing, since it is frequently a good idea to sit back and evaluate situations, allowing time for people to rethink what they and others have said and done. Certainly, it is easier for regrets and reconciliation to occur if no one has made a public statement in regard to an individual or a congregation. Brethren on both sides of The Gospel Journal controversy are to be commended for not making the issue a matter of fellowship—at least, not officially. Many have friends in both groups of differing brethren, and they did not wish to alienate anyone unnecessarily on what most perceived to be a judgment matter, even though many considered TGT Board's actions to be unwarranted and unkind.

Fellowship with God is a fundamental right and privilege that comes with being a Christian. As virtually all brethren know, when our sins are forgiven (at the time we repent and are baptized for the forgiveness of them), we enjoy fellowship with God and with our brothers and sisters. This relationship persists unless someone enters into sin and refuses to exit it. If that individual is warned of his wickedness and he refuses to repent of it, then the church has no recourse but to withdraw fellowship from the impenitent brother.

Such an important step cannot be taken lightly. First of all, the offense must be real, not imagined. Sometimes, when decisions are made, people come away with different perspectives of what happened. When I resigned, for example, from working with one congregation, I went away to interview with another church on a particular Sunday. On that same day, another preacher visited, preached, and met with the men. Upon returning, I was told that the man had been hired.

Another member, however, said he wished I would reconsider and stay there. Something was wrong. The men met the next Sunday, and it was discovered that there were not two but three versions of the previous meeting. Three men said that they had made the decision to hire the visiting preacher. Two said they had made no such decision, and another two or three said they had hired the man—but it was contingent upon me not remaining. How could all the men have been in the same meeting and come away with three different ideas? Miscommunication is not uncommon.

Jesus said that one individual should tell another his

fault privately (Matthew 18:15-17); this practice enables two people to see if they have communicated properly. Others then accompany the offended party to verify that what he said was actually the case and not his own misinterpretation. After this verification has occurred, the church must be told of the impenitent brother and, in the absence of change, must withdraw from him.

The withdrawal of fellowship constitutes a severe step in the relationship between brethren and therefore should be done only after all reasonable efforts of maintaining fellowship have failed. Since Jesus is Lord and Head over His body, the church, withdrawing of fellowship must be done with His approval. In other words, it cannot be done merely because someone is angry with a brother over something he has done (a matter of judgment, for example). The church cannot withdraw from someone out of haste or in the absence of facts. If a person is willing to meet and discuss differences, then it is not the time to consider this option.

When a Scriptural withdrawal of fellowship does occur, then faithful brethren everywhere must (and will) recognize the action. Jesus said He would be in agreement with such withdrawals—if brethren followed the correct procedure (Matt. 18:18-20). Hardly anything can do as much damage as brethren ignoring the legitimate disciplinary action of the church. By refusing to recognize it, they diminish its effectiveness and undermine the purpose for doing it. The guilty party is likely to think, "I still have a few friends. Some may think I have done wrong, but I have others who are standing by me."

So what do these things have to do with the current climate in the brotherhood? The elders of the Highland Church in Dalton, Georgia, who are overseeing the Gospel Broadcasting Network (GBN), recently took it upon themselves to announce the withdrawal of that congregation from the elders of the Northside Church of Christ in Calhoun, Georgia, and now brethren are forced to make a choice as to whether the elders in Calhoun are guilty of sin—or whether the elders at Highland sinned when they made this decision resulting in this withdrawal. Brethren all over the country must realize that either one group of elders or the other is wrong and that we no longer have a choice as to fellowshiping both groups. One of these elderships is in sin and needs to repent. Some are standing by those in Dalton; others are standing by those in Calhoun. Disagreements over certain things that once were categorized as matters of judgment now have been made an issue of fellowship by the action of the Highland elders. Whether or not those elders intended it to be so, their withdrawal cannot be confined to northwest Georgia—it affects the entire brotherhood.

The Highland elders marked the elders of Northside in Calhoun because, in their judgment, they had "sown discord, promoted gossip, and caused an unnecessary breach in the unity of God's people." The main focus of these complaints (although others are mentioned) is the opposition the Northside elders have to the endorsement and defense of Dave Miller at GBN, since he has never repented of two false doctrines that he has publicly taught. In fact, it has been in-

credible to observe how many brethren (who are otherwise sound) have begun defending brother Miller in recent months. (For the record, no personal problem whatsoever with Dave. I have had satisfactory personal contact with him and have enjoyed hearing him preach.) Unfortunately, Miller refuses to say that it is wrong for congregations to re-evaluate and re-affirm elders. He was a leader in the process once and worked behind the scenes in favor of it a second time in the Brown Trail Congregation in Bedford, Texas. His teachings on this topic and on another (his defense of one who married his cousin solely in order to enter this country and then immediately divorced her) are a matter of record. Although Miller issued a statement regarding these two things a few months ago, it was by no means a statement of repentance (see Michael Hatcher's and Dub McClish's articles in the October Defender and Dave Watson's in this publication's November-December issue).

At the time of Dalton's withdrawal from the elders in Calhoun, no one was spreading gossip concerning Dave Miller, unless showing people well-documented facts constitutes gossip. The Highland elders are the ones who have "caused an unnecessary breach in the unity of God's people" and have "sown discord" by counting well-documented facts about Miller as "gossip." Furthermore, Dave Miller has been slow in even addressing these matters. In 1997 brother Dub McClish exposed his leading part in the first elder re-evaluation and re-affirmation program at Brown Trail. This thoroughly documented material involving brother Miller was published in the 1997 Bellview Lectureship book (Leadership). Brother Miller has never made any response to this material. The church in Rowlett, Texas, (among others) protested Dave's hiring by Apologetics Press in 2002. The Rowlett brethren had supported Apologetics Press very generously from its inception, yet when they voiced their concerns about Dave to brother Bert Thompson, Executive Director of Apologetics Press at the time, they were promptly—and rudely—rebuffed. Knowing that he has been under heavy criticism from faithful brethren for more than three years, Dave finally issued the previously-mentioned statement, which fell far short of repentance. How is it that, in the face of written, public evidence distributed widely and over such a long time-span, so many brethren are willing to overlook Dave's errors? DOES FRIENDSHIP TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER TRUTH WITH SOME? DO BROTHERHOOD "POLITICS," RATHER THAN PRINCIPLE AND INTEGRITY, GOVERN THEIR HEARTS?

Seeing this incongruity, I penned an article titled "The Poisoners," which pointedly cautions brethren to avoid "taking sides" based on friendship; among other things I wrote: "Unfortunately, people take the word of a 'friend,' loved one, preacher, or other trusted individual all the time without checking the facts for themselves." I originally published it in the December 25th Spiritual Perspectives. It was also considered for publication in *The Gospel Journal*, so that it might have a broader circulation—but to date it has not been published. I believe that some brethren who have lined

up behind brother Miller have done so without knowing or seeking to know all that they need to know. It is also evident, however, that some have lined up behind him in spite of the information they have—information that prevented their endorsement of him only a few months ago, which information has not changed. [I hoped that some of these brethren would read the article in *The Gospel Journal* and make application of its principles to themselves.]

When it comes to disputes among brethren, we ought to ask, "Who has been open and aboveboard?"; "Who has been willing to discuss the situation?"; "Who has provided documented evidence, as opposed to promoting hearsay?" Some brethren do not fare well when these questions are asked. In fact, some likely know that they would fare so poorly if they answered that they simply refuse to answer. It is easier to manipulate people through innuendo and personal assurances than with a presentation of facts, which many have allowed brother Miller to do to them. Many know, for example, of an unrelated situation in which meetings were recorded so that anyone could have a copy and know the truth of what occurred. All of those who attended the meetings were promised copies of the tapes. Those in charge of the tapes, however, reneged in making them available. Incredibly, many brethren stood by those who made that decision to suppress the truth!

The evidence against Dave Miller is plain and open to all. When the elders at Highland in Dalton withdrew fellowship from the Northside elders in Calhoun, in effect they withdrew from all of us who stand with the Northside elders in opposing Dave Miller until he repents and repudiates the errors he has committed. Likewise, all of those who stand with the Highland elders in their unscriptural withdrawal and in their endorsement of Dave Miller, have implicitly withdrawn from the rest of us. Many of us cannot recognize the withdrawal of the Highland elders in Dalton, Georgia, against the Northside elders in Calhoun, Georgia, who are standing for the Truth. The Highland elders need to understand that their withdrawal is also against the many faithful brethren who stand with the Northside elders. And if the Highland elders, GBN, and all who support GBN and Dave Miller choose not to fellowship the rest of us, they will surely have to give an account for that decision before our Lord and Savior. [By Gary Summers - reproduced from 2006 *CFTF*]

Solutions

Anyone who keeps up with the brotherhood knows that within the past year and a half there has developed a split between faithful brethren and those who were once considered faithful brethren. Even though the division has only been within the past months, the seeds for that split were planted well over a decade ago. However, it is not the intention of this article to deal with the problems which have caused this schism to occur, but instead to offer a scriptural solution to the situation. I will explain that these are my suggestions to begin to solve these problems, and while I realize that not everyone will agree with these suggestions, I do know that

these suggested solutions will be according to what is right by the standard of God's Word.

The seeds of this division go back to what was practiced at Brown Trail Church of Christ in 1990 when Dave Miller preached the sermon and they performed the reevaluation/reaffirmation of elders. Brother Miller needs to repent of this sinful sermon and practice. A simple statement of repentance such as: "I am sorry for preaching the sermon advocating the reaffirmation of elders and repent of what was said in that sermon. The practice of reaffirmation of elders is wrong and I repent of all my actions involving such."

The next problem with brother Miller is his statements concerning intent of marriage. Again, this can be solved in a simple way. Words to the effect of: "In answering some questions, I simply mis-spoke concerning this matter. While I believe that one must intend to get married for there to be a marriage, one might intend to get married and their purpose be wrong. Yet, in that situation they are married both legally and by God. I am sorry I misspoke concerning that issue and ask my brethren to forgive me."

The third area of concern is appearing in congregations which are no longer standing for the old paths. This is a real problem because it should be obvious that a person cannot know every congregation in the brotherhood which might ask him to come speak. I realize that I do not know all the solutions to this problem. However, if brother Miller (and those associated with Apologetics Press) agrees to seriously consider any signed and documented charges against a congregation and then will meet with the elders (or men) of that congregation specifically about those charges and then if found to be true will not return there until corrections are made, this would be a good starting place. Surely this can at least be a good starting point to discuss this issue among faithful brethren and work out a satisfactory arrangement for all faithful brethren.

That which brought much of the problems to the forefront was the release of Dub McClish and Dave Watson as editor and associate editor of *The Gospel Journal*. Everyone realizes that the board of directors had the right to accept the resignations of these brethren or even release (fire) them outright. Everyone also realizes that it is not possible to return these men to that position. However, there are at least three problems which have arisen from their release. The first problem is the way brethren McClish and Watson were treated by the board (of which I was on at the time). The members of the board did not treat these men with the same consideration as they would have desired to be treated (remember the golden rule?). A simple apology from the board would suffice to resolve this problem.

The other two problems are connected (and go back to brother Dave Miller). The first of these is the reason behind the release (resigning) of brethren McClish and Watson, and the second is the fellowship being extended to a marked false teacher (brother Dave Miller). Prior to McClish and Watson's removal, *The Gospel Journal* refused to accept advertising from Apologetics Press (also from Gospel Broadcasting Network) because brother Miller, a marked false teacher, had been hired by brother Bert Thompson. Upon the release of brother Thompson, this marked false teacher was then made director. (*The Gospel Journal* would not accept advertising from Gospel Broadcasting Network because of their support of brother Miller.) Immediately after McClish and Watson's removal, *The Gospel Journal* began running advertisements for both organizations (Gospel Broadcasting Network in the first issue and Apologetics Press in the third issue after the change in editors). This is very simply a violation of God's Word: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Eph. 5:11). The apostle John puts it:

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

When one violates God’s Word, they need to repent. Therefore, the board of *The Gospel Journal* needs to repent of their support for a marked false teacher (Dave Miller) and for their support for those who have supported him. A statement along the following lines would help: “Brethren, please forgive us. We sinned in supporting brother Dave Miller and Apologetics Press (the organization which he directs). We will no longer support those brethren and organizations which are lending support to this false teacher until such time as he repents. (1) He must repent of his false doctrine concerning elder reaffirmation and for engaging in that unauthorized practice. (2) He must repent of his teaching concerning intent of marriage. (3) He must end his practice of appearing at liberal congregations and lending his support to them.”

Those associated with Memphis School of Preaching have given support and defended a marked false teacher in Dave Miller. Because of their support of and their defense of the marked false teacher Dave Miller, they have sinned. They violated the passages just mentioned (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). They should have stood against the false teaching and teacher, but instead they compromised the truth of God’s Word. As such they need to repent of their sin. A statement as the previous one relating to *The Gospel Journal* would again be appropriate. “Brethren, please forgive us. We have sinned in defending and supporting the marked false teacher brother Dave Miller and the organization which he directs, Apologetics Press. We will no longer defend or support either him or the organization which he directs until he repents of his false teaching regarding elder reaffirmation and engaging in such practice, his marriage intent teaching, and his appearing in liberal congregations. We also will no longer defend or support those who have given their encouragement to brother Miller until they repent of their sins.”

Then there are also those associated with Gospel Broadcasting Network. These brethren, like Memphis School of Preaching, have supported and defended the marked false teacher Dave Miller violating the same passages of Scriptures as the others. A statement like that from Memphis School of Preaching or *The Gospel Journal* is necessary from these brethren. However, there is another problem with those associated with Gospel Broadcasting Network. The elders overseeing this work (Highland Church of Christ in Dalton, GA) unscripturally withdrew fellowship from the elders of the Northside Church of Christ in Calhoun, GA. The Northside elders were taking a scriptural stand in opposing the use of the marked false teacher Dave Miller and his associates on Gospel Broadcasting Network by the elders at Highland. At the end of their correspondence the Northside elders released the correspondence to allow others to see the position taken by the elders who oversee Gospel Broadcasting Network. Upon the release of that correspondence, the elders at Highland in

Dalton, GA, unscripturally withdrew fellowship from the elders at Northside in Calhoun, GA (they specifically stated it was not from the preacher or the congregation, but how can you withdraw from the elders without also withdrawing from the rest of the congregation?). This unscriptural withdrawal must also be taken care of by the Highland elders repentance. Again a statement such as the following would do. “We retract the unscriptural withdrawal of fellowship which we initiated against the Northside elders. This action was wrong and was selective of the Northside elders without those who are in fellowship with them (the Northside congregation, preacher, along with other congregations and individuals who continue to fellowship them) and, as such, was a violation of Biblical teachings.” Since Highland sent their unscriptural withdrawal to numerous congregations, they should likewise send a letter like the above statement to those same congregations to make it right.

If these events would take place (and I pray that they will) then brethren can start the process of ending this schism which has taken place among generally faithful brethren. This would at least be a start to that process because there would be many other individual problems that would have to be settled, but this would at least be the starting point to where these things could take place. Do I really believe that these things will take place? While I pray that it will, I do not expect it to happen. For some there is too much pride involved. Solomon wrote, **“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.... Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.... Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”** (Pro. 11:2 13:10; 16:18). Others are simply sticking their finger in the air to see which way the wind is blowing. Some are simply playing politics and following whoever they think can help them the most. There are some who are simply following the money. They need to remember what Paul wrote, “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

Additionally, there has been a concerted effort not to put anything in writing. In a conversation Dave Miller had with Paul Middlebrooks, brother Miller told brother Middlebrooks that Curtis Cates and Bobby Liddell, along with other brethren Miller trusted, had advised him not to put anything about this in writing. Why, brethren? Brethren, let us get these issues resolved in a way which pleases God. If any individual or organization wishes to make things right in a God approved way by making repentance of their sins, we will gladly open up the pages of *Defender* to them to allow the brotherhood to know of their repentance and begin a healing process. We pray to that end. [Reproduced from the *Defender* - September 2006 — written by **Michael Hatcher**]

[NOTE: A copy of this article was sent directly to each party represented in the above mentioned controversies by the editor of the *Defender*, Michael Hatcher.]

THE BLESSINGS OF ADVERSITY

Guy N. Woods

A spectacular beginning does not assure eventual success in any endeavor. Multitudes there are who start well only to end up badly, while others go on from an unimpressive beginning to a thrilling finish. One cannot truly say that life is a success or failure until the final chapter has been penned and the book closed.

This is particularly true in the realm of Christian discipleship. Often those who begin with a grand flourish falter and fall by the wayside; others, who begin awkwardly and hesitantly gradually gain momentum and go to be numbered with the immortals. Of the former type was Demas, and early disciple. For a time he was an enthusiastic and effective co-laborer of Paul: **“Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow laborers”** (Phil. 24). But later, the apostle was to pen with sadness this melancholy note: **“Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world”** (2 Tim. 4:10). Couched in these brief statements is the tragic history of a man who began well but because he was lacking in endurance and stability of character failed to make the grade. He simply would not resist the world’s blandishments and so succumbed to its allurements. His imitators are legion.

Peter is an example of those who flounder badly but who recover to experience a brilliant finish. Impulsive, impetuous and vacillating, the fisherman disciple was sometimes more of a problem to our Lord than a help. But, when his soul was finally purged of its dross by the searing flame of penitence he went on to become one of the world’s greatest and most valuable men.

Here, indeed, appears to be the dividing line between success and failure in the Christian life. The ability—and willingness—to see in the changing affairs of life “a divinity that shapes our ends” enables us to profit from such experiences and to go on to eventual triumph.

This is very clearly taught by the Hebrews writer: **“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby”** (Heb. 12:11).

Experiences which at the time may to us appear to be wholly negative and devoid of any good whatsoever—may, indeed, be filled with pain and anguish—often later reveal themselves as beneficent chastening influences yielding for us the peaceful fruits of righteousness. Such is *discipline*, exercise in the area of the spirit, enabling us to build moral and spiritual stamina, absolutely essential training for the larger life of useful service. We ought to regard such as spiritual surgery which, though unpleasant at the time, “nevertheless afterward” restores to the spirit the bloom of divine health.

**“From my frustration make me sure
That thou, my God, are He
Who buildest something to endure
From what seems loss to me.”**

Joseph, the beloved son of the aged Jacob was despised by his brethren, cast into a pit, and eventually sold into slavery. This experience was far from pleasant to either Joseph or Jacob; however, it was but the first act in a long and thrilling drama whose effects continue to this day. Such tragic and unfair incidents must be contemplated in the entire sweep of history. Bitter though this was it ultimately brought bountiful blessings to multitudes. Joseph wisely saw in it the overruling hand of divine providence; when reconciliation with his brothers came he commented: **“Ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, as it is this day, to save much people alive”** (Gen. 50:20).

John Bunyan, imprisoned in Bedford jail, wrote of his trials as a “pulling of the flesh from the bone.” His experiences seemed to him to signal the end of a useful life. Out of those lonely years came *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Victor Hugo, at the zenith of his mental and intellectual power, came into disfavor with Napoleon III, and suffered exile for nineteen years. This was by him and his friends regarded as unmixed tragedy. They were wrong. Hugo’s biographer informs us that during these years “books that were far stronger than anything that had gone before came from his hand,” and that during his exile, “he became twice the size of man he had been.” Even Hugo commented, “Why was I not exiled before?”

Many who read this article will be able from their own experiences in life to verify the truth of the principle herein set forth. Occurrences which at the time seem to us to be unrelieved tragedy transform into bountiful blessing. All of us, as we look back on some grievous experience can now see that that as a result we are wiser, better, more humble, more tolerant of the weaknesses and frailties of others. The chastening hand of divine providence has led us beyond shallow and trivial things to deeper, and more abiding realities.

The divine discipline will produce these beneficial results only if we allow ourselves to be “exercised” (trained) by it. Those who face such experiences in life with blind antagonism and bitter resentment will not only lose the lessons intended, they will compound their sorrow and suffering, and contribute further to the misery and wretchedness of their lives. The fruit of discipline will ripen only in the warm light of submission and unquestioning faith. We are not suggesting that the proper philosophy of life is supine resignation to its trials; we must face up to them and conquer them, when possible; but, when baffling problems confront us and difficult situations appear we ought to react to them in such a fashion as to be able to say with the Psalmist, **“It is good for me that I have been afflicted”** (Psa. 119:71).

**“Grant, Lord, that I may ever see
In life’s perplexing maze
The light divine to guide me on
And follow all my days.”**

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

-Florida-

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

-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-

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.

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, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (936) 438-8202.

Hurst (Fort Worth area)—Northeast Church of Christ, 1313 Karla Dr., P.O. Box 85, Hurst, TX 76053. Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. (817) 282-3239.

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

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

-Wyoming-

Cheyenne—High Plains Church of Christ, 421 E. 8th St., Cheyenne, WY 82007, tel. (307) 638-7466, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tel. (307) 635-2482. evangelist: Tim Cozad.

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