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Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

The "No Spin" Zone

Mike Demory

This article printed following these remarks is one of two written more than 10 years ago by brother Mike Demory. Neither article has been published until now. This article and the second one to follow on page 8, concern themselves with the problems at the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Hurst, Texas, between 2000-2002. They were written not long after said events took place in order to present what the author knew about certain events that are now for the most part well known to those who want to be correctly informed about what we at the time in *CFTF* called the nightmare on Brown Trail.

Although over ten years have elapsed since the events discussed by brother Demory in both articles took place, time does not erase the facts of history whether they are good or bad. Our actions transcend time going all the way to the Judgment Day. Further, we know there are those in the Brown Trail congregation today who would not engage in the re-evaluation and reaffirmation of elders (hereafter the R. and R. of elders) as related by brother Demory in his articles. Nevertheless, there has never been a definitive statement on the part of those who taught and practiced the R. and R. of elders stating that they now believe it to be a sinful act, that they have repudiated it because it is sinful, that they have confessed said actions as sinful, asking the brethren to pray with them and for them to God for God to forgive them for practicing that for which they had no Bible authority. Further, brother Demory also records other sins, such as brother Dave Miller's false doctrine regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage, for which error he has never repented.

Everyone needs to make informed decisions concerning these matters and any other matter that can impact the church locally and internationally for evil. And, anything the church does that is not authorized by the New Testament is sin (Col. 3:17). Until scriptural compliance takes place on the part of those guilty of whatever the sin takes is, let it be clearly understood that the passing of time does not constitute repentance on the part of those brethren guilty of teaching, practicing, and/or defending the R. and R. of elders, etc., as was practiced by the Brown Trail Church of Christ.—**Editor**

The entire purpose of this treatise is not to demean or pick on any one individual or group of individuals, but to analyze the facts of the matter before us and try to determine where the bride of Christ that meets on Brown Trail Drive in Hurst, Texas stands according to the truth. An ominous cloud of suspicion was cast over this congregation about a year ago when whispers of discontent dampened the cord of unity once thought to be incorruptible. Through the years Brown Trail has been the bastion of faithful works for the Lord, having once sponsored the International Gospel Hour and now the Truth-In-Love program, the Annual Fort Worth Lectures, and the School of Preaching. Great men such as Roy Deaver, Wendell Winkler, Eddie Whitten, Maxie Boren and Dave Miller have poured hours of service into making sure that sound gospel preachers were trained and then turned over to the brotherhood to make disciples of all nations. We most certainly applaud Brown Trail (preachers, elders, deacons, and members) who have worked so diligently in making these programs available to the lost as well as to the brethren. However, all that has been done in the past in

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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

Editorial...

"I HAD RATHER BE HATED FOR SPEAKING GOD'S TRUTH THAN HAILED FOR TRYING TO REDEFINE IT."

Recently I posted to our *Contending for the Faith* Facebook page the above quotation. The following remarks were posted as a response to my posted foregoing quotation. It reads, "The truth needs no defense. At times it is made ugly by a 'Christian' non-Christian ['s] defense of the truth."

I responded to the post with the following comments:

> "It is a false statement to affirm, 'that the truth needs no defense'." The Bible teaches it does need defending (Jude 3; Phi. 1:17, etc.). Indeed, "at times it is made ugly by a 'Christian' non-Christian defense of the truth," an example of which is the well-meaning person who makes such a false statement as "the truth needs no defense." When false teachers reared their ugly heads among the brethren in the church in Antioch of Syria and among the Galatian churches the great apostle Paul declared to the Galatian brethren,
>
> **And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you** (Gal. 2:4, 5; Also see Gal. 2:11; Acts 15:2).
>
> In fact, this person's post is an effort to defend the truth (such as it is) when he states that "truth does not need defending." In making that statement, as contrary to the Word of God as it is, he is making an effort (albeit illogical) to defend the truth. If that is not the case, to what purpose did he make it? This person's post is another sad example of certain people's lack of taking all of what the Bible says on a certain topic before coming to a conclusion about what the Bible actually teaches about it. It is also a prime example of the inability or unwillingness of people to reason correctly and come to the correct conclusion regarding a specific topic (1 The. 5:21). Besides the outright ignorance of the Bible and/or the lack of respect for the authority of the Bible in general and the New Testament in particular, the failure to take all the Bible teaches on a topic in its immediate and remote context, and/or to reason correctly concerning it, are two problems that continually thwart a great many people in their efforts to arrive at the truth on various topics. This person ought to know better than what he posted when he wrote, "The truth needs no defense." It did in his case.

That person posted a second response to my preceding post. He wrote:

> What is true is true. Our defending it will not make it true or truer. I do defend the faith, and the Word of God is true and is its own best defense. Let the Word of God be true, and every human a liar. I think you are reading to (sic) much into what I wrote. I have a high respect for the Word of God. That is where I will leave it. Thanks and God bless.

To his second post I responded with the following com-

ments.

> I can only know what anyone's thoughts are by the words they chose to make them known. Words have meanings—they are signs of ideas and vehicles of thought. Your comment, "What is true is true" does not touch top, side, edge, or bottom of the precise statement you affirmed, specifically, "The truth needs no defense." No one said that "our defending it [the truth] will make it any more true or truer." Advocating and/or defending your wife will not make your wife any more your wife. But you would defend her because she is your wife, you love her, and you have a special obligation as her husband to defend her because she is your wife. I defend the truth because I love the truth; it is the only way for me to know how and when God saves me from my sins and keeps me saved in His church. Thus, I cannot stand to see it misunderstood or corrupted by anyone any more than you can stand to see your wife abused or misused. Therefore, all the passages in the Bible that teach us to defend it will not be ignored by the one who loves the truth of God's Word. To say that since the Word of God is true and is, therefore, its on (sic) best defense, is to ignore those scriptures that obligate us to defend it. Of course you don't have to respond to this, because there is nothing you or anyone else who accepts the Bible to be the infallible, inerrant, all sufficient, final, and complete revelation of God to man can successfully say against those parts of the Bible that demand for those who love it and fully believe it to properly defend it. That is not nearly it concerning the obligation we have to defend to truth, that is it and forever will be it.

To my previous remarks, the person once again responded with the following post, "Do what you feel called to do. The Word of God is more powerful than I am-or you. God bless."

My last response to the foregoing post was:

> It is not a matter of what I "feel," or you "feel," or anyone else "feels," but a matter of what the New Testament authorizes us to do (Col. 3:17). And, whatever it authorizes us to do we can know absolutely what that is (John 8:31, 32; 17:17; 12:48). However, **"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"** (Pro. 14:12). This certainly has to do with our obligation to God to defend His truth and anything else that is necessary to be saved or to remain faithful to God as members of His church. **"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"** (Jer. 10:23). Thus, we have the Word of God to lead, guide, and direct us here on earth (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12; Jam. 1:25).
>
> It is no wonder that religious people end up believing no telling what concerning just about any Bible topic. They are in a state, to one degree or another, of confusion as to what the Bible says on much of anything. And, in many cases when the truth is shown to them they refuse it.

—David P. Brown, Editor

IS YOUR RELIGIOUS AND MORAL CONDUCT AUTHORIZED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT?

David P. Brown

One of the problems with those who believe the Bible to be the Word of God is that they do not know how to determine from the divine volume whether their actions are right or wrong—whether God is pleased with their conduct, or not. Thus, we need to know how to properly study the Bible.

The Bible teaches that we must learn how to study it correctly unless we stand ashamed before God—and stand before Him we will in the final Judgment Day. (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16, 17; Rom. 14:12). Furthermore, we are obligated to have Jesus' authority for everything we believe and practice (Col. 3:17). To engage in actions not authorized by Christ is to fail to act with proper faith in Him and His way of salvation. Our faith in God and Godly things is formed, sustained, and strengthened by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:5) Thus, let it be clearly understood that we are under the authority of Jesus Christ as it is revealed in the language of the New Testament (Mat. 26:28; 28:18; John 14:6; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 9:15; John 12:48). We are not under the authority of the Old Testament (2 Cor. 3:6, 14; Heb. 8:6, 13; 9:15; 12:14). Notice the following as to the fact that we are to look to Jesus and not the Old Testament to learn how to be saved and serve God faithfully.

> **And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him** (Mat. 17:1-5).

New Testament authority is found in the only way the language of the New Testament leads, guides, and directs anyone to do anything—by DIRECT STATEMENTS, EXAMPLES, and/or IMPLICATIONS. If people cannot find one of the foregoing ways in the language of the New Testament (the manner whereby any language authorizes anyone to do anything) to authorize their actions, then there is no authority for them to engage in whatever that action may be.

Please realize that no language can authorize anyone to do anything without direct statements, examples, and/or implica-

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the name of truth, cannot over shadow the sin that now finds itself in their camp.

Once a member of the Brown Trail congregation, and a full-time student at the School of Preaching, I came to know many of the players involved in what must be deemed a tragedy. Keep in mind that there are a lot of hard and hurt feelings over this, which is common whenever brethren are involved in differences of opinion and/or doctrine. Brethren, it is with a deep sense of regret that I present the following material for your consideration. I wish that such did not have to be done, but at the same time I know what anguish the problems at Brown Trail have caused me and others who have been associated with them at one time or another—so there is no doubt that there are others who would like to know as much as possible where the fault lies. Looking from the outside and picking through the multitude of emotions that are flowing from the hearts of the brethren involved, it is my plan to present the meat of the problem without spinning away from the truth. I am in no way saying that I have done this perfectly, but I have tried my best to look at the situation with an open mind, weighing both sides, and gleaning out of it all the facts in a chronological order. Brethren, it is the duty of us all to encourage the guilty parties to repent, that is, a repentance that requires much more than stepping forward and saying "I'm sorry."

Chronology of the Problem

It is alleged that the problem began in August of 1996 with the hiring of Everett Chambers, a freshly graduated student from the Brown Trail School of Preaching. Dave Miller had accepted a plethora of responsibilities (Director of the Truth-In-Love program, Director of PTS, teaching both in the school and on the TV program) plus a number of speaking engagements throughout the brotherhood. Dave asked the elders at that time (Bobby Watts, Roy Bellows & Jimmy McKenzie) if they would allow him to hire Everett to assist him with the TV program and it wouldn't cost them a dime (Letter to the Elders, by Dave Miller, Dec. 24, 1997, p. 4, p. 3).

Brother Miller then allowed brother Chambers to substitute teach in the School of Preaching, which may or may not have been known by the elders. In January 1997, Everett was made a full-time instructor in the School, teaching over students that he had attended school with a year earlier. It was during the year of 1997 that unrest appeared within the school with Everett representing Dave in many matters between staff and Director and students and Director. At the time the late brother Johnny Ramsey voiced his opposition of Everett's tactics to the elders several times but nothing was done. In January of 1998, Brother Ramsey resigned from his association with the School and TV program. Brethren Don Simpson and Gary Fallis had also voiced their dissatisfaction with brother Chambers' ways of dealing with students and his disrespect for older instructors. The elders decided that Everett should focus totally on the TV program and not be associated with the School. During 1998, Everett spent his time raising support and speaking to congregations about the Truth-In-Love program. Then in January 1999, elders Watts & Bellows appointed Everett as Dean of Students over the preaching school, although brother McKenzie many times stood alone in his opposition to Everett's involvement in the school. Before leaving Brown Trail, Johnny Ramsey had warned the elders of Brother Chambers methods, but they refused to listen (Bobby Watts and Roy Bellows, but not Jimmy McKenzie). Please note that the problems that arose between Everett Chambers and some of the instructors and students, was his alleged use of Boston-Crossroads control methodology, which he learned as a member of that false movement. The methods of controlling others used by Chambers and Miller became the beginning cause of the problems at Brown Trail.

> They convicted men of non-existent sin to elicit a confession. They aired student's personal problems before the entire student body. They refused to accept criticism, accusing those approaching them of pride, rebellion, and a wicked heart. Faculty and Students were forbidden from discussing school problems with the eldership without prior approval of Dave or Everett. Everett was the only one who could approach Dave……..Dave accused Johnny Ramsey, Don Simpson, Gary Fallis and several students of sin in that they discussed school problems with the elders without Dave's permission. Dave sought their removal based on that "sin." (Letter by James French to Brown Trail, July 19, 2002, p. 4, pp. 2, 3).

In the July 1981 issue of *Contending for the Faith*, Brother Barry Hatcher wrote an article titled "Beware of the Crossroads Movement." In that article, he stressed how this movement (now referred to as The International Churches of Christ or ICOC) received much of its coaching from Robert E. Coleman's book *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Brother Hatcher pointed out that the Crossroads Philosophy when adopted ignores any and all authority given to elders by the Scriptures. There is a pyramid structure that gives what they call the "Campus Minister" the head position, to which elders, deacons, preachers, soul talk leaders, hosts of soul talks, and visitors answer. The Campus Minister is said to be more spiritual than the rest, which means he holds a higher authority than those under him do. Mr. Coleman said in his book:

> Followers must have leaders, and this means that before much can be done with the church membership something will have to be done with the church officials. If this task seems to be too great, then we will have to start like Jesus did by getting with a few chosen ones and instilling into them the meaning of obedience (*The Master Plan of Evangelism*, p. 60).

Brother Hatcher continues in his article to point out that

the new convert soon learns that the more he obeys the more "spiritual" he becomes. The more he is faithful to the Crossroads leaders the more he is rewarded by their acceptance. Since all are trying to please the leaders by obeying them, if the convert gets out of line the first means used to bring him under control are code words or concept words. This is a very effective method of control. Belittling an individual, who is, to his knowledge, trying his best to be "spiritual," by using such concept words as "not spiritual," "prideful," and "rebellious," will send him on a "guilt trip." It is also pointed out that the convert is always required to confess sin—even intimate sins—to the leader. The confessions only go up never down because spiritual leaders never sin!

The appearance of these types of tactics are suspect when one reviews the various statements of brethren and their concerns with Everett and Dave. Neither Dave nor Everett has yet to admit any sin. Both Dave and Everett ignored the authority of the elders to the point that they swayed two elders (Bobby Watts and Roy Bellows) into giving them total authority in the school. Any student or instructor who challenged Everett's authority was marked as "prideful," and "rebellious." When I attended the Brown Trail School of Preaching, the school chapel was a time of prayer, singing and devotionals. But, when Everett became Dean, it turned into "The guilt trip hour," a time for confession of sin and public rebuke.

Another problem that cropped up with brother Chambers during this time was that as Dean of Students he had illegally entered the United States from Jamaica by marrying a cousin. After obtaining his papers of legalization, Everett divorced her. The elders talked with Everett about the situation and told him he would have to contact government authorities and do whatever they deemed necessary to correct his situation. When the issue was pressed by the eldership (French, McKenzie, Barker) in 2001, Everett resigned from the school and left Brown Trail without repenting, and without discussing it with the elders or correcting his sin. To this date Everett has never repented of this sin nor has he tried to work things out with the government; yet he is a man who Dave Miller continues to staunchly defend.

In January of 2000, after months of prayers, sermons, and evaluation of men who met God's qualifications, the Brown Trail congregation installed two new elders (James French & Daryl Barker), making a total of four elders (Jimmy McKenzie, Bobby Watts, James French & Daryl Barker). The two existing elders met with the two new elders. They were brought up to speed on concerns within the congregation. One important concern was the School of Preaching to which numerous pages of testimony were given concerning an ongoing problem between Everett Chambers [Dean of Students], the instructors, and students. The eldership listened to students and school staff concerning the problem and then recommended that Everett Chambers be removed as Dean of Students. They also recommended that Dave Miller spend full time directing the school during the time they were trying to work things out with brother Chambers. This is something Dave had said in his 1997 letter to the elders.

> I would not have time to be totally responsible for fundraising and recruiting, but I would fulfill the desire of the elders that the school be brought under control, i.e., that discipline, seriousness and stability be restored to the school which had been lacking since the Director was rarely on site (Letter to the Elders, by Dave Miller, Dec. 24, 1997, p. 3).

It was alleged that Dave chastised the eldership for listening to the discontent of instructors and students concerning Everett without first coming to him and that he did not need to spend full-time in the school. It is further alleged that Bobby Watts then sided with Dave, which becomes apparent as things continued to escalate.

Between January 2000 and October 2001 the eldership had much to deal with. They were informed of the problems with Everett's philosophy on authority and spirituality, they became aware of how he had entered the country illegally, and falsified his school application, and they had decided it was time for an audit of the books. Each of these problems individually seemed not to affect the relationship or confidence the membership had in the elders, but collectively, it is alleged, that the finances is what put the proverbial "icing on the cake" so to speak. Unknown to the elders, Everett had enrolled in Law School as a full-time student at UNT. He began making his showing at chapel here and there, but slip out in time to make it to his classes. In October 2001, when the elders asked to meet with him to get an update on his progress in working things out with the government, he walked into the office and told the elders he was through and walked out. The elders made several attempts to evoke repentance from him, but he has refused to speak with them.

In December 2001, it was recommended by Bobby Watts that the congregation install additional elders to which the other three agreed, thinking that it would be good to have others who saw the problems and would assist them in getting Brown Trail back on track scripturally. Two weeks before the end of the year it was announced to the congregation that names would be accepted for additions to the eldership. Maxie Boren, Dave Miller, Gerald Nations and Dan Flournoy were appointed as an eldership committee. Brother Flournoy said that Scriptural objections were put forth concerning brethren Pope, Parker and Elliott, but he was outnumbered and the objections destroyed. In January 2002, three new elders were installed at Brown Trail (Guy Elliott, Philip Pope, Eddy Parker). The eldership in keeping with the past met with them to bring them up to speed on what was going on within the congregation.

They (Pope, Elliott, Parker) rejected the information

> we provided them and developed closed minds to these facts. As an illustration of their mind-set, they returned a letter from one of the dismissed students without reading it. Eddy Parker also has declared, "I am a Dave Miller man." (Letter by James French to Brown Trail, July 19, 2002)

It was now four against three and the new elders plus Brother Watts refused to hear anything concerning Dave Miller and Everett Chambers. They wanted it all put to an end immediately and forgotten or the three elders (French, Barker and McKenzie) would have to go.

On April 24, 2002, Dave Miller announced to the congregation at Brown Trail that he would be leaving effective August 1. He listed a number of reasons why he was not leaving and then gave reasons as to why he was submitting his resignation. He said that two straws had broken the proverbial camel's back for him:

1. He could not endorse, work with or tolerate the philosophy that was advocated by three elders (French, Barker and McKenzie).

2. He was convinced that their attitude and intentions were taking Brown Trail in the wrong direction. That two of the three demonstrated flawed leadership and elitist attitudes.

With that announcement, three deacons (Brian White, Ed Allen, and Kevin Kogucz) took it upon themselves to poll the congregation concerning the qualifications of brothers French, Barker, and McKenzie as elders. The three elders (French, Barker and McKenzie) met with the other four (Parker, Elliott, Pope and Watts) and encouraged them that as an eldership they needed to come together on this and rebuke these men (White, Allen and Kogucz) for their behavior. However, the deacons apparently were supported by the four elders, Dave Miller and Maxie Boren, because none of them saw anything wrong in their actions. The three deacons even approached brother Flournoy and tried indoctrinating him to their cause. But after 2 hours and Dan's reproof of their actions, they never confided in him again.

Brothers French, Barker, & McKenzie continued to encourage the deacons to come to them in accordance with Matthew 18 so that they could work out any differences together, but they refused. Finally it was agreed that they would submit their grievances in writing. On May 9, 2002, a 28-page document was delivered to the elders. When it was all said and done, the only individuals they could find that seemed to have anything against the three elders (French, Barker & McKenzie) were the three deacons themselves. By May 28, the elders answered the deacons in writing and asked that they sit down together to iron out the matters of judgment that they saw as alarming. On Wednesday June 19, 2002, Maxie Boren presented to the eldership a plan to once and for all fix the problem. As Maxie stated in his open letter of November 20,

> I proposed to a hopelessly divided (4/3) eldership that a carefully written letter be sent to the congregation giving the members an opportunity to express themselves as to which of the elders they believed to have remained qualified or which they believed had disqualified themselves.

On June 20, the letter of reaffirmation was presented to the eldership (only 6 present). Four immediately signed the letter. Brother Flournoy had been invited to attend the meeting, and only he, French and Mckenzie voiced their opposition to this unscriptural process (Brother Barker was out sick). Brothers French and McKenzie were allowed to take a copy and consider it overnight. They took a copy to Brother Barker, who would not sign, but wrote his objections below the signature line. Brother McKenzie instructed his wife to write his objections under his signature line, but when she arrived at the building to do so, Barker's objections had been deleted. Before the letter was mailed to the congregation, the only signatures left or allowed, were the four elders (Pope, Parker, Elliott and Watts), and the "please note" section was added. When the three elders heard the "please note," brethren Barker and McKenzie resigned. The results of the reaffirmation were announced to the congregation July 10. Brother French, still not recognizing the validity of the process, refused to give in. Brothers Watts and Pope then convinced him to resign if they too would do the same. Approximately July 14 the three elders announced to the congregation their resignation. However, the following week brother Boren reinstated brethren Watts and Pope because he said they never recognized their resignation in the first place.

By this time, many members were beginning to see the non-Christ like attitude of the new elders towards those they deemed as "troublers," and a few hundred parted ways with Brown Trail.

One note that is interesting, is that somewhere between Dave Miller's resignation on April 24th and the June 20th reaffirmation letter, a secret meeting was put together by Dave where only a selected group of 35 men were asked to attend. This group included elders (Watts, Pope, Parker & Elliott). Not much is known about it, because everyone was sworn to secrecy about its purpose. Yet, in a recent meeting with an ex-member of Brown Trail, brother Parker admitted, in the presence of Robert Dodson, that there was a secret meeting, and that it was for the purpose of ridding the congregation of three elders. Also, just before the reaffirmation letter, when the elders were trying to meet with the three deacons, Ed Allen told brother French that they were not going to meet with them because Barker, McKenzie & French wouldn't be around long enough to have to worry about it.

Conclusion

I have done my best to try to present to you in accordance with all the information that is available at this time, the order in which the sins at Brown Trail occurred. It is true

that I do not know all the "ins and outs" of what happened. As I said there is a lot of emotion written into many of the documents, which must be cast aside to reveal the heart of the matter, and that is what I have tried to do. Maxie has laid the blame on Satan for the division that resulted. But in the end the blame lays totally at the feet of the eldership (both past and present). The Brotherhood is filled with elders who refuse to be watchmen (Eze. 33). Elders who shirked their God given duty to be examples, to lead, and protect the flock. Men like content dogs who will not bark (Isa. 56:10). It is the fault of such elders that men like Lucado, Shelly, Anderson, etc. are allowed to have pulpits to preach in and lead brethren astray. Likewise it is the fault of the elders at Brown Trail for evading their duties and giving Dave and Everett any authority they so desired. It is the fault of the elders for not being of one mind, one judgment and devoted to following only the Word of God in all matters. Using members as consultants rather than outside, unbiased parties to get to the truth should have been a no-brainer.

True, Satan is out there and we must be aware of his devices, but it becomes our own fault for entangling ourselves in his snares and becoming a party to ungodliness. Satan cannot cause problems on his own, nor can he force any of us into ungodly acts. It is only when we choose to join in with the multitude to do evil, that he succeeds (Exo. 23:2). On July 28, 2002, it is reported that "repentance" was forthcoming from several individuals which would finally settle the matter. Bobby Watts made a public statement before the congregation that he had sinned. He said that he had failed to shield the congregation from turmoil. Phil Pope made a statement confessing sin that he had been a part of the turmoil and asked for forgiveness. Guy Elliott made a public statement that he had not functioned as an elder should. Eddy Parker confessed publicly the sin of pride and asked for forgiveness. Maxie Boren made a general statement that he knows he has sinned and was sorry for it. Dave Miller has made no admission of sin, and neither has Everett Chambers.

Although it is admirable that these men stood before the congregation and "confessed sin," the question must be asked —"Was this true Bible repentance?" Although neither I, nor anyone else is able to read the hearts of men, scripture tells us "by their fruits we can know them." Certainly Maxie's was not repentance, because he did not confess what the sin or sins were so that the brethren could know just what it was that he was going to change in his life. As for the four elders, they most certainly did sin in those areas, but what about the areas that led up to the division which they helped to cause? In what way did Brother Elliott act ungodly? And against whom? Has he corrected whatever the sinful act was with the person it was committed against? No he has not. What about Brother Watts and his failure to shield the flock from the turmoil? One of his qualifications for being an elder is **"by sound doctrine to convince the gain sayers"** (Titus 1:9), yet he sided with them! How will he correct that sin? So far he has not. Brother Pope joined in on the turmoil rather than siding with the truth, or trying to discover the truth, he too should consider resigning, if his repentance is genuine. As for Brother Parker, he should be a "Jesus man" instead of a "Dave Miller man." These men and the members of the Brown Trail need to study the subject of repentance to understand what is truly entailed in this action.

After Dave left Brown Trail in August 2002, the elders appointed Maxie as Director of the School of Preaching. Ed Allen has been allowed to teach in the school (one of those involved in the secret meeting). Maxie informed the students that they were not to discuss the problems at Brown Trail with anyone, especially not with supporters. But if asked, just tell them that everything is fine. Some students were confiding in brother Flournoy who was made the School Administrator, but when Maxie discovered that Dan was not totally agreeable to what had happened at Brown Trail and his decisions, Maxie told the students they were not to speak to Dan. Brother Flournoy refused to play along and down play the problems as nothing more than a "personality conflict." Unable to talk Dan into going with the flow the elders relieved him of his responsibilities effective in October 4th.

It has been apparent by the letter and announcements by Maxie that he wants to make everyone think that all is fine and in harmony at Brown Trail. Let the chips fall where they may. Even the elders sent out an open letter on July 16, 2002 to repudiate "false" rumors of the circumstances at Brown Trail. The current eldership supports Dave Miller's false stand on marriage and divorce—a view that parallels the Catholic doctrine of "mental reservation." The elders also supported Dave and Everett's means of controlling the student body as well as staff members. They say that the accusations of Crossroads like tactics were too vague and unsubstantiated, yet there is much documentation that proves otherwise.

Brethren, despite Brown Trail's long-standing record for standing foresquare for the truth, it is apparent that they no longer desire the old paths. Any eldership or preacher who will side with the majority and shun searching every possible angle to get to the root of the problem is not walking circumspectly (Eph. 5:15). Please search the Scriptures and ALL the evidence before you, then decide who the "troublers" are.

— 1601 Abbey Rd.

It is easier to find a score of men wise enough to discover the truth than to find one intrepid enough, in the face of opposition, to stand up for it. **~A. A. Hodge**

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair. **~Douglas MacArthur**

SIN IN THE CAMP

Mike Demory

From generation to generation, God's people face the same *modus operandi*—by good words and fair speeches men deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:18). They turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside unto fables (2 Tim. 4:4), and sadly the majority of the people love to have it so (Jer. 5:31). The stark reality of what happened within the walls of the Brown Trail Church of Christ will cause many to be offended; but hopefully some will awaken toward repentance. Brethren, it is always a sad day when brothers and sisters in Christ choose to bite and devour one another over opinions, or areas of expediency. But just as disheartening is when brethren do the same over matters of doctrine—when we should all be of one mind of one accord (1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2). From the evidence that exists concerning the events that brought about a new eldership, a change in the Brown Trail School of Preaching directorship as well as teaching staff, and a withdrawal of fellowship by those who left Brown Trail, it is apparent that many Scriptures were and continue to be violated. Let us establish the *mens rea* of our case.

The Sin of Rebellion

The physician tells us that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Yet, humanity cannot seem to grasp this most divine concept. In Numbers 16, we are reminded of the incident in which Korah, Abiram, and Dathan took men of renown among the Israelites and rose up against Moses (vss. 1-2). What had started as a sin of three men became a sin of 250! They accused Moses and Aaron of assuming authority over the Israelites, and not allowing others who in their own eyes were just as qualified to stand as leaders among their own brethren.

The record reveals that the rebellion of Korah and his followers against Moses and Aaron—servants who God had deemed qualified, was a sin. Had it not been for Moses' intercession on the part of the innocent, all would have died that day for such an iniquity. When brethren take it upon themselves to try and "dig up dirt" on other brothers and/or sisters in Christ, they are in open rebellion against God. Who gave the three deacons (Kevin Kogucz, Ed Allen & Bryan White) any authority to check the pulse of the congregation concerning three elders (James French, Jimmy McKenzie, Daryl Barker)? The answer is that no one gave them that authority!

Like Korah before them, they chose to seek out other members who might side with their position so that they could then establish precedence for removing God's shepherds. This tactic is not new as evidenced by the account in Numbers 16. Brethren will use this same ploy to rid themselves of a faithful gospel preacher, who to them is too negative. Both Bobby Watts and Maxie Boren encouraged the resignation of two elders (Barker and French) so that the three deacons would stop their dirt digging and so things would calm down; **"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD"** (Pro. 17:15). By appraisal of the Scriptures that makes Maxie guilty by association (2 John 9-11; Eph. 5:11; Num. 16; etc.)! Why is it that erring brethren get more sympathy than those who are trying hard to contend earnestly for the faith?

Another area of rebellion that seems to have escaped the minds of some, is Dave Miller and Everett Chambers. After brothers Barker and French were installed as elders, brothers Bobby Watts and Jimmy McKenzie (existing elders) informed the two of the problems they were having in the School of Preaching. After reading the documentation, it was decided by only three of the four elders that Dave should spend more time with the school and that Everett should have less to do with it. After speaking to Dave about the situation, he wrote them a scathing letter, rebuking the elders for taking away his authority in the school and blaming Everett for the problems they were facing. Dave continued to hire part-time teachers to fill in during his absences (over 35 per year), totally rebelling against the elder's authority to oversee the work of the school. Everett refused to talk with the elders about his erring to the point that he finally resigned in October of 2001.

The Word of God has much to say about the sin of rebellion, to which we must all take heed: **"For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God."** (Job 34:37); **"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry"** (1 Sam 15:23) **"They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof"** (Job 24:13).

The Sin of Pride

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Pro. 16:18). The prophet Obadiah wrote of the Edomites whose pride had deceived them into thinking they were invincible (vs. 3). Unfortunately pride is still alive and well today, as this sin causes more problems within the Lord's body than possibly any other. **"He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife"** (Pro. 28:25). When application of the sin of pride is made to the Brown Trail situation, Dave Miller and Everett Chambers fit this mold as do the three deacons (White, Allen, and Kogucz). In the sense that the word *pride* means "showing oneself above others,"

pride crept in among these brethren when they usurped authority over the eldership. In the case of the deacons, they did not obtain the elder's permission or authority to seek members who were displeased with the shepherding of the elders. First of all if they had ought against a brother they should have met the requirements of Matthew 18:15-17, et al. But that aside, they took it upon themselves to "dig up dirt"—**"The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law"** (Psa. 119:85).

After repeated pleas by three of the seven elders (Barker, McKenzie, and French) for the three deacons to cease and desist, the arrogance of these brothers continued to be supported by four elders (Parker, Elliott, Pope and Watts), Maxie and Dave. Yes, it is true that Satan loves to have it so, and that his ways are the root cause of dissension among brethren, but we cannot lay all the blame at the feet of the devil. Men such as White, Allen and Kogucz made the choice to go against God's ways—**"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts"** (Psa. 10:4).

As for brothers Miller and Chambers, their arrogance is seen in the same light. They too chose not to adhere to the will or authority of the elders. I understand brother Miller's need to be on the road and raise funds for the school, as does every other director of a School of Preaching, however, if the elders saw the need to curtail such trips for the good of the school, Dave should have heeded their advice rather than throw tantrums and ignore their authority.

Brother Chambers after arriving in this country under false pretenses (a marriage to a cousin for the purpose of becoming a legal immigrant), was asked by the elders to correct this situation with the government and repent of his sin. As Dean of Students in the School of Preaching, he was also asked to discontinue his use of Crossroads tactics in the discipline and treatment of students and staff members. To my knowledge he has done neither, nor has he ever repented of his sins, but to this day continues to worship and teach as a faithful member of the church.

God has said, **"Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished"** (Pro. 16:5). Brother Chambers is not only guilty of a proud heart, but also guilty of false doctrine.

> **If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strife's of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings…** (1 Tim. 6:3-4).

As for the newest elders who were installed in January of 2002, it would appear that they too are guilty of pride, which disqualifies them as elders; **"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil"** (1 Tim. 3:6). Their pride carried them away with the rebelling deacons, School Director and Dean of Students. They refused to listen to both sides of the story, because they were "Dave Miller men!" When accusations were brought against brother James French, brother Parker (a new elder) had the microphones turned off so that no one could hear his defense. These are the types of things that should never be heard of among the brethren. Where is the agape love (1 Cor. 13:4-8)? Where are those who truly **"hate EVERY false way"** (Psa. 119:104, 128)? **"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit"** (Pro. 29:23).

The Sin of Strife

"A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends" (Pro. 16:28). Named among the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20), this word along with its synonyms denotes contention, a conflict against foes, causing division, seeking to win followers. Based upon these definitions, there is no doubt that many players in Brown Trail's quandary qualify as causing strife. Bobby Watts, Eddy Parker, Guy Elliott, Philip Pope, Dave Miller, Everett Chambers, Maxie Boren, Brian White, Kevin Kogucz, Ed Allen, and Gerald Nations were all involved in causing the resulting division. Each one played an important role, whether actively or not, in the false position that Brown Trail now takes on the issue of re-affirmation of elders, as well as the ill treatment of faithful brethren. **"He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife"** (Pro. 28:25).

Brothers Fallis, Ramsey, Simpson, Flournoy, McKenzie, French and Barker, as well as several students became foes of Miller and Chambers simply because they were trying their best to correct a sinful situation within the School.

> **But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work** (Jam. 3:14-16).

Miller, Chambers, Allen, White, Watts, Kogucz, Nations, and Boren worked in concert to win followers to their cause, thereby causing division, and conflict; **"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves"** (Phi. 2:3). When Chambers refused to repent and amend his error, or even to work things out with the elders, he resigned from his position at Brown Trail. **"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"** (1 Cor 3:3).

The Sin of Deceit

> **Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee? When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; Thou slan-**

derest thine own mother's son" (Psa. 50:17-20).

The words *deceit* or *deceive* means that which gives a false impression, whether by appearance, statement or influence; to mislead, to beguile or delude. Maxie and the current eldership and anyone else who follows their dictates to tell others all is fine, are guilty of the sin of deceit via brother Boren's open letter (Nov. 20, 2002), his article in the Preaching Training School Newsletter (No. 44, Oct. 2002), and articles written in the *Rocky Mountain News* and *Christian Journal*—all for the purpose of deceiving the brotherhood into thinking that their problems have been taken care of and everything is back to normal. The problem is that nothing is back to normal. The brethren at Brown Trail only seem to care about how the Brotherhood views them so that they will continue to receive support for the School and TV program. Where is the concern for lost souls? If the three elders, Johnny Ramsey, Dan Flournoy, Gary Fallis, Don Simpson and a few disenfranchised students were the troublers, then they sinned and must be dealt with accordingly. How can we lay claim to NT Christianity when we refuse to love the souls of all men? And I mean love as in "action," in "deeds" not just words (1 John 3:18).

> **Their throat is an open sepulchre; With their tongues they have used deceit: The poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes** (Rom. 3:13-18).

The three deacons, Kevin Kogucz, Brian White, and Ed Allen, are guilty of the sin of deceit because of their involvement in polling members of the congregation through dinner invitations in hopes that a member would bring up the subject and voice objections that they could use against brethren. **"Deceit is in the heart of them that devise evil; But to the counsellors of peace is joy"** (Pro. 12:20).

The secret meeting and all that were involved, whether knowingly or not are all guilty of the sin of deceit. To take part in secretive meetings where the minutes are not allowed to be viewed to anyone other than attendees, and to invite only those who may be supportive of Dave Miller, the new eldership and their "cause" is not Christ-like behavior. **"Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ:"** (Col. 2:8). Bobby Watts and Phil Pope are guilty of the sin of deceit when they encouraged Brother French to resign with them. Then the following week allowed others to reinstate them as elders.

> **For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23)**

The Sin of Shedding Innocent Blood

"If they say, Come with us, Let us lay wait for blood; Let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause" (Pro. 1:11). It does not matter to which side or whose version of the circumstances at Brown Trail you tend to believe, one side or the other, or possibly both have sinned by shedding innocent blood. Not actual murder, but character assassination.

> **There are six things which Jehovah hateth; Yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood; A heart that deviseth wicked purposes, Feet that are swift in running to mischief, A false witness that uttereth lies, And he that soweth discord among brethren** (Pro. 6:16-19).

If you will notice these seven items that are an abomination to God, several of them took place at Brown Trail which resulted in the division of that congregation. Brethren who claim to love the truth in turn must believe that it is imperative that they **"HATE EVERY FALSE WAY"** (Psa. 119:104). They should never allowed themselves to destroy the influence of godly men who were only trying to the best of their ability to correct a situation before it reached the magnitude that it finally did. It should not matter how long a man has been preaching or shepherding the flock. It should not matter how close a friendship had been developed with one another. It should not matter how much of an education one has. All that should and must matter to every faithful child of God is that the truth be upheld. Those remaining at Brown Trail point to three elders, a couple of instructors, and former students as the sowers of discord. While on the other hand, the fruit of what Maxie and the current eldership have done single them out as those who shed innocent blood.

Jesus said, **"by their fruit ye shall know them"** (Mat. 7:20). Brethren who actively participate and support the unscriptural reaffirmation of elders, take part in secret meetings, allow deacons to tamper with the "jury," refuse to speak with let alone work out their problems with one another, surely would be convicted in a court of law as guilty. **"Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes"** (Rom. 3:15-18).

The Sin of Guilt by Association

This sin is one that many congregations and individual members of the Lord's church fail and refuse to understand let alone apply. Brother Lester Kamp did a masterful job at the 1998 Bellview Lectures in speaking on this important subject. He said:

> ...what of members who find themselves in a congregation where error is taught or practiced without refutation? When members remain in that congregation, they become guilty of the error by their continued association with that congregation though they disagree with what is taught or practiced there. There comes a time after continued objections are made to no

avail regarding the error when faithfulness to God requires disassociating oneself from a congregation that does not follow God's Word. There is something more important than fond memories…, weddings…, family, and friends who are members of that congregation. It is more important to be faithful to God, faithful to His Word (Acts 5:29).

Several Bible examples can be found that prove this principle to be true and right. In Genesis 19, where Lot and his family were commanded to "disassociate" themselves from the people of Sodom or face the same judgment. In Numbers 16, we have the account of the sin of Korah and his 249 followers. Several areas can be pointed out that show the Brown Trail congregation, the School and TV program being guilty of the sin of association.

1. For the second time Brown Trail has chosen to go against God's Word and reaffirm men as elders. All members who took part in this process, or who have remained silent about this error are guilty by association.

2. Under the cloak of darkness (secrecy) they chose to meet with a select group of men. All who participated and have not rebuked this practice, nor repented of taking part and revealing what happened are guilty by association.

3. Everett Chambers came into this country illegally and through deceit, and Dave Miller chose to ignore it, making him guilty by association.

4. Everett Chambers used Crossroads like tactics in dealing with School staff and students, and Dave Miller allowed it, again making him guilty by association.

5. Maxie Boren, Ed Allen, and Gerald Nations who took part in the secret meeting, the reaffirmation process and/or the tampering with the jury, are currently or having recently been teaching in the School of Preaching. Fellow instructors who have not voiced opposition to unfaithful brethren teaching in the school are guilty by association.

6. Maxie Boren, Dave Miller, and Gerald Nations were on the eldership committee when the names of the current elders were submitted. They chose to ignore Scriptural reasons why these men were not qualified to be elders —despite Dan Flournoy's objections. These men are guilty of deceit and the remaining congregation at Brown Trail as well as any outside congregations that support the School or TV program are guilty of association. That is if they do so without rebuke or error.

The apostle Paul informed the Christians at Corinth that when brethren refuse to follow God's rules for living that faithful brethren are to **"come out from among them and be ye separate"** (2 Cor. 6:17). We must never tolerate sin even for a nano-second. The Psalmist said, **"I am a companion** (an associate) **of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts"** (Psa. 119:63). When we become companions with those who tear asunder the bride of Christ, whether we actively participate in their sin or refuse to rebuke and chasten, then we become guilty by association. Many brethren tend to believe the "HEAD IN THE SAND" is the best policy. Unfortunately, not getting involved only punches their one-way ticket to destruction. Christianity is an active, not passive religion.

The Sin of Neutrality

Perhaps more than any other, this sin has wormed its way into the hearts and minds of far more brethren than we would care to admit. Our Lord informed the church at Laodicea, **"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or not. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth"** (Rev. 3:15-16). This lukewarm feeling of being neutral on issues gives many Christians the notion that they are exuding the love of Christ. I have been shocked to learn of brethren, especially gospel preachers who should know better and I assume have preached against such an attitude, but have become comfortable to settle into this mindset themselves when it comes to brethren or congregations they personally like.

This has certainly been the case in the gospel meeting and lectureship circuit. As it is reported that well-know preachers who seem to be "somewhat," turn the other cheek when it comes to speaking with others who are unfaithful. Brother Mack Lyon is quoted as saying that he is no more endorsing false doctrine by appearing with the likes of Joe Beam, than he would be approving of Baptist doctrine by riding in a plane with a Baptist preacher. It certainly appears that our "somewhat" brethren desperately need "fellowship 101!"

The sin of neutrality is gaining more and more supporters in the brotherhood, which, if we are going to lay claim to being the true NT church, this sin must be removed far from us. Faithfulness DEMANDS that ALL error be exposed! Even to the point of being considered by the spiritually immature as a "troubler." Jesus says that the faithful child of God will be blessed when others revile, persecute and say all manner of evil against them falsely (Mat. 5:11). It certainly is hard to take, and as the song says, "one is the loneliest number," but error must be exposed, rebuked and repentance encouraged.

The Brethren in and outside of Brown Trail have taken a "head in the sand" posture. Partly because Brother Boren and the eldership have encouraged an "all is well" stance, and partly because brethren just want to let it die and get things back to normal. But what is normal about hiding sin, other than being the worldly way of doing things? What is normal about refusing to repent, not caring about the lost souls of the brethren they say are in the wrong? What's normal about being satisfied with the ungodly approach taken to remove elders who allegedly rocked the boat? What's normal about refusing to answer calls, or letters that plead for Bible study that will assist in forming repentant hearts? Brethren, if this

is what getting back to normal is all about, then we would all be just as well off remaining children of the devil, than to dupe ourselves into thinking that as "quasi" children of God that will be able to get by with the active participation of neutrality! As for me, I want no part of this type of "normal."

A Call to Repentance

It is my deepest prayer that all parties involved in the circumstances that caused the division and resulting unfaithfulness of the Brown Trail congregation come together in prayer, supplication, agape love and IN AN EARNEST DESIRE to set ALL THINGS straight. Although Brown Trail may never fully recover from their sin, they would most certainly become a true example of what NT Christianity could and should be.

There is so much more that could be said about the problems that occurred within as well as without the walls of the Brown Trail congregation. Most of the things said are nothing more than hurt feelings meant to strike a cord of sympathy and others are nothing more than minutia. The heart of the matter is that brethren did give in to the ways of Satan. The eldership of the past did not do their job in overseeing the affairs of the school. At times not even knowing that false teachers had been allowed to teach class, and willingly handing over their authority and duties to the Director because that's the way he wanted it.

I am not saying that only a certain group was totally at fault in all that happened at Brown Trail. As is usually the case when problems arise, whether between two individuals or an entire congregation, both sides feel that they are the ones who have been hurt the most. There are always two sides to every story, and many times it is difficult to get down to the precise cause, and the exact cause. However, there are little things that can tip you off that one side has not been as innocent as they claim. In law there is what is called a "prima facie case," which is established by sufficient evidence AT FIRST SIGHT, unless that evidence can be effectively rebutted. AT FIRST SIGHT, the reaffirmation of the elders and the speed to which it was applied, along with the defense of this action, plus Brother Chambers unwillingness to discuss his illegal entry into the country with the elders is sufficient evidence to establish who had an agenda. Then there is the fact that a secret meeting was organized by Dave Miller, new elders allowing three deacons to tamper with the jury, Brother Boren's ungodly methods of sending out a reaffirmation to the congregation, as well as Scriptural objections to brothers Pope, Parker and Elliott being destroyed. In all of this there was total lack of love and care to be of the same mind, and in one accord towards truth, not men. Yes, there is "prima facie evidence" that the current administration of Brown Trail (the church, the school and TV program) stand in error and must be rebuked as well as exhorted to repent.

Brothers Miller, Boren, Chambers, Pope, Parker, Elliott, Allen, Kogucz, White, et al, stand in error of not only shedding innocent blood, but doing so in an ungodly manner. Serving their own bellies, and not following the dictates of God. Will these brethren be willing to sit down with all parties to this problem and work out their differences in a loving and Scriptural manner? Would they be willing to do so with an outside arbitrator? If found guilty of sin, will the current eldership be willing to step down and allow the three elders to return should they be found innocent? If truth is truly what this congregation seeks, then they should be willing to exhaust all efforts to correct this problem. By their fruits we will all discover who they truly are.

As a former member of Brown Trail and BTSOP Alumnus, I pray that all brethren who have allowed themselves to get caught up in the heat of the moment, due to friendships, or whatever prompted them to participate in this ungodliness, will stand back and take a long look at what they have done. That repentance, with the appropriate fruits will be forth coming, so that we all can put this behind us. It is never a pleasant thing when brethren are at odds with one another, it only serves to assist Satan in his quest to divide the church and keep our attentions elsewhere. Please brethren, admit your sin and repent!

— 1601 Abbey Rd.
Pierre, SD 57501

Are You Serious?

Apache Crying Bear

I often wonder if these are the very words used by our Lord as He looks down from Heaven and sees the denominationalism that is running rampant in His church. How broken and heavy hearted He must feel when He sees the error being taught in the schools of preaching and the fellowshipping of false teachers by those who were once champions of truth. It raises the question for me that if they are going to blatantly disregard the Word of God for whatever reasons they may have, why are they so adamant about holding on to the name church of Christ when even an uneducated man like myself can clearly see they are not a part of the churches of Christ as that term in defined and used in the New Testament of Christ.

When years have passed concerning the Dave Miller errors of the re-affirmation and re-evaluation of elders (hereafter R. & R. of elders) and his unscriptural views on marriage,

divorce, and re-marriage (hereafter MDR), after untold numbers of brethren have fallen into the error of fellowshiping and unrepentent false teacher, will they ever realize they have gone against the teaching of 2 John 9-11? But instead, they refuse to see the error of their way in this matter and have fallen headlong into sin. Is 2 John 9-11 no longer in their Bibles? If it is, does it teach them nothing? The apostle John wrote:

> **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.**

Can any verse in Holy Writ support Dave Miller's views concerning the R. & R. of elders and his error on MDR?

Polishing the Pulpit has become a commercialized venture not unlike denominational gatherings or the Tulsa Workshop among the rank liberals in the church. They pride themselves in fellowshipping the likes of Dave Miller. Lectureships held at the schools of preaching and the congregations that support these schools refuse to discuss all the issues facing the church for fear it will put them at odds with some church, brother, or para-church organization, causing them to lose financial support as well as students.

If one is looking for Satan all one needs to do is attend one of these functions and you will almost see him rubbing his hands together in delight as many church members skip willingly and cheerfully down the broad road to eternal destruction. Do these brethren read their Bibles anymore? If they do, it is clear that they do not believe at least some of what they read.

I have warned many congregations of the false teachers such as Dave Miller, Phil Sanders, Chuck Monan, Mac Deavor, and the like. I have warned of the dangers of fellowshipping the false teachers. As a result, I have been asked to leave congregations, been slandered, or just ignored completely. How heartbroken our Lord MUST be when he sees thousands of congregations turned into venues of entertainment where worship has all but disappeared entirely. Divided worship assemblies, children church, women preachers, elders, and deacons, puppet and clown "ministries," the use of mechanical instrumental music in the worship of God, gymnasiums, coffee shops and cafeterias and such like are found throughout the church today.

It continues to be common to see brethren exiting worship, lighting up cigarettes or filling their cheeks with snuff. Brethren engage in social drinking, cursing, gambling, pornography, they permit their children to attend the prom, and allow their wives and daughters to dress immodestly. It makes one wonder why they are members of the church at all. Isaiah 59:2 states: **"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."** These have fallen into the trap of thinking they can "get their ticket punched" for the ride to heaven by simply showing up at the worship assemblies, as if there was such a thing. They have become as sinful as the Judeans of Isaiah's time.

As heartbreaking as all this is, I am reminded of the words of Paul in 1 Timothy 6:10-12:

> **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. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 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.**

One MUST assume that many of these brethren were once faithful soldiers of the truth and, thus, know what they are doing. I studied at the once faithful Memphis School of Preaching and it was an experience that deeply enriched my life with the love for God, the Christ, and the Word of God. But will someone please answer the following question: how is it that I remember the truth that I was taught, but the instructors that taught me have evidently forgotten some of it?

The Bible is the authority, not some man. Be it for money, popularity, or whatever other reason they may have, if it is not authorized by the Word of God we should not have it in our lives. We are not going to stand before a man on that great Day of Judgment. As Paul wrote, **"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God"** (Rom. 14:11-12) Seriously, are we to believe that these false teachers and those who fellowship them do not know what they are doing? Sadly, we must realize that many know exactly what they are doing.

To the faithful that are left, you are not alone even though it may seem that way at times. Remember the words of our King found in Matthew 7:13-14:

> **Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**

— 1300 West Noel Street
Memphis, Texas 79245

[Brother Bear is a Mescalero Apache. He, his wife Carly, and their children, a son Yuma (9) daughters Helaku (3), and Deshona (1) reside at the above address. His life has been a hard one. But he will tell you that he brought many of his trials and tribulations on himself before he learned Christ's gospel. The consequences of some of these bad choices will remain with him the remainder of his life. But since obeying the gospel, he has worked hard to live the Christian life. However, as is true of a number of us who have refused to compromise even one component part of the New Testament system of salvation, he has been in perils of false brethren. Please keep brother Crying Bear and his family in your prayers—**Editor**]

Beware Of False Teachers Who Bind Unscripturally—Including A Report Concerning Correspondence With A False Teacher Who Binds Where God's Word Does Not Bind

Gary L. Grizzell

Although all 66 books of the Bible are the inspired words of God, the New Testament is the binding law in the Christian Age (Heb. 10:9; Rom. 15:4). Creed books of men are unscriptural. As has been pointed out by restoration leaders of times past: 1) If your creed book contains more than the Bible contains, then it contains too much; 2) If your creed book contains less than the Bible contains, then it contains too little; 3) If your creed book contains just what the Bible contains, then it IS the Bible and no other creed book is needed. We are told not to think of men above that which is written by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 4:6).

We are instructed to diligently study God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15). So in our approach to Bible study and as we seek to rightly divide the Word of Truth, we must avoid extremes.

Extremes To Avoid—The Right Wing Extreme Position

The *Right Wing Extreme Position* is to "read into" the words in the Bible in such a way as to allow for binding where God in His Word has not bound. Such is a sin (1 John 3:4; 2 John 9-11; see principle in Rev. 22:18). An example of this in the first century church was that of certain Jews who came privily into Christ (pretenders) and sought to bind the Law of Moses on Gentile male converts and others. Paul did not put up with this for even an hour! (Gal. 2:3-5). He exhorted by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for Christians to stand firm in the liberty which they had in Christ Jesus (Gal. 5:1).

The law-making business has been left up to Christ, the very Head of the church (Col. 1:18; Mt. 28:18). One of the scriptural slogans pioneer preachers were known to repeat was: "In matters of faith, unity. In matters of opinion, liberty. In all things, love."

Another in more recent days has stated it: "In matters of obligation, there must be unity, In matters of option, there must be freedom, and in all matters, there must be love (Thomas B. Warren, *The Bible Only Makes Christians Only and The Only Christians*, p. 140).

Today, the practice of binding where God's Word has not bound, has shown its ugly head. Riding hobby horses, straining at gnats and majoring in minors is characteristic of false teachers of this unauthorized movement.

It gives me no pleasure to say that one false teacher, brother Keith Sharp, who has had his hand called for propagating his own laws in Africa, refers to faithful brethren by the misguided term of "institutional." False teachers today who bind their man-made laws on innocent and unsuspecting brethren will chide their opponents for name-calling. However, they do not mind name-calling when they accuse their critics by such terms as "institutional" and "liberal." To accuse one's opponents of using a pejorative (abusive) term, but then turn right around and do such themselves is but hypocrisy. Intellectual honesty is thrown to the wind with such characters.

Those of this sinful binding-mindset differ with one another on exactly which doctrines they should bind. So because they themselves are divided, one must judge (John 7:24) each false teacher based on which doctrines he personally has chosen to bind. However, certain well known examples wherein brethren have been hindered by those false teachers of this stripe are as follows (this list does not presume to be exhaustive):

Those who are Against Multi-containers—saying it is a sin for the church to use more than one container, out of which to drink the fruit of the vine during the partaking of the Lord's Supper. (However, in Mat. 26:27 when Jesus took the cup and said, "Drink ye all of it," He was talking about the contents of the container, not the container itself!)

Those who are Against Sunday School—saying it is a sin for the church to be divided up into a plurality of Bible Classes (not only simultaneous Bible classes but any Bible class) on Sunday prior to the church coming together in the worship hour. However, Jesus gave some to be "teachers" and this implies authority for classes (Eph. 4:11).

Those who are Against Scripturally Organized Orphan Homes—saying it is a sin to take money from the Lord's Treasury and give to a scripturally organized orphan home. However, note James 1:27. Since when is it a sin for the church to practice pure and undefiled religion? The church is not the home and the home is not the church. The church may help the home. Brother Guy N. Woods proved his case in his debate with the misguided and false teacher, Roy Cogdill. Though both of these men are deceased, the written record of the debate reveals that brother Woods showed that the legal home is no less a home.

Those who bind their Saints-Only Doctrine—saying it is a sin to take money from the church treasury and give to a non-Saint (non-Christian) who has a benevolent need. (However, note Gal. 6:10 and 2 Cor. 9:13.) While the mission of the church is evangelism (Mark 16:15), the faithful church leadership will use balance in this regard by doing

such as the Bible teaches, namely, as opportunity presents itself.

Those who are Against Fellowship Meals in the meeting house—which false doctrine says it is a sin for the members of the church to collectively eat a meal together in the church meeting house. (However, the early church ate together: 2 Peter 2:13; Jude 12; Gal. 2:12). This is an optional matter. (It is not to be done in worship—we know that!)

Those who are Against Scriptural Church Cooperation in Spiritual Matters—their doctrine advocates that it is a sin for one church to send funds to another congregation in spiritual matters, as in the case of church cooperation in preaching the gospel today. It matters little to those who bind in this area that Acts chapter 15 reveals churches (with divine approval) cooperating in spiritual matters in the sending of preachers from one church to another to impart the inspired message of the gospel.

In Acts 15, the Jerusalem church financed the writing material for an inspired epistle and sent preachers for spiritual matters to the church at Antioch—thus, church cooperation took place involving a plurality of churches in spiritual matters! (Note: this was not a benevolence matter.) Who paid for the parchment or whatever writing material the message was written on and which was given to the church at Antioch? That question has never been successfully answered by those of the so-called noninstutionalists' persuasion.

So we have here an example of a plurality of churches cooperating with one another in the work of spiritual matters, i.e., in the matter of edification/evangelism (see Acts 15:22-35). None of their preachers have ever touched, top, side or bottom of this argument, nor will they ever do so.

Today, if church "A" sent free of charge a New Testament (free of charge, i.e., paid for by the church treasury of the sending church) to church "B," anti-church cooperationists would be forced to accept such as an unscriptural arrangement! Why, this would be church cooperation in spiritual matters! Why? Because if it is scriptural to send a New Testament free of charge, it would be scriptural to send the money from one church to another for that New Testament. If not, why not? Friend, if you have fallen for the foolish doctrines of anti-ism, you are associated with those who believe it is a sin to take money from the church treasury, purchase a New Testament and mail it free of charge to another church. Think about it and get away from them. Do not bid Godspeed to such thinking (2 John 9-11; Eph. 5:11).

Did you know that those of this unscriptural binding mind-set argue that (scenario A) when the church money is for benevolence, send it to the other church treasury? However, (scenario B) when the money is for the preacher on the mission field, send it directly to the preacher only. Why? Because it is falsely argued that in scenario A this would constitute a missionary society setup. However, their inconsistency is seen in that with that line of reasoning, scenario B would create a one-man missionary society setup. Which is worse? Truly, the legs of the lame are not equal (Pro. 26:7).

Authority for church cooperation is authorized in benevolence in Acts 11:26-30. Then, generic (general) authority allows authority for cooperation in spiritual matters by the very same text! Remember the principle of implication? It is one of the three ways which authorize a position/practice! So, if God approves of church cooperation in material matters, He approves (by implication) of church cooperation in spiritual matters (edification/evangelism). If not, why not? A blind man at midnight can see that! But alas, the truth has been twisted to set a trap for the unwary. Those steeped in anti-ism just cannot seem to see this. They have heard the false take on Acts 11:26-30 so many times by now they cannot see the forest for the trees. Sad!

While many other things have been unscripturally bound, suffice it to say that had those who pushed such doctrines, 1) Respected Bible Authority, and 2) Properly determined (ascertained) authority by Direct Statement, Example and/or Implication, such would never have been bound on others. Let us be like Paul and not tolerate such behavior in the church for even an hour! (Gal. 2:4-5).

Questioning Those Who Bind Where God Has Not Bound

The following is an email which was sent to one who unscripturally binds man-made laws upon his brethren.

> From: gary grizzell
>
> To: keithsharp@saddenlink.net
>
> Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2014
>
> Subject: To Keith Sharp from Gary
>
> Keith Sharp, preacher & elder Highway 5 South Church of Christ Mountain Home, Arkansas keithsharp@saddenlink.net
>
> Dear Keith Sharp,
>
> A faithful brother and friend in Christ in Africa sent me a copy of certain of your handouts from when you were there in February of this year. He is very concerned about the damage you have begun and has expressed that concern. One of these handouts was entitled, "The Church's Work of Ministering to the Needy," and contained, "The Pattern Revealed," which listed a number of New Testament scriptures. The problem is it is incomplete. Why did you not include Galatians 6:10, which states, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." You will note that Paul wrote to the brethren that "we" (plural pronoun) are to do good to all, as opportunity allows. This would authorize the church to do good to all, in addition to the individual Christian doing good as he could.
>
> You left out another key passage and that is James 1:27 which says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The church of Christ is to practice pure religion. To argue that the

individual only may support the fatherless and widows in this passage is to take the position that only the individual Christian may practice pure and undefiled religion. Right?

Your handout stated, "The local church is limited in its work of ministering to the needy to the relief of needy saints."

This is false doctrine in that it violates the two passages above (and others). Your "pattern" binds where God's Word has not bound. This is the commonly known among faithful and sound brethren as the "saints only doctrine," which has been taught for many years by false teachers.

You even went on to add, "But it is also an exclusive pattern we must neither change nor violate - 2 John 9." I wholeheartedly agree with 2 John 9-11 which teaches we are to abide in the doctrine of Christ and refuse to bid Godspeed to false teachers and false doctrine. However, you have violated the very passage of 2 John 9 by binding which God's Word has not bound. Liberals are left wing extremists and you are part of a movement which constitutes right wing extremists.

You also refused to preach the whole counsel of God by omitting 2 Corinthians 9:13, which is an example of the first century church at Corinth giving to both needy saints and to all men.

Withhold truth from those who have not studied these matters will and has led some astray. Taking the scriptural position that the Lord's church, as opportunity presents itself, may take money from the church treasury and help first, the needy saints, and then if possible a non-Christian down the street (for example, whose house has just burned down and is need of clothing), does not necessitate that one is to be categorized with apostate churches who have loosed where God's Word has not loosed (are rank liberal in doctrine and practice). I am just as against the abuse of the church treasury in the support of unauthorized things such as entertainment and secular education.

You have not fairly represented faithful brethren who have disagreed with your man-made pattern. Your paintbrush is too broad by painting all those who disagree with your false doctrine (who would think you are binding in this area of benevolence), as being connected with those who believe the church should be a "glorified YMCA" (this expression was also used in a second document you handed out). I would also be against such things as church financed gymnasiums and turning the church into a glorified YMCA.

Out of sincere concern for the brethren and the truth of the gospel, I would urge you to consider these passages and retract the false statements you have distributed to our brethren in Africa.

Sincerely,

Gary

Gary L. Grizzell
garylgrizzell@gmail.com
Tennessee

As a result of this email above, this writer had email correspondence with brother Keith Sharp from March 25 through Friday, April 11, 2014 (a period of two weeks and four days). Others were made privy to that correspondence, which resulted in an African convert of this brother's false teaching writing to me. I explained briefly why I ended my correspondence with brother Sharp, as follows:

> I terminated my email exchange with Keith Sharp today because of his continued false characterizations, putting words in my mouth, imagining implications without proving the same and ignoring arguments made while showing only a desire to promote his hobby horse issues of being against fellowship meals, scriptural church cooperation and his saints only doctrine. (April 4, 2014).

For those who wish to know more about these matters, contact faithful brother and preacher, Benard Ooko Kagaga (elykagaga2003@yahoo.com). Brother Kagaga is a native African who labors in Kenya and who can give firsthand knowledge of those preachers who have fallen away from the truth due to the influence and "mission" trips of brother Sharp. Brother Kagaga has tried to restore them to the one faith and is to be commended for his love for the truth and courageous stand for the gospel there.

Also, for more information you can contact faithful gospel preacher, Jerry Brewer (txbrew@att.net), who lives in Oklahoma and who makes mission trips to Kenya, working alongside of brother Kagaga. Jerry has worked diligently to help brethren there to combat the insidious false doctrines of anti-ism and can answer your questions. Jerry is worthy of your support in both prayers and financial assistance for his travel fund, as he travels back and forth to Kenya from time to time.

Shame on false accusers who wish to paint faithful brethren (who point out their errors) as clones of liberals like Rubel Shelly, Max Lucado and other doctrinal compromisers. We also are against doctrinal liberals. Such is but propaganda. Only those whose doctrines have holes, flaws and inconsistencies feel they must resort to such low tactics. To deal with such characters we must think as one pundit said, "Shoot low, they may be crawling."

Dangling the promise of financial support to certain African preachers (where the need for income is so great), while luring them into anti-ism is additionally shameful. As someone said, necessity is a harsh weapon. Judas sold his soul for 30 pieces of silver. Dear reader, have you sold your soul in order to receive a preacher salary from those disruptors who have unscripturally bound their heresies on their brethren?

(Brother Sharp knows I must press my point, even as he believes that he must press his.) Brother Sharp has whined to African preachers that the word "Anti" is a pejorative (abusive) term used by his critics (the prefix simply means, against). However, brother Sharp is guilty of what he accuses another, that is, name-calling. He chided this writer for "name calling," but he was found calling his opponent names (either explicitly or implicitly): "liberal," "institu-

tional" and "a moderate," a reflection that he has a double standard about name calling. Name calling is fine, as long as a thing is called by its right name. All this is but a craftily designed smokescreen of the matter before us. He and his fellow false teachers know that labeling is not the real issue and the evidence of this fact is that they themselves do it.

If one does not know to call a snake a snake, he will not likely acknowledge its presence and will be bitten. The Lord referred to the disobedient who reject the Word of God and God's messengers as dogs and pigs, due to their similar characteristics (Mat. 7:6). Should the Lord be accused of using pejorative (abusive) terms? NO. I would urge one and all to move past the straw man issue of name calling and labeling to the question: *Is there Bible authority for the doctrines being preached?*

"How do I do that?," you may ask. Here's the answer: To know if a belief, doctrine and/or practice is authorized of God, give it the three-fold authority test by asking the following questions. If even one of these is found, then there is authority for it.

1) Is there a *direct statement* in the New Testament which authorizes this doctrine to be believed and practiced?

2) Is there an *example* in the New Testament which authorizes this doctrine to be believed and practiced?

3) Is there an *implication* from even one verse in the New Testament which authorizes this doctrine to be believed and practiced?

The Left Wing Extreme Position

The *Left Wing Extreme Position* is that of loosing where God in His Word has not loosed. The proper principle of binding and loosing is seen in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 in the statements made by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The apostles of Christ were given the authority to bind and loose after the Holy Spirit came upon them (John 14:25-26; Acts 2:1-4). Thus, the early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42).

A spirit of compromise is characteristic of those who seek to loose where God's Word does not authorize loosing. We must allow the apostles' doctrine to do the loosing and binding in doctrinal areas today. Paul wrote that the things he wrote were the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37).

A Contrast: The primary deficiency of the "anti," the one who binds where God's Word does not bind (discussed above) is seemingly a spirit of seeing a pattern in every verse (*hyperbole* intended), but the problem with the "liberal" (one who practices theological liberalism, i.e., loosing where God's Word does not loose) is that of disrespecting the all-authoritative Word of God.

Where God's Word *does* establish a pattern, we dare not deviate. When God's Word specifies something, that excludes everything else! Example: When God's Word specified *gopher wood* in building the ark in Noah's day, Noah dared not use oak! Likewise, in our day when God's Word specifies in the New Testament *vocal*, *congregational* singing in worship in the assembly on the first day of the week—that excludes solos and choirs (see Eph. 5:19).

When you order a hamburger, you do not want the waitress to bring you additionally a hot dog. Neither do you want her to charge you for it. When God placed His order in spiritual matters, He wants His order filled without addition or subtraction.

Today, it is discouraging to see good moral people who are conservative on *political* and *moral* issues inconsistently practice *theological* liberalism in religious matters and particularly in the matter of neglecting to learn how to determine authority. However, we must respect the authority on the plan of salvation (how to obey the gospel; get saved), worship matters, the organization of the church, and the work of the church. It is not good enough simply to "be religious," but we must learn and do the specified will of the Father (Mt. 7:21). To know the will of the Father we must learn how to determine authority.

Political Liberalism has led some to seek to legalize homosexual marriages. *Theological Liberalism* (loosing where God's Word has not loosed) has led some to reject the passages concerning respecting the New Testament of Christ as the only creed and have thereby glorified and followed man-made creed books (and corrupt Bible translations) to determine authority for doctrinal (essential) questions. Such allows for the condoning of immorality included in the political liberalism category mentioned above.

However, God has given "all things" which pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3 - the words of the New Testament) for us today ("all" means all!) and if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God authorize him to speak, so says the Holy Spirit in 1 Peter 4:11.

The popular doctrine of *Faith Only* (which says that a person is required to believe only in the Deity of Christ and he is saved at that moment, separate and apart from the other requirements of the gospel plan of salvation) is an example of both, 1) Disrespecting the authority of the Bible, and 2) Neglecting to properly determine authority for the plan of salvation. The only time the expression, "faith only," is found in that word order in the *KJV* is found in James 2:24 and there it is condemned. We are to be doers of the Word (Jam. 1:22-27). *Faith Only never saved anyon*e! Read Hebrews chapter 11 and see if you can find anyone there who was saved because of his faith only. *The faith that saves is the faith that obeys* in that chapter! (see Heb. 11:8).

Billy Graham and those like him teach the doctrine of faith only, which doctrine and teachers should both be rejected (Mat. 7:15). Does that upset you? Friend, if you hold to the doctrine of faith-only, get your Bible out and ask

yourself the threefold test mentioned above. Oh, how many problems would be solved and how many religious divisions would be avoided if those same religious folks would apply this three-fold test to any and all doctrinal positions which are so deeply held and slavishly followed.

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 saying we are to **"rightly divide the word of truth."** Let us determine to turn neither to the left nor the right but simply abide in the doctrine of Christ. This is what God desires and has commanded (2 John 9-11; Eph. 5:11).

—2128 Crystal Ct.
Cookeville, TN 38501

(Continued from page 3)

tions. It is in the very nature of language (coeval to language) that direct statements, examples, and/or implications give direction to or authorize anyone to do anything. That is one reason Paul stated to us what he did in Colossians 3:17. Paul also wrote that when we read what he wrote we will know what he knows concerning the Lord's salvation for man (Eph. 3:4). Thus, in reading the Holy Spirit inspired words that comprise the New Testament, any attempt to know what the Lord obligates us to do without giving attention to the direct statements, examples, and implications of the language of said document is ridiculous and absurd on the face of it. One might as well attempt to breathe without lungs as to learn what the New Testament authorizes us to do all the while ignoring the direct statements, examples, and implications that are as much a part of the communicative element of language as our lungs are to the functioning of our physical bodies. Therefore, we must do only what is authorized by the New Testament, omitting what is not authorized and what is explicitly (in just so many words) forbidden.

For those who believe the Bible to be the Word of God, their problem, for the most part, is that they never ask if what they desire to do is authorized by the scriptures. However, they ought to ask: 1) Is it authorized? 2) Is it explicitly forbidden? Our souls' salvation depends upon our acting ONLY as the Lord in the words of His New Testament has authorized us to act and leave undone that for which we have no authority, or that which Jesus has explicitly forbidden (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:7; Col. 3:17; John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15). This is the way that is right in Bible study and cannot be wrong. Although, as is the case with anything pertaining to one's salvation, **"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"** (Pro. 14:12). There is nothing of any more importance than for us to learn how our Lord authorizes in the language of His last Will and Testament (the New Testament) and for us to learn how to ascertain His authority from the same divine document.

One last warning: If we are not sure that the act we are contemplating is authorized, then leave it alone until we are sure it is. Indeed, we dare not act in moral or religious matters without the divine authority to act (Col. 3:17).

—Editor

The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.

~Winston Churchill

Transgender Surgery Isn't the Solution—A drastic physical change doesn't address underlying psycho-social troubles.

PAUL MCHUGH

The government and media alliance advancing the transgender cause has gone into overdrive in recent weeks. On May 30, a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services review board ruled that Medicare can pay for the "reassignment" surgery sought by the transgendered—those who say that they don't identify with their biological sex. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel as recently saying that he was "open" to lifting a ban on transgender individuals serving in the military. *Time* magazine, seeing the trend, ran a cover story for its June 9 issue called "The Transgender Tipping Point: America's next civil rights frontier."

Yet policy makers and the media are doing no favors either to the public or the transgendered by treating their confusions as a right in need of defending rather than as a mental disorder that deserves understanding, treatment and prevention. This intensely felt sense of being transgendered constitutes a mental disorder in two respects. The first is that the idea of sex misalignment is simply mistaken—it does not correspond with physical reality. The second is that it can lead to grim psychological outcomes.

The transgendered suffer a disorder of "assumption" like those in other disorders familiar to psychiatrists. With the transgendered, the disordered assumption is that the individual differs from what seems given in nature—namely one's maleness or femaleness. Other kinds of disordered assumptions are held by those who suffer from anorexia and bulimia nervosa, where the assumption that departs from physical reality is the belief by the dangerously thin that they

are overweight.

With body dysmorphic disorder, an often socially crippling condition, the individual is consumed by the assumption "I'm ugly." These disorders occur in subjects who have come to believe that some of their psycho-social conflicts or problems will be resolved if they can change the way that they appear to others. Such ideas work like ruling passions in their subjects' minds and tend to be accompanied by a solipsistic argument.

For the transgendered, this argument holds that one's feeling of "gender" is a conscious, subjective sense that, being in one's mind, cannot be questioned by others. The individual often seeks not just society's tolerance of this "personal truth" but affirmation of it. Here rests the support for "transgender equality," the demands for government payment for medical and surgical treatments, and for access to all sex-based public roles and privileges.

With this argument, advocates for the transgendered have persuaded several states—including California, New Jersey and Massachusetts—to pass laws barring psychiatrists, even with parental permission, from striving to restore natural gender feelings to a transgender minor. That government can intrude into parents' rights to seek help in guiding their children indicates how powerful these advocates have become.

How to respond? Psychiatrists obviously must challenge the solipsistic concept that what is in the mind cannot be questioned. Disorders of consciousness, after all, represent psychiatry's domain; declaring them off-limits would eliminate the field. Many will recall how, in the 1990s, an accusation of parental sex abuse of children was deemed unquestionable by the solipsists of the "recovered memory" craze.

You won't hear it from those championing transgender equality, but controlled and follow-up studies reveal fundamental problems with this movement. When children who reported transgender feelings were tracked without medical or surgical treatment at both Vanderbilt University and London's Portman Clinic, 70%-80% of them spontaneously lost those feelings. Some 25% did have persisting feelings; what differentiates those individuals remains to be discerned.

We at Johns Hopkins University—which in the 1960s was the first American medical center to venture into "sex-reassignment surgery"—launched a study in the 1970s comparing the outcomes of transgendered people who had the surgery with the outcomes of those who did not. Most of the surgically treated patients described themselves as "satisfied" by the results, but their subsequent psycho-social adjustments were no better than those who didn't have the surgery. And so at Hopkins we stopped doing sex-reassignment surgery, since producing a "satisfied" but still troubled patient seemed an inadequate reason for surgically amputating normal organs.

It now appears that our long-ago decision was a wise one. A 2011 study at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden produced the most illuminating results yet regarding the transgendered, evidence that should give advocates pause. The long-term study—up to 30 years—followed 324 people who had sex-reassignment surgery. The study revealed that beginning about 10 years after having the surgery, the transgendered began to experience increasing mental difficulties. Most shockingly, their suicide mortality rose almost 20-fold above the comparable nontransgender population. This disturbing result has as yet no explanation but probably reflects the growing sense of isolation reported by the aging transgendered after surgery. The high suicide rate certainly challenges the surgery prescription.

There are subgroups of the transgendered, and for none does "reassignment" seem apt. One group includes male prisoners like Pvt. Bradley Manning, the convicted national-security leaker who now wishes to be called Chelsea. Facing long sentences and the rigors of a men's prison, they have an obvious motive for wanting to change their sex and hence their prison. Given that they committed their crimes as males, they should be punished as such; after serving their time, they will be free to reconsider their gender.

Another subgroup consists of young men and women susceptible to suggestion from "everything is normal" sex education, amplified by Internet chat groups. These are the transgender subjects most like anorexia nervosa patients: They become persuaded that seeking a drastic physical change will banish their psycho-social problems. "Diversity" counselors in their schools, rather like cult leaders, may encourage these young people to distance themselves from their families and offer advice on rebutting arguments against having transgender surgery. Treatments here must begin with removing the young person from the suggestive environment and offering a counter-message in family therapy.

Then there is the subgroup of very young, often prepubescent children who notice distinct sex roles in the culture and, exploring how they fit in, begin imitating the opposite sex. Misguided doctors at medical centers including Boston's Children's Hospital have begun trying to treat this behavior by administering puberty-delaying hormones to render later sex-change surgeries less onerous—even though the drugs stunt the children's growth and risk causing sterility. Given that close to 80% of such children would abandon their confusion and grow naturally into adult life if untreated, these medical interventions come close to child abuse. A better way to help these children: with devoted parenting.

At the heart of the problem is confusion over the nature of the transgendered. "Sex change" is biologically impossible. People who undergo sex-reassignment surgery do not change from men to women or vice versa. Rather, they become feminized men or masculinized women. Claiming that

this is civil-rights matter and encouraging surgical intervention is in reality to collaborate with and promote a mental disorder. —*The Wall Street Journal*, June 12, 2014,

[http://online.wsj.com/articles/paul-mchugh-transgender-surgery-isnt-the-solution-1402615120]

Dr. McHugh, former psychiatrist in chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital, is the author of "Try to Remember: Psychiatry's Clash Over Meaning, Memory, and Mind" (Dana Press, 2008). You may reach Dr. McHugh through THE JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY, 600 N Wolfe St Suite 113, Baltimore, MD 21287.

DEVIATIONS FROM THE TRUTH

Roelf L. Ruffner, Sr.

Not Bible Baptism

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col.2:12).

Recently Pope Francis visited South Korea where he "baptized" (One news report said "immersed.") a Korean man. A news photo showed that the Pope poured a little water on his head from a glass vessel.

What the Pope did is not Bible baptism but "effusion" or pouring. The Greek work "*baptisma*" in the Bible means "the process of immersion, submersion and emergence" (*Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*). Some translators of the New Testament from ancient Greek to English chose to anglicize the word and put "baptism" for the more correct term "immersion."

In the early New Testament church baptism was solely by immersion. **"And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him"** (Acts 8:38; Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:12). It was not until many years later that men began to depart from the New Testament teaching on the mode of baptism. They substituted sprinkling and pouring for immersion. This was to accommodate infants and the infirm (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Why be immersed?

1. It is a command of Jesus Christ one must do in order to be saved from their sins (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).

2. Immersion enables one to come in contact with the blood of Christ so that their sins might be remitted (Acts 2:38, 22:16; Rom. 6:4-6; Col. 2:12).

3. Immersion insures that God adds one to Christ's body—the church (Acts 2:41,47).

4. When one obeys the gospel (believe, repent, confess, immersed) one is **"born again"** (John 3:3,5).

Have you been immersed?

[http://www.patheos.com/blogs/deaconsbench/2014/08/pope-baptizes-father-of-korean-ferry-disaster-victim-and-the-man-takes-the-name-francis/ as of August 20, 2014]

A Patch of Locoweed

Speaking of false teachers who had no love of the Truth Paul wrote, **"For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness"** (2 The. 2:11,12). I thought about this verse and others describing the shamefulness and spiritual terrorism of those who openly fellowship and even promote false teachers. A case in point is the once faithful but now apostate Lipscomb University (LU).

As they have for many years the LU's Hazelip School of Theology is having their Biblical Preaching Seminar in October. And once again they are having a denominational "scholar" speak, Dr. Terence Fretheim, "Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota." Imagine that, a retired denominationalist preaching to others about preaching on the same premises where faithful gospel preachers once filled the ears of their audience with the Truth (John 8:31-32). Perhaps he will explain how the false doctrine of baptism by sprinkling, which Lutherans hold to, has as much sin cleansing qualities as a cold shower in the bath tub.

They do have a few apostate "brethren" to balance things out. One is "Dr." Leonard Allen, new Dean of LU's College of Bible & Ministry. For years he polluted young minds at Abilene Christian University as well as writing several liberal books degrading the churches of Christ.

In southeastern New Mexico, where I grew up, ranchers often complained about their cattle getting into a patch of locoweed and proceeding to go "loco" or crazy. This is precisely what LU is doing spiritually (2 Tim. 4:3,4). It is tending a patch of locoweed to the detriment of the body of Christ. [https://blu178.mail.live.com/?tid=cmBQcQw6oz5BGetQAjfeSZZg2&fid=flinbox as of September 12, 2014]

Children of Disobedience

Roelf L. Ruffner*

"And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (1 Kings 18:21).

These words ring true down through the ages. They are as spiritually applicable today as they were when originally inspired by the Holy Spirit almost 3,000 years ago. A case in point is my alma mater—Abilene Christian University (ACU) in Abilene, Texas. In the recent issue of the alumni magazine *ACU TODAY* there is an interview of U.S. Congresswoman Janie Hahn ('74), Democrat of California. In the interview she said, "I was born and raised in the Churches of Christ, and faith has always been a strong part of my life, but my time at ACU is where I began to own my faith and not just 'borrow it' from my parents."

The interview goes on to note that Rep. Hahn took part in a "Forum of Civil Discourse and Christian Faith" in September 2012 hosted by ACU, together with Rep. Ted Poe ('70), Republican of Texas. Hahn adds, "I also regularly enjoy attending churches on Sunday to fellowship with my brothers and sisters."

I did some research on Rep. Hahn. Besides being a member of the Church of Christ, she is also a very liberal Democrat. She "strongly favors" abortion and same-sex marriage, among other things. In other words she supports the murder of unborn babies (Ex. 20:13; Rom.13:9) and the antithesis of God ordained natural marriage—the legally recognized union of two sodomites or two lesbians (Mat. 19:4-6; Rom. 1:26-27). If I had a moment with Rep. Hahn, I would show her these verses (And others!) and warn her that her soul is in jeopardy because of her positions (cf. Acts 8:22-23).

Yet the question must be posed why an institution like ACU, founded by men who believed what the Bible says concerning the sanctity of human life and natural marriage, would fellowship such an erring politician, a sister or not? Yes, I know the old, tired refrain, "But we are not the church but a college." But they still boast that they are a "Christian" university. No Christian should fellowship those with such filthy hands, politically or spiritually. "**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"** (Eph. 5:11).

This is the nature of the spiritual beast called compromise. As you compromise it becomes like a snowball rolling downhill. First you compromise over "small" things such as fellowship but the compromise snowball soon descends to ethical and moral issues such as the sanctity of human life and natural marriage. ACU over the last generation has become the epitome of the spiritual digression in the Lord's body. By its fellowship of Rep. Hahn, it shows the depths of that digression. It is no longer "halting" or hopping between soundness and digression. It is wholly apostate.

> **Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!** (Isa. 5:20, 21).

[http://issuu.com/abilenechristian/docs/acu_today_spring-summer_2014/1 as of September 29, 2014]

[http://ballotpedia.org/Janice_Hahn as of September 28, 2014]

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"HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICT TODAY?" (A REVIEW, PART 1)

Gary W. Summers

Preliminary

At Freed-Hardeman University's 2014 lectureship, on Monday afternoon, material was presented relating to the topic, "How Does the Holy Spirit Convict Today?" Once the doctrine taught in this lecture is examined, it will be apparent that this is not your father's and especially not your grandfather's Freed-Hardeman lectures.

The speaker was Jonathan Jones, who grew up in Tennessee and preaches at Maryville. Although his views may not reflect all of the professors and instructors at FHU, he does have a Bachelor's from there, as well as a Master of Ministry and Master of Divinity. It would not be unreasonable to think that his thinking on this subject may have come, in part, from the university. He was introduced as a "good friend, brother, and former student" by one of the members of the faculty, and in his opening remarks, brother Jones said that "the lectureship committee has entrusted to me this topic…." He said that the primary lesson text was 1 Thessalonians 1:5, but then added that he had "also been asked to look some at chapter 4, and verse number 8." All of these clues seem to indicate that at least some of the faculty are in agreement with him.

If so, that is unfortunate because his position is both false and therefore dangerous. Past knowledgeable speakers such as Guy N. Woods and Gus Nichols would have opposed mightily the contents of this lecture, but we are living in a different era when few care if lines of demarcation are drawn between truth and error. Many have shown themselves willing to fellowship anything (nearly) that is taught. One can only wonder how long it will be before more and more people accept the Max King A.D. 70 doctrine, Pre-millennialism, and Pentecostalism in the church. Many

have already opted for false worship practices, such as instrumental music and hand clapping. Instead of marking false teachers, many brethren now mark those who oppose false teaching!

Sorting Out Holy Spirit Passages

Studying the Holy Spirit often proves a difficult challenge because some fail to keep in mind two key principles. One is that of agency, which was discussed previously (June 1, 2014). Simply put, the Holy Spirit may be said to do something when He actually accomplished the goal through His Word. For example, are people convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit? John 16:8 says that He would convict the world of sin. On the Day of Pentecost, many were convicted of sin through the message Peter preached which was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Jones recognized this principle and used the example himself.

A literary device is also used in the Scriptures which may confuse some Bible students. When Jesus told His disciples to drink the cup (1 Cor. 11:25), He was using metonymy—in this instance the cup stands for the contents of the cup. Many times the Holy Spirit stands for something that the Holy Spirit gives, such as spiritual gifts. Simon saw, for example, that when Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritans, they received **"the Holy Spirit"** (Acts 8:14-19). In fact, he offered to buy that ability. But when Peter and John laid their hands on the brethren, what did they receive? Although the text does not say specifically, when Paul did the same things in Acts 19, the twelve newly-baptized souls received the spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues and prophecy (1-6). The Holy Spirit represents that which He gives.

What the Holy Spirit gives might not even be miraculous. In Matthew 7:11, Jesus says if evil human beings give good gifts to their children, how much more will the heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him. On another occasion the Lord made the same point, but in place of good things, He said the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). The Holy Spirit once again represents what it is that He gives.

1 Thessalonians 1:5

Brother Jones began by quoting the words of an old hymn:

I know not how the Spirit moves,
Convincing men of sin,
Revealing Jesus through the Word,
Creating faith in Him.

The speaker would have done well to stick with the words of the song, but he thought he could answer the question that the songwriter did not know, and he sets about doing so on this "vital topic and one of contemporary concern." After urging that all his listeners be students of the Bible and compare his teaching with the Scriptures (an offer herein accepted), he began with an examination of the text. Interestingly, however, he did not make any comments whatsoever about the passage prior to verse 5, and he did not actually finish the verse under consideration. His analysis stopped at **"with much assurance."** The entire verse is presented below: **"For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake** "(1 The. 1:5, *NKJ*).

Before giving attention to his speech, we ought to take the time to analyze the background and the verse. When Paul went to Thessalonica, he found a synagogue of Jews there, and as was his usual custom, he went in **"and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures"** (Acts 17:2). That included **"explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead."** Then Paul said: **"This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ"** (Acts 17:3).

In Acts 17:1-10, no miracles are named or even hinted at. The only word that might be thought to refer to the miraculous is in Acts 17:3, but the word translated "demonstrated" there basically means "to set forth" and is not used to describe the working of miracles. Furthermore, when Paul went to Berea, Luke likewise makes no mention of Divine demonstrations in that locale. He does, however, contrast the Jews' attitudes in the two cities. Those in Berea were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica because they "searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether" the things Paul was preaching were so.

Furthermore, no mention is made of miracles used in Thessalonica in 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 as Paul describes his entrance into the city. Do these observations mean that Paul performed no miracles in this city? No. He may have imparted some spiritual gifts before he left, or someone else might have. He tells the brethren not to despise prophecies (5:20). The point is that Luke emphasized the teaching, explaining, and the setting forth of the gospel in Acts. Then, just as now, people could only be saved by preaching.

But, then, what did Paul mean when he wrote of the gospel coming in power and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance? Of course, he could have referred to the miraculous. McKnight says that the power refers to the miracles and signs that Paul wrought while the Holy Spirit might refer to some of the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit that Paul imparted, such as speaking in tongues or prophecies (402). Certainly, other interpretations could be suggested, but this one seems reasonable and fits with other passages of Scripture.

What about the full assurance? This phrase means that the brethren in Thessalonica were fully persuaded of the message. McKnight comments that the Greek word "denotes the carrying of a ship forward, with her sails spread and filled with the wind" (402). Paul set forth three reasons for the full assurance on the part of the Thessalonians.

1. The gospel message itself, as noted in Acts 17. Paul does not discount the reasoning that he did in proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ any more than Peter would decry the logic he used on the Day of Pentecost. Paul is simply saying that logic was not all he had used to convince them of the truth.

2. The use of the miraculous, when Paul showed the signs of an apostle and imparted the miraculous gifts of the Spirit to them.

3. Paul's example (and that of those with him). They could believe the message because of the behavior on the part of Paul and the other workers in their presence. Paul elaborates on this subject just a few verses later in 2:1-12. The Thessalonians in turn became examples to others (1:7).

Brother Jones, however, went beyond what is stated in the text. He says that "it was not just the words spoken that were instrumental in the conversions of these people; there were other things at work." If by those words he was meaning what was said

above in point 2, we would be in agreement, but he went beyond those parameters to make an unwarranted assumption. Although he acknowledged that miraculous signs often accompanied the message to confirm its validity, he decided that something more was involved. For whatever reason, he decided to conclude: "So Paul indicates in our text that the Holy Spirit Himself convicts the hearts of unbelievers. These were unbelievers that are now converted to Christ. He convicts their hearts in conjunction with but in addition to the words that are spoken."

What does that statement mean, exactly? And who else has been saying similar words (Mac Deaver is a hint)? First, how does the Holy Spirit convict apart from the Word? The only other way taught in the Bible is through providence—through circumstance and situations. The speaker does allow for that possibility elsewhere, but he is advocating something else here—a direct action of the Holy Spirit.

The following words are absolutely chilling:

> Conversion does not occur with the interaction of cold words on a page. Nor does transformation of life happen through intellectual exercise alone…. The Holy Spirit's power is working behind the Spirit's Word. The power of God and the Holy Spirit works beyond mere human words to bring about faith.

Can someone explain what Jonathan Jones means by these words? In the first place, when Peter spoke on Pentecost or Paul reasoned in the synagogue, there were no words on a page. Were they cold words from chilly lips? In fairness to the lecturer, he cited Hebrews 4:12 elsewhere and believes in the power of the Word, but why then does he seem to denigrate the Scriptures at other times—this being one of them.

The Holy Spirit's power is working behind the Holy Spirit's Word? The Spirit works through His Word—not behind it, beside it, or apart from it. Using the word *cold* to apply to the words one reads in the Bible seems an insult to the Author. How does the Spirit work beyond human words (and providence)? At this juncture, Jones quotes from a Puritan named William Law:

> Read whatever chapter of Scripture you will, and be ever so delighted with it—yet it will leave you as poor, as empty and unchanged as it found you unless it has turned you wholly and solely to the Spirit of God and brought you into full union with and dependence upon Him.

The speaker later on defines Calvinism and repudiates its major tenets; so why does he quote a Puritan who was a Calvinist? Is Law not saying, essentially, that the Bible is a dead letter and that the cold words on the page will not do anyone any good unless the Spirit energizes it or illuminates it? If Law is not saying that, what does he mean? Both he and Jones are advocating that the Spirit does something more than just having inspired the Scriptures. Both are wrong. An atheist could open the Bible and profit from it if he followed what it said.

Jones adds: "The Holy Spirit of God is working in the human heart to bring conviction and conversion." Notice that his statement eliminates any possibility of him talking about the Holy Spirit's role in providence. He stated unequivocally that the Holy Spirit is working in the human heart to bring conviction and conversion. He does not say that this work is accomplished through the Word (in this section).

He keeps talking about other options: "The Holy Spirit's power is working behind the Spirit's Word. The power of God and the Holy Spirit works beyond mere human words to bring about faith."

What is the Spirit doing, pray tell, behind His Word? The speaker then quotes from H. Leo Boles, as if Boles would agree with him.

> Let it be understood now that since the church was established, there has never been a genuine case of conversion that was not begun, carried on, and consummated by the Holy Spirit (*The Holy Spirit* 195).

Unlike Jones, Boles is speaking of the Holy Spirit as being responsible for all conversions, but in his explanation of HOW the Holy Spirit operates in conversion, Boles wrote the following:

> One of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to convert sinners. How does he [sic] do this? It has been observed that the Holy Spirit in the redemption of man uses the truth of God. The Holy Spirit and the word of God are never separate in conversion and sanctification. The instrumentality of truth in conversion is a fact abundantly substantiated in the New Testament. The instrumentality of truth in conversion is invariable; the same truth is used in every conversion by the Holy Spirit. This is the same that all are converted by the Holy Spirit with the same instrumentality of truth, and the same truth used by the Holy Spirit in every conversion. While there is no conversion without the Holy Spirit, there is no operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion independent of God's word (197-98).

Does brother Boles sound like a preacher who would agree with Jones when he alleges: "The Holy Spirit's power is working behind the Holy Spirit's Word"? Would he have agreed that "the Holy Spirit works beyond mere human words to bring about faith"? To ask the question in light of Bole's own words is to answer it.

Jones seems to want something more than the Word (those cold words on a page) and more than providence. As he said just before getting to his explanation of 1 Thessalonians 1:5,

> Paul came to the city of Thessalonica, preaching a powerful message. And there was Divine power behind those words—a Divine power that worked in the hearts of people to bring about spiritual transformation.

What is this Divine power that convicts hearts in conjunction with but in addition to the words that are spoken? How are we to understand what the Holy Spirit does that is separate from the Word? Perhaps those who have such confidence in brother Jones at Freed-Hardeman University should ask him for further clarification.

We understand that the Holy Spirit operates through providence and through His Word, but we do not understand how He acts behind His Word—unless it involves some kind of direct operation of the Holy Spirit, which would open the door to Pentecostalism. If this lecture is not opening that door, what door is it opening?

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A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
~Psalms 84:10

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Denton area–Northpoint Church of Christ, 4224 N. I-35 (Greenway Plaza, just north of Cracker Barrel). Mailing address: 4224 N. I-35, Denton, TX 76207. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Website: www.northpointcoc.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 1:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: (940) 387-1429; dubmcclish@gmail.com.

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

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