

The Watchman

O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me (Ezekiel 33:7).

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“Mainstream” Periodicals

Jerry C. Brewer

J.S. Lamar, who authored Isaac Errett’s biography, explained the “need” for a mainstream periodical of his day—*The Christian Standard*.

There were several weeklies, also, among them the ‘Review’ and ‘Gospel Advocate,’ but these were not satisfactory. They were regarded as being narrow in their views and in many respects, hurtful rather than helpful to the great cause which they assumed to represent. I would say nothing here derogatory of the editors of these papers. They represented and fostered that unfortunate type of discipleship...a type with which the leading minds among the brotherhood could have no sympathy. We may credit these writers with sincerity and honesty, but we can not read many of their productions without feeling that we are breathing an unwholesome religious atmosphere. They seem to infuse an unlovely and earth-born spirit, which they clothe, nevertheless, in the garb of the divine letter, and enforce with cold, legalistic and crushing power. The great truth for whose defense the Disciples are set, demanded a wiser, sweeter, better advocacy—an advocacy that should exhibit the apostolic *spirit* as well as the apostolic *letter* [all emph. J. S. Lamar] (West 2:29, 30).

Objections to the *Gospel Advocate* and the *American Christian Review* as unsatisfactory and “narrow in their views” is the same opinion that “leading minds among the brotherhood” in the mainstream have entertained of certain periodicals in our time. The purpose of the *Standard* was to promote the liberal, mainstream, progressivism of Errett, Lamar, and their disciples in a movement to transform the church into a denomination.

Thus Lamar assures the reader that the *Christian Standard* was needed because the *Gospel Advocate* and the *American Christian Review* were edited by men of “unlovely and earth-born spirits” who were cold, and legalistic. Now the fiction in this is easily discernible. Plans for starting the *Standard* were under way by 1864. The *Gospel Advocate* had appeared as a small, monthly paper from 1855 to 1861, having ceased because of the war. The first issue of the *Advocate* as a weekly did not appear until January, 1866. In April that year Isaac Errett wrote to David Lipscomb requesting back copies of the *Advocate* saying he had not yet seen an issue of it. Yet this paper which Errett had not seen was the occasion for starting the *Standard*. To state that brethren were influenced to start the *Standard* because of the “earth-born spirit” of the *Advocate* but betrays the prejudice Lamar felt and shows the undying contempt in which he held the *Advocate*...The *American Christian Review* was being printed as a weekly before this time by Ben Franklin. It was widely received; indeed, it was the most popular paper in the brotherhood, and it was this fact that worried an element of prominent men in the brotherhood. Franklin, on almost all issues before the church, stood opposed to Errett, Pendleton, and preachers of kindred thought. The editor of the *Review*, they considered “narrow” and “bigoted.” Knowing Franklin’s popularity with the majority of the brethren, it was their constant fear that Franklin’s “narrowness” would fasten itself upon the brotherhood and prevent the restoration movement from following the more “liberal” “progressive” lines. No person can go back to a study of this period and fail to see that the chief reason for the establishment of the *Christian Standard* was to kill the *Review*, and lead the brotherhood away from Franklin’s influence into these more liberal channels (Ibid., 30).

Isaac Errett and his fawning coterie were the liberal progressive mainstream in 1864. They held nothing but contempt for Lipscomb’s and Franklin’s unyielding devotion to Bible authority and Errett was determined to kill their opposition to his liberalism through the pages of his new periodical.

Errett's effort to silence his opposition in 1864 has come full circle, repeating itself in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Liberal/mainstream forces forever changed the face of two formerly sound Gospel papers by removing their editors. Errett failed to kill the *Review* or the *Advocate* but mainstream influences succeeded in transforming two periodicals into their own in 1985 and 2005, effectively killing their editorial opposition to mainstream innovations, doctrines, and the Social Gospel.

"The Old Reliable"

For 130 years, *The Gospel Advocate* had been an effective medium opposing liberal/progressive error in the church. Tolbert Fanning founded the paper in 1855 with David Lipscomb's older brother, William, as co-editor. In 1861 publication was suspended during The War Between the States, then resumed in 1866. Upon resuming publication, Fanning named David Lipscomb as co-editor, an arrangement that continued until 1867 when Lipscomb became the *Advocate's* editor.

From the outset, Fanning and his co-editors opposed the missionary society. When Fanning's mantle fell on David Lipscomb, he continued vigorous opposition to both mechanical instruments and the society until he died in 1918. His defense of the one faith in the *Advocate*, and that of his succeeding editors, earned it the name, "The Old Reliable" among the faithful. Among the editors who followed Lipscomb were Foy E. Wallace, Jr., John T. Hinds, H. Leo Boles, B.C. Goodpasture, and Guy N. Woods.

When B.C. Goodpasture died in 1977, *Advocate* owner David L. McQuiddy named J. Roy Vaughan as interim editor. Under Goodpasture, Guy N. Woods had written a column on Biblical Criticism. Under Vaughan, that column ended and Woods began writing a weekly column entitled, "Questions Answered."

Within six months of Vaughan's appointment as interim editor, McQuiddy announced that Ira North would be the paper's new editor. North requested that Guy N. Woods be named Associate Editor and McQuiddy agreed to his request. Woods served in that capacity until December, 1981 when North resigned and Woods was appointed editor in January, 1982.

Historically, *Advocate* editors had opposed false doctrines and practices that lacked Scriptural authority. Lipscomb and Fanning opposed the instrument and the missionary society in the 1800s. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. opposed premillennialism in the 1930s. B.C. Goodpasture opposed anti doctrines that arose in the 1950s, and Guy N. Woods fought the liberal spirit of compromise with the Christian Church in the 1980s.

The *Advocate* experienced tremendous growth in both revenue and circulation during Woods' tenure as co-editor and editor. ...the magazine reached an all time high subscription base with there being 40,000 who were subscribing to its pages. Guy was also in charge of advertising, which reached about \$100,000 per year, and for the first time in the history of the paper it was almost breaking even (Davidson, 175).

During Woods' editorship, a "Restoration Summit" was proposed by Alan Cloyd and Don DeWalt, prominent leaders in Conservative Christian Churches. Cloyd was editor of *Restoration Leadership Quarterly* and DeWalt was publisher of *One Body*. The meeting was to be held Aug. 7-9, 1984 on the campus of Ozark Bible College in Joplin, Mo., for the purpose of exploring the possibility of "unity" between that denomination and churches of Christ. Among invited participants were Marvin Phillips, Rubel Shelly, Robert Hooper, Calvin Warpula, and Reuel Lemmons—all rank liberals from mainstream churches of Christ. Woods turned his attention to the Joplin affair and wrote,

...a strong editorial showing scriptural opposition of the Joplin Unity Meeting. In the same issue he started a reprint of brother H. Leo Boles' speech which was originally presented at a unity meeting in Indianapolis, Ind. on May 3, 1939 (Ibid.).

At the request of Garland Elkins in Memphis, the elders of the church in Obion, Tenn. agreed to find a person to deliver 3,000 reprints of Boles' speech in tract form to the Joplin meeting (Davidson, 176). That was done and the tracts were delivered. "However, the tracts enraged Alan Cloyd who was chairing the Joplin Unity meeting, and they were taken up and disposed of" (Ibid.).

Those in charge of the "Summit" allowed the distribution of packets of material by the long-time advocate of ecumenism, Carl Ketcherside, urging fellowship compromises, but

disallowed the same privilege for an appropriate tract by H. Leo Boles. The tract contained Boles' speech delivered almost fifty years before at a similar conference. In it he correctly emphasized to the Christian Church folk that they knew where they left the Lord's church and they knew where to find us—right where we were when they left us (and the Truth). At the Forum's close, Alan Cloyd asked the men to go home and try to arrange "mini-summits" in their local areas (again, with fellowship issues ignored). He predicted that some (whom he called "knuckleheads") would not understand and agree with their lofty plans and motives. He was right; many of us strongly disagreed (McClish, www.thescripture-cache.com).

Under the date of Sept. 5, 1984, Guy wrote to Alan Cloyd asking if, indeed, the tracts were removed and burned or otherwise destroyed. Cloyd said that he did indeed remove the tracts in question and how the tracts were uninvited materials and were not appreciated. He opined that Boles' language was abusive, crude, and was not in the best interest of the unity forum. Guy said editorially that the promoters of the Joplin meeting did the cause of Christ grave disservice in suppressing the materials brother Boles assembled and delivered in 1939 (Davidson, 176, 177).

Guy N. Woods was the **last editor** of "The Old Reliable." It would never again be called that by the faithful. The *Advocate* had been sold and new owner, Neil Anderson, fired Woods and installed Furman Kearley as editor for the July 18, 1985 issue.

Furman Kearley...was in sympathy with the unity movement and had a plan in mind. He opined how the Lord's church could ease those from the First Christian Church into our classrooms and afterward ease them into our pulpits...Guy knew that the unity meeting would produce compromise. He was reared knowing that a one-inch board is to be one inch and did not know what the word "compromise" meant when it came to his stand for the truth...Soon under the new editor the paper began drifting and lost much of the luster and respect that it had commanded through its illustrious history (Davidson, 178, 179).

Ten years later, Wayne Coats wrote a scathing indictment of the *Advocate's* new mainstream posture under Anderson after brother Woods' departure:

Under date of July 7, 1995, brother Neil W. Anderson (President/Publisher of the *Gospel Advocate*) sent a batch of materials by mail in which he announced a gala affair celebrating "140 years of service to churches of Christ," by the *Gospel Advocate*. Brother Anderson wrote that William Lipscomb and Tolbert Fanning founded the Gospel Advocate "...with the hope of rendering some good service in the cause of truth."

When the *Gospel Advocate* began in 1855, liberalism was on the rampage. The Missionary Society had been organized in 1849. A public announcement of mechanical instruments of music being used in worship was made in 1851. Congregations were being divided. Discord, strife, ill-will and all the attendant evil results were widespread. Digression was marching with but few dissenting voices. Please note carefully where Brother Tolbert Fanning wrote in October, 1855, "determined by the help of the Lord, to give the subject of co-operation a thorough examination." Why be so thorough? The Missionary Society was operating as a gangrene and cancerous growth. Brethren Lipscomb and Fanning did not cower or compromise with the false teachers of their day. There were issues, problems, troubles and disturbances to be addressed and the reader of those early issues of the Gospel Advocate will clearly see that brethren Fanning and Lipscomb were not just trying to render good service, but they were doing battle with the enemies of the church.

For over a century the Gospel Advocate was in the forefront as it stood against the purveyors of error. Such issues as fellowship with the digressives, premillennialism, church cooperation and other threats to the unity of God's people have been given "a thorough examination."

...What has been the policy of the *Gospel Advocate* regarding the troubles, divisions and discord which has resulted from all the liberalism brought into congregations within recent years? It is a well known fact, indisputable, undeniable and unanswerable that the present *Gospel Advocate* has absolutely encouraged liberalism rather than giving it a "thorough examination."

...When Andre Resner wrote his infamous article about Christmas at Matthew's House which appeared in *Wineskins*, many papers, bulletins and articles were published replying to Resner. Those who have more influence with brother Anderson than I should try to get him to inform his readers why a strong reply to the Resner article was not permitted to appear in the *Gospel Advocate*.

I see no evidence that the *Gospel Advocate* will take a firm stand against anything (2).

Brother Woods had few equals in devotion to the faith and his readiness to defend it. It was his fidelity to Christ that landed him in J.S Lamar's category of brethren who breathed "an un-wholesome religious atmosphere" and infused "an unlovely and earth-born spirit."

A faithful soldier of the cross, Guy N. Woods, was sacrificed on the altar of compromise and *The Gospel Advocate* entered the mainstream as another of its mouthpieces. The same fate would befall another periodical and its editor 20 years later.

The Gospel Journal

What has been is that which shall be. The same campaign to silence another editor was conducted by mainstream churches and preachers in 2005. Their tactic was to demonize and assassinate his character, much as Errett demonized Lipscomb and Franklin.

The target this time was Dub McClish, editor of *The Gospel Journal (TGJ)*, and his associate editor David Watson. *TGJ*, a monthly publication, had debuted Jan. 1, 2000. It was incorporated in Texas as a non-profit entity with the following board of directors: Chairman of the Board, Curtis Cates; Vice President, Joseph Meador; Secretary, Michael Hatcher; Business Manager, Kenneth Ratcliff; and Member-at-Large, Tommy Hicks.

A concise statement of *Editorial Aims* appeared in the Premiere Edition of the paper:

Our Editorial Aims

- Exalt the Biblical Godhead as mankind's only lawful, ultimate Head
- Exalt the Bible as the only inerrant, inspired revelation from God
- Advance that revealed Truth and thus the borders of the one church
- Positively set forth the New Testament pattern for the church of Christ
- Oppose and expose both doctrinal and practical error from all quarters
- Serve as a strong counter-voice to the change agent forces in the church
- Provide a source of edification for all, at every level of spiritual maturity
- Serve as a major voice for spiritual Truth and Biblical righteousness
- Present all of the above to the reader each month in an attractive package (*TGJ*, Jan. 1, 2000).

For five and a half years *TGJ* fulfilled those aims under its capable editor, Dub McClish. It was not the intent of *TGJ* to deal with brotherhood issues, but it did not ignore those that threatened the doctrinal purity of New Testament Christianity. McClish and its writers faithfully fulfilled their editorial aims, including opposing and exposing "both doctrinal and practical error."

True to that aim, *TGJ* carried an expose' of Dave Miller's error on Elder R/R in the Oct., 2002 issue. The article was authored by Marvin L. Weir, and approved for publication by a board member (as were all articles in each issue). Brother Weir's article came 12 years **after** Miller had first promoted Elder R/R at Brown Trail in 1990 at which time brethren had reacted adversely to it. Their reaction is shown in the following timeline:

1. That same year (1990), brethren Garland Elkins, Robert Taylor, Bill Jackson, Terry Varner, Dub McClish, and others sent letters to Goebel Music stating Brown Trail's Elder R/R had no Scriptural authority.
2. In 1996, Michael Hatcher and David Brown spoke on the "Truth in Love" Lectureship and decided not to speak on any lectureship in which Miller also appeared.
3. In 1997, Dub McClish dealt with Miller's error in his chapter in the Bellview Lectureship book.
4. In 2002, *TGJ*'s October issue carried Marvin Weir's article exposing Miller.
5. In 2002, several letters were sent to Bert Thompson, executive director of *Apologetics Press (AP)*, protesting his hiring of Dave Miller, and cutting off support for *AP*.
6. In 2003, David B. Smith refused to speak with Miller at Greer, SC until Miller was removed.
7. In 2003, Michael Hatcher, editor of *Defender* reprinted McClish's chapter on Elder R/R from the 1997 Bellview Lectureship.
8. In 2004, David Brown and Dub McClish refused to speak on the lectureship at Visalia, Calif.

until Dave Miller was removed from it.

9. In 2004, David Brown refused to speak on the Spiritual Sword Lectureship because Miller was one of the speakers.

10. In Feb., 2005, Dub McClish wrote to Barry Gilreath, Sr., refusing to run ads from the *Gospel Broadcasting Network* because they used Dave Miller.

For **15 years**, opposition to Miller's doctrines was approved by *TGJ's* board (and many others) who abruptly joined forces in 2005 to **silence** Dub McClish and David Watson.

What brought about their sudden reversal? It began with Bert Thompson's termination as Executive Director of *AP* on May 24, 2005—news of which appeared in the liberal mainstream publication, *The Christian Chronicle*:

Longtime director of Apologetics Press fired

By Bobby Ross Jr.

Apologetics Press, the Montgomery, Ala.-based church organization that has waged a quarter-century battle against atheism and the theory of evolution, has fired its longtime director, Bert Thompson, amid allegations of sexual misconduct.

Interim executive director Dave Miller said the organization, which has a \$1 million annual budget, intends to proceed "undaunted by Satan."

"We are deeply grateful for Dr. Thompson's longstanding warfare against the sinister doctrine of evolution, with his eloquent affirmation of the biblical account of Creation," Miller wrote in an open letter to Apologetics Press supporters.

"Truth is truth, even if those who defend it eventually succumb to personal sin," Miller wrote.

In a separate letter, elders of the Palm Beach Lakes church, West Palm Beach, Fla., urged friends of Apologetics Press to stand behind the organization. That congregation had overseen Thompson and Apologetics Press for 18 months and will maintain an advisory role.

"We implore you to increase your financial and moral support to A.P. for the next two years then make an evaluation," the elders wrote. "We are confident the Lord will bring unparalleled results through the new leadership, its renewed focus and its amazingly talented staff." amazingly talented staff."

The board of Apologetics Press fired Thompson, 55, its executive director for 26 years, at a May 24 meeting.

Among those who attended were his wife, Rhonda, elders from supporting congregations and his minister, Frank Chesser of the Panama Street church, Montgomery. Chesser declined an interview request.

Miller said the confrontation followed an investigation by Apologetics Press staff members and other interested individuals.

"We didn't lay anything out on the table," Miller said, referring to specific instances of wrongdoing. "We just said, 'We now have knowledge of multiple incidents involving a number of individuals.'"

At that time, Thompson confessed his sins and asked for forgiveness, according to those present. At his church the next night, he responded to the invitation and again asked for forgiveness.

Church Member Says He's a Victim

A 36-year-old church member, who grew up in Alabama, said he was among alleged victims who gave statements to the investigators.

The member, who preferred not to be identified publicly, told the *Chronicle* that Thompson started sending him cards and letters when he was 13, then pressed him to go out to dinner after he turned 16, the legal age of consent in Alabama.

At the meal, Thompson invited the teen to go home with him and watch a movie, the member said. Thompson's family was not home, and the member said Thompson lured him to a bedroom, disrobed and touched him inappropriately. The member said he later met two other young men who told of similar experiences with Thompson.

The member voiced concerns that church leaders who gathered evidence against Thompson wanted to keep the accusations quiet.

He said one minister told him, "He didn't molest Methodists. He didn't molest Baptists. He

didn't molest atheists. And we intend to keep it in the church." (The minister who allegedly made that statement declined to comment.)

But the member said the accusations needed to be made public to allow more victims to come forward.

"We don't know if he just molested church of Christ kids," he said. "This guy was all over the country."

In an "Open Letter to the Brotherhood" dated May 25, Thompson wrote, "For some time now, I have been struggling with some personal sins in my life, and as a result it was obvious ... that I no longer was the best choice to lead the work forward for the next quarter of a century."

When contacted by the Chronicle about the firing, Thompson referred all questions to Apologetics Press. "That's something between them and me, and it's a very personal matter," he said, and declined to comment further. Rhonda Thompson, his wife of 33 years, said the couple is divorcing. "You can safely say we're devastated," she said.

But she said she remains supportive of Apologetics Press, describing its work as "vital to the church, and I beg the brotherhood to continue to support it."

Grand Jury Declined to Bring Charges

The recently uncovered accusations were not the first. A year and a half ago, no charges were brought after a grand jury in Montgomery County heard accusations of inappropriate sexual contact by Thompson with a 17-year-old boy, Miller said.

While that case ended with no legal action, the Eastern Meadows church, Montgomery, withdrew as the overseeing congregation for Apologetics Press. The Thompsons, the Millers and three other families associated with Apologetics Press left that congregation, Miller said.

But the Eastern Meadows church continued to contribute "a fairly large sum of money" to Apologetics Press, Miller said.

"We had information about the allegations," said Ted Norton, an Eastern Meadows elder. "We were not in a position to know whether they were true or not. We as individuals had our own personal feelings, but we did not have evidence so to speak..." (*The Christian Chronicle* June 21, 2005).

A week after Thompson was terminated, the following open letter was mailed:

PALM BEACH LAKES CHURCH OF CHRIST
4067 Leo Lane West Palm Beach, Florida 33410
Phone: 561-848-1111 Fax: 561-848-1198
Website: www.pblcoc.org
E-mail: office@pblcoc.org

Open Letter to Contributors and Friends of Apologetics Press – May 31, 2005

For the past eighteen months, the eldership of the Palm Beach Lakes church of Christ has overseen the work of Dr. Bert Thompson and Apologetics Press. With great sorrow, on May 24, 2005, this eldership supported the Board of Directors when they terminated Dr. Bert's association with A.P. Bert has struggled with long-term, deep-seated personal sins in his life which made this action necessary. Happily, on that day, he confessed his sins and asked his employees and the PBL elders for their forgiveness. The next evening, Wednesday, May 25, at the Panama Street church of Christ where he is a member, Dr. Bert responded to the Lord's invitation and publicly asked for the forgiveness of his brothers and sisters in Christ.

The enemies of Bert Thompson, in and out of the kingdom, will rejoice and find comfort in this terrible tragedy. Some will gloat, rejoicing in iniquity not in truth (1 Cor. 13:6), taking delight in the adversity of a brother and not being concerned for souls (including Bert's). Our hearts will sorrow over this ensuing tragedy as well, since the cause of Christ will not be enhanced by such behavior. We need to rejoice over repentance, not sin (James 5:19-20).

The action taken by the Board made it unwise for the A.P. staff to implement the intern program without Bert; plus anticipated financial grants were not received so the program was canceled. We know this was a devastating blow to eighteen outstanding young men, ready for a rewarding summer, and we are sorry it was necessary to cancel at the last minute.

The Board also recognized and has encouraged A.P. to focus on its core mission, defending the Christian faith with a relentless pursuit of excellence, which has become a hallmark at A.P. The PBL elders plan to work with the Board in an advisory capacity, provide strength

and counsel to Bert and to continue overseeing this amazing, effective organization.

The healing process has already begun. The Board named Dr. Dave Miller as interim Executive Director and we have every confidence in his spiritual foundation, talent and leadership ability. Before leaving, Dr. Bert reminded the staff that he had not organized A.P. as a “one man show” but built it so it could be passed on and continue to thrive.

You can help. We implore you to increase your financial and moral support to A.P. for the next two years then make an evaluation. We are confident the Lord will bring unparalleled results through the new leadership, its renewed focus and the amazingly talented staff.

Most importantly, will you begin right now to pray earnestly for Dr. Bert as he works to rebuild trust, for his family’s relief from their devastation, for the healing of the interns and for the staff to take A.P. to unparalleled heights of excellence?

Because of Him, the elders

Stanley C. Bronson

Donald G. Dodd

Joe D. Holland

Jerry D. Hopkins

Daniel L. McLeod

Greg L. Morris

Fifteen years of **documenting** and **proving** Miller’s errors and exposing them in lectures, books, websites, and periodicals were summarily dismissed by the Palm Beach Lakes elders. They were determined to have Miller as *AP*’s executive director and no amount of logic, Scripture, persuasion, or any combination thereof could deter them. The single issue of fellowship with Dave Miller in 2005 would bring down the editor and associate editor of *TGJ*.

Among those signing the letter of support for *AP* were *TGJ*’s Board President Curtis Cates and Vice President Joseph Meador. Since the board had approved Marvin Weir’s article exposing Miller’s error in October, 2002, Editor McClish presented Cates with a dilemma in an email message on June 10:

I know you are aware of all of the stir about the AP/Bert Thompson scandal. I have sent you and the other TGJ Board Members a summary of the information that has come to me, along with some of my reactions to that information. I did not put this together for distribution, but to make notes on these sad events while they were fresh. I have sent my summary to only a very few, with the request that they not distribute it. I am not on any sort of crusade to hurt AP. In fact, I believe it to be a good and necessary work. However, there is no way that I can support AP under the present circumstances, for with Dave Miller at its head, “there is death in the pot” as far as I am concerned. I note in the “explanation packet” that AP has mailed to supporters (past and present) that your name and the name of Joseph Meador appear on the “Statement of Support” list....I am confident that you are aware that Miller was one of the principals (he was Brown Trail preacher at the time) who pushed Brown Trail’s first elder reaffirmation debacle in 1990, which I documented fully in my chapter in the 1997 Bellview book. He was still there when Brown Trail did its second elder reaffirmation in 2002, and although he was not the Brown Trail preacher by this time (he was Director of the SOP), Dave defended its recurrence. (Marvin Weir documents Dave’s involvement in his article in TGJ, October 2002, pp. 25-26.)

If Dave has changed his tune concerning these procedures, he has kept it very quiet. He has now had several years in which to do so. Yet he did not keep his support of them quiet at all. Further, Dave defended the mock marriage of a Jamaican student to a cousin, the purpose of which was to gain entry to and residency privileges in the U.S., fully intending to legally dissolve the marriage upon gaining entry and resident status, which he did (D. Brown wrote a lengthy article in CFTF, April 2004, pp. 7-10, describing and exposing that which Everett Chambers did and which Dave defended, even in BTSOP classes, among other places). Miller even promoted Chambers to be his assistant director of the school, which act produced all kinds of turmoil and almost destroyed the school altogether. ...Before he moved on and became Bert’s great prize catch for AP, Dave ended up having secret meetings with only a few of the elders and engineering the ouster of those who dared question him. These form the “legacy” of Dave’s work in our area that hang as a heavy cloud over what good he did in the twelve or thirteen years he was at Brown Trail. I know that Joseph was well aware of Dave’s behavior near the close of his tenure at Brown Trail, because some of the Brown Trail folk (including at least one BTSOP instructor) talked to him

about it, and Joseph discussed these matters freely with me at the time they were occurring. ...Now I am in a bit of a quandary. TGJ has carried an expose of some of Dave Miller's serious doctrinal problems. As editor, I stand behind this expose because I know it to be factual. All kinds of pressure was put on me by some of my then fellow-elders to write a statement of disclaimer concerning the article, which I steadfastly refused. The Brown Trail elders also hounded me, with more than one phone call from one of them, both to me and to Joe Chism, demanding a meeting of the elderships or at least with me, in attempts to force a retraction. Again, I withstood them all because I knew that what Marvin wrote was the truth. While the material exposing Dave Miller's weird (and convenient) MDR position relative to Everett Chambers did not appear in TGJ, nonetheless, it is a part of the public record in CFTF. I have not kept it a secret that I believe Dave Miller is a false teacher. So, on one hand, we have the editor of TGJ involved in opposing Miller and unable to support AP under his direction, but on the other hand we have the President and Vice-President of TGJ's Board appearing to endorse Miller by signing the "Statement of Support." This circumstance is one of apparent contradiction, as you can see, and it will doubtless become apparent to others, if it has not already. In fact, if one thinks about it very much, the appearance of your and Joseph's names on the "support" statement implies that brethren should ignore what TGJ's editor has printed about Dave Miller's conduct and doctrine. I have not discussed this seeming contradiction with other Board members, except Ken. When the news of the AP scandal first broke, several days before Miller's appointment was known, Ken talked with me about it and indicated that he does not favor even handling any more AP books when the present stock is sold out. AP sent Schertz elders a packet because the church was supporting AP on a monthly basis. Upon learning of the appointment of Dave Miller and its oblique descriptions of what had occurred involving Bert, the Schertz treasurer was instructed to cease any further support immediately. I therefore know that he cannot support AP or urge others to with Miller at its head. In the packet Ken saw your and Joseph's names on the support statement, of course. Ken is aware that I am writing you about these matters. What shall we do about this apparent difference of opinion in our ranks?

In his reply the next day, June 11, Cates danced around the central issue of his and Meador's signatures on the *AP* letter:

Brother Dub, several of our former students are connected with AP, Eric Lyons and Michael Cortez, men in whom I have great confidence. Relative to Dave, I cannot defend anything in which he has been involved which is wrong; I cannot do that in myself. I had been told by brother Keith Mosher that he asked brother Dave at Pulaski this year at the lectures about the re-affirmation of elders, and that Dave told him that was a "mistake." So, I take it that he would not now sanction such. (Perhaps it would be very helpful for him to make that known.). Incidentally, several times, brother Dave has written or talked to me since he got to Montgomery, asking me what my thoughts were on...or how I would answer regarding...or what my position is on...some issue—which I felt was very positive. But, I had no idea what his position would be at AP. I take it (according to their web site) that he is now serving as interim director. I do think that his time in Montgomery has been a growing experience for him; that is my personal impression.

I, like you, see the great need for AP, and I have great confidence in brethren Lyons and Cortez; Brad Harrub has impressed me favorably, as well as have some others connected with AP. I learned that he had been re-hired. I also have confidence in the Palm Beach Lakes elders, who oversee AP, and I have confidence in brother Frank Chesser, a trusted friend, and Panama Street, whom I have know for five decades. These things impacted my desire to help save AP, and I thought the very fact that Dave called me and asked me to sign was positive....

Dear friend, I pray that this matter will not serve to affect adversely the loving, close relationship of those of us who serve on the Board and on the Editorial Staff of THE GOSPEL JOURNAL (Watson, *Summary*).

McClish replied to Cates the same day, again asking about his and Meador's signatures on the letter supporting *AP*:

Please be assured that these matters have not affected my esteem and appreciation for you, and, as far as I am concerned, I trust that they will not affect my relationship with other Board Members. I hope that I said nothing in my message to you to leave the impression that they had/will. My great concerns were/are two:

Dave Miller's directorship of AP.

More particularly, the questions some will ask about TGJ's President and Vice-President's implied endorsement of Dave Miller, whom TGJ has identified as propagating error.

...I know not a single reason that I could not wholeheartedly endorse AP, were it not for Dave Miller. He sours the whole operation for me (and for many others) until he comes clean (Ibid.)

The announcement of Thompson's termination raised far more questions than it answered. Brethren were seeking answers and Dub McClish was receiving inquiries about the scandal. In response to their questions, he consulted sources close to it and,

On June 8, 2005 brother McClish sent his "Summation" to twenty-three persons (including all *TGJ* Board members and other interested brethren, some of whom had requested information concerning the AP scandal). He sent a cover sheet asking the recipients not to circulate the "Summation" without his permission. To *TGJ* principals he said, "I request that this attachment not be circulated, except with great discretion on your part." On page 1 of his "Summation" brother McClish stated:

I have known brother Thompson for twenty-three years. We have spoken on the same lectureships. Our publications company likely sold thousands of dollars worth of AP books through the years. I have admired his scholarship, his ability, and his accomplishments. I have attended Bert's seminars. I have learned from him. I will continue to learn from him through the books he has written. I certainly am not his enemy and it brings me only profound sorrow to learn of his "personal sins." I have been praying and will continue to pray for him and his family.

Nor am I the enemy of Apologetics Press. Without question, this vital work needs to continue and grow. I would rejoice to be able to endorse and encourage it without reservation, as I was able to do for many years. I deeply regret that, however, under its present leadership, I cannot do so (Watson, *Summary*).

Following is the full text of McClish's "Summation":

Summation of Information Relating to Apologetics Press Scandal

Dub McClish

The information that follows is primarily from four brethren, one who had a grandson in the AP interns program and the other three who participated in the discussions and deliberations with the AP Board concerning the future of brother Bert Thompson and of AP itself, during the week of May 22, 2005, in Montgomery, AL. The latter three have seen all of the documentation.

Phone Call from Darrell Conley on May 26

I received my first information of these matters from Darrell Conley, who had a grandson (18 years old) in the AP intern program, when he called me the morning of May 26. He told me the following:

1. Bert had been unmasked as a homosexual, who had been practicing such for "over twenty years" and that he had been removed from AP.
2. The elders at West Palm Beach, Florida, AP's overseeing congregation, had summarily flown his (Darrell's) grandson and another intern who were in Montgomery at the time, to West Palm Beach, and told them what had been discovered about Bert.
3. Brad Harrub had been "released" from AP a few weeks prior to this time (although it was unclear who had fired him from this conversation).
4. Homosexual charges had been brought against Bert about two years ago, but the accuser was a drug addict who was not a Christian. Brad Harrub defended Bert on that occasion (doubtless in all innocence), and since the accuser had little credibility, the matter "blew over."

Phone Call to Dan Jenkins on May 26

I immediately tried to reach Brad Harrub, but was unable to do so. I then called and talked to Dan Jenkins (preacher at W. Palm Beach). He had just returned from Montgomery and the meetings concerning AP the night before, but he would hardly tell me anything. He would not even confirm that Bert was a homosexual. He said that a statement would be issued indicating that Bert had been guilty of "personal sins" or some similar explanation. He stated that Bert had made a public confession of sin, this was now behind him, and our concern should now be to "help him get to Heaven." He did confirm that Bert had been removed by the AP Board, and could never have anything to do with AP henceforth.

Phone Calls to and From Frank Chesser on May 26 and 27

I next tried to reach Frank Chesser (preacher at Panama St. in Montgomery, AL, where most of the AP staff were/are members), but could not do so on May 26, leaving him a voice mail message. He returned my call on May 27. When I told him what I had called about, he became very defensive, asking, “Why do you want to know this information?” I assured him that it was not my intent to publicize it in *The Gospel Journal*, which he seemed to assume was my motivation. I told him I knew that I would be getting calls and messages from others, and I wanted to be able to separate fact from fiction. However, my reassurance made little difference. My conversation with Frank was also extremely unproductive, as had been the conversation with Dan Jenkins. This was especially strange, in light of the fact that on May 25 he had openly divulged considerable information to Marvin Weir in a phone call, of which Marvin had already told me. This was stranger still, in that Frank and I have known each other for several years, but he had never met Marvin. Obviously, something had changed his mind about discussing this situation in the span of 48 hours.

Like Dan, he would not even confirm that Bert’s sin was homosexual behavior. He indicated the following:

1. An explanation letter announcing Bert’s departure from AP would be sent to all financial contributors, referring merely to “personal sins” Bert had committed. I told him I would like to receive the letter, but he said he had no control over the mailing list.
2. He specifically denied that any felony criminal charges had been or would be filed involving minors, in answer to my question about same. Frank led me to believe that he was under the impression that Brad Harrub would be brought back and given the directorship of AP, which he apparently favored. He strangely went out of his way to put a very optimistic spin on the future of AP, and said (more than once) that he believed “the providence of God was at work” in all of this, more so than he had ever seen in his life as a preacher. When I asked him what he meant by that, and he said he would not want to elaborate. I told him that I could not be quite that optimistic. I pointed out that Bert hurt AP in the first place by hiring Dave Miller with all of his baggage, and that now this latest development would certainly not help matters. (He made no response at all to comments about Dave Miller.) At the time we were talking, of course, Dave Miller had not been installed as “Interim Executive Director,” which he now has, so they’ve really “stepped in it” now, in my judgment. Most of the questions I asked, he deflected with an “I don’t want to say,” or “I don’t want to go there.” He said I already knew more than his grown son does about the situation, and that he has determined to take all of the details he knows to the grave with him because revelation of them would “not help anybody.” These statements made me think that the details must be very bad, indeed. If Frank, Dan Jenkins, the AP board, or the W. Palm Beach elders think that the statement that Bert’s removal was for “personal sins” is going to take care of this matter in the minds of brethren, I fear that they are in for a rude awakening.

Call from Wayne Jackson on June 2

The third man on the “inside” with whom I have talked is Wayne Jackson, who has provided some solid, first-hand information. Wayne called me the morning of June 2 about another matter, and when we had finished with that subject, I referred to the tragedy at AP and how it must grieve him, especially. He seemed to want to talk, did not avoid a single question, volunteered some details, and confirmed and/or gave me the following information in answer to my questions (note: these are not direct quotes from Wayne, but summaries in my words of notes I took on our conversation):

1. Although he parted company with Bert and AP in 1998, because of his part in founding AP and having been associated with it for almost twenty years, the AP board asked him to come to Montgomery for consultation last week. He was there for five days in their discussions.
2. As a result of these consultations and discussions concerning evidence of Bert’s sinful behavior, he was dismissed on May 24.
3. Wayne confirmed that he had suspicions about some of Bert’s personal behavior when he parted company with him in 1998, but nothing concrete enough to tell others. He left specifically because of (a) Bert’s controlling personality, (b) his wanting to use Wayne’s name while giving him no voice in AP’s operation, and (c) his plagiarism of material Wayne had written.
4. The Eastern Meadows Church in Montgomery withdrew its sponsorship of AP in 2003 because of accusations concerning Bert’s homosexual behavior (likely, related to or pro-

voked by the aforementioned incident Darrell Conley relayed, in which Brad Harrub defended Bert).

5. When I asked, in light of these accusations, why the W. Palm Beach, FL, elders accepted AP's oversight, Wayne said, "You know Bert. He can put a good research paper together and is a good talker. They allowed Bert to talk his way out of the accusations and accepted AP's oversight."

6. Brad Harrub (AP senior staff member) confronted Bert about 7 weeks earlier (mid to late April) (a) over the huge indebtedness Bert had accrued for AP, (b) over his alleged mishandling of funds, plus (c) his objection to some facet (Wayne didn't elaborate) of the intern program. Bert summarily fired Brad.

7. Bert has had homosexual partners since at least 1985. Wayne told me he had received an e-mail message only the day before our conversation from the earliest of Bert's partners who has thus far come forward, confirming the 1985 date.

8. Bert's youngest known victim thus far was 16 at the time, which age, by Alabama law, allows one to engage in "consensual sex." This protects Bert from being charged with a felony count of sex with a child (which he may have known).

9. None of the AP interns has thus far accused Bert of advances toward them.

10. AP has canceled the intern program.

11. Wayne's evaluation of this mess: "It will prove to be the greatest scandal in the church in my lifetime."

The items listed above I trust as absolutely factual because they came from a credible witness who was in on all of the consultations and has seen all of the documentation thus far regarding Bert and the AP crisis.

Other Information and Sources

From other sources I have been told the following (confirmed or not confirmed, as noted):

1. Dave Miller has been named "Interim Executive Director" (confirmed on the AP Website and by letter in "explanation" packet, as of 6/6/05; see below).

2. Dave Miller is one of three AP Board Members (AP Website).

3. Rhonda has sued Bert for divorce (Marvin Weir, via Frank Chesser and Mark McWhorter, via Bronwen Gibson [our daughter]).

4. Bert responded to the invitation at Panama St. (where Frank Chesser preaches and where most of the AP staff were/are members) on May 25 (confirmed by Frank Chesser). I do not know what Bert confessed.

5. "Explanation" packets from AP began arriving in mailboxes on June 6 (confirmed by phone conversations with Bill Pierce, Horn Lake, MS, and Dave Watson, Sapulpa, OK, both of whom at one time financially supported AP, but who had discontinued support). Dave Watson reported the packet contained 3 letters and a "testimony" list. He read the documents to me and is mailing me copies of same. One was from the W. Palm Beach (WPB), FL, elders (announcing that Dave Miller is now the "Interim Executive Director"), a second letter was from Dave Miller, and the third letter was from Bert. The WPB letter oddly referred several times to "Dr. Bert," never mentioning his last name. It stated that he had committed some "personal sins"(what other kinds are there?), or words to that effect, and had confessed and repented of them. It almost made him out to be the victim rather than the perpetrator. One of the letters shamed anyone who would use this circumstance to defame or oppose the work of AP or use it as an excuse to stop their support for it. It asked people to continue their support for two years and then evaluate its work. Bert's letter did not mention either sin or confession, but said something like, after 26 years as executive director of AP, he and the AP Board agreed that it was time for someone else to direct AP for the next quarter century. The "testimony" statement expressed confidence in AP and urged continued support of it, followed by about 40 signatures. (Received via email, June 8, 2005).

The brotherhood wanted—and needed—to know the facts of this scandal. Individual Christians and churches of Christ had financially supported AP for many years and had a **right** to know the facts, minus any "spin" by those involved. Brother McClish clearly, and honestly presented the information he had obtained from credible sources and that placed him in the center of a vitriolic firestorm. The opening salvo came from Frank Chesser in the following letter:

Panama Street Church of Christ
444 South Panama Street
Montgomery, AL 36107

June 17, 2005
Mr. Dub McClish
908 Imperial Dr.
Denton, TX 76209

Dear brother McClish:

On June 11, 2005, I received a copy of an e-mail that you had penned entitled, "Summation of Information Relating to Apologetics Press Scandal." This document contained information from conversations that you had with Darrell Conley, Dan Jenkins, Wayne Jackson, and myself. To say that I was shocked to see that you had taken our personal conversation into the public arena is a major understatement. You state, regarding your conversation with me, "I assured him that it was not my intent to publicize it in the GOSPEL JOURNAL." However, it appears that at least part of your objective in initiating the conversation with me was to post it on public display. You appeared to be grossly offended that those of us whom you contacted did not reveal every lurid and salacious detail of Bert's sin. We have detected ten lies and eleven misrepresentations (whether intentional or unintentional) in your treatise. One of those involves my very brief conversation with brother Weir and another my statement regarding brother Brad Harrub. All others can be substantiated and verified. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is a folly and shame unto him" (Pro. 18:13). "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him" (Pro. 29:20).

The very title of your invective is incorrect. The sin lay with brother Thompson, not Apologetics Press. It was the staff at Apologetics Press (along with others) who confronted brother Thompson about his sin, especially brethren Dave Miller, Brad Harrub, Eric Lyons and Kyle Butt.

Sadly, you have shunned the spirit of the publican and adopted the spirit of the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14). In reading your treatise, one would be led to conclude that you are blessed with perfect vision regarding the faults of another while wholly blind to any imperfections you may have.

A man's public confession of sin should not be fodder for Internet talebearing and gossip. In just two weeks this side of being confronted with his sin, Bert has made public confessions at seven different congregations. At this point, what else would you have him do? Are more fruits of penitence demanded by you than those required of God? Must he crawl over shattered glass, bathe your feet in tears and beg for your personal forgiveness? I have read your e-mail several times, and I found no expressions of anguish of heart over this human tragedy of incalculable proportions or demonstration of a spirit of kindness, forgiveness, mercy or grief. Did you not reflect upon the devastating effects this tragedy has had upon Rhonda and the family before firing off your missive? Why could you not at least have ended your vituperative with just one tender statement such as, "Brethren, let us pray for Bert, Rhonda and their family"? You would perhaps do well to ponder, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13).

My phone has rung incessantly for three weeks. Every single call has pulsed with expressions of sorrow, grief, and concern for Bert and his family, the devastating consequences this could have upon the church and the great work at Apologetics Press. Questions such as, "What can I do?" and "How can I help?" have been uttered repetitiously. Yours and brother Weir's have been the lone exceptions.

Striking indeed is the contrast in your ignoble conduct and that of Paul in a kindred situation. Regarding the adulterous man in Corinth and the attitude of the church toward it, Paul said, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears" (II Cor. 2:4). In heart, attitude and spirit, you and Paul appear to live in two different worlds. In your conversation with me, your words were clothed in ice. Not one shred of compassion did you express for Bert and his family. Why could you not have borrowed one tear from Paul's eye for this fallen brother and his godly wife and family? Brother Jenkins had already informed you of Bert's confession before you called others and me. What else did you need to know? The matter should have ended right there. Yet, you ploughed on down your furrow of shame, endeavoring to gather every sordid detail you could find with the full intent of broadcasting them to the brotherhood. I did not realize that the Lord had au-

thorized an earthly clearinghouse in the penitence process. “Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people” (Lev. 19:16). “A talebearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter” (Pro. 11:13). “The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly” (Pro. 18:8). “There is he that speaketh like the piercings of a sword; but the tongue of the wise is health” (Pro. 12:18). “He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction” (Pro. 13:3). “A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it till afterwards” (Pro. 29:11).

Have I missed the great good for the kingdom that you were endeavoring to accomplish by your action? Was it your aim to “provoke unto love and to good works”? (Heb. 10:24). Was it an act of love for Bert and his family and support for the unique work of Apologetics Press? Was it an act of kindness, tenderheartedness, and a forgiving spirit toward one who had confessed sin? (Eph. 4:32). Were your words full of “grace and seasoned with salt”? (Col. 4:6). Were they “Words fitly spoken like apples of gold in pictures of silver”? (Prov. 25:11). Were you “following after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another”? (Rom. 14:19). I am confident that if each of us would go on a mental journey across the years of our lives in serious, somber meditation upon our own sins, mistakes and failures we would be less censorious of others—most especially of a brother who has made public confession of sin.

Paul’s instructions to the church in Corinth regarding the adulterous brother who had repented was a call “to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him” (II Cor. 2:7-8). Forgive, comfort, confirm your love toward him! I ask you, brother McClish, is this what you have done? I come to you in the spirit of Galatians 6:1, in full recognition of my own sins and frailties, hoping and praying that you will come to realize the serious nature of your conduct (which was unethical, shameful and at variance with many fundamental principles of the gospel) and take the necessary steps to rectify this wrong.

On the Thursday morning following Bert’s confession of the previous evening, he sat in my office, enumerated some of the consequences of his sin and said, “I have no one to blame but myself.” He and I were both weeping and in great anguish of heart. Scarcely had Bert left than a young man, a recent college graduate, who had been present at the Wednesday evening service entered my office. He immediately discerned my state of deep consternation and asked, “Something is bad wrong, isn’t it?” I answered in the affirmative. He then expressed concern for Apologetics Press and stated, “Tell me what I should pray for.” I replied, “Pray for Bert, Rhonda and their family.” I received another note from a young wife and mother who was converted from denominationalism only a few years ago stating, “We just have to go through a grieving process while continuing to pray for the health of the church and for all of those personally affected.” Oh, how I wish that your conduct, a seasoned veteran, had matched that of these two fine young Christians.

There is no way to know how many people have received your e-mail—perhaps hundreds. No doubt, some are making copies and passing it on to others. Though I loathe and detest this kind of action, I feel compelled to pass on this response I have made to you to at least some who likely have been recipients of your document.

With brotherly love and concern,
Frank Chesser

It is unknown how many persons received Chesser’s letter, which was apparently more widely distributed than McClish’s summation. That became evident when McClish began receiving emails and letters from brethren who had no idea what Chesser was addressing. According to McClish, he had sent his “Summation” to “fewer than two dozen people, asking the majority of them **not** to distribute it, and asking the other few intimates to do so only with their discretion which I trusted completely.” He reminded Chesser of that in his response:

July 8, 2005

Mr. Frank Chesser
Church of Christ
444 South Panama Street
Montgomery, AL 36107

Dear Frank:

“With brotherly love and concern,” you closed your letter. Wow! I would hate to think of

what you would have written if you hated me and were unconcerned. I know that you are very deeply emotionally involved in all of the problems involving Apologetics Press. I am also confident that you are physically and emotionally exhausted from the events surrounding these matters the last few weeks. I can therefore excuse your bitter and intemperate letter on those grounds to some degree.

However, having said that, I am still having difficulty accepting the fact that you wrote such a letter. I would not have thought you capable of such. We all have our burdens, stresses, and challenges, but we must do our best to act and react maturely, nonetheless. You thrust the sword of the Spirit at me repeatedly, but you seem to have forgotten that the Spirit's sword is a double-edged blade, no, even keener than that (Heb. 4:12). The very passages you threw so freely at me apply to what you did by means of your letter. You made numerous unwarranted assumptions (e.g., that I "broadcast" my brief "Summation," which is absolutely untrue). At the time you wrote your letter I had sent it to fewer than two dozen people, asking the majority of them **not** to distribute it, and asking the other few intimates to do so only with their discretion, which I trusted completely. You have exacerbated the very problem you sought to solve by your malicious letter. I am already hearing from brethren who have no idea what e-mail I have supposedly sent to "hundreds" and about which you are so exercised. When they read what I wrote and compared it with your letter they have wondered—as have I—if you really read what I wrote. You have thus advertised the very thing you find so abhorrent.

I have never read a letter so full of motive judgments as yours is, at least not from a brother in Christ. One would think you must be omniscient and know all of my thoughts, aims, and emotions. You have no idea how many times I have prayed for Bert, Rhonda, and their boys. However, if you had read my "Summation" with any care, you would have seen me stating that I have been doing such. (I have even been praying for you since I got your letter, for our Lord taught us bless those who curse us and pray for those who spitefully use us [Luke 6:28]). You judged me as unconcerned because of our phone conversation. What you did not know is that you called when I had just pulled my boots off and was stepping into a medical lab for an MRI. With an MRI tech waiting for my return, my conversation may have been somewhat constrained, but for you to read into that a lack of compassion and concern is truly amazing. It was really a low blow to be accused of seeking "every lurid and salacious detail of Bert's sin." You have a vivid imagination to accuse me of such, and you know it is not true. All that I sought to do is just what I told you—to separate fact from fiction, which it would seem would be of interest to all connected with AP.

It is beyond ironic that you will apparently listen to no charges against Dave Miller, though they are documented and I know that many persons have begged you (as they did Bert) to do so, but you have drawn and quartered me based on nothing more than your own subjective judgments about me. It appears that you almost count my writing a simple "Summation" concerning AP and sending it to a handful of brethren worse than Bert's sinful behavior or Dave Miller's doctrinal errors. As I stated in my "Summation," I am not an enemy of AP. It is a vital work. I genuinely desire to be able to support it and endorse it. I have in no way set out on a campaign to harm it. I am not your enemy (though you obviously consider yourself mine). I am not brother Miller's enemy. I simply believe he should not be given a free pass on his errors, any more than any other brother should. I believe that sooner or later AP will have to deal with this issue. One would think from reading your letter that the items I included in my "Summation" were all mere figments of an imagination out of control — "lies" and "misrepresentations," "the whole lot. Instead of shaming me, you should be ashamed of yourself for such an assertion. I have learned of one correction I need to make, which I am quite willing to do. In discussing these matters further with Marvin Weir very recently, he pointed out that he did not learn from you that Rhonda has sued Bert for divorce, as I stated on page 5 of my "Summation." I simply misunderstood that part of our discussion, for which I apologize. The statement concerning the divorce was factual; I simply mistook the attribution. For whatever it is worth, Marvin did not break any of your confidences in the things he said to me about your conversation with him, so please do not send him a hate letter. I do not recall any discussion with you of confidentiality, even if you had told me anything others had not already told me.

I am serious when I suggest that you consider seeking some anger management treatment—you were obviously beside yourself when you wrote. You likely have seen the article in the latest *Christian Chronicle*. What I wrote was extremely mild and innocent by comparison, and the last time I checked, its circulation was well over 100,000, compared the puny two dozen or so of my "treatise." Are you going to vent your wrath against them as you did

against me?

Frank, I seek only your good and that of Bert, Rhonda, and the Thompson boys. I will continue to pray for you and them. I seek your good, not your ill. I hope you will one day be able to admit what a severe over-reaction your letter was. It was nothing short of slander.

In Christ,
Dub McClish
908 Imperial Drive
Denton, TX 76209

Chesser's missive signaled not only the beginning of the end of McClish's five and a half years in *TGJ*'s editorial chair but its reincarnation as a "wiser, sweeter" publication devoid of "an unlovely and earth-born atmosphere" (West, 2:29). Ere long the axe would fall.

In 1866, W.K. Pendleton was determined to have the Missionary Society and trotted out his horse *Expediency* as a smokescreen to divert attention from the real issue of Bible authority. McClish's enemies trotted out their horse, *Summation*, to assassinate his character and demonize him as **their smokescreen** to obscure the **real** issue in 2005. That was to rescue *Apologetics Press* by ridding *The Gospel Journal* of a pungent pen opposing Dave Miller, thereby appeasing deep-pocketed supporters of *AP* and *MSOP*. Although they **knew** that Miller's Elder R/R doctrine was false, they willingly ignored the facts in order to save their sacred cows. David Lipscomb well described them:

A man cannot compromise his own convictions and adopt things that he believes to be wrong without loss of moral power and without dishonoring his true spiritual manhood. A man cannot compromise and set aside what he believes to be a command of God without dishonoring God before the world, without destroying his own reverence for God and usefulness for his service. To set aside a law of God for the sake of union with others is to prefer union with them to union with God—is to hold their teaching above the word of God. If we sacrifice God's word to please others, it is because we wish to please them rather than to please God (*Q&A*, 432-433).

Thompson's departure from *AP*, McClish's *Summation*, and Miller's elevation as *AP*'s Executive Director created the "perfect storm" as a subterfuge for McClish's enemies to silence his and *TGJ*'s opposition to the Miller/*AP* cabal. By mid summer, McClish and Watson were in the eye of that storm.

On July 8, 2005 brother Curtis Cates wrote an e-mail message to *TGJ* Board & Editors stating: "As a result of many statements of concern to me by trustworthy men who are sound in the faith and my own personal concern relative to Apologetics Press and *The Gospel Journal*, I request that brother Hatcher add the discussion of the *Journal*'s purpose and reputation to the agenda for the upcoming board meeting." (The "upcoming board meeting" referred to a two-day meeting of *TGJ* Board and Editors on July 19–20, 2005, at *TGJ* Business Office in Schertz, Texas. This meeting was planned in *TGJ* Board-Editor meeting in brother Curtis Cates' office during *MSOP* Lectures, March 29. It was intended to be a relaxed, informal, "brain-storming" meeting to discuss various ways of improving the book business and the paper and to discuss future plans in general.) (Watson, *Summation*).

A "discussion of the *Journal*'s **purpose** and **reputation**" was the gun aimed at McClish and Watson and a portent of what was coming. Cates was moved by "statements of concern" from his friends and by his own concerns. The first was the **purpose** of *TGJ*—one aim of which was, "Oppose and expose both doctrinal and practical error from all quarters." McClish and Watson had opposed and exposed Miller's doctrinal error in the October, 2002 issue of *TGJ* which Watson had edited. Cates' second concern was *TGJ*'s **reputation**. To him, *TGJ*'s reputation was inextricably linked to those of McClish and Watson and, in a moment of honesty, Cates defined the issue. The concerns by "trustworthy men who are sound in the faith and my own personal concern" were **not** related to McClish's Summary of the scandal. Their concerns were "relative to Apologetics Press and *The Gospel Journal*" and the catalyst was Dave Miller. In order to preserve *AP* with Miller as its head, so McClish and Watson had to go, and the best way to do that was to destroy the good name of Dub McClish.

The storm built toward its conclusion in an email message three days after Cates expressed concern about the paper's "purpose and reputation":

On July 11, 2005 brother Watson copied the "Statement of Support" for *AP* signed by brethren Cates and Meador and simply substituted *The Gospel Journal* for *Apologetics*

Press and then e-mailed it to all of TGJ Board members and Editors, asking them to sign it. It read: “We the undersigned, wish to announce that we have complete confidence that The Gospel Journal is on a firm footing that will insure its continued work of excellence. We commend The Gospel Journal to the brotherhood and recommend that it continue to be the recipient of financial and moral support.” Brethren Watson and McClish signed it. None of TGJ Board members have to this day signed it.

Instead of signing the “Statement of Support” for TGJ, on that same day (July 11, 2005) brother Curtis Cates submitted, in writing, his resignation from the Board of TGJ. On July 12, 2005 brother Joseph Meador submitted, in writing, his resignation as Vice-President of Board of TGJ. At least two of TGJ’s three remaining Board members stated that they were going to try to talk both brother Cates and brother Meador into rescinding their resignations. They were successful (Watson, *Summary*).

It took less than two months from Dave Miller’s appointment as Executive Director of *AP* until Dub McClish and David Watson were forced to sever their connection with *TGJ*.

On Wednesday July 20, 2005 brother Curtis Cates participated in the Board-Editors’ meeting as President of *TGJ* Board and brother Joseph Meador participated as Vice-President of *TGJ* Board in the meeting in Schertz, Texas. This meeting began at 9:00 am and by 9:30 am brother Dub McClish was no longer Editor of *TGJ* and brother Dave Watson was no longer Associate Editor of *TGJ*.

The meeting began with brother Curtis Cates stating the ground rules. First, brother Cates stated that the meeting would not be a “question and answer” session. Both brother McClish and brother Watson had a list of questions prepared to ask the Board but only managed to ask very few. Second, brother Cates stated that brother Michael Hatcher would be the only spokesman for the Board. Third, brother Cates then asked brother Hatcher to read a unanimous resolution the Board had made the day before. (Board members later stated that the board began meeting at 8:30 am on the previous day and “agonized” all day to reach this resolution. Brother McClish requested a written copy of this resolution on July 21, but none has yet been given.)

The resolution stated that by unanimous decision the Board believed it **MAY** (this word was emphasized) be necessary to make a change in the Editor and Associate Editor of *TGJ*. The reason given as to why a change of the Editor **MAY** be needed was because of brother McClish’s *AP* “Summation” e-mail. The reason given as to why a change of Associate Editor **MAY** be needed was because of brother Watson’s e-mails to the Board members. Brother McClish later pointed out that if his name was an anathema to *TGJ* because of his “Summation” e-mail then the names of brethren Curtis Cates and Joseph Meador on the “Statement of Support” for Apologetics Press with brother Dave Miller as Director should also be considered an anathema to *TGJ*. Since the Board’s opposition to brother McClish revolved around the *AP* “Summation,” he asked brother Cates if the Board believed he had sinned in writing it. Brother Cates assured brother McClish that they did not so believe, and that they had never discussed what he wrote in those terms. Brother Michael Hatcher then stated to brother McClish that it was not the “rightness or wrongness” of what had been said or written but the “perception” of it. At this point in the meeting brother McClish and brother Watson were told they could say anything they wanted. Since they saw the “handwriting on the wall” brother McClish resigned as Editor of *TGJ* and brother Watson resigned as Associate Editor of *TGJ*. Not one of *TGJ* Board members made any attempt to talk either brother McClish or brother Watson out of resigning as they had done with brother Cates and brother Meador the week before. Not one of *TGJ* Board members offered any options to either brother McClish or brother Watson. Not one of *TGJ* Board members suggested that the resignations were premature or should be discussed further. Instead, brethren McClish and Watson were asked to leave the room while *TGJ* Board members met in closed session.

A few minutes later brethren McClish and Watson were recalled to the meeting of *TGJ* Board. Brother Michael Hatcher read another unanimous resolution which accepted the resignations of brother McClish as Editor of *TGJ* and brother Watson as Associate Editor of *TGJ*. Brother McClish asked if this meant that the Board members were withdrawing fellowship from the two of them. All *TGJ* Board members assured brethren McClish and Watson that this was not a fellowship issue. Brother McClish asked about the resignations of brethren Cates and Meador the week before the meeting. Brother Meador did not answer and brother Cates claimed that “what he wrote” (he would not call it a “resignation”) was because of his health. Brother McClish asked brother Cates about his implicit endorsement of brother Dave Miller by his signing the *AP* “Statement of Support” with brother Miller as

its Director. Brother Cates said that he did not endorse any of brother Miller's errors, but he did support the continuation of AP. Brother McClish stated that he did not see how one could support one and not support the other. Brother McClish, knowing that brother Hatcher had written and distributed an e-mail (as quoted earlier) asked him if he had changed his position concerning AP and brother Miller. Brother Hatcher, like brother Cates, stated that he would support AP but that he would not support brother Miller (Watson, *Summary*).

There is no new thing under the sun. When apostasy infested the church in the 1800s, David Lipscomb was demonized and accused of "dividing the church" because he opposed mechanical instruments in worship. That was the case with those who opposed Dave Miller's errors in 2005. They were demonized by Miller's apologists and remain so today. Responding to *TGJ* Board Secretary Michael Hatcher's suggestion to reinstate Dub McClish as editor, *TGJ*'s Board Vice President Joseph Meador described McClish as, "...one of a few who are in a small, but no less toxic, loyalty circle...a small negative faction, who if they gain control, will only rupture fellowship in the church even more than they already have."

Meador's vituperation was his attempt to marginalize and negate the influence of men who stood upon the Word of God. Their devotion to the faith once delivered threatened the loss of money pouring into the coffers of MSOP and AP. Such loss would mean the fall of powerful men from prestigious positions and they were determined to preserve their idols even if it meant compromising with error.

When the *American Christian Review*'s editor, Ben Franklin, voiced his opposition to the Missionary Society in 1866, his former supporters said he had become a "detriment" to it. With far more honesty than McClish's enemies, C.L. Loos **admitted** that the Missionary Society was their sacred cow and no amount of opposition could persuade them to let it die.

If anyone asks why we thus call attention to the course of the editor of the *Review*,—our answer is that Brother F. is using his influence in his paper to the detriment of a work most near and dear to us, and thousands among us; and we are resolved to stand by this work, in true devotion while life lasts...Nothing that our opposing brethren have said has had the slightest influence in weakening our convictions in this respect; but has only made our attachment to the cause stronger (West, 2:48).

Loos described the tenacity of McClish's enemies in 2005. Not a word of the volumes of evidence "opposing brethren" presented about Miller's false doctrines "had the slightest influence in weakening" their convictions about works "most near and dear" to them. Meador said opposition to Miller by McClish would "rupture fellowship" and Loos said Franklin's opposition to the society was a "detriment of a work most near and dear to us." Since he owned *The Review*, Franklin's enemies could not silence him. McClish did not have that advantage. *The Gospel Journal* fell into the hands of neo-mainstream compromisers.

Nine days after McClish and Watson left *TGJ*, Secretary of the Board Michael Hatcher submitted his resignation:

Brethren:

I know we have all been grieved of the events of the last few weeks. It has brought all of us great heartache and sadness. Much of the rhetoric has been high, which was to be expected. I do not plan on detailing many of the things in my mind at this time.

However, there are a few points which I cannot allow to pass. In our board meeting on the first day, we did mention many of the points brother Cates brought up in his e-mail message (getting into the original, not being "issue oriented," not being embroiled in local congregational issues, etc.). However, with the discussion of all these things, not all of them on the whole could have caused us to discuss the dismissal of Dub or David. The sole reason for that discussion was the reaction which some took to Dub's statement which he sent to 23 people. (Yes, I now believe it would have been in the best interest of and the best wisdom to ask Dub to return as being editor). Brethren, I do not believe Dub sinned in sending out that statement; however, I do believe Frank Chesser did sin in his ungodly actions (which being borne out by the fact that he did not send out Dub's letter to him, nor his letter asking Bert and Rhonda Thompson to accept his apology). At this point in time, Dub was correct in the impression of the brotherhood that Frank Chesser has "won."

The "spin" that the board has put on this is just that—"spin." The fact is everyone knows that it is also. While we are stating publicly that there has not been a vote taken (there had not) thus no decision had been made (technically there had not), we all knew that basically

there would need to be a change made regarding the editor and associate editor. The differing terms used (“fired,” “dismissed,” “accepted their resignation”) all boil down to the same thing, and brethren know that. Dub (and David) were placed in a position in which they were forced to resign (if you don’t believe that, ask either one of them). While our spin is fine and technically true, everyone else realizes the situation also. (This is especially true when Brian Brazwell’s (sic) understanding of what Barry Grider said to him and conveyed to Dub was the end result—that Dub is no longer with the paper). When I received brother Meador’s response, I was both hurt and outraged. In my email making a motion to reinstate Dub McClish as editor (I did not mention reinstating David, only Dub), I had also mentioned discussing the situation with my elders and that they were not pleased with the action of the board in accepting Dub’s resignation. Brother Meador mentions in his e-mail that we are dealing with “a few who are in a small, but no less toxic, loyalty circle...a small negative faction, who if they gain control, will only rupture fellowship in the church even more than they already have.”

Since my elders here at Bellview who are individuals who disagreed with our decision and expressed that disagreement to me, I have no alternative to understand that brother Meador has placed them in that class of “toxic loyalty circle...negative faction.” Additionally, many of my close friends and ones I trust totally (not just Lynn Parker, and I have not even talked to David Brown) have called expressing their objection and displeasure with the board. These are brethren who regularly speak on the lectures here at Bellview and that I speak with at other locations. They are also placed in that “toxic loyalty circle” by brother Meador. Additionally, since I believe the board should have asked Dub McClish to return as being editor, I guess brother Meador places me in that “toxic loyalty circle” as well. Brother Meador, I am calling upon you to repent of your attitude toward faithful brethren.

Whether brother Meador repents of such attitudes or not, I will no longer be a part of *The Gospel Journal*. I am tendering my immediate resignation from the board (including, of course, being the secretary of the board). In addition, the board will need to find someone else to be the temporary editor of the paper (I do not plan on editing the August issue). You can whoever (sic) you choose to contact me concerning the articles and the part of the August issue that has not been completed.

Brethren, it is with a sad heart that I do this, but as brother Meador said, “This is a matter of principle as far as I am concerned.” I have enjoyed our association together. I still believe a paper such as *The Gospel Journal* is needed in the brotherhood, but I believe the board has destroyed the paper to such an extent that it will not be revived.

Michael Hatcher

P.S. While I will hold in confidence all the discussions which were done in confidence and which we agreed to be such, this resignation letter does not need to be held in such a manner.

P.S.S. Since Curtis mentioned that he wondered if some were making these things a test of fellowship, please understand that I am not making the acceptance of the resignation of Dub and David a test of fellowship. (CFTF, Sept. 2005).

On August 11, 2005, brother Hatcher emailed his apology to Dub McClish, David Watson and other brethren:

Dub McClish, David Watson, and others:

I want to sincerely apologize to both Dub McClish and David Watson for the way things were handled and my part in all that took place regarding your no longer being with *The Gospel Journal*. My action and votes at the time were out of the sincerity of my heart and what, at the time, I was led to believe to be the best for *The Gospel Journal* and its continued existence. I now realize that the information that I received was wrong. I was being given the information that brother McClish’s reputation had been ruined and that if he remained as editor the paper would die. Not having heard anything myself, I simply accepted what I was being told by my fellow board members (sadly, I did not realize that I could not accept what was being said and I apologize for that).

It now appears to me that there has been a concerted effort to destroy the reputation of a good man—Dub McClish. I apologize for my part in being used to further their cause. I am sorry for not doing some of the things that I should have done and not realizing what was taking place (especially behind the scenes) so I would not have had a part in it. Brother McClish has done nothing worthy of being forced to resign, but it appears to me that the board bowed to pressure to get rid of him, and I was made an unknowing accomplice (sic) in this.

This pressure began with Frank Chesser's hate-filled response to brother McClish's summation of the Apologetics Press Scandal (which none of the board members thought there was any sin involved).

But, apparently to support Apologetics Press, brother McClish was sacrificed as was *The Gospel Journal* itself. I sincerely apologize to Dub McClish, David Watson, and the brotherhood for my part in this sad state of affairs.

Michael Hatcher (Ibid.)

Dub McClish, David Watson and *The Gospel Journal* were sacrificial lambs on the altar of *Apologetics Press*. Altar officiants were Curtis Cates, *The Gospel Journal's* board of directors, and Frank Chesser.

TGJ died July 20, 2005. It never regained its eminence as a sound medium unafraid to address doctrinal issues—nor was that its **new** intent. Upon its death, Jess Whitlock penned an open letter addressed to its board and co-editors:

The direction of this new monthly is not what it was under the capable editorship of brother Dub McClish...I had marveled at the nine editorial aims of The "Original," especially editorial aim number 5: "Oppose and expose both doctrinal and practical error from all quarters"...But, as John Moore (co-editor of *TNGJ*) stated at the 2005 Schertz Lectures, "We are going to do the very best that we can to bring to you issues that are encouraging, that edify, that instruct, that build up people, that are good for the church, every member of the church..." Notice, not one word about exposing error (An "Open Letter" to The "New" Gospel Journal Board (*Defender*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 10, Oct. 2007).

TNGJ struggled and floundered under a parade of editors for a few years until it was sold to Johnie Scaggs, Jr., a devotee of Cates and a supporter of Miller and his doctrines. Scaggs set forth the paper's mission on its website in 2019. Its new mission is **distinctly different** from its "Editorial Aims" under McClish:

TGJ Mission, 2019

Our Purpose

Brother Guy N. Woods once wrote to me about what he believed was one of the great needs of the church, simply stated, it was to preach the fundamentals of the gospel of our Lord. I am persuaded this is still true today. This was the goal of the late brother Curtis A. Cates, who severed (sic) as the Editor prior to his death and it will continue to be our goal today.

The aim of the Gospel Journal will continue on in the same fashion as it was when it began in January 2000. Our purpose will be to teach the gospel of Christ through the printed page. I believe the power to save is still in the gospel of Christ, as Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). As Paul was not ashamed, neither will I be ashamed of the gospel of our Lord. It will be my purpose both to help save the lost and to edify the church. The Gospel Journal will do its best to fulfill the great commission as stated by Jesus, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19-20). Also the work of edifying is greatly needed and it will be our aim to edify the brotherhood. As stated by Paul, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19).

The Gospel Journal will cover topics find (sic) throughout the Bible. It will be our purpose to write articles that are filled with the Bible and present these in such a manner as to be pleasing unto God. The spirit of love will be found in every page and at the same time a strong conviction for Truth.

The writers for The Gospel Journal will be men and women of the book, who are sound in the faith and who are in agreement with our purpose. Though most of the articles will be assigned to different writer (sic), we do plan on using some articles submitted by other writers as long as they agree with our purpose.

Finally let me say, we need your help in the work we have undertaken. First, we need your prayers, as James said, "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jam. 5:16b). We believe in the power of prayer and we have confidence that God will see us through this work. Second, we need you to subscribe to The Gospel Journal if you are not already. Without you, the reader, we will be unable to do the work. Third, we need your

help in spreading the news about The Gospel Journal and encouraging others to take a subscription. The only way The Gospel Journal can continue and to grow is by your assistance. You are greatly needed.

Help us as we help others draw closer to the one who made them and who gave (sic) them life everlasting. May God be with us in this great work.

Editor Johnie Scaggs, Jr.

(<http://www.thegospeljournal.com/mission-statement.html>)

There is a key difference between the Editorial Aims of *TGJ* in 2000 and the Mission of *TNGJ* in 2019. Omitted from *TNGJ*'s mission is to "Oppose and expose both doctrinal and practical error from all quarters." That is not the mission of *TNGJ*—especially if "all quarters" means certain sacred cows within the mainstream brotherhood.

Omitting even a passing reference to its founding editor, *TNGJ* has rewritten history. Its website features a photo of Curtis Cates whom Scaggs idolized and who led in ousting McClish and Watson.

TNGJ has assumed its place among such mainstream voices as *The Gospel Advocate* and *The Christian Chronicle*. As J.S. Lamar said of his enemies, so *TNGJ* seems to believe of McClish and Watson. They "...represented and fostered that unfortunate type of discipleship...a type with which the leading minds of the brotherhood could have no sympathy."

Mainstream Churches of Christ Have Become Internet Beggars

Jerry C. Brewer

"Mainline Churches of Christ" have become "beggars" on their websites to bring in cash flow and are unashamed to ask money from every person. Even if they say "Guests are not expected to contribute," they have no scriptural authority to ask **even members** to contribute over the internet.

From the earliest memory of my childhood, Gospel preachers and faithful Christians always emphasized that the church of Christ asks no financial aid from anyone who is not a Christian. On the other hand, Christians are not only expected, but commanded, to give of their means **on the first day of the week** to finance the work of the church. Paul later wrote,

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7).

The above verses teach us that we are to give 1) upon the first day of the week, 2) for the purpose of "laying by in store" for the work of the church, 3) as we have been prospered, 4) purposefully, 5) of our free will and, 6) cheerfully. This is the sum of the Christian's financial obligation to the work of the Lord and the sum of God's means by which we, as His children, are to raise money for that work. The Scriptures, by including all the above in the church's financial increase and excluding all other means, eliminate car washes, raffles, bazaars, silent auctions, assessments, or any other dependence on those who are not Christians to finance the work of the church.

We who are Christians must fund the work of the church ourselves and cannot ask money for outsiders to contribute to that work. That is a principle stated in John's letter to Gaius:

Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey, after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles (3 John 5-7).

Under the heading, "New Testament Law Of Missions," the late Guy N. Woods had this to say in his commentary on those verses in Third John:

It would have been unseemly for those who carried the message of salvation to depend for support on those to whom they preached. Such would have exposed them to the charge that

they sought material advantage for themselves, and that their preaching was merely a pre-text to obtain that. There is nothing which so quickly wins men to a sympathetic hearing as the realization of complete unselfishness on the part of those who bear the message to them: and it is absolutely requisite that in all missionary efforts, the missionaries be wholly independent financially and materially of those to whom they preach (*Commentary On Third John*, 1956, Gospel Advocate Co., p. 362).

There is no difference today between the church which asks for money from non-Christians and the Jehovah Witnesses' former practice of hawking their *Watchtower* from door to door for 10 cents each. The church of Christ must never ask non-Christians for money to do our work. Let us give cheerfully, liberally, and as we have been prospered upon the first day of the week to accomplish the work of preaching to the lost, "taking nothing of the Gentiles."

Jehovah's Witnesses once sold their *Watchtower* from door-to-door for a dime, but today, "mainline churches of Christ" have taken their marketing strategy into the cyber-technology era and beg for money through the internet. Jesus would take a scourge and drive out the "mainline merchants" as He once did in Jerusalem.

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves (Matt. 21:12-13).

Moneychangers in "mainline churches of Christ" have their tables on the **internet** and have made the Lord's house into a cyber-den of beggars. The following are representative "mainline churches of Christ" who ignore Christ's authority concerning the first day contribution. They could be multiplied over-and-over throughout this land and around the world. **Their elders should hang their heads in shame!**

1. Northwest church of Christ, Ft. Worth Texas

<https://www.northwestcofc.org/online-giving.html>

Northwest, Ft. Worth Texas Elders

Kevin Keim

David Williams

2. The Peninsula Church of Christ, Hampton, VA

<https://www.peninsulacofc.org/giving.html>

The Peninsula Hampton, Virginia Church Elders

Glenn Hitchcock

Chris Driver

Unknown Name

3. Withamsville, Ohio – www.withamsville.church

Your support of our work at Withamsville Church of Christ is greatly appreciated.

Your contributions make a difference to many lives.

To give online, click the **Give Now** button below. You will be asked to designate where you would like your funds to be used.

General Fund – Donations are used for all aspects of the church's operation including ministries, staffing, and facility needs.

CUMO (Cincinnati Urban Ministerial Outreach) – Donations support our work in conjunction with other area churches of Christ to reach people in downtown Cincinnati

Remodeling – Supports the upgrades planned to create a more practical and inviting main entrance for guests and visitors

Youth Ministry Events – Provides funds to engage our teen members in church activities geared toward where they are in life

Camp ROCKs at Camp Lebanon – A weeklong, overnight camp hosted by Withamsville Church of Christ for kids ages 7 – 12. Staffed by church volunteers, funds donated can help keep costs down for parents and provide scholarships for campers who otherwise could not attend.

Missions – Donations help spread the Word to underserved areas around the world

Benevolence – Supports local giving to those needing immediate help from the church

Celebrate Recovery – A Bible-based program for anyone struggling with addiction of any

kind

Memorials – Families of church members who pass away frequently request memorial donations in lieu of flowers. Current memorial requests will be visible in the designations list (<https://withamsville.church/giving/>).

Withamsville Church Elders

Jim Farley

Monty Gillespie

Hal Good

Wayne Johnson

Mark Mason

Don Moore

Dick Wanninger (<https://withamsville.church/church-information/elders/>)

4. The South Yukon Church of Christ, Yukon, Oklahoma

“SYCOC is able to provide incredible programs, events, and outreach because of your generosity. By supporting SYCOC you are directly impacting the future of our community and it's spiritual health. Thank you!”

(<https://southyukon.fellowshiponego.com/external/form/b0bc43e7-3ea8-4cc7-90d9-afde0c2a74d7>)

South Yukon Church of Christ Elders

Jason Engle

Lynn Groves

Stuart Stephens

Barry Stump

Glenn Tunick

Joe Wallace

John Yielding

5. Dalraida Church of Christ – Montgomery, Alabama

<https://givingtools.com/give/1297/2236>

Dalraida Church of Christ Elders

Bill Johnson

John Kachelman Jr.

Bob McKee

Robert Moon

Steve Phillips

Jim Russell

Dean Sanders

6. Central Church of Christ – Amarillo, Texas

<https://www.amarillocentral.org/give>

“Giving is a spiritual discipline, and its basis is found in Scripture. When you choose to give, your giving helps feed those who are hungry and provide for their basic needs. Your generosity funds local mission work that improves the lives of those here in our city. It also funds mission work in 5 different countries. Your giving provides resources to teach and provide a foundation of faith for children and teens and to strengthen and build the faith of adults. Your giving is important. Thank you for your generosity.”

Amarillo, Texas Central Elders

Scott Bentley

Larry Borger

Steve Cearley

John Todd

Craig Gladman

Tom Grant

Tim McMenamy

Mike Roberston

Steve Rogers

Bruce Tidmore

7. The Church of Christ - Belton, Texas - <https://www.beltonchurch.com/give>

“Online Giving”

“We now offer online giving through the Breeze system. You can give online by clicking

here.”

“Most banks now offer an “online bill pay” where you can automate giving through their system. Visit with your local bank to see if this is an option!

“Our Sunday Offering”

“We collect money to support our ministries, both local and across the world. Guests are not expected to contribute. You can share an offering in one of the boxes along the back walls of the Worship Center.”

“You are also welcome to bring an offering to the church office during office hours (Monday-Thursday, 8am-5pm).”

The Belton, Texas Elders

Scott Cox

Mark Groveunder

Quinton Locklin

Lee Munz

Claude Ross

8. Northridge, Mt. Pleasant, Texas - <https://www.northridgecoc.com/give>

Simple and secure giving. Give one-time or schedule recurring giving using the options below.

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Luke 6:8

Northridge, Mt. Pleasant, Texas Elders

Troy Campbell

Larry Dehls

Jeff McClendon

Robert Perryman

John Williams (eldersnrcoc@gmail.com)

9. Greenville Avenue Church of Christ, Richardson, Texas

<https://life.gacoc.org/give.html>

“Giving is a part of worship that emanates from a cheerful heart and is manifested in weekly action. Online giving is an expedient way to facilitate this act of worship.”

Greenville Avenue Church of Christ, Richardson, Texas Elders

Fred Green

Raymond Hart

Otis Idlebird Jr.

Jason Moseley

David Phillips Jr.

10. Brown Street Church of Christ, Waxahachie, Texas

<https://onrealm.org/cocbrownstreet/-/form/give/cocbrownstreet>

“Thank you for giving to support the Lord's work at Brown Street.”

Brown Street Church of Christ, Waxahachie, Texas, Elders

Randy Alexander

Damon Bentley

David Colley

Randall Dyess

David Fittz

Billy Moran

Glenn Perryman

Larry Sullivan

Walter Thompson

Danny Wilson

11. Southaven, Mississippi <https://www.southavencoc.org/index.html>

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z69K/home>

Weekly Giving, Building Fund, Youth Fund, Joe Ruiz Peru Mission Work, Merchandise (General church merchandise: Books, Shirts, Etc. Purchase Now), GBN (This will be set up for giving for GBN)

The Southaven, Mississippi Church of Christ Elders

Gary Barch

Larry Everson

David Rister

Here is what H. Leo Boles wrote on Jesus' words in Matthew 21:12-13:

“House of prayer” is a vivid description of the true design of the worship in the temple. God had recorded his name there; it was called holy, and only those who worshiped God according to his law should have entered the temple. It is not strange that Jesus, who had been hounded by his enemies, would now come and take possession of the temple in this fearless way; it is another token to them that he was what he claimed to be, the Son of God. “Den of robbers” is a strong accusation against these Jews for their evil practices. “Den of robbers” is a terrible antithesis to “the house of God,” or “house of prayer.” This was a serious charge against the Jewish religious leaders (H. Leo Boles, *A Commentary on The Gospel According to Matthew*, Gospel Advocate Co., 1963, Nashville).

(Editor's Note: “Merchandise?” Southaven sells books, shirts, etc. Their elders are “destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness” (Tim. 6:5). They have no authority from Christ (Col. 3:17) to allow their blatantly, crass, merchandising.

12. Brown Trail Church of Christ, Bedford, Texas <https://btcoc.com/giving/>

Online Giving

“You can give via a bank draft or credit card. We suggest creating an account so you can track your giving totals throughout the year. By creating an account, we’ll be able to provide you with an annual report for your taxes.

“If you select the option to cover the fees, it will add about 3% to your contribution for credit cards or 1% for bank transfers, and it will offset all fees charged by the processor.

“Please note: the company we are using for online giving is named Tithe.ly. We know that tithing is not a New Testament commandment, but this company is one of the best solutions for online giving. If you have any questions, please see Eddie.”

Brown Trail Church of Christ, Bedford, Texas Elders

Stephen Alexander

Kevin Carroll

Russ Floyd

Doug Selby

David Webb

13. The Deer Creek Church of Christ, Edmond, Oklahoma

<https://deercreekcoc.com/giving>

The Deer Creek, Edmond, Oklahoma, Elders

Carl Griffin

Tony Wallace

14. The Palm Beach Lakes, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

<https://www.pblcoc.org/online-giving/>

“One of the five avenues of first-day-of-the-week worship that is specified in the New Testament is that of giving back to the Lord. God Himself specifies both the time (every first day of the week) and the place (when the church is assembled together) (1 Cor. 16:1-2). The church is to engage in all five avenues of worship (singing, praying, communing, preaching and giving) together as a body, recognizing the joint-participation and fellowship aspect of each act of worship, including giving.

“All Christians should ‘purpose’ in advance how much to cheerfully give to the Lord (2 Cor. 9:7), and make whatever arrangements are necessary to be prepared on the first day of the week (this includes those who give by cash, check or electronic means). Purposing in one’s heart is something we do each week.”

“For those who intend to give electronically on Sunday, there are three methods available:

Use the website. (Click below.)

Use the app. (Download the ‘FellowshipOne Giving’ app, with the teal background.)

Download for iPhone or Download for Android

Text to give. (Text GIVE to 772-277-7788)”

“For weekly contributions, please select ‘Sunday contribution’ from the drop-down menu.

If you choose to give to another option on the menu, please do so in addition to (and not in place of) your regular contribution.”

“During our worship on Sunday, there will be cards in the pews to use, so that we can all participate together and enjoy the fellowship of giving in worship.”

“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart...for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

The Palm Beach Lakes Church of Christ Elders

Johnny Davis - Email: joboda24@gmail.com

Dan Fuller - Email: fullerd925@gmail.com

Paul Metzkes - Email: paulmetzk@gmail.com

Phil Porter - Email: philporter.nuc@gmail.com

Richard Watson - Email: richardharoldwatson@gmail.com

In recent years it has become common for many works, which are **supposed to be under the oversight of elders in a congregation**, to publicly seek funding for their efforts. That is sinful. Asking the public to fund the church's work violates the injunction Paul gave to Christians to give as we have been prospered, upon the first day of the week. One work (among many others on the internet) which comes to mind is *Apologetics Press* (AP). That entity is ostensibly overseen by the Palm Beach Lakes elders in Florida. If that is true, then **AP is a work of the church** which ought to be funded **by the church**. However, its website requests donations from the public **in violation of Paul's injunction above**. How do the Palm Beach Lakes elders justify the sin they commit on the *Apologetics Press's* website by begging money from the public and also on the website of the Palm Beach Lakes Church of Christ?

Living Sacrifices?

Mike Demory

Perhaps no greater sham has been perpetrated upon Christendom by the devil, than the idea that no authority from God is required in religious matters; most particularly in the area of giving. Christianity finds its foundation in the sacrifice of our Lord, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). What better motivation to induce Christ's disciples to give bountifully, than the example of the one whom we claim to follow? Yet, many claiming to be Christians, are robbing God continually (Mal. 3:8; Eph. 4:28; Rom. 2:21; 13:9).

Financial schemes meant to support the works of the church were invented by men to circumvent God's authority. Schemes such as Rummage and Cake Sales, Dinners, Raffles, Fair Booths, red pot bell ringers, asking for community donations, renting out portions of the church building for secular use, just to name a few. Each of these and more does nothing to help the individual Christian cultivate the God ordained way of giving, and in reality cripples spiritual growth. How can one be a ‘living sacrifice,’ when they know others will be called upon to give?

Many reason that it's harmless because the money goes to God's cause. But how is God glorified in a process that violates His will and finding no Bible authority for it in the first place, let alone, violating other precepts? Is there anything wrong with having a dinner? No, not in and of itself, as long as it's free. The same thing with a Rummage or Garage sale, that gives its items away without cost. The yearly red pot bell ringers take credit for the good they do with the money received from the world, yet their members provide nothing, other than the labor [a clear violation of God's way of giving]. Then one of the more popular ways of raising money is the ever popular raffle (gambling). Gambling is justified as innocent entertainment, and a good source of revenue. There is no doubt that it is a good source of revenue, otherwise businesses, governments, and denominations would not be promoting its use.

Does the Bible specifically state, “Thou shalt not gamble?” No more than it says “thou shalt not use drugs; thou shalt not speed, or thou shalt not use tobacco.” But the principles are implied throughout the Word of God. Christians are commanded to be ‘faithful stewards’ of everything God has put into their care (1 Pet. 4:10; Luke 12:42; 1 Cor. 4:2); because all things belong to God (Psa. 50:10-12; Job 41:11). Gambling violates the second law, to, “love thy neighbor as thyself,” which would never work ill to their neighbor (Matt. 22:39; Rom. 13:10). Gam-

bling (raffles), promotes stealing from the ‘hard luck’ of their neighbors, and violates our duty to look out for the welfare of others over our own (1 Cor. 10:24; Philp. 2:3-4).

In short, the devices of men destroy God’s way of supporting the work of the church. We are commanded to give upon the first day of every week as we have prospered (1 Cor. 16:2). We are to give liberally, and cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:5-7), in order that others may be eased of their burdens, and your love for your fellowman is demonstrated (2 Cor. 8:13-24). We are required to have Bible authority in everything (Col. 3:17). If there is no word from God on a subject, then it is sin if we choose to do it anyway (Rom. 14:23; 10:17). Giving as God authorizes us to give, will assist us in spiritual growth as well as helping to be true ‘living sacrifices.’

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Table of Contents

Foreword.....i
Author's Preface.....iv
Chapter 1 - An Emerging Denomination.....1
Chapter 2 - When the Floodgate was Opened.....19
Chapter 3 - The Time has Come Again.....26
Chapter 4 - Creeds of Mainstream Churches.....40
Chapter 5 - Pentecostalism in Mainstream Churches of Christ.....51
Chapter 6 - “Spirit-Filled” Mainstream Churches of Christ.....67
Chapter 7 - A Deadly Mixture in Mainstream Churches.....81
Chapter 8 - “Forging Our Identity”.....85
Chapter 9 - “Forging” Our Moral Corruption.....104
Chapter 10 - Errors In Mainstream Preaching Schools.....141
Chapter 11 - The Social Gospel Of Mainstream Churches.....183
Chapter 12 - Societies of Mainstream Churches.....203
Chapter 13 - Fellowship of Mainstream Churches.....216
Chapter 14 - Fellowship in Mainstream Lectureships.....235
Chapter 15 - Mainstream Periodicals.....254
Chapter 16 – Newsletters of Mainstream Churches.....301
Chapter 17 - Mainstream Youth Ministries.....313
Epilogue.....330
Works Cited.....337

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Biblical Flotsam From “Mainstream Churches of Christ”

(Flotsam: Floating wreckage of a ship or its cargo; floating debris)

Jerry C. Brewer

The Canyon Church of Christ in Phoenix, Arizona has **their creed** posted on their website. Compare Canyon's creed with the *Methodist Discipline*, the Lutheran's *Augsburg Confession*, *The Hiscox Standard Baptist Manual*, *The Westminster Confession Of Faith* of the Presbyterians, *The Book of Mormon*, *The Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopalians, *The Nicene Creed* of Catholicism, or with any other man-written religious creed!

Statement of Faith

WE BELIEVE THAT:

1. God is sovereign over all creation.
2. Jesus is the Son of God and our Savior and Redeemer through his death, burial, and resurrection.
3. God's Spirit leads, seals, and comforts all believers.
4. We serve as holy priests offering Christ-approved lives up to God.
5. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His Will for the salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.
6. There is one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
7. Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the Cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Father, He now is our High Priest and advocate.
8. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age, to convict men, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.
9. Man was created in the image of God, but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through salvation in Jesus Christ can a spiritual life be obtained.
10. The shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe.
11. Water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are vital parts of salvation and the Christian life.
12. Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.
13. There will be a bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.
14. Marriage has been instituted by God. The Canyon Church of Christ, herein after called Church, defines “marriage” as the exclusive covenantal union of a man and a woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment. A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the Church only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of “marriage” found in these Articles.
15. Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual relations outside of marriage (referred to in the New Testament as “porneia” including but not limited to, adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pedophilia) are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Further, lascivious conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation and/or distribution and/or viewing of pornography, are incompatible with the biblical witness.
16. Every minister, board member, or employee, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith. This shall be a prerequisite, and continual condition, for these positions.
17. Every servant leader shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and behave in a manner that is consistent therewith. This shall be a prerequisite, and continual condition, for congregational membership. (<https://www.canyonchurch.org/statement-of-faith>)

Their “elders” **Jay Carter, Don James, Michael Jenkins**, and **Steve Schmidlap**, are leading them down the broad way to eternal hell. We will have more **creeds** in June's issue about that new “emerging denomination” who still call themselves “The Church of Christ” even though Jesus would never recognize them.